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**BUNYAN'S PRACTICAL
WORKS VOLUME 8**

by John Bunyan

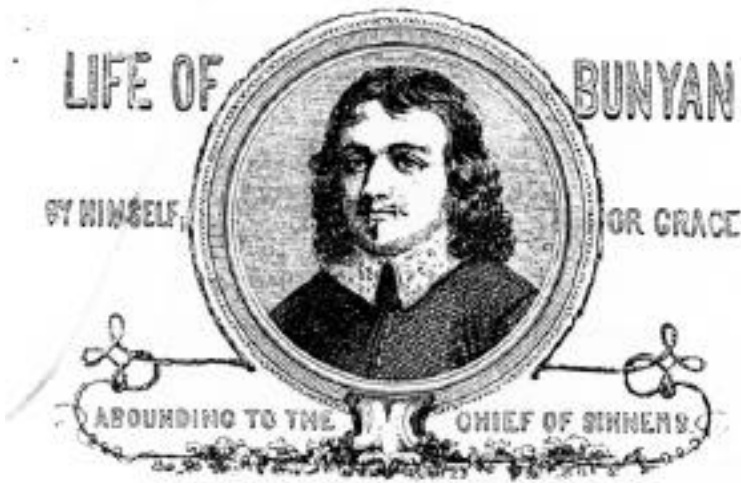
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GRACE ABOUNDING TO THE CHIEF OF SINNERS

BY JOHN BUNYAN



**THE AUTHOR TO THOSE WHOM GOD
HATH COUNTED HIM WORTHY TO BEGET TO FAITH
BY HIS MINISTRY IN THE WORD.**

PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD

JOHN BUNYAN was born at Elstow, near Bedford, England, sometime in the fall of 1628, the first of three children born to Thomas and Margaret Bunyan. The parish register indicates that he was baptized on November 30, 1628.

In *Grace Abounding* Bunyan describes his descent as “of a low and inconsiderable generation.” He had particular disdain for his father’s house; to him it was “of a rank that is meanest and most despised of all the families in the land.”

Sir Walter Scott thought John Bunyan was of gypsy descent, because his father was a traveling tinker, a mender of pots and pans. But historians view the occupation as somewhat like that of “village blacksmith.” The Bunyans were not homeless; they were landowners, but of peasant stock.

Bunyan’s schooling was of brief duration, and it wasn’t long before he was assisting his father and learning the trade himself. On his sixteenth birthday Bunyan joined Cromwell’s New Model Army, introducing him to the Puritan movement. After this military stint, he settled down as a tinker (“brazier”) and married at the age of twenty.

In 1653 Bunyan joined the Puritan Free Church in Bedford, and in 1657 he took on his first assignment as a “field preacher.” At this time there were scores of men, most with little education, who were preaching to Nonconformist audiences throughout England. With the restoration of Charles II to the throne, these preachers were suspect and subject to arrest. Refusing to refrain from preaching, Bunyan was arrested in 1660 and imprisoned-for more than eleven years.

Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, written during this imprisonment, is the spiritual autobiography of Bunyan, the traveling tinker who became the eminent preacher and author. It is in the genre of Augustine’s *Confessions* and Thomas a Kempis’s *Imitation of Christ*. It is not a detailed account of Bunyan’s early life, for it tells us very little of his youth, education, military experiences, and marriages.

Written in 1666, *Grace Abounding* chronicles Bunyan’s spiritual journey from a profane life filled with cursing, blasphemy, and Sabbath desecration to a new creation in Christ Jesus. Some commentators on Bunyan’s life and work are of the opinion that Bunyan wrote too disparagingly of his early life. George Offor, editor of a three volume compilation of Bunyan’s works, observes:

A great difference of opinion has been expressed by learned men as to whether Bunyan’s account of himself is to be understood literally, as it respects his bad conduct before his conversion. or whether he views himself through a glass, by which his evil habits are magnified. No one can doubt his perfect honesty. He plainly narrates his bad, as well as his redeeming qualities; nor does his narrative appear to be exaggerated.^{f1}

Grace Abounding is an autobiography that begins with guilt and despair and ends with a heart “full of comfort,” a thankful heart for “grace abounding.”

