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**BUNYAN'S PRACTICAL
WORKS VOLUME 5**

by John Bunyan

Books For The Ages

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THE STRAIT GATE

OR,

GREAT DIFFICULTY OF GOING TO HEAVEN:

Plainly proving, by the Scripture, that not only the Rude and Profane, but many great Professors, will come short of that Kingdom.

“Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” — ^{<1075}Matthew 7:13, 14.

TO THE READER

COURTEOUS READER,

God (I hope) hath put it into my heart to write unto thee another time, and that about matters of the greatest moment (for now we discourse not about things controverted among the godly, but directly about the saving or damning of the soul; yea, moreover, this discourse is about the fewness of them that shall be saved, and it proves that many an high professor will come short of eternal life); wherefore the matter must needs be sharp, and so disliked by some, but let it not be rejected by thee. The text calls for sharpness, so do the times, yea, the faithful discharge of my duty towards thee hath put me upon it.

I do not now pipe, but mourn; and it will be well for thee if thou canst graciously lament, ⁴¹¹⁷Matthew 11:17. Some (say they) make the gate of heaven too wide, and some make it too narrow; for my part, I have here presented thee with as true a measure of it, as by the word of God I can. Read me, therefore, yea, read me, and compare me with the Bible; and if thou findest my doctrine and that book of God concur, embrace it, as thou wilt answer the contrary in the day of judgment. This awakening work (if God will make it so) was prepared for thee: if there be need, and it wounds, get healing by blood: if it disquiets, get peace by blood: if it takes away all thou hast, because it was naught (for this book is not prepared to take away true grace from any), then buy of Christ gold tried in the fire, that thou mayst be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayst be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness doth not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayst see, ⁴¹¹⁸Revelation 3:18. Self-flatteries, self-deceivings, are easy and pleasant, but damnable. The Lord give thee an heart to judge right of thyself, right of this book, and so prepare for eternity, that thou mayst not only expect entrance, but be received into the kingdom of Christ and of God. Amen.

So prays thy Friend,

John Bunyan.

THE STRAIT GATE

OR

GREAT DIFFICULTY OF GOING TO HEAVEN.

“Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” — ^{<D13>}Luke 13:24.

These are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and are, therefore, in especial manner to be heeded; besides, the subject matter of the words is the most weighty, to wit, how we should attain salvation, and therefore also to be heeded.

The occasion of the words was a question which one that was at this time in the company of the disciples, put to Jesus Christ; the question was this, “Lord, are there few that be saved?” ^{<D13>}Luke 13:23. A serious question, not such as tended to the subversion of the hearers, as too many now a-days do; but such as in its own nature tended to the awakening of the company to good, and that called for such an answer that might profit the people also. This question also well pleased Jesus Christ, and he prepareth and giveth such an answer as was without the least retort, or shew of distaste; such an answer, I say, as carried in it the most full resolve to the question itself, and help to the persons questioning: “And he said unto them, Strive to enter in,” etc. The words are an answer, and an instruction also.

1. An answer, and that in the affirmative; the gate is strait, — many that seek will not be able, therefore but few shall be saved.
2. The answer is an instruction also; “strive to enter in,” etc. good counsel and instruction; pray God help me, and my reader, and all that love their own salvation, to take it.

My manner of handling the word will be, first, by way of explication, and then by way of observation.

I. BY WAY OF EXPLICATION

The words are to be considered, first, with reference to their general scope; and then with reference to their several phrases.

First, the general scope of the text is to be considered, and that is that great thing salvation; for these words do immediately look at, point to, and give directions about salvation: “Are there few that be saved? strive to enter in at the strait gate.”

The words, I say, are to direct us, not only to talk of, or to wish for, but to understand how we shall, and to seek that we may be effectually saved, and therefore of the greatest importance. To be saved! what is like being saved? To be saved from sin, from hell, from the wrath of God, from eternal damnation, what is like it? To be made an heir of God, of his grace, of his kingdom and eternal glory, what is like it? and yet all this is included in this word saved, and in the answer to that question, are there few that be saved? Indeed this word saved is but of little use in the world, save to them that are heartily afraid of damning. This word lies in the Bible, as excellent salves lie in some men's houses, thrust into a hole, and not thought on for many months, because the household-people have no wounds or sores. In time of sickness, what so set by as the doctor's glasses and galley-pots full of his excellent things? but when the person is grown well, the rest is thrown to the dunghill. Oh! when men are sick of sin, and afraid of damning, what a text is that, where this word saved is found? Yea, what a word of worth, and goodness, and blessedness, it is to him that lies continually upon the wrath of a guilty conscience? “But the whole need not the physician;” he therefore, and he only, knows what saved means, that knows what hell, and death, and damnation means. “What shall I do to be saved?” is the language of the trembling sinner. “Lord save me,” is the language of the sinking sinner; and none admire the glory that is in the word saved, but such as see, without being saved, all things in heaven and earth are emptiness to them. They also that believe themselves privileged in all the blessedness that is wrapped up in that word, bless and admire God that hath saved them. Wherefore, since the thing intended, both in the question and the answer, is no less than the salvation of the soul, I beseech you to give the more earnest heed,

 Hebrews 21.

But to come to the particular phrases in the words, and to handle them orderly, in the words I find four things.

- (1.) An intimation of the kingdom of heaven;
- (2.) A description of the entrance into it;
- (3.) An exhortation to enter into it; and,
- (4.) A motive to enforce that exhortation.

1. An intimation of the kingdom of heaven; for when he saith, “Strive to enter in;” and in such phrases there is supposed a place or state, or both, to be enjoyed. “Enter in;” enter into what, or whither, but into a state or place, or both? and therefore when you read this word, “enter in,” you must say there is certainly included in the text that good thing that yet is not expressed. “Enter in;” into heaven, that is the meaning, where the saved are, and shall be; into heaven, that place, that glorious place, where God, and Christ, and angels are, and the souls or spirits of just men made perfect. “Enter in;” that thing included, though not expressed in the words, is called in another place, the Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, ^{<820>}Hebrews 12. And therefore the words signify unto us, that there is a state most glorious, and that when this world is ended; and that this place and state is likewise to be enjoyed, and inherited by a generation of men for ever. Besides, this word, enter in, signifieth that salvation to the full is to be enjoyed only there, and that there only is external safety; all other places and conditions are hazardous, dangerous, full of snares, imperfections, temptations, and afflictions, but there all is well; there is no devil to tempt, no desperately wicked heart to deliver us up, no deceitful lust to entangle, nor any enchanting world to bewitch us: there all shall be well to all eternity. Further, all the parts of, and circumstances that attend salvation, are only there to be enjoyed: there only is immortality and eternal life; there is the glory and fullness of joy, and the everlasting pleasures; there is God and Christ to be enjoyed by open vision, and more; there are the angels, and the saints; further, there is no death, nor sickness, nor sorrow, nor sighing, for ever: there is no pain, nor persecutor, nor darkness, to eclipse our glory. O this Mount Sion! O this heavenly Jerusalem! ^{<820>}2 Corinthians 5:1-5; ^{<820>}Psalm 16:11; ^{<820>}Luke 20:35, 36; ^{<820>}Hebrews 12:12-14.

Behold, therefore, what a great thing the Lord Jesus hath included by this little word “in.” In this word is wrapt up an whole heaven and eternal life; even as there is also by other little words in the holy Scriptures of truth; as where he saith, “Knock and it shall be opened unto you,” and the elect have obtained it. This should teach us, not only to read, but to attend in reading; not only to read, but to lift up our hearts to God in reading; for if we be not heedful, if he gives us not light and understanding, we may easily pass over, without any great regard, such a word as may have a glorious kingdom and eternal salvation in the bowels of it: yea, sometimes, as here, a whole heaven is intimated, where it is not at all expressed. The apostles of old did use to fetch great things out of the Scriptures, even out of the very order and timing of the several things contained therein. See ^{<B01B>}Romans 4:9-11; ^{<B16C>}Galatians 3:16, 17; ^{<B08C>}Hebrews 8:13. But,

2. As we have here an intimation of the kingdom of heaven, so we have a description of the entrance into it, and that by a double similitude:

(1.) It is called a gate;

(2.) A strait gate: “Strive to enter in at the strait gate.”

First, It is set forth by the similitude of a gate. A gate, you know, is of a double use; it is to open and shut, and so, consequently, to let in or to keep out; and to do both these at the season; as he said, “Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened till the sun be hot;” and again, “I commanded that the gate should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the Sabbath,” ^{<B07B>}Nehemiah 7:3; ^{<B13B>}Nehemiah 13:19, 20.

And so you find of this gate of heaven, when the five wise virgins came, the gate was opened, but afterwards came the other virgins, and the door was shut, ^{<B01B>}Matthew 11. So then the entrance into heaven is called a gate, to shew there is a time when there may be entrance, and there will come a time when there shall be none; and indeed this is a chief truth contained in the text: “Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” I read in the scriptures of two gates or doors, through which they that go to heaven must enter.

1. There is the door of faith, the door which the grace of God hath opened to the Gentiles; this door is Jesus Christ, as also himself doth testify, saying, “I am the door,” etc. ^{<B14C>}Acts 14:27; ^{<B01B>}John 10:9. By this door men

enter into God's favor and mercy, and find forgiveness through faith in his blood, and live in hope of eternal life; and therefore himself also said, "I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved," that is, received to mercy, and inherit eternal life. But,

2. There is another door or gate (for that which is called in the text a gate, is twice in the next verse called a door); there is, I say, another gate, and that is the passage into the very heaven itself; the entrance into the celestial mansion-house, and that is the gate mentioned in the text, and the door mentioned twice in the verse that follows. And thus Jacob called it, when he said, Bethel was the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven, that is, the entrance, for he saw the entrance into heaven. One end of Jacob's ladder stands in Bethel, God's house, and the other end reacheth up to the gate of heaven, ^{<0270>}Genesis 27:10-18. Jacob's ladder was the figure of Christ, which ladder was not the gate of heaven, but the way from the Church to that gate which he saw above at the top of the ladder, ^{<0272>}Genesis 27:12; and ^{<0151>}John 1:51. But again, that the gate in the text is the gate or entrance into heaven, consider,

1. It is that gate that letteth men into, or shutteth men out of that place or kingdom where Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob is, which place is that paradise where Christ promised the thief, that he should be that day, that he asked to be with him in his kingdom; it is that place into which Paul said, he was caught, when he heard words unlawful or impossible for a man to utter, ^{<0131>}Luke 13:20; ^{<0234>}Luke 23:24; ^{<0112>}2 Corinthians 12:1-6.

Question: But is not Christ the gate or entrance into this heavenly place?

Answer: He is he without whom no man can get thither, because by his merits men obtain that world, and also because he (as the Father) is the donor and disposer of that kingdom to whom he will. Farther, this place is called his house, and himself the master of it (when once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, ver. 25). But we use to say, that the master of the house is not the door. Men enter into heaven, then, by him, not as he is the gate, or door, or entrance, into the celestial mansion-house, but as he is the giver and disposer of that kingdom to them whom he shall count worthy, because he hath obtained it for them.

2. That this gate is the very passage into heaven, consider the text hath special reference to the day of judgment, when Christ will have laid aside his mediatory office, which before he exercised for the bringing to the faith his own elect; and will then act, not as one that justifieth the ungodly, but as one that judgeth sinners. He will now be risen up from the throne of grace, and shut up the door against all the impenitent, and will be set upon the throne of judgment, from thence to proceed with ungodly sinners.

Objection: But Christ bids strive, “Strive now to enter in at the strait gate;” but if that gate be as you say, the gate or entrance into heaven, then it should seem that we should not strive till the day of judgment, for we shall not come at that gate till then.

Answer: Christ, by this exhortation, Strive, etc. doth not at all admit of, or countenance delays, or that a man should neglect his own salvation; but putteth poor creatures upon preparing for the judgment, and counseleth them now to get those things that will then give them entrance into glory. This exhortation is much like these,

“Be ye therefore ready also, for at such an hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh: and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut,” <1244 Matthew 24:44;
<1250 Matthew 25:10.

So that when he saith, “Strive to enter in,” it is as much as if he should say, Blessed are they that shall be admitted another day to enter into the kingdom of heaven; but they that shall be accounted worthy of so unspeakable a favor, must be well prepared and fitted for it before hand. Now, the time to be fitted is not the day of judgment, but the day of grace; not then, but now. Therefore, strive now for those things that will then give you entrance into the heavenly kingdom. But,

Secondly. As it is called a gate, so it is called a strait gate: “Strive to enter in at the strait gate.”

The straitness of this gate is not to be understood carnally, but mystically. You are not to understand it, as if the entrance into heaven was some little pinching wicket; no, the straitness of this gate is quite another thing. This gate is wide enough for all them that are truly gracious and sincere lovers

of Jesus Christ, but so strait, as that not one of the other can by any means enter in:

“Open to me the gates of righteousness, I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord, this gate of the Lord into which the righteous shall enter,” ⁽¹³⁸⁾ Psalm 118:19, 20.

By this word, therefore, Christ Jesus hath shewed unto us, that without due qualifications there is no possibility of entering into heaven; the strait gate will keep all others out. When Christ spake this parable, he had doubtless his eye upon some passage or passages of the Old Testament, with which the Jews were all acquainted. I will mention two, and so go on.

1. The place by which God turned Adam and his wife out of Paradise. Possibly our Lord might have his eye upon that; for though that was wide enough for them to come out at, yet it was too strait for them to go in at. But what should be the reason of that? Why, they had sinned; and therefore

“God set at the east of that garden cherubims, and a flaming sword, turning every way, to keep the way of the tree of life”
(⁽¹³⁹⁾ Genesis 3:24).

The cherubims, and this flaming sword, they made the entrance too strait for them to enter in. Souls, there are cherubims and a flaming sword at the gates of heaven to keep the way of the tree of life; therefore none but them that are duly fitted for heaven can enter in at this strait gate; the flaming sword will keep all others out.

“Know you not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God; be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God”
(⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ 1 Corinthians 6:9).

2. Perhaps our Lord might have his eye upon the gates of the temple when he spake this word unto the people; for though the gates of the temple were six cubits wide, yet they were so strait, that none that were unclean in anything might enter in thereat (⁽¹⁴¹⁾ Ezekiel 40:48), because there were

placed at them gates, porters, whose office was to look that none but those that had right to enter, might go in thither: And so it is written,

“Jehoidah set porters at the gates of the house of the Lord, that none that were unclean in any thing might enter in”

(⁴⁰²⁹2 Chronicles 23:19).

Souls, God hath porters at the gates of the temple, at the gate of heaven; porters, I say, placed there by God, to look that none that are unclean in any thing may come in thither. In at the gate of the church, none may enter now that are open, profane, and scandalous to religion; no, though they plead they are beloved of God:

“What hath my beloved to do in mine house (saith the Lord), seeing she hath wrought lewdness with many?”

(²⁴¹⁵Jeremiah 11:15).

I say, I am very apt to believe that our Lord Jesus Christ had his thoughts upon these two texts, when he said, The gate is strait: and that which confirms me the more in the thing is this, a little below the text, he saith,

“There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of heaven, and you yourselves thrust out” (verse 28).

Thrust out, which signifieth a violent act, resisting with striving those that would (though unqualified) enter: The porters of the temple were, for this very thing, to wear arms, if need were, and to be men of courage and strength, lest the unsanctified or unprepared should by some means enter in. We read, in the book of Revelations, of the holy city, and that it had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; but what did they do there? Why, amongst the rest of their service, this was one thing, that there might in nowise enter in any thing that defileth, or worketh abomination, and that maketh a lie, ⁶⁴¹²Revelation 21:12, 21.

But more particularly, to shew what it is that maketh this gate so strait: There are three things that maketh it strait.

- (1.) There is sin.
- (2.) There is the word of the law.

(3.) There are the angels of God.

First, There is sin; the sin of the profane, and the sin of the professor.

1. The sin of the profane. But this needs not be enlarged upon, because it is concluded upon at all hands, where there is the common belief of the being of God, and the judgment to come, that

“the wicked shall be turned into hell,
and all the nations that forget God,” ^{<BMT>} Psalm 9:17.

2. But there is the sin of professors; or take it rather thus, there is a profession that will stand with an unsanctified heart and life. The sin of such will overpoise the salvation of their souls, the sin-end being the heaviest end of the scale; I say, that being the heaviest and which hath sin in it, they tilt over, and so are, notwithstanding their glorious profession, drowned in perdition and destruction; “for none such hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God; therefore let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things comes the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience;” neither will a profession be able to excuse them, ^{<HRE>} Ephesians 5:3-6. The gate will be too strait for such as these to enter in thereat. A man may partake of salvation in part, but not of salvation in whole. God saved the children of Israel out of Egypt, but overthrew them in the wilderness: — “I will therefore put you in remembrance, though you once knew this, how that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed them that believed not.” So we see that (notwithstanding their beginning) “they could not enter in, because of unbelief,” ^{<GUE>} Jude 1:5; ^{<SRE>} Hebrews 3:19.

Secondly, There is the word of the law, and that will make the gate strait also. None must go in thereat but those that can go in by the leave of the law; for though no man be, or can be, justified by the works of the law, yet unless the righteousness and holiness by which they attempt to enter into this kingdom be justified by the law, it is in vain once to think of entering in at this strait gate. Now the law justifieth not, but upon the account of Christ's righteousness; if therefore thou be not indeed found in that righteousness, thou wilt find the law lie just in the passage into heaven to keep thee out. Every man's work must be tried by fire, that it may be manifest of what sort it is. There are two errors in the world about the

law; one is, when men think to enter in at the strait gate by the righteousness of the law; the other is, when men think they may enter into heaven without the leave of the law. Both these, I say, are errors; for as by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified; so without the consent of the law, no flesh shall be saved. “heaven and earth shall pass away, before one jot or tittle of the law shall fail, till all be fulfilled.” He therefore must be damned that cannot be saved by the consent of the law. And, indeed, this law is the flaming sword that turneth every way; yea, that lieth to this day in the way to heaven, for a bar to all unbelievers and unsanctified professors; for it is taken out of the way for the truly gracious only. It will be found as a roaring lion to devour all others. Because of the law, therefore, the gate will be found too strait for the unsanctified to enter in. When the apostle had told the Corinthians that the unrighteous should not inherit the kingdom of God, and that such were some of them, he adds,

“But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,”

✠1 Corinthians 6:9-11;

closely concluding, that had they not been washed, and sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, the law, for their transgressions, would have kept them out; it would have made the gate too strait for them to enter in.

Thirdly, There are also the angels of God, and by reason of them the gate is strait. The Lord Jesus calleth the end of the world his harvest; and saith, moreover, that the angels are his reapers. These angels are therefore to gather his wheat into his barn, but to gather the ungodly into bundles to burn them, ✠Matthew 13:39, 41, 49. Unless, therefore, the man that is unsanctified can master the law, and conquer angels; unless he can, as I may say, pull them out of the gate-way of heaven, himself is not to come thither for ever. No man goeth to heaven but by the help of the angels — I mean at the day of judgment: “For the Son of man shall send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” If those that shall enter in at the strait gate shall only enter in thither by the conduct of the holy angels, pray when do you think those men will enter in thither, concerning whom the angels are commanded to gather them, to

bind them in bundles, to burn them? This, therefore, is a third difficulty: The angels will make this entrance strait; yea, too strait for the unjustified and unsanctified to enter in thither.

3. I come now to the exhortation, which is, to strive to enter in: “Strive to enter in at the strait gate.” These words are fitly added; for since the gate is strait, it follows that they who will enter in must strive.

“Strive.” This word strive supposeth,

- (1.) That great idleness is natural to professors; they think to get to heaven by lying, as it were, on their elbows.
- (2.) It also suggesteth, that many will be the difficulties that professors will meet with before they get to heaven.
- (3.) It also concludeth, that only the laboring Christian, man or woman, will get in thither. “Strive,” etc.

Three questions I will propound upon the word, answer to which may give us light into the meaning of it:

- (1.) What doth the word strive import?
- (2.) How should we strive?
- (3.) Why should we strive?

First, What doth this word strive import?

Answer: When he saith, Strive, it is as much as to say, bend yourselves to the work with all your might:

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest,” ^{<10>}Ecclesiastes 9:10.

Thus Samson did when he set himself to destroy the Philistines, he bowed himself with all his might, ^{<10>}Judges 16:30. Thus David did also, when he made provision for the building and beautifying of the temple of God, ^{<10>}1 Chronicles 29:2. And thus must thou do, if ever thou interest into heaven.

Secondly, When he saith, Strive, he calleth for the mind and will, that they should be on side, and on the side of the things of his kingdom; for none strive indeed, but such as have given the son of God their heart, of which

their mind and will are a principal part; for saving conversion lieth more in the turning of the mind and will to Christ, and to the love of his heavenly things, than in all knowledge and judgment. And this the apostle confirmeth, when he saith,

“Stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving,” etc.
¹⁰²Philippians 1:27.

3. And, more particularly, this word strive is expressed by several other terms; as,

1. It is expressed by that word, “So run that you may obtain,” ¹⁰¹1 Corinthians 9:24, 25.

2. It is expressed by that word,

“Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life,”
¹⁰²1 Timothy 6:12.

3. It is expressed by that word,

“Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat that endureth to everlasting life,” ¹⁰²John 6:27.

4. It is expressed by that word,

“We wrestle with principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world,” ¹⁰²Ephesians 6:12.

Therefore, when he saith, Strive, it is as much as to say, Run for heaven, Fight for heaven, Labor for heaven, Wrestle for heaven, or you are like to go without it.

The second question is, How should we strive?

Answer: The answer in general is, Thou must strive lawfully:

“And if a man also strive for the mastery, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully,” ¹⁰²2 Timothy 2:5.

But you will say, What is it to strive lawfully?

Answer:

- 1.** To strive against the things which are abhorred by the Lord Jesus; yea, to resist to the spilling of your blood, striving against sin, ^{<5101>}Hebrews 12:4. To have all those things that are condemned by the word; yea, though they be thine own right hand, right eye, or right foot, in abomination; and to seek by all godly means the utter suppressing of them, ^{<4198>}Mark 9:43, 45, 47.
- 2.** To strive lawfully, is to strive for those things that are commanded in the word. But thou, O man of God, fly the world, and follow after (that is, strive for) righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness, fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, etc., ^{<5101>}1 Timothy 6:11, 12.
- 3.** He that striveth lawfully, must be therefore very temperate in all the good and lawful things of this life. And every one that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things; now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we in incorruptible, ^{<4125>}1 Corinthians 9:25. Most professors give leave to the world, and the vanity of their hearts, to close with them, and to hang about their necks, and make their striving to stand rather in an outcry of words, than a hearty labor against the lusts and love of the world, and their own corruptions; but this kind of striving is but a beating of the air, and will come to just nothing at last, ^{<4126>}1 Corinthians 9:26.
- 4.** He that striveth lawfully, must take God and Christ along with him to the work, otherwise he will certainly be undone:

“Whereunto (said Paul) I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily,”

^{<5129>}Colossians 1:29.

And for the right performing of this, he must observe these following particulars: —

- (1.)** He must take heed that he doth not strive about things, or words, to no profit; for God will not then be with him.

“Of these things (saith the apostle) put them in remembrance; charging them before the Lord, that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers,”

^{<5124>}1 Timothy 2:14.

But, alas! how many professors in our days are guilty of this transgression, whose religion stands chiefly, if not only, in a few unprofitable questions, and vain wranglings, about words and things to no profit, but to the destruction of the hearers!

- (2.) He must take heed that whilst he strives against one sin, he does not harbor and shelter another; or that whilst he cries out against other men's sins, he does not countenance his own.
- (3.) In the striving, strive to believe, strive for the faith of the gospel; for the more we believe the gospel, and the reality of the things of the world to come, with the more stomach and courage shall be labor to possess the blessedness, ^{<612>}Philippians 1:27; Hebrews 4. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.
- (4.) As we should strive for, and by faith, so we should strive by prayer (^{<651>}Romans 15:30), by fervent and effectual prayers. O the swarms of our prayerless professors! What do they think of themselves? Surely the gate of heaven was heretofore as wide as in these our days; but what striving by prayer was there then among Christians for the thing that gives admittance into this kingdom, over what there is in these latter days!
- (5.) We should also strive by mortifying our members that are upon the earth:

“I therefore so run (said Paul), so fight I, not as one that beats the air; but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached the gospel to others, I myself should be a cast-away,” ^{<612>}1 Corinthians 9:27.

But all this is spoken principally to professors; so I would be understood.

I come now to the third question, namely, But why should we strive?

Answer:

1. Because the thing for which you are here exhorted to strive, is worth the striving for; it is for no less than for a whole heaven, and an eternity of felicity there. How will men that have before them a little honor, a little

profit, a little pleasure, strive? I say again, how will they strive for this? Now, they do it for a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. Methinks this word heaven, and this eternal life, ought verily to make us strive, for what is there again either in heaven or earth like them to provoke a man to strive?

2. Strive, because otherwise the devil and hell will assuredly have thee:

“He goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour,”
<408> 1 Peter 5:8.

These fallen angels, they are always watchful, diligent, unwearied; they are also mighty, subtle, and malicious, seeking nothing more than the damnation of thy soul. Oh, thou that art like the heartless dove, strive!

3. Strive, because every lust strives and wars against thy soul. The flesh lusteth against the spirit:

“Dearly beloved, I beseech you (said Peter), as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul,”
<457> Galatians 5:17.

It is a rare thing to see or find out a Christian that indeed can bridle his lusts; but no strange thing to see such professors that are not only bridled, but saddled too, yea, and ridden from lust to sin, from one vanity to another, by the very devil himself, and the corruptions of their hearts.

4. Strive, because thou hast a whole world against thee. The world hateth thee if thou be a Christian; the men of the world hate thee; the things of the world are snares for thee, even thy bed and table, thy wife and husband, yea, thy most lawful enjoyments, have that in them that will certainly sink thy soul to hell, if thou dost not strive against the snares that are in them, <510> Romans 11:9.

The world will seek to keep thee out of heaven with mocks, flouts, taunts, threatenings, gaols, gibbets, halters, burnings, and a thousand deaths; therefore strive. Again, if it cannot overcome thee with these, it will flatter, promise, allure, entice, entreat, and use a thousand tricks on this hand to destroy thee; and observe, many that have been stout against the threats of the world, have yet been overcome with the bewitching flatteries of the same. There ever was enmity between the devil and the church, and

betwixt his seed and her seed too; Michael and his angels, and the dragon and his angels, these make war continually, ^{<ORR>}Genesis 3; ^{<GRI>}Revelation 12. There hath been great desires and endeavors among men to reconcile these two in one, to wit, the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman; but it could never yet be accomplished. The world says, they will never come over to us; and we again say, by God's grace, we will never come over to them. But the business hath not ended in words; both they and we have also added our endeavors to make each other submit; but endeavors have proved ineffectual too. They, for their part, have devised all manner of cruel torments to make us submit; as, slaying with the sword, stoning, sawing asunder, flames, wild beasts, banishments, hunger, and a thousand miseries. We again, on the other side, have labored by prayers and tears, by patience and long-suffering, by gentleness and love, by sound doctrine, and faithful witness-bearing against their enormities, to bring them over to us; but yet the enmity remains: so that they must conquer us, or we must conquer them. One side must be overcome; but the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God.

5. Strive, because there is nothing of Christianity got by idleness:

“Idleness clothes a man with rags, and the vineyard of the slothful is grown over with nettles,” ^{<PRO>}Proverbs 23:21;
^{<PRO>}Proverbs 24:30-32.

Profession that is not attended with spiritual labor cannot bring the soul to heaven. The fathers before us were not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord:

“Therefore be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises,” ^{<ROM>}Romans 12:11;
^{<HEB>}Hebrews 6:12.

“Strive to enter in.” Methinks the words, at the first reading, do intimate to us, that the Christian, in all that ever he does in this world, should carefully heed and regard his soul, — I say, in all that ever he does. Many are for their souls by fits and starts; but a Christian indeed, in all his doing and designs which he contriveth and manageth in this world, should have a special eye to his own future and everlasting good; in all his labors he should strive to enter in:

“Wisdom (Christ) is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom, and in all thy gettings get understanding.” ^{}Proverbs 4:7.

Get nothing, if thou canst not get Christ and grace, and further hopes of heaven in that getting; get nothing with a bad conscience, with the hazard of thy peace with God, and that in getting it thou weakenest thy graces which God hath given thee; for this is not to strive to enter in. Add grace to grace, both by religious and worldly duties; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, ^{}2 Peter 1:8-12. Religious duties are not the only striving times; he that thinks so is out. Thou mayest help thy faith and thy hope, in the godly management of thy calling, and mayest get father footing in eternal life, by studying the glory of God in all thy worldly employment. I am speaking now to Christians that are justified freely by grace; and am encouraging, or rather counseling them to strive to enter in; for there is an entering in by faith and good conscience now, as well as our entering in body and soul hereafter; and I must add, that the more common it is to thy soul to enter in now by faith, the more steadfast hope shalt thou have of entering in hereafter in body and soul.

“**Strive to enter in.**” By these words also the Lord Jesus giveth sharp rebuke to those professors that have not eternal glory, but other temporal things in their eye, by all the bustle that they make in the world about religion. Some there be, what a stir they make, what a noise and clamor, with their notions and forms, and yet perhaps all is for the loaves; because they have eaten of the loaves, and are filled, ^{}John 6:26. They strive indeed to enter, but it is not into heaven: they find religion hath a good trade at the end of it; or they find that it is the way to credit, repute, preferment, and the like; and therefore they strive to enter into these. But these have not the strait gate in their eye, nor yet in themselves have they love to their poor and perishing souls; wherefore this exhortation nippeth such, by predicting of their damnation.

“**Strive to enter in.**” These words also sharply rebuke them who content themselves as the angel of the church of Sardis did, to wit, “To have a name to live, and be dead,” ^{}Revelation 3:1, or as they of the Laodiceans, who took their religion upon trust, and was content with a poor, wretched, lukewarm profession: for such as these do altogether unlike to the

exhortation in the text, that says, Strive; and they sit and sleep; that says, Strive to enter in, and they content themselves with a profession that is never like to bring them thither.

“Strive to enter in.” Further, these words put us upon proving the truth of them now; for if the strait gate be the gate of heaven, and yet we are to strive to enter into it now, even while we live, and before we come thither, then, doubtless, Christ means by this exhortation, that we should use all lawful means to prove our graces in this world, whether they will stand in the judgment or no. Strive to enter in; get those graces now that will prove true graces then; and therefore try them you have; and if, upon trial, they prove not right, cast them away, and cry for better, lest they cast thee away, when better are not to be had.” “But of me gold tried in the fire:” mark that, ^{<B18>}Revelation 3:18. Buy of me faith and grace that will stand in the judgment; strive for that faith; buy of me that grace, and also white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, that the shame of thy wickedness doth not appear, and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. mind you this advice; this is right striving to enter in.

But you will say, How should we try our graces? Would you have us run into temptation to try if they be sound or rotten?

Answer: You need not run into trials; God hath ordained that enough of them shall overtake thee to prove thy graces either rotten or sound before the day of thy death: sufficient to the day is the evil thereof, if thou hast but a sufficiency of grace to withstand. I say, thou shalt have trials enough overtake thee, to prove thy graces sound or rotten. Thou mayest, therefore, if God shall help thee, see how it is like to go with thee before thou goest out of this world; to wit, whether thy graces be such as will carry thee in at the gates of heaven or no.

But how should we try our graces now?

Answer: How dost thou find them in outward trials? See ^{<B15>}Hebrews 11:15, 16. How dost thou find thyself in the inward workings of sin? ^{<B12>}Romans 7:24. How dost thou find thyself under the most high enjoyment of grace in this world? ^{<B14>}Philippians 2:14.

But what do you mean by these three questions?

Answer: I mean graces shew themselves at these their seasons, whether they be rotten or sound.

How do they shew themselves to be true under the first of these?

Answer: By mistrusting our own sufficiency, by crying to God for help, by desiring rather to die than to bring any dishonor to the name of God, and by counting, that if God be honored in the trial, thou hast gained more than all the world could give thee, ^{<4402>}2 Chronicles 20:12; ^{<4441>}2 Chronicles 14:11; ^{<4401>}Acts 4.; ^{<4402>}Acts 20:22; ^{<4707>}2 Corinthians 4:17, 18; ^{<3812>}Hebrews 11:24, 25.

How do they shew themselves to be true under the second?

Answer: By mourning, and confessing, and striving, and praying, against them; by not being content, shouldst thou have heaven, if they live, and defile thee; and by counting of holiness the greatest beauty in the world; and by flying to Jesus Christ for life, ^{<3820>}Zechariah 12:10; ^{<3901>}John 19; ^{<3820>}Hebrews 12:4; ^{<3902>}Psalms 19:12.

How do they shew themselves to be true under the third?

Answer: By prizing the true graces above all the world, — by praying heartily that God will give thee more, — by not being content with all the grace thou canst be capable of enjoying on this side heaven and glory, ^{<3840>}Psalms 84:10; ^{<4705>}Luke 17:5; ^{<3101>}Philippians 3.

“Strive to enter in.” The reason why Christ addeth these words, to enter in, is obvious, to wit, because there is no true and lasting happiness on this side heaven; I say, none that is both true and lasting, I mean as to our sense and feeling, as there shall; for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come, ^{<3834>}Hebrews 13:14. The heaven is within; strive therefore to enter in: the glory is within; strive therefore to enter in: the Mount Zion is within; strive therefore to enter in: the heavenly Jerusalem is within; strive therefore to enter in: angels and saints are within; strive therefore to enter in: and to make up all, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that glorious Redeemer, is within; strive therefore to enter in.

“Strive to enter in.” For without are dogs, sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. Without are also the devils, and hell, and death, and all damned souls; without is howling, weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth; yea, without are all the miseries, sorrows, and plagues that an infinite God can in justice and power inflict upon an evil and wicked generation: “Strive therefore to enter in at the strait gate,” ^{<626>}Revelation 22:15; ^{<1254>}Matthew 25:41; ^{<6129>}Revelation 12:9; ^{<2383>}Isaiah 65:13, 14; ^{<1223>}Matthew 22:13; ^{<1536>}Deuteronomy 29:18-20. “Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

4. We are now come to the motive which our Lord urges to inforce his exhortation.

He told us before, that the gate was strait; he also exhorted us to strive to enter in thereat, or to get those things now that will further our entrance then, and to set ourselves against those things that will hinder our entering in.

In this motive there are five things to be minded.

- (1.) That there will be a disappointment to some at the day of judgment, — they will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.
- (2.) That not a few, but many, will meet with this disappointment; “for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”
- (3.) This doctrine of the miscarriage of many then, it standeth upon the validity of the word of Christ: “For many, I say, will see to enter in, and shall not be able.”
- (4.) Professors shall make a great heap among the many that shall fall short of heaven. “For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”
- (5.) Where grace and striving are wanting now, seeking and contending to enter in will be unprofitable then: “For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

But I will proceed in my former method; to wit, to open the words unto you.

“For many,” etc. If he had said, For some will fall short; it had been a sentence to be minded; if he had said, For some that seek will fall short, it had been very awakening: but when he saith, Many, many will fall short, yea, many among professors will fall short; this is not only awakening, but dreadful.

“For many,” etc. I find this word many variously applied in Scripture.

1. Sometimes it intendeth the openly profane, the wicked and ungodly world, as where Christ saith,

“Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat,” ^{<1073>}Matthew 7:13.

I say, by the many here, he intends those chiefly that go on in the broad way of sin and profaneness, bearing the tokens of their damnation in their foreheads, — those whose daily practice proclaims, “that their feet go down to death, and their steps take hold of hell,” ^{<802>}Job 21:29, 30; ^{<389>}Isaiah 3:9; ^{<1007>}Proverbs 4.

2. Sometimes this word many intendeth those that cleave to the people of God deceitfully, and in hypocrisy, or, as Daniel hath it,

“Many shall cleave unto the church with flatteries,” ^{<2713>}Daniel 11:34.

The word many in this text includeth all those who feign themselves better than they are in religion; it includeth, I say, those that have religion only, for an holy-day suit to set them out at certain times, and when they come among suitable company.

3. Sometimes this word many intendeth them that apostatize from Christ; such as for awhile believe, and in time of temptation fall away, as John saith of some of Christ's disciples:

“From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him,” ^{<816>}John 6:65.

4. Sometimes this word many intendeth them that make a great noise, and do many great things in the church, and yet want saving grace: “Many (saith Christ) will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not

prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?” Mark, there will be many of these.

5. Sometimes this word many intendeth those poor ignorant deluded souls that are led away with every wind of doctrine; those who are caught with the cunning and crafty deceiver, who lieth in wait to beguile unstable souls:

“And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of,” ^{}2 Peter 2:2.

6. Sometimes this word many includeth all the world, good and bad:

“And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt,” ^{}Daniel 12:2;

compare with ^{}John 5:28, 29.

7. Lastly, Sometimes this word many intendeth the good only: “Even them that shall be saved,” ^{}Luke 1:10; ^{}Luke 2:34.

Since then that the word is so variously applied, let us inquire how it must be taken in the text. And,

- (1.) It must not be applied to the sincerely godly, for they shall never perish, ^{}John 10:27, 28.
- (2.) It cannot be applied to all the world, for then no flesh should be saved.
- (3.) Neither is it to be applied to the open profane only, for then the hypocrite is by it excluded.
- (4.) But by the word many in the text our Lord intendeth in special the professor; the professor, I say, how high soever he seems to be now, that shall be found without saving grace in the day of judgment.

Now that the professor is in special intended in this text, consider, so soon as the Lord had said, “Many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able,” he pointeth, as with his finger, at the many that then he in special intendeth; to wit, then among whom he had taught; them that had eat and drunken in his presence; them that had prophesied, and cast out devils in

his name, and in his name had done many wonderful works, ^{<1231>}Luke 23:26; ^{<1072>}Matthew 7:27. These are the many intended by the Lord in this text, though others also are included under the sentence of damnation by his word in other places. “For many,” etc. Matthew saith concerning this strait gate, That there are but few that find it. But it seems the cast-aways in my text did find it; for you read, that they knocked at it, and cried, “Lord, open unto us.” So then, the meaning may seem to be this, — many of the few that find it will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. I find, at the day of judgment, some will be crying to the rocks to cover them, and some at the gates of heaven for entrance. Suppose that those that cry to the rocks to cover them, are they whose conscience will not suffer them once to look God in the face, because they are fallen under present guilt, and the dreadful fears of the wrath of the Lamb, ^{<1616>}Revelation 6:16; and that those that stand crying at the gate of heaven, are those whose confidence holds out to the last, — even those whose boldness will enable them to contend even with Jesus Christ for entrance; them, I say, that will have profession, casting out of devils, and many wonderful works, to plead: of this sort are the many in my text: “For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” “For many,” etc. Could we compare the professors of times with the everlasting word of God, this doctrine would more easily appear to the children of men. How few among the many, yea, among the swarms of professors, have heart to make conscience of walking before God in this world, and to study his glory among the children of men! How few, I say, have his name lie nearer their hearts than their own carnal concerns! Nay, do not many make his word, and his name, and his ways, a stalking-horse to their own worldly advantages! God calls for faith, good conscience, moderation, self-denial, humility, heavenly-mindedness, love to saints, to enemies, and for conformity in heart, in word, and life, to his will: but where is it? ^{<1112>}Mark 11:22; ^{<1016>}1 Peter 3:16; ^{<1816>}Hebrews 13:5; ^{<1045>}Philippians 4:5; ^{<1005>}Matthew 10:37-39; ^{<1801>}Colossians 3:1-4; ^{<1018>}Micah 6:8; ^{<1620>}Revelation 2:10; ^{<1817>}John 15:17; ^{<1021>}1 John 4:21; ^{<1614>}Matthew 5:44; ^{<1723>}Proverbs 23:26; ^{<1006>}Colossians 4:6.

“For many, I say unto you.” These latter words carry I them a double argument to prove the truth asserted before: First, in that he directly pointeth at his followers: “I say unto you:” Many, I say unto you, even

to you that are my disciples, to you that have eat and drank in my presence. I know that sometimes Christ hath directed his speech to his disciples, not so much upon their accounts, as upon the accounts of others: but here it is not so; the I say unto you, in this place, shows it immediately concerned some of themselves: "I say unto you, ye shall begin to stand without, and to knock, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are; then shall ye begin to say, We have eat and drank in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets: But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity;" it is you, you, YOU, that I mean. "I say unto you." It is common with a professing people, when they hear a smart and a thundering sermon, to say, Now has the preacher paid off the drunkard, the swearer, the liar, the covetous, and adulterer; forgetting that these sins may be committed in a spiritual and mystical way. There is spiritual drunkenness, spiritual adultery, and a man may be a liar that calls God his Father when he is not, or that calls himself a Christian, and is not. Wherefore, perhaps all these thunders and lightnings in this terrible sermons may more concern thee than thou art aware of: "I say unto you;" unto you, professors, may be the application of all this thunder, ~~(66)~~ Revelation 2:9; ~~(66)~~ Revelation 3:9. "I say unto you."

Had not the Lord Jesus designed by these words to shew what an overthrow will one day be made among professors, he needed not have you'd it at this rate, as in the text, and afterwards he has done; the sentence had run intelligible enough without it; I say, without his saying, "I say unto you." But the truth is, the professor is in danger; the preacher and the hearer, the workers or miracles, and workers of wonders, may be all in danger of damning, notwithstanding all their attainments. And to awaken us all about this truth, therefore, the text must run thus: "For many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

See you not yet that the professor is in danger, and that those words, "I say unto you," are a prophesy of the everlasting perdition of some that are famous in the congregation of saints? I say, if you do not see it, pray God your eyes may be opened, and beware that thy portion be not as the portion of one of those that are wrapped up in the 28th verse of the chapter: "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see

Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of heaven, and you yourselves thrust out.”

“For many, I say unto you.” These words, I told you, carry in them a double argument for confirmation of the truth asserted before: First, That professors are here particularly pointed at; and, secondly, It is the saying of the truth himself: For these words I say, are words full of authority; I say it, I say unto you, says Christ, as he saith in another place, It is I that speak; behold, it is I. The person whose words we have now under consideration was no blundering raw-headed preacher, but the very Wisdom of God, his Son, and him that hath lain in his bosom from everlasting, and consequently had the most perfect knowledge of his Father's will, and how it would fare with professors at the end of this world. And now hearken what himself doth say of the words which he hath spoken:

“Heaven and earth shall pass away,
but my word shall not pass away,” ⁴⁰⁸Matthew 24:35.

“I say unto you.”

The prophet used not to speak after this manner, nor yet the holy apostles; for thus to speak, is to press things to be received upon their own authority. They used to say, Thus saith the Lord, or Paul, or Peter, an apostle, or a servant of God. But now we are dealing with the words of the Son of God; it is he that hath said it; wherefore we find the truth of the perishing of many professors asserted, and confirmed by Christ's own mouth. This consideration carrieth great awakening in it; but into such a fast sleep are many now-a-days fallen, that nothing will awaken them but that shrill and terrible cry, “Behold, the Bridegroom comes; go ye out to meet him.” “I say unto you.”

There are two things upon which this assertion may be grounded.

1. There is in the world a thing like grace, that is not.
2. There is a sin called the sin against the Holy Ghost, from which there is no redemption. And both these things befall professors.

First, There is in the world a thing like grace, that is not. That is evident, because we read that there are some that not only make a fair shew in the

flesh, that glory in appearance, that appear beautiful outwardly, that do as God's people, but have not the grace of God's people, ^{<R12>}Galatians 6:12; ^{<L12>}2 Corinthians 5:12; ^{<L27>}Matthew 23:27; ^{<S12>}Isaiah 57:2, 3. It is evident also from those frequent cautions that are everywhere in the Scriptures given us about this thing: “Be not deceived: Let a man examine himself: Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith,” ^{<R17>}Galatians 6:7; ^{<R13>}1 Corinthians 11:28; ^{<R13>}2 Corinthians 13:3. All these expressions intimate to us, that there may be a shew of, or a thing like grace, where there is no grace indeed.

3. This is evident from the conclusion made by the Holy Ghost upon this very thing:

“For if a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing,
he deceiveth himself,” ^{<R18>}Galatians 6:3.

The Holy Ghost here concludeth, that a man may think himself to be something, may think he hath grace, when he hath none, may think himself something for heaven and another world, when indeed he is just nothing at all with reference thereto. The Holy Ghost also determines upon this point, to wit, that they that do so deceive themselves: “For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself;” he deceiveth his own soul, he deceiveth himself of heaven and salvation. So again:

“Let no man beguile you of your reward,”
^{<S18>}Colossians 2:18.

4. It is manifest from the text, “For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” Alas! Great light, great parts, great works, and great confidence of heaven, may be where there is no faith of God's elect, no love of the Spirit, and so consequently, no saving grace. But,

Secondly, As there is a thing like grace, which is not, so there is a sin, called the sin against the Holy Ghost, from which there is no redemption; and this sin doth more than ordinarily befall professors.

There is a sin called the sin against the Holy Ghost, from which there is no redemption. This is evident both from Matthew and Mark; “But whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him,

neither in this world, nor in the world to come. But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation,” ^{<402>}Matthew 12:32; ^{<403>}Mark 3:29. Wherefore, when we know that a man hath sinned this sin, we are not to pray for him, or to have compassion on him, ^{<516>}1 John 15:16; ^{<021>}Judges 22.

This sin doth most ordinarily befall professors; for there are few, if any, that are not professors, that are at present capable of sinning this sin.

“They which were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, that were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the power of the world to come,”
^{<300>}Hebrews 6:4, 5,

of this sort are they that commit this sin. Peter also describes them to be such, that sin the unpardonable sin:

“For if after they have escaped the pollution of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning,” ^{<002>}2 Peter 2:2.

The other passage in the 10th of Hebrews holdeth forth the same thing:

“For if we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, that shall devour the adversaries,” ^{<300>}Hebrews 10:26, 27.

These, therefore, are the persons that are the prey for this sin: this sin feedeth upon professors, and they that are such, do very often fall into the mouth of this eater. Some fall into the mouth of this sin, by delusions and doctrines of devils; and some fall into the mouth of it, by returning with the dog to his own vomit again, and with the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire, ^{<002>}1 Peter 2:22. I shall not here give you a particular description of this sin — that I have done elsewhere; but such a sin there is, and they that commit it shall never have forgiveness. And I say again, there be professors that commit this unpardonable sin, yea, more than most are aware of. Let all therefore look about them. The Lord awaken them that they may so do; for what with a profession without grace, and

by the venom of the sin against the Holy Ghost, many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Will seek to enter in.

This kingdom, at the gate of which the reprobate will be stopped, will be at the last judgment the desire of all the world; and they, especially they in my text, will seek to enter in; for then they will see that the blessedness is to those that shall get into this kingdom, according to that which is written, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city, ^{<0214>}Revelation 21:14. To prove that they will seek, although I have done it already, yet read these texts at your leisure, ^{<0211>}Matthew 25:11; ^{<0172>}Matthew 7:22; ^{<0138>}Luke 13:28. And, in a word, to give you the reason why they will seek to enter in.

1. Now they will see what a kingdom it is, what glory there is in it, and now they shall also see the blessedness which they shall have that shall then be counted worthy to enter in. The reason why this kingdom is so little regarded, it is because it is not seen; the glory of it is hid from the eyes of the world: “Their eye hath not seen, nor their ear heard,” etc. Ay, but then they shall hear and see too; and when this comes to pass, then, even then, he that now most seldom thinks thereof will seek to enter in.

2. They will now see what hell is, and what damnation in hell is, more clear than ever. They will also see how the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it. O the sight of the burning fiery furnace, which is prepared for the devil and his angels! This, this will make work in the souls of cast-aways at that day of God Almighty, and then they will seek to enter in.

3. Now they will see what the meaning of such words as these are, Hell-fire, Everlasting fire, Devouring fire, Fire that never shall be quenched. Now they will see what Forever means, what Eternity means; now they will see what this word means, the Bottomless Pit; now they will hear roaring of sinners in this place, howling in that, some crying to the mountains to fall upon them, and others to the rocks to cover them; now they will see blessedness is nowhere but within.

4. Now they will see what glory the godly are possessed with; how they rest in Abraham's bosom, how they enjoy eternal glory, how they walk in

their white robes, and unspeakable happiness that now God's people shall have! and this shall be seen by them that are shut out, by them that God hath rejected for ever; and this will make them seek to enter in, ^{<162>}Luke 16:22, 23; ^{<163>}Luke 13:28, "Will seek to enter in."

Question: But some may say, How will they seek to enter in?

Answer:

1. They will put on all the confidence they can, they will trick and trim up their profession, and adorn it with what bravery they can. Thus the foolish virgins sought to enter in; they did trim up their lamps, made themselves as fine as they could. They made shift to make their lamps to shine awhile; but the Son of God discovering himself, their confidence failed, their lamps went out, the door was shut upon them, and they were kept out.

2. They will seek to enter in by crowding themselves in among the godly. Thus the man without the wedding garment sought to enter in: He goes to the wedding, gets into the wedding-chamber, sits close among the guests, and then, without doubt, concluded he should escape damnation. But you know, one black sheep is soon seen, though it be among an hundred white ones. Why, even thus it fared with this poor man: And when the King came in to see the guests, he saw there a man that had not on a wedding-garment. He spied him presently, and before one word was spoken to any of the others, he had this dreadful salutation, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?" And he was speechless; though he could swagger it out amongst the guests, yet the master of the feast, at first coming in, strikes him dumb; and having nothing to say for himself, the King had something to say against him: "Then said the King to the servants (the angels), bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

3. They will seek to enter in, by pleading their profession and admittance to the Lord's ordinances when they were in the world: "Lord, we have eat and drank in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets:" we sat at thy table, and used to frequent sermons and Christian assemblies; we were well thought of by thy saints, and were admitted into thy churches; we professed the same faith as they did; Lord, Lord, open unto us.

4. They will seek to enter in, by pleading their virtues; how they subjected to his ministry, how they wrought for him, what good they did in the world, and the like, ^{<4022>}Matthew 7:22; but neither will this help them; the same answer that the two former had, the same have these, — “Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.”

5. They will seek to enter in, by pleading excuses, when they cannot evade conviction. The slothful servant went this way to work, when he was called to account for not improving his Lord's money: “Lord (says he) I know thou wast an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sowed, and gathering where thou hast not strawed, and I was afraid,” etc. (either that I should not please in laying out thy money, or that I should put it into hands out of which I should not get it again at thy need), “and I went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast that is thine;” as if he had said, True, Lord, I have not improved, I have not got; but consider also I have not embezzled, I have not spent nor lost thy money; lo, there thou hast what is thine, ^{<4123>}Matthew 25:24-28. There are but few will be able to say these last words at the day of judgment. The most of professors are for embezzling, misspending, and slothing away their time, their talents, their opportunities to do good in. But I say, if he that can make so good an excuse as to say, Lo, there thou hast that is thine; I say, if such an one shall be called a wicked and slothful servant, if such an one shall be put to shame at the day of judgment, yea, if such an one shall, notwithstanding this care to save his Lord's money, be cast as unprofitable into utter darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, what will they do that have neither taken care to lay out, nor care to keep what was committed to their trust?

6. They will seek to enter in, by pleading that ignorance was the ground of their miscarrying in the things where they offended. Wherefore when Christ charges them with want of love to him, and with want of those fruits that should prove their love to be true — as, that they did not feed him, did not give him drink, did not take him in, did not clothe him, visit him, come unto him, and the like — they readily reply,

“Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?”

^{<4124>}Matthew 25:41-45.

As who should say, Lord, we are not conscious to ourselves that this charge is worthily laid at our door: God forbid that we should have been such sinners. But, Lord, give an instance; when was it, or where? True, there was a company of poor sorry people in the world, very inconsiderable, set by with nobody; but for thyself, we professed thee, we loved thee, and hadst thou been with us in the world, wouldst thou have worn gold, wouldst thou have eaten the sweetest of the world, we would have provided it for thee; and therefore, Lord, Lord, open to us. But will this plea do? No. Then shall he answer them, “Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it not to me.” This plea, then, though grounded upon ignorance, which is one of the strangest pleas for neglect of duty, would not give them admittance into the kingdom: “These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.”

I might add other things by which it will appear how they will seek to enter in. As,

- 1.** They will make a stop at this gate, this beautiful gate of heaven; they will begin to stand without at the gate, as being loath to go any further. Never did malefactor so unwillingly turn off the ladder when the rope was about his neck, as these will turn away in that day from the gates of heaven to hell.
- 2.** They will not only make a stop at the gate; but there they will knock and call. This also argueth them willing to enter. They will begin to stand without, and to knock at the gate, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. This word Lord being doubled, shews the vehemency of their desires: Lord, Lord, open to us. The devils are coming; Lord, Lord, the pit opens her mouth upon us; Lord, Lord, there is nothing but hell and damnation left us, if, Lord, Lord, thou hast not mercy upon us; Lord, Lord, open to us.
- 3.** Their last argument for entrance is their tears, when groundless confidence, pleading of virtues, excuses, and ignorance, will not do; when standing at the gate, knocking and calling, Lord, Lord, open to us, will not do, then they betake themselves to their tears. Tears are sometimes the most powerful arguments, but they are nothing worth here. Esau also sought it carefully with tears, but it helped him nothing at all, ^{<S215} Hebrews 12:15, 16. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; for the gate is

shut for ever, mercy is gone for ever, Christ hath rejected them for ever. All their pleas, excuses, and tears, will not make them able to enter into this kingdom.

“For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

I come now to the latter part of the words, which closely shew us the reason of the rejection of these many that must be damned, — “They will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

I come now to the latter part of the words, which closely shew us the reason of the rejection of these many that must be damned, — “They will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

An hypocrite, a false professor, may go a great way; they may pass through the first and second watch, to wit, may be approved of Christians and churches; but what will they do when they come at this iron gate that leadeth into the city? There the workers of iniquity will fall, be cast down, and shall not be able to rise.

“And shall not be able.” The time, as I have already hinted, which my text respecteth, it is the day of judgment, a day when all masks and vizards shall be taken off from all faces. It is a day where God

“will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart,” ~~4015~~ 1 Corinthians 4:5.

It is also the day of his wrath, the day in which he will pay vengeance, even a recompense to his adversaries.

At this day, those things that now these may count sound and good, will then shake like a quagmire, even all their naked knowledge, their feigned faith, pretended love, glorious shows of gravity in the face, their holiday-words, and specious carriages, will stand them in little stead. I call them holiday ones, for I perceive that some professors do with religion just as people do with their best apparel — hang it against the wall all the week, and put them on Sundays. For as some scarce ever put on a suit but when they go to a fair or a market, so little house religion will do with some; they save religion till they go to a meeting, or till they meet with a godly chapman. O poor religion! O poor professor! What wilt thou do at this day, and the day of thy trial and judgment? Cover thyself thou canst not;

go for a Christian thou canst not; stand against the Judge thou canst not. What wilt thou do? “The ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.”

“And shall not be able.” The ability here intended is not that which standeth in carnal power of fleshly subtlety, but in the truth and simplicity of those things for the sake of which God giveth the kingdom of heaven to his people.

There are five things, for the want of which this people will not be able to enter.

1. This kingdom belongs to the elect, to those for whom it was prepared from the foundation of the world, ^{<421>}Matthew 25. Hence Christ saith, when he comes, he will send forth his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to another, ^{<421>}Matthew 24. And hence he saith again, “I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains, and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.” “They shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect.”

“But the elect hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded,”

^{<511>}Romans 11:7.

2. They will not be able to enter, because they will want the birthright. The kingdom of heaven is for the heirs, — and if children, then heirs; if born again, then heirs: wherefore it is said expressly, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” By this one word, down goes all carnal privilege of being born of flesh and blood, and of the will of man. Canst thou produce the birthright? But art thou sure thou canst? For it will little profit thee to think of the blessed kingdom of heaven, if thou wantest a birthright to give thee inheritance there. Esau did despise his birthright, saying, What good will this birthright do me? And there are many in the world of his mind to this day. Tush, say they, they talk of being born again; what good shall a man get by that? They say, no going to heaven without being born again. But God is merciful; Christ died for sinners; and we will turn when we can tend it, and doubt not but all will be well at last. But I will answer thee, thou child of Esau, that the birthright and blessing go together; miss of one, and thou shalt never have the other.

Esau found this true; for having first despised the birthright, when he would afterwards have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears, ^{<0271>}Genesis 25.; ^{<824>}Hebrews 12:14-16.

3. They shall not be able to enter in who have not believed with the faith of God's operation; the faith that is most holy, even the faith of God's elect: "He that believeth on the Son of God hath everlasting life; he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him," ^{<0111>}John 3. But now, this faith is the effect of electing love, and of a new birth, ^{<0112>}John 11:12. Therefore, all the professors that have not faith which floweth from being born of God, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

4. They shall not be able to enter in that have not gospel-holiness. Holiness that is the effect of faith is that which admits into the presence of God, and into his kingdom too: "Blessed and holy are they that have part in the first resurrection, on such the second death (which is hell and eternal damnation, ^{<0114>}Revelation 20:14) have no power," ^{<0110>}Revelation 20:6. Blessed and holy, with the holiness that flows from faith which is in Christ; for to these the inheritance belongs: "That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith (saith Christ) which is in me," ^{<0118>}Acts 26:18. This holiness which is the natural effect of faith in the Son of God, Christ Jesus the Lord will, at this day of judgment, distinguish from all other shows of holiness and sanctity, be they what they will, and will admit the soul that hath this holiness into his kingdom, when the rest will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

5. They shall not be able to enter in that do not persevere in this blessed faith and holiness; not that they that have them indeed can finally fall away, and everlastingly perish; but it hath pleased Jesus Christ to bid them that have the right to hold fast that they have; to endure to the end; and then tells them they shall be saved — though it is as true that none is of power to keep himself; but God worketh together with his children, and they are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, which is also laid up in heaven for them, ^{<0113>}1 Peter 1:3-5.

"The foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest the workers of iniquity." The foolish are the unholy ones, that neither have faith, nor

holiness, nor perseverance in godliness, and yet lay claim to the kingdom of heaven; but “better is a little with righteousness than great revenues without right,” ^{<55>}Psalm 55.; ^{<16>}Proverbs 16:8. What is it for me to claim a house, or a farm, without right? or to say, all this is mine, but have nothing to shew for it? his estate lieth in his conceit; he hath nothing by birthright and law, and therefore shall not be able to inherit the possession: “For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

Thus you see, that the non-elect shall not be able to enter, that he that is not born again shall not be able to enter, that he that hath not saving faith, with holiness and perseverance flowing therefrom, shall not be able to enter: wherefore consider of what I have said.

II. I COME NOW TO GIVE YOU SOME OBSERVATIONS FROM THE WORDS, AND THEY MAY BE THREE.

- 1.** When men have put in all the claim they can for heaven, but few will have it for their inheritance: “For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”
- 2.** Great, therefore, will be the disappointment that many will meet with at the day of judgment: “For many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”
- 3.** Going to heaven, therefore, will be no trivial business; salvation is not got by a dream; they that would then have that kingdom, must now strive lawfully to enter: “For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

I shall speak chiefly, and yet but briefly, to the first of these observations, to wit,

That when men have put in all the claim they can to the kingdom of heaven, but few will have it for their inheritance. The observation standeth of two parts.

- 1.** That the time is coming, when every man will put in whatever claim they can to the kingdom of heaven.
- 2.** There will be but few of them that put in claim thereto that shall enjoy it for their inheritance.

I shall speak but a word or two to the first part of the observation, because I have prevented my enlargement thereon by my explication upon the words; but you find in the 25th of Matthew, that all they are on the left hand of the Judge did put in all the claim they could for this blessed kingdom of heaven. If you shall take them on the left hand, as most do, for all the sinners that shall be damned, then that completely proveth the first part of the observation; for it is expressly said,

“Then shall they (all of them jointly, and every one apart) also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee thus and thus, and did not minister unto thee?” ^{<454>}Matthew 25:44.

I could here bring you in the plea of the slothful servant, the cry of the foolish virgins: I could also here enlarge upon that passage, “Lord, Lord, have we not eat and drank in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets?” But these things are handled already, in the handling of which this first part of the observation is proved; wherefore, without more words, I will, God assisting by his grace, descend to the second part thereof, to wit,

There will be but few of them that put in claim thereto that will enjoy it for their inheritance.

I shall speak distinctly to this part of the observation, and shall first confirm it by a Scripture or two.

“Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it,” ^{<473>}Matthew 7:13, 14.

“Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom,” ^{<473>}Luke 12:32.

By these two texts, and by many more that will be urged anon, you may see the truth of what I have said.

To enlarge, therefore, upon the truth; and, First, more generally; Secondly, more particularly.

- 1.** More generally, I shall prove that in all ages but few have been saved.
- 2.** More particularly, I shall prove but few of them that profess have been saved.

First, In the old world, when it was most populous, even in the days of Noah, we read but of eight persons that were saved out of it: well, therefore, might Peter call them but few; but how few? Why, but eight souls; “wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water,” ^{<1181>}1 Peter 3:20. He touches a second time upon this truth, saying, “He spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.” Mark, all the rest are called the ungodly, and there were also a world of them, ^{<1182>}2 Peter 2:5. These are also taken notice of in Job, and go there also by the name of wicked men:

“Hast thou marked the old way, which wicked men have trodden,
which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was
overflowed with a flood, which said unto God, Depart from us, and
what can the Almighty do for them?” ^{<1025>}Job 22:15-19.

There were therefore but eight persons that escaped the wrath of God, in the day that the flood came upon the earth, the rest were ungodly; there was also a world of them, and they are to this day in the prison of hell, ^{<1106>}Hebrews 11:6; ^{<1189>}1 Peter 3:19, 20.

Nay, I must correct my pen, there were but seven of the eight that were good; for Ham, though he escaped the judgment of the water, yet the curse of God overtook him to his damnation.

Secondly, When the world began again to be replenished, and people began to multiply therein: how few, even in all ages, do we read of that were saved from the damnation of the world?

1. One Abraham and his wife God called out of the land of the Chaldeans: “I called (said God) Abraham alone,” ^{<2501>}Isaiah 51:1, 2.

2. One Lot out of Sodom and Gomorrah, out of Admah and Zeboim; one Lot out of four cities. Indeed his wife and two daughters went out of Sodom with him; but they all three proved naught, as you may see in ^{<1191>}Genesis 19. Wherefore Peter observes, that Lot only was saved:

“He turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemning them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly, and delivered just Lot, that righteous man;” ^{<3000>}2 Peter 2:6, 7, 8.

Jude says, that in this condemnation, God overthrew, not only Sodom and Gomorrah, but the cities about them also; and yet you find none but Lot could be found that was righteous, either in Sodom or Gomorrah, or the cities about them; wherefore they, all of them, suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, ^{<3000>}2 Peter 2:7.

3. Come we now to the time of the Judges, how few then were the godly, even then when the inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel! “the highways (of God) were the unoccupied,” ^{<3000>}Judges 5:6, 7.

4. There were but few in the days of David:

“Help, Lord (says he), for the godly man ceaseth, for the faithful fail from among the children of men,” ^{<3000>}Psalms 12:1.

5. In Isaiah's time the saved were come to such a few, that he positively says that there were a very small number left:

“God had made them like Sodom, and they had been like unto Gomorrah,” ^{<2000>}Isaiah 1:8, 9.

6. It was cried unto them in the time of Jeremiah, that they should

“run to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if he can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, and I will pardon it,” ^{<3000>}Jeremiah 5:1.

7. God shewed his servant Ezekiel how few there would be saved in his day, by the vision of a few hairs saved out of the midst of a few hairs; for the saved were a few saved out of a few, ^{<3000>}Ezekiel 5:3, 4, 5.

8. You find in the time of the prophet Micah, how the godly complain, that as to number, they then were so few, that he compares them to those that are left behind, when they had gathered the summer-fruit, ^{<3000>}Micah 7:1.

9. When Christ was come, how did he confirm this truth, that but few of them that put in claim for heaven will have it for their inheritance! But the common people could not hear it, and therefore, upon a time when he did but a little hint at this truth, the people, even all in the synagogue where he preached it,

“were filled with wrath, rose up, thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill (whereon their city was built), that they might cast him down headlong,” ^{<402>} Luke 4:24-30.

10. John, who was after Christ, saith, “The whole world lies in wickedness; that all the world wondered after the beast; and that power was given to the beast over all kindreds, tongues, and nations.” Power to do what? Why, to cause all, both great and small, rich and poor, bond and free, to receive his mark, and to be branded for him, ^{<410>} John 5:10; ^{<411>} Revelation 13:3; ^{<412>} Revelation 8:16.

11. Should we come to observation and experience, the shew of the countenance of the bulk of men doth witness against them; “they declare their sin like Sodom, they hide it not,” ^{<208>} Isaiah 3:9. Where is the man that maketh the Almighty God his delight, and that designeth his glory in the world? Do not even almost all pursue this world, their lusts and pleasures? and so, consequently, say unto God, “Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways; or, What is the Almighty that we should serve him? It is in vain to serve God,” etc.

So that without doubt it will appear a truth in the day of God, that but few of them that shall put in their claim to heaven will have it for their inheritance.

Before I pass this head, I will shew you to what the saved are compared in the Scriptures.

1. They are compared to an handful: “There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains,” etc. ^{<427>} Psalm 27:16; this corn is nothing else but them that shall be saved, ^{<408>} Matthew 3:12; ^{<413>} Matthew 13:30. But mark, “There shall be an handful:” What is an handful, when compared with the whole heap? or what is an handful out of the rest of the world?

2. As they are compared to an handful, so they are compared to a lily among the thorns, ^{<2118>}Song of Solomon 2:2, which is rare, and not so commonly seen: “As the lily among thorns (saith Christ), so is my beloved among the daughters.”

1. By thorns, we understand the worst and best of men, even all that are destitute of the grace of God, “for the best of them is as a briar, and the most upright of them as a thorn-hedge,” ^{<3106>}Micah 7:4; ^{<1016>}2 Samuel 23:6.

2. I know that she may be called a lily amongst thorns also, because she meets with the pricks of persecution, ^{<3106>}Ezekiel 2:6; ^{<3106>}Ezekiel 29:24.

3. She may also be thus termed, to shew the disparity that is betwixt hypocrites and the church, ^{<1014>}Luke 8:14; ^{<3007>}Hebrews 7. But this is not all; the saved are compared to a lily among thorns, to shew you that they are but few in the world; to shew you that they are but few and rare; for as Christ compares her to a lily among thorns, so she compares him to an apple-tree among the trees of the wood, which is rare and scarce, not common.

3. They that are saved are called but one of many; for though there be threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number, yet my love, saith Christ, is but one, my undefiled is but one, ^{<2118>}Song of Solomon 6:8, 9; according to that of Jeremiah, “I will take you, one of a city,” ^{<3111>}Jeremiah 3. The saying of Paul is much like this,

“Know you not, that they which run in a race, run all,
but one receiveth the prize,” ^{<4024>}1 Corinthians 9:24;

but one, that is, few of many, few of them that run; for he is not here comparing them that run with them that sit still, but with them that run, some run and lose, some run and win; they that run and win are few in comparison with them that run and lose: “They that run in a race, run all, but one receives the prize; let there then be threescore queens, and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number, yet the saved are but few.”

4. They that are saved, are compared to the gleaning after the vintage is in: “Woe is me (said the church), for I am as when they have gathered the summer-fruit, as the grape-gleanings after the vintage is in,” ^{<300E>}Micah 7:1. The gleanings! What is the gleanings to the whole crop? and yet you here see, to the gleanings are the saved compared: It is the devil and sin that carry away the cartloads, while Christ and his ministers come after a gleaning: But the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim are better than the vintage of Abiezer, ^{<000E>}Judges 8:2. Them that Christ and his ministers glean up and bind up in the bundle of life, a better than the loads that go the other way. You know it is often the cry of the poor in harvest, Poor gleaning, poor gleaning: And the ministers of the gospel they also cry,

“Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” ^{<250E>}Isaiah 53:1.

When the prophet speaks of the saved under this metaphor of gleaning, how doth he amplify the matter?

“Gleaning-grapes shall be left, says he, two or three berries in the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the utmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the Lord,” ^{<200E>}Isaiah 17:6.

Thus you see what gleaning is left in the vineyard, after the vintage is in; two or three here, four or five there. Alas! they that shall be saved when the devil and hell have had their due, they will be but as the gleaning, they will be but few; they that go to hell, go thither in clusters, but the saved go not so to heaven, ^{<1E3>}Matthew 13:30; ^{<300E>}Micah 7. Wherefore when the prophet speaketh of the saved, he saith, there is no cluster; but when he speaketh of the damned, he saith, they are gathered by clusters, ^{<648>}Revelation 14:18, 19. O sinners! but few will be saved! O professors! but few will be saved!

5. They that shall be saved are compared to jewels:

“And they shall be mine, saith the Lord, in the day that I make up my jewels,” ^{<30E>}Malachi 3:13.

Jewels, you know, are rare things, things that are not found in every house. Jewels will lie in little room, being few and small, though lumber takes up much. In almost every house you may find brass, and iron, and

lead; and in every place you may find hypocritical professors, but the saved are not these common things; they are God's peculiar treasure, ^{<2894>}Psalm 35:4. Wherefore Paul distinguisheth betwixt the lumber and the treasure in the house: There is, saith he, in a great house, not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood, and of earth, and some to honor, and some to dishonor, ^{<2922>}2 Timothy 2:20. Here is a word for wooden and earthy professors; the jewels and treasure are vessels to honor, they of wood and earth are vessels of dishonor, that is, vessels for destruction, ^{<2922>}Romans 9:21.

6. They that shall be saved, are compared to a remnant:

“Except the Lord had left in us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and should have been like unto Gomorrah,”
^{<2909>}Isaiah 1:9.

A remnant, a small remnant, a very small remnant; O! how doth the Holy Ghost word it! and all to shew you how few shall be saved. Every one knows what a remnant is, but this is a small remnant, a very small remnant. So again,

“Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations, publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel,” ^{<2917>}Jeremiah 31:7.

What shall I say? the saved are often in scripture called a remnant, ^{<2908>}Ezekiel 9:8, 14; ^{<2910>}Ezekiel 10:20-22; ^{<2911>}Ezekiel 11:11, 16; ^{<2913>}Jeremiah 23:3; ^{<2922>}Joel 2:22. But what is a remnant to the whole piece? What is a remnant of people to the whole kingdom? or what is a remnant of wheat to the whole harvest?

7. The saved are compared to the tithe or tenth part; wherefore when God sendeth the prophet to make the hearts of the people fat, their ears dull, and to shut their eyes, the prophet asketh, “How long?” to which God answereth,

“Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed man far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land: But yet (as God saith in another place, “I will not

make a full end,") in it shall be a tenth, so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof," ^{<2160>}Isaiah 6:10-13.

But what is a tenth? What is one in ten? And yet so speaks the Holy Ghost, when he speaks of the holy seed, of those that were to be reserved from the judgment. And observe it, the fattening and blinding of the rest, it was to their everlasting destruction; and so both Christ and Paul expounds it often in the New Testament, ^{<1134>}Matthew 13:14, 15; ^{<4102>}Mark 4:12; ^{<4070>}Luke 7:10; ^{<6120>}John 12:40; ^{<4330>}Acts 28:26; ^{<6108>}Romans 11:8. So that those that are reserved from them that perish will be very few, one in ten: "A tenth shall return, so the holy seed shall be in the substance thereof."

I shall not add more generals at this time: I pray God that the world be not offended at these. But without doubt, but few of them that shall put in their claim for heaven will have it for their inheritance; which will yet farther appear in the reading of that which follows.

Therefore I come more particularly to shew you, that but few will be saved. I say, but few of professors themselves will be saved; for that is the truth that the text doth more directly look at and defend. Give me therefore thy hand, good reader, and let us soberly walk through the rest of what shall be said; and let us compare as we go each particular with the holy Scripture.

1. It is said, "The daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city," ^{<2301>}Isaiah 18. The vineyard was the church of Israel, ^{<2311>}Isaiah 5:1; the cottage in that vineyard was the daughter of Zion, or the truly gracious amongst, or in that church. A cottage; God had but a cottage there, but a little habitation in the church, a very few that were truly gracious amongst the great multitude that professed; and had it not been for these, for this cottage, the rest had been ruined as Sodom: "Except the Lord of Hosts had left in us, in the church, a very few, they had been as Sodom," ^{<2319>}Isaiah 5:9. Wherefore among the multitude of them that shall be damned, professors will make a considerable party.

2. "For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, remnant shall return, a remnant shall be saved," ^{<2312>}Isaiah 10:22; ^{<4102>}Romans 9:27. For though thy people Israel whom thou broughtest out of Egypt, to whom

thou hast given church-constitution, holy laws, holy ordinances, holy prophets, and holy covenants; thy people by separation from all people, and thy people by profession; though this thy people be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved; wherefore, among the multitude of them that shall be damned, professors will make a considerable party.

3. “Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them,” ^{416b}Jeremiah 6:30. The people here under consideration are called in ^{416a}Jeremiah 6:27, God's people, his people by profession: “I have set thee for a tower and a fortress among my people, that thou mayest know, and try their way.” What follows? They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders, reprobate silver; the Lord hath rejected them. In ^{417a}Jeremiah 7:29, they are called also the generation of his wrath: “For the Lord hath rejected and forsaken the generation of his wrath.” This, therefore, I gather out of these holy Scriptures, — that with reference to profession and church-constitution, a people may be called the people of God; but, with reference to the event and final conclusion that God will make with some of them, they may be truly the generation of his wrath.

4. In ^{418a}Isaiah 5, you read again of the vineyard of God, and that it was planted on a very fruitful hill, planted with the choicest vines, had a wall, a tower, a winepress belonging to it, and all things that could put it into right order and good government, as a church; but this vineyard of the Lord of hosts brought forth wild grapes, fruits unbecoming her constitution and government, wherefore the Lord takes from her his hedge and wall, and lets her be trodden down. Read Christ's exposition upon it in ^{418b}Matthew 2:23, etc. Look to it, professors, these are the words of the text, “For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

5. “Son of man,” said God to the prophet, “the house of Israel is to me become dross, all they are brass and tin, and iron and lead, in the midst of the furnace they are the dross of silver,” ^{419a}Ezekiel 22:18. God had silver there, some silver, but it was but little; the bulk of that people was but the dross of the church, though they were the members of it. But what doth he mean by the dross? why he looked upon them as no better, notwithstanding their church-membership, than the rabble of the world, that is, with respect to their latter end; for to be called dross, it is to be put

amongst the rest of the sinners of the world, in the judgment of God, though at present they abide in his house:

“Thou puttest away all the wicked of the earth like dross; therefore I love thy testimonies,” ^{<19B9119>} Psalm. 119:119.

God saith of his saved ones, “He hath chosen them in the furnace of affliction.” The refiner, when he putteth the silver into his furnace, he puts lead I also among it; now this lead being ordered as he knows how, works up the dross from the silver, which dross, still as it riseth, he putteth by, or taketh away with an instrument. And thus deals God with his church; there is silver in his church, ay, and there is also dross; now the dross are the hypocrites and graceless ones that are got into the church, and these will God discover, and afterwards put away as dross. So that it will without doubt prove a truth of God, that many of their professors that shall put in claim for heaven, will not have it for their inheritance.

6. It is said of Christ,

“His fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather his wheat into his garner, but will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire,” ^{<4B2>} Matthew 3:12.

The floor is the church of God: “O my threshing, and the corn of my floor!” said God by the prophet (^{<2B11>} Isaiah 21:10) to his people.

The wheat are those good ones in his church that shall be undoubtedly saved; therefore he saith, “Gather my wheat into my garner.”

The chaff groweth upon the same stalk and ear, and so is in the same visible body with the wheat, but there is not substance in it: wherefore in time they must be severed one from the other; the wheat must be gathered into the garner, which is heaven; and the chaff, or professors that want true grace, must be gathered into hell, that they may be burned up with unquenchable fire. Therefore let professors look to it.

7. Christ Jesus casts away two of the three grounds that are said to receive the word, ^{<4B1>} Luke 8. The stony ground received it with joy, and the thorny ground brought forth fruit almost to perfection. Indeed the highway ground was to shew us, that the carnal, whilst such, receive not the word at all; but here is the pinch, two of the three that received it, fell short of

the kingdom of heaven; for but one of the three received it so as to bring forth fruit to perfection. Look to it, professors.

8. The parable of the unprofitable servant, the parable of the man without a wedding-garment, and the parable of the unsavory salt, do each of them justify this for truth, ^{<153>}Matthew 25:24, 29; ^{<121>}Matthew 22:11-13; also ^{<153>}Matthew 5:13. That of the unprofitable servant is to shew us the sloth and idleness of some professors; that of the man without a wedding-garment, is to shew us how some professors have the shame of their wickedness seen by God, even when they are among the children of the bridegroom; and that parable of the unsavory salt is to shew, that as the salt that hath lost its savor is fit for nothing, no, not for the dunghill, but to be trodden under foot of men; so some professors (yea, and great ones too, for this parable reached one of the apostles) will in God's day be counted fir for nothing but to be trodden down as the mire in the streets. Oh! the slothful, the naked, and unsavory professors, how will they be rejected of God and his Christ in the judgment! Look to it, professors.

9. The parable of the tares also giveth countenance to this truth: for though it be said, the field is the world, yet it is said, the tares were sown even in the church:

“And while men slept, the enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way,” ^{<133>}Matthew 13:24, 25.

Objection: But some may object, The tares might be sown in the world among the wheat, though not in the churches.

Answer: But Christ, by expounding this parable, tells us, the tares were sown in his kingdom; the tares, that is, the children of the devil, ^{<133>}Matthew 13:30, 39. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so shall it be in the end of this world:

“The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth,” ^{<133>}Matthew 13:40-44.

Look to it, professors.

10. The parable of the ten virgins also suiteth our purpose: these ten are called the kingdom of heaven (^{<4021>}Matthew 25:1), that is, the church of Christ, the visible rightly-constituted church of Christ; for they went all out of the world, had all lamps, and all went forth to meet the bridegroom; yet behold what an overthrow the one-half of them met with at the gate of heaven; they were shut out, bid to depart, and Christ told them he did not know them, ver. 10, 11. Tremble, professors! Pray, professors!

11. The parable of the net that was cast into the sea (^{<4034>}Matthew 13:41, 42), that also countenanceth this truth. The substance of that parable is to shew, that souls may be gathered by the gospel, there compared to a net, may be kept in that net, drawn to a shore, to the world's end, by that net, and yet may then prove bad fishes, and be cast away. The parable runs thus: — “The kingdom of heaven, the gospel, is like unto a net which was cast into the sea, the world, and gathered of every kind, good and bad, which when it was full, they drew it to shore, to the end of the world, and sat down, in judgment, and gathered the good into vessels, and cast the bad away.” Some bad fishes, nay, I doubt a great many, will be found in the net of the gospel, at the day of judgment. Watch and be sober, professors.

12. “And many shall come from the east and from the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; and the children of the kingdom shall be cast out,” ^{<4082>}Matthew 8:12. The children of the kingdom, whose privileges were said to be these, — to whom pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promise, ^{<4004>}Romans 9:4. I take liberty to harp the more upon the first church, because that what happened to them, happened as types and examples, intimating, there is ground to think, that things of as dreadful a nature are to happen among the churches of the Gentiles, ^{<4011>}1 Corinthians 10:11, 12. Neither, indeed, have the Gentile churches security from God that there shall not as dreadful things happen to them. And concerning this very thing, sufficient caution is given to us also, ^{<4009>}1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; ^{<4069>}Galatians 5:19-21; ^{<4088>}Ephesians 5:3-7; ^{<4080>}Philippians 3:10, 11; ^{<4021>}2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12; ^{<4029>}2 Timothy 2:20, 21; ^{<4004>}Hebrews 6:4-9; and ^{<4026>}Hebrews 10:26-28; ^{<4002>}2 Peter 2 and ^{<4003>}2 Peter 3.; ^{<4050>}1 John 5:10; ^{<4020>}Revelation 2:20-22.

13. The parable of the true vine and its branches confirms what I have said, ^{}John 15:1-6. By the vine there I understand Christ, Christ as head; by the branches, I understand his church. Some of these branches proved fruitless castaways, were in time cast out of the church, were gathered by men, and burned.

14. Lastly, I will come to particular instances.

(1.) The twelve had a devil among them, ^{}John 6:70.

(2.) Ananias and Sapphira were in the church of Jerusalem, ^{}Acts 5:3. Simon Magus was among them at Samaria, ^{}Acts 8:4. Among the church of Corinth were them that had not the knowledge of God, ^{}1 Corinthians 15:5. Paul tells the Galatians that false brethren crept in unawares; and so does the apostle Jude, and yet they were as quick-sighted to see as any nowadays, ^{}Galatians 2.; ^{}Jude 1:3, 4, 6. The church in Sardis had but a few names in her, to whom the kingdom of heaven belonged: “Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.” As for the church of the Laodiceans, it is called “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked,” ^{}Revelation 3. So that put all things together, and I may boldly say, as I also have said already, that among the multitude of them that shall be damned, professors will make a considerable party; or, to speak in the words of the observation, When men have put in all the claim they can for heaven, but few will have it for their inheritance.

I will now shew you some reasons of the point, besides those five that I shewed you before.

But, first, I will shew you why the poor, carnal, ignorant world miss of heaven, and then why the knowing professors miss of it also.

1. The poor, carnal, ignorant world miss of heaven, even because they love their sins, and cannot part with them: “Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds be evil,” ^{}John 3. The poor ignorant world miss of heaven, because they are enemies in their minds to God, his word, and holiness: they must be all damned who take pleasure in unrighteousness, ^{}2 Thessalonians 2:10-12. The poor ignorant world miss of heaven,

because they stop their ears against convictions, and refuse to come when God calls:

“Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, but have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproofs; I also will laugh at your calamities, and mock when your fear cometh as desolation, and your desolation like a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you; then shall you call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but shall not find me,”

Proverbs 1:24-29.

2. The poor ignorant world miss of heaven, because the god of this world hath blinded their eyes, that they can neither see the evil and damnable state they are in at present, nor the way to get out of it: neither do they see the beauty of Jesus Christ, nor how willing he is to save poor sinners,

2 Corinthians 4:2, 3.

3. The poor ignorant world miss of heaven, because they put off and defer coming to Christ, until the time of God's patience and grace is over. Some indeed are resolved never to come; but some again say, We will come hereafter, and so it comes to pass, that because God called, and they did not hear; so they shall cry, and I will not hear, saith the Lord,

Zechariah 7:11-13.

4. The poor ignorant world miss of heaven, because they have false apprehensions of God's mercy. They say in their hearts, We shall have peace, though we walk in the imagination of our heart, to add drunkenness to thirst. But what saith the word?

“The Lord will not spare him; but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy, shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall be upon him, and God shall blot out his name from under heaven,”

Deuteronomy 29:19-21.

5. The poor ignorant world miss of heaven, because they make light of the gospel that offereth mercy to them freely, and because they lean upon their own good meanings, and thinkings, and doings,

Matthew 22:1-6;

Romans 9:30, 31.

6. The poor carnal world miss of heaven, because by unbelief, which reigns in them, they are kept for ever from being clothed with Christ's righteousness, and from washing in his blood, without which there is neither remission of sin, nor justification. But to pass these till anon.

I come, in the next place, To shew you some reasons why the professor falls short of heaven.

First, In the general, they reset in things below special grace; as in awakenings that are not special, in repentance that is not special, etc. and a little to run a parallel betwixt the one and the other, that, if God will, you may see and escape.

1. Have they that shall be saved, awakenings about their state by nature? So have they that shall be damned. They that never go to heaven, may see much of sin, and of the wrath of God due thereto. This had Cain and Judas, and yet they came short of the kingdom, ^{<1001>}Genesis 4.; ^{<1170>}Matthew 27:4. The saved have convictions, in order to their eternal life; but the others' convictions are not so. The convictions of the one doth drive them sincerely to Christ; the convictions of the other doth drive them to the law, and the law to desperation at last.

2. There is a repentance that will not save, a repentance to be repented of; and a repentance to salvation, not to be repented of, ^{<1070>}2 Corinthians 7:10. Yet so great a similitude and likeness there is betwixt the one and the other, that most times the wrong is taken for the right, and through this mistake professors perish.

As

1. In saving repentance there will be an acknowledgment of sin; and one that hath the other repentance may acknowledge his sins also, ^{<1170>}Matthew 27:4.

2. In saving repentance there is a crying out under sin; but one that hath the other repentance may cry out under sin also, ^{<1004>}Genesis 4:13.

3. In saving repentance there will be humiliation for sin; and one that hath the other repentance may humble himself also, ^{<1129>}1 Kings 21:29.

- 4.** Saving repentance is attended with self-loathing; but he that hath the other repentance may have loathing of sin too, ^{<0122>}2 Peter 2:22, — a loathing of sin, because it is sin, that he cannot have; but a loathing of sin, because it is offensive to him, that he may have. The dog doth not loath that which troubleth his stomach, because it is there, but because it troubleth him; when it has done troubling of him, he can turn to it again, and lick it up as before it troubled him.
- 5.** Saving repentance is attended with prayers and tears; but he that hath none but the other repentance, may have prayers and tears also, ^{<0123>}Genesis 27:34, 35; ^{<0124>}Hebrews 12:14-16.
- 6.** In saving repentance, there is fear and reverence of the word and ministers that bring it; but this may be also where there is none but the repentance that is not saving; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man, and holy, and observed him; when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly, ^{<0125>}Mark 6:20.
- 7.** Saving repentance makes a man's heart very tender of doing any thing against the word of God. But Balaam could say,

“If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord,” ^{<0126>}Numbers 24:13.

Behold, then, how far a man may go in repentance, and yet be short of that which is called, “Repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of.”

- (1.) He may be awakened;
- (2.) He may acknowledge his sin;
- (3.) He may cry out under the burden of sin;
- (4.) He may have humility for it;
- (5.) He may loath it;
- (6.) May have prayers and tears against it;
- (7.) May delight to do many things of God;
- (8.) May be afraid of sinning against him; and after all this may perish, for want of saving repentance.

Secondly, Have they that shall be saved, faith? Why, they that shall not be saved may have faith also; yes, a faith in many things so like the faith that saveth, that they can hardly be distinguished (though they differ both in root and branch). To come to particulars.

1. Saving faith hath Christ for its object, and so many the faith have that is not saving. Those very Jews of whom it is said they believed on Christ, Christ tells them, and that after their believing,

“Ye are of your father the devil,
and the lusts of your father ye will do,” ^{<480>}John 8:30-44.

2. Saving faith is wrought by the word of God, and so may the faith be that is not saving, ^{<483>}Luke 8:13.

3. Saving faith looks for justification without works, and so may a faith do that is not saving, ^{<518>}James 2:18.

4. Saving faith will sanctify and purify the heart, and the faith that is not saving may work a man off from the pollutions of the world, as it did Judas, Demas, and others — See ^{<602>}2 Peter 2

5. Saving faith will give a man tastes of the world to come, and also joy by those tastes, and so will the faith do that is not saving, ^{<504>}Hebrews 6:4, 5; ^{<483>}Luke 8:13.

6. Saving faith will help a man, if called thereto, to give his body to be burned for his religion, and so will the faith do that is not saving, ^{<431>}1 Corinthians 13:1-5.

7. Saving faith will help a man to look for an inheritance in the world to come, and that may the faith do that is not saving:

“All those virgins took their lamps,
and went forth to meet the bridegroom,” ^{<481>}Matthew 25:1.

8. Saving faith will not only make a man look for, but prepare to meet the bridegroom, and so may the faith do that is not saving:

“Then all these virgins arose and trimmed their lamps,”
^{<427>}Matthew 25:7.

9. Saving faith will make a man look for an interest in the kingdom of heaven with confidence, and the faith that is not saving will even demand entrance of the Lord: “Lord, Lord, open unto us,” ^{<151b} Matthew 25:11.

10. Saving faith will have good works follow it into heaven, and the faith that is not saving may have great works follow it, as far as to heaven-gates:

“Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done wondrous works,”
^{<172} Matthew 7:22.

Now, then, if the faith that is not saving may have Christ for its object, be wrought by the word, look for justification without works, work men off from the pollutions of the world, and give men tastes of, and joy in the things of another world: I say again, if it will help a man to burn for his judgment, and to look for an inheritance in another world; yea, if it will help a man to prepare for it, claim interest in it; and if it can carry great works — many great and glorious works, as far as heaven-gates, then no marvel if abundance of people take this faith for the saving faith, and so fall short of heaven thereby. Alas, friends! There are but few that can produce such for repentance; and such faith as yet you see, I have proved even reprobates have had in several ages of the church. But,

Thirdly, They that go to heaven are a praying people; but a man may pray that shall not be saved. Pray! He may pray, pray daily; yea, he may ask of God the ordinances of justice, and may take delight in approaching to God; nay, further, such souls may, as it were, cover the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping and crying out, ^{<28D} Isaiah 28:2; ^{<31D} Malachi 12:13.

Fourthly, Do God's people keep holy fasts? They that are not his people may keep fasts also — may keep fasts often — even twice a-week:

“The Pharisee stood, and prayed thus with himself: God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust adulterers, or even as this Publican: I fast twice a-week, I give tithes of all that I possess,” ^{<21G} Luke 16:11, 12.

I might enlarge upon things, but I intend but a little book. I do not question but many Balaamites will appear before the judgment-seat to condemnation: men that have had visions of God, and that knew the

knowledge of the Most High; men that have had the Spirit of God come upon them, and that have by that been made other men; yet these shall go to the generations of their fathers, they shall never see light, ^{<0241>}Numbers 24:2, 4, 16; ^{<0916>}1 Samuel 10:6, 10; ^{<3909>}Psalms 49:19.

I read of some men whose excellency in religion mounts up to heavens, and their heads reach unto the clouds, who yet shall perish for ever like their very refuse; and he that in this world hath seen them, shall say at the judgment, Where are they? ^{<3315>}Job 20:5-7. There will be many a one that were gallant professors in this world be wanting among the saved in the day of Christ's coming; yea, many whose damnation was never dreamed of. Which is the twelve ever thought that Judas would have proved a devil? Nay, when Christ suggested that one among them was naught, they each were more afraid of themselves than of him, ^{<4821>}Matthew 36:21-23. Who questioned the salvation of the foolish virgins? The wise ones did not; they gave them the privilege of communion with themselves, ^{<4821>}Matthew 25. The discerning of the heart, and the infallible proof of the truth of saving grace, is reserved to the judgment of Jesus Christ at his coming. The church and best of saints sometimes hit, and sometimes miss, in their judgments about this matter; and the cause of our missing in our judgment is,

- 1.** Partly because we cannot infallibly, at all times, distinguish grace that saveth from that which doth but appear to do so.
- 2.** Partly also because some men have the art to give right names to wrong things.
- 3.** And partly because we being commanded to receive him that is weak, are afraid to exclude the least Christian, by which means hypocrites creep into the churches. But what saith the scripture? "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins." And again, "All the churches shall know that I am he that searches the reins and hearts, and I will give to every one of you according to your works," ^{<2411>}Jeremiah 11:20; ^{<2470>}Jeremiah 17:10; ^{<4122>}Revelation 2:23. To this searcher of hearts is the time of infallible discerning reserved, and then you shall see how far grace that is not saving hath gone; and also how few will be saved indeed. The Lord awaken poor sinners by these warnings and cautions.

I come now to make some brief use and application of the whole; and my first word shall be to the openly profane. Poor sinner, thou readest here that but a few will be saved, that many that expect heaven will go without heaven. What sayest thou to this, poor sinner? Let me say it over again. There are but few to be saved, but very few. Let me add, but few professors — but few eminent professors. What sayest thou now, sinner? If judgment begins at the house of God, what will the end of them be that obey not the gospel of God? This is Peter's question. Canst thou answer it, sinner? Yea, I say again, if judgment must begin at them, will it not make thee think, What shall become of me? And I add, when thou shalt see the stars of heaven to tumble down to hell, canst thou think that such a muck-heap of sin as thou art shall be lifted up to heaven? Peter asks thee another question, to wit,

“If the righteous scarcely be saved, here shall the ungodly and sinners appear?” 1 Peter 4:18.

Canst thou answer this question, sinner? Stand among the righteous thou mayest not:

“The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous,” Psalm 1:5.

Stand among the wicked thou then wilt not dare to do. Where wilt thou appear, sinner? To stand among the hypocrites will avail thee nothing: “The hypocrite shall not come before him,” that is, with acceptance, “but shall perish,” Job 13:16. Because it concerns thee much, let me over with it again. When thou shalt see less sinners than thou art, bound up by angels in bundles, to burn them, where wilt thou appear, sinner? Thou mayst wish thyself another man, but that will not help thee, sinner. Thou mayst wish, Would I had been converted in time; but that will not help thee neither. And if, like the wife of Jeroboam, thou should feign thyself to be another woman, the Prophet, the Lord Jesus, would soon find thee out! What wilt thou do, poor sinner? Heavy tidings, heavy tidings, will attend thee, except thou repent, poor sinner! 1 Kings 14:2, 5, 6; Luke 13:3, 5. O the dreadful state of a poor sinner, of an open profane sinner! Every body that hath but common sense, knows that this man is in the broad way to death, yet he laughs at his own damnation.

Shall I come to particulars with thee?

1. Poor unclean sinner, the harlot's house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death, ^{<3126>}Proverbs 2:18; ^{<3125>}Proverbs 5:5; ^{<3127>}Proverbs 7:27.

2. Poor swearing and thievish sinner, God hath prepared the curse, that every one that stealeth shall be cut off, as on this side, according to it; and every one that sweareth, shall be cut off on that side, according to it, ^{<3128>}Zechariah 5:3.

3. Poor drunken sinner, what shall I say to thee? "Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim, woe to them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strong drink; they shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven," ^{<3129>}Isaiah 28:1; ^{<3130>}Isaiah 5:22; ^{<3131>}1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

4. Poor covetous worldly man, God's word says, "That the covetous the Lord abhorreth; that the covetous man is an idolator: and that the covetous shall not inherit the kingdom of God," ^{<3132>}Psalms 10:3; ^{<3133>}Ephesians 5:5; ^{<3134>}John 2:15; ^{<3135>}1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

5. And thou liar, what wilt thou do? "All liars shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone," ^{<3136>}Revelation 21:8, 27.

I shall not enlarge, poor sinner, let no man deceive thee; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience, ^{<3137>}Ephesians 5:6. I will therefore give thee a short call, and so leave thee.

Sinner, awake; yea, I say unto thee, awake: Sin lieth at thy door, and God's axe lieth at thy root, and hell-fire is right underneath thee: I say again, awake:

"Every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire," ^{<3138>}Genesis 4:7; ^{<3139>}Matthew 3:10.

Poor sinner, awake; eternity is coming, and his Son, they are both coming to judge the world; awake, art yet asleep, poor sinner? let me set the trumpet to thine ear once again. The heavens will be shortly on a burning flame; the earth, and the works thereof, shall be burned up, and then wicked men shall go into perdition; dost thou hear this, sinner? ^{<3140>}2 Peter 3. Hark again, the sweet morsels of sins will then be fled and gone, and the bitter burning fruits of them only left. What sayest thou now sinner?

Canst thou drink hell-fire? Will the wrath of God be a pleasant dish to thy taste? This must be thine every day's meat and rink in hell, sinner.

I will yet propound to thee God's ponderous question, and then for this time leave thee:

“Can thine heart endure, or can thine hands be strong in the day that I shall deal with thee, saith the Lord?”

<3214 Ezekiel 22:14.

What sayest thou? Wilt thou answer this question now? or wilt thou take time to do it; or wilt thou be desperate, and venture all? And let me put this text in thine ear to keep it open; and so the Lord have mercy upon thee:

“Upon the wicked shall the Lord rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup,”

<3100 Psalm 11:6.

Repent, sinners.

Secondly, My second word is to them that are upon the potter's wheel; concerning whom, we know not, as yet, whether their convictions and awakenings will end in conversion or not. Several things I shall say to you, both to further your convictions, and to caution you from staying any where below, or short of saving grace.

- 1.** Remember that but few shall be saved; and if God should count thee worthy to be one of that few, what mercy would that be?
- 2.** Be thankful, therefore, for convictions; conversion begins at conviction, though all conviction doth not end in conversion. It is a great mercy to be convinced that we are sinners, and that we need a Savior; count it therefore a mercy, and that thy convictions may end in conversion: Do thou,
- 3.** Take heed of stifling of them: It is the way of poor sinners to look upon convictions as things there are hurtful; and therefore they use to shun the awakening ministry, and to check a convincing conscience. Such poor sinners are much like to the wanton boy that stands at the maid's elbow, to blow out her candle as fast as she lights it at the fire. Convinced sinner, God lighteth thy candle, and thou putteth it out; God lights it again, and

thou putteth it out (“yea, how oft is the candle of the wicked put out?” ^{<8817>}Job 31:17). At last God resolveth he will light thy candle no more; and then, like Egyptians, you dwell all your days in darkness, and never see light more, but by the light of hell-fire; wherefore give glory to God, and if he awakens thy conscience, quench not thy convictions:

“Do it (saith the prophet) before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and he turn your convictions into the shadow of death, and make them gross darkness,” ^{<2136>}Jeremiah 13:16.

1. Be willing to see the worst of thy condition; it is better to see it here than in hell; for thou must see thy misery here or there.
2. Beware of little sins, they will make way for great ones, and they again will make way for bigger, upon which God's wrath will follow; and then may thy latter end be worse than thy beginning, ^{<6121>}2 Peter 2:20.
3. Take heed of bad company, and evil communication, for that will corrupt good manners. God saith, evil company will turn thee away from following him, and will tempt thee to serve other gods, devils:

“So the anger of the Lord will be kindled against thee, and destroy thee suddenly,” ^{<8704>}Deuteronomy 7:4.

4. Beware of such a thought as bids thee delay repentance, for that is damnable, ^{<102>}Proverbs 1:24; ^{<371>}Zechariah 7:12, 13.
5. Beware of taking example by some poor carnal professor, whose religion lies in the tip of his tongue. Beware, I say of the man who heads swims with notions, but his life is among the unclean, ^{<834>}Job 36:14.

“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed,” ^{<131>}Proverbs 13:20.

6. Give thyself much to the word, and prayer, and good conference.
7. Labor to see the sin that cleaveth to the best of thy performances, and know that all is nothing if thou beest not found in Jesus Christ.
8. Keep in remembrance that God's eye is upon thy heart, and upon all thy ways:

“Can any hide himself in secret places, that I should not see him, saith the Lord? do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?”

^{<2123>}Jeremiah 23:24.

9. Be often mediating upon death and judgment, ^{<2119>}Ecclesiastes 11:9; ^{<2124>}Ecclesiastes 12:14.

10. Be often thinking what a dreadful end sinners that have neglected Christ will make at that day of death and judgment, ^{<5808>}Hebrews 10:31.

11. Put thyself often, in thy thoughts, before Christ's judgment-seat, in thy sins, and consider with thyself, Were I now before my judge, how should I look, how should I shake and tremble?

12. Be often thinking of them that are now in hell past all mercy: I say, be often thinking of them thus:

- (1.) They were once in the world, as I now am.
- (2.) They once took delight in sin, as I have done.
- (3.) They once neglected repentance, as Satan would have me do.
- (4.) But now they are gone, now they are in hell, now the pit hath shut her mouth upon them.

Thou mayest also double thy thoughts of the damned thus:

1. If these poor creatures were in the world again, would they sin as they did before? would they neglect salvation as they did before?
2. If they had sermons, as I have; if they had the Bible, as I have; if they had good company, would they neglect it as they did before? Sinner, couldst thou soberly think of these things, they might help (God blessing them) to awaken thee, and to keep thee awake to repentance, to the repentance that is to salvation, never to be repented of.

Objection: But you have said few shall be saved; and some that go a great way, yet are not saved. At this, therefore, I am even discouraged, and disheartened; I think I had as good go no further. I am indeed under conviction, but I may perish, and if I go on in my sins, I can but perish; and it is ten, twenty, an hundred to one if I be saved, should I be never so earnest for heaven.

Answer: That few will be saved must needs be a truth, for Christ hath said it; that many go far, and come short of heaven, is as true, being testified by the same hand. But what then? Why, then had I as good never seek? Who told thee so? Must nobody seek because few are saved? This is just contrary to the text, that bids us therefore strive; strive to enter in, because the gate is strait, and because many will seek to enter in and shall not be able. But why go back again, seeing that is the nearest way to hell? Never go over hedge and ditch to hell. If I must need go thither, I will go the farthest way about. But who can tell, though there should not be saved so many as there shall, but thou mayest be one of that few. They that miss of life perish, because they will not let go their sins, or because they take up a profession short of the saving faith of the gospel. They perish, I say, because they are content with such things, as will not prove graces of a saving nature when they come to be tried in the fire, otherwise the promise is free, and full, and everlasting:

“Him that cometh to me (says Christ) I will in nowise cast out; for
God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,
that whosoever believeth in him might not perish,
but have everlasting life,” ⁴¹⁶⁷ John 6:37.

Wherefore let not this though, Few shall be saved, weaken thy heart, but let it cause thee to mend thy pace, to mend thy cries, to look well to thy grounds for heaven; let it make thee fly faster from sin to Christ; let it keep thee awake, and out of carnal security, and thou mayest be saved.

Thirdly, My third word is to professors. Sirs, give me leave to set my trumpet to you ears again a little; when every man hath put in all the claim they can for heaven, but few will have it for their inheritance; I mean but few professors, for so the text intendeth, and so I have also proved: “For many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

Let me therefore a little expostulate the matter with you, O ye thousands of professors!

1. I begin with you whose religion lieth only in your tongues; I mean you who are little or nothing known from the rest of the rabble of the world, only you can talk better than they. Hear me a word or two. “If I speak with the tongue of men and angels, and have not charity (that is, love to

God, and Christ, and saints, and holiness), I am nothing,” — no child of God, and so have nothing to do with heaven, ^{<434>}1 Corinthians 13: A prating tongue will not unlock the gates of heaven, nor blind the eyes of thy judge. Look to it:

“The wise in heart will receive commandments;
but a prating fool shall fall,” ^{<408>}Proverbs 10:8.

2. Covetous professors, thou that makest a gain of religion, that usest thy profession to bring grist to thy mill, look to it also. Gain is not godliness. Judas's religion lay much in the bag, but his soul is now burning in hell. All covetousness is idolatry; but what is that, or what will you call it, when men are religious for filthy lucre's sake, ^{<433>}Ezekiel 33:31.

3. Wanton professors, I have a word for you; I mean you that can tell how to misplead scripture, to maintain your pride, your banqueting, and abominable idolatry. Read what Peter says. You are the snare and damnation of others:

“You allure through the lust of the flesh,
through much wantonness, those that were clean
escaped from them who live in error,” ^{<428>}2 Peter 2:18.

Besides, the Holy Ghost hath a great deal against you, for your feasting, and eating without fear, not for health, but gluttony, ^{<412>}Jude 1:12. Farther, Peter says,

“That you that count it pleasure to riot in the day-time are spots
and blemishes, sporting yourselves with your own deceivings,”
^{<414>}2 Peter 2:14.

And let me ask, did God give his word to justify your wickedness? or doth grace teach you to plead for the flesh, or the making provision for the lusts thereof? Of these also are they that feed their bodies to strengthen their lusts, under pretense of strengthening frail nature. But pray, remember the text, “Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

4. I come next to the Opinionist; I mean, to him whose religion lieth in some circumstantial of religion. With this sort of kingdom swarms at this day. These think all out of the way that are not of their mode, when themselves may be out of the way in the midst of their zeal for their

opinions. Pray, do you also observe the text: “Many, I say unto you, seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

5. Neither is the Formalist exempted from this number. He is a man that hath lost all but the shell of religion. He is hot indeed for his form; and no marvel, for that is his all to contend for. But his form being without the power and spirit of godliness, it will leave him in his sins; nay, he standeth now in them in the sight of God ([☞]2 Timothy 3:5), and is one of the many that “will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

6. The Legalist comes next, even him that hath no life but what he makes out of his duties. This man hath chosen to stand and fall by Moses, who is the condemner of the world:

“There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust,”
[☞]John 5:45.

7. There is, in the next place, the Libertine — he that pretendeth to be against forms and duties, as things that gender to bondage, neglecting the order of God. This man pretends to pray always, but under that pretense, prays not at all; he pretends to keep every day a Sabbath, but this pretense serves him only to cast off all set times for the worship of God. This is also one of the many that “will seek to enter in, and shall not be able,” [☞]Titus 1:16.

8. There is the temporising Latitudinarian. He is a man that hath no God but his belly, nor any religion but that by which his belly is worshipped. His religion is always, like the times, turning this way and that way, like the cock on the steeple; neither hath he any conscience but a benumbed and scared one, and is next door to a downright Atheist; and also is one of the many that “will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

9. There is also the wilfully ignorant professor, or him that is afraid to know more, for fear of the cross. He is for picking and choosing of truth, and loveth not hazard his all for that worthy name by which he would be called. When he is at any time overset by arguments, or awakenings of conscience, he uses to heal all by — I was not brought up in his faith; as if it were unlawful for Christians to know more than hath been taught them at first conversion. There are many scriptures that lie against this man, as

the mouths of great guns, and he is one of the many that “will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

10. We will add to all these, the professor that would prove himself a Christian, by comparing himself with others, instead of comparing himself with the word of God. This man comforts himself, because he is as holy as such and such; he also knows as much as that old professor, and then concludes he shall go to heaven: as if he certainly knew, that those with whom he compareth himself would be undoubtedly saved; but how if he should be mistaken, nay, may they not both fall short? but to be sure he is in the wrong that hath made the comparison, ~~and~~ 2 Corinthians 10:12, and a wrong foundation will not stand in the day of judgment. This man, therefore, is one of the many that “will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

11. There is yet another professor; and he is for God and for Baal too; he can be any thing for any company; he can throw stones with both hands; his religion alters as fast as his company; he is a frog of Egypt, and can live in the water and out of the water; he can live in religious company, and again as well out. Nothing that is disorderly comes amiss to him; he will hold with the hare, and run with the hound; he carries fire in the one hand, and water in the other; he is a very any thing but what he should be. This is also one of the many that “will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

12. There is also that free-willer, who denies to the Holy Ghost the sole work in conversion; and that Socinian, who denieth to Christ that he hath made to God satisfaction for sin; and that Quaker, who takes from Christ the two natures in his person; and I might add as many more, touching whose damnation (they dying as they are) the Scripture is plain: these “will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

But, fourthly, If it be so, what a strange disappointment will many professors meet with at the day of judgment! I speak not now to the openly profane; every body, as I have said, that hath but common understanding between good and evil, knows that they are in the broad way to hell and damnation, and they must needs come thither; nothing can hinder it but repentance unto salvation, except God should prove a liar to save them, and it is hard venturing of that.

Neither is it amiss, if we take notice of the examples that are briefly mentioned in the Scripture, concerning professors that have miscarried.

1. Judas perished from among the apostles, ^{<400>}Acts 1
2. Demas, as I think, perished from among the evangelists, ^{<500>}2 Timothy 4:9.
3. Diotrefes from among the ministers, or them in office in the church, ^{<600>}John 10
4. And as for Christian professors, they have fallen by heaps, and almost by whole churches, ^{<700>}2 Timothy 1:15; ^{<800>}Revelation 3:4, 15-17.
5. Let us add to these, that the things mentioned in the Scripture about these matters, are but brief hints and items of what is afterwards to happen; as the apostle said,

“Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after,” ^{<900>}1 Timothy 5:24.

So that, fellow-professors, let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into this rest, any of us should seem to come short of it. O! to come short! nothing kills like it, nothing will burn like it. I intend not discouragements, but awakenings; the churches have need of awakening, and so have all professors. Do not despise me, therefore, but hear me over again. What a strange disappointment will many professors meet with at the day of God Almighty! — a disappointment, I say, and that as to several things.

- (1.) They will look to escape hell, and yet fall just into the mouth of hell: what a disappointment will here be!
- (2.) They will look for heaven, but the gate of heaven will be shut against them: what a disappointment is here!
- (3.) They will expect that Christ should have compassion for them, but will find that he hath shut up all bowels of compassion from them: what a disappointment is here!

Again, *fifthly*, As this disappointment will be fearful, so certainly it will be very full of amazement.

1. Will it not amaze them to be unexpectedly excluded from life and salvation?

2. Will it not be amazing to them to see their own madness and folly, while they consider how they have dallied with their own souls, and took lightly for granted, that they had that grace that would save them, but hath left them in a damnable state?

3. Will they not also be amazed one at another, while they remember how in their lifetime they counted themselves fellow-heirs of life? To allude to that of the prophet,

“They shall be amazed one of another,
their faces shall be as flames,” ^{-233B}Isaiah 13:8.

4. Will it not be amazing to some of the damned themselves, to see some come to hell, that then they shall see come thither? to see preachers of the word, professors of the word, practicers in the word, to come thither. What wondering was there among them at the fall of the king of Babylon, since he thought to have swallowed up all, because he was run down by the Medes and Persians! “How art thou fallen from heaven, Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cast down to the ground that didst weaken the nations!” If such a thing as this will with amazement surprise the damned, what an amazement will it be to them to see such a one as he, whose head reached to the clouds, to see him come down to the pit, and perish for ever like very dross? “Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming; it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth,” ^{-234B}Isaiah 14. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man? Is this he that professed, and disputed, and forsook us; but now he is come to us again? Is this he that separated from us, but now is he fallen with us into the same eternal damnation with us?

Sixthly, Yet again, one word more, if I may awaken professors. 1.

Consider, though the poor carnal world shall certainly perish, yet they will want these things to aggravate their sorrow, which thou wilt meet with in every thought that thou wilt have of the condition thou wast in when thou was in the world.

1. They will not have a profession, to bite them when they come thither.

- 2.** They will not have a taste of a lost heaven, to bite them when they come thither.
- 3.** They will not have the thoughts of, I was almost at heaven, to bite them when they come thither.
- 4.** They will not have the thoughts of, how they cheated saints, ministers, churches, to bite them when they come thither.
- 5.** They will not have the dying thoughts of false faith, false hope, false repentance, and false holiness, to bite them when they come thither. I was at the gates of heaven, I looked into heaven, I thought I should have entered into heaven; O how will these things sting! They will, if I may call them so, be the sting of the sting of death in hell fire.

Seventhly, Give me leave now in a word to give you a little advice.

- 1.** Dost thou love thine own soul? then pray to Jesus Christ for an awakened heart, for an heart so awakened with all the things of another world, that thou mayst be allured to Jesus Christ.
- 2.** When thou comest there, beg again for more awakenings about sin, hell, grace, and about the righteousness of Christ.
- 3.** Cry also for a spirit of discerning, that thou mayst know that which is saving grace indeed.
- 4.** Above all studies, apply thyself to the study of those things that shew thee the evil of sin, the shortness of man's life, and which is the way to be saved.
- 5.** Keep company with the most godly among professors.
- 6.** When thou hearest what the nature of true grace is, defer not to ask thine own heart, if this grace be there. And here take heed,
 - (1.)** That the preacher himself be sound, and of good life.
 - (2.)** That thou takest not seeming graces for real ones, nor seeming fruits for real fruits.
 - (3.)** Take heed that a sin in thy life goes not unrepented of; for that will make a flew in thine evidence, a wound in thy conscience,

and a breach in thy peace; and a hundred to one, if at last it doth not drive all the grace in thee into so dark a corner of thy heart, that thou shalt not be able, for a time, by all the torches that are burning in the gospel, to find it out to thine own comfort and consolation.

THE HEAVENLY FOOTMAN;

OR A DESCRIPTION OF THE MAN THAT GETS TO HEAVEN:

**TOGETHER WITH THE WAY HE RUNS IN,
THE MARKS HE GOES BY;
ALSO SOME DIRECTIONS HOW TO RUN SO AS TO OBTAIN.**

And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain. Escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. — ^{<0197}Genesis 19:17.

AN EPISTLE TO ALL THE SLOTHFUL AND CARELESS PEOPLE

FRIENDS:

Solomon saith, “that be desire of the slothful killeth him;” and if so, what will slothfulness itself do to those that entertain it? The proverb is, “lie that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame;” and this I dare be bold to say: no greater shame can befall a man than., to see that he hath fooled away his soul and sinned away eternal life. And! am sure this is the next way to do it — namely, to be slothful; slothful, I say, in the work of salvation. The vineyard of the slothful man, in reference to the things of this life, is not fuller of briars, nettles, and stinking weeds than he that is slothful for heaven hath his heart full of heart-choking and soul-damning sin.

Slothfulness hath these two evils: first, to neglect the time in which it should be getting of heaven; and by that means doth, in the second place, bring untimely repentance. I will warrant you that he who should lose his

soul in this world through slothfulness will have, no cause to be glad thereat when he comes to hell.

Slothfulness is usually accompanied with carelessness, and carelessness is for the most part begotten by senselessness, and senselessness doth again put fresh strength into slothfulness, and by this means the soul is left remediless.

Slothfulness shutteth out Christ, slothfulness shameth the soul.

Slothfulness is condemned even by the fee-blast of all creatures. “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise.” “The sluggard will not plough by reason of the cold, (that is, he will not break up the fallow ground of his heart, because there must be spere pains taken by him that will do it;) therefore he shall beg in harvest,” (that is, when the saints of God shall have their glorious heaven and happiness given to them;) but the sluggard shall have nothing — that is, be never the better for his crying for mercy, according to that in ⁴²⁵¹Matthew 25:10, 11, 12.

If you would know a sluggard in the things of heaven, compare him with one that is slothful in the things of this world; as —

- 1.** He that is slothful is loth to set about the work he should follow; so is he that is slothful for heaven.
- 2.** He that is slothful is one that is willing to make delays; so is he that is slothful for heaven.
- 3.** He that is a sluggard, any small matter that cometh in between he will make it; a sufficient excuse to keep him off from playing his works; so it is also with him that is slothful for heaven.
- 4.** He that is slothful doth his work by the halves; and so it is with him that is slothful for heaven, he may almost, but he shall never altogether, obtain perfection of deliverance from hell; he may almost, but he shall never (without he mend) altogether, be a saint.
- 5.** They that are slothful do usually lose the season in which things are to be done; and thus it is also with them that are slothful for heaven; they miss the seasons of grace. And therefore,

6. They that are slothful have seldom or never good fruit; so also it will be with the soul-sluggard.

7. They that are slothful, they are chid for the same; so also will Christ deal with those that are not active for him. Thou wicked or slothful servant! out of thine own mouth will I judge thee; thou saidst I was thus and thus; wherefore then gavest not thou my money to rite bank? etc. Take the unprofitable servant and cast him into utter darkness, where shall. be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

1. What shall I say? Time runs, and will ye be slothful?

2. Much of your lives are past, and will you be slothful?

3. Your souls are worth a thousand worlds, and will you be slothful?

4. The day of death and judgment is at the door, and will you be slothful?

5. The curse of God hangs over your heads, and will you be slothful?

6. Besides, the devils are earnest, laborious, and seek by all means, every day, by every, sin, to keep you out of heaven and hinder you of salvation; and will you be slothful?

7. Also your neighbors are diligent for things that will perish, and will you be slothful for things that will endure for ever?

8. Would you be willing to be damned for slothfulness?

9. Would you be willing the angels of God should neglect to fetch your souls away to heaven when you lie a-dying, and the devils stand by ready to scramble for them?

10. Was Christ slothful in the work of your redemption?

11. Are his ministers slothful in tendering this unto you?

12. And lastly. If all this will not move, I tell you God will not be slothful or negligent to damn you, (whose damnation now of a long time slumbereth not,) the devils will not neglect to fetch thee, nor hell neglect to shut its mouth upon thee.

Sluggard, art thou asleep still? Art thou resolved to sleep the sleep of death? Will neither tidings from heaven nor hell awake thee? Wilt thou say still, Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, and a little folding of the arms to sleep? Wilt thou yet turn thyself in thy sloth as the door is turned upon the hinges? Oh that I was one that was skillful in lamentation, and had but a yearning heart towards thee, how would I pity thee! How would I bemoan thee! Oh that I could, with Jeremiah, let my eyes run down with rivers of waters for thee! Poor soul, lost soul, dying soul, what a hard heart have I that I cannot mourn for thee! If thou shouldst lose but a limb, a child, or a friend, it would not be so much, but, poor man, it is thy soul; if it was to lie in hell but for a day, but for a year, nay, ten thousand years, it would (in comparison) be nothing; but oh it is for ever! Oh this cutting ever! What a soul-amazing word will that be which saith, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into EVERLASTING fire!” etc.

Objection. But if I should set in and run as you would have me, then I must run from all my friends, for none of them are running that way.

Answer. And if thou dost thou wilt run into the bosom of Christ and of God, and then what harm will that do thee?

Objection. But if I run this way, then I must run from all my sins.

Answer. That is true, indeed, yet if thou dost not, thou wilt run into hell-fire.

Objection. But if I run this way I shall be hated, and lose the love of my friends and relations, and of those that I expect benefit from or have reliance on, and I shall be mocked of all my neighbors.

Answer. And if thou dost not, thou art sure to lose the love and favor of God and Christ, the benefits of heaven and glory, and be mocked of God for thy folly, (“I will laugh at your calamities, and mock when your fear cometh;”) and if thou wouldst not be hated and mocked, then take heed thou, by thy folly, dost not procure the displeasure and mockings of the great God; for his mocks and hatred will be terrible, because they will fall upon thee in terrible times, even when tribulation and anguish taketh hold on thee; which will be when death and judgment comes, when all the men in the earth and all the angels in heaven cannot help thee.

Objection. But surely I may begin this time enough a year or two hence, may I not?

Answer. First. Hast thou any lease of thy life? Did ever God tell thee thou shalt live half a year or two months longer? Nay, it may be thou mayest not live so long. And therefore,

Secondly. Wilt thou be so sottish and unwise as to venture thy soul upon a little uncertain time?

Thirdly. Dost thou know whether the day of grace will last a week longer or no? For the day of grace is past with some before their life is ended; and if it should be so with thee, wouldst thou not say, Oh that I had begun to run before the day of grace had been past and the gates of heaven shut against me! But,

Fourthly. If thou shouldst see any of thy neighbors neglect the making sure of either house or land to themselves if they had it proffered to them, saying, Time enough hereafter, when the time is uncertain, and besides, they do not know whether ever it will be proffered to them again or no — I say, wouldst thou not then call them fools? And if so, then dost thou think that; thou art a wise man to let thy immortal soul hang over hell by a thread of uncertain time:, which may soon be cut asunder by death?

But, to speak plainly, all these are the words of a slothful spirit. Arise, man! be slothful no longer; set foot, and heart, and all into the way of God, and run; the crown is at the end of the race; there also standeth the loving Forerunner, even Jesus, who hath prepared heavenly provision to make thy soul welcome, and he will give it thee with a willinger heart than ever thou canst desire it of him. Oh therefore do not delay the time any longer, but put into practice the words of the men of Dan to their brethren after they had seen the goodness of the land of Canaan: “Arise,” (say they, etc.), “for we have seen the land, and behold it is very good,” and ye are stilt, (or do you forbear running.) “Be not slothful to go and to enter to possess the land.” Fare well.

I wish our souls may meet with comfort at the journey’s end!

John Bunyan.

THE HEAVENLY FOOTMAN;

CHAPTER 1

HEAVEN MUST BE RUN FOR.

So run that ye may obtain. — ~~1~~1 Corinthians 9:24.

HEAVEN and happiness is that which every one desireth, insomuch that wicked Balsam could say, “Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his;” yet for all this there are but few that do obtain that ever-to-be-desired glory, insomuch that *many* eminent professors drop short of a welcome from God into this pleasant place. The apostle, therefore, because he did desire the salvation of the Corinthians to whom he writes this epistle, layeth them down in these words such counsel, which, if taken, would be for their hell:, and advantage.

First. Not to be wicked, and sit still and wish for heaven, but to run for it.

Secondly. Not to content themselves with every kind of running, but, saith he, “So run that ye may obtain.” As if he should say, Some, because they would not lose their souls, they begin to run betimes, they run apace, they run with patience, they run the right way: do you so run. Some run from both father and mother, friends and companions, and thus that they may have the crown: do you so run. Some run through temptations, afflictions, good report, evil report, that they may win the pearl: do you so run. “So run that ye may obtain”

These words are taken from men’s running for a wager — a very apt similitude to set before the eyes of the saints of the Lord. “Know you not that they which run in a race run all but one obtains the prize? So run that ye may obtain.” That is, do not only run, but be sure you win as well as run. “So run that ye may obtain.”

I shall not need to make any great ado in opening the words at this time, but shall rather lay down one doctrine that I do find in them; and in

prosecuting that I snail show you, in some measure, the scope of the words.

The doctrine is this: They that will have heaven must run for it; I say, they that will have heaven, they must run for it. I beseech you to heed it well. “Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one obtaineth the prize?” So run ye. The prize is heaven, and if you will have it you must run for it. You have another Scripture for this in ^{<small>8111}Hebrews 12:1, 2, and 3 “Wherefore, seeing also,” saith the apostle, “that we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” And let us run, saith he.

Again, saith Paul, “I so run, not as uncertainly: so fight I,” etc.

But before I go any farther.

1. FLEEING.

Observe, that this running is not an ordinary or any sort of running, but it is to be understood of the swiftest sort of running; and therefore in the 6th of the Hebrews it is called *a fleeing*: “That we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us.” Mark who have fled. It is taken from the 20th of Joshua (^{<small>8111}Joshua 20), concerning the man that was to flee to the city of refuge when the avenger of blood was hard at his heels to take vengeance on him for the offense he had committed; therefore it is a running or fleeing for one’s life — a running with all might and main, as we used to say. So run.

2. PRESSING.

Secondly. This running in another place is called *a pressing*: “I press toward the mark;” which signifieth that they that will have heaven, they must not stick at any difficulties they meet with, but press, crowd, and thrust through all that may stand between heaven and their souls. So run.

3. CONTINUING.

This running is called in another place a *continuing in the way of life*. “If you continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away

from the hope of the Gospel of Christ.” Not to run a little now and then, by fits and starts, or halfway or almost thither, but to run for thy life, to run through all difficulties, and to continue therein to the end of the race, which must be to the end of thy life. “So run that ye may obtain.” And the reasons for this point are these:

1. Because all or every one that runneth doth not obtain the prize; there be many that do run, yea, and run far too, who yet miss of the crown that standeth at the end of the race. You know that all that run in a race do not obtain the victory they all run, but one wins. And so it is here; it is not every one that runneth, nor every one that seeketh, nor every one that striveth for the mastery, that hath it. “Though a man do strive for the mastery,” saith Paul, “yet he is not crowned unless he strive lawfully;” that is, unless he so run and so strive as to have God’s approbation. What! do you think that every heavy-heeled professor will have heaven? What! every lazy one? every wanton and foolish professor, that will be stopped by anything, kept back by any thing, that scarce runneth so fast heavenward as a snail creepeth on the ground” Nay, there are some professors that do not go on so fast in the way of God as a snail doth go on the wall, and yet these think that heaven and happiness is for them. But stay; there be many more that run than there be that obtain; therefore he that will have heaven must run for it,.

2. Because you know that though a man do run, yet if he do not overcome or win as well as run what will they be the better for their running? They will get nothing. You know the man that runneth, he doth do it that he may win the prize; but if he doth not obtain it he doth lose his labor, spend his pains and time, and that to no purpose; I say, he getteth nothing. And ah! how many such runners wilt there be found in the day of judgment! Even multitudes — multitudes that have run, yea, run so far as to come to heaven’s gates, and not able to get any further, but there stand knocking when it is too late, crying, Lord, Lord I when they have nothing but rebukes for their pains. Depart from me; you come not here, you come too late, you run too lazy: the door is shut. “When once the Master of the house is risen up,” saith Christ, “and hath shut the door, and ye begin to stand without and knock, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, I will say, I know you not; depart,” etc. Oh, sad will the state of those be that run and

miss; therefore, if you will have heaven you must run for it, and “so run that ye may obtain.”

3. Because the way is long (I speak metaphorically) and there is many a dirty step, many a high hill, much work to do, a wicked heart, world, and devil to overcome; I say there are many steps to be taken by those that intend to be saved by running or walking in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham. Out of Egypt thou must go through the Red Sea; thou must run a long and tedious journey through the vast howling wilderness before thou come to the land of promise.

4. They that will go to heaven must run for it, because, as the way is long, so the time in which they are to get to the end of it is very uncertain; the time present is the only time; thou hast no more time allotted thee than that thou now enjoyest: “Boast not thyself of tomorrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.” Do not say, I have time enough to get to heaven seven years hence; for I tell thee the bell may toll for thee before seven days more be ended; and when death comes away thou must go, whether thou art provided or not; and therefore look to it, make no delays; it is not good dallying with things of so great concernment as the salvation or damnation of thy soul. You know he that hath a great way to go in a little time, and less by half than he thinks of, he had need to run for it

5. They that will have heaven must run for it, because the devil, the law, sin, death and · hell follow them. There is never a poor soul that is going to heaven but the devil, the law, and death, and hell make after that soul. “The devil, your adversary, as a roaring lion, goeth about, seeking whom he may devour.” And I will assure you the devil is nimble, he can run apace, he is light of foot, he hath over-taken many, he hath turned up their heels, and hath given them an everlasting fall. Also the law, that can’ shoot a great way; have a care thou keep out of the reach of those great guns, the ten commandments. Hell also hath a wide mouth; it can stretch itself farther than you are aware of. And as the angel said to Lot, “Take heed, look not behind thee, neither tarry thou in all the plain,” (that is, anywhere between this and heaven,) “lest thou be consumed,” so say I to thee, Take heed, tarry not, lest either the devil, hell, death, or the fearful curses of the law of God do overtake thee and throw thee down in the midst of thy sins,

so as never to rise and recover again. If this were well considered, then thou, as well as I, wouldst say, They that will have heaven must run for it.

6. They that will go to heaven must run for it, because, perchance, the gates of heaven may shut shortly. Sometimes sinners have not heaven's gates open to them so long as they suppose; and if they be once shut against a man; they are so heavy that all the men in the world nor all the angels in heaven are not able to open them. "I shut, and no man can open," saith Christ. And how if thou shouldst come but one quarter of an hour too late? I tell thee it will cost thee an eternity to bewail thy misery in. Francis Spira can tell thee what it is to stay till the gate of mercy be quite shut, or to run so lazily that they be shut before thou get within them. What! to be shut out! what! out of heaven! Sinner, rather than lose it run for it; yea, and "so run that thou mayest obtain."

7. Lastly. Because if thou lose thou. lovest all, thou lovest soul, God, Christ, heaven, ease, peace, etc. Besides, thou layest thyself open to all the shame, contempt, and reproach that either God, Christ, saints, the world, sin, the devil, and all can lay upon thee. As Christ saith of the foolish builder, so will I say of thee if thou be such a one who runs and missest — I say, even all that go by will begin to mock at thee, saying, This man began to run well, but was not able to finish. But more of this anon.

Question. But; how should a poor soul do to run? For this very thing is that which afflicteth me sore, (as you say,) to think that I may run and yet fall short. Methinks to fall short at last; oh it fears me greatly! Pray tell me, therefore, how I should run?

Answer. That thou mayst indeed be satisfied in this particular, consider these following things:

THE FIRST DIRECTION.

If thou wouldst so run as to obtain the kingdom of heaven, then be sure that thou get into the way that leadeth thither; for it is a vain thing to think that ever thou shalt have the prize, though thou runnest never so fast, unless thou art in the way that leads to it. Set the case that there should be a man in London that was to run to York for a wager; now though he run

never so swiftly, yet if he run full south, he might run himself quickly out of breath and be never nearer the prize, but rather the farther off. Just so it is here; it is not simply the runner, nor yet the hasty runner, that winneth the crown, unless he be in the way that leadeth thereto. I have observed, that little time which I have been a professor, that there is a great running to and fro, some this way and some that way; yet it is to be feared most of them are out of the way, and then, though they run as swift as the eagle can fly, they are benefited nothing at all.

Here is one runs a-quaking, another a-ranting; one again runs after the Baptism, and another after the Independency; here is one for Free-will, and another for Presbytery; and yet, possibly, most of all these sects run quite the wrong way, and yet every one is for his life, his soul, either for heaven or hell.

If thou now say, Which is the way? I tell thee it IS CHRIST, THE SON OF MARY, THE SON OF GOD. Jesus saith, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by me." So then thy business is (if thou wouldst have salvation) to see if Christ be thine with all his benefits, whether he hath covered thee with his righteousness, whether he hath showed thee that thy sins are washed away with his heart-blood, whether thou art planted into him, and whether thou have faith in him, so as to make a life out of him and to confirm thee to him; that is, such faith as to conclude that thou art righteous because Christ is thy righteousness, and so constrained to walk with him as the joy of thy heart because he saved thy soul. And for the Lord's sake take heed and do not deceive thy self, and think thou art in the way upon too slight grounds; for if thou miss of the way, thou wilt miss of the prize, and if thou miss of that, I am sure thou wilt lose thy soul, even that soul which is worth more than the whole world.

But I have treated more largely on this in my book of the Two Covenants, and therefore shall pass it now; only I beseech thee to have a care of thy soul, and that thou mayst so do take this counsel:

Mistrust thy own strength and throw it; away; down on thy knees in prayer to the Lord for the Spirit of truth; search his word for direction; flee seducers company; keep company with the so rudest Christians that have most experience of Christ; and be sure thou have a care of Quakers,

Ranters, Free-willers; also do not have too much company with some Anabaptists: though I go under that name myself, I tell thee this is such a serious matter, and I fear thou wilt so little regard it, that the thoughts of he worth of the thing and of thy too light regarding of it doth even make my heart ache whilst I am writing to thee. The Lord teach thee the way by his Spirit, and then I am sure thou wilt know it! So run.

Only, by the way, let me bid thee have a care of two things, and so I shall pass to the next thing:

1. Have a care of relying on the outward obedience to any of God's commands, or thinking thyself ever the better in the sight; of God for that.
2. Take heed of fetching peace for thy soul from any inherent righteousness. But if thou canst believe that thou art a sinner, so thou art justified freely by the love of God through the redemption that is in Christ; and that God for Christ's sake hath forgiven thee, not because he saw any thing done or to be done in or by thee to move him thereunto to do it; for that is the, right way; the Lord put thee into it and kept thee in it!

THE SECOND DIRECTION.

As thou shouldst get into the way, so thou shouldst also be much in studying and musing on the way. You know men that would be expert in any thing, they are usually much in studying of that thing, and so likewise is it with those that quickly grow expert in any thing, this therefore thou shouldst do: let thy study be much exercised about Christ, who is the way — what he is, what he hath done, and why he is what he is, and why he hath done what is done; as, why “he took upon him the form of a servant; why he was “made in the likeness of man;” why he cried; why he died; why he “bare the sins of the world;” why he was made sin, and why he was made righteousness; why he is in heaven in the nature of man, and what he doth there. Be much in musing and considering of these things; be thinking also enough of those places which thou must not come near, but leave some on this hand, and some on that hand; as it is with those that travel into other countries, they must leave such a gate on this hand, and such a hush on that hand, and go by such a place, where standeth such a thing. Thus, therefore, you must do. “Avoid such things which are

expressly forbidden in the word of God.” “Withdraw thy foot far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house, for her steps take hold of hell, going down to the chambers of death.” *And so of every thing that is not in the way*, have a care of it, that thou go not by it; come not near it, have nothing to do with it. So run.

THE THIRD DIRECTION.

Not only thus, but in the next place thou must strip thyself of those things that may hang upon thee to the hindering of thee in the way to the kingdom of heaven, as covetousness, pride, lust, or whatsoever else thy heart may be inclined unto which may hinder thee in this heavenly race. Men that run for a wager, if they intend to win as well as run, they do not use to encumber themselves or carry those things about them that may be an hindrance to them in their running. “Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things;” that is, he layeth aside every thing that would be any wise a disadvantage to him as saith the apostle, “Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that cloth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” It is but a vain thing to talk of going to heaven if thou let thy heart be encumbered with those things that would hinder. Would you not say that such a man would be in danger of losing, though he run, if he fill his pocket with stones, hang heavy garments on his shoulders, and great lumpish shoes on his *feet*? So it is here; thou talkest of going to heaven, and yet fillest thy pocket with stones — *i. e.*, fillest thy heart with this world, lettest that hang on thy shoulders, with its profits and pleasures. Alas, alas! thou art widely mistaken: if thou intendest to win, thou must strip, thou must lay aside every weight, thou must be temperate in all things. Thou must so run.

THE FOURTH DIRECTION.

Beware of by-paths; take heed thou dost not run into those lanes which lead out of the way. There are crooked paths, paths in which men go astray, paths that lead to death, and damnation, but take heed of all those. Some of them are dangerous because of practice, some because of opinion, but mind them not; mind the path *before* thee, look right before thee, turn neither to the right nor to the left, but let thine eyes look right on, even right before thee: “Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be

established.” Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: “Remove thy foot far from evil.” This counsel being not so seriously taken as given is the reason of that starting from opinion to opinion, reeling this way and that way, out of this lane into that lane, and so missing the way to the kingdom. Though the way to heaven be but one, yet there are many crooked lanes and by-paths shoot down upon it, as I may say. And, again, notwithstanding the kingdom of heaven be the biggest city, yet usually those by-paths are most beaten, most travelers go those ways; and therefore the way to heaven is hard to be found, and as hard to be kept in by reason of these. Yet nevertheless it is in this case as it was with the harlot of Jericho; she had one scarlet thread tied in her window by which her house was known. So it is here the scarlet streams of Christ’s blood run throughout the way to the kingdom of heaven; therefore mind that, see if thou do find the besprinkling of the blood of Christ in the way, and if thou do, be of good cheer, thou art in the right way; but have a care thou beguile not thyself with a fancy, for then thou mayest light into any lane or way; but that thou mayest not be mistaken, consider, though it seem newer so pleasant, yet if thou do not find that in the very middle of the road there is written with the heart-blood of Christ that he came into the world to save sinners, and that we are justified though we are ungodly, shun that way, for this it is which the apostle meaneth when he saith, “We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil — that is to say, his flesh.” How easy a matter is it in this our day for the devil to be too cunning for poor souls by calling his by-paths the way to the kingdom! If such an opinion or fancy be but cried up by one or more, this inscription being set upon it by the devil, This is the way of God, how speedily, greedily, and by neaps do poor simple souls throw away themselves upon it, especially if it be daubed over with a few external acts of morality, if so good! But this is because men do not know painted by-paths from the plain way to the kingdom of heaven. They have not yet learned the true Christ, and what his righteousness is, neither have they a sense of their own insufficiency; but are bold, proud, presumptuous, self-conceited. And therefore,

THE FIFTH DIRECTION.

Do not thou be too much in looking too high in thy journey heavenwards. You know men that run a race do not use to stare and gaze this way and that, neither do they use to cast up their eyes too high, lest haply, through their too much gazing with their eyes after other things, they in the mean time stumble and catch a fall. The very same case is this: if thou gaze and stare after every opinion and way that comes into the world, also if thou be prying overmuch into God's secret decrees, or let thy heart too much entertain questions about some nice, foolish curiosities, thou mayest stumble and fall, as many hundreds in England have done, both in ranting and quakery, to their own eternal overthrow, without the marvelous operation of God's grace be suddenly stretched forth to bring them back again. Take heed, therefore; follow not that proud, lofty spirit that, devil-like, cannot be content with his own station. David was of excellent spirit where he saith, "Lord, my heart is not haughty nor mine eyes lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great matters or things too high for me. Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother. My soul is even as a weaned child." Do thou so run.

THE SIXTH DIRECTION.

Take heed that you have not an ear open to every one that calleth after you as you are in your journey. Men that run, you know, if any do call after them, saying, I would speak with you, or, Go not too fast and you shall have my company with you, if they run for some great matter, they use to say, Alas! I cannot stay, I am in haste, pray talk not to me now; neither can I stay for you, I am running for a wager; if I win I am made, if I lose I am undone; and therefore hinder me not. Thus wise are men when they run for corruptible things, and thus shouldst thou do; and thou hast more cause to do so than they, forasmuch as they run but for things that last not, but thou for an incorruptible glory. I give thee notice of this betimes, knowing that thou shalt have enough call after thee, even the devil, sin, this world, vain company, pleasure, profits, esteem among men, ease, pomp, pride, together with an innumerable company of such companions; one crying, Stay for me: the other saying, Do not leave me behind: a third saying, And take me along with you. What, will you go, saith the devil, without your sins, pleasures, and profits? Are you so

hasty? Can you not stay and take these along with you? Will you leave your friends and companions behind you? Call you not do as your neighbors do — carry the world, sin, lust, pleasure, profit, esteem among men along with you? Have a care thou do not let thine ear now be open to the tempting, enticing, alluring and soul-entangling flatteries of such sink-souls as these are. “My son,” saith Solomon, “if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.”

You know what it cost the young man which Solomon speaks of in the 7th of Proverbs, that was enticed by a harlot: “With much fair speech she won him and caused him to yield, with the flattering of her lips she forced him, till he: went after her as an ox to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks;” even so far “till the dart struck through his liver, and knew not that it was for his life. Hearken unto me now therefore,” saith he, “O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth:: let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not; astray in her paths, for she hath cast down many wounded, many strong men have been slain (that is, kept out of heaven) by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.” Soul, take this counsel, and say, Satan, sin, lust, pleasure, profit, pride, friends, companions, and every thing else, let me alone, stand off, come not nigh me, for I am running for heaven, for my soul, for God, for Christ, from hell and everlasting damnation; if I win, I win all; and if I lose, I lose all; let me alone, for I will not hear. So run.

THE SEVENTH DIRECTION.

In the next, place, be not daunted though thou meetest with never so many discouragements in try journey thither. That man that is resolved for heaven, if Satan cannot win him by flatteries he will endeavor to weaken him by discouragements, saying, Thou art a sinner, thou hast broke God’s law, thou art not elected, thou comest too late, the day of grace is past, God doth not care for thee, thy heart is naught, thou art lazy, with an hundred other discouraging suggestions. And thus it was with David, where he saith, “I had fainted, unless I had believed, to see the loving-kindness of the Lord in the land of the living.” As if he should say, The devil did so rage, and my heart was so base, that, had I judged according to my own sense and feeling, I had been absolutely distracted; but I trusted to Christ in the promise, and looked that God would be as good as his

promise in having mercy upon me, an unworthy sinner; and this is that which encouraged me and kept me from fainting. And thus must thou do when Satan, or the law, or thy own conscience do go about to dishearten thee, either by the greatness of thy sins, the wickedness of thy heart, the tediousness of the way, the loss of outward enjoyments, the hatred that thou wilt procure from the world, or the like; then thou must encourage thyself with the freeness of the promises, the tender-heartedness of Christ, the merits of his blood, the freeness of his invitations to come in, the greatness of the sin of others that have been pardoned, and that the same God, through the same Christ, holdeth forth the same grace as free as ever. If these be not thine meditations, thou wilt draw very heavily in the way to heaven, if thou do not give up all for lost, and so knock off from following any farther; therefore, I stay, take heart in try journey, and say to them that seek thy destruction, "Rejoice not against me, O my enemy, for when I fall I shall arise, when I sit in darkness the Lord shall be a light unto me."

THE EIGHTH DIRECTION.

Take heed of being offended at the eros that thou must go by before thou come to heaven. You must understand (as I have already touched) that there is no man that goeth to heaven but he must go by the cross. The cross is the standing waymark by which all they that go to glory must pass by.

"We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." If thou art in thy way to the kingdom, my life for thine thou wilt come to the cross shortly, (the Lord grant thou dost not shrink at it, so as to turn thee back again!) "If any man will come after me," saith Christ, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily; and follow me." The cross! it stands and hath stood from the beginning as a way mark to the kingdom of heaven. You know, if one ask you the way to such and such a place, you, for the better direction, do not only say, This is the way, but then also *say*, You must go by such a gate, by such a stile, such a bush, tree, bridge, or such like. Why, so it; is here. Art thou inquiring the way to heaven? Why, I tell thee, Christ is the way; into him thou must *get*, into his righteousness to be justified; and if thou art in him, thou wilt presently see

the cross; thou must go close by it, thou must touch it, nay, thou must take it up, or else thou wilt quickly go out of the way that leads to heaven, and turn up some of those crooked lanes that lead down to the chambers of death.

Now thou mayest know the cross by these six things:

1. It is known in the doctrine of justification;
2. In the doctrine of mortification;
3. In the doctrine of perseverance;
4. In self-denial;
5. Patience;
6. Communion with poor saints.

1. In the doctrine of justification, there is a great deal of the cross in that; a man is forced to suffer the destruction of his own righteousness for the righteousness of another. This is no easy matter for a man to do; I assure to you it stretcheth every vein in his heart before he will be brought to yield to it. What! for a man to deny, reject, abhor, and throw away all his prayers, tears, alms, keeping of sabbaths, hearing, reading, with the rest, in the point of justification, and to count them accursed; and to be willing, in the very midst of the sense of his sins, to throw himself wholly upon the righteousness and obedience of another man, abhorring his own, counting it as deadly sin, as the open breach of the law I say, to do this in deed and in truth is the biggest, piece of the cross; and therefore Paul calleth this very thing a “suffering” where he saith, “And I have suffered the loss of all things (which principally was his righteousness) that I might win Christ, and be found in him, not having (but rejecting) my own righteousness.” That is the first.

2. In the doctrine of mortification is also much of the cross. Is it nothing for a man to lay hands on his vile opinions, on his vile sins, on his bosom sins, on his beloved, pleasant, darling sins, that stick as close to him as the flesh sticks to the bones? What! to lose all these brave things that my eyes behold for that which I never saw with my eyes! What! to lose my pride, my covetousness, my vain company, sports and pleasures, and the rest! I

tell you this is no easy matter; if it were, what need all these prayers, sighs, watchings? What need we be so backward to it? Nay, do you not see that some men, before they will set about this work, they will even venture the loss of their souls, heaven, God, Christ, and all? What means else all those delays and put-offs, saying, Stay a little longer, I am loth to leave my sins while I am so young and in health? Again, what is the reason else that others do it so by the halves, coldly and seldom, notwithstanding they are convinced over and over, nay, and also promise to amend, and yet all's in vain? I will assure you, to cut off right hands and pluck out right eyes is no pleasure to the flesh.

3. The doctrine of perseverance is also cross to the flesh, which is not only to begin, but to hold out; not only to bid fair and to say, Would I had heaven! but so to know Christ, to put on Christ, and walk with Christ, as to come to heaven. Indeed it is no great matter to begin to look for heaven, to begin to seek the Lord, to begin to shun sin; oh but it is a very great matter to continue with God's approbation!" My servant Caleb (saith God) is a man of another spirit; he hath followed me (followed me always, he hath continually followed me) fully; he shall possess the land." Almost all the many thousands of the children of Israel in their generation fell short of perseverance when they walked from Egypt toward the land of Canaan. Indeed they went to work at first pretty willingly, but they were very short-winded, they were quickly out of breath, and in their hearts they turned back again into Egypt.

It is an easy matter for a man to run hard for a spurt, for a furlong, for a mile or two: oh, but to hold out for a hundred, for a thousand, for ten thousand miles; that man that doth this he must look to meet with cross, pain, and wearisomeness to the flesh, especially if as he goeth he meeteth with briers, and quagmires, and other encumbrances that make his journey so much the more painful.

Nay, do you not see with your eyes daily that perseverance is a very great part of the cross? Why else do men so soon grow weary? I could point out many that, after they had followed the ways of God about a twelvemonth, others it may be two, three, or four (some more, some less) years, they have been beat out of wind, have taken up their lodging and rest before they have got halfway to heaven, some in this some in that sin, and have

secretly, nay sometimes openly, said that the way is too strait, the race too long, the religion too holy, and I cannot hold out, I call go no farther.

And so likewise of the other three — to wit, patience, self-denial, communion and communication with and to the poor saints — how hard are these things! It is an easy matter to deny another man, but it is not so easy a matter to deny one's self — to deny! myself out of love to God, to his Gospel, to his saints of this advantage and of that, gain nay of that which otherwise I might lawfully do were it not for offending them. That Scripture is but seldom read, and seldomer put in practice, which saith, "I will eat no flesh while the world standeth if it make my brother to offend;" again, "We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." But how forward, how hasty, how peevish, and sell!' resolved are the generality of professors at this day! Alas! how little considering the poor, unless it be to say, Be thou warmed and filled. But to give is seldomer work, also especially to give to any poor. I tell *you* all things are cross; to flesh and blood; and that man that hath but a watchful eye over the flesh, and also some considerable measure of strength against it, he shall find his heart in these things like unto a starting horse that is rid without a curbing bridle, ready to start at everything that is offensive to him, yea, and ready to run away too, do what the rider can.

It is the cross which keepeth those that are kept from heaven. I am persuaded were it not for the cross, where we have one professor we should have twenty, but this cross, that is it which spoileth all.

Some men, as I said before, when they come at the cross, they can go no farther, but, back again to their sins they must go. Others, they stumble at it and break their necks; others again, when they see that the cross is approaching, they turn aside to the left hand or to the right hand, and so think to get to heaven another way, but they will be deceived. "For all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall" — mark, shall — "be sure to suffer persecution." There are but few when they come at the. cross cry, Welcome, cross! as some of the martyrs did to the stake they were burned at. Therefore if you meet with the Cross in thy journey, in what manner so ever it be, be not daunted and say, Alas! what shall I do now? But rather take courage, knowing that by the cross is the way to the kingdom. Can a man believe in Christ and not; be hated by the devil? Can he make a

profession of this Christ, and that sweetly and convincingly, and the children of Satan hold their tongue? Can darkness agree with light, or the devil endure that Christ Jesus should be honored both by faith and a heavenly conversation, and let that soul alone at quiet? Did you never read that; “the dragon persecuted the woman?” And that Christ saith, “In the world you shall, have tribulations.”