Those who have read both *Grace Abounding* and *The Pilgrim’s Progress* will realize that *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, in substantial measure, is the same life as that described in *Grace Abounding*, but in allegory rather than straightforward narrative. George Offor makes this point when he quotes a Dr. Cheever:

As you read the “*Grace Abounding*”, you are ready to say at every step, Here is the future author of the “*Pilgrim’s Progress*”. It is as if you stood beside some great sculptor, and watched every movement of the chisel, having seen his design; so that at every blow some new trait of beauty in the future comes clearly into view. ^{F2}

Ernest W. Bacon, in a recent biography based on the latest historical research makes the same point:

The experiences he [Bunyan] records in *Grace Abounding* are seen in the characters of *The Pilgrim’s Progress*, and there is little doubt that he could not have written the great allegory had he not experienced God’s saving mercy recounted in the autobiography. It has an undying vitality and perpetual youth about it, is a record of Puritan experience unsurpassed, and a spiritual stimulus of great value. ^{F3}

The importance of *Grace Abounding* is summed up by Hugh Martin:

Grace Abounding is among the greatest stories of God’s dealings with the human soul—to be put on the shelf beside such treasures as Augustine’s *Confessions*, Law’s *Serious Call*, Baxter’s *Autobiography*, and Wesley’s account of his own spiritual travail. ^{F4}

A PREFACE

OR BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE PUBLISHING OF THIS WORK

**WRITTEN BY THE AUTHOR THEREOF, AND DEDICATED TO
THOSE WHOM GOD HATH COUNTED HIM WORTHY TO
BEGET TO FAITH, BY HIS MINISTRY IN THE WORD**

CHILDREN, grace be with you, Amen. I being taken from you in presence, and so tied up, that I cannot perform that duty that from God doth lie upon me to you ward, for your further edifying and building up in faith and holiness, etc., yet that you may see my soul hath fatherly care and desire after your spiritual and everlasting welfare; I now once again, as before, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, so now from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards (~~2008~~ Song of Solomon 4:8), do look yet after you all, greatly longing to see your safe arrival into the desired haven.

I thank God upon every remembrance of you; and rejoice, even while I stick between the teeth of the lions in the wilderness, at the grace, and mercy, and knowledge of Christ our Savior, which God hath bestowed upon you, with abundance of faith and love. Your hungerings and thirstings also after further acquaintance with the Father, in His Son; your tenderness of heart, your trembling at sin, your sober and holy deportment also, before both God and men, is great refreshment to me;

“For ye are my glory and joy” (~~5021~~ 1 Thessalonians 2:20).

I have sent you here enclosed, a drop of that honey, that I have taken out of the carcass of a lion (~~474B~~ Judges 14:5-9). I have eaten thereof myself also, and am much refreshed thereby. (Temptations, when we meet them at first, are as the lion that roared upon Samson; but if we overcome them, the next time we see them, we shall find a nest of honey within them.) The Philistines understand me not. It is something of a relation of the work of God upon my own soul, even from the very first, till now; wherein you may perceive my castings down, and raisings up; for he woundeth, and his

hands make whole. It is written in the Scripture (^{<2389>}Isaiah 38:19), “The father to the children shall make known the truth of God.” Yea, it was for this reason I lay so long at Sinai (^{<4040>}Deuteronomy 4:10, 11), to see the fire, and the cloud, and the darkness, that I might fear the Lord all the days of my life upon earth, and tell of his wondrous works to my children (^{<3988>}Psalms 78:3-5).

Moses (^{<4041>}Numbers 33:1, 2) writ of the journeyings of the children of Israel, from Egypt to the land of Canaan; and commanded also, that they did remember their forty years” travel in the wilderness.

“Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no” (^{<4042>}Deuteronomy 8:2).

Wherefore this I have endeavored to do; and not only so, but to publish it also; that, if God will, others may be put in remembrance of what He hath done for their souls, by reading His work upon me.