THE NINTH DIRECTION.

Beg of God that he would do these two things for thee: First enlighten thine understanding; and, secondly, inflame thy will. If these two be but effectually done, there is no fear but thou wilt go safe to heaven.

One of the great reasons why men and women do so little regard the other world, it is because they see so little of it; and the reason why they see so little of it is because they have their understanding darkened. And therefore, saith Paul, “Do not you believers walk as do other Gentiles, even in the vanity of their minds, having their understandings darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance (or foolishness) that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.” Walk not as those, run not with them: Alas, poor souls! they have their understandings darkened, their hearts blinded, and that is the.. reason they have such undervaluing thoughts of the Lord Jesus Christ and the salvation of their souls. For when men do come to see the things of another world, what a God, what a Christ, what a heaven, and what an eternal glory there is to be enjoyed, also when they see that it is possible for them to have a share in it, I tell you it will make them run through thick and thin to enjoy it. Moses having a sight of this because his understanding was enlightened, “he feared not the wrath of the king, but chose rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” He refused to be called the son of the king’s daughter, accounting it wonderful riches to be accounted worthy of so much as to suffer for Christ with the poor despised saints; and that was because he saw Him who was invisible, and had respect unto the recompense of reward. And this is that which the apostle usually prayeth for in his epistles for the saints — namely, “That they might know what is the hope of God’s calling, and the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints; and that they might be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and

length, and depth and height, and know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." Pray, therefore, that God would enlighten thy understanding; that will be a very great help unto thee. It will make thee endure many a hard brunt for Christ; as Paul saith, "After you were illuminated ye endured a great fight of afflictions You took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." If there be never such a rare jewel he just in a man's way, yet if he sees it; not he will rather trample upon it than stoop for it, and it is because he sees it not. Why so it is here: though heaven be worth never so much, and thou hast never so much need of it, yet if thou see it not — that is, have not thy understanding opened or enlightened to see — thou wilt not regard at all; therefore cry to the Lord for enlightening grace, and say, "Lord, open my blind eyes; Lord, take the veil off my dark heart," show me the things of the other world, and let me see the sweetness, glory, and excellency of them for Christ his sake. This is the first.

THE TENTH DIRECTION.

Cry to God that he would inflame thy will also with the things of the other world; for when a man's will is fully set to do such or such a thing, then it must be a very hard matter that shall hinder that man from bringing about his end. When Paul's will was set resolutely to go up to Jerusalem, (though it was signified to trim before what he should there suffer,) he was not daunted at all; nay, saith he, "I am ready (or willing) not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." His will was inflamed with love to Christ, and therefore all the persuasions that could be used wrought nothing at all.

Your self-willed people, nobody knows what to do with them; we used to say, He will have his own will, do what you can. Indeed to have such a will for heaven is an admirable advantage to a man that undertaketh a race thither; a man that is resolved and hath his will fixed, saith he, I will do my best to advantage myself; I will do my worst to hinder my enemies; I will not give out as long as I can stand; will have it or I will lose my life; "though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." "I will not let thee go except thou bless me." I will, I will, I will. Oh this blessed inflamed will for heaven! that is like it? If a man be willing, then any argument shall be

matter of encouragement; but if unwilling, then any argument shall give discouragement; this is seen both in saints and sinners, in them that are the children of God, and also those that are the children of the devil. As

1. The saints of old, they being willing and resolved for heaven, what could stop them? Could fire and faggot, sword or halter, filthy dungeons, whips, bears, bulls, lions, cruel rackings, stoning, starving, nakedness, etc.? “And in all these things they were more than conquerors, through Him that loved them,” who had also made them “willing in the day of his power.”
2. See again, on the other side, the children of the devil, because they are not willing, how many shifts and starting-holes they will have: I have married a wife, I have a farm, I shall offend my landlord, I shall offend my master, I shall lose my trading, I shall lose my pride, my pleasures, I shall be mocked and scoffed; therefore I dare not come. I, saith another, will stay till I am older, till my children are out, till I am got a little aforehand in the world, till I have done this and that and the other business; but, alas! the thing is, they are not willing; for were they but soundly willing, these, and a thousand such as these, would hold them no faster than the cords held Samson when he broke them like burnt flax; I tell you the will is all: that is one of the chief things which turns the wheel either backwards or forwards; and God knoweth that full well, and so likewise doth the devil, and therefore they both endeavor very much to strengthen the will of their servants. God, he is for making of his a willing people to serve him; and the devil, he doth what he can to *possess* the will and affection of those that are his with love to sin; and therefore when Christ comes close to the matter, indeed, saith he, “You will not come to me.” “How often would I have gathered you as a hen doth her chickens, but you would not!” The devil had possessed their wills, and so long he was sure enough of them. Oh therefore cry hard to God to inflame thy will for heaven and Christ — thy will, I say: if that be rightly set for heaven, thou wilt not be beat off with discouragements; and this was the reason that when Jacob wrestled with the angel, though he lost a limb as it were, and the hollow of his thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him, yet, saith he, “I will not” — mark, I will not — ”let thee go except thou bless me.” Get thy will tipped with the heavenly grace and resolution against all thy discouragements, and then thou goest full speed for leaven; but if thou falter in thy will and be not sound there, thou wilt run hobbling and halting all the way’ thou

runnest, and ‘also to be sure thou wilt fall short at last. The Lord give thee a will and courage! Thus base I done with directing’ thee how to run to the kingdom; be sure thou keep in memory what I have said unto thee, lest thou lose thy way. But because I would have thee think of them, take all in short in this little bit of paper:

1. Get into the way.
2. Then study on it.
3. Then strip and lay aside everything that would hinder.
4. Beware of by-paths.
5. Do not gaze and stare too much about thee, but be sure to ponder the path of thy feet.
6. Do not stop for any that call after thee, whether it be the world, the flesh, or the devil, for all these will hinder thy journey if possible.
7. Be not daunted with any discouragements thou meet-est with as thou goest.
8. Take heed of stumbling at the cross.
9. Cry hard to God for an enlightened heart and willing mind, and God give thee a prosperous journey!

Yet before I do quite take my leave of thee let me give thee a few motives along with thee. It may be ‘they will be as good as a pair of spurs to prick on thy lumpish heart in this rich journey.

THE FIRST MOTIVE.

Consider, there is no way but this: thou must either win or lose. If thou winnest, then heaven, God, Christ, glory, ease, peace, life, yea, life eternal, is thine; thou shalt be made equal to the angels in heaven; thou shalt sorrow no more, sigh no more, feel no more pain; thou shalt be out of the reach of sin, hell, death, the devil, the grave and whatever else may endeavor thy hurt. But contrariwise, and if’ thou lose, then thy loss is heaven, glory, God, Christ, ease, peace, land whatever else which tendeth to make eternity comfortable to the saints; besides, thou procurest eternal

death, sorrow, pain, blackness, and darkness, fellowship with devils, together with the everlasting damnation of thy own soul.

THE SECOND MOTIVE.

Consider that this devil, this hell, death and damnation follow after thee as hard as they can drive, and have their commission so to do by the law, against which thou hast sinned; and therefore, for the Lord's sake, make haste.

THE THIRD MOTIVE.

If they seize upon thee before thou get a the city of refuge, they will put an everlasting stop to thy journey. This also cries, Run for it.

THE FOURTH MOTIVE.

Know also that now heaven-gates, the heart of Christ, with his arms, are wide open to receive thee. Oh methinks that this consideration, that the devil followeth after to destroy, and that Christ standeth open-armed to receive, should make thee reach out and fly with all haste and speed! And therefore

THE FIFTH MOTIVE.

Keep thine eye upon the prize; be sure that ' thy eyes be continually upon the profit thou art like to get. The reason why men are so apt to faint in their race for heaven, it lieth chiefly in either of these two things:

- 1.** They do not seriously consider the worth of the prize; or else if they do, they are afraid it is too good for them, but must lose heaven for want of considering the prize and the worth of it. And therefore, that thou mayest not do the like, keep thine eye much upon the excellency, the sweetness, the beauty, the comfort, the peace that is to be had there by those that win the prize. This was that which made the apostle run through any thing — good report, evil report, persecution, affliction, hunger, nakedness, peril by sea and peril by land, bonds and imprisonment's. Also it made others endure to be stoned, sawn asunder, to have their eyes bored with augers, their bodies broiled on gridirons, their

tongues cut out of their mouths, boiled in caldrons, thrown to the; wild beasts, burned at the stake, whipped at posts, and a thousand other fearful torments, “while they looked not at the things that are seen, (as the things of-this world,) but at the things that are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen. are eternal.” Oh this word “eternal!” That was it that made them, when they might have had deliverance, not accept of it, for they knew in the world to come they should have a better resurrection.

2. And do not let the thoughts of the rareness of the place make thee say in thy heart, This is too good for me; for I tell thee heaven is prepared for whosoever will accept of it, and they shall be entertained with a hearty good welcome. Consider, therefore, that as bad as thou have got thither; thither went scrubbed, beggarly Lazarus, etc. Nay, it is prepared for the poor: “Hearken, my beloved brethren, (saith James — take notice of it,) hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom?” Therefore take heart and. run, man. And

THE SIXTH MOTIVE.

Think much of them that are gone before. First, how really they go into the kingdom. Secondly, how safe they are in the arms of Jesus; would they be here again for a thousand worlds? Or if they were, would they be afraid that God would not make them welcome? Thirdly, what would they judge of thee if they knew thy heart began to fail thee in thy journey, or thy sins began to allure thee and to persuade thee to stop thy race? Would they not call thee a thousand fools, and say, Oh that he did but see what we see, feel what we feel, and taste of the dainties that we taste of! Oh if he were one quarter of an hour to behold, to see, to feel, to taste and enjoy but the thousandth part of what we enjoy, what would he do? What would he suffer? What would he leave undone? Would he favor sin? Would he love this world below? Would he be afraid of friends, or shrink at the most fearful threatenings that the greatest tyrants could invent to give him? Nay, those who have had but: a sight of these things by faith, when they have been as far off from them as heaven from earth, yet they have been able to say, with a comfortable and merry heart, as the bird that sings in the spring, that; this and more shall not stop them from running to heaven. Sometimes, when my base heart hath been inclining to this world and to

loiter in my journey towards heaven, the very consideration of the glorious saints and angels in heaven, what they enjoy, and what low thoughts they have of the things of this world together, how they would befool me if they did but know that my heart was drawing back, hath caused me to rush forward, to disdain these poor, low, empty, beggarly things, and to say to my soul, Come, soul, let us not be weary; let us see what this heaven is; let us even venture all for it, and try if that will quit the cost. Surely Abraham, David, Paul and the rest of the saints of God were as wise as any are now, and yet they lost all for this glorious kingdom. Oh therefore throw away your lusts, follow after righteousness, love the Lord Jesus, devote thyself unto his fear. I'll warrant thee he will give thee a goodly recompense. Reader, what sayest thou to this? Art thou resolved to follow me? Nay, resolve if thou canst to get before me. So run that ye may obtain.

THE SEVENTH MOTIVE.

To encourage thee a little further, set to the work, and when thou hast run thyself down weary, then the Lord Jesus will take thee up and carry thee. Is not this enough to make any poor soul begin his race? Thou (perhaps) criest, Oh but I am feeble, I am lame, etc. Well, but Christ hath a bosom; consider, therefore, when thou hast run thyself down weary he will put thee in his bosom: "He shall gather the lambs with his arms and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." This is the way that fathers take to encourage their children, saying, Run, sweet babe, until thou art weary, and then I will take thee up and carry thee. "He will gather his lambs with his arms and carry them in his bosom." When they are weary they shall ride.

THE EIGHTH MOTIVE.

Or else he will convey new strength from heaven into thy soul, which will be as well. "The youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail, but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not be faint." What shall I say besides what hath already been said? Thou shalt have good and easy lodging, good and wholesome diet, the bosom of Christ to lie in, the joys of heaven to feed

on. Shall I speak of the satiety and of the duration of all these? Verily to describe them to the height, it is a work too hard for me to do.

THE NINTH MOTIVE.

Again, methinks the very industry of the devil and the industry of his servants, etc., should make you that have a desire to heaven and happiness to run apace. Why, the devil, he will lose no time, spare no pains, also neither will his servants, both to seek the destruction of themselves and others; and shall not we be as industrious for our own salvation? Shall the world venture the damnation of their souls for a poor corruptible crown, and shall not we venture the loss of a few trifles for an eternal crown? Shall they venture the loss of eternal friends, as God to love, Christ to redeem, the Holy Spirit to comfort, heaven for habitation, saints and angels for company, and all this to get and hold communion with sin, and this world, and a few base, drunken, swearing, lying, covetous wretches like themselves, and shall not we labor as hard, run as fast, seek as diligently, nay, a hundred times more diligently, for the company of these glorious, eternal friends, though with the loss of such as these, nay, with the loss of ten thousand times better than these poor, low, base, contemptible things? Shall it be said at the last day that wicked men made more haste to hell than you did make to heaven? — that they spent more hours, days, and that early and late, for hell, than you spent for that which is ten thousand thousand of thousand times better? Oh let it not be so, but run with all might and main.

Thus you see I have here spoken something, though but little. Now I shall come to make some use and application of what hath been said, and so conclude.

THE FIRST USE.

You see here that he that will go to heaven, he must run for it; yea, and not only run, but so run; that is, (as I have said,) to run earnestly, to run continually, to strip off every thing that would hinder in his race with the rest. Well, then, do you so run.

1. And now let us examine a little. Art thou got into the right way? Art thou in Christ's righteousness? Do not say yes in thy heart, when in truth

there is no such matter. It is a dangerous thing, you know, for a man to think he is in the right way when he is in the wrong, It is the next way for him to lose his way, and not only so, but if he run for heaven, as thou sayest thou dost, even to lose that too. Oh this is the misery of most men, to persuade themselves that they run right, when they never had one foot in the way. The Lord give thee understanding here, or else thou art undone for ever. Prithee, soul, search when was it thou turned out of thy sins and righteousness into the righteousness of Jesus Christ. I say, dost thou see thyself in him, and is he more precious to thee than the whole world? Is thy mind always musing on him, and also to be walking with him? Dost thou count his company more precious than the whole world? Dost thou count all things but poor, lifeless, empty, vain things, without communion with him?

Doth his company sweeten all things, and his absence embitter all things? Soul, I beseech thee be serious and lay it to heart, and do not take things of such weighty concernment as the salvation or damnation of thy soul without good ground.

2. Art thou unladen of the things of this world, as pride, pleasures, profits, lusts, vanities? What! dost thou think to run fast enough with the world, thy sins and lusts in thy heart? I tell thee, soul, they that have laid all aside, every weight, every sin, and are got into the nimblest posture, they find work enough to run — so to run as to hold out.

To run through all that opposition, all the jostles, all these rubs, over all the stumbling-blocks, over all the snares, from all the entanglements that the devil, sin, the world, and their own hearts lay before them — I tell thee if thou art going heavenward thou wilt find it no small or easy matter. Art thou therefore discharged and unladen of these things? Never talk of going to heaven if thou art not. It is to be feared thou wilt be found among the “many that will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.”

THE SECOND USE.

If so, then, in the next place, what will become of them that are grown weary before they are got halfway thither? Why, man, it is he that holdeth out to the end that must be saved; it is he that overcometh that shall inherit all things; it is not every one that begins. Agrippa gave a fair step

for a sudden; he steps almost into the bosom of Christ in less than half an hour. "Thou (saith he to Paul) hast almost persuaded me to be a Christian." Ah! but it was but *almost*, and so he had as good have been never a whit; he stepped fair indeed, but yet he stopped short; he was hot while he was at it, but he was quickly out of wind. Oh this *but almost!* I tell you, this *but almost*, it lost his soul. Methinks I have seen sometimes how these poor wretches that get but almost to heaven, how fearfully their *almost* and their *but almost* will torment them in hell, when they shall cry out in bitterness of their soul, saying, "*Almost* a Christian." I was almost got into the kingdom, almost out of the hands of the devil, almost out of my sins, almost from under the curse of God; almost, and that was all; almost, but not all together. Oh that I should be almost at heaven, and should not go quite through Friend. it is a sad thing to sit down before we are in heaven, and to grow weary before we come to the place of rest; and if it should be thy case, I am sure thou dost not so run as to obtain. But again,

THE THIRD USE.

In the next place. What then will become of them that some time since were running post-haste to heaven, (insomuch that they seemed to outstrip many, but now are running as fast back again? Do you think those will ever come thither? What! to run back again — back again to sin, to the world; to the devil — back again to the lust of the flesh! Oh, "it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it to turn (to turn back · again) from the holy commandment." Those men shall not only be damned for sin, but for professing to all the world that sin is better than Christ; for the man that runs back again, he doth as good as say, I have tried Christ, and I have tried sin, and I do not find so much profit in Christ as in sin. I say, this man declareth this, even by his running back again. Oh sad! What a doom they will have who were almost at heaven-gates and then run back again! "If any draweth back,:" saith Christ, "my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Again, "No man having put his hand to the plough, (that is, set forward in the ways of God,) and looking back, (turning back again,) is fit for. the kingdom of heaven." And if not fit for the kingdom of heaven, then for certain he must needs be fit for the fire of hell. And therefore (saith the

apostle) those that bring forth these apostatizing fruits, as “briers and thorns, are rejected, being nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.” Oh there is never another Christ to save them by bleeding and dying for them! And if they “shall not escape that neglect,” then how shall they escape that reject and turn their back upon “so great a salvation?” And if the righteous — that is, they that run for it — will find work enough to get to heaven, “then where will the ungodly (backsliding) sinner appear?” Or, if Judas the traitor or Francis Spira the backslider were but now alive in the world to whisper these men in the ear a little, and tell them what it hath cost their souls for backsliding, surely it would stick by them and make them afraid of running back again so long as they had one day to live in this world

THE FOURTH USE.

So again, fourthly. How like to these men’s sufferings will those be that have all this while sat still, and have not so much as set one foot forward to the kingdom of heaven! Surely he that backslideth and he that sitteth still in sin, they are both of one mind; the one he will not stir, because he loveth his sins and the things of this world; the other he runs back again, because he loveth his sins and the things of this world; is it not one and the same thing: They are all one here, and shall not one and the same hell hold them hereafter? He is an ungodly one that never looked after Christ, and he is an ungodly one that did once look after him and then ran quite back again; and therefore that word must certainly drop out of the mouth of Christ against them both, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

THE FIFTH USE.

Again, here you may see in the next place. That is, they that will have heaven must run for it; then this calls aloud to those who began but a while since to run; I say, for them to mend their pace if they intend to win; you know that they which come hindmost had need run fastest. Friend, I tell thee there be those that have run ten years to thy one, nay twenty to five, and yet if thou talk with them sometimes they will say they doubt they shall come late enough. How then will it be with thee? Look to it, therefore, that thou delay no time, not an hour’s time, but part speedily

with all, with everything that is an hindrance to thee in thy journey, and run; yea, and so run that thou mayest obtain.

THE SIXTH USE.

Again, sixthly. You that are old professors, take you heed that the young striplings of Jesus, that began to strip but the other day, do not outrun you, so as to have that Scripture fulfilled on you, "The first shall be last and the last first;" which will be a shame to you and a credit for them. What! for a young soldier to be more courageous than he that hath been used to wars! To you that are hindermost, I say, Strive to outrun them that are before you; and you that are foremost, I say, Hold your ground, and keep before them in faith and love if possible; for indeed that is the right running, for one to strive to outrun another; even for the hindermost to endeavor to overtake the foremost, and he that is before should be sure to lay out himself to keep his ground, even to the very utmost. But then,

THE SEVENTH USE.

Again. How basely they do behave themselves, how unlike are they to win, that think it enough to keep company with the hindmost! There are some men that profess themselves such as run for heaven as well as any; yet if there be but any lazy, slothful, cold, halfhearted professors in the country, they will be sure to take example by them; they think if they can but keep pace with them they shall do fair; but these do not consider that the hindmost lose the prize. You may know it if you will that it cost the foolish virgins dear for their coming too late: "They that were ready went in with him, and the door was shut. Afterward (mark, afterward!) came the other (the foolish) virgins; saying, Lord, open to us; but he answered and said, Depart, I know you not." Depart, lazy professors, slothful professors. Oh, methinks the word of God is so plain for the overthrow of your lazy professors that it is to be wondered men do take no more notice of it. How was Lot's wife served for running lazily and for giving but one look behind her after the things she left in Sodom? How was Esau served for staying too long before he came for the blessing? And how were they served that are mentioned in ¹³ Luke 13, for staying till "the door was shut?" Also the foolish virgins; a heavy after-groan will they give that have thus stayed too long. It turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt; it made Esau

weep with an exceeding loud. and bitter cry; it made Judas hang him-sell'; yea, and it will *make* thee curse the day in which thou wast born if thou miss of the kingdom, as thou wilt certainly do if this be thy course. But,

THE EIGHTH USE.

Again. How and if thou by thy lazy running should not only destroy thyself, but also thereby be the cause of the damnation of some others? For thou being a professor, thou must think that others will take notice of thee; but because thou art but a poor, cold, lazy runner, and. one that seeks to drive the world and pleasure along with thee, why, thereby others will think of doing so too. Nay, say they, why may not we as well as he? He is a professor, and yet he seeks for pleasures, riches, profits; he loveth vain company, and he is so and so, and professeth that he is going for heaven; yea, and he saith also he doth not fear but he shall have entertainment; let us therefore keep pace with him; we shall fare no worse than he. Oh how fearful a thing will it be if that thou shalt be instrumental to the ruin of others by thy halting in the way of righteousness! Look to it; thou wilt have strength little enough to appear before God to give an account of the loss of thy own soul; thou needest not have to give an account for others why thou didst stop them front entering in. How wilt thou answer that saying, You would not enter in yourselves, and them that would, you hinder; for that saying is eminently fulfilled on them that through their own idleness do keep themselves out of heaven,, and by giving of others the same examples hinder them also.

THE NINTH USE.

Therefore, now to speak a word to both of you, and so I shall conclude.

1. I beseech you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that none of you do run so lazily in the way to heaven as to hinder either yourselves or others. I know that even he which runs laziest, if he should see a man running for a temporal life, if he should so much neglect his own well-being in this world as to venture, when he is a-running for his life, to pick up here and there a lock of wool that hangeth by the wayside, or to step now and then aside out of the way for to gather up a straw or two or any rotten stick — I say, if he should do this when he is a-running for his life, thou wouldst

condemn him; and dost thou not condemn thyself that dost the very same effect, nay worse — that loiterest in thy race, notwithstanding thy soul, heaven, glory, and all is at stake? Have a care, have a care; poor, wretched sinner, have a care.

2. If yet there shall be any that, notwithstanding this advice, win Still be flagging and loitering in the way to the kingdom of glory, be thou so wise as not to take example by them. Learn of no man farther than he followeth Christ. But look unto Jesus, who is not only the author and finisher of faith, but who did, for the joy that was set before him, endure the cross, despise the shame, and is now set down at the right hand of God; I say, look to no man to learn of him farther than he followeth Christ. “Be ye followers of me,” saith Paul, “even as I am of Christ.” Though he was an eminent man, yet his exhortation was that none should follow him any farther than he followed Christ.

PROVOCATION.

Now, that you may be provoked to run with the foremost take notice of this. When Lot and his wife were running from cursed Sodom to the mountain tops to save their lives., it is said that his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt; and yet you see that neither her practice, nor the judgment of God that fall upon her for the same, would cause Lot to look behind him. I have sometimes wondered at Lot in this particular; his wife looked behind her and died immediately, but let what would become of her, Let would not so much, as look behind him to see her. We do not read that he did so much as once look: where she was or what was become of her; his heart was indeed upon his journey, and well it might: there was the mountain before him and the fire and brimstone behind him; his life lay at stake, and he had lost it if he had but looked behind him. Do thou so run; and in thy race remember Lot’s wife and remember her doom, and remember for what that doom did overtake her, and remember that God made him an example for all lazy runners to the end of the world; and take heed thou fall not after the same example. But

—
If this will not provoke thee, consider thus:

1. Thy soul is thy own soul that is either to be saved or lost thou shalt not lose my soul by thy laziness, It is thy own soul, thy own ease, thy own peace, thy own advantage or disadvantage. If it were my own that thou art desired to be good unto, methinks reason should move thee somewhat to pity it. But, alas I it is thy own, thy own soul. “What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” God’s people wish well to the souls of others, and wilt not thou wish well to thy own? And if this wilt not provoke thee, then think —

Again,

2. If thou lose thy soul, it is thou also that must bear the blame. It made Cain stark mad to consider that he had not looked to his brother Abel’s soul. How much more will it perplex thee to think that thou hadst not a care of thy own! And if this will not provoke thee to bestir thyself, think again

3. That if thou wilt not run, the people of God are resolved to deal with thee even as Lot dealt with his wife — that is, leave thee behind them. It may be thou hast a father, mother, brother, etc., going post-haste to heaven; wouldst thou be willing to be left behind them? Surely no.

Again,

4. Will it not be a dishonor to thee to see the very boys and girls in the country to have more wit than thyself? It may be the servants of some, men, as the horsekeeper, ploughman, scullion, etc., are more looking after heaven than their masters. I am apt to think, sometimes, that more servants than masters, that more tenants than landlords, will inherit the kingdom of heaven, But is not this a shame for them that are such? I am persuaded you scorn that your servants should say that they are wiser than you in the things of the world, and yet I am bold to say that many of them are wiser than you in the things of the world to come, which are of greater concernment.

EXPOSTULATION.

Well, then, sinner, what sayest thou? Where is thy heart? Wilt thou run? Art thou resolved to strip, or art thou not? Think quickly, man; it is not dallying in this matter. Confer not with flesh and blood; look up to heaven, and see how thou likest it; also to hell, (of which thou mayest understand something

in my book, called “A Few Sighs from Hell; or, The Groans of a Damned Soul,” which I wish thee to read seriously over,) and accordingly devote thyself. If thou dost not know the way, inquire at the word of God; if thou wantest company, cry for God’s Spirit; if thou wantest encouragement, entertain the promises. But be sure thou begin betimes; get into the way, run apace, and hold out at the end, and the Lord give thee a prosperous journey!

FAREWELL.

THE BARREN FIG TREE;

OR,

THE DOOM AND DOWNFALL OF THE FRUITLESS PROFESSOR:

**SHOWING THAT THE DAY OF GRACE MAY BE PAST WITH HIM
LONG BEFORE HIS LIFE IS ENDED: THE SIGNS, ALSO, BY
WHICH SUCH MISERABLE MORTALS MAY' BE KNOWN.**

TO THE READER.

COURTEOUS READER:

I have written to thee now about the barren fig tree, or how it will fare with the fruitless professor that standeth in the vineyard of God.

Of what complexion thou art I cannot certainly divine, but the parable tells thee that the cumber-ground must be cut down.

A cumber-ground professor is not only a provocation to God, a stumbling-block to the world, and a blemish to religion, but a snare to his own soul also. "Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds, yet he shall perish for ever, like his own dung; they that have seen him shall say, Where is he?"

Now they count it pleasure to riot in the daytime. But what will they do when the axe is fetched out?

The tree whose fruit withereth is reckoned a tree without fruit, a tree twice dead, one that must be plucked up by the roots.

O thou cumber-ground, God expects fruit — God will come seeking fruit shortly.

My exhortation therefore is to professors, that they look to it that they take heed.

The barren fig tree in the vineyard and the bramble in the wood are both prepared for the fire.

Profession is not a covert to hide from the eye of God, nor will it palliate the revengeful threatening of his justice; he will command to cut it down shortly.

The Church and a profession are the best of places for the upright, but the worst in the world for the cumber-ground; he must be cast, as profane, out of the mount of God — cast, I say, over the wall of the vineyard, there to wither, thence to be gathered and burned. It had been better for them that they had not known the way of righteousness. And yet if they had not, they had been damned, but it is better to go to hell without than in or from under a profession. These shall receive greater damnation.

If thou be a professor, read and tremble; if thou be profane, do so likewise. “For if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinners appear?” Cumber-ground, take heed of the axe; barren fig tree, beware of the fire.

But I will keep thee no longer out of the book. Christ Jesus, the dresser of the vineyard, take care of thee, dig about thee, and dung thee, that thou mayest bear fruit, that when the Lord of the vineyard cometh with his axe to seek for fruit or pronounce the sentence of damnation on the barren fig tree, thou mayest escape that judgment. The cumber-ground must to the wood-pile, and thence to the fire. Farewell.

Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus in sincerity! Amen.

John Bunyan.

THE BARREN FIG TREE.

A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none; cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down. —

◀216 LUKE 13:6-9.

AT the beginning of this chapter we read how some of the Jews came to Jesus Christ to tell him of the cruelty of Pontius Pilate in mingling the blood of the Galileans with their sacrifices — an heathenish and prodigious act: for therein he showed not only his malice against the Jewish nation, but also against their worship, and consequently their God — an action, I say, not only heathenish, but prodigious also; for the Lord Jesus, paraphrasing upon this fact of his, teacheth the Jews that, without repentance “they should all likewise perish” — likewise, that is, by the hand and rage of the Roman empire. Neither should they be more able to avoid the stroke than were those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them; the fulfilling of which prophecy, for their hardness of heart and impenitency, was in the days of Titus, son of Vespasian, about forty years after the death of Christ. Then, I say, were these Jews and their city both environed round on every side, wherein both they and it to amazement were miserably overthrown. God gave them sword and famine, pestilence and blood for their outrage against the Son of his love; so “wrath came on them to the uttermost.”

Now to prevent their old and foolish salvo, which they always had in readiness against such prophecies and denunciations of judgment, the Lord Jesus presents them with this parable, in which he emphatically shows them that their cry of being the temple of the Lord, and of their being the children of Abraham, etc., and their being the Church of God, would not stand them in any stead. As who should say, It may be you think to help yourselves against this my prophecy of your utter and unavoidable

overthrow by the interest which you have in your outward privileges, but all these will fail you; for what think you, “A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.” This is your case. The Jewish land is God’s vineyard, I know it; and I know also that you are the fig trees. But behold, there wanteth the main thing, fruit, for the sake and in expectation of which he set this vineyard with trees. Now, seeing the fruit is not found amongst you — the fruit, I say, for the sake of which he did at first plant this vineyard — what remains but that in justice he command to cut you down as those that cumber the ground, that he may plant himself another vineyard? “Then said he to the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none; cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?” This therefore must be your end, although you are planted in the garden of God; for the barrenness and unfruitfulness of your hearts and lives you must be cut off, yea, rooted up and cast out of the vineyard.

In parables there are two things to be taken notice of and to be inquired into of them that read:

First. The metaphors made use of.

Secondly. The doctrine or mysteries couched under such metaphors.

The metaphors in this parable are —

1. A certain man;
2. A vineyard;
3. A fig tree, barren or fruitless;
4. A dresser;
5. Three years;
6. Digging and dunging, etc.

The doctrine or mystery couched under these words is to show us what is like to become of a fruitless or formal professor. For —

1. By the man in the parable (^{Q151} Luke 15:11) is meant God the Father.

2. By the vineyard, (²³⁸⁷Isaiah 5:7,) his Church.
3. By the fig tree, a professor.
4. By the dresser, the Lord Jesus.
5. By the fig tree's barrenness, the professor's fruitlessness.
6. By the three years, the patience of God that for a time he extendeth to barren professors.
7. This calling to the dresser of the vineyard to cut it down is to show the outcries of justice against fruitless professors.
8. The dresser's interceding is to show how the Lord Jesus steps in and takes hold of the head of his Father's axe, to stop, or at least to defer, present execution of a barren fig tree.
9. The dresser's desire to try to make the fig tree fruitful is to show you how unwilling he is that ever a barren fig tree should yet be barren and perish.
10. His digging about it and dunging of it is to show his willingness to apply gospel helps to this barren professor, if haply he may be fruitful.
11. The supposition that the fig tree may yet continue fruitless is to show that when Christ Jesus hath done all there are some professors will abide barren and fruitless.
12. The determination upon this supposition at last to cut it down is a certain prediction of such professors' unavoidable and eternal damnation.

But to take this parable into pieces and to discourse more particularly, though with all brevity, upon all the parts thereof.

A CERTAIN MAN HAD A FIG TREE PLANTED IN HIS VINEYARD.

The man, I told you, is to represent to us God the Father, by which similitude he is often set out in the New Testament.

Observe, then, that it is no new thing if you find in God's Church barren fig trees, fruitless professors, even as here you see is a tree, a fruitless tree,

a fruitless fig tree in the vineyard. Fruit is not so easily brought forth as a profession is got into; it is easy for a man to clothe himself with a fair show in the flesh, to word it, and say, Be thou warmed and filled with the best. It is no hard thing to do these with other things, but to be fruitful, to bring forth fruit to God, this doth not every tree, no not every fig tree that stands in the vineyard of God. Those words also, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away," assert the same thing. There are branches in Christ, in Christ's body mystical, (which is his Church, his vineyard,) that bear not fruit, wherefore the hand of God is to take them away. "I looked for grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes;" that is, no fruit at all that was acceptable with God. Again, "Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself," none to God; he is without fruit to God. All these, with many more, show us the truth of the observation, and that God's Church may be cumbered with fruitless fig trees, with barren professors.

HAD A FIG FREE.

Although there be in God's Church that be barren and fruitless, yet, as I said, to look upon they are like the rest of the trees, even a fig tree: it was not an oak, nor a willow, nor a thorn, nor a bramble, but a fig tree. "They come before thee as thy people cometh;" "They delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness and forsook not the ordinances of their God; they ask of me the ordinances of justice, they take delight in approaching to God," and yet but barren, fruitless and unprofitable professors. Judas also was one of the twelve, a disciple, an apostle, a preacher, an officer, yea, and such a one as none of the eleven mistrusted, but preferred before themselves, each one crying out, "Is it I? Is it I?" None of them, as we read of, mistrusted Judas, yet he, in Christ's eye, was the barren fig tree, a devil, a fruitless professor. The foolish virgins also went forth of the world with the other, had lamps and light, and were awakened with the other; yea, had boldness to go forth, when the midnight cry was made, with the other, and thought that they could have looked Christ in the face when he sat upon the throne of judgment, with the other, and yet but foolish, but barren fig trees, but fruitless professors. "Many," saith Christ, "will say unto me in that day" this and that, and will also talk of many wonderful works; yet behold, he finds nothing in them but the

fruits of unrighteousness: they were altogether barren and fruitless professors.

HAD A FIG TREE PLANTED.

This word planted doth also reach far; it supposeth one taken out of its natural soil, or removed from the place it grew once; one that seemed to be called, awakened, and not only so, but by strong hand carried from this world to the church, from nature to grace, from sin to godliness. ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 80:8.

“Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt;
thou has cast out the heathen, and planted it.”

Of some of the branches of this vine were there unfruitful professors.

It must be concluded, therefore, that this professor that remaineth, notwithstanding, fruitless, is, as to the view and judgment of the Church, rightly brought in thither — to wit, by confession of faith, of sin, and a show of repentance and regeneration: thus false brethren creep in unawares. All these things this word *planteth* intimateth; yea, further, that the Church is satisfied with them, consents they should abide in the garden, and counteth them sound as the rest; but before God, in the sight of God, they are graceless professors, barren and fruitless fig trees.

Therefore, it is one thing to be in the Church or in a profession, and another to be of the Church and to belong to that kingdom that is prepared for the saint that is so indeed. Otherwise, “being planted, shall it prosper? shall it not utterly wither when the east wind toucheth it? It shall wither in the furrows where it grew.”

HAD A FIG TREE PLANTED IN HIS VINEYARD.

In *his* vineyard. Hypocrites with rotten hearts are not afraid to come before God in Zion. These words, therefore, suggest unto us a prodigious kind of boldness and hardened fearlessness; for what presumption higher and what attempt more desperate than for a man that wanteth grace and a true knowledge of God to crowd himself, in that condition, into the house or Church of God, or to make profession of and desire that the name of God should be called upon him?

For the man that maketh a profession of the religion of Jesus Christ, that man hath, as it were, put the name of God upon himself, and is called and reckoned now (how fruitless soe'ever before God or men) the man that hath to do with God, the man that God owneth and will stand for. This man, I say, by his profession, suggesteth this to all that know him to be such a professor. Men merely natural — I mean, men that have not got the devilish art of hypocrisy — are afraid to think of doing thus: “And of the rest durst no man join himself to them, but the people magnified them.” And indeed it displeaseth God: “They have brought,” saith he, “men uncircumcised into my sanctuary.” And again, (²¹¹²Isaiah 1:12:) “When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to read my courts?” saith God. They have of the devil, for he, and he only, with these his disciples, attempt to present themselves in the Church before God. “The tares are the children of the wicked one” — the tares, that is, the hypocrites, that are Satan’s brood, the generation of vipers, that cannot escape the damnation of hell.

HAD A FIG TREE PLANTED IN HIS VINEYARD.

He doth not say, He planted a fig tree, but there was a fig tree there; he had or found a fig tree planted in his vineyard.

The great God will not acknowledge the barren fig tree or barren professor to be his workmanship or a tree of his bringing in; only the text saith he had one there. This is much like that in ⁴¹⁵³Matthew 15:13:

“Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not
planted shall be rooted up.”

Here again are plants in his vineyard which God will not acknowledge to be of his planting; and he seems to suggest that in his vineyard are many such. Every plant, or all those plants or professors that are got into the assembly of the saints or into the profession of their religion without God and his grace, “shall be rooted up.”

“And when the King came in to see the guests, he saw there a man that had not on a wedding garment. And he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding-garment?” Here is one so cunning and crafty that he beguiled all the guests: he got and kept in the Church,

even until the King himself came in to see the guests. But his subtilty got him nothing; it did not blind the eyes of the King; it did not pervert the judgment of the righteous. “Friend, how camest thou in hither?” did overtake him at last, even a public rejection; the King discovered him in the face of all present. “How camest thou in hither?” My Father did not bring thee hither; I did not bring thee hither; my Spirit did not bring thee hither; thou art not of the heavenly Father’s planting; “how camest thou in hither?” “He that cometh not in by the door, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.” This text is full and plain also to our purpose, for this man came not in by the door, yet got into the Church; he got in by climbing; he broke in at the windows; he got something of the light and glory of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in his head, and so (hardy wretch that he was) he presumed to crowd himself among the children. But how is this resented? What saith the King of him? Why, this is his sign: “the same is a thief and a robber.” See ye here also if all they be owned as the planting of God that get into his Church or make profession of his name.

Had a fig tree — had one without a wedding-garment, had a thief in his garden, at his wedding, in his house. These climbed up some other way. There are many ways to get into the Church of God and profession of his name besides, and without an entering by the door.

- 1.** There is the way of lying and dissembling; and at this gap the Gibeonites got in. ^{<699B>}Joshua 9:3, 4, etc.
- 2.** There is sometimes falseness amongst some pastors, either for the sake of carnal relations or the like; at this hole Tobiah the enemy of God got in. ^{<433D>}Nehemiah 13:4, 5, 6.
- 3.** There is sometimes negligence and too much uncircumspectness in the whole Church; thus the uncircumcised get in. ^{<344D>}Ezekiel 44:7, 8.
- 4.** Sometimes again, let the Church be never so circumspect, yet these have so much help from the devil that they beguile them all, and so get in. These are of that sort of thieves that Paul complains of: “false brethren are brought unawares.” Jude also cries out of these, “Certain men crept in unawares.” Crept in! What! What, were they so lowly? A voluntary humility, a neglecting of the body, not in any humor. Oh how seemingly self-

denying are some of these creeping things, that yet are to be held (as we shall know them) an abomination to Israel! ^{<BIB>}Leviticus 11:43, 44.

“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honor and some to dishonor.” By these words the apostle seems to take it for granted that as there hath been, so there still will be, these kind of fig trees, these barren professors in the house, when all men have done what they can; even as in a great house there are always vessels to dishonor, as well as those to honor and glory; vessels of wood and of earth, as well as of silver and of gold. So then there must be wooden professors in the garden of God, there must be earthly, earthen professors in his vineyard; but that methinks is the biting word, “and some to dishonor.” That to the Romans is dreadful, (^{<BIB>}Romans 9:21, 22,) but this seems to go beyond it; that speaks but of the reprobate in general, but this of such and such in particular; that speaks of their hardening but in the common way, but this that they must be suffered to creep into the Church, there to fit themselves for their place, their own place, (^{<BIB>}Acts 1:25,) the place prepared for them of this sort only; as the Lord Jesus said once of the Pharisees, “These shall receive greater damnation.”

Barren fig tree, fruitless professor, hast thou heard all these things? Hast thou considered that this fig tree is not acknowledged of God to be his, but is denied to be of his planting and of his bringing unto his wedding? Dost thou not see that thou art called a thief and a robber, that hast either climbed up to or crept in at another place than the door? Dost thou not hear that there will be in God’s house wooden and earthly professors, and that no place will serve to fit those for hell but the house, Church, the vineyard of God? Barren fig tree, fruitless Christian, do not thine ears tingle?

AND HE CAME AND SOUGHT FRUIT THEREON.

When a man hath got a profession, and is crowded into the Church and house of God, the question is not now, Hath he life, hath he right principles? but, Hath he fruit? He came seeking fruit thereon. It mattereth not who brought thee in hither, whether God or the devil, or thine own vain-glorious heart; but hast thou fruit? Dost thou bring forth fruit unto

God? “And let every one that nameth the name of the Lord Jesus Christ depart from iniquity.” He doth not say, And let every one that hath grace, or, Let those that have the Spirit of God; but, “Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord Jesus Christ depart from iniquity.”

What do men meddle with religion for? Why do they call themselves by the name of the Lord Jesus if they have not the grace of God, if they have not the Spirit of Christ? God therefore expecteth fruit. What do they do in the vineyard? Let them work or get them out; the vineyard must have laborers in it: “Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.” Wherefore want of grace and want of spirit will not keep God from seeking fruit: “And he came and sought fruit thereon.” He required that which he seemeth to have; every man in the vineyard and house of God promiseth himself, professeth to others, and would have all men take it for granted, that an heavenly principle is in him; why then should not God seek fruit?

As for them, therefore, that will retain the name of Christians, fearing God, and yet make conscience of bringing forth fruit to him, he saith to them, “Away! As for you, go ye, serve every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me,” etc. Barren fig tree, dost thou hear? God expecteth fruit, God calls for fruit, yea, God will shortly come seeking fruit on this barren fig tree. Barren fig tree, either bear fruit or go out of the vineyard; and yet then thy case will be unspeakably damnable. Yea, let me add, if they shall neither bear fruit nor depart, God “will take his name out of their mouth.” He will have fruit. And I say further, if thou wilt do neither, yet God in justice and righteousness will still come for fruit. And it will be in vain for thee to count this austerity. He will “reap where he hath not sown, and gather where he hath not strewed.” Barren fig tree, dost thou hear?

Question. What if a man have no grace?

Answer. Yet he hath a profession.

AND HE CAME AND SOUGHT FRUIT THEREON.

A Church, then, and a profession are not places where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves and sins from God. Some of old thought that because they could cry, “The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!”

that therefore they were delivered, or had a dispensation to do the abominations which they committed; as some in our days. For who (say they) have a right to the creatures if not Christians, if not professors, if not Church members? And from this conclusion let go the reins of their inordinate affections after pride, ambition, gluttony, pampering themselves without fear, (^{<small>6112</small>}Jude 1:12,) daubing themselves with the lust-provoking fashions of the times; to walk with stretched-out necks, naked breasts, frizzled foretops, wanton gestures, in gorgeous apparel, mixed with gold and pearl and costly array. I will not here make inspection unto their lives, their carriages at home, in their corners, and secret holes; but certainly persons thus spirited, thus principled, and thus inclined have but empty boughs — boughs that want the fruit that God expects, and that God will come down to seek.

Barren fig tree, thou art not licensed by thy profession nor by the Lord of the vineyard to bear these clusters of Gomorrah; neither shall the vineyard nor thy being crowded among the trees there shelter thee from the sight of the eye of God. Many make religion their cloak and Christ their stalking-home, and by that means cover themselves and hide their own wickedness from men; but God seeth their heart, hath his print upon the heels of their feet, and pondereth all their goings; and at last, when their iniquity is found to be hateful, he will either smite them with hardness of heart, and so leave them, or awaken them to bring forth fruit. Fruits he looks for, seeks and expects, barren fig tree!

But what! Come into the presence of God to sin! What! come into the presence of God to hide thy sin! Alas, man! the Church is God's garden, and Christ Jesus is the great Apostle and High Priest of our profession. What! come into the house that is called by my name! into the place where mine honor dwelleth, (^{<small>6113</small>}Psalm 36:8,) where mine eyes and heart are continually! ^{<small>6114</small>}1 Kings 9:3. What I come there to sin, to hide thy sin, to cloak thy sin! His plants are an orchard with pleasant fruits, (^{<small>6115</small>}Song of Solomon 4:13,) and every time he goeth into his garden it is "to see the fruits of the valley," and to "see if the vines flourish and if the pomegranates bud."

Yea, saith he, he came seeking fruit on this fig tree. The Church is the place of God's delight, where he ever desires to be: there he is night and day. He

is there to seek for fruit — to seek for fruit of all and every tree in the garden. Wherefore, assure thyself, O fruitless one, that thy ways must needs be open before the eyes of the Lord. One black sheep is soon espied, although in company with many — that is, taken with the first cast of the eye; its different color still betrays it. I say, therefore, a Church and a profession are not places where the workers of iniquity may hide themselves from God, that seeks for fruit. “My vineyard,” saith God, “which is mine, is before me.”

**AND HE CAME AND SOUGHT FRUIT THEREON,
AND FOUND NONE.**

Barren fig tree, hearken: thy continual non-bearing of fruit is a dreadful sign that thou art come to a dreadful end, as the winding up of this parable concludeth.

“And found none.” None at all, or none to God’s liking; for when he saith, “He came seeking fruit thereon,” he means “fruit meet for God,” pleasant fruit, fruit good and sweet. Alas I it is not any fruit will serve; bad fruit is counted none: “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.”

1. There is a fruit among professors that withers, and so never comes to be ripe; a fruit that is smitten in the growth, and comes not to maturity, and this is reckoned no fruit: this fruit those professors bear that have many fair beginnings or blossoms, that make many fair offers of repentance and amendment, that begin to pray to resolve, and to break off their sins by righteousness, but stop at those beginnings, and bring no fruit forth to perfection. This man’s fruit is withered, wrinkled, smitten fruit, and is in effect no fruit at all.

2. There is a hasty fruit, such as is the “corn upon the house-top” or that which springs up on the dung-hill, that runs up suddenly, violently, with great stalks and big show, and yet at last proves empty of kernel. This fruit is to be found in those professors that on sudden are so awakened, so convinced, and so affected with their condition that they shake the whole family, the endship, the whole town. For awhile they cry hastily, vehemently, dolefully, mournfully, yet all is but a pang, an agony, a fit;

they bring not forth fruit with patience. These are called those hasty fruits that “shall be a fading flower.”

3. There is a fruit that is vile and ill-tasted, (²⁰⁰¹Jeremiah 24) how long soever it be in growing; the root is dried, and cannot convey a sufficiency of sap to the branches to ripen the fruit. These are the fruit of such professors whose hearts are estranged from communion with the Holy Ghost, whose fruit groweth from themselves, from their parts, gifts, strength of wit, natural or moral principles. These, notwithstanding they bring forth fruit, are called empty vines, such as bring not forth fruit to God.

“Their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb.”

4. There is a fruit that is wild: “I looked for grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.” I observe that as there are trees and herbs that are wholly right and noble, fit indeed for the vineyard, so there are also their semblance, but wild, not right, but ignoble. There is the grape, and the wild grape; the vine, and the wild vine; the rose, and canker rose; flowers, and wild flowers; the apple, and the wild apple, which we call the crab. Now, fruit from these wild things, however they may please the children to play with, yet the prudent and grave count them of little or no value. There are also in the world a generation of professors that notwithstanding their profession are wild by nature; yea, such as were never cut out or off from the wild olive tree, nor never yet planted into the good olive tree. Now these can bring nothing forth but wild olive berries; they cannot bring forth fruit unto God. Such are all those that have lightly taken up a profession, and crept into the vineyard without a new birth and the blessing of regeneration.

5. There is also untimely fruit: “Even as a fig tree casteth forth her untimely figs” — fruit out of season, and so no fruit to God’s liking.

There are two sorts of professors subject to bring forth untimely fruit —

- 1.** They that bring forth fruit too soon;
- 2.** They that bring forth fruit too late.

1. They that bring forth too soon. They are such as at present receive the word with joy: anon, before they have root downwards, they thrust forth upwards, but having no root, when the sun ariseth they are smitten, and miserably die without fruit. These professors are those light and inconsiderate ones that think nothing but peace will attend the Gospel, and so anon rejoice at the tidings, without fore-seeing the evil; wherefore, when the evil comes, being unarmed, and so not able to stand any longer, they die and are withered, and bring forth no fruit: “He that received the seed in stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for awhile; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by they are offended.” There is in ²³⁰⁹Isaiah 28:4 mention made of some “whose glorious beauty shall be a fading flower,” because it is fruit before summer. Both these are untimely fruit.

2. They also bring forth untimely fruit that stay till the season is over. God will have his fruit in his season; I say, he will receive them of such men as shall render them to him in their season. The missing of the season is dangerous; staying till the door is shut is dangerous. Many there be that come not till the flood of God’s anger is raised and too deep for them to wade through, “Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.” Esau’s (afterwards) is fearful; “For ye know that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

So the children of Israel, they brought to God the fruits of obedience too late: their “Lo, we be here,” came too late; their “We will go up,” came too late: the Lord had sworn before “that they should not possess the land.” All these are such as bring forth untimely fruit. It is the hard hap of the reprobate to do all things too late, to be sensible of his want of grace too late, to be sorry for sin too late, to seek repentance too late, to ask for mercy and to desire to go to glory too late.

Thus you see that fruit smitten in the growth, that withereth, and that comes not to maturity, is no fruit; that hasty fruit, such as the “corn upon the house-top,” withereth also before it groweth up, and is no fruit; that the fruit that is vile and ill-tasted is no fruit; that wild fruit, wild grapes are

no fruit; that untimely fruit, such as comes too soon or that comes too late, such as come not in their season, are no fruit.

AND HE CAME AND SOUGHT FRUIT THEREON, AND FOUND NONE.

Nothing will do but fruit; he looked for grapes; when the time of fruit grew near he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruit of it.

Question. But what fruit doth God expect?

Answer. Good fruit. “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down.” Now, before the fruit can be good the tree must be good, for good fruit makes not a good tree, “but a good tree bringeth forth good fruit. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?” A man must be good, else he can bring forth no good fruit; he must have righteousness imputed, that he may stand good in God’s sight from the curse of his law; he must have a principle of righteousness in his soul, else how should he bring forth good fruits? and hence it is that a Christian’s fruits are called “the fruits of the Spirit, the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ.” The fruits of the Spirit, therefore the Spirit must be there; the fruits of righteousness, therefore righteousness must first be there. But to particularize in a few things briefly:

1. God expecteth fruit that will answer and be worthy of the repentance which thou feignest thyself to have. Every one in a profession and that hath crowded into the vineyard pretendeth to repentance: now of every such soul God expecteth that the fruits of repentance be found to attend them. “Bring forth fruits, therefore, meet for repentance,” or answerable to thy profession of the doctrine of repentance. Barren fig tree, seeing thou art a professor and art got into the vineyard, thou standest before the Lord of the vineyard as one of the trees of the garden; wherefore he looketh for fruit from thee as from the rest of the trees in the vineyard — fruit, I say, and such as may declare thee in heart and life one that hath sound profession of repentance. By thy profession thou hast said, I am sensible of the evil of sin. Now, then, live such a life as declares that thou art sensible of the evil of sin. By thy profession thou hast said, I am sorry for my sin. Why, then, live such a life as may declare this sorrow. By thy

profession thou hast said, “I am ashamed of my sin.” Yea, but live such a life that men by that may “see thy shame for sin.” By thy profession thou sayest, I have turned from, let off, and am become an enemy to every appearance of evil. Ah! but doth thy life and conversation declare thee to be such an one? Take heed, barren fig tree, lest thy life should give thy profession the lie; I say again, take heed, for God himself will come for fruit; “and he sought fruit thereon.”

You have some professors that are only saints before men when they are abroad, but are devils and vipers at home — saints by profession, but devils by practice — saints in word, but sinners in heart and life. These men may have the profession, but they want the fruits that become repentance.

Barren fig tree, can it be imagined that those that paint themselves did ever repent of their pride? or that those that pursue this world did ever repent of their covetousness? or that those that walk with wanton eyes did ever repent of their fleshly lusts? Where, barren fig tree, is the fruit of these people’s repentance? Nay, do they not rather declare to the world that they have repented of their profession? Their fruits look as if they had. Their pride saith they have repented of their humility; their covetousness declareth that they are weary of depending upon God; and doth not thy wanton actions declare that thou abhorrest charity? Where is thy fruit, barren fig tree? Repentance is not only a sorrow and a shame for, but a turning from, sin to God. In ^{scrip}Hebrews 4 it is called “repentance from dead works.” Hast thou that godly sorrow that worketh “repentance to salvation, never to be repented of?” How dost thou show thy carefulness and clearing of thyself, thy indignation against sin, thy fear of offending, thy vehement desire to walk with God, thy zeal for his name and glory in the world? And what revenge hast thou in thy heart against every thought of disobedience?

But where is the fruit of this repentance? Where is thy watching, thy fasting, thy praying against the remainders of corruption? Where is thy self-abhorrence, thy blushing before God, for the sin that is yet behind? Where is thy tenderness of the name of God and his ways? Where is thy self-denial and contentment? How dost thou show before men the truth of thy turning to God? “Hast thou renounced the hidden things of

dishonesty, not walking in craftiness?” Canst thou commend thyself “to every man’s conscience in the sight of God?”

2. God expecteth fruit that shall answer that faith which thou makest profession of. The professor that is got into the vineyard of God doth feign that he hath the faith the most holy, the faith of God’s elect. Ah! but where are thy fruits, barren fig tree? The faith of the Romans was spoken of throughout the whole world, and the Thessalonians’ faith grew exceedingly.

Thou professest to believe thou hast peace in another world; hast thou let go this, barren fig tree? Thou professest thou believest in Christ; is he the joy and the life of thy soul? Yea, what conformity unto him, to his sorrows and sufferings? What resemblance hath his crying, and groaning, and bleeding, and dying wrought in thee? Dost thou “bear in thy body the dying of the Lord Jesus?” and is also “the life of Jesus made manifest in thy mortal body?” Barren fig tree, “show me thy faith by thy works.” “Show out of a good conversation thy works with meekness of heart.”

What fruit, barren fig tree, what degree of heart-holiness? for “faith purifies the heart,” What love to the Lord Jesus? for” faith worketh by love.”

3. God expecteth fruits according to the seasons of grace thou art under, according to the rain that cometh upon thee. Perhaps thou art planted in a good soil, by great waters, that thou mightest bring forth branches and bear fruit, that thou mightest be a goodly vine or fig tree. Shall he not therefore seek for fruit, for fruit answerable to the means? Barren fig tree, God expects it, and will find it too if ever he bless thee. “For the earth which drinketh in the rain that comes oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for him by whom it is dressed, receives blessing for God; but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.”

Barren soul, how many showers of grace, how many dews from heaven, how many times have the silver streams of the city of God run gliding by thy roots, to cause thee to bring forth fruit? These showers and streams, and the drops that hang upon thy boughs, will all be accounted for; and will they not testify against thee that thou oughtest of right to be burned?

Hear and tremble, O thou barren professor! Fruits that become thy profession of the gospel the God of heaven expecteth. The gospel hath in it the forgiveness of sins, the kingdom of heaven, and eternal life; but what fruit hath thy profession of a belief of these things put forth in thy heart and life? Hast thou given thyself to the Lord? and is all that thou hast to be ventured for his name in this world? Dost thou walk like one that is bought with a price, even with the price of precious blood?

4. The fruit that God expecteth is such as is meet for himself — fruit that may glorify God. God’s trees “are trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified;” fruit that tasteth of heaven, abundance of such fruit. “For herein,” saith Christ, “is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit” — fruits of all kinds, new and old: the fruits of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. Fruits before the world, fruits before the saints, fruits before God, fruits before angels.

O my brethren, “what manner of persons ought we to be” who have subscribed to the Lord and have called ourselves by the name of Israel? “One shall say, I am the Lord’s; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.” Barren fig tree, hast thou subscribed, hast thou called thyself by the name of Jacob, and surnamed thyself by the name of Israel? All this thou pretendest to who art got into the vineyard, who art placed among the trees of the garden of God. God doth therefore look for such fruit as is worthy of his name, as is meet for him; as the apostle saith, “we should walk worthy of God;” that is, so as we may show in every place that the presence of God is with us, his fear in us, and his majesty and authority upon our actions. Fruits meet for him, such a dependence upon him, such trust in his word, such satisfaction in his presence, such a trusting of him with all my concerns, and such delights in the enjoyment of him that may demonstrate that his fear is in my heart, that my soul is wrapped up in his things, and that my body, and soul, and estates, and all are in truth, through his grace, at his dispose — fruit meet for him. Hearty thanks and blessing God for Jesus Christ, for his good word, for his free grace, for the discovery of himself in Christ to the soul, secret longing after another world — fruit meet for him. Liberality to the poor saint, to the poor world; a life in word and deed exemplary; a patient and quiet enduring of all things, till I have done and

suffered the whole will of God which he hath appointed for me. “That on the good ground are they which in honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.” This is bringing forth fruit unto God; “having our fruit unto holiness, and our end everlasting life.”

5. The Lord expects fruit becoming the vineyard of God. The vineyard, saith he, “is a very fruitful hill;” witness the fruit brought forth in all ages. The most barren trees that ever grew in the wood of this world, when planted in this vineyard by the God of heaven, what fruit to God-ward have they brought forth! “Abraham offered the more excellent sacrifice.” “Enoch walked with God for three hundred years.” “Noah, by his life of faith, condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness that is by faith.” “Abraham left his country and went out after God, not knowing whither he went.” Moses left a kingdom and ran the hazard of the wrath of the king for the love he had to God and Christ. What shall I say of them who had trials, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection? “They were stoned, they were sawn asunder; were tempted; were slain with the sword; they wandered in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented.” Peter left his father, his nets. Paul turned off from the feet of Gamaliel. Men brought their goods and possessions (the price of them) and cast it down at the apostles’ feet; and other brought their books together and burnt them — curious books, though they were worth fifty thousand pieces of silver. I could add how many willingly offer themselves in all ages, and their all, for the worthy name of the Lord Jesus, to be racked, starved, hanged, burned, drowned, pulled in pieces, and a thousand calamities! Barren fig tree, the vineyard of God hath been a fruitful place. What dost thou there? What dost thou bear? God expects fruit according to or becoming the soil of the vineyard.

6. The fruit which God expecteth is such as becometh God’s husbandry and labor. The vineyard is God’s husbandry or tillage. “I am the vine,” saith Christ, “and my Father is the husbandman.” And again, “Ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.” The vineyard, God fences it, God gathereth out the stones, God builds the tower, and the winepress in the midst thereof. Here is labor, here is protection, here is removing of hindrances, here is convenient purgation, and all that there might be fruit.

Barren fig tree, what fruit hast thou? Hast thou fruit becoming the care of God, the protection of God, the wisdom of God, the patience and husbandry of God? It is the fruit of the vineyard that is either the shame or the praise of the husbandman. "I went by the field of the slothful," saith Solomon, "and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and lo, it was grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof."

Barren fig tree, if men should make a judgment of the care, and pains, and labor of God in his Church by the fruit that thou bringest forth, what might they say? — Is he not slothful, is he not careless, is he not without discretion? Oh thy thorns, thy nettles, the barren heart and barren life is a continual provocation to the eyes of his glory, as likewise a dishonor to the glory of his grace.

Barren fig tree, hast thou heard all these things? I will add yet once more,

AND HE CAME AND SOUGHT FRUIT THEREON.

The question is not now what thou thinkest of thyself, nor what all the people of God think of thee, but what thou shalt be found in that day when God shall search thy boughs for fruit. When Sodom was to be searched for righteous men, God would not, in that manner, trust his faithful servant Abraham, but still as Abraham interceded, God answered, "If I find fifty or forty and five there, I will not destroy the city." Barren fig tree, what sayest thou? God will come down to see, God will make search for fruit himself.

"And he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he to the dresser of the vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none; cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"

These words are the effect of God's search into the boughs of a barren fig tree; he sought fruit and found none — none to his liking, none pleasant and good. Therefore first he complains of the want thereof to the dresser, calls him to come and see and take notice of the tree; then signifieth his pleasure: he will have it removed, taken away, cut down from cumbering the ground.

Observe, the barren fig tree is the object of God's displeasure; God cannot bear with a fruitless professor.

THEN SAID HE, ETC.

Then, after this provocation; *then*, after he had sought and found no fruit — *then*. This word *then* doth show us a kind of inward disquietness; as he saith also in another place, upon a like provocation, "Then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven."

Then intimateth that he was now come to a point, to a resolution, what to do with this fig tree. "Then said he to the dresser of this vineyard " — that is, to Jesus Christ — "*behold*;" as much as to say, Come hither; here is a fig tree in my vineyard, here is a professor in my Church, that is barren, that beareth no fruit.

Observe, however the barren professor thinks of himself on earth, the Lord cries out in heaven against him: "And now go to, I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and I will break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down."

BEHOLD THESE THREE YEARS I COME SEEKING FRUIT, ETC.

Observe, "these three years." God cries out that his patience is abused, that his forbearance is abused: behold, these three years I have waited, forborne — these three years I have deferred mine anger: "Therefore will I stretch out my hand against thee, and destroy thee: I am weary with repenting."

"These three years." Observe, God layeth up all the time, I say, a remembrance of all the time that a barren fig tree or a fruitless professor misspendeth from this world. As he saith also of Israel of old, "forty years long was I grieved with this generation."

"These three years," etc. These three seasons. Observe, God remembers how many seasons thou hast misspent, for these three signify so many

seasons. "And when the time of fruit drew nigh;" that is, about the season they begin to be ripe, or that according to the season might so have been. Barren fig tree, thou hast had time, seasons, ministers, afflictions, judgments, mercies, and what not, and yet hast not been fruitful. Thou hast had awakenings, reproofs, threatenings, comforts, and yet hast not been fruitful. Thou hast had patterns, examples, citations, provocations, and yet hast not been fruitful. Well, God hath laid up thy three years with himself. He remembers every time, every season, every sermon, every minister, affliction, judgment, mercy, awakening, pattern, example, citation, provocation: he remembers all. As he said of Israel of old, "They have tempted me these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice." And again, "I remember all their wickedness."

"These three years," etc. He seeks for the fruit of every season: he will not that any of his sermons, ministers, afflictions, judgments, or mercies should be lost or stand for insignificant things: he will have according to the benefit bestowed, he hath not done without a cause all that he hath done, and therefore he looketh for fruit. Look to it, barren fig tree.

I COME SEEKING FRUIT.

Observe, this word *seeking* signifies a narrow search; for when a man seeks for fruit on a tree, he goes round it and round it, now looking into this bough and then into that; he peeps into the inmost boughs and the lower-most boughs, if perhaps fruit may be thereon.

Barren fig tree, God will look into all thy boughs: he will be with thee in thy bed fruits, thy midnight fruits, thy closet fruits, thy family fruits, thy conversation fruits, to see if there be any among all these that are fit for or worthy of the name of the God of heaven, he sees what the children of Israel do in the dark. "All things are open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

SEEING FRUIT ON THIS FIG TREE.

I told you before that he keeps in remembrance the times and seasons that the barren professor had wickedly misspent. Now, forasmuch as he also pointeth out the fig tree, "this fig tree," it showeth that the barren professor, above all professors, is a continual odium in the eye of God.

This fig tree, this man Coniah. ^{<3228>}Jeremiah 22:28. This people draw nigh to me with their mouth, but have removed their hearts far from me. God knows who they are among all the thousands of Israel that are the barren and fruitless professors; his lot will fall upon the head of Achan, though he be hid amongst six hundred thousand men. And he brought his household, man by man, and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zubdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was taken. ^{<0077>}Joshua 7:17, 18. This is the Achan, this is the fig tree, this is the barren professor.

There is a man hath an hundred trees in his vineyard, and at the time of the season he walketh into his vineyard to see how the trees flourish; and as he goes and views and pries and observes how they are hanged with fruit, behold he cometh to one where he findeth naught but leaves. Now he makes a stand, looks upon it again and again; he looks also here and there, above and below; and if after all this seeking he finds nothing but leaves thereon, then he begins to cast in his mind how he may know this tree next year — what stands next it or how far it is off the hedge; but if there be nothing there that may be as a mark to know it by, then he takes his hook and giveth it a private mark, (“And the Lord set a mark upon Cain,”) saying, Go thy way, fruitless fig tree, thou hast spent this season in vain.

Yet doth he not now cut it down; I will try it another year; maybe this was not a hitting season. Therefore he comes again next year, to see if now it have fruit; but as he found it before, so he finds it now, barren, barren, every year barren; he looks again, but finds no fruit. Now he begins to have second thoughts. How! neither hit last year nor this? Surely the barrenness is not in the season, sure the fault is in the tree; however, I will spare it this year also, but will give it a second mark; and it may be he toucheth it with a hot iron, because he begins to be angry.

Well, at the third season he comes again for fruit, but the third year is like the first and second — no fruit yet; it only cumbereth the ground. What now must be done with this fig tree? Why, the Lord will lop its boughs with terror; yea, the thickest of those professors with iron. I have waited, saith God, these three years; I have missed of fruit these three years; it hath been a cumber-ground these three years; cut it down. Precept hath been upon precept, and line upon line, one year after another, for these three years, but no fruit can be seen: I find none. Fetch out the axe: I am

sure this is the fig tree; I know it from the first year; barrenness was its sign then, barrenness is its sign now; make it fit for the fire. “Behold, the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.”

Observe, my brethren, God’s heart cannot stand towards a barren fig tree. You know thus it is with yourselves. If you have a tree in your orchard or vineyard that doth only cumber the ground, you cannot look upon that tree with pleasure, with complacency and delight. No; if you do but go by it, if you do but cast your eye upon it, yea, if you do but think of that tree, you threaten it in your heart, saying, I will hew thee down shortly, I will to the fire with thee shortly: and it is in vain for any to think of persuading of you to show favor to the barren fig tree; and if they should persuade your answer is irresistible: It yields me no profit, it takes up room, and does no good; a better may grow in its room.

CUT IT DOWN.

Thus when the godly among the Jews (^{<21417>}Jeremiah 14:17) made prayers that rebellious Israel might not be cast out of the vineyard, what saith the answer of God? — “Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet could not my mind be towards this people; wherefore cast them out of my presence, and let them go forth.”

What a resolution is here! Moses and Samuel could do almost anything with God in prayer. How many times did Moses by prayer turn away God’s judgments from even Pharaoh himself! yea, how many times did he by prayer preserve Israel, when in the wilderness, (^{<21423>}Psalm 106:23,) from the anger and wrath of God! Samuel is reckoned excellent this way, yea, so excellent that when Israel had done that fearful thing as to reject the Lord and choose them another king, he prayed, and the Lord spared and forgave them. But yet neither Moses nor Samuel can save a barren fig tree. No; though Moses and Samuel stood before me — that is, pleading, arguing, interceding, supplicating, and beseeching — yet could they not incline mine heart to this people.

CUT IT DOWN.

Ay, but, Lord, it is a fig tree, a fig tree! If it was a thorn, or a bramble, or a thistle, the matter would not be much; but it is a fig tree or a vine. Well, but mark the answer of God: “Son of man, what is the vine tree more than any tree, or than a branch that is among the trees of the forest? Shall wood be taken thereof to do any work? or will men take a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon?” If trees that are set or planted for fruit bring not forth that fruit, there is betwixt them and the trees of the forest no betterment at all, unless the betterment lieth in the trees of the wood, for they are fit to build withal; but a fig tree or a vine, if they bring not forth fruit, yea, good fruit, they are fit for nothing at all but to be cut down and prepared for the fire; and so the prophet goes on, “Behold, it is cast into the fire for fuel.” If it serve not for fruit, it will serve for fuel, and so “the fire devoureth both the ends of it, and the middle of it is burnt.”

Ay, but these fig trees and vines are church-members, inhabitants of Jerusalem. So was the fig tree mentioned in the text. But what answer hath God prepared for these objections? Why, “Thus saith the Lord God, As the vine tree among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so will I give the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and I will set my face against them; they shall go out from one fire, and another fire shall devour them.”

CUT IT DOWN.

The woman that delighteth in her garden, if she have a slip there, suppose (if it was fruitful) she would not take five pounds for it, yet if it bear no fruit, if it wither and dwindle and die, and turn cumber-ground only, it may not stand in her garden. Gardens and vineyards are places for fruit — for fruit according to the nature of the plant or flowers. Suppose such a slip as I told you of before should be in your garden and there die, would you let it abide in your garden? No; away with it, away with it! The woman comes into her garden towards the spring, when first she gives it a slight cast with her eye, then she sets to gathering out the weeds and nettles and stones; takes a besom and sweeps the walks; this done, she falls to prying into her herbs and slips, to see if they live, to see if they are likely to grow.

Now, if she comes to one that is dead, that she is confident will not grow, up she pulls that, and makes to the heap of rubbish with it, where she despisingly casts it down, and valueth it no more than a nettle or a weed, or than the dust she hath swept out of her walks.

Yes, if any that see her should say, Why do you so? the answer is ready, It is dead, it is dead at root; if I had let it stand it would but have cumbered the ground. The strange slips, (and also the dead ones,) “they must be a heap in the day of grief and of desperate sorrow.”

CUT IT DOWN.

There are two ways of cutting down —

1. When a man is cast out of the vineyard;
2. When a man is cast out of the world.

1. When a man is cast out of the vineyard. And that is done two ways —

1. By an immediate hand of God;
2. By the Church’s due execution of the laws and censures which Christ for that purpose hath left with his Church.

First. God cuts down the barren fig tree by an immediate hand, smiting his roots, blasting his branches, and so takes him away from among his people. “Every branch,” saith Christ, “that beareth not fruit in me, he (my Father) taketh away.” He taketh him out of the Church, he taketh him away from the godly.

There are two things by which God taketh the barren professor from among the children of God —

1. Strong delusions;
2. Open profaneness.

1. By strong delusions, such as beguile the soul with damnable doctrines that swerve from faith and godliness. “They have chosen their own ways,” saith God, “and their soul delighteth in their abominations. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them.” I will smite

them with blindness, and hardness of heart, and failing of eyes, and will also suffer the tempter to tempt and effect his hellish designs upon them. “God will send them strong delusions, that they may believe a lie; that they all may be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.”

2. Sometimes God takes away a barren professor by open profaneness. There is one hath taken up a profession of that worthy name, the Lord Jesus Christ, but this profession is but a cloak: he secretly practiceth wickedness. He is a glutton, a drunkard, or covetous, or unclean. Well, saith God, I will loose the reins of this professor: I will give him up to his vile affections; I will loose the reins of his lusts before him; he shall be entangled with his beastly lusts; he shall be overcome of ungodly company. Thus they that turn aside to their own crooked ways, “the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity.” This is God’s hand immediately; God is now dealing with this man himself. Barren fig tree, hearken. Thou art crowded into a profession, art got among the godly, and there art a scandal to the holy and glorious gospel, but withal so cunning that, like the sons of Zeruiah, thou art too hard for the Church: she knows not how to deal with thee. Well, saith God, I will deal with that man myself. “I will answer that man myself.” He that sets up his idols in his heart, and puts the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and yet comes and appears before me, “I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb; and I will cut him off from the midst of my people, and he shall know that I am the Lord.”

But, **Secondly**. God doth sometimes cut down the barren fig tree by the Church, by the Church’s due execution of the: law and censures which Christ for that purpose hath left with his Church. This is the meaning of that in ^{}Matthew 18; ^{}1 Corinthians 5, and that in ^{}1 Timothy 1:20, upon which now I shall not enlarge. But which way soever God dealeth with thee, O thou barren fig tree — whether by himself immediately or by his Church — it amounts to one and the same; for if timely repentance prevent not, the end of that soul is damnation. They are blasted and withered, and gathered by men, God’s enemies, and at last being cast into the fire, burning must be their end: “That which beareth briars and thorns is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.”

2. Again, sometimes by “cut it down,” God means, Cast it out of the world. Thus he cut down Nadab and Abihu when he burned them up with fire from heaven. Thus he cut down Korah, Dathan, and Abiram when he made the earth to swallow them up. Thus he cut down Saul when he gave him up to fall against the edge of his own sword, and died. Thus he cut down Ananias with Sapphira his wife when he struck them down dead in the midst of the congregation. I might here also discourse of Absalom, Ahithophel, and Judas, who were all three hanged — the first by God’s revenging hand; the others were given up of God to be their own executioners. These were barren and unprofitable fig trees, such as God took no pleasure in, therefore he commanded to cut them down. The Psalmist saith, “He shall take them away as with a whirlwind, both living, and in his wrath.”

Barren fig tree, hearken. God calls for the axe, his sword: Bring it hither, here is a barren professor; “Cut him down; why cumbereth he the ground?”

WHY CUMBERETH IT THE GROUND?

By these words the Lord suggesteth reasons of his displeasure against the barren fig tree; it cumbereth the ground. The Holy Ghost doth not only take an argument from its barrenness, but because it is a cumber-ground, therefore cut it down; wherefore it must needs be a provocation —

- 1.** Because as much as in him lieth he disappointeth the design of God in planting his vineyard; “I looked that it should bring forth fruit.”
- 2.** It hath also abused his patience, his long-suffering, his three years’ patience.
- 3.** It hath also abused his labor, his pains, his care, and providence of protection and preservation, for he hedges his vineyard, and walls it about. Cumber-ground, all these things thou abuseth. He waters his vineyard and looks to it night and day, but all these things thou hast abused.

Further, there are other reasons of God’s displeasure; as —

- 1.** A cumber-ground is a very mock and reproach to religion, a mock and reproach to the ways of God, to the people of God, to the word of God,

and to the name of religion. It is expected of all hands that all the trees in the garden of God should be fruitful: God expects fruit, the Church expects fruit, the world, even the world, concludes that professors should be fruitful in good works; I say, the very world expecteth that professors should be better than themselves. But, barren fig tree, thou disappointest all; nay, hast thou not learned the wicked ones thy ways? Hast thou not learned them to be more wicked by thy example? (But that is by the by.) Barren fig tree, thou hast disappointed others, and must be disappointed thyself: “cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?”

2. The barren fig tree takes up the room where a better might stand; I say, it takes up the room; it keeps, so long as it stands where it doth, a fruitful tree out of that place, and therefore it must be cut down. Barren fig tree, dost thou hear? Because the Jews stood fruitless in the vineyard, therefore saith God, “the kingdom of heaven shall be taken from you, and shall be given to a nation that shall render him their fruits in their season.” The Jews for their barrenness were cut down, and more fruitful people put in their room. As Samuel also said to barren Saul, “The Lord hath rent the kingdom from thee, and hath given it to thy neighbor, who is better than thou;” the unprofitable servant must be cast out, must be cut down.

Cumber-ground, how many hopeful, inclinable, forward people hast thou by thy fruitless and unprofitable life kept out of the vineyard of God! For thy sake have the people stumbled at religion; by thy life have they been kept from the love of their own salvation. Thou hast been also a means of hardening others and of quenching and killing weak beginnings. Well, barren fig tree, look to thyself; thou wilt not go to heaven thyself, and them that would thou hinderest; thou must not always cumber the ground, nor always hinder the salvation of others. Thou shall be cut down, and another shall be planted in thy room.

3. The cumber-ground is a sucker; he draws away the heart and nourishment from the other trees. Were the cumber-ground cut down, the others would be more fruitful; he draws away that fatness of the ground to himself that would make the others more hearty and fruitful: “One sinner destroyeth much good.”

The cumber-ground is a very drone in the hive, that eats up the honey that should feed the laboring bee; he is a thief in the candle, that wasteth the

tallow, but giveth no light; he is the unsavory salt, that is fit for naught but the dunghill. Look to it, barren fig tree.

AND HE ANSWERING, SAID UNTO HIM, LORD, LET IT ALONE THIS YEAR ALSO, TILL I SHALL DIG ABOUT IT, AND DUNG IT; AND IF IT BEAR FRUIT, WELL; AND IF NOT, THEN AFTER THAT THOU SHALT CUT IT DOWN.

These are the words of the dresser of the vineyard, who, I told you, is Jesus Christ, (for he made intercession for the transgressors.) And they contain a petition presented to an offended justice, praying that a little more lime and patience might be exercised towards the barren, cumber-ground fig tree.

In this petition there are six things considerable —

1. That justice might be deferred. “Lord, let it alone,” etc., awhile longer.
2. Here is time prefixed, as a space to try if more means will cure a barren fig tree. “Lord, let it alone this year also.”
3. The means to help it are propounded. “Until I shall dig about it, and dung it.”
4. Here is also an insinuation of a supposition that by thus doing God’s expectations may be answered. “And if it bear fruit, well.”
5. Here is a supposition that the barren fig tree may yet abide barren when Christ hath done what he will unto it. “And if it bear fruit,” etc.
6. Here is at last a resolution that if thou continue barren hewing days will come upon thee. “And if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.”

But to proceed, according to my former method, by way of exposition.

LORD, LET IT ALONE THIS YEAR ALSO.

Here is astonishing grace indeed! — astonishing grace, I say, that the Lord Jesus should concern himself with a barren fig tree, that he should step in to stop the blow from a barren fig tree! True, he stopped the blow but for a time, but why did he stop it at all? Why did he not fetch out the axe?

Why did he not do execution? Why did not he cut it down? Barren fig tree, it is well for thee that there is a Jesus at God's right hand — a Jesus of that largeness of bowels as to have companion for a barren fig tree — else justice had never lot thee alone to cumber the ground as thou hast done. When Israel also had sinned against God, down they had gone but that "Moses stood in the breach." "Let me alone," said God to him, "that I may consume them in a moment, and I will make of thee a great nation." Barren fig tree, dost thou hear? Thou knowest not how oft the hand of Divine justice had been up to strike, and how many years since thou hadst been cut down had not Jesus caught hold of his Father's axe. Let me alone, let me fetch my blow, or "cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" Wilt thou not hear yet, barren fig tree? Wilt thou provoke still? Thou hast wearied men and provoked the justice of God: "And wilt thou weary my God also?"

LORD, LET IT ALONE THIS YEAR.

Look a little longer; let us not lose a soul for want of means. I will try, I will see if I can make it fruitful; I will not beg a long life, nor that it might still be barren, and so provoke thee. I beg for the sake of the soul, the immortal soul. Lord, spare it one year only, one year longer, this year also: if I do any good to it, it will be in little time. Thou shalt not be overwearied with waiting; one year and — then.

Barren fig tree, dost thou hear what a striving there is between the Vine-dresser and the Husbandman for thy life? "Cut it down," says one; "Lord, spare it," saith the other. It is a cumber-ground, saith the Father; One year longer, prays the Son. "Let it alone this year also."

TILL I SHALL DIG ABOUT IT, AND DUNG IT.

The Lord Jesus by these words supposeth two things as causes of the want of fruit in a barren fig tree, and two things he supposeth as I remedy.

The things that are a cause of want of fruit are —

1. It is earth-bound. Lord, the fig tree is earth-bound.
2. A want of warmer means, of fatter means.

Wherefore accordingly he propoundeth —

1. To loosen the earth: to dung about it. And then to supply it with dung: “To dig about it, and dung it.” “Lord, let it alone this year also, until I shall dig about it.” I doubt it is too much ground-bound; “the love of this world and the deceitfulness of riches” lie too close to the roots of the heart of this professor. The love of riches, the love of honors, the love of pleasures are the thorns that choke the word. “For all that is in the world, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, are not of the Father, but enmity to God:” how then (where these things bind up the heart) can there be fruit brought forth to God? Barren fig tree, see how the Lord Jesus by these very words suggesteth the cause of thy fruitfulness of soul. The things of this world lie too close to thy heart; the earth with its things have bound up thy roots; thou art an earth-bound soul, thou art wrapped up in thick clay. “If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;” how then can he be fruitful in the vineyard? This kept Judas from the fruit of caring for the poor. This kept Demas from the fruit of self-denial. And this kept Ananias and Sapphira his wife from the goodly fruit of sincerity and truth. What shall I say? “These are foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition; for the love of money is the root of all evil.” How then can good fruit grow from such a root, the root of all evil? “Which while some covet after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many arrows.” It is an evil root, nay, it is the root of all evil. How then can the professor that hath such a root, or a root wrapped up in such earthly things as the lusts, and pleasures, and vanities of this world, bring forth fruit to God?

TILL I SHALL DIG ABOUT IT.

Lord, I will loose his roots, I will dig up this earth, I will lay his roots bare; my hand shall be upon him by sickness, by disappointments, by cross providences; I will dig about him until he stands shaking and tottering, until he be ready to fall; then, if ever, he will seek to take faster hold. Thus, I say, deals the Lord Jesus oftentimes with the barren professor; he diggeth about him, he smiteth one blow at his heart, another blow at his lusts, a third at his pleasures, a fourth at his comforts, another at his self-conceitedness. Thus he diggeth about him; this is the way to take bad earth from the roots and to loosen his roots from the earth. Barren fig tree, see

here the care, the love, the labor, and way which the Lord Jesus, the dresser of the vineyard, is fain to take with thee if haply thou mayest be made fruitful.

TILL I SHALL DIG ABOUT IT, AND DUNG IT.

As the earth, by binding the roots too closely, may hinder the tree's being fruitful, so the want of better means may be also a cause thereof. And this is more than intimated by the dresser of the vineyard: "Until I shall dig about it, and dung it." I will supply it with a more fruitful ministry, with a warmer word; I will give them pastors after mine own heart; I will dung them. You know dung is a more warm, more fat, more hearty, and succoring matter than is commonly the place in which trees are planted.

"I will dig about it, and dung it;" I will bring it under an heart-awakening ministry: the means of grace shall be fat and good: I will also visit it with heart-awakening, heart-warming, heart-encouraging considerations; I will apply warm dung to his roots; I will strive with him by my Spirit, and give him some tastes of the heavenly gift and the power of the world to come. I am loth to lose him for want of digging. "Lord, let it alone this year also, until I shall dig about it, and dung it."

AND IF IT BEAR FRUIT, WELL.

And if the fruit of all my labor doth make this fig tree fruitful, I shall count my time, my labor, and my means well bestowed upon it; and thou also, O my God, shall be therewith much delighted; for thou art gracious, and merciful, and repentest thee of the evil which thou threatenest to bring upon a people.

These words, therefore, inform us that if a barren fig tree, a barren professor, shall now at last bring forth fruit to God, it shall go well with that professor, it shall go well with that poor soul. His former barrenness, his former tempting of God, his abuse of God's patience and long-suffering, his misspending year after year, shall now be all forgiven him. Yea, God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ will now pass by and forget all, and say, Well done! at the last. When I say to the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die, if he then do that which is law fill and

right, if he walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity, he shall surely live, he shall not die. ^{<ARB>}Ezekiel 3:3.

Barren fig tree, dost thou hear? The axe is laid to thy roots, the Lord Jesus prays God to spare thee. Hath he been digging about thee? Hath he been dunging of thee? O barren fig tree, now thou art come to the point: if thou shalt now become good, if thou shalt, after a gracious manner, suck in the gospel nourishment, and if thou shalt bring forth fruit unto God, well; but if not, the fire is the last; fruit or the fire, fruit or the fire, barren fig tree. "If it bear fruit, well."

**AND IF NOT, THEN AFTER THAT THOU SHALT
CUT IT DOWN.**

"And if not," etc. The Lord Jesus by this *if* giveth us to understand that there is a generation of professors in the world that are incurable — that will not, that cannot repent, nor be profited by the means of grace — a generation, I say, that will retain a profession, but will not bring forth fruit; a generation that will wear out the patience of God, time and tide, threatenings and intercessions, judgments and mercies, and after all will be unfruitful.

Oh the desperate wickedness that is in thy heart! Barren professor, dost thou hear? The Lord Jesus stands yet in doubt about thee; there is an *if* stands yet in the way. I say, the Lord Jesus stands yet in doubt about thee, whether or no at last thou wilt be good, whether he may not labor in vain, whether his digging and dunging will come to more than lost labor. "I gave her space to repent, but she repented not;" I digged about it, I dunged it; I gained time, and supplied it with means; but I labored here in vain, and spent my strength for naught and in vain. Dost thou hear, barren fig tree? There is yet a question whether it will be well with thy soul at last.

**AND IF NOT, THEN AFTER THAT THOU SHALT
CUT IT DOWN.**

There is nothing more exasperating to the mind of a man than to find all his kindness and favor slighted; neither is the Lord Jesus so provoked with any thing as when sinners abuse his means of grace. If it be barren and fruitless under my Gospel, if it turn my grace into wantonness, if after

digging, and dunging, and waiting, it yet remain unfruitful, I will let thee cut it down.

Gospel-means applied is the last remedy for a barren professor: if the Gospel, if the grace of the Gospel, will not do, there can be nothing expected but cut it down; "Then after that thou shalt cut it down."

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee! how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Therefore your houses are left unto you desolate." Yet it cannot be but this Lord Jesus, who at first did put a stop to the execution of his Father's justice, because he desired to try more means with the fig tree — I say, it cannot be but that a heart so full of compassion as his is should be touched to behold this professor must now be cut down. "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

AFTER THAT THOU SHALT CUT IT DOWN.

When Christ giveth thee over there is no intercessor or mediator, no more sacrifice for sin; all is gone but judgment, but the axe, but "a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

Barren fig tree, take heed that thou comest not to these last words, for these words are a give-up, a cast-up, a cast-up of a castaway; "After that thou shalt cut it down." They are as much as if Christ had said, Father, I begged for more time for this barren professor; I begged until I should dig about it, and dung it; but now, Father, the time is out, the year is ended, the summer is ended, and no good done. I have also tried with my means, with the Gospel; I have digged about it; I have laid also the fat and hearty dung of the Gospel to it, but all comes to nothing. Father, I deliver up this professor to thee again. I have done, I have done all; I have done praying and endeavoring; I will hold the head of thine axe no longer. Take him into the hands of justice; do justice, do the law; I will never beg for him more. "After that thou shalt cut it down." "Woe unto them when I depart from them!" Now is this professor left naked indeed — naked to God, naked to

Satan, naked to sin, naked to the law, naked to death, naked to hell, naked to judgment, and naked to the gripes of a guilty conscience, and to the torment of that worm that never dies, and to that fire that never shall be quenched. “See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if” they escape not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven.”

From this brief pass through this parable, you have these two general observations:

- 1.** That even then, when the justice of God cries out, I cannot endure to wait on this barren professor any longer, then Jesus Christ intercedes for a little more patience and a little more striving with this professor, if possibly he may make him a fruitful professor: “Lord, let it alone this year also, until I shall dig about it, and dung it; and if it bear fruit, well,” etc.
- 2.** There are some professors whose day of grace will end with, Cut it down, with judgment — when Christ by his means hath been used for their salvation.

The first of these observations I shall pass, and not meddle at all therewith, but shall briefly speak to the second, to wit:

That there are some professors whose day of grace will end with, Cut it down, with judgment — when Christ by his means hath been used for their salvation.

This the apostle showeth in that third chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, where he tells us that the people of the Jews, after a forty years’ patience, and endeavor to do them good by the means appointed for that purpose, their end was to be cut down, or excluded the land of promise for their final incredulity: “So we see they could not enter in, because of unbelief.” Wherefore saith he, “I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their hearts and they have not known my ways; so I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.” As who should say, I would they should have entered in, and for that purpose I brought them out of Egypt, led them through the sea, and taught them in the wilderness, but they did not answer my work or designs in that matter; wherefore they shall not, I swear they shall not: “I swear in my wrath, They should not enter into my rest.” Here is cutting

down with judgment. So again he saith, “As I have sworn in my wrath, If they shall enter into my rest, although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.” This word *if* is the same with *they shall not* in the chapter before. And where he saith, “Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world,” he giveth us to understand that what preparations soever are made for the salvation of sinners, and of how long continuance soever they are, yet the God-tempting, God-provoking, and fruitless professor is like to go without a share therein: “although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not. And the angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.” Here is an instance to purpose, an instance of men and angels — men saved out of the land of Egypt, and in their journey towards Canaan, the type of heaven, cut down; angels created and placed in the heavens in great estate and principality; yet both these, because unfruitful to God in their places, were cut down, the men destroyed by God, (for so saith the text,) “and the angels reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, to the judgment of the great day.”

Now, in my handling of this point I shall discourse of the cutting down, or the judgment here denounced, as it respecteth the doing of it by God’s hand immediately, and that, too, with respect to his casting them out of the world, and not as it respecteth an act of the Church, etc. And as to this cutting down, or judgment, it must be concluded that it cannot be before the day of grace be past with the fig tree, but according to the observation, there are some professors whose day of grace will end with, Cut it down; and according to the words of the text, “Then, after that, thou shalt cut it down.” After that; that is, after all my attempts and endeavors to make it fruitful, after I have left it, given it over, done with it, and have resolved to bestow no more days of grace, opportunities of grace, and means of grace upon it — then, *after that*, thou shalt cut it down.

Besides, the giving up of the fig tree is before the execution. Execution is not always presently upon the sentence given; for after that a convenient time is thought on, and then is cutting down. And so it is here in the text. The decree that it shall perish is gathered from its continuing fruitless quite

through the last year, from its continuing fruitless at the end of all endeavors. But cutting down is not yet, for that comes with an afterward: “Then, after that, thou shalt cut it down.”

So then, that I may orderly proceed with the observation, I must lay down these two propositions:

Prop. 1. That the day of grace ends with some men before God takes them out of this world; and,

Prop. 2. The death, or cutting down of such men, will be dreadful. For this *cut it down*, when it is understood in the largest sense, (as here indeed it ought,) it showeth not only the wrath of God against a man’s life in this world, but his wrath against him, body and soul; and is as much as to say, Cut him off from all the privileges and benefits that come by grace, both in this world and that which is to come.

But to proceed: the day of grace ends with some men before God taketh them out of the world. I shall give you some instances of this, and so go on to the last proposition.

1. I shall instance Cain. Cain was a professor, a sacrificer, a worshipper of God; yea, the first worshipper that we read of after the Fall; but his grapes were wild ones; his works were evil; he did not do what he did from true gospel motives; therefore God disallowed his work. At this his countenance falls; wherefore he envies his brother, disputes him, takes his opportunity and kills him. Now in that day that he did this act were the heavens closed up against him; and that himself did smartingly and fearfully feel when God made inquisition for the blood of Abel. “And now cursed” (said God) “shalt thou be from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand. And Cain said, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Mine iniquity is greater than that it may be forgiven. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face shall I be hid.” Now thou art cursed, saith God. Thou hast driven me out this day, saith Cain, and from thy face shall I be hid; I shall never more have hope in thee, smile from thee, nor expect mercy at thy hand. Thus therefore Cain’s day of grace ended, and the heavens, with God’s own heart, were shut up against him; yet after this he lived long. Cutting down was not come yet; after this he lived to marry a

wife, to beget a cursed brood, to build a city, (and what else I know not;) all which could not be quickly done; wherefore Cain might live after the day of grace was past with him several hundreds of years.

2. I shall instance Ishmael. Ishmael was a professor, was brought up in Abraham's family, and was circumcised at thirteen years of age. But he was the son of the bond-woman; he brought not forth good fruit; he was a wild professor. For all his religion, he would scoff at those that were better than himself. Well, upon a day his brother Isaac was weaned, at which time his father made a feast and rejoiced before the Lord, for that he had given him the promised son: at this Ishmael mocked them, their son, and godly rejoicing. Then came the Spirit of God upon Sarah, and she cried, "Cast him out, cast out this bond-woman and her son; for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, with Isaac." Now Paul to the Galatians makes this casting out to be not only a casting out of Abraham's family, but a casting out also from a lot with the saints in heaven. Also Moses giveth us a notable proof thereof in saying that when he died he was gathered to his people — his people by his mother's side, for he was reckoned from her, the son of Hagar, the son of the bond-woman. Now she came of the Egyptians; so that he was gathered when he died, notwithstanding his profession, to the place that Pharaoh and his host were gathered, who were drowned in the Red Sea: these were his people, and he was of them, both by nature and disposition, by persecuting as they did. But now, when did the day of grace end with this man? Observe, and I will show you. Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised, and then was Abraham ninety years old and nine; the next year Isaac was born; so that Ishmael was now fourteen years of age. Now when Isaac was weaned, (suppose he sucked four years,) by that account the day of grace must be ended with Ishmael by the time he was eighteen years old. For that day he mocked, that day it was said, Cast him out; and of that casting out, the apostle makes what I have said. Beware, ye young barren professors. Now Ishmael lived an hundred and nineteen years after this, in great tranquillity and honor with men; after this he also begat twelve princes, even after his day of grace was past.

3. I shall instance Esau. He also was a professor, he was born unto Isaac, and circumcised according to the custom. But Esau was a gamesome professor, a huntsman, a man of the field: also he was wedded to his lusts,

which he did also venture to keep rather than the birthright. Well, upon a day, when he came from hunting and was faint, he sold his birthright to Jacob his brother. Now the birthright, in those days, had the promise and blessing annexed to it. Yea, they were so entailed in this that the one could not go without the other; wherefore the apostle's caution is here of weight. "Take heed," saith he, "lest there be among you a fornicator or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright; for ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." Now the ending of Esau's day of grace is to be reckoned from his selling of his birthright; for there the apostle points it, Lest there be among you any that, like Esau, sells his birthright; for then goes hence the blessing also.

But Esau sold his birthright long before his death. Twenty years after this Jacob was with Laban, and when he returned home his brother Esau met him. Further, after this, when Jacob dwelt again some time with his father, then Jacob and Esau buried him. I suppose he might live about forty — yea, for aught I know, above fourscore — years after he had sold his birthright, and so consequently had put himself out of the grace of God.

Three things I would further note upon these three professors:

1. Cain, an angry professor, Ishmael, a mocking one, Esau, a lustful, gamesome one — three symptoms of a barren professor, for he that can be angry, and that can mock, and that can indulge his lusts cannot bring forth fruit to God.

2. The day of grace ended with these professors at that time when they committed some grievous sin. Cain's, when he killed his brother; Ishmael's, when he mocked at Isaac, etc., etc.; and Esau's, when out of love to his lusts, he despised and sold his birthright. Beware, barren professor; thou mayest do that in half a quarter of an hour from the evil of which thou mayest not be delivered for ever and ever.

3. Yet these three, after their day of grace was over, lived better lives, as to outward things, than ever they did before. Cain, after this, was lord of a city; Ishmael was, after this, father of twelve princes; and Esau, after this, told his brother, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast to thyself.

Ease and peace, and a prosperous life in outwards, is no sign of the favor of God to a barren and fruitless professor, but rather of his wrath, that thereby he may be capable to treasure up more wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

Let this much serve for the proof of the first proposition — namely, that the day of grace ends with some men before God takes them out of this world.

Now, then, to show you by some signs how you may know that the day of grace is ended, or near to ending, with the barren professor, and after that thou shalt cut it down.

First. He that hath stood it out against God, and that hath withstood all those means for fruit that God hath used for the making of him (if it might have been) a fruitful tree in his garden, he is in this danger; and this indeed is the sum of the parable. The fig tree here mentioned was blessed with the application of means, had time allowed it to receive the nourishment; but it withstood, withstood, overstood all — all that the husbandman did, all that the vine-dresser did.

SIGNS OF BEING PAST GRACE.

But a little distinctly to particularize in four or five particulars.

First sign. The day of grace is like to be past when a professor hath withstood, abused, and worn out God's patience; then he is in danger; this is a provocation; then God cries, "Cut it down." There are some men that steal into a profession, nobody knows how, even as this fig tree was brought into the vine-yard — by other hands than God's; and there they abide, lifeless, graceless, careless, and without any good conscience to God at all. Perhaps they came in for the loaves, for a trade, for credit, for a blind, or it may be to stifle and choke the checks and grinding pangs of an awakened and disquieted conscience. Now, having obtained their purpose, like the sinner of Zion they are at ease and secure, saying, like Agag, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." I am well, shall be saved, and go to heaven. Thus in these vain conceits they spend a year, two, or three, not remembering that at every season of grace and at every opportunity of the gospel the Lord comes seeking fruit. Well, sinner, well, barren fig tree, this

is but a coarse beginning: God comes for fruit. What have I here, saith God? What a fig tree is this, that hath stood this year in my vineyard and brought me forth no fruit? I will cry unto him: Professor, barren fig tree, be fruitful! I look for fruit, I expect fruit, I must have fruit; therefore bethink thyself. At these the professor pauses; but these are words, not blows; therefore off goes this consideration from the heart. When God comes the next year, he finds him still as he was, a barren, fruitless cumber-ground. And now again he complains: Here are two years gone, and no fruit appears; well, I will defer mine anger for my name's sake. I will defer mine anger for my praise; I will refrain from thee, that I cut thee not off, (as yet.) I will wait, I will yet wait to be gracious. But this helps not, this hath not the least influence upon the barren fig tree. Tush, saith he, here is no threatening; God is merciful, he will defer his anger, he waits to be gracious. I am not yet afraid. Oh, how ungodly men, that are at unawares crept into the vineyard, how do they turn the grace of our God into lasciviousness! Well, he comes the third year for fruit, as he did before, but still he finds but a barren fig tree; no fruit. Now he cries out again, O thou dresser of my vineyard, come hither; here is a fig tree hath stood these three years in my vineyard, and hath at every season disappointed my expectation, for I have looked for fruit in vain. Cut it down; my patience is worn out, I shall wait on this fig tree no longer.

And now he begins to shake the fig tree with his threatenings: Fetch out the axe. Now the axe is death; death therefore is called for; Death, come smite me this fig tree. And withal the Lord shakes this sinner, and whirls him upon a sickbed, saying, Take him, death; he hath abused my patience and forbearance, not remembering that it should have led him to repentance and to the fruits thereof. Death, fetch away this fig tree to the fire, fetch this barren professor to hell. At this, death comes with grim looks to the chamber, yea, and hell follows with him to the bedside, and both stare this professor in the face, yea, begin to lay hands upon him — one smiting him with pains in his body, with headache, heartache, backache, shortness of breath, fainting qualms, trembling at joints, stopping at the chest, and almost all the symptoms of a man past all recovery. Now, while death is thus tormenting the body, hell is doing with the mind and conscience — striking them with its pains, casting sparks of fire in thither, wounding with sorrows and fears of everlasting damnation the spirit of this poor

creature. And now he begins to bethink himself and to cry to God for mercy: Lord, spare me; Lord, spare me. Nay, saith God, you have been a provocation to me these three years. How many times have you disappointed me! How many seasons have you spent in vain I How many sermons and other mercies did I of my patience afford you! but to no purpose at all. Take him, death. O good Lord, saith the sinner, spare me but this once, raise me but this once. Indeed I have been a barren professor, and have stood to no purpose at all in thy vineyard. But spare, oh spare this one time, I beseech thee, and I will be better. Away, away! you will not: I have tried you these three years already; you are naught; if I should recover you again, you would be as bad as you were before. (And all this talk is while death stands by.) The sinner cries again: Good Lord, try me this once, let me get up again this once, and see if I do not mend. But will you promise me to mend? Yes indeed, Lord, and vow it too; I will never be so bad again, I will be better. Well, saith God, death, let this professor alone for this time; I will try him awhile longer; he hath promised, he hath vowed that he will mend his ways. It may be he will mind to keep his promises. Vows are solemn things; it may be he may fear to break his vows. Arise from off thy bed. And now God lays down his axe. At this the poor creature is very thankful, praises God, and fawns upon him, shows as if he did it heartily, and calls to others to thank him too. He therefore riseth, as one would think, to be a new creature indeed. But by that he hath put on his clothes, is come down from his bed, and ventured into the yard or shop, and there sees how all things are gone to sixes and sevens, he begins to have second thoughts, and says to his folks, What have you all been doing? How are all things out of order! I am, I cannot tell what, behindhand. One may see, if a man be but a little to a side, that you have neither wisdom nor prudence to order things. And now, instead of seeking to spend the rest of his time to God, he doubleth his diligence after this world. Alas! all must not be lost, we must have provident care. And thus, quite forgetting the sorrows of death, the pains of hell, the promises and vows which he made to God to be better, because judgment was not (now) speedily executed, therefore the heart of this poor creature is fully set in him to do evil.

These things proving ineffectual, God takes hold of his axe again, sends death to a wife, to a child, to his cattle. ("Your young men have I slain, and

taken away your horses.”) I will blast him, cross him, disappoint him, and cast him down, and will set myself against him in all that he putteth his hand unto. At this the poor barren professor cries out again, Lord, I have sinned; spare me once more, I beseech thee. Oh take not away the desire of mine eyes, spare my children, bless me in my labors, and I will mend and be better. No, saith God; you lied to me last time; I will trust you in this no longer; and withal he tumbleth the wife, the child, the estate into a grave, and then returns to his place till this professor more unfeignedly acknowledgeth his offense.

At this the poor creature is afflicted and distressed, rends his clothes, and begins to call the breaking of his promise and vows to mind; he mourns and prays, and like Ahab awhile walks softly at the remembrance of the justice of the hand of God upon him. And now he renews his promises: Lord, try me this one time more; take off thy hand and see; they go far that never turn. Well, God spareth him again, sets down his axe again. “Many times he did deliver them, but they provoked him with their counsels, and were brought low for their iniquities.” Now they seem to be thankful again, and are as if they were resolved to be godly indeed. Now they read, they pray, they go to meetings, and seem to be serious a pretty while, but at last they forget. Their lusts prick them, suitable temptations present themselves. Wherefore they turn to their own crooked ways again. “When he slew them, then they sought him, and returned early after God; nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongue.”

Yet again the Lord will not leave this professor, but will take up his axe again, and will put him under a more heart-searching ministry — a ministry that shall search him and turn him over and ever; a ministry that shall meet with him as Elijah met with Ahab in all his acts of wickedness, (and now the axe is laid to the roots of the trees.) Besides, this ministry doth not only search the heart, but presenteth the sinner with the golden rays of the glorious gospel; now is Christ Jesus set forth evidently; now is grace displayed sweetly; now, now are the promises broken like boxes of ointment, to the perfuming of the whole room. But, alas! there is yet no fruit on this fig tree. While his heart is searching, he wrangles; while the glorious grace of the gospel is unveiling, this professor wags and is wanton; gathers up some scraps thereof; “tastes the good word of God,

and the power of the world to come; drinketh in the rain that comes oft upon him," but bringeth not forth fruit meet for Him whose gospel it is; takes no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart, but counteth that the glory of the gospel consisteth in talk and show, and that our obedience thereto is a matter of speculation — that good works lie in good words, and if they can finely talk they think they bravely please God. They think the kingdom of God consisteth only in word, not in power; and thus proveth ineffectual this fourth means also.

Well, now the axe begins to be heaved higher, for now indeed God is ready to smite the sinner; yet before he will strike the stroke he will try one way more at last, and, if that misseth, down goes the fig tree. Now this last way is to tug and strive with this professor by his Spirit. Wherefore the Spirit of the Lord is now come to him, but not always to strive with man; yet awhile he will strive with him, he will awaken, he will convince, he will call to remembrance former sins, former judgments, the breach of former vows and promises, the misspending of former days; he will also present persuasive arguments, encouraging promises, dreadful judgments, the shortness of time to repent in, and that there is hope if he come. Further, he will show him the certainty of death and of the judgment to come; yea, he will pull and strive with this sinner; but behold the mischief now lies here — here is tugging and striving on both sides. The Spirit convinces, the man turns a deaf ear to God; the Spirit saith, Receive my instruction and live, but the man pulls away his shoulder; the Spirit shows him whither he is going, but the man closeth his eyes against it; the Spirit offereth violence, the man strives and resists; they have done despite unto the Spirit of grace. The Spirit parleyeth the second time, and urgeth reasons of a new nature, but the sinner answereth, No, I have loved strangers, and after them I will go. At this God's fury comes up into his face; now he comes out of his holy place and is terrible; now he sweareth in his wrath they shall never enter into his rest. I exercised towards you my patience, yet you have not turned unto me, saith the Lord. I smote you in your person, in your relations, in your estate, yet you have not returned unto me, saith the Lord. In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more till I cause my fury to rest upon thee. Cut it down; why doth it cumber the ground?

The second sign that such a professor is almost (if not quite) past grace is, when God hath given him over or lets him alone, and suffers him to do anything, and that without control — helpeth him not either in works of holiness or in straits and difficulties; “Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone.” “Woe be to them when I depart from them! I will laugh at their calamities, and mock when their fear cometh.”

Barren fig tree, thou hast heretofore been digged about, and dunged; God’s mattock hath heretofore been at thy roots: gospel dung hath heretofore been applied to thee; thou hast heretofore been striven with, convinced, awakened, made to taste and see, and cry, Oh the blessedness! Thou hast heretofore been met with under the word; thy heart hath melted, thy spirit hath fallen, thy soul hath trembled, and thou hast felt something of the power of the gospel. But thou hast sinned, thou hast provoked the eyes of his glory, thy iniquity is found to be hateful, and now perhaps God hath left thee, given thee up and lets thee alone.

Heretofore thou wast tender; thy conscience startled at the temptation to wickedness, for thou wert taken off from the pollution of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; but that very vomit that once thou wert turned from, now thou lappest up (with the dog in the proverb) again, and that very mire that once thou seemedst to be washed from, in that very mire thou now art tumbling afresh.

But, to particularize, there are three signs of a man’s being given over of God:

1. When he is let alone in sinning, when the reins of his lusts are loosed, and he given up to them. “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient, being filled with all unrighteousness.” Seest thou a man that heretofore had the knowledge of God, and that had some awe of Majesty upon him — I say, seest thou such an one, sporting himself in his own deceivings, “turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and walking after his own ungodly lusts? His judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and his damnation slumbereth not.” Dost thou hear, barren professor. It is astonishing to see how those that once seemed sons of the morning, and were making preparations for eternal life, now, at last, for the rottenness of their hearts, by the just judgment of

God, to be permitted, being past feeling, “to give themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” A great number of such were in the first gospel days; against whom Peter and Jude couple them with the fallen angels, and John forbids that prayer be made for them, because that is happened unto them that hath happened to the fallen angels that fell — “who, forsaking their first estate, and for leaving their own habitation, are reserved in chains under everlasting darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.” Barren fig tree, dost thou hear?

1. These are beyond all mercy.
2. These are beyond all promises.
3. These are beyond all hopes of repentance.
4. These have no intercessor, nor any more share in a sacrifice for sin.
5. For these there remains nothing but a fearful looking-for of judgment.

1. Wherefore these are the true fugitives and vagabonds, that, being left of God, of Christ, of grace, and of the promise, and beyond all hope, wander and straggle to and fro, even as the devil, their associate, till the time shall come to die or until they descend in battle and perish.

2. Wherefore they are let alone in hearing. If these at any time come under the word, there is for them no God, no savor of the means of grace, no stirrings of heart, no pity for themselves, no love to their own salvation. Let them look on this hand or that, there they see such effects of the word in others as produceth signs of repentance and love to God and his Christ. These men only have their backs bowed down alway; these men have only the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, to this very day. Wherefore as they go to the place of the Holy, so they come from the place of the Holy, and soon are forgotten in the place where they so did, only they reap this damage, “they treasure up wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” Look to it, barren professor.

3. If he be visited after the common way of mankind, either with sickness, distress, or any kind of calamity, still no God appeareth, no sanctifying hand of God, no special mercy is mixed with the affliction. But he falls

sick and grows well like the beast, or is under distress as Saul, who, when he was engaged by the Philistines, was forsaken and left of God. “And the Philistines gathered themselves together, and came and pitched in Shunem, and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid and his heart greatly trembled. And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him no more, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.” The Lord answered him no more; he had done with him, cast him off, and rejected him, and left him to stand and fall with his sins by himself. But of this more in the conclusion; therefore I here forbear.

These men may go whither they will, do what they will; they may range from opinion to opinion, from notion to notion, from sect to sect, but are steadfast nowhere; they are left to their own uncertainties, they have not grace to establish their hearts; and though some of them have boasted themselves of this liberty, yet Jude calls them wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever. They are left, as I told you before, to be fugitives and vagabonds on the earth, to wander everywhere, but to abide nowhere, until they shall descend to their own place with Cain and Judas, men of the same fate with themselves.

A third sign that such a professor is quite past grace is, when his heart is grown so hard, so stony, and impenetrable that nothing will pierce it. Barren fig tree, dost thou consider? A hard and impenitent heart is the curse of God. A heart that cannot repent is instead of all plagues at once; and hence it is that God said of Pharaoh, when he spake of delivering him up in the greatness of his anger, “I will at this time,” saith he, “send all my plagues upon thy heart.”

To some men that have grievously sinned under a profession of the gospel, God giveth this token of his displeasure: they are denied the power of repentance, their heart is bound, they cannot repent; it is impossible that they should ever repent should they live a thousand years. It is impossible for those fallaways to be renewed again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to open shame. Now, to have the heart so hardened, so judicially hardened, this is as a bar put in by the Lord God against the salvation of this sinner. This was the burden of Spira’s complaint: I cannot do it; oh now I cannot do it.

This man sees what he hath done, what should help him, and what will become of him, yet he cannot repent; he pulled away his shoulder before, he shut up his eyes before, and in that very posture God left him, and so he stands to this very day. I have had a fancy that Lot's wife, when she was turned into a pillar of salt, stood yet looking over her shoulder, or else with her face towards Sodom; as the judgment caught her, so it bound her, and left her a monument of God's anger to after generations.

We read of some that are seared with a hot iron, and that are past feeling, for so seared persons in seared parts are: their conscience is seared. The conscience is the thing that must be touched with feeling, fear, and remorse if any good be done to those whose conscience is worse than that — that is, fast asleep in sin. For that conscience that is fast asleep may yet be effectually awakened and saved, but that conscience that is seared, dried, as it were, into a cinder, can never have sense, feeling, or the least regret in this world. Barren fig tree, hearken! — judicial hardening is dreadful. There is a difference betwixt that hardness of heart that is incident to all men, and that which comes upon some as a special judgment of God. And although all kind of hardness of heart, in some sense, may be called a judgment, yet to be hardened with this second kind is a judgment peculiar only to them that perish — a hardness that is sent as a punishment for the abuse of light received, for a reward of apostacy.

This judicial hardness is discovered from that which is incident to all men in these particulars:

- 1.** It is a hardness that comes after some great light received, because of some great sin committed against that light and the grace that gave it — such hardness as Pharaoh had after the Lord had wrought wondrously before him; such hardness as the Gentiles had — a hardness which darkened the heart, a hardness which made their minds reprobate. This hardness is also the same with that the Hebrews are cautioned to beware of — a hardness that is caused by unbelief and a departing from the living God; a hardness completed through the deceitfulness of sin; such as that in the provocation, of whom God swear that they should not enter into his rest. It was this kind of darkness also that both Cain and Ishmael and Esau were hardened with after they had committed their great transgressions.

2. It is the greatest kind of hardness, and hence they are said to be harder than a rock or than adamant — that is, harder than flint; so hard that nothing can enter.
3. It is a hardness given in much anger, and to bind the soul up in an impossibility of repentance.
4. It is a hardness, therefore, which is incurable, of which a man must die and be damned. Barren professor, hearken to this.

A fourth sign that such a professor is quite past grace is when he fortifies his hard heart against the tenor of God's word. This is called hardening themselves against God, and turning of the Spirit against him; as thus, when after a profession of faith in the Lord Jesus, and of the doctrine that is according to godliness, they shall embolden themselves in courts of sin by promising themselves that they shall have life and salvation notwithstanding. Barren professor, hearken to this. This man is called a root that beareth gall and wormwood, or a poisonous herb — such an one as is abominated of God, yea, the abhorred of his soul. For this man saith, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination or stubbornness of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst — an opinion flat against the whole word of God, yea, against the very nature of God himself. Wherefore he adds, “Then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy, shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in God's book shall lie upon him, and God shall blot out his name from under heaven.”

Yea, that man shall not fail to be effectually destroyed, saith the text. “The Lord shall separate that man unto evil, out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant.”

He shall separate him unto evil; he shall give him up, he shall leave him to his heart; he shall separate him to that or those that will assuredly be too hard for him.

Now this judgment is much effected when God hath given a man up unto Satan, and hath given Satan leave, without fail, to complete his destruction — I say, when God hath given Satan leave effectually to complete his destruction; for all that are delivered up unto Satan have not and do not come to this end. But that is the man whom God shall separate to evil, and shall leave in the bands of Satan, to complete without fail his destruction.

Thus he served Ahab, a man that sold himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord. “And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner;’ and there came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also; go forth and do so.” Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail: do thy will, I leave him in thine hand, go forth, and do so.

Wherefore in these judgments the Lord doth much concern himself for the management thereof, because of the provocation wherewith they have provoked him. This is the man whose ruin he contriveth, and bringeth to pass by his own contrivance. “I will choose their delusions for them; I will bring their fears upon them.” I will choose their devices or the wickedness that their hearts are contriving. I, even I, will cause them to be accepted of and delightful to them. But who are they that must thus be seared? Why, those among professors that have chosen their own ways, those whose soul delighteth in their abominations.

Because they receive not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

“God shall send them.” It is a great word. Yea, God shall send them strong delusions — delusions that shall do, that shall make them believe a lie. Why so? “That they all might be damned, every one of them who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

There is nothing more provoking to the Lord than for a man to promise when God threateneth; for a man to be light of conceit that he shall be safe, and yet to be more wicked than in former days. This man’s soul abhorreth the truth of God; no marvel, therefore, if God’s soul abhorreth him: he hath invented a way contrary to God, to bring about his own salvation; no marvel, therefore, if God invent a way to bring about this man’s damnation; and seeing that these rebels are at this point, we shall have peace; God will see whose word shall stand, his or theirs.

A fifth sign of a man being past grace is when he shall at this scoff, and inwardly grin, and fret against the Lord, secretly purposing to continue his course and put all to the venture, despising the messengers of the Lord. “He that despised Moses’s law died without mercy; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God!” etc.

Wherefore against these despisers God hath set himself, and foretold that they shall not believe, but perish. “Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; for I work a work in your days which ye shall in nowise believe, though a man declare it unto you.”

Thus far we have treated of the barren fig tree or fruitless professor, with some signs to know him by, whereto is added also some signs of one who neither will nor can, by any means, be fruitful, but they must miserably perish. Now being come to the time of execution, I shall speak a word to that also: “After that thou shalt cut it down.” Christ at last turns the barren fig tree over to the justice of God, shakes his hands off him, and gives him up to the fire for his unprofitableness.

AFTER THAT THOU SHALT CUT IT DOWN.

Two things are here to be considered:

- 1.** The executioner; thou, the great, the dreadful, the eternal God. These words, therefore, as I have already said, signify that Christ the Mediator, through whom alone salvation comes, and by whom alone execution hath been deferred, now giveth up the soul, forbears to speak one syllable more for him, or to do the least act of grace further to try for his recovery, but delivereth him up to that fearful dispensation, “to fall into the hand of the living God.”
- 2.** The second to be considered is, the instrument by which this execution is done, and that is death, compared here to an axe; and forasmuch as the tree is not felled at one blow, therefore the strokes are here continued till all the blows be struck at it that are requisite for its felling, for now cutting time and cutting work is come; cutting must be his portion till he be cut down. “After that thou shalt cut it down.” Death, I say, is the axe, which God often useth, therewith to take the barren fig tree out of the vineyard,

out of a profession, and also out of the world at once. But this axe is now new ground; it cometh well edged to the roots of this barren fig tree. It hath been whetted by sin, by the law, and by a formal profession, and therefore must and will make deep gashes, not only in the natural life, but in the heart and conscience also of this professor. “The wages of sin is death, the sting of death is sin.” Wherefore death comes not to this man as he doth to saints, muzzled or without his sting, but with open mouth, in all his strength; yea, he sends his first-born, which is guilt, to devour his strength and to bring him to the king of terrors.

But to give you, in a few particulars, the manner of this man’s dying.

- 1.** Now he hath his fruitless fruit beleaguer him round his bed, together with all the bands and legions of his other wickedness. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden in the cords of his sins.
- 2.** Now some terrible discovery of God is made out unto him, to the perplexing and terrifying of his guilty conscience. God shall cast upon him and not spare, and he shall be afraid of that which is high.
- 3.** The dark entry he is to go through will be a sore amazement to him; “for fear shall be in the way;” yea, terrors will take hold on him when he shall see the yawning jaws of death to gape upon him, and the doors of the shadow of death open to give him passage out of the world. Now, who will meet me in this dark entry? How shall I pass through this dark entry into another world?
- 4.** For by reason of guilt and a shaking conscience his life will hang in continual doubt before him, and he shall be afraid day and night, and shall have no assurance of his life.
- 5.** Now also want will come up against him; it will come up like an armed man. This is a terrible army to him that is graceless in heart and fruitless in life. This want will continually cry in thy ears, Here is a new birth wanting, a new heart and a new spirit wanting; here is faith wanting, here is love and repentance wanting, here is the fear of God wanting, and a good conversation. “Thou art weighed in the balance, and art found wanting.”

6. Together with these standeth by the companions of death, death and hell, death and devils, death and endless torment in the everlasting flames of devouring fire. When God shall come up unto the people he will invade them with his troops.

But how will this man die? Can his heart now endure or can his hands be made strong?

1. God, and Christ, and pity have left him. Sin against light, against mercy, and the long-suffering of God is come up against him; his hope and confidence now is dying by him, and his conscience totters and shakes continually within him.

2. Death is at work, cutting of him down, hewing both bark and heart, both body and soul asunder: the man groans, but death hears him not: he looks ghastly, carefully, dejectedly; he sighs, he sweats, he trembles, death matters nothing.

3. Fearful cogitations haunt him, misgivings, direful apprehensions of God terrify him. Now he hath time to think what the loss of heaven will be, and what the torments of hell will be; now he looks no way but he is frightened.

4. Now would he live, but may not; he would live, though it were but the life of a bedrid man, but must not. He that cuts him down sways him as the feller of wood sways the tottering tree, now this way, then that; at last a root breaks, an heart-string, an eye-string snaps asunder.

5. And now, could the soul be annihilated or brought to nothing, how happy would it count itself! But it sees that may not be. Wherefore it is put to a wonderful strait; stay in the body it may not, go out of the body it dares not. Life is going, the blood settles in the flesh, and the lungs being no more able to draw breath through the nostrils, at last out goes the weary, trembling soul, who is immediately seized by devils, who lay lurking in every hole in the chamber for that very purpose. His friends take care of the body, wrap it up in the sheet or coffin, but the soul is out of their thought and reach, going down to the chambers of death.

I had thought to have enlarged, but I forbear. God, who teaches man to profit, bless this brief and plain discourse to thy soul who yet standest a professor in the land of the living, amongst the trees of his garden! Amen.

A DISCOURSE UPON THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

WHEREIN SEVERAL GREAT AND WEIGHTY
THINGS ARE HANDLED:

AS, THE NATURE OF PRAYER,
AND OF OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW,

WITH HOW FAR IT OBLIGES CHRISTIANS,
AND WHEREIN IT CONSISTS.

*Wherein is Also Shewed, the Equally Deplorable Condition of the
Pharisee, or Hypocritical and Self-Righteous Man; and of the
Publican, or Sinner That Lives in Sin, and in Open Violation of the
Divine Laws. Together With the Way and Method of God's Free
Grace in Pardoning Penitent Sinners; Proverbsing That He
Justifies Them by Imputing Christ's Righteousness to Them.*

BY JOHN BUNYAN,

AUTHOR OF THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

ADVERTISEMENT BY THE EDITOR.

This important treatise unveils, in few but telling words, the nature of prayer, about which mankind has made most awful mistakes. Multitudes conceive that the heart-searching God can be influenced and propitiated by eloquent words and forms of prayer; whilst the few, who are taught by the Holy Spirit, feel and know that the ardent desire, the aspirations, the fervent wishes of the mind, can alone be accepted by the Eternal; and even then only through the merits of the Redeemer.

The first edition appeared in 1635, and it soon became a very popular book. The use and application announced at the end do not appear to have been published, unless the author meant one of his later productions to answer that purpose. The twelfth edition has no date on the title page; to it is added Bunyan's last Sermon, and his dying sayings,—“Licensed, Sept. 10th, 1688”; but this announcement had been probably continued from some earlier edition. The number of cheap reprints of this little volume may account, in some measure, for the amazing errors which crept in and deformed the book; for with the exception of “Grace Abounding,” “The Pilgrim,” and “The Holy War,” few books have been so carelessly and disgracefully printed. For more than a century Bunyan has been represented as saying, “How did God deal with sinners before his righteousness was actually in being.” In fact, no reader can conceive the mutilated state in which this valuable treatise has been published, unless by actual comparison with those printed before the author's decease. Some considerable omissions, doubtless, arose from political causes. Bunyan died very shortly before the glorious revolution in 1688,—and in drawing a faithful portrait of a publican or tax gatherer, he supposed the country to be conquered by a foreign power. “Would it not be an insufferable thing? yea, did not that man deserve hanging ten times over, that should, being a Dutchman, fall in with a French invader, and farm at his hands, those cruel and grievous taxations, which he, in barbarous wise, should at his conquest lay upon them; and exact and force them to be paid with an over, and above of what is appointed.” He goes on to argue, that if this would be a severe trial at the hand of a foreigner, how much more oppressive would it appear if exercised by a fellow countryman. “If these

things are intolerable, what shall we think of such men as shall join to all this compliance with a foreign prince, to rob the church of God? yea, that shall become a man in power under them, to wring out of the hand of a brother, his estate; yea, his bread and livelihood.” These paragraphs, and much more, were omitted, probably, from a fear of giving offense to the new government, and, until the present edition, they had not been restored. In Bunyan’s time, severe and awful persecutions fell upon the church of God in England, and he must have felt the utmost compassion, mingled with deep abhorrence, for those emissaries of Satan, the Informers, who plundered mercilessly all who refused obedience to the order of common prayer. These men, aided by fanatic justices and clergymen, reduced many pious families to the severest sufferings, while thousands fled to the wilds of America for that refuge among men called savages, which was denied them by their much more savage countrymen. It is distressing to read the narrative, published in 1670, of those proceedings in Bedford, while Bunyan was an inmate in its jail. The porters, charged to assist in carrying off the people’s goods, ran away, saying, that “they would be hanged, drawn, and quartered, before they would assist in that work”; two of them were sent to gaol for thus refusing to aid in this severe enforcement of impious laws. This populous town “was so thin of people that it looked more like a country village than a corporation; and the shops being generally shut down, it seemed like a place visited with the pest, where usually is written upon the door—Lord, have mercy upon us.” When in the presence of the justice the officers took all his goods from Thomas Arthur, he appealed to the humane feelings of the magistrate on behalf of his children,—“Sir, shall my children starve,” to which he replied, “yes, your children shall starve.” All these bitter sufferings were inflicted for worshipping God according to the directions of his holy word. Can we wonder then that Bunyan uses hard words. He felt that state hierarchies were anti-christian; their fruit declared that those who supported them by such cruelties were aliens and enemies to the church of Christ.

As a theological treatise, this of the Pharisee and Publican is invaluable. It is clear and perfectly intelligible to every candid and prayerful inquirer. When our author is proving the impossibility of a sinner’s recommending himself to the divine favor by any imperfect good works of his own, he

draws a vivid picture. A lord invites his friends to a sumptuous banquet, the provision is bountiful and in rich abundance, when some of the guests take a few moldy crusts out of their pockets and lay them on their plates, lest the prince had not provided a sufficient repast for his friends; “would it not be a high affront to, a great contempt of, and a distrust in, the goodness of the Lord.” We are bound to produce good works as a fruit of faith—a proof of love to him that hath redeemed us, but not to recommend us to his favor. The picture of such a feast drawn by John Bunyan must make upon every reader a deep, a lasting, an indelible impression. How bitter and how true is the irony, when the Pharisee is represented as saying, “I came to thy feast out of civility, but for thy dainties I need them not, I have enough of my own; I thank thee for thy kindness, but I am not as those that stand in need of thy provisions, nor yet as this Publican.” And how excellent is the reasoning and the Christian philosophy of that paragraph which was suppressed after Bunyan’s death. The language is bold and striking, but it exhibits the unvarnished truth; an inward change of nature is the only cause of good and acceptable works—good or evil actions are but the evidences of our state by grace or by nature—they do not work that change or produce that state. It is a soul-humbling view of our state of death by sin, or of life by the righteousness and obedience of Christ. Bunyan’s train of reasoning on ◀HFB▶Romans 5 is worthy of our profound consideration,—“When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” What is a sinful man in himself, or in his approach to God, but as stubble fully dry in the presence of a consuming fire, unless he is washed and cleansed by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus.

May the glorified spirit of Bunyan rejoice among the angels of heaven, over souls converted by the instrumentality of this solemn and searching treatise.

George Offor.

TO THE READER.

COURTEOUS READER,

I have made bold once again to present thee with some of my meditations; and they are now about the PHARISEE and the PUBLICAN: Two men in whose condition the whole world is comprehended, both as to their state now, and condition at the judgment.

Wherefore in reading this little book thou must needs read thyself. I do not say thou must understand thy condition; for it is the gift of God must make thee do that. Howbeit, if God will bless it to thee, it may be a means to bring thee to see whose steps thou art treading, and so at whose end thou art like to arrive.

And let me beg this at thy hand, now thou art about to read; reserve thy judgment or sentence as to me, until thou hast passed through the discourse.

Justification is treated of here, and the way for men to be saved.

I have also O PUBLICAN here, as my skill hath served me, for thy encouragement, set before thee the Pharisee and the Publican in their colors, and shewed thee, that though the Publican seemed to be far behind, yet in running he got the prize from the lofty Pharisee. I say, Art thou a Pharisee? Here is a Pharisee for thee! Art thou a Publican? Here is a Publican for thee!

God give thee the Publican's heart, if thou art in the Publican's sins, that thou mayest partake with the Publican, of mercy.—So wisheth thy friend.

JOHN BUNYAN.

A DISCOURSE UPON THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN.

CHAPTER 1

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican: The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.” LUKE LUKE 18:10-13.

In the beginning of this chapter you read of the reason of the parable of the unjust judge and the poor widow; namely, to encourage men to pray. He spake a parable to THIS END, that men ought always to pray and not to faint. And a most sweet parable for that purpose it is: For if through importunity, a poor widow-woman may prevail with an unjust judge; and so consequently with an unmerciful and hard-hearted tyrant; how much more shall the poor, afflicted, distressed, and tempted people of God, prevail with, and obtain mercy at the hands of a loving, just and merciful God? The unjust judge would not hearken to, nor regard, the cry of the poor widow for a while: “But afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.” Hark, saith Christ, “what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him?” I tell you, that he will avenge them speedily.

This is therefore a very comfortable parable to such of the saints, that are under hard usages by reason of evil men, their might, and tyranny. For by it we are taught to believe and expect, that God, though for a while he

seemeth not to regard, yet will, in due time and season, arise and set such in safety from them that puff at them. (^{912B}Psalm 12:5)

Let the good Christian pray always; let him pray and not faint at seeming delays; for if the widow by importunity prevailed with the unjust judge, how much more shall he with his heavenly Father. “I tell you, [says Christ,] that he will avenge them speedily.”

But now, forasmuch as this parable reacheth not (so directly) the poor publican in the text, therefore our Lord begins again, and adds to that another parable, this parable, which I have chosen for my text. By the which he designeth two things: First, The conviction of the proud and self-conceited Pharisee. Secondly, The raising up and healing of the cast down and dejected Publican. And observe it, as by the first parable he chiefly designeth the relief of those that are under the hand of cruel tyrants: So by this he designeth the relief of those that lie under the load and burden of a guilty and disquieted conscience.

This therefore is a parable that is full of singular comfort to such of the sinners in the world, that are clogged with guilt, and a sense of sin; and that lie under the apprehensions of, and that are driven to God by, the sense of the judgment, that for sin is due unto them.

In my handling of this text, I shall have respect to these things.

First, To the PERSONS in the text.

Secondly, To the CONDITION of the persons in the text.

Thirdly, To the CONCLUSION that Christ makes upon them both.

First, For the PERSONS. They were, as you see, far one from another in their own apprehension of themselves; one good, the other bad; but yet in the judgment of the law, both alike, both the same, both sinners; for they both stood in need of merit. ^{F1} True, the first mentioned did not see it, as the other poor sinner did; but that altereth not the case. He that is in the judgment of the law a sinner, is in the judgment of the law for sin condemned, though in his own judgment he be never so righteous.

Men must not be judged, or justified, according to what themselves do think, but according to the verdict and sentence that cometh out of the

mouth of God about them. ^{f2} Now the sentence of God is, “They are all under sin — There is none righteous, no, not one” (^{481R}Romans 3) ‘Tis no matter then what the Pharisee did think of himself, God by his word hath proclaimed him a sinner. A sinner, by reason of original sin. A sinner by reason of actual transgression. Personally therefore, with reference to the true nature of their state, they both were sinners, and both by the law under condemnation. True, the Publican’s leprosy was outward; but the Pharisee’s leprosy was inward: his heart, his soul, his spirit, was as foul, and had as much the plague of sin, as had the other in his life or conversation.

Secondly, As to their CONDITION. I do not mean by condition, so much a habit of mind, as the state that they had each of them put themselves into by that mind. The one, says the text, was a Pharisee, the other a Publican. A Pharisee: That is, one that hath chosen to himself such a course of life. A Publican: That is, one that hath chosen to himself such a course of life. These terms therefore shew, the divers courses of life that they had put themselves into. The Pharisee, as he thought, had put himself into a condition for heaven and glory; but the Publican was for this world, and his lusts. Wherefore when the Pharisee stands in the temple, he boasteth of himself and good condition; but condemneth the Publican, and bitterly inveigheth against him. But, as I said, their personal state by the law, was not at all changed. The Pharisee made himself never the better; the Publican also abode in his place. Indeed the Publican is here found to recant, and repent of his condition; of the condition that he had put himself into; and the Pharisee to boast of his: But the Publican’s repentance was not of himself, but of God; who can also, yea, and sometimes it is evident (^{489E}Acts 9), he doth make Pharisees also repent of that condition that they have chosen to be in themselves. (^{518B}Philippians 3:3-8) The Pharisee, therefore in commending of himself, makes himself never the better. The Publican also, in condemning of himself, makes himself never the worse. Nay, contrariwise, the Pharisee by commending of himself makes himself much the worse (^{518B}Philippians 3:14). And the Publican, by condemning of himself, makes himself much the better. “I tell you, [says Christ] This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

But, I say, as to men's commending of themselves, yea, though others should commend them also, that availeth, to Godward, nothing at all. "For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth." So then, men in "measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." (⁴⁷⁰⁸2 Corinthians 10:18, 12)

Now this was the way of the Pharisee, I am not, saith he, as other men; I am no extortioner, nor unjust, no adulterer, nor yet as this Publican.

TWO MEN WENT UP INTO THE TEMPLE TO PRAY. And they two, as I said, as opposite one to the other, as any two men that ever went thither to pray. One of them was over righteous, and the other wicked over much. Some would have thought, had they not by the word of Christ been otherwise described, that they had been both of the same religion; for they both went up into the temple to pray; yea, both to pray, and that at the same time, as if they did it by appointment, by agreement, but there was no such thing. The one was a Pharisee, the other a Publican; for so saith the after words: And therefore persons as opposite as light and darkness, as fire and water; I mean as to their apprehensions one of another. The Pharisee could not abide the Publican, nor could the Publican brook the Pharisee, and yet both went up into the temple to pray. It is strange to see, and yet it is seen, that men cross in their minds, cross in their principles, cross in their apprehensions; yea, and cross in their prayers too, should yet meet together in the temple to pray.

TWO MEN, Men not of the middle sort, as afore is shewed; but two, and them too, picked out of the best and worst that was: as shall now be a little more largely handled. Two men, a Pharisee and a Publican.

To be a Pharisee was in those days counted honorable for religion, and for holiness of life. A Pharisee was a man of esteem and repute among the Jews, though it is a term of reproach with us. Else Paul would not as he did, and at such a time as he did it, have said, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee." (⁴²³⁶Acts 23:6, ⁵⁰⁸⁵Philippians 3:5) For now he stood upon his purgation and justification, especially it appears so by the place first named. And far be it from any to think, that Paul would make use of a color of wickedness, to save, thereby, himself from the fury of the people.

A Publican was in those days counted one of the vilest of men, as is manifest; because when they are by the word, by way of discrimination, made mention of, they are ranked with the most vile and base. Therefore they are joined with sinners. “He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners”; and with harlots. “The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God.” Yea, when our Lord Christ would have the rebellious professor stigmatized to purpose, he saith: “Let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican.”

We therefore can make no judgment of men upon the outward appearance of them. Who would have thought, but that the Pharisee had been a good man, for he was righteous; for he prayed. And who could have thought, that the other had been a good man? For he was a Publican: A man, by good men, and bad men, joined with the worst of men, to wit, with sinners, harlots, heathens.

The Pharisee was a sectarian; the Publican was an officer. The Pharisee even because he was a sectarian, was had the more in esteem; and the Publican because he was an officer, was had the more in reproach. To speak a little to both these.

The Pharisee was a sectarian, one that deviated, that turned aside in his worshipping from the way of God, both in matter and manner of worship; for such an one I count a sectarian. That he turned aside from the matter, which is the rule of worship, to wit, the written word, it is evident; for Christ saith, That they rejected the commandments of God, and made them of no effect, that they might keep their own traditions. (~~4170~~ Mark 7:9-14) That they turned aside also as to their manner of worship, and became sectarians there, is with no less authority asserted; For “all their works they do for to be seen of men.” (~~4175~~ Acts 26:5, ~~4175~~ Matthew 23:5)

Now this being none of the order or ordinance of Christ, and yet being chose by, and stuck to of these sort of men, and also made a singular and necessary part of worship, became a sect, or bottom for these hypocritical factious men to adhere unto, and to make of others, disciples to themselves. And that they might be admired, and rendered venerable by the simple people to their fellows, they loved to go in long robes; they loved to pray in markets, and in the corners of the streets; they shewed

great zeal for the small things of the law, but had only great words for things that were substantial.

“They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments.” (^{<4215>}Matthew 23:5)

When I say the Pharisee was a sectarian, I do not mean that every sectarian is a Pharisee. There was the sect of the Herodians, and of the Alexandrians, of the Sadducees, with many others; but to be a Pharisee, was to be of the strictest sect: After the most strictest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee; that therefore of all the sects, was the most strait and strict. Therefore, saith he in another place, I was “taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers.” (^{<4218>}Acts 22:3, ^{<4219>}Acts 26:4-6) And again, “Touching the law a Pharisee.” (^{<5185>}Philippians 3:5) The Pharisees therefore did carry the bell, ^{f3} and did wear the garland for religion; for he out-did, he went beyond all other sectarians in his day. He was the strictest, he was the most zealous; therefore Christ in his making of this parable, waveth all other sects then in being, and pitcheth upon the Pharisee as the man most meet, by whose rejection he might shew forth, and demonstrate the riches of his mercy in its extension to sinners: “Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee.” The one such a brave man as you have heard.

The PUBLICAN also went up thither to pray. The Publican, I told you before, was an officer. An officer that served the Romans and themselves too; for the Romans at that time were possessors of the land of Jewry, the lot of Israel’s inheritance, and the Emperor Tiberius Caesar placed over that land four governors, to wit, Pilate, Herod, Philip, and Lysanias (^{<4211>}Luke 3:1); all these were Gentiles, heathens, infidels; and the Publicans were a sort of inferior men, to whom was let out to farm, and so men that were employed by these to gather up the taxes and customs, that the heathens had laid upon the Jews to be paid to the emperor. (^{<4212>}Luke 2:1, ^{<4213>}Luke 3:12, 13)

But they were a generation of men that were very injurious in the execution of their office. They would exact and demand more than was due of the people; yea, and if their demands were denied, they would falsely accuse those that so denied them to the governor, and by false accusation obtain the money of the people, and so wickedly enrich themselves.

(^{40B}Luke 3:13, ^{40C}Luke 19:2, 8) This was therefore grievous to the Jews, who always counted themselves a free people, and could never abide to be in bondage to any. And this was something of the reason, that they were so generally, by all the Jews, counted so vile and base, and reckoned among the worst of men, even as our informers and bum bailiffs are with us at this day.

But that which heightened the spirit of the people against them, and that made them so odious and filthy in their eyes, was for that, at least so I think, these Publicans were not, as the other officers, aliens, heathens, and Gentiles, but men of their own nation, Jews, and so the brethren of those that they so abused. Had they been Gentiles, it had not been to be wondered at; that they abused, accused and by false accusations peeled and wasted the people; for that cannot but be expected at the hands of aliens and strangers.

The Publican then was a Jew, a kind of a renegade Jew, that through the love that he had to unjust gains, fell off in his affections from his brethren, adhered to the Romans, and became a kind of servant to them against their brethren, farming the heathenish taxations at the hand of strangers, and exacting of them upon their brethren with much cruelty, falsehood, and extortion. And hence, as I said, it was, that to be a Publican, was to be so odious a thing, so vile a sinner, and so grievous a man in the eyes of the Jews. And would it not be an insufferable thing? Yea, did not that man deserve hanging ten times over, that should, being a Dutchman, fall in with a French invader, and take place or farm at his hands, those cruel and grievous taxations, which he in barbarous wise should at his conquest lay upon them; and exact and force them to be paid him with an over and above of what is appointed. ^{F4} Why this was the Publican, he was a Jew, and so should have abode with them, and have been content to share with his brethren in their calamities; but contrary to nature, to law, to religion, reason, and honesty, he fell in with the heathen, and took the advantage of their tyranny, to pole, to peel, ^{f5} to rob and impoverish his brethren.

But for proof that the Publican was a Jew.

1. They are, even then, when compared with, yet distinguished from the heathen; Let him be to thee as an heathen man and a Publican (^{40D}Matthew 18), which two terms, I think, must not here be applied to one and the

self-same man, as if the heathen was a Publican, or the Publican a heathen, but to men of two distinct nations; as that Publican and Harlot, is to be understood of sinners of both sexes. The Publican is not an harlot, for he is a man, etc. and such a man as has been described before. So by Publicans and Sinners, is meant Publicans, and such sinners as the Gentiles were; or such as, by the text, the Publican is distinguished from: Where the Pharisee saith he was not an extortioner, unjust, adulterer, or even as this Publican. Nor can he by Heathen Man, intend the person, and by the term Publican, the office or place of the heathen man; but by Publican is meant the renegade Jew, in such a place, etc. as is yet further manifest by that which follows. For,

2. Those Publicans, even every one of them that by name are made mention of in the New Testament, have such names put upon them; yea, and other circumstances thereunto annexed, as doth demonstrate them to be Jews. I remember the names of no more but three, to wit, Matthew, Levi, and Zaccheus, and they were all Jews.

(1.) Matthew was a Jew, and the same Matthew was a Publican; yea, and also afterward an apostle. He was a Jew, and wrote his gospel in Hebrew; He was an apostle, and is therefore found among the twelve. That he was a Publican too, is as evident by his own words: For though Mark and Luke in their mentioning of his name and apostleship, do forbear to call him a Publican. (^{}Mark 3:18, ^{}Luke 6:15) Yet when this Matthew comes to speak of himself, he calls himself Matthew the Publican (^{}Matthew 10:3), for I count this the self-same Matthew that Mark and Luke maketh mention of, because I find no other Matthew among the apostles but he: Matthew the Publican, Matthew the man so deep in apostasy, Matthew the man of that ill fame among his brethren. Love in Mark and Luke, when they counted him among the apostles, did cover with silence this his Publican state; and it is meet for Peter to call Paul his beloved brother, when Paul himself shall call himself the chief of sinners; but faithfulness to the world, and a desire to be abased, that Christ thereby, and grace by him, might be advanced, made Matthew, in his evangelical writings, call himself by the name of Matthew the Publican. Nor has he lost thereby; for Christ again to exalt him, as he hath also done by the apostle Paul, hath set, by his special providence, the

testimony that this Matthew hath given of his birth, life, death, doctrine, and miracles, in the front of all the New Testament.

(2.) The next Publican that I find by the testament of Christ, made mention of by name, is Levi, another of the apostles of Jesus Christ. This Levi also, by the Holy Ghost in holy writ, is called by the name of James. Not James the brother of John, for Zebedee was his father; but James the son of Alpheus. Now I take this Levi also to be another than Matthew; first, because Matthew is not called the son of Alpheus; and because Matthew and Levi, or James the son of Alpheus, are distinctly counted where the names of the apostles are mentioned (^{400}Matthew 10:3), for two distinct persons: And that this Levi, or James the apostle was a Publican, as was the apostle Matthew, whom we mentioned before, is evident; for both Mark and Luke do count him such. First, Mark saith, Christ found him when he called him, as he also found Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom; yea, Luke words it thus:

“He went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me.”

(^{414}Mark 2:14, ^{457}Luke 5:27)

Now that this Levi, or James the son of Alpheus, was a Jew, his name doth well make manifest. Besides, had there been among the apostles any more Gentiles save Simon the Canaanite; or if this Levi James had been [one] here, I think the Holy Ghost would, to distinguish him, have included him in the same discriminating character as he did the other, when he called him Simon the Canaanite. (^{400}Matthew 10:4)

Matthew, therefore, and Levi or James, were both Publicans, and, as I think, called both at the same time; ^{f6} were both Publican-Jews, and made by grace the apostles of Jesus Christ.

(3.) The next Publican that I find by name, made mention of in the testament of Christ, is one Zaccheus. And he was a chief Publican; yea, for ought I know, the master of them all.

“There was a man, [saith Luke,] named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the Publicans, and he was rich.” (^{400}Luke 19:2)

This man, Christ saith, was a son of Abraham, that is, as other Jews were; for he spake that to stop the mouths of their Pharisaiical cavillations. Besides, the Publican shewed himself to be such an one, when under a supposition of wronging any man, he has respect to the Jewish law of restoring four-fold. (^{<0218>}Exodus 22:1, ^{<0219>}2 Samuel 12:6)

It is further manifest that he was a Jew, because Christ puts him among the lost; to wit, among the lost sheep of the house of Israel (^{<0218>}Luke 19:8-10, ^{<0219>}Matthew 15:24), for Zaccheus was one that might properly be said to be lost, and that in the Jews account: Lost I say, and that not only in the most common sense, by reason of transgression against the law, but for that he was an apostate Jew; not with reference to heathenish religion, but as to heathenish, cruel, and barbarous actions; and therefore he was, as the other, by his brethren counted as bad as heathens, Gentiles, and harlots. But salvation is come to this house, saith Christ, and that notwithstanding his Publican practices, forasmuch as he also is the son of Abraham.

3. Again, Christ by the parable of the lost sheep, doth plainly intimate, that the Publican was a Jew.

“Then drew near unto him all the Publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” (^{<0218>}Luke 15:1, 2)

But by what answer doth Christ repel their objections? Why, he saith, “What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost until he find it?” Doth he not here, by the lost sheep, mean the poor Publican? Plenty of whom, while he preached this sermon, were there, as objects of the Pharisees’ scorn; but of the pity and compassion of Jesus Christ! he did without doubt mean them. For, pray, what was the flock, and who Christ’s sheep under the law, but the house and people of Israel? (^{<0218>}Exodus 34:30, 31) So then, who could be the lost sheep of the house of Israel, but such as was Matthew, James, Zaccheus, and their companions in their, and such like transgressions.

4. Besides, had not the Publican been of the Jews, how easy had it been for the Pharisees to have objected, that an impertinency was couched in

that most excellent parable of the lost sheep? They might have said, We are offended, because thou receivest the Publicans, and thou for vindication of thy practice, propoundest a parable of lost sheep; but they are the sinners of the house of Israel, and the Publicans are aliens and Gentiles. I say, How easily might they thus have objected? But they knew full well, that the parable was pertinent, for that the Publicans were of the Jews, and not of the aliens. Yea, had they not been Jews, it cannot, it must not be thought, that Christ, in sum, should call them so; and yet he did do so, when he called them lost sheep.

Now that these Publicans were Jews, what follows, but that for this they were a great deal the more abominated of their brethren. And, as I have also hinted before, it is no marvel though they were; for a treacherous brother is worse than an open enemy. (^{35B}Psalm 55:12, 13) For, if to be debauched in open and common transgressions is odious, how odious is it for a brother to be so? For a brother in nature and religion to be so? I say again, if these things are intolerable, what shall we think of such men, as shall join to all this compliance with a foreign prince to rob the church of God? Yea, that shall become a tenant, an officer, a man in power under them, to exact, force, and wring out of the hand of a brother his estate; yea, his bread and livelihood. Add to all this, What shall we say to him that shall do for an enemy against a brother in a way of injury and wrong, more than in strictness of law they were commanded by that same enemy to do? And yet all this they did, as both John insinuates, and Zaccheus confesses. ^{F7}

The Pharisee therefore was not so good, but the Publican was as bad: Indeed, the Publican was a notorious wretch, one that had a way of transgressing by himself; one that could not be sufficiently condemned by the Jews, nor coupled with a viler than himself. 'Tis true, you find him here in the temple at prayer; not because he retained in his apostasy, conscience of the true religion, but God had awakened him, shewn him his sin, and bestowed upon him the grace of repentance, by which he was not only fetched back to the temple, and prayer, but to his God, and to the salvation of his soul.