It is profitable for Christians to be often calling to mind the very beginnings of grace with their souls. “It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations” (^{<4043>}Exodus 12:42). “O my God,” saith David (^{<4044>}Psalms 42:6), “my soul is cast down within me; therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar.” He remembered also the lion and the bear, when he went to fight with the giant of Gath (^{<4045>}1 Samuel 17:36, 37).

It was Paul’s accustomed manner (^{<4046>}Acts 22), and that when tried for his life (^{<4047>}Acts 24), ever to open, before his judges, the manner of his conversion: he would think of that day, and that hour, in the which he first did meet with grace; for he found it support unto him. When God had brought the children of Israel through the Red Sea, far into the wilderness, yet they must turn quite about thither again, to remember the drowning of their enemies there (^{<4048>}Numbers 14:25). For though they sang His praise before, yet “they soon forgot his works” (^{<4049>}Psalms 106:11-13).

In this discourse of mine you may see much; much, I say, of the grace of God towards me. I thank God I can count it much, for it was above my sins and Satan's temptations too. I can remember my fears, and doubts, and sad months with comfort; they are as the head of Goliath in my hand. There was nothing to David like Goliath's sword, even that sword that should have been sheathed in his bowels; for the very sight and remembrance of that did preach forth God's deliverance to him. Oh, the remembrance of my great sins, of my great temptations, and of my great fears of perishing for ever! They bring afresh into my mind the remembrance of my great help, my great support from heaven, and the great grace that God extended to such a wretch as I.

My dear children, call to mind the former days, and the years of ancient times: remember also your songs in the night; and commune with your own heart (^{1971B} Psalm 77:5-12). Yea, look diligently, and leave no corner therein unsearched, for there is treasure hid, even the treasure of your first and second experience of the grace of God toward you. Remember, I say, the word that first laid hold upon you; remember your terrors of conscience, and fear of death and hell; remember also your tears and prayers to God; yea, how you sighed under every hedge for mercy. Have you never a hill Mizar to remember? Have you forgot the close, the milk house, the stable, the barn, and the like, where God did visit your soul? Remember also the Word-the Word, I say, upon which the Lord hath caused you to hope. If you have sinned against light; if you are tempted to blaspheme; if you are down in despair; if you think God fights against you; or if heaven is hid from your eyes, remember it was thus with your father, but out of them all the Lord delivered me.

I could have enlarged much in this my discourse, of my temptations and troubles for sin; as also of the merciful kindness and working of God with my soul. I could also have stepped into a style much higher than this in which I have here discoursed, and could have adorned all things more than here I have seemed to do, but I dare not. God did not play in convincing of me, the devil did not play in tempting of me, neither did I play when I sunk as into a bottomless pit, when the pangs of hell caught hold upon me; wherefore I may not play in my relating of them, but be plain and simple, and lay down the thing as it was. He that liketh it, let him receive it; and he that does not, let him produce a better. Farewell.

My dear children, the milk and honey is beyond this wilderness, God be merciful to you, and grant that you be not slothful to go in to possess the land.

JOHN BUNYAN

GRACE ABOUNDING TO THE CHIEF OF SINNERS

OR, A BRIEF RELATION OF THE EXCEEDING MERCY OF GOD IN CHRIST, TO HIS POOR SERVANT JOHN BUNYAN

1. In this my relation of the merciful working of God upon my soul, it will not be amiss, if, in the first place, I do, in a few words, give you a hint of my pedigree, and manner of bringing up; that thereby the goodness and bounty of God towards me, may be the more advanced and magnified before the sons of men.
2. For my descent then, it was, as is well known by many, of a low and inconsiderable generation; my father's house being of that rank that is meanest and most despised of all the families in the land. Wherefore I have not here, as others, to boast of noble blood, or of a high-born state, according to the flesh; though, all things considered, I magnify the heavenly Majesty, for that by this door He brought me into this world, to partake of the grace and life that is in Christ by the gospel.
3. But yet, notwithstanding the meanness and inconsiderableness of my parents, it pleased God to put it into their hearts to put me to school, to learn both to read and write; the which I also attained, according to the rate of other poor men's children; though, to my shame I confess, I did soon lose that little I learned, and that even almost utterly, and that long before the Lord did work His gracious work of conversion upon my soul.
4. As for my own natural life, for the time that I was without God in the world, it was indeed according to the course of this world, and "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (~~AND~~ Ephesians 2:2, 3). It was my delight to be "taken captive by the devil at his will" (~~AND~~ 2 Timothy 2:26). Being filled with all unrighteousness, the which did also so strongly work and put forth itself, both in my heart and life, and that from a child, that I had but few equals, especially considering my years, which were tender, being few, both for cursing, swearing, lying, and blaspheming the holy name of God.
5. Yea, so settled and rooted was I in these things, that they became as a second nature to me; the which, as I also have with soberness considered

since, did so offend the Lord, that even in my childhood He did scare and affright me with fearful dreams, and did terrify me with dreadful visions; for often, after I had spent this and the other day in sin, I have in my bed been greatly afflicted, while asleep, with the apprehensions of devils and wicked spirits, who still, as I then thought, labored to draw me away with them, of which I could never be rid.

6. Also I should, at these years, be greatly afflicted and troubled with the thoughts of the day of judgment, and that both night and day, and should tremble at the thoughts of the fearful torments of hell fire; still fearing that it would be my lot to be found at last amongst those devils and hellish fiends, who are there bound down with the chains and bonds of eternal darkness, “unto the judgment of the great day.”


7. These things, I say, when I was but a child but nine or ten years old, did so distress my soul, that when in the midst of my many sports and childish vanities, amidst my vain companions, I was often much cast down and afflicted in my mind therewith, yet could I not let go my sins. Yea, I was also then so overcome with despair of life and heaven, that I should often wish either that there had been no hell, or that I had been a devil-supposing they were only tormentors; that if it must needs be that I went thither, I might be rather a tormentor, than be tormented myself.

8. A while after, these terrible dreams did leave me, which also I soon forgot; for my pleasures did quickly cut off the remembrance of them, as if they had never been: wherefore, with more greediness, according to the strength of nature, I did still let loose the reins to my lusts, and delighted in all transgression against the law of God: so that, until I came to the state of marriage, I was the very ringleader of all the youth that kept me company, into all manner of vice and ungodliness.

9. Yea, such prevalency had the lusts and fruits of the flesh in this poor soul of mine, that had not a miracle of precious grace prevented, I had not only perished by the stroke of eternal justice, but had also laid myself open, even to the stroke of those laws, which bring some to disgrace and open shame before the face of the world.

10. In these days, the thoughts of religion were very grievous to me; I could neither endure it myself, nor that any other should; so that, when I

have seen some read in those books that concerned Christian piety, it would be as it were a prison to me. Then I said unto God,

“Depart from me, for I desire not the knowledge of thy ways”
( Job 21:14).

I was now void of all good consideration, heaven and hell were both out of sight and mind; and as for saving and damning, they were least in my thoughts. O Lord, thou knowest my life, and my ways were not hid from Thee.

11. Yet this I well remember, that though I could myself sin with the greatest delight and ease, and also take pleasure in the vileness of my companions; yet, even then, if I have at any time seen wicked things, by those who professed goodness, it would make my spirit tremble. As once, above all the rest, when I was in my height of vanity, yet hearing one to swear that was reckoned for a religious man, it had so great a stroke upon my spirit, that it made my heart to ache.

12. But God did not utterly leave me, but followed me still, not now with convictions, but judgments; yet, such as were mixed with mercy. For once I fell into a creek of the sea, and hardly escaped drowning. Another time I fell out of a boat into Bedford river, but mercy yet preserved me alive. Besides, another time, being in the field with one of my companions, it chanced that an adder passed over the highway; so I, having a stick in my hand, struck her over the back; and having stunned her, I forced open her mouth with my stick, and plucked her sting out with my fingers, by which act, had not God been merciful, I might, by my desperateness, have brought myself to mine end.

13. This also have I taken notice of with thanksgiving; when I was a soldier, I, with others, were drawn out to go to such a place to besiege it; but when I was just ready to go, one of the company desired to go in my room; to which, when I had consented, he took my place; and coming to the siege, as he stood sentinel, he was shot into the head with a musket bullet, and died.