The Pharisee, then, was a man of another complexion, and stood as to his own thoughts of himself; yea, and in the thoughts of others also, upon the highest and better ground by far. The Publican was a notorious sinner; the

Pharisee was a notorious righteous man. The Publican was a sinner out of the ordinary way of sinning; and the Pharisee was a man for righteousness in a singular way also. The Publican pursued his villainies, and the Pharisee pursued his righteousness; and yet they both meet in the temple to pray. Yea, the Pharisee stuck to, and boasted in the law of God; but the Publican did forsake it, and hardened his heart against his way and people.

Thus diverse were they in their appearances; the Pharisee, very good; the Publican, very bad. But as to the law of God, which looked upon them with reference to the state of their spirits, and the nature of their actions, by that they were both found sinners; the Publican an open outside one, and the Pharisee a filthy inside one. This is evident, because the best of them was rejected, and the worst of them was received to mercy. Mercy standeth not at the Publican's badness, nor is it enamored with the Pharisee's goodness: It suffereth not the law to take place on both, though it findeth them both in sin, but graciously embraceth the most unworthy, and leaveth the best to shift for himself. And good reason that both should be dealt with after this manner; to wit, that the word of grace should be justified upon the soul of the penitent, and that the other should stand or fall to that, which he had chosen to be his master.

There are three things that follow upon this discourse.

[Conclusion.] 1. That the righteousness of man is not of any esteem with God, as to Justification. It is passed by as a thing of naughtiness, a thing not worth the taking notice of. There was not so much as notice taken of the Pharisee's person, or prayer, because he came into the temple mantled up in his own good things.

[Conclusion.] 2. That the man that has nothing to commend him to God, but his own good doings, shall never be in favor with him. This also is evident from the text: The Pharisee had his own righteousness, but had nothing else to commend him to God; and therefore could not by that obtain favor with God, but abode still a rejected one, and in a state of condemnation.

[Conclusion.] 3. Wherefore, though we are bound by the law of charity to judge of men, according as in appearance they present themselves unto us: yet withal, to wit, though we do so judge, we

must leave room for the judgment of God. Mercy may receive him that we have doomed to hell, and justice may take hold on him, whom we have judged to be bound up in the bundle of life. And both these things are apparent by the persons under consideration.

We, like Joseph, are for setting of Manasseh before Ephesiansraim; but God, like Jacob, puts his hands across, and lays his right hand upon the worst man's head, and his left hand upon the best, to the amazement and wonderment even of the best of men. (~~0884~~Genesis 48:14)

CHAPTER 2

THE PHARISEE'S DEFINITION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.” ^{F8}

In these words many things are worth the noting. As,

First. THE PHARISEE'S DEFINITION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS; the which standeth in two things:

1. In negatives.
2. In positives.

In negatives; to wit, what a man that is righteous must not be: I am no extortioner, no unjust man, no adulterer, nor yet as this Publican.

In positives; to wit, what a man that is righteous must be: I fast twice a week, I give tithes of all that I possess, etc.

That righteousness standeth in negative and positive holiness is true; but that the Pharisee's definition is, notwithstanding, false, will be manifest by and by. But I will first treat of righteousness in the general, because the text leadeth me to it.

First then, A Man that is righteous, must have negative holiness; that is, he must not live in actual transgressions: He must not be an extortioner, unjust, an adulterer, or, as the Publican was. And this the apostle intends, when he saith, “Flee fornication (⁴¹²²2 Timothy 2:22), flee also youthful lusts (⁴¹¹⁸1 Corinthians 6:18), flee from idolatry” (⁴¹⁰⁴1 Corinthians 10:14), and “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” (⁴¹⁵¹1 John 5:21) For it is a vain thing to talk of righteousness, and that ourselves are righteous, when every observer shall find us in actual transgression. Yea, though a man shall mix his want of negative holiness, with some good actions, that will

not make him a righteous man. As suppose, a man that is a swearer, a drunkard, an adulterer, or the like, should, notwithstanding this, be open handed to the poor, be a greater executor of justice in his place, be exact in his buying, selling, keep touch with his promise and with his friend, or the like. These things, yea, many more such, cannot make him a righteous man; for the beginning of righteousness is yet wanting in him, which is this negative holiness: For except a man shall leave off to do evil he cannot be a righteous man. Negative holiness is therefore of absolute necessity to make one in one's self a righteous man. This therefore condemns them, that count it sufficient if a man have some actions that in themselves, and by virtue of the command are good, to make him a righteous man, though negative holiness is wanting. This is as saying to the wicked, Thou art righteous, and a perverting of the right way of the Lord. Negative holiness therefore must be in a man before he can be accounted righteous.

Second. As negative holiness is required to declare one a righteous man; so also positive holiness must be joined therewith, or the man is unrighteous still. For it is not what a man is not, but what a man does, that declares him a righteous man. Suppose a man be no thief, no liar, no unjust man; or, as the Pharisee saith, no extortioner, no adulterer, etc., this will not make him a righteous man. But there must be joined to these, holy and good actions, before he can be declared a righteous man. Wherefore, as the apostle, when he pressed the Christians to righteousness, did put them first upon negative holiness, so he joineth thereto an exhortation to positive holiness; knowing, that where positive holiness is wanting, all the negative holiness in the whole world cannot declare a man a righteous man. When therefore he had said, "But thou, O man of God, flee these things," (sins and wickedness) he adds,

"and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience,
meekness." (^{50b1}1 Timothy 6:11)

Here Timothy is exhorted to negative holiness, when he is bid to flee sin. Here also he is exhorted to positive holiness, when he is bid to follow after righteousness, etc., for righteousness can neither stand in negative nor positive holiness, as severed one from another. That man then, and that man only, is, as to actions a righteous man, that hath left off to do evil, and hath learnt to do well (²¹¹⁶Isaiah 1:16, 17), that hath cast off the works of

darkness, and put on the armor of light. Flee also youthful lusts, (said Paul,) but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. (^{<3122>} Timothy 2:22)

The Pharisee therefore, as to the general description of righteousness, made his definition right; but as to his person and personal righteousness, he made his definition wrong. I do not mean, he defined his own righteousness wrong; but I mean, his definition of true righteousness, which standeth in negative and positive holiness, he made to stoop to justify his own righteousness, and therein he played the hypocrite in his prayer: For although it is true righteousness, that standeth in negative and positive holiness; yet that is not true righteousness, that standeth but in some pieces and ragged remnants of negative and positive righteousness. If then the Pharisee would in his definition of personal righteousness, have proved his own righteousness to be good, he must have proved, that both his negative and positive holiness had been universal: to wit, that he had left off to act in any wickedness, and that he had given up himself to the duty enjoined in every commandment. For so the righteous man is described (^{<8008>} Job 1:8), As it is also said of Zacharias and Elizabeth his wife,

“they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.” (^{<4006>} Luke 1:6)

Here the perfection, that is, the universality of their negative holiness is implied, and the universality of their positive holiness is expressed: They walked in all the commandments of the Lord; but that they could not do, if they had lived in any unrighteous thing or way. They walked in all blamelessly, that is, sincerely with upright hearts. The Pharisee’s righteousness therefore, even by his own implied definition of righteousness, was not good, as is manifest these two ways.

1. His negative holiness was not universal.
2. His positive holiness was rather criminal^{f9} than moral.

1. His negative holiness was not universal. He saith indeed, he was not an extortioner, nor unjust, no adulterer, nor yet as this Publican: but now of these expressions apart, nor all, if put together, do prove him to be perfect as to negative holiness; that is, they do not prove him, should it be

granted, that he was as holy with this kind of holiness, as himself of himself had testified. For,

(1.) What though he was no extortioner, he might yet be a covetous man. (⁴²⁶⁴Luke 16:14)

(2.) What though, as to dealing, he was not unjust to others, yet he wanted honesty to do justice to his own soul. (⁴²⁶⁵Luke 16:15)

(3.) What, though he was free from the act of adultery, he might yet be made guilty by an adulterous eye, against which the Pharisee did not watch, of which the Pharisee did not take cognizance. (⁴¹⁵³Matthew 5:28)

(4.) What, though he was not like the Publican, yet he was like, yea, was a downright hypocrite; he wanted in those things wherein he boasted himself, sincerity; but without sincerity no action can be good, or accounted of God as righteous. The Pharisee therefore, notwithstanding his boasts, was deficient in his righteousness, though he would fain have shrouded it under the right definition thereof.

2. Nor doth his positive holiness help him at all, forasmuch as it is grounded mostly, if not altogether, in ceremonial holiness. Nay, I will recollect myself, it was grounded partly in ceremonial, and partly in superstitious holiness, if there be such a thing as superstitious holiness in the world, this paying of tithes was ceremonial, such as came in and went out with the typical priesthood. But what is that to positive holiness, when it was but a small pittance by the by. Had the Pharisee argued plainly and honestly; I mean, had he so dealt with that law, by which now he sought to be justified, he should have brought forth positive righteousness in morals, and should have said and proved it too, that, as he was no wicked man with reference to the act of wickedness, he was indeed a righteous man in acts of moral virtues. He should, I say, have proved himself a true lover of God, no superstitious one, but a sincere worshipper of him; for this is contained in the first table (⁴²¹¹Exodus 20), and is so in sum expounded by the Lord Christ himself. (⁴¹²⁰Mark 12:30) He should also in the next place have proved himself truly kind, compassionate, liberal, and full of love and charity to his neighbor; for that is the sum of the second table, as our Lord also doth expound it, saying,

“Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” (⁴¹²³Mark 12:31)

True, he says, he did them no hurt; but did he do them good? To do no hurt is one thing; and to do good, is another; and it is possible for a man to do neither hurt nor good to his neighbor. What then, Is he a righteous man because he hath done him no hurt? No verily; unless, to his power, he hath also done him good.

It is therefore a very fallacious and deceitful arguing of the Pharisee, thus to speak before God in his prayer: I am righteous, because I have not hurt my neighbor, and because I have acted in ceremonial duties. Nor will that help him at all to say, he gave TITHES of all that he possessed. It had been more modest to say, that he had paid them; for they, being commanded, were a due debt; nor could they go before God for a free gift, because by the commandment they were made a payment; but proud men and hypocrites, love so to word it both with God and man, as at least to imply, that they are more forward to do, than God’s commandment is to require them to do.

The second part of his positive holiness was superstitious; for God hath appointed no such set fasts, neither more nor less, but just twice a week: I fast twice a week. Ay, but who did command thee to do so; ^{f10} commanded to fast when occasion required if thou wast, but that thou shouldest have any occasion to do so as thou doest, other than by thy being put upon it by a superstitious and erroneous conscience, doth not, nor canst thou make to appear. This part therefore of this positive righteousness, was positive superstition, an abuse of God’s law, and a gratification of thy own erroneous conscience. Hitherto therefore, thou art defective in thy so seemingly brave and glorious righteousness.

Yet this let me say in commendation of the Pharisee: In my conscience he was better than many of our English Christians; for many of them are so far off from being at all partakers of positive righteousness, that all their ministers, bibles, good books, good sermons, nor yet God’s judgments, can persuade them to become so much as negatively holy, that is, to leave off evil.

CHAPTER 3

THE PHARISEE'S SELF-COMPLACENCY IN PRAYER.

THE second thing that I take notice of in this prayer of the Pharisee, is, HIS MANNER OF DELIVERY, as he stood praying in the temple. "God, I thank thee [said he] that I am not as other men are." He seemed to be at this time, in more than an ordinary frame, while now he stood in the presence of the divine majesty: for a prayer made up of praise, is a prayer of the highest order, and is most like the way of them that are now in a state beyond prayer. Praise is the work of heaven; but we see here, that an hypocrite may get into that vein, even while an hypocrite, and while on earth below. Nor do I think that this prayer of his was a premeditated stunted form, but a prayer extempore, made on a sudden, according to what he felt, thought, or understood of himself.

Here therefore, we may see, that even prayer, as well as other acts of religious worship, may be performed in great hypocrisy; although, I think, that to perform prayer in hypocrisy, is one of the most daring sins that are committed by the sons of men. For by prayer, above all duties, is our most direct, and immediate personal approach into the presence of God: and as there is an uttering of things before him, especially a giving of him thanks for things received, or a begging, that such and such things might be bestowed upon me. But now to do these things in hypocrisy, and 'tis easy to do them so, when we go up into the temple to pray, must needs be intolerable wickedness, and it argueth infinite patience in God, that he should let such as do so, arise alive from their knees, or that he should suffer them to go away from the place where they stand, without some token or mark of his wrath upon them. I also observe, That this extempore prayer of the Pharisee, was performed by himself, or in the strength of his own natural parts; for so the text implieth, "The Pharisee," saith the text, "stood and prayed thus with himself," with himself, or by himself, and may signify, either that he spoke softly, or that he made this prayer by reason of his natural parts. "I will pray with the Spirit," said Paul. (1 Corinthians 14:15) The Pharisee prayed with himself, said Christ. It is at this day wonderful common, for men to pray extempore also. To pray by

a book, by a premeditated set form, is now out of fashion. He is counted no body now, that cannot at any time, at a minute's warning, make a prayer of half an hour long. I am not against extempore prayer, for I believe it to be the best kind of praying; but yet I am jealous, that there are a great many such prayers made, especially in pulpits and public meetings, without the breathing of the Holy Ghost in them: For if a Pharisee of old could do so, Why may not a Pharisee do the same now? Wit, and reason, and notion is now screwed up to a very great height; nor do men want words, or fancies, or pride, to make them do this thing. Great is the formality of religion this day, and little the power thereof. Now where there is a great form and little power, and such there was also among the Jews, in the time of our Savior Jesus Christ, there men are most strangely under the temptation to be hypocrites; for nothing doth so properly and directly oppose hypocrisy, as the power and glory of the things we profess. And so on the contrary, nothing is a greater temptation to hypocrisy, than a form of knowledge of things without the savor thereof. Nor can much of the power and savor of the things of the gospel be seen at this day upon professors, I speak not now of all, if their notions and conversations be compared together. How proud, how covetous, how like the world in garb and guise, in words and actions, are most of the great professors of this our day! But when they come to divine worship, especially to pray, by their words and carriage there, one would almost judge them to be angels in heaven. But such things must be done in hypocrisy, as also the Pharisee's were.

The Pharisee stood and prayed **THUS WITH HIMSELF.**

And, in that it is said, "he prayed with himself"; it may signify, that he went in his prayer no further than his sense and reason, feeling and carnal apprehensions went. True, Christian prayer oftentimes leaves sense and reason, feeling, and carnal apprehensions behind it, and it goeth forth with faith, hope, and desires to know what at present we are ignorant of, and that unto which our sense, feeling, reason, etc., are strangers. The apostle indeed doth say, "I will pray with the understanding" (~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 14:15) but then it must be taken for an understanding spiritually enlightened. I say, it must be so understood, because the natural understanding, properly as such, receiveth not the things of the Spirit of

God when offered, and therefore cannot pray for them; for they to such, are foolish things. (^{<404>}1 Corinthians 2:14)

Now a spiritually enlightened understanding may be officious in prayer these ways.

1. As it has received conviction of the truth of the being of the things that are of the Spirit of God; For to receive conviction of the truth and being of such things, comes from the Spirit of God, not from the law, sense, or reason. (^{<400>}1 Corinthians 2:10-12) Now the understanding having, by the Holy Ghost, received conviction of the truth of the being of such things, draweth out the heart to cry in prayer to God for them. Therefore he saith, he would pray with the understanding.

2. A spiritually enlightened understanding, hath also received by the Holy Ghost, conviction of the excellency and glory of the things that are of the Spirit of God, and so enflameth the heart with more fervent desires in this duty of prayer; for there is a supernatural excellency in the things that are of the Spirit;

“But if the ministration of death, [to which the Pharisee adhered] written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious. For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth.” (^{<400>}2 Corinthians 3:7-10)

And the Spirit of God sheweth, at best, some things of that excellent glory of them to the understanding that it enlighteneth. (^{<400>}Ephesians 1:17-19)

3. The spiritually enlightened understanding hath also thereby received knowledge, that these excellent supernatural things of the Spirit, are given by covenant in Christ to those that love God, that are beloved of him.

“Now we have received, [says Paul] not the Spirit of the world, [that the Pharisee had] but the Spirit which is of God, that we

might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”

(⁴¹²1 Corinthians 2:12)

And this knowledge, that the things of the Spirit of God are freely given to us of God, puts yet a greater edge, more vigor, and yet further confidence into the heart to ask for what is mine by gift, by a free gift of God in his Son. ^{F11} But all these things the poor Pharisee was an utter stranger to; he knew not the Spirit, nor the things of the Spirit, and therefore must neglect faith, judgment, and the love of God (⁴¹³Matthew 23:23, ⁴¹⁴Luke 11:42), and follow himself, and himself only, as to his sense, feeling, reason, and carnal imagination in prayer.

He stood and prayed thus WITH HIMSELF. He prayed thus, talking to himself; for so also it may, I think, be understood. It is said of the unjust judge, “he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man,” etc. (⁴¹⁵Luke 18:4) That is, he said it to himself. So the Pharisee is said to pray with himself. God and the Pharisee were not together, there was only the Pharisee and himself. Paul knew not what to pray for without the Holy Ghost joined himself with him, spake with him and helped him with groans unutterable. But the Pharisee had no need of that, it was enough that HE And HIMSELF were together at this work; for he thought without doubting that he and himself together could do. How many times have I heard ancient men, and ancient women, at it, with themselves, when all alone in some private room, or in some solitary path; and in their chat, they have been sometimes reasoning, sometimes chiding, sometimes pleading, sometimes praying, and sometimes singing; but yet all has been done by themselves when all alone: But yet so done, as one that has not seen them, must needs have concluded, that they were talking, singing, and praying with company, when all that they said, they did it with themselves, and had neither auditor nor regarder.

So the Pharisee was at it with himself, he and himself performed, at this time, the duty of prayer. Now I observe, that usually when men do speak to, or with themselves, they greatly strive to please themselves: Therefore it is said, there is a man, That

“flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity
be found to be hateful.” (⁴¹⁶Psalms 36:2)

He flattereth himself in his own way, according as his sense and carnal reason dictates to him; and he might do it as well in prayer, as in any other way. Some men will so hear sermons, and apply them that they may please themselves: And some men will pray, but will refuse such words and thoughts in prayer as will not please themselves.

Oh, how many men speak all that they speak in prayer, rather to themselves, or to their auditory, than to God that dwelleth in heaven! And this I take to be the manner, I mean something of the manner of the Pharisee's praying. Indeed, he made mention of God, as also others do; but he prayed with himself to himself, in his own spirit, and to his own pleasing, as the matter of his prayer doth manifest. For was it not pleasant to this hypocrite, think you, to speak thus well of himself at this time? doubtless it was. Also children and fools are of the same temper with hypocrites as to this; they also love without ground, as the Pharisee, to flatter themselves in their own eyes. But not he that commendeth himself is approved.

God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican, etc.

Thus he begins his prayer; and it is, as was hinted before, a prayer of the highest strain. For to make a prayer all of thanksgiving, and to urge in that prayer, the cause of that thanksgiving, is the highest manner of praying, and seems to be done in the strongest faith, etc., in the greatest sense of things. And such was the Pharisee's prayer, only he wanted substantial ground for his thanksgiving; to wit, he wanted proof of that he said, "he was not as other men were," except he had meant, as he did not, that he was even of the worst sort of men: For even the best of men by nature, and the worst, are all alike. "What, then? are we better than they?" said Paul, "No, in no wise." (Romans 3:9) So then, he failed in the ground of his thankfulness, and therefore his thankfulness was grounded on an untruth, and so became feigned, and self-flattering, and could not be acceptable with the God of heaven.

Besides, in this high prayer of the Pharisee, he fathered that upon God which he could by no means own; to wit, that his being so good as he thought himself to be, was through distinguishing love and favor of God, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are." I thank thee, that thou

hast made me better than others. I thank thee that my condition is so good, and that I am so far advanced above my neighbor.

There are several things flow from this prayer of the Pharisee, that are worth our observation: as,

First, That the Pharisees and hypocrites, do not love to count themselves sinners, when they stand before God. They choose rather to commend themselves before him for virtuous and holy persons, sometimes saying, and oftener thinking, that they are more righteous than others. Yea, it seems by the word, to be natural, hereditary, and so common for hypocrites to trust to themselves that they are righteous, and then to condemn others; this is the foundation upon which this very parable is built: “He spake this parable, [saith Luke] unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous”; or that they were so, “and despised others.” (verse 9)

I say, hypocrites love not to think of their sins, when they stand in the presence of God; but rather to muster up, and to present him with their several good deeds, and to venture a standing or falling by them.

Second, This carriage of the Pharisee before God informs us, that moral virtues, and the ground of them, which is the law, if trusted to, blinds the mind of man, that he cannot for them perceive the way to happiness. While Moses is read, and his law, and the righteousness thereof trusted to, the vail is upon their heart.

“For until this day, [said Paul] remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament, which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart.” (2 Corinthians 3:14, 15)

And this is the reason that so many moral men, that are adorned with civil and moral righteousness, are yet so ignorant of themselves, and the way of life by Christ.

The law of works, and the righteousness of the flesh, which is the righteousness of the law, blinds their minds, shuts up their eyes, and causeth them to miss of the righteousness that they are so hotly in the pursuit of. Their minds were blinded, saith the text: Whose minds? Why

those that adhered to, that stood by, and that sought righteousness of the law. Now,

The Pharisee was such an one, he rested in the law, he made his boasts of God, and trusted to himself that he was righteous; And all this proceeded of that blindness and ignorance that the law had possessed his mind withal; for it is not granted to the law to be the ministration of life and light, but to be the ministration of death, when it speaks; and of darkness, when trusted unto, that the Son of God might have the pre-eminence in all things: Therefore 'tis said,

“When the heart shall turn to him, the vail shall be taken away.”

(2 Corinthians 3:16)

Third, We may see by this prayer, the strength of vain confidence; it will embolden a man to stand in a lie before God; it will embolden a man to trust to himself and to what he hath done; yea, to plead his own goodness instead of God's mercy before him. For the Pharisee was not only a man that justified himself before men, but one that justified himself before God. And what was the cause of his so justifying of himself before God; but that vain confidence that he had in himself and his works, which were both a cheat and a lie to himself. But, I say, the boldness of the man was wonderful, for he stood to the lie that was in his right hand, and pleaded the goodness of it before him. But, besides these things, there are four things more that are couched in this prayer of the Pharisee.

First, By this prayer *the Pharisee doth appropriate to himself conversion*, he challengeth it to himself and to his fellows. I am not, saith he, as other men; that is, in unconversion, in a state of sin, wrath, and death. And this must be his meaning; for the religion of the Pharisee was not grounded upon any particular natural privilege. I mean not singly, not only upon that, but upon a falling in with those principles, notions, opinions, decrees, traditions, and doctrines that they taught distinct from the true and holy doctrines of the prophets. And they made to themselves disciples by such doctrine, men, that they could captivate by those principles, laws, doctrines, and traditions: And therefore such are said to be of the sect of the Pharisees; that is, the scholars, and disciples of them, converted to them and to their doctrine. Oh! it is easy for souls to appropriate conversion to themselves, that know not what conversion is.

It is easy, I say, for men to lay conversion to God, on a legal, or ceremonial, or delusive bottom, on such a bottom that will sink under the burden that is laid upon it; on such a bottom that will not stand when it is brought under the touch-stone of God, nor against the rain, wind, and floods that are ordained to put it to the trial, whether it is true or false. The Pharisee here stands upon a supposed conversion to God; “I am not as other men”; but both he, and his conversion are rejected by the sequel of the parable:

“That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.” (^{<2165}Luke 16:15)

That is, that conversion, that men, as men, flatter themselves that they have, is such. But the Pharisee will be a converted man, he will have more to shew for heaven than his neighbor, “I am not as other men are”; to wit, in a state of sin and condemnation, but in a state of conversion and salvation. But see how grievously this sect, this religion beguiled men. It made them two-fold worse the children of hell than they were before: And than their teachers were (^{<2165}Matthew 23:15), that is, their doctrine begat such blindness, such vain confidence, and groundless boldness in their disciples, as to involve them in that conceit of conversion that was false, and so if trusted to, damnable.

Second, By these words, we find the Pharisee, not only appropriating conversion to himself, but rejoicing in that conversion: “God, I thank thee,” saith he, “that I am not as other men”; which saying of his, gives us to see that he gloried in his conversion; he made no doubt at all of his state, but lived in the joy of the safety that he supposed his soul by his conversion to be in. Oh! thanks to God, says he, I am not in the state of sin, death, and damnation, as the unjust, and this Publican is. But a strong delusion! to trust to the spider’s web, and to think, that a few of the most fine of the works of the flesh, would be sufficient to bear up the soul in, at, and under the judgment of God.

“There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.” (^{<2165}Proverbs 30:12)

This text can be so fitly applied to none, as to the Pharisee, and to those that tread in the Pharisee's steps, and that are swallowed up with is conceits, and with the glory of his own righteousness.

So again,

“There is a way [a way to heaven] which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death,”

(^{<3142}Proverbs 14:12)

This also is fulfilled in these kind of men; at the end of their way is death and hell, notwithstanding their confidence in the goodness of their state.

Again,

“There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing.”

(^{<3137}Proverbs 13:7)

What can be more plain from all these texts, than that some men, that are out of the way think themselves in it; and that some men think themselves clean that are yet in their filthiness; and that think themselves rich for the next world, and yet are poor, and miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked. ^{F12} Thus the poor, blind, naked, hypocritical Pharisee thought of himself, when God threatened to abase him: Yea, he thought himself thus, and joyed therein, when indeed he was going down to the chambers of death.

Third, by these words, the Pharisee seems to put the goodness of his condition upon the goodness of God. I am not as other men are, and I thank God for it. God, saith he, I thank thee that I am not as other men are. He thanked God when God had done nothing for him. He thanked God, when the way that he was in was not of Gods prescribing, but of his own inventing. So the persecutor thanks God that he was put into that way of roguery that the devil had put him into, when he fell to rending and tearing of the church of God:

“Whose possessors slay them, [saith the prophet,] and hold themselves not guilty: and they that sell them say, Blessed be the Lord, for I am rich.” (^{<3115}Zechariah 11:5)

I remember that Luther used to say, "In the name of God begins all mischief." All must be fathered upon God: the Pharisee's conversion must be fathered upon God; the right or rather the villany of the outrageous persecution against God's people, must be fathered upon God. God, "I thank thee," and blessed be God, must be the burthen of the heretic's song. So again, the free-willer, he will ascribe all to God; the quaker, the ranter, the socinian, etc. will ascribe all to God. "God, I thank thee," is in every man's mouth, and must be entailed to every error, delusion, and damnable doctrine that is in the world: But the name of God, and their doctrine, worship, and way, hangeth together, much as doth it and the Pharisee's doctrine; that is to say, nothing at all; for God hath not proposed their principles, nor doth he own them, nor hath he commanded them, nor doth he convey by them the least grace or mercy to them; but rather rejecteth them, and holdeth them for his enemies, and for the destroyers of the world.

Fourth, We come in the next place to the ground of all this; and that is, to what the Pharisee had attained. To wit, that he was no extortioner, no unjust man, no adulterer, nor even as this Publican, and for that he fasted twice a week, and paid tithes of all that he possessed. So that you see he pretendeth to a double foundation for his salvation, a moral and a ceremonial one; but both very lean, weak, and feeble: For the first of his foundations, what is it more, if all be true that he saith, but a being removed a few inches from the vilest men in their vilest actions, a very slender matter to build my confidence for heaven upon.

And for the second part of his ground for life, what is it but a couple of ceremonies, if so good. The first is questioned as a thing not founded in God's law; and the second is such, as is of the remotest sort of ceremonies, that teach and preach the Lord Jesus. But suppose them to be the best, and his conformity to them the thoroughest, they never were ordained to get to heaven by, and so are become but a sandy foundation. But anything will serve some men for a foundation and support for their souls, and to build their hopes of heaven upon. I am not a drunkard, says one, nor a liar, nor a swearer, nor a thief, and therefore, I thank God, I have hopes of heaven and glory. I am not an extortioner, nor an adulterer, nor unjust, nor yet as this Publican; and therefore do hope I shall go to heaven. Alas! poor men! will your being furnished with these things, save you

from the thundering claps and vehement batteries, that the wrath of God will make upon sin and sinners in the day that shall burn like an oven? No, no, nothing at that day can shroud a man from the hot rebukes of that vengeance, but the very righteousness of God, which is not the righteousness of the law, however christened, named, or garnished with all those gew-gaws that men's heads and fancies can invent, for that is but the righteousness of man.

CHAPTER 4

THE PHARISEE EXANUBED.

But, O thou blind Pharisee, since thou art so confident that thy state is good, and thy righteousness is that that will stand, when it shall be tried with fire (^{488B}1 Corinthians 3:13), let me now reason with thee of righteousness. My terror shall not make thee afraid; I am not God, but a man as thou art, we both are formed out of the clay.

First, Prithee when didst thou begin to be righteous? Was it before or after thou hadst been a sinner? Not afore, I dare say; but if after, then the sins that thou pollutedst thyself withal before, have made thee incapable of acting legal righteousness. For sin, where it is, pollutes, defiles, and makes vile the whole man; therefore thou canst not by after acts of obedience make thyself just in the sight of that God thou pretended now to stand praying unto. Indeed, thou mayest cover thy dirt, and paint thy sepulcher; for that acts of after obedience will do, though sin has gone before. But Pharisee, God can see through the white of this wall, even to the dirt that is within: God also can see through the paint and garnish of thy beauteous sepulcher, to the dead men's bones that are within; nor can any of thy most holy duties, nor all, when put together, blind the eye of the all-seeing majesty from beholding all the uncleanness of thy soul. ^{F13} (^{488C}Matthew 23:27) Stand not therefore so stoutly to it, now thou art before God; sin is with thee, and judgment and justice is before him. It becomes thee, therefore, rather to despise and abhor this life of thy hand, and to count all thy doings but dross and dung, and to be content to be justified with another's righteousness instead of thine own. This is the way to be secured. I say, blind Pharisee, this is the way to be secured from the wrath which is to come.

There is nothing more certain than this, that as to justification from the curse of the law, God has rejected man's righteousness, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof; and hath accepted in the room of that glorious righteousness of his Son; because indeed, that, and that only, is universal, perfect, and equal with his justice and holiness. This is in a manner the contents of the whole bible, and therefore must needs be most

certainly true. Now then, Mr. Pharisee, methinks, what if thou didst this, and that while thou art at thy prayers; to wit, cast in they mind what doth God love most, and the resolve will be at hand. The BEST righteousness, surely the BEST righteousness; for that thy reason will tell thee: This done, even while thou art at thy devotion, ask thyself again, But WHO has the best righteousness? And that resolve will be at hand also; to wit, he that in person is equal with God; and that is his Son Jesus Christ. He that is separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; and that is his Son Jesus Christ. He that did no sin, nor had any guile found in his mouth; and there never was any such HE in all the world but the Son of God, Jesus Christ.

Now Pharisee, when thou hast done this, then as thou art in thy devotion, ask again, But what is this best righteousness, the righteousness of Christ, to do? And the answer will be ready. It is to be made by an act of the sovereign grace of God over to the sinner, that shall dare to trust thereto for justification from the curse of the law. He is made unto us of God, righteousness. (⁴⁰¹³1 Corinthians 1:30)

“He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”

(⁴⁰¹²2 Corinthians 5:21)

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” (⁴⁰¹⁰Romans 10:4)

This done, and concluded on, then turn again Pharisee, and say thus with thyself; Is it most safe for me to trust in this righteousness of God? This righteousness of God-man, this righteousness of Christ? Certainly it is. Since, by the text, it is counted the best, and that which best pleaseth God; since it is that which God hath appointed, that sinners shall be justified withal. For in the Lord have we righteousness if we believe: And, in the Lord we are justified, and do glory. (³⁵¹Isaiah 45:24, 25)

Nay Pharisee, suppose thine own righteousness should be as long, as broad, as high, as deep, as perfect, as good, even every way as good, as the righteousness of Christ. Yet since God has chosen by Christ, to reconcile us to himself, canst thou attempt to seek by thine own righteousness to reconcile thyself to God, and not be guilty of attempting, at least, to

confront this righteousness of Christ before God. Yea, to dare with it, yea, to challenge by it, acceptance of thy person contrary to God's design.

Suppose, that when the king has chosen one to be judge in the land, and has determined that he shall be judge in all cases, and that by his verdict every man's judgment shall stand. I say, suppose, after this another should arise, and of his own head resolve to do his own business himself. Now, though he should be every whit as able as the judge of the king's appointing to do it; yea, and suppose he should do it as justly and righteously too, yet his making of himself a judge, would be an affront to the king, and an act of rebellion, and so a transgression worthy of punishment.

Why Pharisee, God hath appointed, that by the righteousness of his Son, and by that righteousness only, men shall be justified in his sight from the curse of the law. Wherefore, take heed, and at thy peril, whatever thy righteousness is, confront not the righteousness of Christ therewith. I say, bring it not in, let it not plead for thee at the bar of God, nor do thou plead for that in his court of justice; for thou canst not do that and be innocent. If he trusts to his righteousness, he hath sinned, says Ezekiel. Mark the text,

“When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered: but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.” (Ezekiel 33:13)

Observer a few things from this text, and they are these that follow.

First, Here is a righteous man; a man, with whom we do not hear that the God of heaven finds fault.

Secondly, Here is a promise made to this man, that “he shall surely live”; but on THIS condition, that he trusts not to his own righteousness. Whence it is manifest, that the promise of life to this righteous man, is not for the sake of his righteousness, but for the sake of something else, to wit, the righteousness of Christ.

1. Not for the sake of his own righteousness. This is evident, because we are admitted, yea, commanded, to trust in the righteousness that saveth us.

The righteousness of God is unto all, and upon all that believe; that is, trust in it, and trust to it for justification. Now therefore, if thy righteousness, when most perfect, could save thee, thou mightest, yea oughtest most boldly to trust therein. But since thou art forbidden to trust to it, it is evident it cannot save, nor is it for the sake of that, that the righteous man is saved. (~~482~~Romans 3:21, 22)

2. But for the sake of something else; to wit, for the sake of the righteousness of Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.

“To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” (~~482~~Romans 3:26)

See also ~~518~~Philippians 3:7-9.

“If he trusts to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed [in trusting to his own righteousness] he shall die for it.”

Note hence further.

1. That there is more virtue in one sin to destroy, than in all thy righteousness to save thee alive. If he trust, if he trust never so little, if he do at all trust to his own righteousness, all his righteousness shall be forgotten; and by, and for, and in, the sin that he hath committed in trusting to it, he shall die.

2. Take notice also, that there are more damnable sins than those that are against the moral law. By which of the ten commandments is trusting to our own righteousness forbidden? Yet it is a sin. It is a sin therefore forbidden by the gospel, and is included, lurketh close in, yea, is the, or a root of unbelief itself; “He that believeth not shall be damned.” But he that trusteth in his own righteousness doth not believe, neither in the truth or sufficiency of the righteousness of Christ to save him, therefore he shall be damned.

Question. ‘But how is it manifest, that he that trusteth to his own righteousness, doth it through a doubt, or unbelief of the truth or sufficiency of the righteousness of Christ?’

Answer. I answer, Because, even because he trusteth to his own. A man will never willingly choose to trust to the worst of helps, when he believes there is a better as near, and to be had as soon, and that too, upon as easy, if not more easy terms. If he that trusteth to his own righteousness for life, did believe, that there is indeed such a thing as the righteousness of Christ to justify; and that this righteousness of Christ has in it ALL sufficiency to do that blessed work, be sure he would choose that, thereon to lay, lean, and venture his soul, that he saw was the best, and most sufficient to save; especially when he saw also, (and see that he must, when he sees the righteousness of Christ) to wit, that that is to be obtained as soon, because as near, and to be had on as easy terms; nay, upon easier than may man’s own righteousness. I say, he would sooner choose it, because of the weight of salvation, of the worth of salvation, and of the fearful sorrow, that to eternity will overtake him, that in this thing shall miscarry. It is for heaven, it is to escape hell, wrath, and damnation, saith the soul; and therefore I will, I must, I dare not but choose that, and that only, that I believe to be the best and most sufficient help in so great a concern, as soul-concern is. So then he that trusteth to his own righteousness, does it of unbelief of the sufficiency of the righteousness of Christ to save him.

Wherefore this sin of trusting to his own righteousness is a most high and damning transgression: because it contemneth the righteousness of Christ, which is the only righteousness that is sufficient to save from the curse of the law. It also disalloweth the design of heaven, and the excellency of the mystery of the wisdom of God, in designing this way of salvation for man. What shall I say, It also seeketh to rob God of the honor of the salvation of man. It seeketh to take the crown from the head of Christ, and to set it upon the hypocrite’s head; therefore, no marvel, that this one sin be of that weight, virtue and power, as to sink that man and his righteousness into hell, that leaneth thereon, or that trusteth unto it.

But Pharisee, I need not talk thus unto thee, for thou art not the man that hath that righteousness, that God findeth not fault withal; nor is it to be found, but with him that is ordained to be the Savior of mankind; nor is

there any such one besides Jesus, who is called Christ. Thy righteousness is a poor pittance, a serap: nay, not so good as a serap of righteousness. Thine own confession makes thee partial in the law; for here, in the midst of thy boasts, thou hast not, because thou canst not say, thou hast fulfilled all righteousness. What madness then has brought thee into the temple, there in audacious manner to stand and vaunt before God; saying, “God, I thank thee, I am not as other men are.”

Dost thou not know, that he that breaks one, breaks all the commandments of God; and consequently, that he that keeps not all, keeps none at all of the commandments of God. Say I this of myself? saith not the scriptures the same?

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” (³⁰⁰James 2:10)

Be confounded then, be confounded.

Dost thou know the God with whom now thou hast to do? He is a God that cannot, no, that cannot, as he is just, accept of an half righteousness for a whole; nor of a lame righteousness for a sound; nor of a sick righteousness for a well and healthy one. (³⁰⁰Malachi 1:8) And if so, how should he then accept of that which is not righteousness? I say, how should he accept of that which is none at all, save an hypocritical and feigned one, for thine is only such. And if Christ said, when you have done all, say, “We are unprofitable,” How camest thou to say before thou hadst done one thing well, I am better, more righteous than other men?

Didst thou believe, when thou saidst it, That God knew thy heart? Hadst thou said this to the Publican, it had been a high and rampant expression; but to say this before God, to the face of God, when he knew that thou wast vile, and a sinner from the womb, and from the conception, spoils all. It was spoken to put a check to thy arrogancy, when Christ said,

“Ye are they which justify yourselves before me; but God knoweth your hearts.” (⁴⁰⁰Luke 16:15)

Hast thou taken notice of this, that God judgeth the fruit by the heart from whence it comes?

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil.” (⁴⁰⁶Luke 6:45)

Nor can it be otherwise concluded, but that thou art an evil man, and so that all thy supposed good is nought but badness. For that thou hast made it to stand in the room of Jesus, and hast dared to commend thyself to the living God thereby: For thou hast trusted in thy shadow of righteousness, and committed iniquity. Thy sin hath melted away thy righteousness, and turned it to nothing but dross; or, if you will, to the early dew, like to which it goeth away, and so can by no means do thee good, when thou shalt stand in need of salvation and eternal life of God.

But further, thou sayest thou art righteous, but they are but vain words. Knowest thou not that thy zeal, which is the life of thy righteousness, is preposterous in many things. What else means thy madness, and the rage thereof, against men as good as thyself. True, thy being ignorant that they are good, may save thee from the commission of the sin that is unpardonable, but it will never keep thee from spot in God's sight, but will make both thee and thy righteousness culpable.

Paul, who was once as brave a Pharisee as thou canst be, calleth much of that zeal, which he in that estate was possessed with, and lived in the exercise of, madness; yea, exceeding madness (⁴⁰⁷Acts 26:9-11, ⁴⁰⁸Philippians 3:5, 6), and of the same sort is much of thine, and it must be so; for a lawyer, a man for the law, and that resteth in it, must be a persecutor; yea, a persecutor of righteous men, and that of zeal to God; because by the law is begat, through the weakness that it meeteth with in thee, sourness, bitterness of spirit, and anger against him that rightfully condemneth thee of folly, for choosing to trust to thine own righteousness, when a better is provided of God to save us. (⁴⁰⁹Galatians 4:28-31) Thy righteousness therefore is deficient; yea, thy zeal for the law, and the men of the law, has joined madness with thy moral virtues, and made thy righteousness unrighteousness; How then canst thou be upright before the Lord?

Further, Has not the pride of thy spirit in this hot-headed zeal for thy Pharisaical notions, run thee upon thinking that thou art able to do more than God hath enjoined thee, and so able to make thyself more righteous,

than God requireth thou shouldest be. What else is the use of thy adding of laws to God's laws, precepts to God's precepts, and traditions to God's appointments? (⁴⁰⁰⁸Mark 7:8) Nay, hast thou not by thus doing, condemned the law of want of perfection, and so the God that gave it, of want of wisdom, and faithfulness to himself and thee?

Nay, I say again, hath not thy thus doing charged God with being ignorant of knowing, what rules there needed to be imposed on his creatures to make their obedience complete? And doth not this apish madness of thine intimate, moreover, that if thou hadst not stept in with the bundle of thy traditions, righteousness had been imperfect, not through man's weakness, but through impediment in God, or in his ministering rules of righteousness unto us.

Now, when thou hast thought on these things fairly, answer thyself in these few questions: Is not this arrogancy? Is not this blasphemy? Is not this to condemn God, that thou mightest be righteous? And dost thou think, this is, indeed, the way to be righteous?

But again, what means thy preferring of thine own rules, laws, statutes, ordinances and appointments, before the rules, laws, statutes and appointments of God? Thinkest thou this to be right? Whither will thy zeal, thy pride, and thy folly carry thee? Is there more reason, more equity, more holiness in thy traditions, than in the holy, and just, and good commandments of God? (⁴⁰⁷⁰Romans 7:12) Why then, I say, dost thou reject the commandment of God, to keep thine own tradition? Yea, Why dost thou rage, and rail, and cry out when men keep not thy law, or the rule of thine order, and tradition of thine elders; and yet shut thine eyes, or wink with them, when thou thyself shalt live in the breach of the law of God? Yea, why wilt thou condemn men, when they keep not thy law, but study for an excuse, yea, plead for them that live in the breach of God's (⁴⁰⁷¹Mark 7:10-13) Will this go for righteousness in the day of God Almighty? Nay rather, will not this, like a millstone about thy neck, drown thee in the deeps of hell? Oh, the blindness, the madness, the pride, and spite, that dwells in the hearts of these pretended righteous men.

Again, What kind of righteousness of thine, is this, that standeth in a misplacing, and so consequently in a misesteeming of God's commands? Some thou settest too high, and some too low; as in the text, thou hast set

a ceremony above faith, above love, and above hope in the mercy of God: When, as it is evident, the things last mentioned, are the things of the first rate, the weightier matters. (⁴¹²³Matthew 23:23)

Again, Thou hast preferred the gold above the temple that sanctifieth the gold, and the gift upon the altar, above the altar that sanctifies the gift. (⁴¹²⁷Matthew 23:17)

I say again, What kind of righteousness shall this be called? What back will such a suit of apparel fit, that is set together just cross and thwart to what it should be? Just as if the sleeves should be sewed upon the pocket-holes, and the pockets set on where the sleeves should stand. Nor can other righteousness proceed where a wrong judgment precedeth it.

This misplacing of God's laws cannot, I say, but produce misshaped and misplaced obedience. It indeed produceth a monster, an ill-shapened thing, a mole, a mouse, a pig, all which are things unclean, and an abomination to the Lord. For see, saith he, if thou wilt be making, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount. Set faith, where faith should stand, a moral, where a moral should stand; and a ceremony, where a ceremony should stand; for this turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: And wilt thou call this thy righteousness; yea, wilt thou stand in this, plead for this, and venture an eternal concern in such a piece of linsey-woolsey as this? O fools, and blind!

CHAPTER 5

THE PHARISEE FURTHER EXAMINED

BUT, further, let us come a little closer to the point. O blind Pharisee. Thou standest to thy righteousness, what dost thou mean? Wouldest thou have MERCY for thy righteousness, or JUSTICE for thy righteousness?

[First Mercy.] If mercy, what mercy? Temporal things God giveth to the unthankful and unholy; nor doth he use to SELL the world to man for righteousness. The earth hath he GIVEN to the children of men. But this is not the thing; thou wouldest have eternal mercy for thy righteousness; thou wouldest have God think upon what an holy, what a good, what a righteous man thou art, and hast been. But Christ died not for the good and righteous, nor did he come to call such to the banquet, that grace hath prepared for the world. “I came not,” I am not come, saith Christ, “to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” (^{127}Mark 2:27, ^{610}Romans 5) Yet this is thy plea; Lord God, I am a righteous man, therefore grant me mercy, and a share in thy heavenly kingdom. What else dost thou mean, when thou sayest, “God I thank thee, that I am not as other men are?” Why dost thou rejoice, why art thou glad that thou art more righteous, if indeed thou art, than thy neighbor, if it is not because thou thinkest, that thou hast got the start of, the better of thy neighbor, with reference to mercy; and that by thy righteousness thou hast insinuated thyself into God’s affections, and procured an interest in his eternal favor. But,

What, What hast thou done by thy righteousness? I say, What hast thou given to God thereby? And what hath he received of thy hand? Perhaps thou wilt say, righteousness pleaseth God: But I answer no, not thine, with respect to justification from the curse of the law, unless it be as perfect, as the justice it is yielded to, and as the law that doth command it. But thine is not such a righteousness: no, thine is speckled, thine is spotted, thine makes thee to look like a speckled bird in his eye-sight.

Thy righteousness has added iniquity, to thy iniquity, because it has kept thee from a belief of thy need of repentance, and because it has emboldened thee to thrust thyself audaciously into the presence of God,

and made thee there, even before his holy eyes, which are so pure, that they cannot look on iniquity (<sup>Habakkuk 1:13), to vaunt, boast, and brag of thyself, and of thy tottering, ragged, stinking uncleanness; for all our righteousnesses are as menstruous rags, because they flow from a thing, a heart, a man that is unclean. But,

Again, Wouldest thou have mercy for thy righteousness? For who wouldest thou have it; for another, or for thyself?

If *for another*, and it is most proper, that a righteous man should intercede for another by his righteousness, rather than for himself, then thou thrusteth Christ out of his place and office, and makest thyself to be a savior in his stead; for a mediator there is already, even a mediator between God and man, and he is the man Christ Jesus. There is therefore no need of thine interceding by thy righteousness for the acceptation of any unto justification from the curse.

But dost thou plead by thy righteousness, for mercy *for thyself*? Why, in so doing thou impliest,

First, Thou impliest, that thy righteousness can prevail with God, more than can thy sins. I say, that thy righteousness can prevail with God, to preserve thee from death, more than thy sins can prevail with him to condemn thee to it. And if so, what follows? but that thy righteousness is more, and has been done in a fuller spirit than ever were thy sins: but thus to insinuate is to insinuate a lie; for there is no man, but while he is a sinner, sinneth with a more full spirit, than any good man can act righteousness withal.

A sinner when he sinneth, he doth it with all his heart, and with all his mind, and with all his soul, and with all his strength; nor hath he in his ordinary course any thing that bindeth. But with a good man it is not so; all, and every whit of himself, neither is, nor can be, in every good duty that he doth. For when he would do good evil is present with him. And again,

“The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” (<sup>Galatians 5:17)

Now if a good man cannot do good things with that wholeness and oneness of soul, with that oneness and universalness of mind, as a wicked man doth sin with, then is his sin heavier to weigh him down to hell, than is his righteousness to buoy him up to the heavens.

And again, I say, if the righteousness of a good man comes short of his sin, both in number, weight and measure, as it doth, for a good man shrinks and quakes at the thoughts of God's entering into judgment with him (^(~~HEB~~) Psalm 143:2), then is his iniquity more than his righteousness. And I say again, if the sin of one that is truly gracious, and so of one that hath the best of principles, is heavier and mightier to destroy him, than is his righteousness to save him, how can it be, that the Pharisee, that is not gracious, but a mere carnal man, somewhat reformed and painted over with a few, lean, and lousy formalities, should with his empty, partial, hypocritical righteousness, counterpoise his great, mighty, and weighty sins, that have cleaved to him in every state and condition of his, to make him odious in the sight of God?

Second. Dost thou plead by thy righteousness for mercy for thyself? Why in so doing thou impliest, that mercy thou deservedst; and that is next door to, or almost as much as to say, God oweth me what I ask for. ^{F14} The best that can be put upon it, is, thou seekest security from the direful curse of God, as it were by the works of the law, and to be sure betwixt Christ and the law, thou wilt drop into hell. (^(~~HEB~~) Romans 9:31-33) For he that seeks for mercy, as it were, and but as it were, by the works of the law, doth not altogether trust thereto. Nor doth he that seeks for that righteousness, that should save him, as it were, by the works of the law, seek it only, wholly and solely at the hands of mercy. So then, to seek for that that should save thee, neither at the hands of the law, nor at the hands of mercy, is, to be sure, to seek it where it is not to be found; for there is no medium betwixt the righteousness of the law, and the mercy of God. Thou must have it either at the door of the law, or at the door of grace. But sayest thou, I am for having of it at the hands of both. I will trust solely to neither. I love to have two strings to my bow. If one of them, as you think, can help me by itself, my reason tells me, that both can help me better. Therefore will I be righteous, and good, and will seek by my goodness to be commended to the mercy of God: for surely, he that hath something of his own to ingratiate himself into the favor of his prince

withal, shall sooner obtain his mercy and favor, than one that comes to him as stript of all good.

I answer, But there are not two ways to heaven, not two living ways; there is one new and living way, which Christ hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; and besides that one, there is no more. (³⁰⁹ Hebrews 10:19-24) Why then dost thou talk of two strings to thy bow? What became of him that had, and would have, two stools to sit on? Yea, the text says plainly, that therefore they obtained not righteousness, because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law. See here, they are disowned by the gospel, because they sought it not by faith; that is, by faith only. Again, the law, and the righteousness thereof, flies from them, nor could they attain it, though they followed after it, because they sought it not by faith.

Mercy then is to be found alone in Jesus Christ! Again, the righteousness of the law is to be obtained only by faith of Jesus Christ: that is, in the Son of God is the righteousness of the law to be found; for he, by his obedience to his Father, is become the end of the law for righteousness. And for the sake of his legal righteousness, which is also called the righteousness of God, because it was God in the flesh of the Lord Jesus that did accomplish it, is mercy and grace from God extended, to whoever dependeth by faith upon God by this Jesus his righteousness for it. And hence it is, that we so often read, that this Jesus is the way to the Father: That God, for Christ's sake, forgiveth us: That by the obedience of one, many are made righteous or justified: And that through this man, is preached to us the forgiveness of sins; and that by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses.

Now, though I here do make mention of righteousness and mercy, yet I hold there is but one way, to wit, to eternal life; which way, as I said, is Jesus Christ; for he is the new, the only new, and living way to the Father of mercies, for mercy to make me capable of abiding with him in the heavens for ever and ever.

But sayest thou, I will be righteous in myself that I may have wherewith to commend me to God, when I go to him for mercy?

I answer, But thou blind Pharisee; I tell thee thou hast no understanding of God's design by the gospel; which is, not to advance man's righteousness, as thou dreamest; but to advance the righteousness of his Son, and his grace by him. Indeed, if God's design by the gospel was to exalt and advance man's righteousness, then that which thou hast said, would be to the purpose. For what greater dignity can be put upon man's righteousness, than to admit it?

I say then, for God to admit it, to be an advocate, an intercessor, a mediator; for all these is that which prevaileth with God to shew me mercy. But this God never thought of, much less could he thus design by the gospel: for the text runs flat against it. Not of works, not of works of righteousness, which we have done; not of works, lest any man should boast, saying, Well, I may thank my own good life for mercy. It was partly for the sake of mine own good deeds that I obtained mercy to be in heaven and glory. Shall this be the burden of the song of heaven? Or is this that which is composed by that glittering heavenly host, and which we have read of in the holy book of God! No, no, that song runs upon other feet, standeth in far better strains, being composed of far higher, and truly heavenly matter: For God has "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." (Ephesians 1:5-7) And it is requisite, that the song be framed accordingly; wherefore he saith, that the heavenly song runs thus:

"Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth." (Revelation 5:9, 10)

He saith not that they have redeemed, or helped to redeem and deliver themselves; but that the Lamb, the Lamb that was slain; the Lamb only was he that had redeemed them. Nor, saith he, that they had made themselves kings and priests unto God to offer any oblation, sacrifice, or offering whatsoever; but that the same Lamb had made them such. For

they, as is insinuated by the text, were in, among, one with, and no better, than the kindreds, tongues, nations, and people of the earth. Better! No, in no wise, saith Paul (~~488~~Romans 3:9), therefore their separation from them was of mere mercy, free grace, good will, and distinguishing love: not for, or because of, works of righteousness which any of them have done; no, they were all alike. But these, because beloved, when in their blood, according to Ezekiel ^{f15} were separated by free grace. And as another scripture hath it, redeemed from the earth, and from among men by blood. (~~648~~Revelation 14:3, 4) Wherefore deliverance from the ireful wrath of God, must not, neither in whole, nor in part, be ascribed to the whole law, or to all the righteousness that comes by it; but to the Lamb of God, Jesus, the Savior of the world; for it is He that delivered us from the wrath to come: and that according to God's appointment;

“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation
by [or through] our Lord Jesus Christ.”

(~~588~~1 Thessalonians 5:9)

Let every man, therefore, take heed what he doth, and whereon he layeth the stress of his salvation,

“For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is
Jesus Christ.” (~~488~~1 Corinthians 3:11)

But dost thou plead still as thou didst before, and wilt thou stand thereto? Why then, thy design must overcome God, or God's design must overcome thee. Thy design is to give thy good life, thy good deeds, a part of the glory of thy justification from the curse. And God's design is to throw all thy righteousness out into the street, into the dirt, and dunghill, as to that. Thou art for glory, and for glorying here before God; yea, thou art for sharing in the glory of justification, when that alone belongeth to God. And he hath said, “My glory will I not give to another.” Thou wilt not trust wholly to God's grace in Christ for justification; and God will not take thy stinking righteousness in, as a partner in thy acquitment from sin, death, wrath, and hell. Now the question is, who shall prevail? God, or the Pharisee? And whose word shall stand? His, or the Pharisee's?

Alas! The Pharisee here must needs come down, for God is greater than all. Also, he hath said, that no flesh shall glory in his presence; and that he

will have mercy, and not sacrifice. And again, that it is not, nor shall be, in him that wills, nor in him that runs, but in God that sheweth mercy. What hope, help, stay, or relief then is there left for the merit-monger? What twig, or straw, or twined thread is left to be a stay for his soul? This besom will sweep away his cobweb: The house that this spider doth so lean upon, will now be overturned, and he in it to hell fire; for nothing less than everlasting damnation is designed by God, and that for this fearful and unbelieving Pharisee: God will prevail against him for ever.

Third, But wilt thou yet plead thy righteousness for mercy? Why, in so doing, thou takest away from God the power of giving mercy. For if it be thine as wages, it is no longer his to dispose of all pleasure; for that which another man oweth me, is in equity not at his, but at my disposal. Did I say, that by this thy plea, thou takest away from God the power of giving mercy; I will add, yea, and also of disposing of heaven and life eternal. And then, I pray you, what is left unto God, and what can he call his own? Not mercy; for that by thy good deeds thou hast purchased. Not heaven; for that by thy good deeds thou hast purchased. Not eternal life; for that by thy good deeds thou hast purchased. Thus, Pharisee, O thou self-righteous man, hast thou set up thyself above grace, mercy, heaven, glory; yea, above even God himself, for the purchaser should in reason be esteemed above the purchase.

Awake man! What hast thou done? Thou hast blasphemed God, thou hast undervalued the glory of his grace; thou hast, what in thee lieth, opposed the glorious design of heaven! Thou hast sought to make thy filthy rags to share in thy justification.

Now, all these are mighty sins; these have made thine iniquity infinite. What wilt thou do? Thou hast created to thyself a world of needless miseries. I call them needless, because thou hadst more than enough before. Thou hast set thyself against God in a way of contending; thou standest upon thy points and pantables: ^{f16} Thou wilt not bate God an ace, of what thy righteousness is worth, and wilt also make it worth what thyself shalt list. Thou wilt be thine own judge, as to the worth of thy righteousness; thou wilt neither hear what verdict the word has passed about it, nor wilt thou endure, that God should throw it out in the matter of thy justification, but quarrellest with the doctrine of free grace, or else dost

wrest it out of its place to serve thy Pharisaical designs; saying, “God, I thank thee, I am not as other men”; fathering upon thyself, yea, upon God and thyself, a stark lie; for thou art as other men are, though not in this, yet in that; yea, in a far worse condition than the most of men are. Nor will it help thee any thing to attribute this thy goodness to the God of heaven: for that is but a mere toying; the truth is, the God that thou intendest, is nothing but thy righteousness; and the grace that thou supposest, is nothing but thine own good and honest intentions. So that,

Fourth, In all that thou sayest, thou dost but play the downright hypocrite. Thou pretendest indeed to mercy, but thou intendest nothing but merit. Thou seemest to give the glory to God; but at the same time takest it all to thyself. Thou despisest others, and criest up thyself, and in conclusion fatherest all upon God by word, and upon thyself in truth. Nor is there any thing more common among this sort of men, than to make God, his grace, and kindness, the stalking-horse to their own praise, saying, God, I thank thee when they trust to themselves that they are righteous, and have not need of any repentance; when the truth is, they are the worst sort of men in the world, because they put themselves into such a state as God hath not put them into, and then impute it to God, saying, God, I thank thee, that thou hast done it; for what greater sin [is there] than to make God a liar, or than to father that upon God which he never meant, intended, or did. And all this under a color to glorify God; when there is nothing else designed, but to take all glory from him, and to wear [it] on thine own head as a crown, and a diadem in the face of the whole world.

A self-righteous man therefore can come to God for mercy none otherwise than fawningly: For what need of mercy hath a righteous man? Let him then talk of mercy, of grace, and goodness, and come in an hundred times with him, “God, I thank thee,” in his mouth, all is but words, there is no sense, nor savor, nor relish of mercy and favor; nor doth he in truth, from his very heart, understand the nature of mercy, nor what is an object thereof; but when he thanks God, he praises himself; when he pleads for mercy, he means his own merit; and all this is manifest from what doth follow; for, saith he, “I am not as this Publican!” Thence clearly insinuating, that not the good, but the bad, should be rejected of the God of heaven: That not the bad but the good; not the sinner, but the self-

righteous, are the most proper objects of God's favor. The same thing is done by others in this our day: Favor, mercy, grace, and "God I thank thee," is in their mouths, but their own strength, sufficiency, free-will, and the like, they are the things they mean, by all such high and glorious expressions.

[Second Justice.] But, secondly, If thy plea be not for mercy, but for justice, then to speak a little to that. Justice has measures and rules to go by; unto which measures and rules, if thou comest not up, justice can do thee no good. Come then, O thou blind Pharisee, let us pass away a few minutes in some discourse about this. Thou demandest justice, because God hath said, that the man that doth these things shall live in and by them. And again, the doers of the law shall be justified; not in a way of mercy, but in a way of justice. He shall live by them. But what hast thou done, O blind Pharisee! What hast thou done, that thou art emboldened to venture, to stand and fall to the most perfect justice of God? Hast thou fulfilled the whole law, and not offended in one point? Hast thou purged thyself from the pollutions and motions of sin that dwell in the flesh, and work in thy own members? Is the very being of sin rooted out of thy tabernacle? And art thou now as perfectly innocent as ever was Jesus Christ? Hast thou, by suffering the uttermost punishment that justice could justly lay upon thee for thy sins, made fair and full satisfaction to God, according to the tenor of his law for thy transgressions? If thou hast done all these things, then thou mayest plead something, and yet but something for thyself in a way of justice. Nay, in this I will assert nothing, but rather inquire:—What hast thou gained by all this thy righteousness? (we will now suppose what must not be granted) Was not this thy state when thou wast in thy first parents? Wast thou not innocent, perfectly innocent and righteous? And if thou shouldst be so now, what hast thou gained thereby? Suppose that the man, that had forty years ago forty pounds of his own, and had spent it all since, should yet be able now to show his forty pounds again? What has he got thereby, or how much richer is he at last, than he was, when he first set up for himself. Nay, doth not the blot of his ill living betwixt his first and his last, lie as a blemish upon him, unless he should redeem himself also by works of supererogation, from the scandal that justice may lay at his door for that?

But, I say, suppose, O Pharisee, this should be thy case, yet God is not bound to give thee in justice that eternal life, which by his grace he bestoweth upon those, that have redemption from sin, by the blood of his Son. In justice therefore, when all comes to all, thou canst require no more than an endless life in an earthly paradise; for there thou wast set up at first; nor doth it appear from what hath been said, touching all that thou hast done or canst do, that thou deservedst a better place.

Did I say, that thou mayest require justly an endless life in an earthly paradise. Why? I must add to that saying, this proviso: If thou continuest in the law, and in the righteousness thereof, else not. But how dost thou know that thou shalt continue therein? Thou hast no promise from God's mouth for that, nor is grace or strength ministered to mankind by the covenant that thou art under. So that still thou standest bound to thy good behavior, and in the day that thou dost give the first, though never so little a trip, or stumble in thy obedience, thou forfeitest thine interest in paradise, and in justice, as to any benefit there.

But alas, what need is there that we should thus talk of things, when it is manifest, that thou hast sinned, not only before thou wast a Pharisee, but when, after the most strictest sect of thy religion, thou livedst also a Pharisee; yea, and now in the temple, in thy prayer there, thou showest thyself to be full of ignorance, pride, self-conceit, and horrible arrogancy, and desire of vain-glory, etc., which are none of them the seat of fruits of righteousness, but the seat of the devil, and the fruit of his dwelling, even at this time, in thy heart.

Could it ever have been imagined, that such audacious impudence could have put itself forth in any mortal man, in his approach unto God by prayer, as has showed itself in thee? "I am not as other men!" sayest thou; but is this the way to go to God in prayer? Is this the way for a mortal man, that is full of sin, that stands in need of mercy, and that must certainly perish without it, to come to God in prayer? The prayer of the upright is God's delight. But the upright man glorifies God's justice, by confessing to God the vileness and pollution of his state and condition: He glorifies God's mercy by acknowledging, that that, and that only, as communicated of God by Christ to sinners, can save and deliver from the curse of the law.

This, I say, is the sum of the prayer of the just and upright man (^{<3008>}Job 1:8, ^{<3404>}Job 40:4, ^{<4132>}Acts 13:22, ^{<4501>}Psalms 38, ^{<4501>}Psalms 51, ^{<1062>}2 Samuel 6:21, 22), and not as thou most vain-gloriously vauntest, with thy, “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are.”

True, when a man is accused by his neighbors, by a brother, by an enemy, and the like; if he be clear, and he may be so, as to what they shall lay to his charge, then let him vindicate, justify, and acquit himself, to the utmost that in justice and truth he can; for his name, the preservation whereof is more to be chosen than silver and gold; also his profession, yea, the name of God too, and religion, may now lie at stake, by reason of such false accusations, and perhaps can by no means, as to this man, be recovered, and vindicated from reproach and scandal, but by his justifying of himself. Wherefore in such a work, a man serveth God, and saves religion from hurt; yea, as he that is a professor, and has his profession attended with a scandalous life, hurteth religion thereby: So he that has his profession attended with a good life, and shall suffer it notwithstanding, to lie under blame by false accusations, when it is in the power of his hand to justify himself, hurteth religion also. But the case of the Pharisee is otherwise. He is not here a dealing with men, but God; not seeking to stand clear in the sight of the world, but in the sight of heaven itself; and that too, not with respect to what men or angels, but with respect to what God and his law, could charge him with and justly lay at his door.

This therefore mainly altereth the case; for a man here to stand thus upon his points, it is death; for he affronteth God, he giveth him the lie, he reproveth the law, and in sum, accuseth it of bearing false witness against him; he doth this, I say, even by saying, “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are”; for God hath made none of this difference. The law condemneth all men as sinners, and testifieth, that every imagination of the thought of the heart of the sons of men is only evil, and that continually. Wherefore they that do as the Pharisee did, to wit, seek to justify themselves before God from the curse of the law, by their own good doings, though they also, as the Pharisee did, seem to give God the thanks for all, yet do most horribly sin, even by their so doing, and shall receive a Pharisee’s reward at last. Wherefore, O thou Pharisee, it is a vain thing for thee either to think of, or to ask for, at God’s hand, either mercy or justice. Because mercy thou canst not ask for, from sense of want of mercy,

because thy righteousness, which is by the law, hath utterly blinded thine eyes, and complimenting with God doth nothing. And as for justice, that can do thee no good, but the more just God is, and the more by that he acteth towards thee, the more miserable and fearful will be thy condition, because of the deficiency of thy, so much by thee, esteemed righteousness.

[The Pharisee seeth no need of mercy, but thinketh himself righteous before God.]

What a deplorable condition then is a poor Pharisee in! For mercy he cannot pray, he cannot pray for it with all his heart; for he seeth, indeed, no need thereof. True, the Pharisee, though he was impudent enough, yet would not take all from God; he would still count, that there was due to him a tribute of thanks: "God, I thank thee," saith he, but yet not a bit of this, for mercy; but for that he had let him live, for I know not for what he did thank himself, till he had made himself better than other men; but that betterment was a betterment in none other judgment than that of his own, and that was none other but such an one as was false. So then, the Pharisee is by this time quite out of doors; his righteousness is worth nothing, his prayer is worth nothing, his thanks to God are worth nothing; for that what he had was scanty, and imperfect, and it was his pride that made him offer it to God for acceptance; nor could his fawning thanksgiving better his case, or make his matter at all good before God.

CHAPTER 6

THE PHARISEE'S SCORN OF THE PUBLICAN

But I'll warrant you, the Pharisee was so far off from thinking thus of himself, and of his righteousness, that he thought of nothing so much as of this, that he was a happy man; yea, happier by far than other his fellow rationals. Yea, he plainly declares it when he saith, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are."

O what a fool's paradise was the heart of the Pharisee now in, while he stood in the temple praying to God! "God, I thank thee," said he, for I am good and holy, I am a righteous man; I have been full of good works; I am no extortioner, unjust, nor adulterer, no nor yet as this wretched Publican. I have kept myself strictly to the rule of mine order, and my order is the most strict of all orders now in being: I fast, I pray, I give tithes of all that I possess. Yea, so forward am I to be a religious man; so ready have I been to listen after my duty, that I have asked both of God and man the ordinances of judgment and justice; I take delight in approaching to God. What less now can be mine than the heavenly kingdom and glory?

Now the Pharisee, like Haman, saith in his heart, To whom would the king delight to do honor, more than to myself? Where is the man that so pleaseth God, and consequently, that in equity and reason should be beloved of God like me? Thus like the prodigal's brother, he pleadeth, saying,

"Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment." (²¹⁵ Luke 15:29)

O brave Pharisee! But go on in thine oration: "Nor yet as this Publican."

Poor wretch, quoth the Pharisee to the Publican, What comest thou for? Dost think that such a sinner as thou art shall be heard of God? God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God as I am, as I thank God I am, him he heareth. Thou, for thy part, hast been a rebel all thy days: I abhor to come nigh thee, or to touch thy garments. Stand by thyself, come not near me, for I am more holy than thou. (²¹⁶ Isaiah 65:5)

Hold, stop there, go no further; fie Pharisee, fie; Dost thou know before whom thou standest, to whom thou speakest, and of what the matter of thy silly oration is made? Thou art now before God, thou speakest now to God, and therefore in justice and honesty thou shouldest make mention of his righteousness, not of thine; of his righteousness, and of his only.

I am sure Abraham, of whom thou sayest he is thy father, never had the face to do as thou hast done, though it is to be presumed he had more cause so to do, than thou hast, or canst have. Abraham had whereof to glory, but not before God; yea, he was called God's friend, and yet would not glory before him; but humbled himself, was afraid, and trembled in himself, when he stood before him, acknowledging of himself to be but dust and ashes. (^{<DIS7}Genesis 18:27, 30, ^{<FOU}Romans 4:2) But thou, as thou hadst quite forgot, that thou wast framed of that matter, and after the manner of other men, standest and pleadest thy goodness before him. Be ashamed Pharisee! Dost thou think, that God hath eyes of flesh, or that he seeth as man sees? Is not the secrets of thy heart open unto him? Thinkest thou with thyself, that thou, with a few of thy defiled ways canst cover thy rotten wall, that thou hast daubed with untempered mortar, and so hide the dirt thereof from his eyes: Or that these fine, smooth, and oily words, that come out of thy mouth, will make him forget that thy throat is an open sepulcher, and that thou within art full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness? Thy thus cleansing of the outside of the cup and platter, and thy garnishing of the sepulchers of the righteous, is nothing at all in God's eyes, but things that manifest, that thou art an hypocrite, and blind, because thou takest no notice of that which is within, which yet is that, which is most abominable to God. For the fruit, alas, what is the fruit to the tree, or what are the streams to the fountain! Thy fountain is defiled; yea, a defiler, and so that which maketh thy whole self, with thy works unclean in God's sight. But Pharisee, how comes it to pass, that the poor Publican is now such a mote in thine eye, that thou canst not forbear, but must accuse him before the judgment of God: for in that thou sayest, "that thou art not even as this Publican," thou bringest in an accusation, a charge, a bill against him. What has he done? Has he concealed any of thy righteousness, or has he secretly informed against thee that thou art an hypocrite, and superstitious? I dare say, the poor wretch has neither meddled nor made with thee in these matters.

But what aileth the Pharisee? Doth the poor Publican stand to vex thee? Doth he touch thee with is dirty garments; or doth he annoy thee with his stinking breath? Doth his posture of standing so like a man condemned offend thee? True, he now standeth with his hand held up at God's bar, he pleads guilty to all that is laid to his charge.

He cannot strut, vapor, and swagger as thou dost? but why offended at this? Oh but he has been a naughty man! and I have been righteous, sayest thou. Well, Pharisee, well, his naughtiness shall not be laid to thy charge, if thou hast chosen none of his ways. But since thou wilt yet bear me down, that thou art righteous, shew now, even now, while thou standest before God with the Publican, some, though they be but small, yea, though but very small fruits of thy righteousness. Let the Publican alone, since he is speaking of his life before God. Or if thou canst not let him alone, yet do not speak against him; for thy so doing will but prove, that thou rememberest the evil that the man has done unto thee; yea, and that thou bearest him a grudge for it too, and that while you stand before God.

But Pharisee, the righteous man is a merciful man, and while he standeth praying, he forgiveth; yea, and also crieth to God that he will forgive him too. (^{<41125>}Mark 11:25, 26, ^{<41161>}Acts 7:60) Hitherto then thou hast shewed none of the fruits of thy righteousness. Pharisee, righteousness would teach thee to love this Publican, but thou showest that thou hatest him. Love covereth the multitude of sins; but hatred and unfaithfulness revealeth secrets.

Pharisee, thou shouldest have remembered this thy brother in this his day of adversity, and shouldest have shewed, that thou hadst compassion to thy brother in this his deplorable condition; but thou, like the proud, the cruel, and arrogant man, hast taken thy neighbor at the advantage, and that when he is even between the straits, and standing upon the very pinnacle of difficulty, betwixt the heavens and the hells, and hast done what thou couldest, what on thy part lay, to thrust him down to the deep, saying, "I am not even as this Publican."

What cruelty can be greater; what rage more furious; and what spite and hatred more damnable and implacable, than to follow, or take a man while he is asking of mercy at God's hands, and to put in a caveat ^{f17} against his

obtaining of it, by exclaiming against him that he is a sinner? The master of righteousness doth not so:

“Do not think,” saith he, “that I will accuse you to the Father.”
(~~455~~ John 5:45)

The scholars of righteousness do not so. “But as for me,” said David, “when they [mine enemies] were sick, [and the Publican here was sick of the most malignant disease] my clothing was sackcloth, I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer [to wit, that I made for them] returned into mine own bosom. I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother: I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother.”
(~~455~~ Psalm 35:13, 14)

Pharisee, Dost thou see here how contrary thou art to righteous men? Now then, where shall we find out one to parallel thee, but by finding out of him that is called the dragon; for he it is that accuseth poor sinners before God. (~~300~~ Zechariah 3, ~~610~~ Revelation 12)

“I am not as this Publican”: Modesty should have commanded thee to have bit thy tongue as to this. What could the angels think, but that revenge was now in thine heart, and but that thou comest up into the temple, rather to boast of thyself and accuse thy neighbor, than to pray to the God of heaven: For what one petition is there in all thy prayer, that gives the least intimation, that thou hast the knowledge of God or thyself? Nay, what petition of any kind is there in thy vain-glorious oration from first to last? only an accusation drawn up, and that against one helpless and forlorn; against a poor man, because he is a sinner; drawn up, I say, against him by thee, who canst not make proof of thyself that thou art righteous: But come to proofs of righteousness, and there thou art wanting also. What though thy raiment is better than his, thy skin may be full as black: Yea, what if thy skin be whiter than his, thy heart may be yet far blacker. Yea, it is so, for the truth hath spoken it; for within you are full of excess and all uncleanness. (~~400~~ Matthew 23)

Pharisee, there are transgressions against the second table, and the Publican shall be guilty of them: But there are sins also against the first table, and thou thyself art guilty of them.