14. Here, as I said, were judgments and mercy, but neither of them did awaken my soul to righteousness; wherefore I sinned still, and grew more and more rebellious against God, and careless of mine own salvation.

15. Presently after this, I changed my condition into a married state, and my mercy was to light upon a wife whose father was counted godly. This woman and I, though we came together as poor as poor might be, not having so much household stuff as a dish or spoon betwixt us both, yet this she had for her part, *The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven*, and *The Practice of Piety*, which her father had left her when he died. In these two books I should sometimes read with her, wherein I also found some things that were somewhat pleasing to me; but all this while I met with no conviction. She also would be often telling of me, what a godly man her father was, and how he would reprove and correct vice, both in his house, and amongst his neighbors; what a strict and holy life he lived in his day, both in word and deed.

16. Wherefore these books with this relation, though they did not reach my heart, to awaken it about my sad and sinful state, yet they did beget within me some desires to religion: so that, because I knew no better, I fell in very eagerly with the religion of the times; to wit, to go to church twice a day, and that too with the foremost; and there should very devoutly, both say and sing as others did, yet retaining my wicked life; but withal, I was so overrun with a spirit of superstition, that I adored, and that with great devotion, even all things, both the high place, priest, clerk, vestment, service, and what else belonging to the church; counting all things holy that were therein contained, and especially the priest and clerk most happy, and without doubt, greatly blessed, because they were the servants, as I then thought, of God, and were principal in the holy temple, to do His work therein.

17. This conceit grew so strong in little time upon my spirit, that had I but seen a priest, though never so sordid and debauched in his life, I should find my spirit fall under him, reverence him, and knit unto him: yea, I thought for the love I did bear unto them, supposing they were the ministers of God, I could have lain down at their feet, and have been trampled upon by them; their name, their garb, and work, did so intoxicate and bewitch me.

18. After I had been thus for some considerable time, another thought came into my mind; and that was, whether we were of the Israelites, or no? For finding in the Scriptures that they were once the peculiar people

of God, thought I, if I were one of this race, my soul must needs be happy. Now again, I found within me a great longing to be resolved about this question, but could not tell how I should. At last I asked my father of it; who told me, No, we were not. Wherefore then I fell in my spirit as to the hopes of that, and so remained.

19. But all this while, I was not sensible of the danger and evil of sin; I was kept from considering that sin would damn me, what religion soever I followed, unless I was found in Christ. Nay, I never thought of Him, nor whether there was one, or no. Thus man, while blind, doth wander, but wearieith himself with vanity, for he knoweth not the way to the city of God (~~2019~~ Ecclesiastes 10:15).

20. But one day, amongst all the sermons our parson made, his subject was, to treat of the Sabbath-day, and of the evil of breaking that, either with labor, sports or otherwise. Now I was, notwithstanding my religion, one that took much delight in all manner of vice, and especially that was the day that I did solace myself therewith, wherefore I fell in my conscience under his sermon, thinking and believing that he made that sermon on purpose to show me my evil doing; and at that time I felt what guilt was, though never before, that I can remember; but then I was, for the present, greatly loaden therewith, and so went home when the sermon was ended, with a great burden upon my spirit.

21. This, for that instant, did benumb the sinews of my best delights, and did embitter my former pleasures to me; but behold, it lasted not, for before I had well dined, the trouble began to go off my mind, and my heart returned to his old course: but oh! how glad was I, that this trouble was gone from me, and that the fire was put out, that I might sin again without control! Wherefore, when I had satisfied nature with my food, I shook the sermon out of my mind, and to my old custom of sports and gaming I returned with great delight.

22. But the same day, as I was in the midst of a game at cat, and having struck it one blow from the hole, just as I was about to strike it the second time, a voice did suddenly dart from heaven into my soul, which said, Wilt thou leave thy sins and go to heaven, or have thy sins and go to hell? At this I was put to an exceeding maze; wherefore, leaving my cat upon the ground, I looked up to heaven, and was as if I had, with the eyes of my

understanding, seen the Lord Jesus looking down upon me, as being very hotly displeased with me, and as if He did severely threaten me with some grievous punishment for these and other my ungodly practices.

23. I had no sooner thus conceived in my mind, but suddenly this conclusion was fastened on my spirit, for the former hint did set my sins again before my face, that I had been a great and grievous sinner, and that it was now too late for me to look after heaven; for Christ would not forgive me, nor pardon my transgressions. Then I fell to musing upon this also; and while I was thinking on it, and fearing lest it should be so, I felt my heart sink in despair, concluding it was too late; and therefore I resolved in my mind I would go on in sin; for, thought I, if the case be thus, my state is surely miserable; miserable if I leave my sins, and but miserable if I follow then; I can but be damned, and if I must be so, I had as good be damned for many sins, as to be damned for few.

24. Thus I stood in the midst of my play, before all that then were present; but yet I told them nothing: but I say, I having made this conclusion, I returned desperately to my sport again; and I well remember, that presently this kind of despair did so possess my soul, that I was persuaded I could never attain to other comfort than what I should get in sin; for heaven was gone already, so that on that I must not think; wherefore I found within me a great desire to take my fill of sin, still studying what sin was set to be committed, that I might taste the sweetness of it; and I made as much haste as I could to fill my belly with its delicates, lest I should die before I had my desire; for that I feared greatly. In these things, I protest before God, I lie not, neither do I feign this sort of speech; these were really, strongly, and with all my heart, my desires; the good Lord, whose mercy is unsearchable, forgive me my transgressions .

25. And I am very confident, that this temptation of the devil is more than usual amongst poor creatures than many are aware of, even to overrun their spirits with a scurvy and seared frame of heart, and benumbing of conscience; which frame, he stilly and slily supplieth with such despair, that though not much guilt attendeth the soul, yet they continually have a secret conclusion within them, that there is no hopes for them; for they

have loved sons, “therefore after them they will go” (²⁴¹²⁵Jeremiah 2:25; ²⁴¹⁸²Jeremiah 18:12).

26. Now therefore I went on in sin with great greediness of mind, still grudging that I could not be so satisfied with it as I would. This did continue with me about a month, or more; but one day, as I was standing at a neighbor’s shop-window, and there cursing and swearing, and playing the madman, after my wonted manner, there sat within the woman of the house, and heard me, who, though she was a very loose and ungodly wretch, yet protested that I swore and cursed at that most fearful rate, that she was made to tremble to hear me; and told me further, That I was the ungodliest fellow for swearing that ever she heard in all her life; and that I, by thus doing, was able to spoil all the youth in a whole town, if they came but in my company.

27. At this reproof I was silenced, and put to secret shame, and that too, as I thought, before the God of heaven; wherefore, while I stood there, and hanging down my head. I wished with all my heart that I might be a little child again, that my father might learn me to speak without this wicked way of swearing; for, thought I, I am so accustomed to it, that it is in vain for me to think of a reformation, for I thought it could never be.

28. But how it came to pass, I know not; I did from this time forward so leave my swearing, that it was a great wonder to myself to observe it; and whereas before, I knew not how to speak unless I put an oath before, and another behind, to make my words have authority; now, I could, without it, speak better, and with more pleasantness, than ever I could before. All this while I knew not Jesus Christ, neither did I leave my sports and plays.

29. But quickly after this, I fell in company with one poor man that made profession of religion; who, as I then thought, did talk pleasantly of the Scriptures, and of the matters of religion; wherefore, falling into some love and liking to what he said, I betook me to my Bible, and began to take great pleasure in reading, but especially with the historical part thereof; for, as for Paul’s epistles, and Scriptures of that nature, I could not away with them, being as yet but ignorant, either of the corruption’s of my nature, or of the want and worth of Jesus Christ to save me.

30. Wherefore I fell to some outward reformation, both in my words and life, and did set the commandments before me for my way to heaven; which commandments I also did strive to keep, and, as I thought, did keep them pretty well sometimes, and then I should have comfort; yet now and then should break one, and so afflict my conscience; but then I should repent, and say I was sorry for it, and promise God to do better next time, and there get help again, for then I thought I pleased God as well as any man in England.