The Publican, in that he was an extortioner, unjust, and an adulterer, made it thereby manifest that he did not love his neighbor; and thou by making a God, a Savior, a deliverer, of thy filthy righteousness, doth make it appear, that thou dost not love thy God; for as he that taketh, or that derogateth from his neighbor in that which is his neighbor's due, sinneth against his neighbor, so he that taketh or derogateth from God, sinneth against God.

Now then, though thou hast not, as thou dost imagine, played at that low game as to derogate from thy neighbor; yet thou hast played at that high game as to derogate from thy God; for thou hast robbed God of the glory of salvation; yea, declared, that as to that there is no trust to be put in him.

“Lo, this is the man that made not God his strength; but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness” or substance. (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 52:7)

What else means this great bundle of thy own righteousness, which thou hast brought with thee into the temple? yea, what means else thy commending of thyself because of that, and so thy implicit prayer, that thou for that mightest find acceptance with God?

All this, what does it argue, I say, but thy diffidence of God? and that thou countest salvation safer in thine own righteousness, than in the righteousness of God; and that thy own love to, and care of thy own soul, is far greater, and so much better, than is the care and love of God. And is this to keep the first table; yea, the first branch of that table, which saith, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God?” For thy thus doing cannot stand with love to God.

How can that man say, I love God, who from his very heart shrinketh from trusting in him? Or, how can that man say, I would glorify God, who in his very heart refuseth to stand and fall by his mercy?

Suppose a great man should bid all the poor of the parish to his house to dinner, and should moreover send by the mouth of his servant, saying, My lord hath killed his fatlings, hath furnished his table, and prepared his wine, nor is there want of anything, come to the banquet: Would it not be counted as a high affront to, great contempt of, and much distrust in the goodness of the man of the house, if some of these guests should take with them, out of their own poor store, some of their moldy crusts, and carry

them with them, lay them on their trenchers upon the table before the lord of the feast, and the rest of his guests, out of fear that he yet would not provide sufficiently for those he had bidden to his dinner that he made?

Why Pharisee, this is thy very case, Thou hast been called to a banquet, even to the banquet of God's grace, and thou hast been disposed to go; but behold, thou hath not believed, that he would of his own cost make thee a feast, when thou comest; wherefore of thy own store thou hast brought with thee, and hast laid upon thy trencher ^{f18} on his table, thy moldy and hoary crusts in the presence of the angels, and of this poor Publican; yea, and hast vauntingly said upon the whole, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are." I am no such NEEDY man. (~~CR18~~ Luke 15:7) "I am no extortioner, nor unjust, no adulterer, nor even as this Publican." I am come indeed to thy feast, for of civility I could do no less; but for thy dainties, I need them not, I have of such things enough of mine own. ^{f19} (~~CR19~~ Luke 18:9) I thank thee therefore for thy offer of kindness, but I am not as those that have, and stand in need thereof, "nor yet as this Publican." And thus feeding upon thine own fare, or by making a composition of his and thine together, thou condemnest God, thou countest him insufficient or unfaithful; that is, either one that hath not enough, or having it, will not bestow it upon the poor and needy, and therefore, of mere pretense thou goest to his banquet, but yet trustest to thine own, and to that only.

This is to break the first table; and so to make thyself a sinner of the highest form: for the sins against the first table, are sins of an higher nature than are the sins against the second. True, the sins of the second table are also sins against God, because they are sins against the commandments of God: but the sins that are against the first table, are sins not only against the command, but against the very love, strength, holiness, and faithfulness of God. And herein stands thy condition; thou hast not, thou sayest thou hast not done injury to thy neighbor; but what of that, IF THOU HAST REPROACHED GOD THY MAKER? This is, as if a man should be in with his fellow-servant, and out with his master.

Pharisee, I will assure thee, thou art besides the saddle; ^{f20} thy state is not good, thy righteousness is so far off from doing of thee any good, that it maketh thee to be a greater sinner than if thou hadst none at all, because it

fighteth more immediately against the mercy, the love, the grace, and goodness of God, than the sins of other sinners, as to degree, does.

And as they are more odious and abominable in the sight of God, as they needs must, if what is said be true, as it is; so they are more dangerous to the life and soul of man: for that they always appear unto him in whom they dwell, and to him that trusteth in them, not to be sins and transgressions, but virtues and excellent things. Not things that set a man further off, but the things, that bring a man nearer to God, than those that want them are or can be. This therefore is the dangerous estate of those that go about to establish their own righteousness, that neither have, nor can, while they are so doing, submit themselves to the righteousness of God. (⁶¹⁰Romans 10:3) It is far more easy to persuade a poor wretch, whose life is debauched, and whose sins are written in his forehead, to submit to the righteousness of God, that is, to the righteousness that is of God's providing and giving; than it is to persuade a self-righteous man to do it. For the profane are sooner convinced, as of the necessity of righteousness to save him: so that he has none of his own to do him that pleasure, and therefore most gladly he accepteth of, and submitteth himself to the help and health and salvation that is in the righteousness and obedience of another man.

And upon this account it is, that Christ saith, "The Publicans and the Harlots" enter into the kingdom of heaven before the Scribes and Pharisees. (⁶²⁰Matthew 21:31) Poor Pharisee, what a loss art thou at? thou art not only a sinner, but a sinner of the highest form. Not a sinner by such sins (by such sins chiefly) as the second table doth make manifest; but a sinner chiefly in that way, as no self-righteous man did ever dream of. For when the righteous man or Pharisee shall hear that he is a sinner, he replieth, "I am not as other men are."

And because the common and more ordinary description of sin, is the transgression against the second table, he presently replieth again, I am not as this Publican is; and so shrowdeth himself under his own lame endeavors, and ragged, partial patches of moral or civil righteousness. Wherefore when he heareth, that his righteousness is condemned, slighted, and accounted nothing worth, then he fretteth, and fumeth, and chafeth and would kill the man, that so slighteth and disdaineth his goodly

righteousness; but Christ and the true gospel-teacher still goeth on, and condemneth all his righteousness to be as menstruous rags, an abomination to God, and nothing but loss and dung.

Now menstruous rags, things that are an abomination, and dung, are not fit matter to make a garment of to wear, when I come to God for life, much less to be made my friend, my advocate, my mediator and spokesman, when I stand betwixt heaven and hell, to plead for me that I might be saved. (^{<2616>}Isaiah 64:6, ^{<2665>}Luke 16:15, ^{<3188>}Philippians 3:6-8)

Perhaps some will blame me, and count me also worthy thereof, because I do not distinguish betwixt the matter and the manner of the Pharisee's righteousness. And let them condemn me still; for, saving the holy law, which is neither the matter nor manner of the Pharisee's righteousness, but rather the rules, if he will live thereby, up to which he should completely come in every thing that he doth. And I say again, that the whole of the Pharisee's righteousness is sinful, though not with and to me, yet with and before the God of heaven. Sinful I say it is, and abominable, both in itself, and also in its effects.

[The Pharisee's whole righteousness sinful.]

First, In itself; for that it is imperfect, scanty, and short of the rule by which righteousness is enjoined, and EVEN with which every act should be: For shortness here, even every shortness in these duties, is sin, and sinful weakness; wherefore the curse taketh hold of the man for coming short, but that it could not justly do, if he coming short was not his sin: Cursed is every one that doeth not, and that continueth not to do all things written in the law. (^{<6723>}Deuteronomy 27:26, ^{<8181>}Galatians 3:10)

Second, It is sinful, because it is wrought by sinful flesh; for all legal righteousness is a work of the flesh. (^{<8001>}Romans 4:1, ^{<3188>}Philippians 3:3-8)

A work, I say, of the flesh; even of that flesh, who, or which also committeth the greatest enormities. For the flesh is but one, though its workings are divers: Sometimes in a way most notoriously sensual and devilish, causing the soul to wallow in wickedness as the sow doth to wallow in the mire.

But these are not all the works of the flesh; the flesh sometimes will attempt to be righteous, and set upon doing actions, that in their perfection would be very glorious and beautiful to behold. But because the law is only commanding words, and yieldeth no help to the man that attempts to perform it; and because the flesh is weak, and cannot do of itself that which it beginneth to meddle with, therefore this most glorious work of the flesh faileth.

But, I say, as it is a work of the flesh, it cannot be good, forasmuch as the hand that worketh it, is defiled with sin: For in a good man, one spiritually good, “that is in his flesh there dwells no good thing,” but consequently that which is bad; how then can the flesh of a carnal, graceless man, and such a one is every Pharisee and self-righteous man in the world, produce, though it joineth itself to the law, to the righteous law of God, that which is good in his sight.

If any shall think that I pinch so hardly, because I call man’s righteousness which is of the law, of the righteous law of God, flesh; let them consider that which follows; to wit, That though man by sin, is said to be dead in sin and trespasses, yet not so dead, but that he can act still in his own sphere. That is, to do, and choose to do, either that which by all men is counted base, or that which by some is counted good, though he is not, nor can all the world make him capable of doing anything that may please his God.

Man by nature, as dead as he is, can, and that with the will of his flesh, will his own salvation. Man by nature can, and that by the power of the flesh, pursue and follow after his own salvation; but then he wills it, and pursues or follows after it, not in God’s way, but his own. Not by faith in Christ, but by the law of Moses, see [Romans 9:16](#), [31](#), [Romans 10:3-7](#).

Wherefore it is no error to say, that a man naturally has Will, and a Power to pursue his will, and that as to his salvation. But it is a damnable error to say, that he hath will and power to pursue it, and that in God’s way. For then we must hold that the mysteries of the gospel are natural; for that natural men, or men by nature, may apprehend and know them; yea, and know them to be the only means by which they must obtain eternal life: for the understanding must act before the will; yea, a man must approve of

the way to life by Jesus Christ, before his mind will budge, or stir, or move that way:

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; [of the gospel] for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned.”

(~~4124~~ 1 Corinthians 2:14)

He receiveth not these things; that is, his mind and will lie cross unto them, for he counts them foolishness; nor can all the natural wisdom in the world, cause that his will should fall in with them, because it cannot discern them.

Nature discerneth the law, and the righteousness thereof; yea, it discerneth it, and approveth thereof; that is, that the righteousness of it is the best and only way to life, and therefore the natural will and power of the flesh, as here you see in the Pharisee, do steer their course by that for eternal life. (~~4124~~ 1 Corinthians 2:14)

The righteousness of the law therefore is a work of the flesh, a work of sinful flesh, and therefore must needs be as filth and dung, and abominable as to that for which this man hath produced it, and presented it in the temple before God.

Nor is the Pharisee alone entangled in this mischief; many souls are by these works of the flesh flattered, as also the Pharisee was, into an opinion, that their state is good, when there is nothing in it. the most that their conversion amounteth to, is, the Publican is become a Pharisee; the open sinner is become a self-righteous man. Of the black side of the flesh he hath had enough, now therefore with the white side of the flesh he will recreate himself. And now, most wicked must he needs be, that questioneth the goodness of the state of such a man. He, of a drunkard, a swearer, an unclean person, a sabbath-breaker, a liar, and the like, is become reformed; a lover of righteousness, a strict observer, doer, and trader in the formalities of the law, and a herder with men of his complexion. And now he is become a great exclaimer against sin and sinners, defying to acquaint with those that once were his companions, saying, “I am not even as this Publican.”

To turn therefore from the flesh to the flesh, from sin to man's righteousness: yea, to rejoice in confidence, that thy state is better than is that of the Publican: I mean, better in the eyes of divine justice, and in the judgment of the law; and yet to be found by the law, not in the spirit, but in the flesh; not in Christ, but under the law; not in a state of salvation, but of damnation, is common among men: For they, and they only, are the right men, "which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." Where by flesh, must not be meant the horrible transgressions against the law, though they are also called the works of the flesh (^{415B}Galatians 5:19), for they minister no occasion unto men, to have confidence in them towards God: but that is that, which is insinuated by Paul, where he saith, he had "no confidence in the flesh," though he might have had it, as he said,

"Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man," saith he, "thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more" (^{513B}Philippians 3:3,4):

And then he repeats a two-fold privilege that he had by the flesh. First, That he was one of the seed of Abraham, and of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, etc.

Secondly, That he had fallen in with the strictest men of that religion, which was such after the flesh; to wit, to be a Pharisee, and was the son of a Pharisee, had much fleshly zeal for God, and was

"touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless."
(^{513B}Philippians 3:6)

But, I say still, there is nothing but flesh, flesh; fleshly privileges, and fleshly righteousness, and so consequently a fleshly confidence, and trust for heaven. This is manifest for these very things, when the man had his eyes enlightened, he counted all but loss and dung, that he might be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

CHAPTER 7

THE PHARISEE'S RIGHTEOUSNESS UNSAFE.

AND this leads me to another thing, and that is, to tell thee, O thou blind Pharisee that thou canst not be in a safe condition, because thou hast thy confidence in the flesh, that is, in the righteousness of the flesh. For “all flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field”: and the flesh and the glory of that being as weak as the grass, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, is but a weak business for a man to venture his eternal salvation upon.

Wherefore, as I also hinted before, THE GODLY-WISE HAVE BEEN AFRAID TO BE FOUND IN THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS, I mean their own personal righteousness, though that is far better, than can be the righteousness of any carnal man: for the godly man's righteousness is wrought in the spirit and faith of Christ; but the ungodly man's righteousness is of the flesh, and of the law. Yet I say, this godly man is afraid to stand by his righteousness before the tribunal of God, as is manifest in these following particulars.

First, He sees sin in his righteousness, for so the prophet intimates, when he saith, “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags (²³¹⁰ Isaiah 64:6): but there is nothing can make one's righteousness filthy but sin. It is not the poor, the low, the mean, the sickly, the beggarly state of a man, nor yet his being hated of devils, persecuted of men, broken under necessities, reproaches, distresses, or any kind of troubles of this nature, that can make the godly man's righteousness filthy; nothing but SIN can do it, and that can, doth, hath, and will do it. Nor can any man, be he who he will, and though he watches, prays, strives, denies himself, and puts his body under what chastisement or hardships he can; yea, though he also shall get his spirit and soul hoisted up to the highest peg, or pin of sanctity, and holy contemplation, and so his lusts to the greatest degree of mortification; but sin will be with him in the best of his performances. With him, I say, to pollute and defile his duties, and to make his righteousness specked and spotted, filthy and menstruous.

I will give you two or three instances for this.

1. Nehemiah was a man, in his day, one that was zealous, very zealous for God, for his house, for his people, and for his ways; and so continued, and that from first to last, as they may see that please to read the relation of his action; yet when he comes seriously to be concerned with God about his duties, he relinquisheth a standing by them. True, he mentioneth them to God, but confesseth that there is imperfections in them, and prayeth that God will not wipe them away: “Wipe not out my good deeds, O my God, that I have done for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof.” And again, “Remember me, O my God, concerning this,” also another good deed,

“and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy: -
Remember me, O my God, for good.” (^{<4811>}Nehemiah 13)

I do not think that by these prayers he pleadeth for an acceptation of his person, as touching justification from the curse of the law, as the poor blind Pharisee doth; but that God would accept of his service, as he was a son, and not deny to give him a reward of grace for what he had done, since he was pleased to declare in his testament, that he would reward the labor of love of his saints with an exceeding weight of glory; and therefore prayeth, that God would not wipe away his good deeds, but remember him for good, according to the greatness of his mercy.

2. A second instance is that of David, where he saith,

“Enter not into judgment with thy servant,” O Lord; “for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.” (^{<4812>}Psalm 143:2)

David, as I also have hinted before is said to be a man after God’s own heart (^{<4813>}Acts 13:22), and as here by the Spirit he acknowledges him for his servant; yet behold how he shrinketh, how he draweth back, how he prayeth, and petitioneth, that God would vouchsafe so much as not to enter into judgment with him. Lord, saith he, if thou enterest into judgment with me, I die, because I shall be condemned; for in thy sight I cannot be justified; to wit, by my own good deeds. Lord, at the beginning of thy dealing with me, by thy law and my works I die, therefore do not so much as enter into judgment with me, O Lord. Nor is this my case only, but it is

the condition of all the world: “For in thy sight shall NO man living be justified.”

3. A third instance is, that general conclusion of the apostle,

“But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.” (^{<310>}Galatians 3:11)

By this saying of Paul, as he taketh up the sentence of the prophet Habakkuk (^{<310>}Habakkuk 2:4), so he taketh up this sentence, yea, and the personal justice of David also. No man, saith he, is justified by the law in the sight of God; no, no just man, no holy man, not the strictest and most righteous man. But why not? why? Because the just shall live by faith.

The just man, therefore, must die, if he has not faith in another righteousness, than that which is of the law; called his own: I say, he must die, if he has none other righteousness than that which is his own by the law. ^{F21} Thus also Paul confesses of himself: I, saith he, know nothing by myself, either before conversion or after; that is, I knew not, that I did anything before conversion, either against the law, or against my conscience; for I was then, touching the righteousness which is of the law, blameless. Also, since my conversion, I know nothing by myself; for

“I have lived in all good conscience before God unto this day.”
(^{<421>}Acts 23:1)

A great saying, I promise you. I doubt this is more than our glorious justitiaries can say, except they say and lie. Well, but yet, “I am not hereby justified.” (^{<401>}1 Corinthians 4:4, ^{<310>}Philippians 3:7) Nor will I dare to venture the eternal salvation of my soul upon mine own justice, “but he that judgeth me is the Lord.” That is, though I, through my dimightedness, cannot see the imperfections of my righteousness; yet the Lord, who is my judge, and before whose tribunal I must shortly stand, can and will; and if in his sight there shall be found no more but one spot in my righteousness, I must, if I plead my righteousness, fall for that.

Second, That the best of men are afraid to stand before God’s tribunal, there to be judged by the law as to life and death, according to the sufficiency or non-sufficiency of their righteousness, is evident, because by casting away their own, in this matter, they make all the means they

can for this; that is, that his mercy, by an act of grace, be made over to them, and that they in it may stand before God to be judged.

Hence David cries out so often, “Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness.” (^{488B}Psalm 5:8) “Deliver me in thy righteousness.” (^{488C}Psalm 31:1) “Judge me, O Lord my God, according to thy righteousness.” (^{488D}Psalm 35:24) “Quicken me in thy righteousness.” (^{488E}Psalm 119:40) “O Lord,” says he, “give ear to my supplications; in thy faithfulness answer me, and in thy righteousness. And enter not into judgment with thy servant”: O Lord: “For in thy sight shall no man living be justified.” (^{488F}Psalm 143:1,2) And David, What if God doth thus? Why then, saith he, “My tongue shall speak of thy righteousness.” (^{488G}Psalm 35:28) “My tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.” (^{488H}Psalm 51:14) “My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness.” Yea, “I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.” (^{488I}Psalm 71:15,16)

Daniel also, when he comes to plead for himself and his people, he first casts away his and their righteousness, saying, “For we do not present out supplications before thee for our righteousnesses.” And pleads God’s righteousness, and that he might have a share and interest in that, saying, “O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee” (^{200B}Daniel 9:7, 18), to wit, that righteousness, for the sake of which, mercy and forgiveness, and so heaven and happiness is extended to us.

Righteousness belongeth to thee, and is thine, as nearly as sin, shame, and confusion, is ours, and belongeth to us, which righteousness he afterwards calleth “The Lord,” saying, do it, for the Lord’s sake; read ^{200C}Daniel 9:16, 17.

“O Lord,” saith he, “according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us. Now therefore, O our God, hear the prayer of thy servant, and his supplications, and cause thy face to shine upon thy sanctuary that is desolate, for the Lord’s sake.”

For the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ; for on him Daniel now had his eye, and through him to the Father he made his supplication; yea, and the

answer was according to his prayer, to wit, that God would have mercy on Jerusalem, and that he would in his time send the Lord, the Messias, to bring them in everlasting righteousness for them.

Paul also, as I have hinted before, disclaims his own righteousness, and layeth fast hold on the righteousness of God: seeking to be found in that, or in him that has it, not having his own righteousness; for he knew that when the rain descends, the winds blow, and the floods come down falls on all men, but they that have that righteousness. (³¹Philippians 3)

Now the earnest desire of the righteous to be found in God's righteousness, ariseth from strong conviction of the imperfections of their own, and of good knowledge that was given them of the terror that will attend men at the day of the fiery trial; to wit, the day of judgment. For although men can now flatter themselves into a fool's paradise, and persuade themselves that all shall be well with them then, for the sake of their own silly and vain-glorious performances; yet when the day comes that shall burn like an oven, and when all that have done wickedly shall be as stubble, and so will all appear to be that are not found in Christ, then will their righteousness vanish like smoke, or be like fuel for that burning flame. And hence the righteousness that the godly seek to be found in, is called the name of the Lord, a strong tower, a rock, a shield, a fortress, a buckler, a rock of defense, UNTO which they resort, and INTO which they run and are safe.

The godly wise therefore do not, as this Pharisee, bring their own righteousness into the temple, and there buoy up themselves and spirits by that into a conceit, that for the sake of that, God will be merciful and good unto them: but throwing away their own, they make to God for his, because they certainly know, even by the word of God, that in the judgment none can stand the trial, but those that are found in the righteousness of God.

Third, That the best of men are afraid to stand before God's tribunal by the law, there to be judged to life and death, according to the sufficiency or non-sufficiency of their righteousness, is evident: for they know, that it is a vain thing to seek by acts of righteousness to make themselves righteous men, as is the way of all them that seek to be justified by the deeds of the law.

And herein lieth the great difference between the Pharisee and the true Christian man. The Pharisee thinks, by acts of righteousness he shall make himself a righteous man, therefore he cometh into the presence of God well furnished, as he thinks, with his negative and positive righteousness.

Grace suffereth not a man to boast it before God, whatever he saith before me:

“His soul which is lifted up, is not upright in him”

(<BIB> Habakkuk 2:4)

And better is the poor in spirit, than the proud in spirit. The Pharisee was a very proud man, a proud, ignorant man, proud of his own righteousness, and ignorant of God’s: for had he not, he could not, as he did, have so condemned the Publican, and justified himself.

[The Pharisee ignorant that he must be righteous before he can do righteousness.]

And I say again, that all this pride and vain-glorious shew of the Pharisee, did arise from his not being acquainted with this; that a man must be good, before he can do good; he must be righteous, before he can do righteousness. This is evident from Paul, who insinuateth this as the reason, why “none do good,” even because There is none that is righteous, no, not one. “There is none righteous,” saith he; and then follows, “There is none that doeth good.” (<BIB> Romans 3:10-12) For it is not possible for a man, that is not first made righteous by the God of heaven, to do anything that in a proper, in a law, or in a gospel-sense may be called righteousness. Meddle with righteous things he may; attempt to make himself a righteous man, by his so meddling with them, he may; but work righteousness, and so by such works of righteousness, make himself a righteous man, he cannot.

The righteousness of a carnal man, is indeed by God called righteousness; but it must be understood, as spoken in the dialect of the world; or with reference to the world’s matters. The world indeed calls it righteousness; and it will do no harm, if it bear that term with reference to worldly matters. Hence worldly civilians are called good and righteous men, and so, such as Christ, under that notion, neither died for, nor giveth his grace unto. (<BIB> Romans 5:7, 8) But we are not now discoursing about any other

righteousness, than that which is so accounted either in a law, or in a gospel-sense; and therefore let us a little more touch upon that.

A man then must be righteous in a law-sense, before he can do acts of righteousness, I mean that are such, in a gospel-sense. Hence first, you have true gospel-righteousness made the fruit of a second birth.

“If ye know that he [Christ] is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.” (⁽¹⁰²⁾1 John 2:29)

Not born of him by virtue of his own righteous actions, but born of him by virtue of Christ’s mighty working with his word upon the soul; who afterwards, from a principle of life, acteth and worketh righteousness.

And he saith again, “Little children, let no man deceive you, he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.” (⁽¹⁰⁷⁾1 John 3:7) Upon this scripture, I will a little comment, for the proof of what is urged before; namely, that a man must be righteous in a law-sense, before he can do such things that may be called acts of righteousness in a gospel-sense. And for this, this scripture, ministereth to us two things to be considered by us.

The first is, that he that doeth righteousness is righteous.

The second is, that he that doeth righteousness is righteous, as Christ is righteous.

First, He that doeth righteousness; that is, righteousness which the gospel calleth so, is righteous; that is, precedent to, or before he doth that righteousness. For he doth not say, he shall make his person righteous by acts of righteousness that he shall do; for then an evil tree may bear good fruit: yea, and may make itself good by doing so: But he saith, he that doeth righteousness is righteous; as he saith, he that doeth righteousness IS born of him.

So then, a man must be righteous before he can do righteousness, before he can do righteousness in a gospel-sense.

Second, Our second thing then is to inquire, with what righteousness a man must be righteous, before he can do that which in a gospel-sense is called righteousness?

And first, I answer, He must be righteous in a law-sense; that is, he must be righteous in the judgment of the law. This is evident, because he saith, he that doeth righteousness is righteous as he is righteous. That is, in a law-sense; for Christ in no sense is righteous in the judgment of charity only; but in his meanest acts, if it be lawful to make such comparison, he was righteous in a law-sense, or in the judgment of the law. Now the apostle saith, “That he that doeth righteousness Is righteous, as HE is righteous.” They are the words of God, and therefore I cannot err in quoting of them, though I may not so fully, as I would, make the glory of them shine in speaking to them.

But what righteousness is that, with which a man must stand righteous in the judgment of the law, before he shall or can be found to do acts of righteousness, that by the gospel are so called? I answer.

First, It is none of his own which is of the law, you may be sure; for he hath this righteousness before he doeth any that can be called his own. “He that doeth righteousness is righteous” already, precedent to, or before he doth that righteousness; yea, he is righteous before, even as HE is righteous.

Second, It cannot be his own which is of the gospel; that is, that which floweth from a principle of grace in the soul: for he is righteous before he doeth this righteousness. He that doeth righteousness, Is righteous. He doth not say he that hath done it, but he that doeth it; respecting the act while it is in doing, he is righteous. He is righteous even then, when he is a doing of the very first act of righteousness; but an act, while it is in doing, cannot, until it is done, be called an act of righteousness; yet, saith the text, “He is righteous.”

But again, if an act, while it is in doing, cannot be called an act of righteousness; to be sure, it cannot have such influences as to make the actor righteous; to make him righteous, as the Son of God is righteous, and yet the righteousness with which this doer is made righteous, and that before he doeth righteousness, is such; for so saith the text, that makes him righteous as he is righteous.

Besides, it cannot be his own, which is gospel-righteousness, flowing from a principle of grace in the soul; for that in its greatest perfection in us,

while we live in this world, is accompanied with some imperfections; to wit, our faith, love, and whole course of holiness is wanting, or hath something lacking in it. They neither are apart, nor when put all together, perfect, as to the degree, the uttermost degree of perfection.

But the righteousness under consideration, with which the man, in that of John, is made righteous, is a perfect righteousness; not only with respect to the nature of it, as a penny is as perfect silver as a shilling; nor yet with respect to a comparative degree; for so a shilling arriveth more toward the perfection of the number twenty, than doth a two-penny or a three-penny piece: but it is a righteousness so perfect, that nothing can be added to it, nor can any thing be taken from it: for so implieth the words of the text, “he is righteous, as Christ is righteous.” Yea, thus righteous before, and in order to his doing of righteousness. And in this he is like unto the Son of God, who was also righteous before he did acts of righteousness referring to a law of commandment: wherefore it is said, that as he is, so are we in this world. As he is or was righteous, before he did acts of righteousness among men by a law, so are His righteous, before they act righteousness among men by a law. “He that doth righteousness is righteous, as HE is righteous.”

Christ was righteous, before he did righteousness, with a two-fold righteousness. He had a righteousness as he was God; his godhead was perfectly righteous; yea, it was righteousness itself. His human nature was perfectly righteous, it was naturally spotless and undefiled. Thus his person was righteous, and so qualified to do that righteousness, that because he was born of a woman, and made under the law, he was bound by the law to perform.

Now, as he is, so are we: not by way of natural righteousness, but by way of resemblance thereunto. Had Christ, in order to his working of righteousness, a two-fold righteousness inherent in himself, the Christian, in order to his working of righteousness, hath belonging to him a two-fold righteousness. Did Christ’s two-fold righteousness qualify him for that work of righteousness, that was of God designed for him to do? Why the Christian’s two-fold righteousness doth qualify him for that work of righteousness, that God hath ordained, that he should do and walk in this world.

But you may ask, what is that righteousness, with which a Christian is made righteous before he doth righteousness?

I answer, It is a two-fold righteousness.

I. It is a righteousness put upon him.

II. It is a righteousness put into him.

I. For the first, It is righteousness put upon him, with which also he is clothed as with a coat or mantle (^{<612>}Romans 3:22), and this is called the robe of righteousness; and this is called the garments of salvation. (^{<611>}Isaiah 61:10)^{f22} This righteousness is none other but the obedience of Christ; the which he performed in the days of his flesh, and can properly be called no man's righteousness, but the righteousness of Christ; because no man had a hand therein, but he completed it himself. And hence it is said, That

“by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

(^{<616>}Romans 5:19)

By the obedience of one, of one man Jesus Christ, as you have it in verse 15 for he came down into the world to this very end; that is, to make a generation righteous, not by making of them laws, and prescribing unto them rules: for this was the work of Moses, who said, “And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us.” (^{<615>}Deuteronomy 6:25, ^{<614>}Deuteronomy 24:13) Nor yet by taking away by his grace the imperfections of their righteousness, and so making of that perfect by additions of his own; but he makes them righteous by his obedience; not in them, but for them, while he personally subjected himself to his Father's law on our behalf, that he might have a righteousness to bestow upon us. And hence we are said to be made righteous, while we work not; and to be justified while ungodly (^{<618>}Romans 4:5), which can be done by no other righteousness than that, which is the righteousness of Christ by performance, the righteousness of God by donation, and our righteousness by imputation. For, I say, the person that wrought this righteousness for us, is Christ Jesus; the person that giveth it to us, is the Father; who hath made Christ to be unto us righteousness, and hath given him to us for this very end, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (^{<613>}1

Corinthians 1:30, ^{<40>}2 Corinthians 5:21), And hence it is so often said, One shall say, surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength. And again, “In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.” “This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.” (^{<36>}Isaiah 45:24, 25, ^{<25>}Isaiah 54:17)

This righteousness is that which justifieth, and which secureth the soul from the curse of the law; by hiding, through its perfection, all the sins and imperfections of the soul. Hence it follows, in that fourth of the Romans, “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”

And this it doth, even while the person that by grace is made a partaker, is without good works, and so ungodly. This is the righteousness of Christ, Christ’s personal performances, which he did when he was in this world; that is that, by which the soul while naked, is covered, and so hid as to its nakedness, from the divine sentence of the law;

“I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness.”

(^{<26>}Ezekiel 16:8)

Now this obediential righteousness of Christ, consisteth of two parts. **1.** In a doing of that which the law commanded us to do. **2.** In a paying that price for the transgression thereof, which justice hath said, shall be required at the hand of man; and that is the cursed death. In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die the death; to wit, the death that comes by the curse of the law. So then, Christ having brought in that part of obedience for us, which consisteth in a doing of such obediential acts of righteousness which the law commands; he addeth thereto the spilling of his blood, to be the price of our redemption from that cursed death, that by sin we had brought upon our bodies and souls. And thus are the Christians made perfectly righteous; they have the whole obedience of Christ made over to them; to wit, that obedience that standeth in doing the law, and that obedience that standeth in paying of a price for our transgressions. So then, Doth the law call for righteousness? Here it is. Doth the law call for satisfaction for our sins? Here it is. And what can the law say any more to the sinner but that which is good, when he findeth in

the personal obedience of Christ for him, that which answereth to what it can command, that which it can demand of us.

Herein then standeth a Christian's safety, not in a bundle of actions of his own, but in a righteousness which cometh to him by grace and gift; for this righteousness is such as comes by gift, by the gift of God. Hence it is called the gift of righteousness, the gift by grace, the gift of righteousness by grace, which is the righteousness of one, to wit, the obedience of Jesus Christ. (~~4115~~ Romans 5:15-19)

And this is the righteousness by which, he that doth righteousness, is righteous as HE is righteous; because it is the very self-same righteousness, that the Son of God hath accomplished by himself. Nor has he any other or more excellent righteousness, of which the law taketh notice, or that it requireth, than this. For as for the righteousness of his godhead, the law is not concerned with that; for as he is such, the law is his creature, and servant, and may not meddle with him.

The righteousness also of his human nature, the law hath nothing to do with that; for that is the workmanship of God, and is as good, as pure, as holy and undefiled, as is the law itself. All then that the law hath to do with, is to exact complete obedience of him that is made under it, and a due satisfaction for the breach thereof, the which, if it hath, then Moses is content.

Now, this is the righteousness, with which the Christian, as to justification, is made righteous; to wit, a righteousness, that is neither essential to his godhead, nor to his manhood; but such as standeth in that glorious person, who was such, his obedience to the law. Which righteousness himself had, with reference to himself, no need of at all, for his godhead; yea, his manhood was perfectly righteous without it. This righteousness therefore was there, and there only, necessary, where Christ was to be considered as God's servant and our surety, to bring to God Jacob again, and to restore the preserved of Israel. For though Christ was a Son, yet he became a servant to do, not for himself, for he had no need, but for us, the whole law, and so bring in everlasting righteousness for us.

And hence it is said, that Christ did what he did for us: He became the end of the law for righteousness for us; he suffered for us (~~4121~~ 1 Peter 2:21); he

died for us (³¹⁵⁰1 Thessalonians 5:10); he laid down his life for us (³¹⁶¹1 John 3:16), and he gave himself for us. (⁴¹⁰⁰Galatians 1:4) The righteousness then that Christ did fulfil, when he was in the world, was not for himself simply considered, nor for himself personally considered, for he had no need thereof; but it was for the elect, the members of his body.

Christ then did not fulfil the law for himself, for he had no need thereof. Christ again did fulfil the law for himself, for he had need of the righteousness thereof; he had need thereof for the covering of his body, and the several members thereof; for they, in a good sense, are himself, members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones; and he owns them as parts of himself in many places of the holy scripture. (⁴¹⁶¹Ephesians 5:30, ⁴¹⁰⁰Acts 9:4, 5, ⁴²⁵⁶Matthew 25:45, ⁴²⁵⁶Matthew 10:40, ⁴¹⁰⁵Mark 9:37, ⁴²⁰⁶Luke 10:16, ⁴¹²²1 Corinthians 12:12, 27) This righteousness then, even the whole of what Christ did in answer to the law, it was for his, and God hath put it upon them, and they are righteous in it, even righteous as he is righteous. And this they have before they do acts of righteousness.

II. There is righteousness put into them, before they act righteous things. A righteousness, I say, put into them; or I had rather that you should call it a principle of righteousness; for it is a principle of life to righteousness. Before man's conversion, there is in him a principle of death by sin; but when he is converted to Christ, there is put into him a principle of righteousness, that he may bring forth fruit unto God. (⁴¹⁰⁴Romans 7:4-6)

Hence they are said to be quickened, to be made alive, to be risen from death to life, to have the Spirit of God dwelling in them; not only to make their souls alive, but to quicken their mortal bodies to that which is good. (⁴¹⁶¹Romans 8:11)

Here, as I hinted before, they that do righteousness are said to be born of him, that is, antecedent to their doing of righteousness (³¹²⁹1 John 2:29), "born of him," that is, made alive with new spiritual and heavenly life. Wherefore the exhortation to them is,

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (⁴¹⁶¹Romans 6:13)

Now this principle must also be in men, before they can do that which is spiritually and gospelly good: For whatever seeming good thing any man doth, before he has bestowed upon him this heavenly principle from God, it is accounted nothing, it is accounted sin and abomination in the sight of God; for an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit: Men do not gather grapes of thorns; neither of a bramble gather they figs. Either make the tree good and his fruit good, or the tree evil and his fruit evil. (⁴¹⁶⁸Luke 6:43-45) It is not the fruit that makes the tree, but the tree that makes the fruit. A man must be good, before he can do good, and evil before he can do evil.

They be not righteous actions that make a righteous man; nor be they evil actions that make a wicked man: for a tree must be a sweeting tree before it yield sweetings; ^{F23} and a crab tree before it bring forth crabs. ^{F24}

This is that which is asserted by the Son of God himself; and it lieth so level with reason and the nature of things, that it cannot be contradicted. (⁴¹⁷⁵Matthew 7:16-18)

“A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil.” (⁴¹⁶⁵Luke 6:45)

But this, notwithstanding all that can be said, seemeth very strange to the carnal world; for they will not be otherwise persuaded, but that they be good deeds that make good men, and evil ones that make evil men: And so by such dotish apprehensions do what in them lieth to fortify their hearts with the mists of darkness against the clear shining of the word, and conviction of the truth.

And thus it was from the beginning: Abel did his first services to God from this principle of righteousness; but Cain would have been made righteous by his deed; but his deed not flowing from the same root of goodness, as did Abel's, notwithstanding he did it with the very best he had, is yet called evil: For he wanted, I say, the principles, to wit, of grace and faith, without which no action can be counted good in a gospel sense.

These two things then, that man must have that will do righteousness. He must have put upon him the perfect righteousness of Christ; and he must have dwelling in him, as a fruit of the new birth, a principle of righteousness. Then indeed he is a tree of righteousness, and God is like to

be glorified in, and by him; but this the Pharisee was utterly ignorant of, and at the remotest distance from it.

CHAPTER 8

THE PHARISEE INSTRUCTED IN THE WAY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

You may ask me next, But which of these are first bestowed upon the Christian, the perfect righteousness of Christ unto justification, or this gospel principle of righteousness unto sanctification?

THE PERFECT RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST UNTO JUSTIFICATION, MUST FIRST BE MADE OVER TO HIM BY AN ACT OF GRACE. This is evident,

1. Because, *he is justified as ungodly*; that is, whilst he is ungodly: But it must not be said of them, that have this principle of grace in them, that they are ungodly; for they are saints and holy. But this righteousness, by IT God justifieth the ungodly, by imputing it to them, when, and while they, as to a principle of grace, are graceless.

This is further manifested thus: The person must be accepted before the performance of the person can;

“And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering.”

(~~1000~~ Genesis 4:4)

If he had respect to Abel’s person first, yet he must have respect unto it for the sake of some righteousness; but Abel, in that, had no righteousness; for that he acted after that God had had respect unto his person.^{F25} “And the LORD had respect unto Abel, and to his offering: But unto Cain, and to his offering, he had not respect.”

The prophet Ezekiel also shows us this; where, by the similitude of the wretched infant, and of the manner of God’s receiving it to mercy, he shows how he received the Jews to favor. First, saith he, “I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness.” (16:8) There is justification; “I covered thy nakedness.” But what manner of nakedness was it? Was it utter nakedness, nakedness in its perfection? Yes, it was then as naked as naked could be, even as naked as in the day that it was born. And as thus naked, it was covered, not with anything, but with the skirt of Christ; that

is, with his robe of righteousness, with his obedience, that he performed by himself for that very purpose. For by the obedience of one many are made righteous.

2. Righteousness unto justification must be first, because *the first duty that a Christian performeth to God, must be accepted, not for the sake of the principle from which in the heart it flows, nor yet for the sake of the person that acts it; but for the sake of Christ, whose righteousness it is, by which, before the sinner, he stands just before God.* And hence it is said,

“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.” (Hebrews 11:4)

By faith he did it; but faith hath respect to the righteousness that justifies. For we are justified by faith, not by faith as it is a grace, nor by faith as it is an acting grace; but by the righteousness of faith; that is, by that righteousness that faith embraceth, layeth hold of, and helpeth the soul to rest upon, and to trust to, for justification of life, which is the obedience of Christ. Besides, it is said, by faith he offered; faith then, faith in Christ, was precedent to his offering.

Now since faith was in being and in act before his offer, and since before his offer, he had no personal goodness of his own, faith must look out from home: I say, it must look out to another than to him in whom it resided for righteousness; and finding the righteousness of Christ to be the righteousness, which by God was designed to be performed for the justification of a sinner, it embraces it, and through it offereth to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain.

Hence it follows, “by which he obtained witness that he was righteous.” By which, not by his offering, but by his faith. For his offering, simply as an offering, could not have made him righteous, if he had not been righteous before; “for an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit.” Besides, if this be granted, why had not God respect to Cain’s offering, as well as to Abel’s? For, did Abel offer? so did Cain. Did Abel offer his best? so did Cain his. And if with this, we shall take notice of the order of their offering, Cain seemed to offer first, and so with the frankest will, and forwardest mind; but yet, saith the text, “The Lord had respect to Abel and to his offering.” But why to Abel? Why, because his person was made

righteous before he offered his gift: “By which he obtained witness that he was righteous.” God testifying of his gifts, that they were good and acceptable, because they declared Abel’s acceptance of the righteousness of Christ, for his justice, through the riches of the grace of God.

By faith then, Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. He shrouded himself under the righteousness of Christ, and so, as out of that righteousness, he offered to God; God also looking and finding him there, where also he could not have been, as to his own apprehension, no otherwise than by faith, he accepted of his gift; by which acceptance, for so you may understand it also, God testified that he was righteous: For God receiveth not the gifts and offerings of those that are not righteous, for their sacrifices are an abomination unto him. (³⁰⁰⁷Proverbs 21:27)

Abel then was righteous before; he was, I say, made righteous first, as he stood ungodly in himself; God justifieth the ungodly. (⁶⁰¹Romans 4) Now being justified, he was righteous; and being righteous, he offered his sacrifice of praise to God, or other offerings which God accepted, because he believed in his Son, as also other scriptures manifest abundantly. But this our Pharisee understandeth not.

3. Righteousness by imputation must be first, because we are made so, to wit, by another, “By the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Now to be made righteous, implies a passiveness in him that is so made, and the activity of the work to lie in some body else; except he had said, they had made themselves righteous; but that it doth not, nor doth the text leave to any the least countenance so to insinuate: Nay, it plainly affirms the contrary, for it saith, by the obedience of one, of one man Jesus Christ, many are made righteous; by the righteousness of one (⁶⁰¹Romans 5), So then, if they be MADE righteous by the righteousness of one: I say, if many be made righteous by the righteousness of one, then are they that are so, as to themselves, passive and not active, with reference unto the working out of this righteousness. They have no hand in that; for that is the act of ONE, the righteousness of ONE, the obedience of ONE, the workmanship of ONE, even of Christ Jesus.

Again, if they are made righteous by this righteousness, then also they are passive, as to their first privilege by it; for they are made righteous by it;

they do not make themselves righteous; no, they do not make themselves righteous by it.

Imputation is also the act of God. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness. The righteousness then is the work of Christ, his own obedience to his father's law; the making of it ours, is the act of his father, and of his infinite grace; "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness." "For he [God] hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And both these things God showed to our first parents when he acted in grace towards them after the fall.

There it is said, the Lord God made unto Adam, and unto his wife, coats of skins, and clothed them. (~~GEN~~ Genesis 3:21)

Whence note,

- (1.) That Adam and his wife were naked both in God's eye, and in their own. (verse 10,11)
- (2.) That the Lord God made coats of skins.
- (3.) That in his making of them, he had respect to Adam and to his wife, that is, he made them for them.
- (4.) That when he had made them, he also clothed them therewith.

They made not the coats, nor did God bid them make them; but God did make them himself to cover their nakedness with. Yea, when he had made them, he did not bid them put them on, but he himself did clothe them with them: For thus runs the text; "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." O! It was the Lord God that made this coat, with which a poor sinner is made righteous! And it is also the Lord God that putteth it upon us. But this our Pharisee understandeth not.

But now, if a man is not righteous before he is made so, before the Lord God has, by the righteousness of another, made him so; then whether this righteousness come first or last, the man is not righteous until it cometh, and if he be not righteous until it cometh, then what works soever are done

before it comes, they are not the works of a righteous man, nor the fruits of a good tree, but of a bad. And so again, this righteousness must first come before a man be righteous, and before a man does righteousness. Make the tree good and its fruit will be good.

Now, since a man must be made righteous before he can do righteousness, it is manifest his works of righteousness do not make him righteous, no more than the fig makes its own tree a fig-tree, or than the grape doth make its own vine a vine. Hence those acts of righteousness, that Christian men do perform, are called the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. (^{<small>3011</small>}Philippians 1:11)

The fruits of righteousness they are by Jesus Christ, as the fruits of the tree are by the tree itself. For the truth is, that principle of righteousness, of which mention has been made before, and concerning which I have said, it comes in, in the second place; it is also originally to be found for us no where but in Christ.

Hence it is said to be by Jesus Christ, and again,

“of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.”

(^{<small>3111</small>}John 1:16)

A man must then be united to Christ first, and so being united, he partaketh of this benefit, to wit, a principle that is supernatural, spiritual, and heavenly. Now his being united to Christ, is not of, or from himself, but of, and from the Father, who, as to this work, is the husbandman; even as the twig that is grafted into the tree, officiateth not, that is, grafteth not itself thereinto, but is grafted in by some other, itself being utterly passive as to that. Now being united unto Christ, the soul is first made partaker of justification, or of justifying righteousness, and now no longer beareth the name of an ungodly man, for he is made righteous by the obedience of Christ, he being also united to Christ, partaketh of the root and fatness of Christ; the root, that is, his divine nature; the fatness, that is, that fulness of grace that is laid up in him to be communicated unto us, even as the branch that is grafted into the olive-tree, partaketh of the root and fatness of the olive-tree. Now partaking thereof, it quickeneth, it groweth, it buddeth, and yieldeth fruit to the glory and praise of God. (^{<small>3117</small>}Romans 11:17)

But these things, as I have often said, the poor Pharisee was ignorant of, when so swaggeringly he, with his, “God I thank thee,” came into the temple to pray and indeed, in that which hath here been said, is something of the mystery of God’s will in his way with his elect; and such a mystery it is, that it lieth hid for ever to nature and natural men; for they think of nothing less than of this, nor of nothing more, when they think of their souls and of salvation, than that something must be done by themselves to reconcile them to God. Yea, if through some common convictions their understandings should be swayed to a consenting to that, that justification is of grace by Christ, and not of works by men; yet conscience, reason, and the law of nature, not being as yet subdued by the power and glory of grace unto the obedience of Christ, will rise up in rebellion against this doctrine, and will overrule and bow down the soul again to the law and works thereof for life.

4. Righteousness by imputation must be first, because, else faith, which is a part, yea, a great part, of that which is called a principle of grace in the soul, will have nothing to fix itself upon, nor a motive to work by. Let this therefore be considered by those that are on the contrary side.

Faith, so soon as it has being in the soul, is like the child that has being in the mother’s lap, it must have something to feed upon, not something at a distance, afar off, or to be purchased, I speak now as to justification from the curse, but something by promise made over of grace to the soul; something to feed upon to support from the fears of perishing by the curse for sin. Nor can it rest content with all duties and performances, that other graces shall put the soul upon; nor with any of its own works, until it reaches and takes hold of the righteousness of Christ. Faith is like the dove, that found no rest any where in all the world until it returned to Noah into the ark. But this our Pharisee understandeth not.

Objection. Perhaps some may object, That from this way of reasoning it is apparent, that sanctification is first, since the soul may have faith, and so a principle of grace in it; and yet, as yet it cannot find Christ to feed and to refresh the soul withal.

Answer. From this way of reasoning it is not at all apparent, that sanctification, or a principle of grace is in the soul before righteousness is

imputed, and the soul made perfectly righteous thereby. And for the clearing up of this let me propose a few things.

(1.) Justifying righteousness, to wit, the obedience of that one man Christ is imputed to the sinner to justify him in God's sight. For his law calls for perfect righteousness, and before that be come TO, and put UPON the poor sinner, God cannot bestow other spiritual blessings upon him; because by the law he has pronounced him accursed; by the which curse, he is also so holden, until a righteousness shall be found upon the sinner, that the law, and so divine justice can alike approve of, and be contented with. So then, as to the justification of the sinner, there must be a righteousness for God; I say, for the sinner, and for God. For the sinner to be clothed with, and for God to look upon, that he may, for the sake thereof in a way of justice, bless the sinner with forgiveness of sins: For forgiveness of sins is the next thing that followeth upon the appearance of the sinner before God in the righteousness of Christ. (ROM Romans 4:6,7)

Now, upon this forgiveness, follows the second blessing. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. And so, consequently, hath obtained for us the forgiveness of sins: for he that is delivered from the curse, hath received forgiveness of sins, or rather is made partaker thereof; now being made a partaker thereof, the second blessing immediately follows: to wit, the blessing of Abraham, that is, "the promise of the spirit through faith" (GAL Galatians 3:13,14), but this our Pharisee understandeth not.

But now, although it be of absolute necessity that imputed righteousness be first TO the soul; that is, that perfect righteousness be found upon the sinner first by God, that he may bestow other blessings in a way of justice. Yet it is not of absolute necessity that the soul should see this first.

Let God then put righteousness, the righteousness of his Son upon me; and by virtue of that, let the second blessing of God come in to me; and by virtue of that, let me be made to see myself a sinner, and Christ's righteousness, and my need of it, in the doctrine of it, as it is revealed in the scriptures of truth. Let me then believe this doctrine to be true, and be brought by my belief to repentance for my sins, to hungering and thirsting vehemently after this righteousness; for this is "the kingdom of God and

his righteousness.” Yea, let me pray, and cry, and sigh, and groan day and night to the God of this righteousness, that he will of grace make me a partaker: And let me thus prostrate before my God, all the time that in wisdom he shall think fit. And in his own time he shall show me, that I am a justified person, a pardoned person, a person in whom the Spirit of God hath dwelt for some time, though I knew it not.

So then justification before God is one thing; and justification in mine own eyes is another: not that these are two justifications, but the same righteousness by which I stand justified before God, may be seen of God, when I am ignorant of it; yea, for the sake of it I may be received, pardoned, and accounted righteous of him, and yet I may not understand it. Yea, further, he may proceed in the way of blessing, to bless me with additional blessings, and yet I be ignorant of it.

So that the question is not, Do I find that I am righteous? But am I so? Doth God find me so, when he seeth that the righteousness of his Son is upon me, being made over to me by an act of his grace? For I am justified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the redemption of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. (^{<RB3>}Romans 3:25) But this our Pharisee understandeth not.

I am then made righteous first, by the righteousness of another; and because I am thus righteous, God accepteth of my person as such, and bestoweth upon me his grace; the which, at first, for want of skill and experience in the word of righteousness, I make use of but poorly, and have need to be certified that I am made righteous, and that I have eternal life (^{<RB3>}Hebrews 5:13), not by faith first and immediately, but by the written word, which is called the word of faith; which word declareth unto me, to whom grace, and so faith in the seed of it is given, that I have eternal life; and that I should with boldness, in peace and joy, believe on the Son of God. (^{<RB3>}Romans 15:13, ^{<RB3>}1 John 5:13) But, Again, I, in the first acts of my faith, when I am come at Christ, do not accept of him, because, I know I am righteous, either with imputed righteousness, or with that which is inherent: both these, as to my present privilege in them, may be hidden from mine eyes, and I only put upon taking of encouragement to

close with Christ for life and righteousness, as he is set forth to be a propitiation before mine eyes, in the word of the truth of the gospel; to which word I adhere as, or because I find, I want peace with God in my soul, and because I am convinced, that the means of peace is not to be found any where but in Jesus Christ. Now, by my thus adhering to him, I find stay for my soul, and peace to my conscience, because the word doth ascertain me, that he that believeth on him hath remission of sins, hath eternal life, and shall be saved from the wrath to come.

But alas! who knows the many straights, and as I may say, the stress of weather, I mean the cold blasts of hell, with which the poor soul is assaulted, betwixt its receiving of grace, and its sensible closing with Jesus Christ? ^{F26} None, I daresay, but IT and its FELLOWS.

“The heart knoweth his own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.” (²¹⁴⁰ Proverbs 14:10)

No sooner doth Satan perceive that God is doing with the soul, in a way of grace and mercy, but he endeavoreth what he may, to make the renewing thereof bitter and wearisome work to the sinner. O what mists, what mountains, what clouds, what darkness, what objections, what false apprehensions of God, of Christ, of grace, of the word, and of the soul's condition, doth he now lay before it, and haunt it with; whereby he fighteth, dejecteth, casteth down, daunteth, distresseth, and almost driveth it quite into despair. Now, by the reason of these things, faith, and all the grace that is in the soul, is hard put to it to come at the promise; and by the promise to Christ, as it is said, when the tempest and great danger of shipwreck lay upon the vessel in which Paul was, They

“had much work to come by the boat.” (⁴²⁷⁶ Acts 27:16)

For Satan's design is, if he cannot keep the soul from Christ, to make his coming to him, and closing with him, as hard, difficult, and troublesome, as he by his devices can. But faith, true justifying faith, is a grace, that is not weary by all that Satan can do; but meditateth upon the word, and taketh stomach, and courage, fighteth, and crieth, and by crying and fighting, by help from heaven, its way is made through all the oppositions that appear so mighty, and draweth up at last to Jesus Christ, into whose bosom it

putteth the soul, where, for the time, it sweetly resteth after its marvelous tossings to and fro. ^{F27}

And besides what hath been said, let me yet illustrate this truth unto you by this familiar similitude.

Suppose a man, a traitor, that by the law should die for his sin, is yet such an one, that the king hath exceeding kindness for; may not the king pardon this man of his clemency; yea, order that his pardon should be drawn up and sealed, and so in every sense be made sure; and yet, for the present, keep all this close enough from the ears, or the knowledge of the person therein concerned. Yea, may not the king after all leave this person, with others under the same transgression, to sue for, and obtain this pardon with great expense and difficulty, with many tears and heart-achings, with many fears, and dubious cogitations.

Why this is the case between God and the soul that he saveth; he saveth him, pardoneth him, and secureth him from the curse and death that to him is due for sin, but yet doth not tell him so, but ascends in his great suit unto God for it. Only this difference we must make in this between God and the potentates of this world: God cannot pardon before the sinner stands before him righteous by the righteousness of Christ; because he has in judgment, and justice, and righteousness threatened and concluded, that he that wants righteousness shall die.

And I say again, because this righteousness is God's, and at God's disposal only; it is God that must make a man righteous before he can forgive him his sins, or bestow upon him of his secondary blessings; to wit, his Spirit, and the graces thereof. And I say again, it must be this righteousness; for it can be no other, that must justify a sinner from sin in the sight of God, and from the sentence of his law. But

(2.) This is, and must be the way of God with the sinner, that faith may not only have an object to work upon, but a motive to work by.

Here, as I said, Faith hath an object to work upon, and that is the person of Christ, and that personal righteousness of his, which he in the days of his flesh did finish to justify sinners withal. This is, I say, the object of faith for justification, whereunto the soul by it doth continually resort.

Hence David said to Christ, “Be thou my strong habitation”; or as you have it in the margin,

“Be thou to me for a rock of habitation, whereunto I may continually resort” (^{<4710>}Psalm 71:3)

And two things he inserts by so saying.

The *first* is, That the Christian is a man under continual exercises, sometimes one way, and sometimes another; but all his exercises have a tendency in them more or less to spoil him; if he deals with them hand to hand; therefore he is rather for flying than standing; for flying to Christ, than for grappling with them in and by his own power.

The *second* is, That Christ is of God, provided to be our shelter as to this very thing. Hence his name is said to be a strong tower, and that the righteous run into it, and are safe. (^{<4810>}Proverbs 18:10) That also of David in ^{<4910>}Psalm 56 is very pregnant to this purpose; “Mine enemies,” saith he, “would daily swallow me up, for they be many that fight against me, O thou most high.” And what then? Why, “what time I am afraid,” saith he, “I will trust in thee.” Thus you see, faith hath an object to work upon to carry the soul unto, and to secure the soul in, in times of difficulty, and that they are almost continually, and that object is Jesus Christ, and his righteousness. But,

Again, as faith hath an object to work upon, so it hath a motive to work by; and that is the love of God in giving of Christ to the soul for righteousness. Nor is there any profession, religion, or duty and performance, that is at all regarded, where this faith, which by such means can work, is wanting.

“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”

(^{<4810>}Galatians 5:6)

So he saith not here, but faith which acteth lovely, or but faith whose fruit is love, though true faith hath love for its offspring, but faith which worketh BY love; that is true saving justifying faith, as it beholdeth the righteousness of Christ, as made over to the soul for justification, so it beholdeth love, love to be the cause of its so being made over. It beholdeth

love in the Father, in giving of his Son; and love in the Son, in giving of himself to be made soul-saving righteousness for me. And this seeing, it worketh or this apprehending, it worketh by it; that is, it is stirred up to an holy boldness of venturing all eternal concerns upon Christ, and also to an holy endeared affecting love of him for his sweet and blessed redeeming love. Hence the apostle saith,

“The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”

(¹⁵2 Corinthians 5:14,15)

Thus then is the heart united in affection and love to the Father and the Son, for the love that they have shewed to the poor sinner, in their thus delivering him from the wrath to come. Nor doth this love of God cause that the faith of the poor man should work by IT to him alone, no; for by this love faith worketh, in sweet passions and pangs of love, to all that are thus reconciled, as this sinner seeth he is. The motive then, whereby faith worketh, both as to justification, and sanctification, the great motive to them, I say, is love, the love of God, and the love of Christ: “We love him because he first loved us.” That is, when our faith hath told us so; for so are the words above, “We have known and believed the love that God hath to us.” And then, “We love him because he first loved us.” And then, “This commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also.” (¹⁶1 John 4:16-21) But this our poor Pharisee understandeth not. But,

5. Righteousness by imputation must be first, to cut off boasting from the heart, conceit, and lips of men, Wherefore he saith as also was hinted before, That we are justified freely by the grace of God, not through, or for the sake of an holy gospel principle in us; but “through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ,” etc. “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.” (¹⁷Romans 3:24,27) And this is the law of faith that we are justified as afore [is shewn].

Nor can any man propound such an essential way to cut off boasting as this, which is of God’s providing: for what has man here to boast of? No righteousness, nor yet of the application of it to his soul. The

righteousness is Christ's, not the sinner's. The imputation is God's, not the sinner's. The cause of imputation is God's grace and love, not the sinner's works of righteousness. The time of God's imputing righteousness, is when the sinner was a sinner, wrapped up in ignorance, and wallowing in his vanity; not when he was good, or when he was seeking of it; for his inward gospel goodness is a fruit of the imputation of justifying righteousness, as has been already shewed. "Where is boasting then?" Where is our Pharisee then, with his brags of not being as other men are? It is excluded, and he with it, and the poor Publican taken into favor, that boasting might be cut off. "Not of works, lest any man should boast." There is no trust to be put in men, those that seem most humble, and that to appearance, are farthest off from pride, it is natural to them to boast; yea, to boast now, now they have no cause to boast. For by grace are we saved through FAITH, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast.

But if man is so prone to boast, when yet there is no ground of boasting in him, nor yet in what he doeth, how would he have boasted, had he been permitted by the God of heaven to have done something, though that something had been but a very little something towards his justification. But God has prevented boasting by doing as he has done. (⁴⁰¹⁸Ephesians 2:8,9) Nay, the apostle addeth further, lest any man should boast, that as to good works, "we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them." (⁴⁰²⁰Ephesians 2:10) Can the tree boast, because it is a sweetening tree, ^{f28} since it was not the tree, but God that made it such: Where is boasting then?

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (⁴⁰¹³1 Corinthians 1:30,31)

Where is boasting then? Where is our Pharisee then, with all his works of righteousness, and with his boasts of being better than his neighbors?

Objection. It may be said, If we should be justified for the sake of our inherent righteousness, since that righteousness is the gift of God, will it not follow that boasting is in the occasion thereof, cut off.

Answer. No, for although the principle of inherent righteousness be the gift of God, yet it bringeth forth fruits by man, and through man, and so man having a hand therein, though he should have never so little, he has an occasion offered him to boast. Yea, if a man should be justified before God by the grace, or the working of the grace of faith in him, he would have ground of occasion to boast, because faith, though it be the gift of God, yet as it acteth in man, takes man along with it in its so acting; yea, the acting of faith is as often attributed to the man by whom it is acted, and oftener, than to the grace itself. How then can it be, but that man must have a hand therein, and so a ground therein, or thereof to boast.

But now! since justification from the curse of the law before God, lieth only and wholly in God's imputing of Christ's righteousness to a man, and that too, while the man to whom it is imputed, is in himself wicked and ungodly, there is no room left for boasting before God, for that is the boasting intended; but rather an occasion given to shame and confusion of face, and to stop the mouth for ever, since justification comes to him in a way so far above him, so vastly without him, his skill, help, or what else soever. (^{<3000>}Ezekiel 16:61-63)

6. Righteousness by imputation must be first, that justification may not be of debt, but of mercy and grace. This is evident from reason: It is meet that God should therefore justify us by a righteousness of his own, not of his own prescribing, for that he may do, and yet the righteousness be ours; but of his own providing, that the righteousness may be his.

“Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace,
but of debt.” (^{<3000>}Romans 4:4)

If I work for justifying righteousness, and that way get righteousness, my justification is not of grace but of debt, God giveth it not unto me, for he oweth it unto me; so then it is no longer his but mine: Mine not of grace, but debt: And if so then, I thank him not for remission of sins, nor for the kingdom of heaven, nor for eternal life; for if justifying righteousness is of debt, then when I have it, and what dependeth thereon, I have but mine own, that which God oweth to me.

Nor will it help at all to say, but I obtain it by God's grace in me, because that doth not cut off my work, nor prevent my having of an hand in my justifying righteousness.

Suppose I give a man materials, even all materials that are necessary to the completing of such or such a thing; yet if he worketh, though the materials be mine, I am to him a debtor, and he deserveth a reward. Thou sayest, God has given thee his Spirit, his grace, and all other things that are necessary for the working up of a complete righteousness. Well, but is thy work required to the finishing of this righteousness? If so, this is not the righteousness that justifieth, because it is such as has thy hand, thy workmanship therein, and so obtains a reward. And observe it, righteousness, justifying righteousness, consisteth not in a principle of righteousness, but in works of righteousness; that is, in good duties, in obedience, in a walking in the law to the pleasing of the law, and the content of the justice of God.

I suppose again, that thou shalt conclude with me, that justifying righteousness, I mean that which justifies from the curse of the law, resideth only in the obedience of the Son of God; and that the principle of grace that is in thee, is none of that righteousness, no, not then when thou hast to the utmost walked with God according to thy gift and grace: Yet if thou concludest that this principle must be in thee, and these works done by thee, before this justifying righteousness is imputed to thee for justification, thou layest in a caveat against justification by grace; and also concludest, that though thou art not justified by thy righteousness, but by Christ, yet thou art justified by Christ's righteousness, for the sake of thine own, and so makest justification to be still a debt. But here the scripture doth also cut thee off: "Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart dost thou go to possess their land"; which was but a type of heaven, and if our righteousness cannot give us by its excellency a share in the type, be sure, that for it, we shall never be sharers in the antitype itself.

"Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it, for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people." (^(ROM) Deuteronomy 9:5,6)

Gospel-performances therefore are not first; that was first, for the sake of which, God did receive these people into favor with himself, and that was a covenant righteousness; and where could that covenant righteousness be found but in the prince, mediator, and high priest of the covenant? For it was HE and HE only that was appointed of God, nor could any but himself, bring in everlasting righteousness. (Daniel 9:24,25) This is evident from these texts last mentioned; it was not for their righteousness, that they possessed the land.

Again, As it was not for their righteousness, that they were made possessors of the land, so it was not for the sake of their righteousness, that they were made partakers of such a righteousness that did make them possess the land. This is plain to reason; for then inherent or inherent and personal righteousness, when by us performed, is of worth to obtain of God a justifying righteousness. But if it be of worth to obtain a justifying righteousness, then it seems, it is more commodious to both parties than is justifying righteousness. First, it is more commodious to him that worketh it, for by it he obtaineth everlasting righteousness; and secondly, it is more commodious unto him that receiveth it, else why doth he for it give us a due debt, and so put upon us the everlasting justifying righteousness.

Perhaps it will be objected, that God doth all this of grace; but I answer, that these are but fallacious words, spake by the tongue of the crafty. For we are not now discoursing of what rewards God can give to the operations of his own grace in us, but whether he can in a way of justice, or how he will, bestow any spiritual blessings upon sinful creatures, against whom, for sin, he has pronounced the curse of the law, before he hath found them in a righteousness, that is proved to be as good justice and righteousness, as is the justice and righteousness of the law, with which we have to do.

I assert he cannot, because he cannot lie, because he cannot deny himself: For if he should first threaten the transgression of the law with death, and yet afterwards receive the transgressor to grace, without a plenary satisfaction, what is this but to lie, and to diminish his truth, righteousness, and faithfulness; yea, and also to overthrow the sanction and perfect holiness of his law. His mercy therefore must act so towards

this sinner, that justice may be content, and that can never be, without a justifying righteousness.

Now what this justifying righteousness should be, and when imputed, that is the question. I say, it is the righteousness or the obedience of the Son of God in the flesh, which he assumed, and so his own, and the righteousness of no body else, otherwise than by imputation.

I say again, that this righteousness must be imputed first, that the sinner may stand just in God's sight from the curse, and that God might deal with him both in a way of justice as well as mercy, and yet do the sinner no harm.

But you may ask, How did God deal with sinners before this righteousness was actually in being?

I answer, He did then deal with sinners even as he dealeth with them now; he justifieth them by it, by virtue of the suretiship of him that was to bring it in. Christ became surety for us, and by his suretiship laid himself under an obligation to bring in, in time, for those for whom he became a surety, this everlasting and justifying righteousness, and by virtue of this those of his elect that came into and went out of the world, before he came to perform his work, were saved through the forbearance of God.

Wherefore, before the Lord came, they were saved for the Lord's sake, and for the sake of his name. And they that were spiritually wise understood it, and pleaded it as their necessities required, and the Lord for HIS sake also accepted them. (^{<S172>} Hebrews 7:22, ^{<R104>} Romans 4:24, ^{<Z117>} Daniel 9:17, ^{<P251>} Psalm 25:11)

7. Righteousness by imputation must be first: that justification may be certain;

“therefore it is of faith, [of the righteousness that faith layeth hold on] that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed.” (^{<R110>} Romans 4:16)

That the promise, What promise? The promise of remission of sins, etc. might be sure.

Now a promise of remission of sins supposeth a righteousness, a righteousness going before; for there is no forgiveness of sins, nor promise

of forgiveness, but for the sake of righteousness: but not for the sake of righteousness that shall be by us, but that Is already found in Christ as head, and so imputed to the elect for their remission.

“God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

(~~OF~~ Ephesians 4:32)

For Christ’s sake; that is, for the sake of the righteousness of Christ. Therefore imputed righteousness must be first; yea, it must be before forgiveness, and forgiveness is extended by God, then when we lie in our blood, though to us it is manifested afterwards. ^{F29} Therefore it is OF faith, he saith not BY it, respecting the act of faith; but of, respecting the doctrine or word which presenteth me with this blessed imputed righteousness: “They that are of faith, are the children of faithful Abraham.” They that are of the doctrine of faith, for all the elect are the sons of that doctrine in which is this righteousness of Christ contained; yea, they are begotten by it of God to this inheritance, to their comfortable enjoyment of the comfort of it by faith.

That “the promise might be sure to all the seed”; to all them wrapped up in the promise, and so begotten and born. That it might be sure, implying that there is no certain way of salvation for the elect but this, because God can never by other means reconcile us to himself; for his heavenly eyes perceive through and through the silly cobweb righteousness that we work; yea, they spy faults and sins in the best of our gospel performances. How then can God put any trust in such people, or how can remission be extended to us for the sake of that? Yea, our faith is faulty, and also imperfect; how then should remission be extended to us for the sake of that? But now the righteousness of Christ is perfect, perpetual and stable as the great mountains, wherefore he is called the rock of our salvation, because a man may as soon tumble the mountains before him, as one would tumble a little ball, I say, as soon as sin can make invalid the righteousness of Christ, when, and unto whom, God shall impute it for justice. (~~OF~~ Psalm 36:6) In the margin it is said, to be like the mountain of God; to wit, that is called Mount Zion, or that Moriah on which the temple was built, and upon which it stood: All other bottoms are fickle, all other righteousnesses are so feeble, short, narrow, and thin, yea, so specked and full of imperfections. “For what the law could not do

in that it was weak through the flesh," Christ did for us in the similitude of sinful flesh. But what could not the law do? Why it could not give us righteousness, nor strengthen us to perform it. It could not give us any certain, solid, well-grounded hope of remission of sin and salvation, "but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God."

Wherefore this righteousness being imputed, justice findeth no fault therewith, but consenteth to the extending to the sinner those blessings that tend to perfect his happiness in the heavens.

8. Righteousness by imputation must be first, "that in all things he [Christ] might have the pre-eminence." Christ is head of the church, and therefore let him have the highest honor in the soul; but how can he have that, if any precede as to justification, before his perfect righteousness be imputed? If it be said, grace may be in the soul, though the soul doth not act it, until the moment that justifying righteousness shall be imputed.

I ask, What should it do there before, or to what purpose is it there, if it be not acted? And gain, how came it thither, how got the soul possession of it, while it was unjustified? Or, How could God in justice give it to a person, that by the law stood condemned, before they were quitted from that condemnation? And I say, nothing can set the soul free from that curse, but the perfect obedience of Christ; nor that either, if it be not imputed for that end to the sinner by the grace of God.

Imputed, that is, reckoned, or accounted to him. And why should it not be accounted to him for righteousness? Who did Christ bring it into the world for, for the righteous or for sinners? no doubt for sinners. And how must it be reckoned to them? when in circumcision or in uncircumcision; not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision; not as righteous, but as sinners. And how are they to consider of themselves, even then when they first are apprehensive of their need of this righteousness? Are they to think, that they are righteous or sinners.

And again, How are they to believe concerning themselves, then when they put forth the first act of faith towards this righteousness for justification? Are they to think, that they are righteous or sinners? Sinners, sinners doubtless they are to reckon themselves, and as such to reckon

themselves justified by this righteousness. And this is according to the sentence of God, as appeareth by such sayings.

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”

“But God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

“For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son,” etc. (☞ Romans 5:6, 8, 10)

Out of these words I gather these three things.

1. That Christ by God’s appointment died for us.
2. That by his death he reconciled us to God.
3. That even then, when the very act of reconciliation was in performing, and also when performed, we were ungodly, sinners, enemies.

Now the act by which we are said to be reconciled to God while ungodly, while sinners, and while enemies, was Christ’s offering himself a sacrifice for us, which is, in the words above-mentioned, called his death. Christ died, Christ died for the ungodly, Christ died for us while sinners. Christ reconciled us to God by his death. And just as here Christ is said to die for us, so the Father is said to impute righteousness to us; to wit, as we are without works, as we are ungodly:

“Now to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”

(☞ Romans 4:5)

He worketh not, but is ungodly, when this gracious act of God, in imputing of the righteousness of Christ to him, is extended, the which when he shall believe, his faith is counted to him for righteousness. And why should we not have the benefit of the righteousness, while we are ungodly, since it was completed for us while we were yet ungodly? Yea, we have the benefit of it:

“For — when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.” (☞ Romans 5:10)

When I say, the benefit, I mean that benefit that we are capable of, and that is justification before God; for that a man may be capable of while he is in himself ungodly, because this justice comes to him by the righteousness of another. True, was it to be his own righteousness by which he was to be justified, he should not, could not so be, as or while he is ungodly. But the righteousness is Christ's, and that imputed by God, not as a reward for work, or of debt, but freely by his grace, to the glory of it, and therefore may be done, and is so, while the person concerned is without works, ungodly, and a sinner.

And he that denieth that we are capable of this benefit while we are sinners and ungodly, may with like reason deny that we are created beings. For that which is done for a man without him, may be done for him, not only at any time which they that do it shall appoint, but for him while in any condition in this world. While a man is a beggar, may not I make him worth ten thousand a year, if I can and will; yea and yet he shall not know thereof in that moment that I make him so? yet the revenue of that estate shall really be his from the moment that I make him so, and he shall know it too at the rent-day.

This is the case, we are sinners and ungodly; there is a righteousness wrought out by Jesus Christ, the which God hath designed we shall be made righteous by; and by it, if he will impute it to us, we shall be righteous in his sight, even then when we are yet ungodly in ourselves; "for he justifies the ungodly."