31. Thus I continued about a year; all which time our neighbors did take me to be a very godly man, a new and religious man, and did marvel much to see such a great and famous alteration in my life and manners; and, indeed, so it was, though yet I knew not Christ, nor grace, nor faith, nor hope; and truly, as I have well seen since, had I then died, my state had been most fearful; well, this, I say, continued about a twelvemonth or more.

32. But, I say, my neighbors were amazed at this my great conversion, from prodigious profaneness, to something like a moral life; and, truly, so they well might; for this my conversion was as great, as for Tom of Bedlam to become a sober man. Now, therefore, they began to praise, to commend, and to speak well of me, both to my face, and behind my back. Now, I was, as they said, become godly; now, I was become a right honest man. But oh! when I understood that these were their words and opinions of me, it pleased me mighty well. For though, as yet, I was nothing but a poor painted hypocrite, yet I loved to be talked of as one that was truly godly. I was proud of my godliness, and, I did all I did, either to be seen of, or to be well spoken of, by man. And thus I continued for about a twelvemonth or more.

33. Now you must know, that before this I had taken much delight in ringing, but my conscience beginning to be tender, I thought such practice was but vain, and therefore forced myself to leave it, yet my mind hankered; wherefore I should go to the steeple house, and look on it, though I durst not ring. But I thought this did not become religion neither, yet I forced myself, and would look on still; but quickly after, I began to think, How, if one of the bells should fall? Then I chose to stand under a main beam, that lay overthwart the steeple, from side to side, thinking

there I might stand sure, but then I should think again, should the bell fall with a swing, it might first hit the wall, and then rebounding upon me, might kill me for all this beam. This made me stand in the steeple door; and now, thought I, I am safe enough; for if a bell should then fall, I can slip out behind these thick walls, and so be preserved notwithstanding.

34. So, after this, I would yet go to see them ring, but would not go farther than the steeple door; but then it came into my head, How, if the steeple itself should fall? And this thought, it may fall for aught I know, when I stood and looked on, did continually so shake my mind, that I durst not stand at the steeple door any longer, but was forced to flee, for fear the steeple should fall upon my head.

35. Another thing was my dancing; I was a full year before I could quite leave that; but all this while, when I thought I kept this or that commandment, or did, by word or deed, anything that I thought was good, I had great peace in my conscience; and should think with myself, God cannot choose but be now pleased with me; yea, to relate it in mine own way, I thought no man in England could please God better than I.

36. But, poor wretch as I was, I was all this while ignorant of Jesus Christ, and going about to establish my own righteousness; and had perished therein, had not God, in mercy, showed me more of my state of nature.

37. But upon a day, the good providence of God did cast me to Bedford, to work on my calling; and in one of the streets of that town, I came where there were three or four poor women sitting at a door in the sun, and talking about the things of God; and being now willing to hear them discourse, I drew near to hear what they said, for I was now a brisk talker also myself in the matters of religion, but now I may say, I heard, but I understood not; for they were far above, out of my reach, for their talk was about a new birth, the work of God on their hearts, also how they were convinced of their miserable state by nature; they talked how God had visited their souls with His love in the Lord Jesus, and with what words and promises they had been refreshed, comforted, and supported against the temptations of the devil. Moreover, they reasoned of the suggestions and temptations of Satan in particular; and told to each other by which they had been afflicted, and how they were borne up under his assaults. They also discoursed of their own wretchedness of heart, of their

unbelief; and did condemn, slight, and abhor their own righteousness, as filthy and insufficient to do them any good.

38. And methought they spake as if joy did make them speak; they spake with such pleasantness of Scripture language, and with such appearance of grace in all they said, that they were to me as if they had found a new world, as if they were people that dwelt alone, and were not to be reckoned among their neighbors (⁰²³⁹Numbers 23:9).

39. At this I felt my own heart began to shake, as mistrusting my condition to be naught; for I saw that in all my thoughts about religion and salvation, the new birth did never enter into my mind, neither knew I the comfort of the Word and promise, nor the deceitfulness and treachery of my own wicked heart. As for secret thoughts, I took no notice of them; neither did I understand what Satan's temptations were, nor how they were to be withstood and resisted, etc.