Now though it is irregular and blame-worthy in man to justify the wicked, because he cannot for the wicked provide, and clothe him with a justifying righteousness; yet it is glorious and for ever worthy of praise for God to do it; because it is in his power not only to forgive, but to make a man righteous, even then when he is a sinner, and to justify him, as afore is proved, while he is ungodly.

Objection. But it may be yet objected, That though God has received satisfaction for sin, and so sufficient terms of reconciliation by the obedience and death of his Son, yet he imputeth it not unto us but upon condition of our becoming good.

Answer. This must not be admitted: For,

1. The scripture saith not so; but that we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son, and justified too, and that while, or when we are sinners and ungodly.

2. If this objection carrieth the truth in it, then it follows, that the Holy Ghost, faith, and so all grace, may be given to us, and we may have it dwelling in us, yea, acting in us, before we stand righteous in the judgment of the law before God; for nothing can make us stand just before God in the judgment of the law, but the obedience of the Son of God without us. And if the Holy Ghost, faith and so consequently the habit of every grace, may be in us, acting in us, before Christ's righteousness be by God imputed to us, then we are not justified as sinners and ungodly: but as persons inherently holy and righteous before.

But I have over and over already shewed you, that this cannot be, therefore righteousness for justification must be imputed first. And here let me present the reader with two or three things.

(1.) That justification before God is one thing; and justification to the understanding and conscience is another. Now, I am treating of justification before God, not of it as to man's understanding and conscience, and I say, a man may be justified before God, even then when himself knoweth nothing thereof (^{2ND} Isaiah 40:2, ^{4TH} Matthew 9:2), and so when and while he hath not faith about it, but is ungodly.

(2.) There is a justification by faith, by faith's applying of that righteousness to the understanding and conscience, which God hath afore of his grace imputed for righteousness to the soul for justification in his sight. And this is that by which we, as to sense and feeling, have peace with God:

“Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (^{4TH} Romans 5:1)

And these two the Apostle keepeth distinct, a little lower in this chapter: for after that he had said in the tenth verse, that while “we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son”: He addeth, “And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.” (verse 11) Here you see that to be reconciled to God by the death of his Son, is one thing; and for us actually,

for that I think he aimeth at, to receive by faith, this reconciliation, is another. That is a thing over and above, and not only so, but we have received the atonement.

(3.) Men do not gather their justification from God's single act of imputing of righteousness, that we might stand clear in his sight from the curse and judgment of the law; but from the word, the which they neither see nor understand, till it is brought to their understanding by the light and glory of the Holy Ghost.

We are not therefore in the ministry of the word to pronounce any man justified, from a supposition that God has imputed righteousness to him, since that act is not known to us, until the fruits that follow thereupon do break out before our eyes; to wit, the signs and effects of the Holy Ghost's indwelling in our souls. And then we may conclude it; that is, that such a one stands just before God, yet not for the sake of his inherent righteousness, nor yet for the fruits thereof, and so not for the sake of the act of faith, but for the sake of Jesus Christ his doing and suffering for us.

Nor will it avail to object, That if at first we stand just before God by his imputing of Christ's righteousness unto us, though faith be not in us to act, we may always stand justified so; and so what need of faith? For therefore are we justified, first, by the imputation of God, as we are ungodly, that thereby we might be made capable of receiving of the Holy Ghost, and his graces in a way of righteousness and justice. Besides, God will have those that he shall justify by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, to have the Holy Ghost, and so faith, that they may know and believe the things not only that shall be, but that already ARE, freely given to us of God. Now, says Paul,

“we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” (1st Corinthians 2:12)

To know, that is, to believe. It is given to you to believe, who believe according to the working of his mighty power, “and we have known and believed the love that God hath to us,” preceding to our believing. (1st John 4:16) He then that is justified by God's imputation, shall believe by the power of the Holy Ghost; for that must come, and work faith, and

strengthen the soul to act it, because imputed righteousness has gone before. He then that believeth shall be saved; for his believing is a sign, not a cause, of his being made righteous before God by imputation: And he that believeth not shall be damned, because his non-belief is a sign that he is not righteous, and a cause that his sins abide upon him.

And thus much for the Pharisee, and for his information; and now I come to that part of the text which remains, which part in special respecteth the Publican.

[THE PUBLICAN'S PRAYER.]

And THE PUBLICAN, STANDING AFAR OFF, WOULD NOT LIFT UP SO MUCH AS HIS EYES UNTO HEAVEN, BUT SMOTE UPON HIS BREAST, SAYING, GOD BE MERCIFUL TO ME A SINNER.

What this Publican was, I have shewed you, both with respect to his nation, office, and disposition. Wherefore I shall not here trouble the reader as to that, with a second rehearsal of these things; we now therefore come to his repentance in the whole and in the parts of it; concerning which I shall take notice of several things, some more remote, and some more near to the matter and life of it.

But first let us see how thwart and cross the Pharisee and the Publican did lie in the temple one to another, while they both were presenting of their prayers to God.

First, The Pharisee he goes in boldly, fears nothing, but trusteth in himself that his state is good, that God loves him, and that there was no doubt to be made but of his good speed in this his religious enterprise. But alas! poor Publican, he sneaks, he leers, he is hardly able to crawl into the temple, and when he comes there, stands behind, aloof off, as one not worthy to approach the divine presence.

Second, The Pharisee at his approach hath his mouth full of something, yea of many fine things, whereby he strokes himself over the head, and in effect calls himself, and that in his presence, one of God's white boys, that always kept close to his will, abode with him; or as the prodigal's brother said,

“Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment” (⁴⁰³⁹Luke 15:29)

But alas! poor Publican thy guilt, as to these pleas, stops thy mouth, thou hast not one good thing to say of thyself, not one rag of righteousness; thy conversation tells thee so, thy conscience tells thee so; yea, and if thou shouldst now attempt to set a good face on it, and for thy credit say something after the Pharisee in way of thine own commendations, yet here is God on the one side, the Pharisee on the other, together with thine own heart to give thee check, to rebuke thee, to condemn thee, and to lay thee even with the ground for thy insolency.

Third, The Pharisee in his approach to God, wipes his fingers of the Publican’s enormities, will not come nigh him, lest he should defile him with his beastly rags: “I am not as other men are, - or even as this Publican.” But the poor Publican, alas for him, his fingers are not clean, nor can he tell how to make them so; besides, he meekly and quietly puts up this reflection of the Pharisee upon him, and by silent behavior, justifies the severe sentence of that self-righteous man, concluding with him, that for his part, he is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and not worthy to come nigh, or to stand by, so good, so virtuous, so holy, and so deserving a man as our spangling Pharisee is.

Fourth, The Pharisee, as at feasts and synagogues, chose the chief and first place for his person, and for his prayer, counting that the Publican was not meet, ought not to presume to let his stinking breath once come out of his polluted lips in the temple, till he had made his holy prayer. And poor Publican, how dost thou hear and put up this with all other affronts, counting even as the Pharisee counted of thee, that thou wast but a dog in comparison of him, and therefore not fit to go before, but to come as in chains, behind, and forbear to present thy mournful and debrorous ^{f30} supplication to the holy God, till he had presented him with his, in his own conceit, brave, gay, and fine oration.

Fifth, The Pharisee, as he is numerous in his repeating of his good deeds, so is stiff in standing to them, bearing up himself, that he hath now sufficient foundation on which to bear up his soul against all the attempts of the law, the devil, sin and hell. But alas, poor Publican! Thou standest naked; nay, worse than naked; for thou art clothed with filthy garments,

thy sins cover thy face with shame: nor hast thou in, from, or of thyself, any defense from, or shelter against the attempts, assaults, and censures of thy ghostly enemies, but art now in thine own eyes, though in the temple, cast forth into the open field stark naked, to the loathing of thy person, as in the day that thou was born, and there ready to be devoured or torn in pieces for thy transgressions against thy God.

What wilt thou do Publican! What wilt thou do! Come, let's see, which way wilt thou begin to address thyself to God; bethink thyself man, has thou any thing to say, speak out man, the Pharisee by this time has done, and received his sentence. Make an O yes; ^{f31} let all the world be silent; yea, let the angels of heaven come near and listen; for the Publican is come to have to do with God! Yea, is come from the receipt of custom into the temple to pray to him.

“And the Publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.” And is this thy way poor Publican! O cunning sinner! O crafty Publican! thy wisdom has outdone the Pharisee, for it is better to apply ourselves to God's mercy, than to trust to ourselves that we are righteous. But that the Publican did hit the mark, yea, get nearer unto, and more into the heart of God and his Son than did the Pharisee, the sequel of the matter will make manifest.

Take notice then of this profound speech of the Publican, every word is heavier than the earth, and has more argument in it, than has ten thousand Pharisaical prayers. “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Yea, the Son of God was so delighted with this prayer, that for the sake of it, he, even as a limner, draweth out the Publican in his manner of standing, behavior, gestures, etc. while he makes this prayer to God: Wherefore we will take notice both of the one and of the other; for surely his gestures put luster unto his prayer and repentance.

First, His prayer you see is this, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

Second, His gestures in his prayer were in general three.

First, He stood afar off.

Second, He would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven.

Third, He smote upon his breast, with his fist, saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

First, To begin first with is prayer. In his prayer we have two things to consider of. First, His confession: I am a sinner. Second, His imploring of help against this malady: “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

[His Confession.]

First, In his confession divers things are to be taken notice of. As,

1. The fairness and simplicity of his confession: A sinner: I am a sinner; “God be merciful to me a sinner.” This indeed he was, and this indeed confesses; and this, I say, he doth of godly simplicity. For, for a man to confess himself a sinner, it is to speak all against himself that can be spoken. And man, as degenerate, is too much an hypocrite, and too much a self-flatterer, thus to confess against himself, unless made simple and honest about the thing through the power of conviction upon his heart. And it is yet worth your noting, that he doth not say he was, or had been, but that at that time his state was such, to wit, a sinner. “God be merciful to me a sinner,” or who am, and now stand before thee a sinner, or, in my sins.

Now a little to shew you what it is to be a sinner; for every one that sinneth may not in a proper sense be called a sinner. Saints, the sanctified in Christ Jesus, do often sin, but it is not proper to call them sinners: But here the Publican calls himself a sinner; and therefore in effect, calls himself an evil tree, one that hath neither good nature, nor that beareth good fruit: one whose body and soul is polluted, whose mind and conscience is defiled: one who hath “walked according to the course of this world, and after the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” They having their minds at enmity with or against God, and are taken captive by the devil at his will. A sinner, one whose trade hath been in and about sin, and the works of Satan all his days.

Thus he waves all pleas, and shews of pleas, and stoops his neck immediately to the block. Though he was a base man, yet he might have had pleas; pleas, I say, as well as the Pharisee, though not so many, yet as good. He was of the stock of Abraham, a Jew, an Israelite of the Israelites, and so a privileged man in the things and religion of the Jews, else what

doth he do in the temple? Yea, why did not the Pharisee, if he was a heathen, lay that to his charge while he stood before God? but the truth is, he could not; for the Publican was a Jew as well as the Pharisee, and consequently might, had he been so disposed, have pleaded that before God. But that he would not, he could not, for his conscience was under convictions, the awakenings of God were upon him; wherefore his privileges melt away like grease, and fly from him like the chaff of the summer threshing-floor, which the wind taketh up and scattereth as the dust; he therefore lets all privileges fall, and pleads only that he is “a sinner.”

2. In this confession he judges and condemns himself: For, for a man to say, “I am a sinner,” is as much as to say, I am contrary to the holiness of God, a transgressor of his law, and consequently an object of the curse, and an heir of hell. The Publican therefore goeth very far in this his confession, but this is not all; for, for a man to confess that he is a sinner, is in the

3. Third place, to confess, that there is nothing in him, done, or can be done by him, that should allure, or prevail with God to do any thing for him. For a sinner cannot do good; no, nor work up his heart unto one good thought: no, though he should have heaven itself, if he could; or was sure to burn in hell fire for ever and ever if he could not. For sin, where it is in possession and bears rule, as it doth in every one that we may properly call a sinner, there it hath the mastery of the man, hath bound up his senses in cords and chains, and made nothing so odious to the soul as are the things that be of the Spirit of God. Wherefore it is said of such, that they are enemies in their minds; that the carnal mind is enmity to God, and that wickedness proceedeth of the wicked; and that the Ethiopian may as well change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as they that are accustomed to do evil may learn to do well. (^{<BIB1>}Ephesians 2, ^{<BIB2>}Romans 8, ^{<BIB3>}1 Samuel 24:13, ^{<BIB4>}Jeremiah 13:23)

4. In this confession, he implicitly acknowledgeth, that sin is the worst of things, forasmuch as it layeth the soul without the reach of all remedy that can be found under heaven. Nothing below, or short of the mercy of God, can deliver a poor soul from this fearful malady. This the Pharisee did not see. Doubtless he did conclude, that at some time or other he had sinned;

but he never in all his life did arrive to a sight of what sin was: His knowledge of it was but false and counterfeit, as is manifest by his cure; to wit, his own righteousness. For take this for a truth undeniable, that he that thinks himself better before God, because of his reformations, never yet had the true knowledge of his sin: But the poor Publican he had it, he had it in truth, as is manifest, because it drives him to the only sovereign remedy. For indeed, the right knowledge of sin, in the guilt and filth, and damning power thereof, makes a man to understand, that not any thing but grace and mercy by Christ, can secure him from the hellish ruins thereof.

Suppose a man sick of an apoplexy unto death, and should for his remedy make use only of those things that are good against the second ague, would not this demonstrate that this man was not sensible of the nature and danger of this disease. The same may be said of every sinner, that shall make use only of those means to justify him before God, that can hardly make him go for a good Christian before judicious men. But the poor Publican, he knew the nature of his disease, the danger of his disease; and knew also, that nothing but mercy, infinite mercy could cure him thereof.

5. This confession of the Publican, declareth that he himself was born up now, by an almighty, though invisible hand. For sin, when seen in its colors, and when appearing in its monstrous shape and hue, frighteth all mortals out of their wits, away from God; and if he stops them not, also out of the world. This is manifest by Cain, Judas, Saul, and others, who could not stand up before God under the sense and appearance of their sin, but fly before him, one to one fruit of despair, and one to another. But now this Publican, though he apprehends his sin, and that himself was one that was a sinner, yet he beareth up, cometh into the temple, approaches the presence of an holy and sin-revenging God, stands before him, and confesses that he is that ugly man, that man that sin had defiled, and that had brought himself into the danger of damnation thereby.

This therefore was a mighty act of the Publican. He went against the voice of conscience, against sense and feeling, against the curse and condemning verdict of the law; he went, as I may say, upon hot burning coals to one, that to sin and sinners is nothing but consuming fire.

Now then, did the Publican this of his own head, or from his now mind? No verily, there was some supernatural power within that did secretly

prompt him on, and strengthen him to this most noble venture. True, there is nothing more common among wicked men, than to tick and toy, and play with this saying of the Publican, “God be merciful to me a sinner”; not at all being sensible either what sin is, or of their need of mercy. And such sinners shall find their speed in the Publican’s prayer, far otherwise than the Publican sped himself; it will happen unto them much as it happened unto the vagabond Jews, exorcists, who took upon them to call over them that had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus; that were beaten by that spirit and made fly out of that house naked and wounded. (⁴⁰⁹³Acts 19:13-16) Poor sinner, dead sinner, thou wilt say the Publican’s prayer, and make the Publican’s confession, and say, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” But hold, dost thou do it with the Publican’s heart, sense, dread and simplicity? If not, thou dost but abuse the Publican and his prayer, and thyself, and his God; and shalt find God rejecting of thee and thy prayers, saying, The Publican I know, his prayers, and tears, and godly tears I know; but who or what art thou? And will send thee away naked and wounded. They are the hungry that he filleth with good things, but the rich and the senseless, he sendeth empty away.

For my part, I find it one of the hardest things that I can put my soul upon, even to come to God, when warmly sensible that I am a sinner, for a share in grace and mercy. Oh! methinks it seems to me as if the whole face of the heavens were set against me. Yea, the very thought of God strikes me through, I cannot bear up, I cannot stand before him, I cannot but with a thousand tears say, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” (⁴⁵⁹⁵Ezra 9:15) At another time when my heart is more hard and stupid, and when his terror doth not make me afraid, then I can come before him and talk of my sins, and ask mercy at his hand, and scarce be sensible of sin or grace, or that indeed I am before God: But above all, they are the rare times, when I can go to God as the Publican, sensible of his glorious majesty, sensible of my misery, and bear up, and affectionately cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

But again, the Publican by his confession, showeth a piece of the highest wisdom that a mortal man can show; because by so doing, he engageth as well as imploreth the grace and mercy of God to save him. You see by the text he imploreth it; and now I will shew you that he engageth it, and makes himself a sharer in it.

“He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.” (²¹⁸³Proverbs 28:13)

And again,

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (⁶¹⁰⁹1 John 1:9)

[He engageth it.] In the promise of pardon, He shall find mercy; he shall have his sins forgiven. As also Solomon prays, that God will forgive them that know their own sore, and they are indeed, such as are sensible of the plague of their own heart. (⁴¹⁶⁹2 Chronicles 6:29,30, ⁴¹⁸⁷1 Kings 8:37,38) And the reason is, because the sinner is now driven to the farthest point; for confession is the farthest point, and the utmost bound unto which God has appointed the Publican to go, with reference to his work. As it is said of Saul to David, when he was about to give him Micah his daughter to wife,

“The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king’s enemies.”
(¹⁰⁸⁵1 Samuel 18:25)

So says God in this matter, I desire no sacrifices, nor legal righteousness to make thee acceptable to me, only acknowledge and confess thine iniquity that thou hast transgressed against me. (³⁴⁸²Jeremiah 3:12, 13) And though this by some may be thought to be a very easy way to come at, and partake of, the mercy of God; yet let the sensible sinner try it, and he shall find it one of the hardest things in the world. And there are two things, to which man is prone, that makes confession hard.

I. There is a great incidency in us to be partial, and not thorough and plain in our confessions. We are apt to make half confessions; to confess some, and hide some; or else to make feigned confessions, flattering both ourselves, and also God, while we make confession unto him; or else to confess sin as our own fancies apprehend, and not as the word describes them. These things we are very incident to: Men can confess little sins, while they hide great ones. Men can feign themselves sorry for sin, when they are not, or else in their confessions forget to judge of sin by the word. Hence it is said, They turned to God, not with their whole heart, but as it were feignedly. They spake not aright, saying, what have I done? They

flatter him with their lips, and lie unto him with their tongues, and do their wickedness in the dark, and sin against him with a high hand, and then come to him and cover the altar with their tears. These things therefore, demonstrate the difficulty of sincere confession of sin; and that to do it as it should, is no such easy thing.

To right confession of sin, several things must go. As,

1. There must be found conviction for sin upon the spirit: for before a man shall be convinced of the nature, aggravation, and evil of sin, how shall he make godly confession of it? Now to convince the soul of sin, the law must be set home upon the conscience by the Spirit of God;

“For by the law is the knowledge of sin.” (Ⓜ Romans 3:20)

And again,

“I had not known sin except the law had said,
Thou shalt not covet.” (Ⓜ Romans 7:7)

This law, now, when it effectually ministereth conviction of sin to the conscience, doth it by putting of life, and strength, and terror into sin. By its working on the conscience, it makes sin revive,

“and the strength of sin is the law.” (Ⓜ 1 Corinthians 15:56)

It also increaseth and multiplieth sin, both by the revelation of God’s anger against the soul; and also by mustering up, and calling to view sins committed, and forgotten time out of mind. Sin seen in the glass of the law is a terrible thing, no man can behold it and live. “When the commandment came, sin revived, and I died”; when it came from God to my conscience, as managed by an almighty arm, “then it slew me.” And now is the time to confess sin, because now a soul knows what it is, and sees what it is, both in the nature and consequence of it.

2. To right confession of sin, there must be sound knowledge of God, especially as to his justice, holiness, righteousness, and purity; wherefore the Publican here begins his confession by calling upon, or by the acknowledgement of his majesty: “God be merciful to me a sinner.” As if he should say, God, O God, O great God, O sin-revenging God, I have sinned against thee, I have broken thy law, I have opposed thy holiness,

thy justice, thy law, and thy righteous will. O consuming fire! for our God is a consuming fire, I have justly provoked thee to wrath, and to take vengeance of me for my transgressions. But, alas! how few, that make confession of sin, have right apprehension of God, unto whom confession of sin doth belong! Alas, 'tis easy for men to entertain such apprehensions of God as shall please their own humors, and as will admit them without dying, to bear up under their sense of sin, and that shall make their confession rather facile, and fantastical, than solid and heart-breaking. The sight and knowledge of the great God is to the sinful man the most dreadful thing in the world; and is that which makes confession of sin so rare and wonderful a thing. Most men confess their sins behind God's back, but few to his face; and you know there is oftentimes a vast difference in one thus doing among men.

3. To right confession of sin, there must be a deep conviction of the certainty and terribleness of the day of judgment. This John the Baptist inserts, where he insinuates, that the Pharisees' want of sense of, and the true confession of sin, was because they had not been warned, or had not taken the alarm, to flee from the wrath to come. What dread, terror, or frightful apprehension can there be put into a revelation of sin, where there is no sense of a day of judgment, and of our giving there unto God an account for it. (~~408~~ Matthew 3:7, ~~408~~ Luke 3:7)

I say therefore, to right confession of sin there must be,

(1.) A deep conviction of the certainty of the day of judgment; namely, that such a day is coming, that such a day shall be. This the apostle insinuates, where he saith,

“God commandeth all men every where to repent; Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” (~~4473~~ Acts 17:30, 31)

This will give a sense of what the soul must expect at that day for sin, and so will drive to an hearty acknowledgment of it, and strong cries for deliverance from it. For thus will the soul argue that expecteth the judgment day, and that believes that he must count for all there. O my

heart! It is in vain now to dissemble, or to hide, or to lessen transgressions; for there is a judgment to come, a day in which God will judge “the secrets of men by his Son,” and at that day he will bring to light “the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsel of the heart.” If it must be so then, to what boot ^{f32} will it be now to seek to dissemble, or to lessen in this matter. (⁴⁰¹⁵1 Corinthians 4:5) This also is in the Old Testament urged as an argument to cause youth, and persons of all sizes to recall themselves to sobriety, and so to confession of their sin to God; where the Holy Ghost saith ironically, “Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.” (²¹¹⁰Ecclesiastes 11:9) So again, “God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good, or whether evil.” (²¹²⁴Ecclesiastes 12:14)

The certainty of this, I say, must go to the producing of a sincere confession of sin, and this is intimated by the Publican, who, with his confession, addeth a hearty crave for mercy, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” As if he should say, if thou art not merciful to me, by thy judgment when thou comest I shall be swallowed up; without thy mercy I shall not stand, but fall by the judgment which thou hast appointed.

(2.) As there must be, for the producing of sincere confession of sin, a deep conviction of the certainty, so there must also be of the terribleness of the day of judgment. Wherefore the apostle, makes use of the first, so of this to put men upon repentance, an ingredient of which is sincere confession of sin.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.” (⁴⁰⁵⁰2 Corinthians 5:10, 11)

The terror of the Lord, as we see here, he makes use of that, to persuade men to come by confession of sin, and repentance, to God for mercy.

And I am persuaded, that it will be found a truth one day that one reason that this day doth so swarm with wanton professors, is, because they have not begun at sound conviction for, nor gone to God at first with

sincere confession of sin. And one cause of that has been, for that they did never seriously fall in with, nor yet in heart sink under, either the certainty or terribleness of the day of judgment.

O! the terrors of the Lord! the amazing face that will be put upon all things before the tribunal of God. Yea, the terror that will then be read in the face of God, of Christ, of saints and angels, against the ungodly; whoso believes and understands it, cannot live without confession of sin to God, and coming to him for mercy.

Mountains, mountains fall upon us, and cover us, will then the cry of the ungodly be, and “hide us from the face of him that sitteth upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?” This terror is also signified where it is said, “and I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the [very] earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” (☞ Revelation 20) Here is terror, and this terror is revealed aforehand in the word of the truth of God, that sinners might hear and read and consider it, and so come and confess, and implore God’s mercy.

The terror of the Lord, how will it appear, when he

“shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.”
(☞ 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9)

The terror of the Lord, how will it appear, when his wrath shall burn and flame out like an oven, or a fiery furnace before him, while the wicked stand in his sight. (☞ Matthew 13:50)

The terror of the Lord, how will it appear, while the angels at his commandment shall gather the wicked in bundles to burn them!

“As — the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

( Matthew 13:40-42)

Who can conceive of this terror to its full with his mind? Wherefore much more unable are men to express it with tongue or pen; yet the truly penitent and sin-confessing Publican, hath apprehension so far thereof, by the word of the testimony, that it driveth him to God, with a confession of sin for an interest in God’s mercy. But,

4. To right and sincere confession of sin, there must be a good conviction of a probability of mercy. This also is intimated by the Publican in his confession; “God [saith he] be merciful to me a sinner.” He had some glimmerings of mercy, some conviction of a probability of mercy, or that he might obtain mercy for his pardon, if he went, and with unfeigned lips did confess his sins to God. ^{F33}

Despair of mercy, shuts up the mouth, makes the heart hard, and drives a man away from God; as is manifest in the case of Adam and the fallen angels. But the least intimation of mercy, if the heart can but touch, feel, taste, or have the least probability of it, that will open the mouth, tend to soften the heart, and to make a very Publican come up to God into the temple and say, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

There must then be this holy mixture of things in the heart of a truly confessing Publican. There must be sound sense of sin, sound knowledge of God: deep conviction of the certainty and terribleness of the day of judgment, as also of the probability of obtaining mercy.

But to come to that which remains; I told you that there were two things that did make unfeigned confession hard. The first I have touched upon.

II. And now the second follows: And that is, some private, close leaning to some piece or parcel of goodness, that a man shall conceit that he hath

done before, or is doing now, or that he purposeth in his deceitful heart that he will do one of these days, with which he hopes to prevail with God for the pardon of his sins. This man to be sure knows not sin in the nature and evil of it, only he has some false apprehensions about it. For where the right knowledge of sin is in the heart, that man sees so much evil in the least transgression, as that it would, even any one sin, break the backs of all the angels of heaven, should the great God but impute it to them. And he that sees this is far enough off from thinking of doing to mitigate, or assuage the rigor of the law, or to make pardonable his own transgressions thereby. But he that sees not this, cannot confess his transgressions aright; for the confession consisteth in the general, in a man's taking to himself his transgressions, and standing in them, with the acknowledgement of them to be his, and that he cannot stir from under them, nor do any thing to make amends for them, or to palliate the rigor of justice against the soul. And this the Publican did when he cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

He made his sins his own, he took them to him, he stood before in them, accounting that he was surely undone for ever if God did not extend forgiveness unto him. And this is to do as the prophet Jeremiah bids; to wit, "only to acknowledge our iniquities," to acknowledge them and to stand in them at the terrible bar of God's justice, until mercy takes them out of the way; not shifting our shoulders or conscience of them, by doing, or promising to do, either this or that good work, only acknowledge, acknowledge only. And the reason of this kind of confession is,

1. Because this carrieth in it the true nature of confession, to confess, and to abide under the crimes confessed, without shifts and evasions, is the only real simple way of confessions. "I said I would confess my transgressions unto the Lord"; and what then, "and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 32:5) Mark, nothing comes in betwixt confession and forgiveness of sin, nothing of works of righteousness, nothing of legal amendments, nothing but an outcry for mercy; and that act is so far off from lessening the offense, that it greatly heighteneth and aggravates it. That is the first reason.

2. A second reason is, because God doth expect that the penitent confessors should for the time that his wisdom shall think meet, not only

confess, but bear their shame upon them; yea, saith God, “be thou confounded also and bear thy shame,” when God takes away thine iniquity, thou shalt be confounded and never open thy mouth more because of thy shame. (^{<336>}Ezekiel 16:52, 63) We count it convenient that men, when their crimes and transgressions are to be manifested, that they be set in some open place, with a paper, wherein their transgressions are inserted, pinned upon their back or their forehead, that they may not only confess, but bear their own shame. ^{F34} And at the penitential confession of sinners, God has something of this kind to do; if not before men, yet before angels, that they may behold, and be affected, and rejoice when they shall see, after the revelation of sin, the sinner taken into the favor and abundant mercy of God. (^{<215>}Luke 15)

3. A third reason is, For that God will in the forgiveness of sin, magnify the riches of his mercy; but this cannot be, if God shall suffer, or accept of such confession of sin, as is yet intermixed with those things that will darken the heinousness of the offense, and that will be darkened either by a partial, feigned, or overly confession: or by a joining with the confession any of the sinners pretended good deeds.

That God in the salvation, and so in the confession of the sinner, designs the magnifying of his mercy, is apparent enough from the whole current of scripture, and that any of the things now mentioned will, if suffered to be done, darken and eclipse this thing, is evident to reason itself.

Suppose a man stand indicted for treason, yet shall so order the matter, that it shall ring in the country, that his offenses are but petty crimes; though the king shall forgive this man, much glory shall not thereby redound to the riches and greatness of his mercy. But let all things lie naked, let nothing lie hid or covered, let sin be seen, shewn, and confessed, as it is with and in the sinner himself, and then there will be in his forgiveness a magnifying of mercy.

4. A fourth reason is, for that else God cannot be justified in his sayings, nor overcome when he is judged. (^{<250>}Psalm 51, ^{<211>}Romans 3) God’s word hath told us what sin is, both as to its nature and evil effects. God’s word hath told us, that the best of our righteousnesses are not better than filthy rags. God’s word has also told us, that sin is forgiven us freely by grace, and to for the sake of our amendments: and all this God will have shewn,

not only in the acts of his mercy towards, but even in the humiliations and confessions of the penitent: For God will have his mercy begin to be displayed even there where the sinner hath taken his first step toward him:

“That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

(^{5:21}Romans 5:21)

5. A fifth reason is, because God would have by the Publican’s conversion, others affected with the displays and discoveries of wonderful grace; but to cloud and cover it with lessening of sin, and the sinful righteousness of man, is not the way to do this. Wherefore the sinner’s confession must be such as is full, nor must anything of his to lessen sin come in betwixt confession and mercy; and this is the way to affect others [who are] as bad as Publicans and sinners, and to make them come in to God for mercy.

For what will such say when sin begins to appear to the conscience, and when the law shall follow it with a voice of words, each one like a clap of thunder? I say, what will such say when they shall read that the Publican did only acknowledge his iniquity, and found grace and favor at the hand of God? But that God is infinitely merciful; merciful indeed, and that to those, or to such, as do in truth stand in need of mercy. Also that he sheweth mercy of his own good pleasure, nothing moving him thereto but the bounty of his own goodness and the misery of his creature.

I say, this is the way to make others be affected with mercy; as he saith, by the apostle Paul,

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, [by grace ye are saved] and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

(^{2:4-7}Ephesians 2:4-7)

You may also see that: ¹⁵1 Timothy 1:15, 16.

6. Another reason of this is, because this is the way to heighten the comfort and consolation of the soul; and that both here and hereafter. What tendeth more to this, than for sinners to see, and with guilt and amazement to confess what sin is, and so to have pardon extended from God to the sinner as such? This fills the heart; this ravishes the soul! this puts a whole heaven of joy into every one of the thoughts of salvation from sin, and deliverance from wrath to come.

“And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”
(~~250~~ Isaiah 35:10)

Indeed the belief of this makes joy and gladness endless: I say, it will make it begin here, and make that it shall never have consummation in heaven.

7. Besides, it layeth upon the soul the greatest obligations to holiness; what like the apprehension of free forgiveness, and that apprehension must come in through a sight of the greatness of sin, and of my inability to do anything towards satisfaction, to engage the heart of a rebel and traitor to love his prince, and to submit to his laws.

When Elisha had taken the Syrians captives, some were for using severities towards them; but he said, “Set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master”; and they did so. And what follows, “So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.” He conquered their malice with his compassion. And it is the love of Christ that constraineth to live to him. (~~1162~~ 2 Kings 6:22,23, ~~4754~~ 2 Corinthians 5:14)

Many other things might possibly be urged, but at present let these be sufficient.

[His imploring of mercy.]

Second. The second thing that we made mention of in the Publican’s prayer was, an imploring of help against this malady; GOD BE MERCIFUL TO ME A SINNER. In which petition I shall take notice of several things.

I. That a man’s help against sins, doth not so absolutely lie in his personal conquest, as in the pardon of them. I suppose a conquest, though there can

indeed by man be none, so long as he liveth in this world; I mean, a complete conquest and annihilation of sin.

The Publican, and so every graciously awakened sinner, is doubtless for the subduing of sin; but yet he looketh that the chief help against it doth lie in the pardon of it. Suppose a man should stab his neighbor with his knife, and afterwards burn his knife to nothing in the fire, would this give him help against his murder? No verily, notwithstanding this, his neck is obnoxious to the halter, yea, and his soul to hell fire. But a pardon gives him absolute help: "It is God that justifies, who shall condemn." (Romans 8) Suppose a man should live many days in rebellion against God, and after that leave off to live any longer so rebelliously, would this help him against the guilt which he contracted before? No verily, without remission there is no help, but the rebel is undone. Wherefore the first blessedness, yea, and that without which all other things cannot make one blessed, it lies in pardon.

"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 32:1)

"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."
(~~Romans~~ Romans 4:8)

Suppose a man greatly sanctified and made holy; I say, suppose it; yet if the sins, before committed by him, be not pardoned, he cannot be a blessed man.

Yet again, Suppose a man should be caught up to heaven, not having his sins pardoned, heaven itself cannot make him a blessed man. I suppose these things, not that they can be, but to illustrate my matter. There can be not blessedness upon any man who yet remaineth unforgiven. You see therefore here, that there was much of the wisdom of the Holy Ghost in this prayer of the Publican. He was directed the right, the only, the next^{f35} way to shelter, where blessedness begins even to mercy for the pardon of his sins. Alas! What would it advantage a traitor to be taken up into the king's coach, to be clothed with the king's royal robe, to have put upon his finger the king's gold ring, and to be made to wear, for the present, a chain of gold about his neck, if after all this the king should say unto him, but I will not pardon thy rebellion; thou shalt die for thy treason? Pardon

then, to him that loves life, is chiefest, is better, and more to be preferred and sought after, than all other things; yea, it is the highest point of wisdom in any sinner to seek after that first.

This therefore confuteth the blindness of some, and the hypocrisy of others. Some are so silly, and so blind, as quite to forget and look over the pardon of sin, and to lay their happiness in some external amendments; when alas poor wretches, as they are, they abide still under the wrath of God. Or if they be not quite so foolish as utterly to forget the forgiveness of sin, yet they think of it, but in the second place; they are for setting of sanctification before justification, and so seek to confound the order of God; and that which is worse unto them, they by so doing, do what they can to keep themselves indeed from being sharers in that great blessing of forgiveness of sins by grace.

But the Publican here was guided by the wisdom of heaven: He comes into the temple, he confesseth himself a sinner, and forthwith, without any delay, before he removeth his foot from where he stands, craveth help of pardon; for he knew that all other things, if yet he remained as involved in guilt, would not help him against that damnation that belonged to a vile and unforgiven sinner.

This also confuteth the hypocrites, such as is our Pharisee here in the text, that glory in nothing more, or so much, as that they are “not as other men, — unjust, adulterers, extortioners, or even as this Publican”; for these men have missed of the beginning of good which is the forgiveness of sin; and if they have missed of the first, of the beginning good, they shall never, as so standing, receive the second, or the third: Justification, sanctification, glorification, they are the three things, but the order of God must not be perverted. Justification must be first, because that comes to man while he is ungodly and a sinner.

Justification cannot be where God has not passed a pardon. A pardon then is the first thing to be looked after by the sinner; this the Pharisee did not, therefore he went down to his house unjustified; he set the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face when he went to inquire of the Lord; and as he neglected, slighted, scorned, because he thought that he had no need of pardon; therefore it was given to the poor, needy, and miserable Publican, and he went away with the blessing of it.

PUBLICANS, since this is so weighty a point, let me exhort you that you do not forget this prayer of your wise and elder brother, to wit, the Publican, that went up into the temple to pray. I say, forget it not, neither suffer any vain-glorious or self-conceited hypocrite to beat you with arguments, or to allure you with their silly and deceitful tongues, from this most wholesome doctrine. Remember that you are sinners, equal to, or as abominable as are the Publicans, wherefore do you, as you have him for your pattern, go to God, and to him confess in all simple, honest, and self-abasing-wise your great, numerous, and abominable sins; and be sure that in the very next place you forget not to ask for pardon, saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” And remember that heaven itself cannot help you against, nor keep you from, the damnation and misery that comes by sin, if ‘twas possible you should go thither, if you miss of pardon and forgiveness.

II. As the Publican imploreth help, so withal he closely approveth, notwithstanding, of the sentence of the law that was gone out against him. This is manifest, for he saith to God, “be merciful to me”; and also in that he concludes himself “a sinner.” I say, he justifieth, he approveth of the sentence of the law, that was gone out against him, and by which he now stood condemned in his own conscience before the tribunal of God’s justice. He saith not as the hypocrite,

“Because I am innocent, surely his anger shall turn from me”
 (<2425>Jeremiah 2:35)

or

“What have we spoken so much against thee?”
 (<3013>Malachi 3:13)

No, he is none of these murmurers or complainers, but fairly falls before the law, witnesses, judge and jury, and consenteth to the verdict, sentence, and testimony of each of them.

To illustrate this a little, suppose a malefactor should be arraigned before a judge, and that after the witnesses, jury, and judge, have all condemned him to death for his fact, the judge again should ask him what he can say for himself why sentence of death should not pass upon him? Now if he saith, nothing, but good, my lord, mercy; he in sum confesseth the

indictment, justifieth the witnesses, approveth of the verdict of the jury, and consenteth to the judgment of the judge.

The Publican therefore in crying mercy, justifieth the sentence of the law that was gone out against his sins: He wrangleth not with the law, saying, that was too severe, though many men do thus, saying, God forbid, for then woe be to us. He wrangleth not with the witness, which was his own conscience, though some will buffet, smite, and stop its mouth, or command it to be silent. He wrangleth not with the jury, which was the prophets and apostles, though some men cannot abide to hear all that they say. He wrangleth not with the judge, nor sheweth himself irreverently before him, but in all humble-wise, with all manner of gestures that could bespeak him acquiescing with the sentence, he flieth to mercy for relief.

Nor is this alone the way of the Publican; but of other godly men before his time: When David was condemned, he justified the sentence and the judge, out of whose mouth it proceeded, and so fled for succor to the mercy of God. (⁴⁵⁰Psalm 51) When Shemaiah the prophet pronounced God's judgments against the princes of Judah for their sin, they said, "The Lord is righteous." (⁴⁴⁰2 Chronicles 12:6) When the church in the Lamentations had reckoned up several of her grievous afflictions wherewith she had been chastised of her God, she, instead of complaining, doth justify the Lord, and approve of the sentence that was passed upon her, saying,

"The Lord is righteous; for I have rebelled against his
commandment." (²¹⁸Lamentations 1:18)

So Daniel, after he had enumerated the evils that befell the church in his day, addeth,

"Therefore hath the Lord - brought it upon us; for the Lord our
God is righteous in all his works which he doeth: for we obeyed
not his voice." (²¹⁴Daniel 9:14)

I know that all these do justify the judgment of God that was gone out against them, as the Publican did the sentence wherewith he was condemned. And I say, that unless a man doth come hither, his confession and cry for mercy is not right, and so according to the scripture, reason, and nature of things as they ought to be; for he that has any other plea,

why doth he cry God, Mercy! Surely not because he concludes that what is done, is done justly and righteously against him, but because he is overruled by spite, prejudice, tyranny, or the like.

But this is not the case with our Publican. He has transgressed a law that is holy, just, and good: the witness that accuseth him of this, is God and his conscience; he is also cast by the verdict of holy men of God; and all this he knows, and implicitly confesses, even in that he directs his prayer unto his judge for pardon. And it is one of the excellentest sights in the world to see, or understand a sinner thus honestly receiving the sentence of the law that is gone out against him; to see and hear a Publican thus to justify God. ^{F36} And this God will have done for these reasons.

- 1.** That it might be conspicuous to all that the Publican has need of mercy. This is for the glory of the justice of God, because it vindicates it in its goings out against the Publican. God loveth to do things in justice and righteousness, when he goeth out against men, though it be but such a going out against them as only tendeth to their conviction and conversions. When he dealt with our father Abraham in this matter, he called him to his foot, as here he doth the Publican. And sinner, if ever God counts thee worthy to inherit the throne of glory, he will bring thee hither. But,
- 2.** The Publican, by the power of conviction stoops to, and falleth under the righteous sentence gone forth against him, that it might be also manifest that what afterward he shall receive is of the mere grace and sovereign goodness of God. And indeed there is no way that doth more naturally tend to make this manifest than this. For thus; there is a man proceeded against for life, by the law, and the sentence of death is in conclusion most justly and righteously passed upon him by the judge. Suppose now that after this, this man lives, and is exalted to honor, enjoys great things, and is put into place of trust and power, and that by him that he has offended, even by him that did pass the sentence upon him. What will all say, or what will they conclude, even upon the very first hearing of this story? Will they not say, well, whoever he was that found himself wrapped up in this strange providence, must thank the mercy of a gracious prince; for all these things bespeak grace and favor. But,
- 3.** As the Publican falleth willingly under the sentence, and justifieth the passing of it upon him; so by his flying to mercy for help, he declareth to

all that he cannot deliver himself: He putteth help away from himself, or saith, it is not in me.

This, I say, is another thing included in this prayer, and it is a thing distinct from that but now we have been speaking to. For it is possible for a man to justify and fall under the sentence of the judge, and yet retain that with himself that will certainly deliver him from that sentence when it has done its worst. Many have held up their hand, and cried guilty at the bar, and yet have fetched themselves off well enough for all that; but then they have not pleaded mercy, for he that doth so, puts his life altogether into the hands of another, but privilege or good deeds either done or to be done by them. But the Publican in the text puts all out of his own hand; and in effect saith to that God before whom he went up into the temple to pray; Lord, I stand here condemned at the bar of thy justice, and that worthily, for the sentence is good, and hath in righteousness gone out against me; nor can I deliver myself, I heartily and freely confess I cannot; wherefore I betake myself only to thy mercy, and do pray thee to forgive the transgressions of me a sinner. O how few be there of such kind of Publicans! I mean of Publicans thus made sensible, that come unto God for mercy.

Mercy with most, is rather a compliment, I mean, while they plead it with God, than a matter of absolute necessity; they have not awfully, and in judgment and conscience fallen under the sentence, nor put themselves out of all plea but the plea of mercy. Indeed, thus to do, is the effect of the proof of the vanity and emptiness of all experiments made use of before. Now there is a two-fold proof of experiments; the one is, the result of practice; the other is, the result of faith.

The woman with her bloody issue made her proof by practice, when she had spent all that she had upon physicians and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse. (Mark 5:26) But our Publican here proves the emptiness and vanity of all other helps, by one cast of faith upon the contents of the bible, and by another look upon his present state of condemnation; wherefore he presently, without any more ado, condemneth all other helps, ways, modes, or means of deliverance, and betakes himself only to the mercy of God, saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

And herein he showeth wonderful wisdom. For,

(1.) By this, He thrusts himself under the shelter and blessing of the promise: and I am sure it is better and safer to do so, than to rely upon the best of excellences that this world can afford. (²⁸⁴⁰Hosea 14:1-4)

(2.) He takes the ready way to please God; for God takes more delight in showing of mercy, than in any thing that we can do. (²⁸⁶⁶Hosea 6:6, ⁴⁰⁹⁵Matthew 9:13, ⁴¹²⁷Matthew 12:7) Yea and that also is the man that pleaseth him, even he that hopes in his mercy. (⁴²⁷¹Psalms 147:11) The Publican therefore, whatever the Pharisee might think, stood all this while upon sure ground, and had by far the start of him for heaven. Alas! his dull head could look no further than to the conceit of the pitiful beauty and splendor of his own stinking righteousness. ^{F37} Nor durst he leave that to trust wholly to the mercy of God; but the Publican comes out, though in his sins, yet like an awakened, enlightened, resolved man, and first abases himself, then gives God the glory of his justice, and after that the glory of his mercy, by saying, “God be merciful to me a sinner”; and thus in the ears of the angels he did ring the changes of heaven. Again,

(3.) The Publican, in his thus putting himself upon mercy, showeth, that in his opinion there is more virtue in mercy to save, than there is in the law and sin to condemn. And although this is not counted a great matter to do, while men are far from the law, and while their conscience is asleep within them; yet when the law comes near, and conscience is awake, who so tries it, will find it a laborsome work. Cain could not do thus for his heart, no, nor Saul; nor Judas, neither. This is another kind of thing than most men think it to be, or shall find it, whenever they shall behold God’s angry face, and when they shall hear the words of his law.

However our Publican did it, and ventured his body, soul, and future condition for ever in this bottom, with other the saints and servants of God, leaving of the world to swim over the sea of God’s wrath if they will, in their weak and simple vessels of bulrushes, or to lean upon their cobweb-hold, when he shall arise to the judgment that he hath appointed.

In the mean time pray God awaken us as he did the Publican; pray God enlighten us as he did the Publican; pray God grant us boldness to come to

him as the Publican did; and also in that trembling spirit as he did, when he cried in the temple before him, “God be merciful to me a sinner.”

[His Gestures.]

THIRD. Thus having in brief passed over his prayer, we come in the next place to his gestures; for in my judgment the right understanding of them will give us yet more conviction of the Publican’s sense and awakening of spirit under this present action of his.

And I have observed many a poor wretch that has readily had recourse to the Publican’s prayer, that never knew what the Publican’s GESTURES, in the presence of God, while in prayer before him, did mean. Nor must any man be admitted to think, that those gestures of his were in custom, and a formality among the Jews in those days; for ‘tis evident enough by the carriage of the Pharisee, that it was below them and their mode, when they came into the temple, or when they prayed any where else; and they in those days were counted for the best of men, and men too in religious matters they were to imitate and take their examples at the hands of the best, not at the hands of the worst.

The Publican’s gestures then, were properly his own, caused by the guilt of sin, and by that dread of the majesty of God that was upon his spirit. And a comely posture it was, else Christ Jesus, the Son of God, would never have taken that particular notice thereof as he did, nor have smiled upon it so much as to take it, and distinctly repeat it as that which made his prayer the more weighty, and the more also to be taken notice of. Yea, in mine opinion, the Lord Jesus has committed it to record, for that he liked it, and for that it shall pass for some kind of touchstone of prayer, that is made in good sense of sin, and of God, and of need of his goodness and mercy. For verily, all these postures signify sense, sight of a lost condition, and a heart in good earnest for mercy.

I know that they may be counterfeited, and Christ Jesus knows who doth so too; but that will not hinder, or make weak or invalid what hath already been spoken about it. But to forbear to make a further prologue, and to come to the handling of particulars.

“And the Publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast.”

Three things, as I told you already, we may perceive in these words, by which his Publican posture, or gestures are set forth.

First. He stands afar off. Second. He would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven. Third. He smote upon his breast. First. For the first of these, “He stood afar off.” “And the Publican standing afar off.” This is, I say, the first thing, the first posture of his with which we are acquainted, and it informeth us of several things.

1. That he came not with senselessness of the majesty of God when he came to pray, as the Pharisee did, and as sinners commonly do. For this standing back, or afar off, declares that the majesty of God had an awful stroke upon his spirit: He saw whither, to whom, and for what, he was now approaching the temple. It is said in that 20th of Exodus, That when the people saw the thunderings and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, and all these were signs of God’s terrible presence, and dreadful majesty, they removed themselves, “and stood afar off.” (⁴²⁷⁶Exodus 20:18) This behavior therefore of the Publican did well become his present action, especially since, in his own eyes, he was yet an unforgiven sinner. Alas! What is God’s majesty to a sinful man, but a consuming fire? And what is a sinful man in himself, or in his approach to God, but as stubble fully dry.

How then could the Publican do otherwise than what he did, than stand afar off, if he either thought of God or himself. Indeed the people afore-named, before they saw God in his terrible majesty, could scarce be kept off from the mount with words and bounds, as it is now the case of many: Their blindness gives them boldness; their rudeness gives them confidence; but when they shall see what the Publican saw, and felt, and understood as he, they will pray, and stand afar off, even as these people did. They removed and stood afar off, and then fell to praying of Moses that this dreadful sight and sound might be taken from them. And what if I should say, he stood afar off for fear of a blow, though he came for mercy, as it is said of them, They stood “afar off for the fear of her torment.”

(⁴⁶⁸¹Revelation 18:10)

I know what it is to go to God for mercy, and what it is to stand all that while in my spirit through fear afar off, being possessed with this, will not

God now smite me at once to the ground for my sins. David thought something when he said as he prayed,

“Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.” (^{F3111}Psalm 51:11)

There is none knows, but those that have them, what turns and returns, what coming on and going off, there is in the spirit of a man that indeed is awakened, and that stands awakened before the glorious Majesty in prayer. ^{F38} The prodigal also made his prayer to his Father intentionally, while he was yet a great way off. And so did the lepers too;

“And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood AFAR OFF: And they lift up their voices and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.”

(^{F2712}Luke 17:12, 13)

See here, it has been the custom of praying men to keep their distance, and not to be rudely bold in rushing into the presence of the holy and heavenly majesty; especially if they have been sensible of their own vileness and sins, as the prodigal, the lepers, and our Publican was. Yea, Peter himself, when upon a time he perceived more than commonly he did of the majesty of Jesus his Lord, what doth he do!

“When Simon Peter saw it,” says the text, “he fell down at Jesus” knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”

(^{F418}Luke 5:8)

Oh! when men see God and themselves, it fills them with holy fear, of the greatness of the majesty of God, as well as with love to, and desire after his mercy.

Besides, by his standing afar off, it might be to intimate that he now had in mind, and with great weight upon his conscience, the infinite distance that was betwixt God, and him. Men should know that, and tremble in the thoughts of it, when they are about to approach the omnipotent presence.

What is poor sorry man! poor dust and ashes, that he should crowd it up, and go jostlingly in the presence of the great God? especially since it is apparent, that besides the disproportion that is betwixt God and him, he is a filthy, leprous, polluted, nasty, stinking, sinful bit of carrion. ^{F39} Esther,

when she went to supplicate the king her husband for her people, made neither use of her beauty, nor relation, nor other privileges of which she might have had temptation to make use, especially at such a time, and in such exigencies, as then did compass her about: But I say, she made not use of them to thrust herself into his presence, but knew, and kept her distance, standing in the inward court of his palace, until he held out the golden scepter to her; THEN

“Esther drew near, and touched the top of the scepter.”

(~~ESTHER~~ Esther 5:2)

Men also when they come into the presence of God, should know their distance; yea, and shew that they know it too, by such gestures and carriages, and behaviors that are seemly. A remarkable saying is that of Solomon.

“Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools; for they consider not that they do evil. [And as they should keep their foot, so also he adds] Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.”

(~~ECCL~~ Ecclesiastes 5:1, 2)

Three things the Holy Ghost exhorteth to in this text.

The one is, that we look to our feet, and not be forward to crowd into God’s presence.

Another is, That we should also look well to our tongues, that they be not rash in uttering anything before God.

And the third is, because of the infinite distance that is betwixt God and us, which is intimated by those words, “For God is in heaven, and thou upon earth.”

The Publican therefore shewed great wisdom, holy shame, and humility, in this brave gesture of his, namely, in his standing afar off, when he went up into the temple to pray. But this is not all.

2. The Publican, in standing afar off, left room for an advocate, an high priest, a day's-man to come betwixt, to make peace between God and this poor creature. Moses, the great mediator of the Old Testament, was to go nigher to God than the rest of the leaders, or of the people were.

(^{<021>}Exodus 20:21) Yea, the rest of the people were expressly commanded to worship, standing afar off. (^{<022>}Exodus 19:21) No man of the sons of Aaron that hath a blemish was to come nigh.

“No man that hath a blemish of the seed of Aaron the priest, shall come nigh to offer the offerings of the Lord made by fire: He shall not come nigh to offer the bread of his God.”

(^{<023>}Leviticus 21:21)

The Publican durst not be his own mediator, he knew he had a blemish, and was infirm, and therefore he stands back; for he knew that it was none of him that his God had chosen to come near unto him, to offer the fat and the blood. (^{<344>}Ezekiel 44:13-15) The Publican therefore was thus far right: he took not up the room himself, neither with his person, nor his performances, but stood back, and gave place to the high priest that was to be intercessor.

We read, that when Zacharias went into the temple to burn incense, as at that time his lot was,

“The whole multitude of the people were praying without.”

(^{<000>}Luke 1:9,10)

They left him where he was, near to God, between God and them, mediating of them; for the offering of incense by the chief priest was a figurative making of intercession for the people, and they maintained their distance.

It is a great matter in praying to God, not to go too far, nor come too short in that duty. I mean in the duty of prayer, and a man is very apt to do one or the other. The Pharisee went so far, he was too bold, he came into the temple making such a ruffle with his own excellences, there was in his thoughts no need of a Mediator. He also went up so nigh to God, that he took up the room and place of the Mediator himself; but this poor Publican, he knows his distance, and kept it, and leaves room for the High Priest to come and intercede for him with God. He stood afar off, not too

far off; for that is the room and place of unbelievers, and in this sense that saying is true,

“For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish”
(⁴⁹⁷²Psalm 73:27)

That is, they whose unbelief hath set them in their hearts and affections more upon their idols, and that have been made to cast God behind their backs, to follow and go a whoring after them.

Hitherto therefore it appears, that though the Pharisee had more righteousness than the Publican, yet the Publican had more spiritual righteousness than the Pharisee: And that though the Publican had a baser, and more ugly outside than the Pharisee, yet the Publican knew how to prevail with God for mercy better than he.

As for the Publican’s posture of standing in prayer, it is excusable, and that by the very father of the faithful himself: For Abraham stood praying when he made intercession for Sodom. (⁴¹⁸²Genesis 18:22, 23) Christ also alloweth it where he saith,

“And when ye STAND PRAYING, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.” (⁴¹¹²Mark 11:25)

Indeed there is no stinted order prescribed for our thus or thus behaving of ourselves in prayer, whether kneeling, or standing, or walking or lying, or sitting; for all these postures have been used by the godly. “Paul KNEELED down and prayed.” (⁴⁰³⁶Acts 20:36) Abraham and the Publican STOOD and prayed. David prayed as he WALKED. (⁴⁰⁵³2 Samuel 15:30, 31) Abraham prayed LYING upon his face. (⁴¹⁷⁷Genesis 17:17, 18) Moses prayed SITTING. (⁴⁰⁷²Exodus 17:12) And indeed prayer, effectual fervent prayer, may be, and often is, made unto God, under all these circumstances of behavior: for God has not tied us to any of them; and he that shall tie himself, or his people, to any one of these, doth more than he hath warrant for from God; and let such take care of innovating, it is the next way to make men hypocrites and dissemblers in those duties, in which they should be sincere.

True, which of those soever a man shall chose to himself for the present, to perform this solemn duty in, it is required of him, and God expects it, that he should pray to him in truth, and with desire, affection, and hunger, after those things, that with his tongue he maketh mention of before the throne of God. And indeed without this, all is nothing. But alas! how few be there in the world whose heart and mouth in prayer shall go together? Dost thou, when thou askest for the spirit, or faith, or love to God, to holiness, to saints, to the word, and the like, ask for them with love to them, desire of them, hungering after them? Oh! this is a mighty thing! and yet prayer is no more before God, than as it is seasoned with these blessed qualifications. Wherefore it is said, that while men are praying, God is searching of the heart, to see what is the meaning of the spirit, or whether there be the spirit and his meaning in all that the mouth hath uttered, either by words, sighs, or groans; because it is by him, and through his help only that any make prayers according to the will of God. (⁴¹⁸Romans 8:26,27) Whatever thy posture therefore shall be, see that thy prayers be pertinent and fervent, not mocking of thine own soul with words, while thou wantest and art an utter stranger to the very vital and living spirit of prayer.

Now our Publican, had, and did exercises, the very spirit of prayer in prayer. He prayed sensibly, seriously, affectionately hungering, thirsting, and with longing after that, for which with his mouth he implored the God of heaven: His heart and soul were in his words, and it was that which made his PRAYER; even because he prayed in PRAYER; he prayed inwardly, as well as outwardly.

David tells us, that God heard the VOICE of his supplication, the voice of his cry, the voice of his tears, and the voice of his roaring. For indeed there are all these without this acceptable sound in them, nor can any thing but sense, and affection, and fervent desire, make them sound well in the ears of God. Tears, supplications, prayers, cries, may be all of them done in formality, hypocrisy, and from other causes, and to other ends than that which is honest and right in God's sight: For God as he had experience of, would search and look after the VOICE of his tears, supplications, roarings, prayers, and cries.

And if men had less care to please men, and more to please God, in the matter and manner of praying, the world would be at a better pass than it is. But this is not in man's power to help, and to amen: When the Holy Ghost comes upon men with greater conviction of their state and condition, and of the use and excellency of the grace of sincerity and humility in prayer, then, and not till then, will the grace of prayer be more prized, and the spacious flouting, complimentary lips of flatterers be more laid aside. I have said it already, and I will say it again, that there is now-a-days a great deal of wickedness committed in the very duty of prayer; by words, of which men have no sense,^{f40} by reaching after such conclusions and clenches therein, as may make their persons to be admired; by studying for, and laboring after such enlargements as the spirit accompanieth not the heart in. O Lord God, O Lord God, make our hearts upright in us, as in all points and parts of our profession, so in this solemn appointment of God, "If I regard iniquity in my heart," said David, "the Lord will not hear me." But if I be truly sincere he will, and then it is no mater whether I kneel, or stand, or sit, or lie, or walk; for I shall do none of these, nor put up my prayers under any of these circumstances, lightly foolishly, and idly, but to beautify this gesture with the inward working of my mind and spirit in prayer; that whether I stand or sit, walk or lie down, glory and gravity, humility and sincerity shall make my prayer profitable, and my outward behavior comely in his eyes, with whom in prayer I now have to do.

And had not our Publican been inwardly seasoned with these, Christ would have taken but little pleasure in his modes and outward behavior: but being so honest inwardly, and in the matter of his prayer, his gestures by that were made beauteous also; and therefore it is that our Lord so delightfully dilateth upon them, and draweth them out at length before the eyes of others.

I have often observed, that that which is natural, and so comely in one, looks odiously when imitated by another, I speak as to gestures and actions in preaching and prayer. Many, I doubt not, but will imitate the Publican, and that both in the prayer and gestures of the Publican, whose persons and actions will yet stink full foully in the nostrils of him that is holy and just, and that searcheth the heart and the reins.

Well, the Publican STOOD and prayed, he stood afar off, and prayed, and his prayers came even to the ears and heart of God.

“AND THE PUBLICAN STANDING AFAR OFF, WOULD NOT LIFT UP SO MUCH AS HIS EYES UNTO HEAVEN.”

Second, We are now come to another of his postures. “He would not, [says the text] so much as lift up his eyes to heaven.” Here therefore was another gesture added to that which went before; and a gesture that a great while before had been condemned by the Holy Ghost himself.

“Is it such a fast that I have chosen? A day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush.”

(^{288F} Isaiah 58:5)

But why condemned then, and smiled upon now? Why! Because done in hypocrisy then, and in sincerity now. Hypocrisy and a spirit of error will so besmut God’s ordinances, that he shall take no pleasure in them: but sincerity, and honesty in duties, will make even those circumstances that in themselves are indifferent, at least comely in the sight of men. May I not say before God? the Rechabites were not commanded of God, but of their father, to do as they did; but, because they were sincere in their obedience thereto, even God himself maketh use of what they did to condemn the disobedience of the Jews; and moreover doth tell the Rechabites, at last, that they should not want a man to stand before him for ever.

“And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites, Thus saith the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel; Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according unto all that he hath commanded you; therefore, thus saith the LORD of Hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever.” (^{245B} Jeremiah 35:18, 19)

“He would not life up his eyes to heaven.” Why? Surely because shame had covered his face. Shame will make a man blush and hang his head like a bulrush. Shame for sin is a virtue, a comely thing; yea, a beauty-spot in the face of a sinner that cometh to God for mercy.

God complains of the house of Israel, that they could sin, and that without shame; yea, and threateneth them too with sore and repeated judgments, “because they were not ashamed,” it is in ⁽²⁴⁸²⁾Jeremiah 8:12. Their crimes in general were, they turned every one to his course, as the horse runneth into the battle. In particular, they were such as rejected God’s word, they loved this world, and set themselves against the prophet’s crying peace, peace, peace, when they cried judgment, judgment: “Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination: nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore shall they fall among them that fall: in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down, saith the Lord.” Oh! to stand, or sit, or lie, or kneel, or walk before God in prayer, with blushing cheeks for sin, is one of the excellentest sights that can be seen in the world. Wherefore the church taketh some kind of heart to herself in that she could lie down in her shame; yea, and makes that a kind of an argument with God, to prove that her prayers did come from her heart, and also that he would hear them. (⁽²⁴⁸⁵⁾Jeremiah 3:25)

Shame for sin argueth sense of sin, yea, a right sense of sin, a godly sense of sin; Ephesiansraim pleads this when under the hand of God: “I was,” saith he, “ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.” But what follows? “Is Ephesiansraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him: I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.” (⁽²⁴⁸⁹⁾Jeremiah 31:19, 20)

I know that there is a shame that is not the spirit of an honest heart; but that rather floweth from sudden surprisal, when the sinner is unawares taken in the act, in the very manner. And thus sometimes the house of Israel was taken, and then when they blushed, their shame is compared to the shame of a thief. “As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their princes and their priests, and their prophets.”

But where were they taken, or about what were they found? Why they were found “saying to a stock, Thou art my father; and to a stone, Thou hast brought me forth.” (⁽²⁴⁹²⁾Jeremiah 2:26, 27) God caught them thus doing, and this made them ashamed, even as the thief is ashamed when the owner doth catch him stealing of his horse.

But this was not the Publican's shame; this shame brings not a man into the temple to pray, to stand willingly, and to take shame before God in prayer. This shame makes one rather to fly from his face, and to count one's self most at ease when they get farthest off from God.

The Publican's shame therefore, which he demonstrateth that he had, even by hanging down of his head, was godly and holy, and much like that of the prodigal, when he said,

“Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” (~~ERR~~ Luke 15:21)

I suppose that his postures were much the same with the Publican's, as were his prayers, for the substance of them. O however grace did work in both to the same end, they were both of them, after a godly manner ashamed of their sins.

He would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven.

It saith not he could not, but he would not; which yet more fully makes it appear that it was shame, not guilt, not guilt only or chiefly, though it is manifest enough that he had guilt also by his crying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I say, guilt was not the chief cause of hanging down his head, because it saith, he would not; for when guilt is the cause of stooping, it lieth not in the will, or in the power thereof, to help one up.

David tells us, that when he was under guilt, his iniquities were gone over his head:

“As an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.”
(~~ERR~~ Psalm 38:4)

And that with them he was bowed down greatly. Or, as he says in another place,

“Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me,
so that I am not able to look up” (~~ERR~~ Psalm 40:12)

I am not ABLE to do it; guilt disableth the understanding and conscience, shame makes all willingly fall and bare at the feet of Christ.

“He would not.” He knew what he was, what he had been, and should be, if God had not mercy upon him: Yea, he knew also that God knew what he was, had been, and would be, if mercy prevented not; wherefore thought he, Wherefore should I lift up the head? I am no righteous man, no godly man; I have not served God, but Satan; this I know, this God knows, this angels know, wherefore I will not “lift up the head.” It is as much as to say, I will not be an hypocrite, like the Pharisee; for lifting up of the head signifies innocency and harmlessness of life, or good conscience, and the testimony thereof, under, and in the midst of all accusations. Wherefore this was the counsel of Zophar to Job:

“If thou prepare thine heart, and stretch out thine hands towards him; If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; yea, thou shalt be stedfast, and shalt not fear.”
(¹¹¹³Job 11:13-15)

This was not the Publican’s state, he had lived in lewdness and villany all his days; nor had he prepared his heart to seek the Lord God of his fathers, he had not cleansed his heart nor hands from violence, nor done that which was lawful and right. He only had been convinced of his evil ways, and was come into the temple as he was, all foul, and in his filthy garments, and amidst his pollutions; how then could he be innocent, holy or without spot? And consequently how could he lift up his face unto God? I remember what Abner said to Asahel,

“Turn thee aside, from following me; wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?” (¹⁰²²2 Samuel 2:22)

As if he had said, if I kill thee, I shall blush, be ashamed, and hang my head like a bulrush, the next time I come into the company of thy brother.

This was the Publican’s case, he was guilty, he had sinned, he had committed a trespass, and now being come into the temple, into the presence of that God whose laws he had broken, and against whom he had sinned, how could he lift up his head? how could he bear the face to do it? No, it better became him to take his shame, and to hang his head in token

of guilt; and indeed he did, and did it to purpose too, for he would not lift up, no, not so much as his eyes to heaven.

True, some would have done it, the Pharisee did it; though if he had considered, that hypocrisy, and leaning to his own righteousness had been sin, he would have found as little cause to have done it, as did the Publican himself. But, I say, he did it, and sped thereafter; he went down to his house as he came up into the temple, a poor unjustified Pharisee, whose person and prayers were both rejected, because, like the whore of whom we read in the Proverbs, after he had practiced all manner of hypocrisy, he comes into the temple

“and wipes his mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness.”

(~~1811~~ Proverbs 30:20)

He lifts up his head, his face, his eyes to heaven; he struts, he vaunts himself; he swaggers, he vapors, and cries up himself, saying, “God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are.”

True, had he come and stood before a stock or a stone, he might have said thus, and not have been reprehended; for such are gods that see not, nor hear, neither do they understand. But to come before the true God, the living God, the God that fills heaven and earth by his presence, and that knows the things that come into the mind of man, even every one of them, I say, to come into his house, to stand before him, and thus to lift up his head and eyes in such hypocrisy before him: this was abominable, this was to tempt God, and to prove him; yea, to challenge him to know what was in man if he could even as those did who said, “How doth God [see] know? can he judge through the dark cloud?” (~~1821~~ Job 22:13, ~~1971~~ Psalm 73:11)

But the Publican, no the Publican could not, durst not, would not do thus: He would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven. As who should say, O Lord, I have been against thee, a traitor and a rebel, and like a traitor and rebel before thee will I stand. I will bear my shame before thee in the presence of the holy angels; yea, I will prevent thy judging of me by judging myself in thy sight, and will stand as condemned before thee, before thou passest sentence upon me.

This is now for a sinner to go to the end of things. For what is God's design in the work of conviction for sin, and in his awakening of the conscience about it? What is his end I say, but to make the sinner sensible of what he hath done, and that he might unfeignedly judge himself for the same. Now this our Publican doth; his will therefore is now subject to the word of God, and he justifies him in all his ways and works towards him. Blessed be God for any experience of these things.

“He would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven.” He knew by his deeds and deservings that he had no portion there; nor would he divert his mind from the remembering, and from being affected with the evil of his ways.

Some men when they are under the guilt and conviction of their evil life, will do what they can to look any ways, and that on purpose to divert their minds, and to call them off from thinking on what they have done; and by their thus doing, they bring many evils more upon their own souls: for this is a kind of striving with God, and a shewing a dislike to his ways. Would not you think, if when you are shewing your son or your servant his faults, if he should do what he could to divert and take off his mind from what you are saying, that he striveth against you, and sheweth dislike of your doings. What else means the complaints of masters and of fathers in this matter? I have a servant, I have a son, that doth contrary to my will. O but why do you not chide them for it: The answer is, so I do; but they do not regard my words; they do what they can, even while I am speaking, to divert their minds from my words and counsels. Why, all men will cry out this is base, this is worthy of great rebuke; such a son, such a servant deserveth to be shut out of doors, and so made to learn better breeding by want and hardship.

But the Publican would not divert his mind from what at present God was about to make him sensible of, no, not by a look on the choicest object, he would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven. They are but bad scholars, whose eyes, when their master is teaching of them, are wandering off of their books.

God saith unto men, when he is a teaching them to know the evil of their ways, as the angel said to the prophet, when he came to shew him the pattern of the temple;

“Son of man,” says he, “behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall shew thee; for to the intent that I might shew them unto thee, art thou brought hither.” (^{<340E}Ezekiel 40:4)

So to the intent that God might shew to the Publican the evil of his ways, therefore was he brought under the power of convictions, and the terrors of the law; and he also like a good learner gave good heed unto that lesson that now he was learning of God; for he would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven.

Looking downwards doth oftentimes bespeak men very ponderous and deep in their cogitations; also that the matter about which in their minds they are now concerned, hath taken great hold of their spirits. The Publican hath now new things, great things, and long-lived things, to concern himself about: His sins, the curse, with death, and hell, began now to stare him in the face; Wherefore it was no time now to let his heart, or his eyes, or his cogitations wander, but to be fixed, and to be vehemently applying of himself as a sinner, to the God of heaven for mercies.

Few know the weight of sin, and how, when the guilt thereof takes hold of the conscience, it commands homewards all the faculties of the soul. No man can go out or off now. Now he is wind-bound, or as Paul says, caught. Now he is made to possess bitter days, bitter nights, bitter hours, bitter thoughts; nor can he shift them, for his sin is ever before him. As David said,

“For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me,” in mine eye, and sticketh fast in every one of my thoughts.
(^{<350E}Psalm 51:3)

He would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven. THIRD, BUT SMOTE UPON HIS BREAST. This was the third and last of his gestures. He smote upon his breast; to wit, with his hand, or with his fist. I read of several gestures with the hand and foot, according to the working and passions of the mind. ‘Tis said Balak smote his hands together, being angry because that Balaam had blessed and not cursed for him the children of Israel.
(^{<400E}Numbers 24:10)

God says also, that he had smitten his hands together, at the sins of the children of Israel. (³²²¹Ezekiel 22:13) God also bids the prophet stamp with his feet, and smite with his hand upon his thigh, upon sundry occasions, and at several enormities, but the Publican here is said to smite upon his breast. And,

1. Smiting upon the breast betokeneth sorrow for something done, this is an experiment common among men. And indeed, therefore as I take it, doth our Lord Jesus put him under this gesture in the act and exercise of his repentance, because it is that which doth most lively set it forth.

Suppose a man comes to great damage for some folly that he has wrought, and he be made sorrowful for being and doing such folly: There is nothing more common than for such a man, if he may, to walk to and fro in the room where he is, with head hung down, fetching ever and anon a bitter sigh: and smiting himself upon the breast in his dejected condition; “But smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”

2. Smiting upon the breast is sometimes a token of indignation and abhorrence of something thought upon. I read in Luke, that when Christ was crucified, those spectators that stood to behold the barbarous usage that he endured at the hands of his enemies, “smote their breasts and returned.” “And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.” (⁴²³⁸Luke 23:48) Smote their breasts; that is, in token of indignation against, and abhorrence of their cruelty, that so grievously used the Son of God.

Here also we have our Publican smiting upon his breast, in token of indignation against, and abhorrence of his former life. And indeed without indignation against, and abhorrence of his former life, his repentance had not been good. Wherefore the apostle doth make indignation against sin, and against ourselves for that, one sign of true repentance (⁴¹⁷¹2 Corinthians 7:11), and his indignation against sin in general, and against his former life in particular, was manifested by his smiting upon the breast. Even as Ephraim’s smiting upon the thigh was a sign and token of his: “Surely,” says he, “after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.” (²⁶¹⁹Jeremiah 31:19) Man when he vehemently dislikes a thing, is very apt to shew that dislike that

to that thing he hath, by this or another outward gesture: as in putting the branch to the nose, ^{f41} in snuffing or snorting at it (^{<2087>}Ezekiel 8:17, ^{<3013>}Malachi 1:13); or in deriding; or, as some say, in blowing of their noses at it. (^{<2164>}Luke 16:14) But the Publican here chooseth rather to use this most solemn posture; for smiting upon the breast, seems to imply a more serious, solemn, grave way or manner of dislike, than any of those last mentioned do.

3. Smiting upon the breast, seems to intimate a quarrel with the heart for beguiling, deluding, flattering, seducing, and enticing of him to sin: For as conviction for sin begets in man, I mean if it be thorough, a sense of the sore and plague of the heart. So repentance, if it be right, begets in the man an outcry against the heart; for as much as by that light, by which repentance takes occasion, the sinner is made to see, that the heart is the fountain, and well-spring of sin.

“For from within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, — covetousness,” etc. (^{<4172>}Mark 7:21, 22)

And hence it is, that commonly young converts do complain so of their hearts, calling them wicked, treacherous, deceitful, desperate ones.

Indeed one difference between true and false repentance lieth in this. The man that truly repents crieth out of his heart; but the other, as Eve, upon the serpent, or something else. And that the Publican perceived his heart to be naught I conclude, by his smiting upon his breast.

4. Smiting upon the breast, seems to intimate one apprehensive of some new, sudden, strange and amazing thing: As when a man sees some strange sight in the air, or heareth some sudden or dismal sound in the clouds: Why, as he is struck into a deep damp in his mind, so ‘tis a wonder if he can keep or hold back from smiting upon his breast.

Now ofttimes a sight of God and sense of sin, comes to the sinner like a flash of lightning, not for short continuance, but for suddenness, and so for surprisal; so that the sinner is struck, taken and captivated to his own amazement, with what so unexpectedly is come upon him. It is said of Paul at his conversion, that when conviction of his bad life took fast hold of his conscience, he trembled, and was astonished. (^{<4116>}Acts 9:6) And although we read not of any particular circumstance of his behavior under

his conviction outwardly, yet it is almost impossibly but he must have some, and those of the most solid sort. For there is such a sympathy betwixt the soul and the body, that the one cannot be in distress or comfort, but the other must partake of, and also signify the same. If it be comfort, then 'tis shewn; If comfort of mind, then by leaping, skipping, cheerfulness of the countenance, or some other outward gesture. If it be sorrow or heaviness of spirit, then that is shewed by the body, in weeping, sighing, groaning, softly-going, shaking of the head, a lowering countenance, stamping, smiting upon the thigh or breast as here the Publican did, or somewhat.

We must not therefore look upon these outward actions or gestures of the Publican, to be empty insignificant things; but to be such, that in truth did express and shew the temper, frame, and present complexion of his soul. For Christ, the wisdom of God, hath mentioned them to that very end, that in and by them, might be held forth, and that men might see, as in a glass, the very emblem of a converted, and truly penitent sinner. "He smote upon his breast."

5. Smiting upon the breast, is sometimes to signify a mixture of distrust, joined with hope. And indeed in young converts, hope and distrust, or a degree of despair, do work and answer one another, as doth the noise of the balance of the watch in the pocket. Life and death, life and death is always the motion of the mind then, and this noise continues until faith is stronger grown, and until the soul is better acquainted with the methods and ways of God with a sinner. Yea, was but a carnal man in a convert's heart, and could see, he should discern these two, to wit, hope and fear, to have a continual motion in the soul: wrestling and opposing one another, as doth light and darkness, in striving for the victory.

And hence it is that you find such people so fickle and uncertain in their spirits; Now on the mount, then in the valleys; now in the sunshine, then in the shade; now warm, then frozen; now bonny and blithe, then in a moment pensive and sad; as thinking of a portion nowhere but in hell. This will cause smiting on the breast; nor can I imagine that the Publican was as yet farther than thus far in the Christian's progress, since yet he was smiting upon his breast.

6. Smiting upon the breast, seems to intimate, that the party so doing is very apprehensive of some great loss that he has sustained; either by negligence, carelessness, foolishness, or the like, and this is the way in which men do lose their souls. Now to lose a thing, a great thing, the only choice thing that a man has, negligently, carelessly, foolishly, or the like, why it puts aggravations into the thoughts of the loss that the man has sustained; and aggravations in the thoughts of them go out of the soul, and come in upon a sudden, even as the bailiff, or the king's serjeant at arms, and at every appearance of them makes the soul start; and starting, it smites upon the breast.

I might multiply particulars; but to be brief, we have before us a sensible soul, a sorrowful soul, a penitent soul: one that prays indeed, that prays sensibly, affectionately, effectually. One that sees his loss, that fears and trembleth before God in consideration of it, and one that knows no way, but the right way, to secure himself from perishing, to wit, by having humble and hearty recourse to the God of heaven for mercy.

I should now come to speak something by way of use and application; but before I do that, I will briefly draw up, and present you with a few conclusions that in my judgment do naturally flow from the text, therefore in this place I will read over the text again.

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a Publican: The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this Publican: I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the Publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.”

From these words I gather these several conclusions, with these inferences.

Conclusion *First*, It doth not always follow, that they that pray do know God, or love him, or trust in him. This conclusion is evident by the Pharisee in the text; he prayed, but he knew not God, he loved not God, he trusted not in God; that is, he knew him not in his Son, nor so loved, nor trusted in him. He was, though a praying man, far off from this. Whence it may be inferred, that those that pray not at all cannot be good, cannot

know, love, or trust in God. For if the star, though it shines, is not the sun, then surely a clod of dirt cannot be the sun. Why, a praying man doth as far outstrip a non-praying man, as a star outstrips a clod of earth. A non-praying man lives like a beast, nay worse, and with reference to his station, a more sottish life than he.

“The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib: but [this man] Israel doth not know, [but this man] my people doth not consider.” (^{200B} Isaiah 1:3)

The prayerless man is therefore of no religion, except he be an Atheist, or an Epicurean. Therefore the non-praying man is numbered among the heathens, and among those that know not God, and is appointed and designed by the sentence of the word to the fearful wrath of God.

(^{390B} Psalm 79:6, ^{240B} Jeremiah 10:25)

Conclusion *Second*, A second conclusion is, That the man that prays, if in his prayer he pleads for acceptance, either in whole or in part, for his own good deeds, is in a miserable state. This also is gathered from the Pharisee here, he prayed, but in his prayer he pleaded his own good deeds for acceptance, that is, of his person, and therefore went down to his house unjustified. Now to be unjustified is the worst condition that a man can be in, and he is in this condition that doth thus. The conclusion is true, forasmuch as the Pharisee mentioned in the parable is not so spoken of, for the only sake of that sect of men, but to caution, forewarn, and bid all men take heed, that they by doing as he, procure not his rejection of God, and be sent away from his presence unjustified. I do therefore infer from hence, that if he that pleadeth his own good doing for personal acceptance with God, be thus miserable; then he that teacheth men so to do, is much more miserable. We always conclude, that a ring-leader in an evil way, is more blame-worthy, than those that are led of him. This falls hard upon the leading Socinians and others, who teach, that men’s works make their person accepted of God.

True, they say, through Christ; but that is brought in as a blandation, ^{f42} merely to delude the simple with, and is an horrible lie; for we read not in all the word of God, as to personal justification in the sight of God from the curse, and that is the question under consideration, that it must be by man’s righteousness, as made prevalent by Christ’s, but contrariwise by

his, and his only, without the deeds, works, or righteousness of the law which is our righteousness. Wherefore I say, the teachers and leaders of this doctrine have the greater sin.

Conclusion **Third**, A third conclusion is. They that use high and flaunting language in prayer, their simplicity and godly sincerity is to be questioned, as to the doing of that duty sincerely. This still flows from our text, the Pharisee greatly used this; for higher and more flaunting language can hardly be found, than in the Pharisee's mouth; nor will ascribing to God by the same mouth laud and praise, help the business at all: For to be sure, where the effect is base and rotten, the cause cannot be good.

The Pharisee would hold himself in hand that he was not as other men, and then gives thanks to God for this: But the conclusion was most vilely false, and therefore the praise for it could not but be foolish, vain, and frivolous. Whence I infer, that if to use such language in prayer is dangerous, then to affect the use thereof is yet more dangerous: Prayer must be made with humble hearts, and sensible words, and of that we have treated before, wherefore high, flaunting, swelling words of vanity becomes not a sinner's mouth, no, not at any time, much less when he comes to, and presents himself before God in that solemn duty of prayer. But, I say, there are some that so affect the Pharisee's mode, that they cannot be well if in some sort or other they be not in the practice of it; not knowing what they say, nor whereof they affirm; but these are greatly addicted to hypocrisy, and to desire of vain-glory, especially if the sound of their words be within the reach of other men's ears.

Conclusion **Fourth**, A fourth conclusion is, that reformation and amendment, though good, with, and before me, are nothing as to justification with God. This is manifest by the condition of our Pharisee; he was a reformed man, a man beyond others for personal righteousness, yet he went out of the temple from God unjustified, his works, came to nothing with God. Hence I infer, that the man that hath nothing to commend him to God of his own, yet stands as fair before God for justification, and so acceptance, as any other man in the world.

Conclusion **Fifth**, A fifth conclusion is, it is the sensible sinner, the self-bemoaning sinner, the self-judging sinner, the self-abhorring sinner, and the self-condemning sinner, whose prayers prevail with God for mercy. Hence

I infer, that one reason why men make so many prayers, and prevail no more with God, is because their prayers are rather the floatings of Pharisaical fancies, than the fruits of sound sense of sin, and sincere desire of enjoying God in mercy, and in the fruits of the Holy Ghost.

The use and application we must let alone till another time.

DIVINE EMBLEMS

OR,

TEMPORAL THINGS SPIRITUALIZED.

FITTED FOR
THE USE OF BOYS AND GIRLS,

OF

ALL AGES AND SIZES.

THE AUTHOR TO THE READER.

COURTEOUS READER:

THE title page will show, if thou wilt look,
 Who are the proper subjects of this book.
 They're boys and girls, of all sorts and degrees,
 From those of age, to children on the knees.
 Thus comprehensive am I in my notions,
 They tempt me to it by their childish motions.

We now have boys with beards, and girls that be
 Huge as old women, wanting gravity.
 Then do not blame me, since I thus describe 'em,
 Flatter I may not, lest thereby I bribe them
 To have a better judgment of themselves,
 Than wise men have of babies on the shelves.
 Their antic tricks, fantastic modes, and way,
 Show they like very boys and girls do play
 With all the frantic fooleries of the age,
 And that in open view, as on a stage;
 Our bearded men do act like beardless boys,
 Our women please themselves with childish toys.

Our ministers long time by word and pen
 Dealt with them, counting them not boys, but men
 They shot their thunders at them, and their toys,
 But hit them not, 'cause they were girls and boys.
 The better charg'd, the wider still they shot,
 Or else so high, these dwarfs they touched not.

Instead of men they found them girls and boys,
 To naught addicted but to childish toys.
 Wherefore, dear reader, that I save them may,
 I now with them the very Dottrel ^{fc1} play.
 And since at gravity they make a tush,
 My very beard I cast behind a bush,

And like a fool stand fingering of their toys,
 And all to show they are but girls and boys!

Nor do I blush, although I think some may
 Call me a child, because I with them play:
 I aim to show them how each fingle-fangle
 On which they dote, does but their souls entangle
 As with a web, a trap, a gin, a snare;
 And will destroy them, have they not a care.

Paul seemed to play the fool, that he might gain
 Those that were fools indeed, if not in grain
 He did it, by such things to let them see
 Their emptiness, their sin and vanity:
 A noble act, and full of honesty!
 Nor he, nor I would like them be in vice,
 But by their play things, I would them intice,
 That they might raise their thoughts from childish toys,
 To heaven-for that's prepared for girls and boys.

Nor would I so confine myself to these,
 As to shun graver things, but seek to please
 Those more compos'd with better things than toys;
 Though I would thus be catching girls and boys.
 Wherefore if men should be inclin'd to look,
 Perhaps their graver fancies may be took
 With what is here, though but in homely rhymes:
 But he who pleases all, must rise betimes!

Some, I persuade me, will be finding fault,
 Concluding, here I trip, and there I halt:
 Yet though no doubt some could those notions raise
 By fine spun terms, that challenge might the bays
 Should all be forced their brains to lay aside
 That cannot regulate the flowing tide,
 By this or that man's fancy, we should have
 The wise, unto the fool, become a slave.

What though my text seems mean, my morals be
 Grave, as if fetched from a sublimer tree.
 And if some better handle can a fly,
 Than some a text, wherefore should we deny
 Their making proof, or good experiment,
 Of smallest things, great mischiefs to prevent!
 Wise Solomon did fools to pismires send,
 To learn true wisdom, and their lives to mend.
 Yea, God by swallows, cuckoos, and the ass,
 Shows they are fools who let that season pass,
 Which he put in their hand, that to obtain,
 Which is both present and eternal gain.

I think the wiser sort my rhymes may slight,
 While to peruse them, fools will take delight.
 Then what care I? The foolish, God has chose;
 And doth by foolish things their minds compose
 And settle upon that which is divine; —
 Great things by little ones are made to shine.

I could, were I so pleas'd, use higher strains;
 And for applause on tenters stretch my brains,
 But what needs that? The arrow out of sight,
 Does not the sleeper, nor the watchman fright;
 To shoot too high doth make but children gaze,
 'Tis that which hits the man doth him amaze.

As for the inconsiderableness
 Of things, by which I do my mind express:
 May I by them bring some good thing to pass,
 As Samson, with the jaw-bone of an ass;
 Or as brave Shamgar, with his ox's goad,
 (Both things unmanly, not for war in mode)
 I have my end, though I myself expose:
 For God will have the glory at the close.

J. B.

DIVINE EMBLEMS:
OR,
TEMPORAL THINGS
SPIRITUALIZED.

THE LARK AND THE FOWLER.

THOU simple bird, what makes thee here to play?
Look, there's the fowler, prithee come away.
Dost not behold the net? Look! there 'tis spread.
Venture a little farther, thou art dead!

Is there not room enough in all the field
For thee to play in, but thou needs must yield
To the deceitful glittering of a glass,
Between nets placed to bring thy death to pass?

Bird, if thou art so much for dazzling light,
Look! there's the sun above thee; dart upright;
Thy nature is to soar up to the sky,
Why wilt thou then come down to th' nets and die?

Heed not the fowler's tempting, flattering call;
This whistle he enchanteth birds withal.
What though thou seest a live bird in his net,
She's there, because from thence she cannot get!

Look, how he tempteth thee with his decoy,
That he may rob thee of thy life, thy joy!
Come, prithee, bird, I prithee come away,
Why shouldst thou to this net become a prey?

Hadst thou not wings, or were thy feathers pulled,
 Or wast thou blind, or fast asleep wept lulled,
 The case would somewhat alter, but for thee,
 Thy eyes are open, thou hast wings to flee!

Remember that thy song is in thy rise,
 Not in thy fall; earth's not thy paradise.
 Keep up aloft then; let thy circuits be
 Above, where birds from fowlers' nets are free.

COMPARISON.

This fowler is an emblem of the devil,
 His nets and whistle, figures of all evil.
 His glass an emblem is of sinful pleasure,
 Decoying such, who reckon sin a treasure.

This simple lark's a shadow of a saint,
 Under allurings, ready now to faint.
 What you have read, a needful warning is,
 Designed to show the soul its heavenly bliss,
 The danger lurking under pleasure's shape,
 And how it may this fowler's net escape.

THE VINE-TREE.

What is the vine, more than another tree?
 Nay most, than it, more tall, more comely be.
 What workman thence will take a beam or pin,
 To make that which may be delighted in?
 Its excellency in its fruit doth lie,
 A fruitless vine, it is not worth a fly!

COMPARISON.

What are professors more than other men?
 Nothing at all. Nay, there's not one in ten,
 Either for wealth, or wit, that may compare,

In many things, with some that carnal are.
 Good then they are, when mortified their sin,
 But without that, they are not worth a pin!

OF FOWLS FLYING IN THE AIR.

METHINKS I see a sight most excellent,
 All sorts of birds fly in the firmament:
 Some great, some small, all of a diverse kind,
 Mine eye affecting, pleasant to my mind.
 Look how they wing along the wholesome air,
 Above the world of worldlings, and their care!
 And as they diverse are in bulk and hue,
 So are they in their way of flying too.
 So many birds, so many various things,
 Swim in the element upon their wings.

COMPARISON.

These birds are emblems of those men, that shall
 Ere long possess the heavens, their all in all.
 They each are of a different shape and kind;
 To teach, we of all nations there shall find.
 They are some great, some little, as we see,
 To show, some great, some small, in glory be.
 Their flying diversely, as we behold,
 Doth show saints' joys will there be manifold.
 Some glide, some mount, some flutter, and some do,
 In a mixed way of flying, glory too;
 To show that each shall, to his full content,
 Be happy in that heavenly firmament!

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

OUR Father which in heaven art,
 Thy name be always hallowed;

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done;
 Thy heavenly path be followed:
 By us on earth, as 'tis in heaven,
 We humbly pray;
 And let our bread to us be given
 From day to day.

Forgive our debts, as we forgive
 Those that to us indebted are:
 Into temptation lead us not;
 But save us from the wicked snare.
 The kingdom's thine, the power is thine.
 We thee adore;
 The glory also shall be thine
 For evermore.

MEDITATIONS UPON THE PEEP OF DAY.

AT peep of day I often cannot know
 Whether 'tis night, whether 'tis day or no.
 I fancy that I see a little light,
 But cannot yet distinguish day from night;
 I hope, I doubt, but certain yet I be not,
 I am not at a point, the sun I see not.
 Thus such, who are but just of grace possessed,
 Oft know not yet, if they be cursed or blest.

THE FLINT IN THE WATER.

THIS flint time out of mind, has there abode,
 Where crystal streams make their continual road,
 Yet it abides a flint as much as 'twere,
 Before it touched the water, or came there.

Its hardness is not in the least abated,
 'Tis not at all by water penetrated.

Though water hath a softening virtue in't,
It can't dissolve the stone, for 'tis a flint.

Yea, though in th' water it, doth still remain,
Its fiery nature still it doth retain.
If you oppose it with its opposite,
Then in your very face its fire 'twill spit.

COMPARISON.

This flint an emblem is of those that lie,
Under God's word, like stones, until they die:
From God, alas! by wicked lusts estranged,
Its crystal streams have not their natures changed.

THE FISH IN THE WATER.

THE water is the fish's element:
Take her from thence, none can her death prevent:
And some have said, who have transgressors been,
As good not be, as to be kept from sin!

The water is the fish's element:
Leave her but there, and she is well content.
So's he, who in the path of life doth plod,
Take all, says he, let me but have my God.

The water is the fish's element:
Her sportings there to her are excellent:
So is God's service unto holy men,
They are not in their element till then.

THE SWALLOW.

THIS pretty bird, oh! how she flies and sings!
But could she do so if she had not wings?

Her wings bespeak my faith, her songs my peace;
When I believe and sing, my doubtings cease.

THE BEE.

THE bee goes out, and honey home doth bring;
And some who seek that honey find a sting,
Now would'st thou have the honey, and be free
From stinging; in the first place kill the bee.

COMPARISON.

This bee an emblem truly is of sin
Whose sweetness unto a many, death has been
Wouldst thou have sweet from sin, and yet not die?
Sin in the first place thou must mortify.

A LOWERING MORNING.

WELL, with the day I see the clouds appear;
And mix the light with darkness ev'ry where;
This threatens those who on long journeys go,
That they shall meet with slabby rain or snow.

Even while I gaze, the sun doth with his beams
Belace the clouds, as 'twere with bloody streams;
Then suddenly those clouds do watery grow,
And weep and pour their tears out where they go.

COMPARISON.

Thus 'tis when gospel light doth usher in
To us, both sense of grace, and sense of sin;
Yea, when it makes sin red with Jesus' blood,
Then we can weep, till weeping does us good.

OVER-MUCH NICENESS.

‘Tis strange to see how over-nice are some
 About their clothes, their bodies and their home:
 While what’s of worth, they slightly pass it by,
 Not doing it at all, or slovenly.
 Their houses must well furnish’d be in print;
 While their immortal soul has no good in’t.
 Its outside also they must beautify,
 While there is in’t scarce common honesty.
 Their bodies they must have trick’d up and trim:
 Their inside full of filth up to the brim.
 Upon their clothes there must not be a spot,
 Whereas their lives are but one common blot.

How nice, how coy are some about their diet,
 That can their crying souls with hog’s meat quiet.
 All must be drest t’a hair, or else ‘tis naught,
 While of the living bread they have no thought.
 Thus for their outside they are clean and nice,
 While their poor inside stinks with sin and vice

MEDITATIONS UPON A CANDLE.

MAN’S like a candle in a candlestick,
 Made up of tallow, and a little wick;
 For what the candle is, before ‘tis lighted,
 Just such be they who are in sin benighted.
 Nor can a man his soul with grace inspire,
 More than the candles set themselves on fire.
 Candles receive their light from what they are not:
 Men grace from him, for whom at first they care not.

We manage candles when they take the fire;
 God men, when he with grace doth them inspire.
 And biggest candles give the better light,
 As grace on biggest sinners shines most bright.

The candle shines to make another see,
 A saint unto his neighbor light should be.
 The blinking candle we do much despise,
 Saints, dim of light are high in no man's eyes.

Again, though it may seem to some a riddle,
 We use to light our candle at the middle:
 True light doth at the candle's end appear,
 And grace the heart first reaches by the ear.
 But 'tis the wick the fire doth kindle on,
 As 'tis the heart that grace first works upon,
 Thus both do fasten upon what's the main,
 And so their life and vigor do maintain.

The tallow makes the wick yield to the fire.
 And sinful flesh doth make the soul desire
 That grace may kindle on it, in it burn;
 So evil makes the soul from evil turn.
 But candles in the wind are apt to flare;
 And Christians in a tempest, to despair.
 We see the flame with smoke attended is;
 And in our holy lives there's much amiss.
 Sometimes a thief will candle-light annoy;
 And lusts will seek our graces to destroy.
 What brackish is will make a candle sputter;
 'Twixt sin and grace there's oft a heavy clutter.
 Sometimes the light burns dim, 'cause of the snuff,
 And sometimes 'tis blown quite out with a puff;
 But watchfulness preventeth both these evils,
 Keeps candles light, and grace in spite of devils.
 But let not snuffs nor puffs make us to doubt;
 Our candles may be lighted, the' pufft out.

The candle in the night doth all excel,
 Nor sun, nor moon, nor stars, then shine so well,
 So is the Christian in our hemisphere,
 Whose light shows others how their course to steer.
 When candles are put out, all's in confusion;

Where Christians are not, devils make intrusion.
 They then are happy who such candles have,
 All others dwell in darkness and the grave.
 But candles that do blink within the socket,
 And saints whose eyes are always in their pocket,
 Are much alike; such candles make us fumble:
 And at such saints, good men and bad do stumble.

Good candles don't offend, except sore eyes,
 Nor hurt, unless it be the silly flies:
 Yet none like burning candles in the night,
 Nor ought to, holy living for delight.

But let us draw towards the candle's end:
 The fire, you see, doth wick and tallow spend;
 As grace man's life, until his glass is run,
 And so the candle and the man are done.
 The man now lays him down upon his bed;
 The wick yields up its fire; and so are dead.
 The candle now extinct is, but the man,
 By grace mounts up to glory, there to stand.

THE SACRAMENTS.

Two sacraments I do believe there be,
 Ev'n Baptism and the Supper of the Lord;
 Both mysteries divine, which do to me,
 By God's appointment, benefit afford.

But shall they be my God, or shall I have
 Of them so foul and impious a thought,
 To think that from the curse they can me save?
 Bread, wine, nor water, me no ransom bought!

APPAREL.

GOD gave us clothes to hide our nakedness,
 And we by them do it expose to view;
 Our pride and unclean minds, to an excess,
 By our apparel we to others show.

THE SINNER AND THE SPIDER.

Sinner.

WHAT black, what ugly crawling thing art thou?

Spider.

I am a spider —

Sinner.

A spider, aye; truly a filthy creature!

Spider.

Not filthy as thyself in name or feature:
 My name entailed is unto my creation;
 My features, from the God of thy salvation.

Sinner.

I am a man! and in God's image made,
 I have a soul shall neither die nor fade;
 God has possessed my soul with human reason,
 Speak not against me, lest thou speakest treason:
 For if I am the image of my Maker,
 Of slanders laid on me, he is partaker.

Spider.

I know thou art a creature far above me,
 Therefore I shun, I fear, and also love thee.
 But though thy God hath made thee such a creature,

Thou hast against him often play'd the traitor.
 Thy sin has fetch'd thee down: leave off to boast:
 Nature thou hast defil'd, God's image lost
 Yea thou, thyself a very beast hast made,
 And art become like grass, which soon doth fade!
 Thy soul, thy reason, yea thy spotless state,
 Sin has subjected to th' most dreadful fate.
 But I retain my primitive condition,
 I've all but what I lost by thy ambition.

Sinner.

Thou venom'd thing, I know not what to call thee!
 The dregs of nature surely did befall thee;
 Thou wast compos'd o'th' dross and scum of all.
 Men hate thee, and in scorn, thee Spider call.

Spider.

My venom's good for something; since God made it:
 Thy nature sin hath spoil'd, and doth degrade it.
 Thou art despoil'd of good: and the' I fear thee,
 I will not, the' I might, despise and jeer thee.
 Thou say'st I am the very dregs of nature,
 Thy sin's the spawn of devils, 'tis no creature.
 Thou say'st man hates me, 'cause I am a spider,
 Poor man, thou at thy God art a derider!
 My venom tendeth to my preservation;
 Thy pleasing follies work out thy damnation!
 Poor man, I keep the rules of my creation,
 Thy sin has east thee headlong from thy station.
 I hurt nobody willingly; but thou
 Art a self-murderer! thou know'st not how
 To do what's good; no, for thou lovest evil:
 Thou fly'st God's law, adherest to the devil.

Sinner.

Thou ill-shaped thing! there's an antipathy
 'Twixt man and spiders; 'tis in vain to lie.

Stand off! I hate thee; if thou dost come nigh me,
I'll crush thee with my foot; I do defy thee.

Spider.

They are ill-shaped, who are warped ill by sin!
Hatred to God in thee hath long time been;
No marvel then indeed, if me his creature
Thou dost defy; pretending name and feature.
But why stand off? My presence shall not throng thee,
'Tis not my venom, but thy sin doth wrong thee.

Come, I will teach thee wisdom, do but hear me,
I was made for thy profit, do not fear me.
But if thy God thou wilt not hearken to,
What can the swallow, ant, and spider do?
Yet I will speak; I can but be rejected;
Sometimes great things, by small means are effected.

Hark then, though man is noble by creation,
He is lapsed now to such degeneration
As not to grieve, (so careless is he grown,)
Though he, himself has sadly overthrown,
And brought to bondage every earthly thing,
Ev'n from the very spider to the king:
This we, poor sensitives, do feel and see;
]For subject to the curse you made us be.
Tread not upon me, neither from me go;
'Tis man alone brought all the world to woe!

The law of my creation bids me teach thee;
I will not, for thy pride, to God impeach thee.
I spin, I weave, and all to let thee see
Thy best performances but cobwebs be:
Thy glory now is brought to such an ebb,
It doth not much excel the spider's web!

My webs becoming snares and traps for flies,
Do set the wiles of hell before thine eyes;
Their tangling nature is to let thee see,

Thy sins (too) of a tangling nature be.
 My den, or hole, for that 'tis bottomless,
 Doth of damnation show the lastingness.
 My lying quiet till the fly is catch'd,
 Shows, secretly hell hath thy ruin hatch'd.
 In that I on her seize, when she is taken,
 I show who gathers whom God hath forsaken.
 The fly lies buzzing in my web to tell
 How sinners always roar and howl in hell.

Now since I show thee all these mysteries,
 How canst thou hate me; or me scandalize?

Sinner.

Well, well; I will no more be a derider,
 I did not look for such things from a spider.

Spider.

Come, hold thy peace, what I have yet to say,
 If heeded may help thee another day.
 Since I an ugly ven'mous creature be,
 There's some resemblance 'twixt vile man and me.

My wild and heedless runnings, are like those
 Whose ways to ruin do their souls expose.
 Day-light is not my time; I work i'th' night,
 To show they are like me who hate the light.
 The maid sweeps one web down, I make another
 To show how heedless one's convictions smother.
 My web is no defense at all to me,
 Nor will false hopes at judgment be to thee.

Sinner.

O spider, I have heard thee, and do wonder,
 A spider should thus lighten, and thus thunder!

Spider.

Do but hold still, and I will let thee see,
 Yet in my ways more mysteries there be.
 Shall not I do thee good, if I thee tell,
 I show to thee a four-fold way to hell.
 For since I set my web in sundry places,
 I show men go to hell in divers traces.

One I set in the window, that I might
 Show, some go down to hell with gospel-light.
 One I set in a corner, as you see,
 To show how some in secret snared be.
 Gross webs great store I set in darksome places,
 To show how many sin with brazen faces.
 Another web I set aloft on high,
 To show there's some professing men must die.
 Thus in my ways, God wisdom doth conceal;
 And by my ways that wisdom doth reveal.

I hide myself when I for flies do wait,
 So doth the devil when he lays his bait;
 If I do fear the losing of my prey,
 I stir me, and more snares upon her lay.
 This way, and that, her wings and legs I tic,
 That sure as she is catch'd, so she must die;
 But if I see she's like to get away,
 Then with my venom I her journey stay.
 All which my ways, the devil imitates
 To catch men, since he their salvation hates.

Sinner.

O spider, thou delight'st me with thy skill,
 I prithee spit this venom at me still.

Spider.

I am a spider, yet I can possess
 The palace of a king, where happiness
 So much abounds. Nor when [do go thither,
 Do they ask what, or whence I come, or whither

I make my hasty travels; no not they;
 They let me pass, and I go on my way.
 I seize the palace; with my hands take hold
 Of doors, of locks, or bolts; yea, I am bold,
 When in, to clamber up unto the throne,
 And to possess it, as if 'twere my own!
 Nor is there any law forbidding me,
 Here to abide, or in this palace be.
 At pleasure I ascend the highest stories,
 And then I sit, and so behold the glories,
 Myself am compassed with, as if I were,
 One of the chiefest courtiers that be there!
 Here lords and ladies do come round about me,
 With grave demeanor, nor do any flout me,
 For this my brave adventure; no not they;
 They come, they go, but leave me there to stay.

Now, my reproacher, I do by all this
 Show how thou may'st possess thyself of bliss:
 Worse than a spider thou art, but take hold
 On Christ the door, thou shalt not be control'd:
 By him do thou the heavenly palace enter;
 None e'er will chide thee for thy brave adventure!
 Approach thou then unto the very throne;
 There speak thy mind; fear not, the day's thine own!
 Nor saint, nor angel will thee stop or stay,
 But rather tumble blocks out of the way.
 My venom stops not me; let not thy vice
 Stop thee; possess thyself of paradise!

Go on, I say, although thou be a sinner,
 Learn to be bold in faith, of me a spinner.
 This is the way true glories to possess,
 And to enjoy what no man can express.

Sometimes I find the palace door is lock'd,
 And so my entrance thitherward is block'd.
 But am I daunted? No, I here and there

Do feel, and search; and so, if anywhere,
 At any chink or crevice find my way,
 I crowd, I press for passage, make no stay:
 And so through difficulty I attain
 The palace, yea, the throne where princes reign!
 I crowd sometimes, as if I'd burst in sunder;
 And art thou crush'd with striving? do not wonder.
 Some scarce get in, and yet indeed they enter:
 Knock; for they nothing have, that nothing venture.
 Nor will the king himself throw dirt on thee,
 As thou hast cast reproaches upon me.
 He will not hate thee, O thou foul backslider!
 As thou didst me, because I am a spider.

Now to conclude: since I much doctrine bring,
 Slight me no more, call me not, 'Ugly thing.'
 God, wisdom hath unto the pismire given,
 And spiders may teach men the way to heaven.

Sinner.

Well, my good spider, I my errors see,
 I was a feel for railing so at thee.
 Thy nature, venom, and thy fearful hue,
 But show what sinners are, and what they do.
 Thy way, and works do also darkly tell,
 How some men go to heaven, some to hell.
 Thou art my monitor: I am a feel:
 They may learn much, that t'spiders go to school!

MEDITATIONS BEFORE THE SUN-RISING.

BUT all this while, where's he whose golden rays,
 Drive night away, and beautify our days?
 Where's he whose goodly face doth warm and heal,
 And show us what the darksome nights conceal'?

Where's he who thaws our ice, drives cold away?
 Let's have him, or we care not for the day.

Thus 'tis with those who are possessed of grace;
 There's nought to them like their Redeemer's face.

ON THE RISING OF THE SUN.

LOOK, look, brave Sol doth peep up from beneath,
 Shows us his golden face, doth on us breathe;
 Yea he doth compass us around with glories,
 Whilst he ascends up to his highest stories.
 Where he his banner over us displays,
 And gives us light to see our works and ways.

Nor are we now, as at the peep of light,
 To question, is it day, or is it night?
 The night is gone, the shadow's fled away,
 And now we are most certain that 'tis day,
 And thus it is when Jesus shows his face,
 And doth assure us of his love and grace.

THE SUN'S REFLECTION ON THE CLOUDS IN A FAIR MORNING.

LOOK yonder, ah! methinks mine eyes do see
 Clouds edg'd with silver, as fine garments be!
 They look as if they saw the golden face,
 That makes black clouds most beautiful with grace!

Unto the saints' sweet incense of their prayer,
 These smoke-like curling clouds I do compare.
 For as these clouds seem edg'd or lac'd with gold,
 Their prayers return with blessings manifold.

OF THE MOLE IN THE GROUND.

THE Mole's a creature very smooth and slick,
 She digs i'th' dirt, but 'twill not on her stick.
 So's he who counts this world his greatest gains,
 Yet nothing gets but labor for his pains.

Earth's the Mole's element; she can't abide
 To be above ground; dirt-heaps are her pride;
 And he is like her, who the worldling plays,
 He imitates her in her works and ways.

Poor silly Mole! that thou should'st love to be,
 Where thou, nor sun, nor moon, nor stars, can'st see.
 But oh! how silly's he, who doth not care
 So he gets earth, to have of heaven a share!

OF THE CUCKOO.

THOU booby! say'st thou nothing but Cuckoo?
 The Robin and the Wren can thee out-do.
 They to us warble through their little throats,
 Not one, but sundry pretty tuneful notes.
 But thou hast fellows! some like thee can do
 Little but suck our eggs, and sing Cuckoo!

Thy notes do not first welcome in our spring,
 Nor dost thou its first tokens to us bring.
 Birds less than thee by far, like prophets, do
 Tell us 'tis coming, though not by Cuckoo.

Nor dost thou summer have away with thee,
 Though thou a yawling, bawling Cuckoo be.
 When thou dost cease among us to appear,
 Then doth our harvest bravely crown our year.
 But thou hast fellows! some like thee can do
 Little but suck our eggs, and sing Cuckoo!

Since Cuckoo forwards not our early spring,
 Nor helps with notes to bring our harvest in:
 And since while here, she only makes a noise,
 So pleasing unto none as girls and boys,
 The Formalist we may compare her to,
 For he doth suck our eggs, and sing Cuckoo!

OF THE BOY AND BUTTERFLY.

BEHOLD how eager this our little Boy
 Is for this Butterfly, as if all joy.
 All profits, honors, yea, and lasting pleasures,
 Were wrapt up in her, or the richest treasures,
 Found in her would be, bundled up together;
 When all her all is lighter than a feather!
 He halloos, runs, and cries out, 'Here, boys, here!'
 Nor doth he brambles or the nettles fear:
 He stumbles at the mole hills; up he gets,
 And runs again, as one bereft of wits
 And all his labor and his large out-cry,
 Is only for a silly Butterfly.

COMPARISON.

This little Boy an emblem is of those,
 Whose hearts are wholly at the world's dispose.
 The Butterfly doth represent to me,
 The world's best things at best but fading be.
 All are but painted nothings and false joys,
 Like this poor Butterfly to these our boys.
 His running through nettles, and thorns and briers,
 To gratify his boyish fond desires;
 His tumbling over mole-hills to attain
 His end, — namely, his Butterfly to gain;
 Doth plainly show what hazards some men run,
 To get what will be lost as soon as won.
 Men seem in choice, than children far more wise,

Because they run not after Butterflies:
 When yet, alas! for what are empty toys,
 They follow children, like to beardless boys.

OF THE FLY AT THE CANDLE.

WHAT ails this fly thus desperately to enter
 A combat with the candle? Will she venture
 To clash at light? Away, thou silly Fly
 Thus doing thou wilt burn thy wings and die.

But 'tis a folly her advice to give,
 She'll kill the candle, or she will not live.
 Slap, says she at it; then she makes retreat,
 So wheels about, and doth her blows repeat.

Nor doth the candle let her quite escape,
 But gives some little check unto the ape:
 Throws up her nimble heels, and down she falls,
 Where she lies sprawling, and for succor calls.

When she recovers, up she gets again,
 And at the candle comes with might and main.
 But now behold, the candle takes the Fly,
 And holds her, till she doth by burning die.

COMPARISON.

This candle is an emblem of that light,
 Our gospel gives in this our darksome night.
 The Fly a lively picture is of those
 That hate, and do this gospel-light oppose.
 At last the gospel doth become their snare,
 Doth them with burning hands in pieces tear!

UPON THE PROMISING FRUITFULNESS OF A TREE.

A COMELY sight indeed it is to see
 A world of blossoms on an apple tree:
 Yet far more comely would this tree appear,
 If all its dainty blooms young apples were.

But how much more, might one upon it see,
 If all would hang there till they ripe should be!
 But most of all in beauty, 'twould abound,
 If every one should then be truly sound.
 But we, alas! do commonly behold
 Blooms fall apace, if mornings be but cold.
 They too which hang till they young apples are,
 By blasting winds, and vermin take despair.

Store that do hang, while almost ripe we see
 By blust'ring winds are shaken from the tree.
 So that of many, only some there be,
 That grow and thrive to full maturity.

COMPARISON.

THIS tree a perfect emblem is of those
 Who do the garden of the Lord compose.
 Its blasted blooms are motions unto good,
 Which chill affections do nip in the bad.

Those little apples which yet blasted are,
 Show, some good purposes, no good fruits bear:
 Those spoil'd by vermin are to let us see,
 How good attempts by bad thoughts ruined be.

Those which the wind blows down, while they are green,
 Show good works have by trials spoiled been:
 Those that abide, while ripe upon the tree
 Show in a good man, some ripe fruit will be.

Behold then how abortive some fruits are,
 Which at the first most promising appear!
 The frost, the wind, the worm, with time, doth show
 There flow from much appearance, works but few.

THE THIEF.

THE thief when he doth steal, thinks he doth gain
 Yet then the greatest loss he doth sustain!
 Come, thief, tell me thy gains, but do not falter,
 When sum'd, what comes it to more than the halter?

Perhaps, thoul't say, 'The halter I defy?'
 So thou may'st say, yet by the halter die.
 Thou'lt say, 'then there's an ends' no; prithee, hold,
 He was no friend of thine that thee so told.

Hear thou the word of God; that will thee tell,
 Without repentance, thieves must go to hell.
 But should it be as the false prophet says,
 Yet naught but loss doth come by thievish ways.

All honest men will flee thy company,
 Thou liv'st a rogue, and so a rogue will die.
 Innocent boldness thou hast none at all,
 Thy inward thoughts do thee a villain call.

Sometimes when lying warmly on thy bed,
 Thou art like one unto the gallows led;
 Fear as a constable breaks in upon thee,
 Thou art as if the town was up to stone thee.

If hogs do grunt, or silly rats do rustle,
 Thou art in consternation! think'st a bustle
 By men about the door is made to take thee:
 And all because good conscience doth forsake thee!

Thy case is so deplorable and bad;
 Thou shunn'st to think on't, lest thou should'st be mad:

Thou art beset with mischiefs ev'ry way,
The gallows groaneth for thee ev'ry day.

Wherefore, I prithee, thief, thy theft forbear,
Consult thy safety, pri'thee have a care.
If once thy head be got within the noose,
'Twill be too late a longer life to choose.

As to the penitent thou readest of,
What's that to them who at repentance scoff?
Nor is that grace at thy command or power,
That thou should'st put it off till the last hour.

I prithee, thief, think on't, and turn betime:
Few go to life, who do the gallows climb.

OF THE CHILD AND THE BIRD ON THE BUSH.

MY little Bird, how canst thou sit,
 And sing amidst so many thorns?
 Let me but hold upon thee get,
 My love with honor thee adorns.

Thou art at present little worth;
 Five farthings none will give for thee.
 But, prithee little bird, come forth,
 Thou of more value art to me.

'Tis true it is sunshine to-day,
 Tomorrow birds will have a storm;
 My pretty one, come thou away,
 My bosom then shall keep thee warm.

Thou subject art to cold 'o nights,
 When darkness is thy covering;
 At days thy danger's great by kites,
 How can'st thou then sit there and sing?

Thy food is scarce and scanty too,
 'Tis worms and trash which thou dost eat,
 Thy present state I pity do,
 Come, I'll provide thee better meat.

I'll feed thee with white bread and milk,
 And sugar-plums, if thou them crave;
 I'll cover thee with finest silk,
 That from the cold I may thee save.

My father's palace shall be thine,
 Yea, in it thou shalt sit and sing;
 My little bird, if thou I't be mine,
 The whole year round shall be thy Spring!

I'll teach thee all the notes at court
 Unthought of music thou shalt play:

And all that thither do resort,
Shall praise thee for it every day.

I'll keep thee safe from cat and cur,
No manner o' harm shall come to thee:
Yea, I will be thy succorer,
My bosom shall thy cabin be.

But lo, behold, the Bird is gone:
These charmings would not make her yield:
The Child's left at the bush alone,
The Bird flies yonder o'er the field.

COMPARISON.

This Child, of Christ an emblem is;
The Bird to th' sinner I compare:
The thorns are like those sins of his,
Which do surround him ev'ry where.

Her songs, her food, and sunshine day,
Are emblems of those foolish toys,
Which to destruction lead the way, —
The fruit of worldly, empty joys.

The arguments this Child doth choose,
To draw to him a bird thus wild,
Shows, Christ familiar speech doth use,
That sinners may be reconcil'd.

The Bird, in that she takes her wing,
To speed her from him after all;
Shows us, vain man loves any thing,
Much better than the heav'nly call!

OF MOSES AND HIS WIFE.

THIS Moses was a fair and comely man;
His wife a swarthy Aethiopian;

Nor did his milk-white bosom change her skin,
She came out thence as black as she went in.

Now Moses was a type of Moses' law,
His wife likewise of one that never saw
Another way unto eternal life; —
There's myst'ry then, in Moses and his wife.

The law is very holy, just and good,
And to it is espous'd all flesh and blood:
But yet the law its goodness can't bestow
On any that are wedded thereunto.

Therefore as Moses' wife came swarthy in,
And went out from him without change of skin:
So he that doth the law for life adore,
Shall yet by it be left a black-a-moor.

OF THE ROSE-BUSH.

THIS homely bush doth to mine eyes expose,
A very fair, yee, comely ruddy Rose.

This Rose doth always bow its head to me,
Saying, 'Come pluck me, I thy rose will be;'
Yet offer I to gather Rose or bud,
But ten to one the bush will have my blood.

This looks like a trapan, or a decoy,
To offer, and yet snap, who would enjoy;
Yea, the more eager on't, the more in danger,
Be he the master of it, or a stranger.

Bush, why dost bear a Rose, if none must have it?
Why dost expose it, yet claw those that crave it?
Art become freakish? Dost the wanton play?
Or doth thy testy humor tend this way?

COMPARISON,

This Rose, God's Son is, with his ruddy looks:
 But what's the bush? whose pricks like tenter-hooks,
 Do scratch and claw the finest lady's hands,
 Or rend her clothes, if she too near it stands.

This bush an emblem is of Adam's race,
 Of which Christ came, when he his Father's grace
 Commended to us in his crimson blood,
 While he in sinner's stead and nature stood.

Thus Adam's race did bear this dainty Rose.
 And doth the same to Adam's race expose:
 But those of Adam's race 'which at it catch,
 Them will the race of Adam claw and scratch.

OF THE GOING DOWN OF THE SUN.

WHAT, hast thou run thy race, art going down?
 Why, as one angry, dost thou on us frown?
 Why wrap thy head with clouds, and hide thy face,
 As threatening to withdraw from us thy grace?
 O leave us not! When once thou hid'st thy head,
 Our whole horizon darkness will o'erspread.
 Tell, who hath thee offended, turn again:—
 Alas! too late; intreaties are in vain!

COMPARISON.

The Gospel here has had a summer's day,
 But in its sun-shine we, like fools, did play;
 Or else fall out, and with each other wrangle.
 And did, instead of work, not much but jangle.
 And if our sun seems angry, hides his face,
 Shall it go down, shall night possess this place?
 Let not the voice of night-birds us afflict,
 And of our mispent summer us convict.

THE FROG.

THE Frog by nature is both damp and cold.
 Her mouth is large, her belly much will hold;
 She sits somewhat ascending, loves to be
 Croaking in gardens, the' unpleasantly.

COMPARISON.

The Hypocrite is like unto this Frog;
 As like as is the puppy to the dog.
 He is of nature cold; his mouth is wide,
 To prate, and at true goodness to deride,
 And though the world is that which has his love
 He mounts his head, as if he liv'd above.
 And though he seeks in churches for to croak,
 He neither loveth Jesus nor his yoke.

UPON THE WHIPPING OF A TOP.

'Tis with the whip, the boy sets up the top,
 The whip does make it whirl upon its toe;
 Hither and hither makes it skip and hop:
 'Tis with the whip, the top is made to go.

COMPARISON.

Our Legalist is like this nimble top,
 Without a whip, he will not duty do:
 Let Moses whip him he will skip and hop;
 Forbear to whip, he'll neither stand nor go!

THE PISMIRE.

MUST we unto the Pismire go to school,
 To learn of her in summer to provide,

For winter next ensuing? Man's a fool,
Or silly ants would not be made his guide.

But, sluggard, is it not a shame for thee,
To be outdone by Pismires? Prithee hear:
Their works too will thy condemnation be,
When at the judgment-seat thou shalt appear.

But since thy God doth bid thee to her go,
Obey; her ways consider, and be wise:
The Pismires will inform thee what to do,
And set the way to life before thine eyes!

THE BEGGAR.

HE wants: he asks, he pleads his poverty,
They within doors do him an alms deny.
He doth repeat and aggravate his grief;
But they repulse him, give him no relief.
He begs; they say, Begone! he will not hear?
He coughs and sighs to show he still is there
They disregard him, he repeats his groans;
They still say Nay, and he himself bemoans.
They call him vagrant, and more rugged grow:
He cries the shriller; trumpets out his woe.
At last when they perceive he'll take no nay,
An alms they give him without more delay.

COMPARISON.

This beggar doth resemble them that pray
To God for mercy, and will take no nay;
But wait, and count that all his hard gainsays,
Are nothing else, but fatherly delays.
Then imitate him, praying souls, and cry:
There's nothing like to importunity.

THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER.

THERE'S one rides very sagely on the road;
 Showing that he affects the gravest mode:
 Another rides tantivy, or full trot,
 To show such gravity he matters not.
 Lo here comes one amain, he rides full speed,
 Hedge, ditch, or miry bog, he doth not heed.
 One claws it up-hill without stop or check,
 Another down, as if he'd break his neck.

Now every horse has his especial guider:
 Then by his going you may know the rider.

COMPARISON.

Now let us turn our horse into a man,
 The rider to a spirit, if we can:
 Then let us, by the methods of the guider,
 Tell every horse how he should know his rider.

Some go as men direct, in a right way,
 Nor are they suffered e'er to go astray:
 As with a bridle they are governed well,
 And so are kept from paths that lead to hell.
 Now this good man has his especial guider:
 Then by his going, let him know his rider.

Another goes as if he did not care,
 Whether of heaven or hell he should be heir.
 The rein, it seems, is laid upon his neck,
 And he pursues his way without a check.
 Now this man too has his especial guider,
 And by his going he may know his rider.

Again, some run, as if resolved to die,
 Body and soul to all eternity.
 Good counsel they by no means can abide;
 They'll have their course, whatever them betide.

Now these poor men have their especial guider;
 Were they not fools, they soon might know their rider.

There's one makes head against all godliness;
 Those, too, that do profess it he'll distress:
 He'll taunt and flout if goodness doth appear;
 And those that love it he will mock and jeer.
 Now this man too, has his especial guider,
 And by his going he may know his rider.

THE SIGHT OF A POUND OF CANDLES FALLING TO THE GROUND.

BUT are the candles down and scattered too,
 Some lying here, some there? What shall we do?
 Hold! light the candle there that stands on high,
 The other candles you may find thereby.
 Light that, I say, and so take up the pound,
 Which you let fall and scattered on the ground.

COMPARISON.

The fallen candles to us intimate,
 The bulk of God's elect in their lapsed state;
 Their lying scattered in the dark may be,
 To show by man's lapsed state his misery.

The Candle that was taken down and lighted,
 Thereby to find them fallen and benighted,
 Is Jesus Christ: God by his light doth gather
 Whom he will save, and be to them a Father.

A PENNY LOAF.

THY price one penny is, in time of plenty;
 In famine doubled, 'tis from one to twenty.

Yea, no man knows what price on thee to set,
When there is but one penny loaf to get.

COMPARISON.

This Loaf's an emblem of the word of God,
A thing of low esteem, before the rod
Of famine smites the soul with fear of death:
But then it is our all, our life, our breath!

THE BOY AND THE WATCH-MAKER.

Boy.

'This watch my father did on me bestow,
A golden one it is; but 'twill not go,
Unless it be at an uncertainty:
But as good none, as one to tell a lie!
When 'tis high day, my hand will stand at nine
I think there's no man's watch so bad as mine.
Sometimes 'tis sullen, 'twill not go at all,
And yet 'twas never broke, nor had a fall.'

Watch-maker.

'Your watch, though it be good, through want of skill,
May fail to do according to your will.
Suppose the balance, wheels, and spring be good,
And all things else, unless you understood
To manage it, as watches ought to be,
Your watch will still be at uncertainty.
Come, tell me, do you keep it from the dust
And wind it duly, that it may not rust?
Take heed too, that you do not strain the spring
You must be circumspect in every thing,
Or else your watch will not exactly go,
'Twill stand, or run too fast, or move too slow.'

COMPARISON.

This Boy resembles one that's turned from sin
 His watch, the curious work of grace within:
 The Watchmaker is Jesus Christ our Lord;
 His counsel, the directions of his word.
 Then, Convert, if thy heart be out of frame,
 Of this Watchmaker learn to mend the same.
 Do not lay ope' thy heart to worldly dust,
 Nor let thy graces overgrow with rust;
 Be oft renew'd in th' spirit of thy mind,
 Or else uncertain thou thy watch wilt find.

UPON A LOOKING-GLASS.

IN this see thou thy beauty, hast thou any;
 Or thy defects, should they be few or many.
 Thou may'st too, here thy spots and freckles see,
 Hast thou but eyes, and what their numbers be.
 But art thou blind? There is no looking-glass
 Can show thee thy defects, thy spots, or face.

COMPARISON.

Unto this glass we may compare the word.
 For that to man assistance doth afford,
 (Has he a mind to know himself and state;)
 To see what will be his eternal fate.
 But without eyes, alas! how can he see?
 Many that seem to look here, blind men be.
 This is the reason they so often read
 Their judgment there, and do it nothing dread.

OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

THE love of Christ, poor I, may touch upon
 But 'tis unsearchable. O there is none
 Its large dimensions e'er can comprehend,
 Should they dilate thereon, world without end!

When we had sinn'd, he in his zeal did swear
 That he upon his back our sins would bear.
 And since to sin there is entailed death,
 He vow'd that for our sins he'd lose his breath.
 He did not only say, vow, or resolve;
 But to astonishment did so involve
 Himself in man's distress and misery,
 As for, and with him, both to live and die.

To his eternal fame in sacred story,
 We find that he did lay aside his glory,
 Stepp'd from the throne of highest dignity,
 Became poor man, did in a manger lie
 Yea, was beholden upon his, for bread,
 Had, of his own, not where to lay his head!
 Though rich, he did, for us, become thus poor,
 That he might make us rich for evermore.

Yet this was but the least of what he did;
 But the outside of what he suffered.
 God made his blessed Son under the law;
 Under the curse, which like the lion's paw,
 Did rend and tear his soul, for mankind's sin,
 More than if we, for it, in hell had been.
 His eries, his tears, and bloody agony,
 The nature of his death do testify.

Nor did he of constraint himself thus give
 For sin to death, that man might with him live:
 He did do what he did most willingly,
 He sung, and gave God thanks that he must die!

Did ever king die for a captive slave?
 Yet such were we whom Jesus died to save.
 Yea, when he made himself a sacrifice,
 It was that he might save his enemies!

And, though he was provoked for to retract
 His blest resolves to do so kind an act,
 By the abusive carriages of those,
 That did both him, his love, and grace oppose,
 Yet he, as unconcern'd about such things,
 Goes on, determines to make captives kings!
 Yea, many of his murderers he takes
 Into his favor, and them princes makes.

ON THE CACKLING OF A HEN.

THE Hen so soon as she an egg doth lay,
 Spreads the fame of her doing what she may.
 About the yard a cackling she doth go
 To tell what 'twas she at her nest did do.
 Just thus it is with some professing men,
 If they do aught that's good; they, like our hen,
 Cannot but cackle on't where-e'er they go,
 And what their right hand doth, their left must know

UPON AN HOUR-GLASS.

THIS glass when made, was by the workman's skill,
 The sum of sixty minutes to fulfill.
 Time more, nor less, by it will out be spun,
 But just an hour, and then the glass is run.

Man's life, we will compare unto this glass,
 The number of his months he cannot pass:
 But when he has accomplished here his day,
 He, like a vapor, vanisheth away.

UPON A SNAIL.

SHE goes but softly, but she goeth sure,
 She stumbles not, as stronger creatures do:
 Her journey's shorter, so she may endure,
 Better than they which do much further go.

She makes no noise, but stilly seizeth on
 The flower or herb, appointed for her food;
 The which she quietly doth feed upon,
 While others range and glare but find no good.

And though she doth but very softly go,
 However slow her pace be, yet 'tis sure;
 And certainly they that do travel so,
 The prize which they do aim at they procure.

Although they seem not much to stir or go,
 Who thirst for Christ; and who from wrath do flee
 Yet what they seek for, quickly they come to,
 Though it doth seem the farthest off to be.

One act of faith doth bring them to that flower
 They so long for, that they may, eat and live
 Which to attain is not in others' power,
 Though for it a king's ransom they would give.

Then let none faint, nor be at all dismay'd,
 That life by Christ do seek; they shall not fail
 To have it; let them nothing be afraid;
 The herb and flower are eaten by the snail.

OF THE SPOUSE OF CHRIST.

WHO'S this that cometh from the wilderness,
 Like smoky pillars thus perfum'd with myrrh,
 Leaning upon her dearest in distress,
 Placed in his bosom by the Comforter?

She's clothed with the sun, crown'd with twelve stars.
 The spotted moon her footstool she hath made.
 The dragon her assaults with ceaseless jars,
 Yet rests she under the Beloved's shade.

But whence was she? What is her pedigree?
 Was not her father a poor Arnorite?
 What was her mother but as others be,
 A Hittite sinful, poor, and helpless quite.
 Yea, as for her, the day that she was born,
 As loathsome, out of doors they did her cast;
 Naked and filthy, stinking and forlorn:
 This was her pedigree from first to last.

Nor was she pitied in this lost estate,
 All let her lie polluted in her blood:
 None her condition did commiserate,
 There was no heart that sought to do her good.

Yet she unto these ornaments is come,
 Her breasts are fashion'd, and her hair is grown;
 She is made heiress of a heavenly home
 All her indignities away are blown.
 Cast out she was, but now she home is taken,
 Once she was naked, now you see she's clad;
 Now made the darling, though before forsaken,
 Barefoot, but now, as princes' daughters shod.
 Instead of filth, she now has her perfumes,
 Instead of ignominy, chains of gold:
 Instead of what the beauty most consumes,
 Her beauty's perfect, lovely to behold.
 Those that attend, and wait upon her be
 Princes of honor cloth'd in white array
 Upon her head's a crown of gold, and she
 Eats honey, wheat and oil, from day to day.

For her Beloved, he's the high'st of all,
 The only Potentate, the King of kings:
 Angels and men do him Jehovah call,

And from him life and glory always springs.
 He's white and ruddy, and of all the chief:
 His head, his locks, his eyes, his hands, and feet,
 Do for completeness outdo all belief,
 His cheeks like flowers are, and his mouth most sweet.
 As for his wealth, he is made heir of all,
 What is in heav'n, what is in earth is his:
 And he this lady, his joint heir doth call,
 Of all that shall be, or at present is.

Well lady, well, God has been good to thee!
 Thou of an outcast, now art made a Queen
 And few or none with thee compared may be,
 A beggar made thus high is seldom seen.
 Take heed of pride! remember what thou art
 By nature, the' thou hast in grace a share
 Thou in thyself dost yet retain a part
 Of thine own filthiness: wherefore beware!

A SKILFUL PLAYER ON AN INSTRUMENT.

HE that can play well on an instrument,
 Will take the ear, and captivate the mind
 With mirth or sadness, when it is intent;
 And music into it a way doth find.
 But if one hears that hath therein no skill,
 (As often music lights of such a chance)
 Of its brave notes they soon be weary will:
 And there are some can neither sing nor dance.

COMPARISON.

To him that thus most skilfully doth play,
 God doth compare a gospel-minister,
 That doth with life and vigor preach and pray,
 Applying right, what he doth there infer.
 Whether this man, of wrath or grace doth preach,

So skilfully he handles every word,
 And by his saying, doth the heart so reach,
 That it doth joy or sigh before the Lord.
 But some there be, which, as the brute do lie
 Under the word, without the least advance:
 Such do despise the gospel-ministry;
 They weep not at it, neither to it dance.

OF MAN BY NATURE.

FROM God he's a backslider,
 Of ways, he loves the wider
 With wickedness a sider.
 More venom than a spider,
 In sin he's a confider.
 A make-bate and divider;
 Blind reason in his guider,
 The devil is his rider.

THE DISOBEDIENT CHILD.

CHILDREN, when little, how do they delight us!
 When they grow bigger, they begin to fright us.
 Their sinful nature prompts them to rebel,
 And to delight in paths that lead to hell.
 Their parents' love and care they overlook,
 As if relation had them quite forsook.
 They take the counsels of the wanton, rather
 Than the most grave instructions of a father.
 They reckon parents ought to do for them,
 Though they the fifth commandment do contemn.
 They snap, and snarl, if parents them control,
 Although in things most hurtful to the soul,
 They reckon they are masters, and that we
 Who parents are, should to them subject be!

If parents fain would have a hand in choosing,
 The children have a heart still in refusing.
 They by wrong doings, from their parents gather,
 And say it is no sin to rob a father.
 They'll jostle parents out of place and power,
 They'll make themselves the head, and them devour.
 How many children by becoming head
 Have brought their parents to a piece of bread!
 Thus they who at the first were parents' joy,
 Turn that to bitterness, themselves destroy.

But wretched child, how canst thou thus requite
 Thy aged parents, for that great delight
 They took in thee, when thou, as helpless lay,
 In their indulgent bosoms day by day?
 Thy mother long before she brought thee forth,
 Took care thou should'st want neither food nor cloth.
 Thy father glad was at his very heart,
 Had he, to thee, a portion to impart.

Comfort they promised to themselves in thee,
 But thou, it seems, to them a grief will be.
 How oft, how willingly, brake they their sleep,
 If thou, their bantling, did'st but winch or weep
 Their love to thee was such, they could have giv'n,
 That thou might'st live, all but their part of heaven.

But now, behold, how they rewarded are,
 For their indulgent love and tender care!
 All is forgot; this love you do despise:
 They brought this bird up to pick out their eyes!

ON A SHEET OF WHITE PAPER.

TILLS paper's handled by the sons of men,
 Both with the fairest and the foulest pen.
 'Twill also show what is upon it writ,

Whether 'tis wisely done, or void of wit,
 Each blot and blur, it also will expose
 To the next readers, be they friends or foes.

COMPARISON.

Some souls are like unto this blank or sheet,
 (Though not in whiteness:) the next man they meet,
 Be what he will, a good man or deluder,
 A knave or fool, the dangerous intruder
 May write thereon, to cause that soul to err,
 In doctrine, or in life, with blot and blur.
 Nor will that soul conceal wherein it swerves,
 But show itself to each one that observes:
 A reading man may know who was the writer,
 And by the hellish nonsense the inditer.

MEDITATIONS UPON AN EGG.

THE egg's no chick by falling from the hen;
 Nor man a Christian till he's born again.

The egg's at first contained within the shell:
 Men afore grace in sins and darkness dwell:
 The egg, when laid, by warmth is made a chicken,
 And Christ by grace the dead in sin does quicken.
 The chick at first is in the cell confined;
 So heaven-born souls at first the flesh may bind:
 The shell doth crack, the chick doth chirp and peep,
 The flesh decays, and men then pray and weep:
 The shell doth break, the chick's at liberty,
 The flesh falls off, the soul mounts up on high:
 But both do not enjoy the self-same plight;
 The soul is safe, the chick now fears the kite!

But chicks from rotten eggs do not proceed;
 Nor is a hypocrite a saint indeed.
 The rotten egg, though underneath the hen,

If cracked, will stink, and loathsome is to men.
 Nor doth her warmth make what is rotten sound;
 What's rotten, rotten will at last be found.
 The hypocrite, sin has him in possession,
 He is a rotten egg beneath profession.

Some eggs bring cockatrices; and some men
 Seem hatched and brooded in the viper's den:
 Some eggs bring wild-fowls; and some men there be
 As wild as are the wildest fowls that flee.
 Some eggs bring spiders; and some men appear
 More venom'd than the worst of spiders are;
 Some eggs bring pismires; and some seem to me
 As much for trifles as the pismires be!

And thus do diverse eggs form different shapes,
 As like some men as monkeys are like apes.
 But this is but an egg; were it a chick,
 Here had been legs, and wings, and bones to pick.

THE BARREN FIG-TREE IN GOD'S VINEYARD.

WHAT barren here! in this so good a soil?
 The sight of this doth make God's heart recoil
 From giving thee his blessing, barren tree:
 Bear fruit, or else thine end will cursed be!

Art thou not planted by the water side?
 Know'st not thy Lord by fruit is glorified?
 The sentence is, Cut down the barren tree.
 Bear fruit, or else thine end will cursed be!

Thou hast been digg'd about and dunged too,
 Will neither patience, nor yet dressing do?
 The executioner is come, O tree,
 Bear fruit, or else thine end will cursed be!

He that about thy roots takes pains to dig,
 Would, if on thee were found but one good fig,
 Preserve thee from the axe: but barren tree,
 Bear fruit, or else thine end will cursed be!

The utmost end of patience is at hand,
 'Tis much if thou much longer here doth stand.
 O cumber-ground, thou art a barren tree!
 Bear fruit, or else thine end will cursed be!

Thy standing, nor thy name will help at all;
 When fruitful trees are spared, then thou must fall.
 The axe is laid unto thy roots, O tree!
 Bear fruit, or else thine end will cursed be!

THE FIRE.

WHO falls into the fire shall burn with heat;
 While those remote, scorn from it to retreat.
 Yea, while those in it, cry out, Oh! I burn,
 Some farther off those cries to laughter turn.

COMPARISON.

While some tormented are in hell for sin
 On earth some greatly do delight therein.
 Yea, while some make it echo with their cry,
 Others count it a fable and a lie!

THE END.

FOOTNOTES

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

- ^{ft1} The word “merit” was changed for “mercy” after the author’s death.—Ed.
- ^{ft2} “Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.” (^{<4708>}2 Corinthians 10:18)
- ^{ft3} “Carry the bell and wear the garland,” alluding to our old English races; the winner being rewarded with a silver bell, and crowned with a garland: or to the morris dance, in which the leader carried the garland and danced with bells fixed to his dress.—Ed.
- ^{ft4} The glorious revolution, conducted by William, Prince of Orange, afterwards King William the 3rd, took place soon after Bunyan’s decease. It was probably on this account that this paragraph was omitted from the edition of September, 1688, and all the subsequent ones to the present time. The popular opinion, in those times, was, that Dutchman and extortioner were nearly synonymous.
- “We trade wid de Yankey, we deal wid de Scot. And cheaten de tain and de teither: We cheaten de Jew, aye and better dan dat, We cheaten well ein aniether.” Old Song.
- ^{ft5} “To pole, to peel,” to take off the top and branches of a tree, and then to peel off the bark; terms used to designate violent oppressions under pretended legal authority. “Which pols and pils the poor in piteous wise.” Fairy Queen. “Pilling and polling is grown out of request, since plain pilfering came into fashion.” Winwood’s Memorials. “They had rather pill straws than read the scriptures.” Dent’s Pathway.—Ed.
- ^{ft6} Immediately after the calling of Matthew and of James, our Lord sat at meat in Levi’s [James’] house, and made that gracious declaration, “I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance”; compare ^{<109>}Matthew 9:10-13, with ^{<424>}Mark 2:14-17 and ^{<357>}Luke 5:27-32.—Ed.

- Ft7** Nearly half this paragraph is omitted from every edition since 1688, probably from a fear lest it should be misinterpreted as reflecting upon the glorious revolution under William and Mary.—Ed.
- Ft8** This proud beggar shews not his wounds but his worth; not his rags, but his robes; not his misery, but his stoutheartedness: he brings in God Almighty as a debtor to him for his services, and thanks God more that others were bad, than for his own fancied goodness.—Ryland.
- Ft9** The word “criminal,” used by Bunyan, has been altered in modern editions to “ceremonial”; but it was not only ceremonial but superstitious, and therefore more criminal than moral.
- Ft10** It is singular that our modern Pharisees continue the custom of fasting twice a week, on Wednesday and Friday. This is not so monstrous as pretending to do what “God manifest in the flesh” alone could do—to fast for forty consecutive days.—Ed.
- Ft11** God heareth the heart, without the mouth; but never heareth the mouth acceptably, without the heart. (⁴⁰¹¹³1 Samuel 1:13, 15) Puritan Saying.
- Ft12** To such poor deceived souls, our Lord’s words are extremely applicable; “If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” If poor blind sinners are, through the ignorance of their minds, fully persuaded that the destructive way in which they walk is the road to true happiness, how dangerous is their error, and how deplorable the consequences.—Ryland.
- Ft13** What home-thrusts are here! The two-edged sword of the Spirit, wielded by such a man, pierces—divides—lays bare every refuge of lies to which poor souls vainly fly for succor. It is a solemn and most important subject. May every reader have grace given him to weigh his hopes of heaven in the balances of divine unerring truth.—Ed.
- Ft14** Those who plead for mercy, as the reward of their own righteousness, are guilty of gross absurdity. They may claim to employ the mercy which they have earned: why plead with the God of justice for that to which they consider themselves in justice entitled? God will give to all that to which they are entitled, without being sued for their earnings.—Ed.

Ft15 “Points and pantables”; quibbles and quirks. “With periods, points, and tropes, he slurs his crimes; He robb’d not, but he borrowed from the poor.”—Dryden.

“Pantable,” from pantoufle, a slipper. To stand upon his pantables, was a contemptuous mode of speech, to express a very dishonorable man’s “standing upon his honor,” which could so easily be slipped from under him. “What pride is equal to the pope’s in making kings kiss his pantables.” Sir E. Sandys. “He standeth upon his pantables, and regardeth greatly his reputation.” Saker’s Character of a Fraudulent Fellow. Bunyan was peculiarly happy in his use of popular and proverbial expressions.—Ed.

Ft16 “Meddle nor make,” to interfere with matters that do not concern us. “I think it no sin, to sleep in a whole skin, So I neither meddle nor make.”—Old Play.

“He that will meddle with all things, may go shoe the goslings.” “I’ll neither meddle nor make, said Bill Heaps, when he spill’d the butter milk.” Old Proverbs.—Ed.

Ft17 The accurate knowledge of Bunyan as to the meaning of law terms is very surprising, and proves him to have been an apt scholar. A caveat is a caution not to admit a will that may injure some other party.—Ed.

Ft18 In this country the introduction of earthenware plates has driven the less cleanly wooden plate, called a trencher, entirely out of use.—Ed.

Ft19 Sin-sick souls alone seek the Great Physician, and are the proper subjects of Christ’s healing power. Pride and unbelief bar the door of mercy and grace; and if not subdued by the blood of the cross, will ruin the soul.—Ryland.

Ft20 “Thou art besides the saddle.”

“I have no spur To prick the sides of my intent, but only Vaulting ambition; which o’erleaps itself, And falls on the other.” — Macbeth.

A proud ecclesiastic requested one of his devotees to give him a leg on mounting his horse, which he did so heartily as to throw him to the other side of the saddle, and broke his neck.—Ed.

Ft21 “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (³⁰²⁰James 2:10).

- ft22** When we had no righteousness of our own to cover us, he put on us naked beggars that rich robe, the righteousness of Christ. Though black in ourselves, we are comely in Christ's comeliness; but we never live upon his righteousness, only as we see none in ourselves.—Ryland.
- ft23** "Sweeting," an obsolete term for a sweet apple.—Ed.
- ft24** This whole paragraph is omitted from all editions subsequent to 1688, when the author died. It is the practical illustration of his whole theory. By their fruit ye shall know them; the fruit does not make them what they are by nature and sin or by grace and righteousness. The rebuke of the Savior, ^{<46>}Matthew 15:16, falls heavily on the man who rejected this paragraph.—Ed.
- ft25** Abel possessed righteousness before his offering, which influenced him to make this acceptable sacrifice.—Ed.
- ft26** "Then was I most distressed with blasphemies, if I have been hearing the word, then uncleanness, blasphemies, and despair would hold me as captive." "I blessed the condition of the dog and toad, and counted their state far better than this sate of mine."—Grace Abounding.
- ft27** Many are the devices of Satan to keep souls from Christ. The world and the flesh are his grand instruments of seduction, while his temptations and snares drown them in despair. Their wisdom is to resist manfully by faith in the serpent-bruiser, Jesus. He will consummate his victories by a glorious triumph over all the powers of hell and darkness.—Ryland.
- ft28** "A sweeting tree," a sweet apple, and not a crab apple tree.—Ed.
- ft29** As the disobedience of the first Adam is imputed to all his natural posterity, and brings death upon all; so the righteousness of the second Adam is imputed to all his spiritual progeny, to obtain life for them. As the carnal Adam, lost original righteousness, derives a corrupt nature to all his descendants; so the spiritual Adam, by his obedience, conveys a vital efficacy of grace to us. The same Spirit of holiness which anointed our Redeemer doth quicken all his race, that as they have borne the image of the earthly, THEY may henceforth bear the image of the heavenly Adam.—Ryland.
- ft30** "Debrorous," probably a misprint for "dolorous," sorrowful or dismal.

“Through many a dark and dreary vale They passed, and many a region dolorous.”—Milton.

^{ft31} “Make an O yes,” alluding to the form of proclamation at sessions of the peace—“Oyer,” the French for “Hear,” now corrupted to “O yes.”—Ed.

^{ft32} “Boot,” profit or advantage.—Ed.

^{ft33} The mercy of God has not only a quick eye to spy out a penitent, but a swift foot to run and embrace him. What infinite condescension! God the Father is said to “run, fall on the neck of, and kiss” the sinner, whom he has by his Spirit inclined to sue for mercy and peace, which, being obtained, he will withhold from him no manner of thing that is good.—Ryland.

^{ft34} The pillory, to which allusion is here made, was a cruel mode of punishment, now out of date. In earlier times, the ears were nailed to the wood, and after an hour’s anguish were cut off, and the nose and cheeks slit; thus were treated Leighton and other holy men. In later days, the victims were subjected to the brutality of a mob, and sometimes excited by factious men.

“Tell us who ‘tis upon the ridge stands there So full of fault, and yet so void of fear; And from the paper in his hat Let all mankind be told for what.”—Defoe.

^{ft35} “Next,” nighest or nearest. This sentence is highly poetical, as much or more so as any in the writings of the most cultivated scholars.—Ed.

^{ft36} A humbling view of our sinful selves is manifested to the soul by the Word and Spirit of God. The gospel of Jesus Christ has all the properties of a great and true light; it has a piercing power and penetrating virtue; it enters the darkest recesses of the soul, and detects the errors of men’s judgment, as well as discovers the enormities of their lives.—Ryland.

^{ft37} This sentence is peculiarly striking, and is very illustrative of Bunyan’s homely, cutting, faithful phraseology.—Ed.

^{ft38} The newly awakened soul, beholding itself in the glass of the law, is shocked at its own deformity. Sin is truly odious, and an intolerable burthen. So felt the royal penitent when he cried, “My flesh trembleth

for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments.” God’s indignation at sin must be felt on this side the grave, in the conscience of the sinner, if ever he hopes to escape the dreadful punishment of it in the world to come. But blessed be God, the blood of atonement is a sovereign balsam for sick and wounded souls, and is abundantly efficacious for procuring pardon, peace, and reconciliation by the application of the eternal Spirit.—Ryland.

ft39 These humbling words, being too rough for ears polite, have been omitted from all the editions of this book published since the author’s death, except the fifth, 1702.—Ed.

ft40 A simple-hearted man, at a prayer meeting, used the words, “Incline our hearts to cast our bread upon the waters, that we may find it after many days.” Upon leaving the prayer meeting, while crossing a bridge, a youth said to him, “If you were to throw a loaf into the river, what good would it be even if you did find it after many days”; to which his elder replied, “Oh, it is a scripture expression, though I do not know its meaning”! This happened to the editor forty-five years ago, before Sunday schools and the Tract Society had spread their flood of scriptural knowledge over the kingdom.—Ed.

ft41 This is variously interpreted, but may it not mean an ancient mode of mocking, now called taking a sight?—Ed.

ft42 “Blandation,” a piece of flattery. “They flattered the Bishop of Ely with this blandation.”—Camden.

DIVINE EMBLEMS

Ftc1 The Dottrel is said to be a silly bird that imitates the action of the fowler. J. N. B.

PUBLISHERS NOTES

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