40. Thus, therefore, when I had heard and considered what they said, I left them, and went about my employment again, but their talk and discourse went with me; also my heart would tarry with them, for I was greatly affected with their words, both because by them I was convinced that I wanted the true tokens of a truly godly man, and also because by them I was convinced of the happy and blessed condition of him that was such a one.

41. Therefore I should often make it my business to be going again and again into the company of these poor people, for I could not stay away; and the more I went amongst them, the more I did question my condition; and as I still do remember, presently I found two things within me, at which I did sometimes marvel, especially considering what a blind, ignorant, sordid, and ungodly wretch but just before I was; the one was a great softness and tenderness of heart, which caused me to fall under the conviction of what by Scripture they asserted; and the other was a great bending in my mind to a continual meditating on it, and on all other good things which at any time I heard or read of.

42. By these things my mind was now so turned, that it lay like a horse leech at the vein, still crying out, Give, give (⁰³¹⁵Proverbs 30:15); yea, it was so fixed on eternity, and on the things about the kingdom of heaven,

that is, so far as I knew, though as yet, God knows, I knew but little; that neither pleasures nor profits, nor persuasions, nor threats, could loosen it, or make it let go his hold; and though I may speak it with shame, yet it is in very deed a certain truth, it would then have been as difficult for me to have taken my mind from heaven to earth, as I have found it often since to get it again from earth to heaven.

43. One thing I may not omit: There was a young man in our town, to whom my heart was knit more than to any other, but he being a most wicked creature for cursing, and swearing, and whoring, I now shook him off, and forsook his company: but about a quarter of a year after I had left him, I met him in a certain lane, and asked him how he did; he, after his old swearing and mad way, answered, he was well. But, Harry, said I, why do you swear and curse thus? What will become of you, if you die in this condition? He answered me in a great chafe, What would the devil do for company, if it were not for such as I am?

44. About this time I met with some Ranters' books, that were put forth by some of our countrymen, which books were also highly in esteem by several old professors; some of these I read, but was not able to make a judgment about them; wherefore as I read in them, and thought upon them, feeling myself unable to judge, I should betake myself to hearty prayer in this manner: O Lord, I am a fool, and not able to know the truth from error: Lord, leave me not to my own blindness, either to approve of, or condemn this doctrine; if it be of God, let me not despise it; if it be of the devil, let me not embrace it. Lord, I lay my soul, in this matter, only at Thy foot; let me not be deceived, I humbly beseech Thee. I had one religious intimate companion all this while, and that was the poor man that I spoke of before; but about this time he also turned a most devilish Ranter, and gave himself up to all manner of filthiness, especially uncleanness; he would also deny that there was a God, angel, or spirit; and would laugh at all exhortations to sobriety. When I labored to rebuke his wickedness, he would laugh the more, and pretend that he had gone through all religions, and could never light on the right till now. He told me also, that in a little time we should see all professors turn to the ways of the Ranters. Wherefore, abominating those cursed principles, I left his company forthwith, and became to him as great a stranger, as I had been before a familiar.

45. Neither was this man only a temptation to me; but my calling lying in the country, I happened to light into several people's company, who, though strict in religion formerly, yet were also swept away by these Ranters. These would also talk with me of their ways, and condemn me as legal and dark; pretending that they had only attained to perfection that could do what they would, and not sin. Oh! these temptations were suitable to my flesh, I being but a young man, and my nature in its prime; but God, who had, I hope, designed me for better things, kept me in the fear of His name, and did not suffer me to accept of such principles. And blessed be God, who put it into my heart to cry to Him to be kept and directed, still distrusting mine own wisdom; for I have since seen even the effect of that prayer, in His preserving me not only from ranting errors, but from those also that have sprung up since. The Bible was precious to me in those days.

46. And now, methought, I began to look into the Bible with new eyes, and read as I never did before; and especially the epistles of the apostle Paul were sweet and pleasant to me; and, indeed, I was then never out of the Bible, either by reading or meditation; still crying out to God, that I might know the truth, and way to heaven and glory.

47. And as I went on and read, I lighted on that passage, "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; and to another faith," etc. (~~4128~~ 1 Corinthians 12:8, 9). And though, as I have since seen, that by this Scripture the Holy Ghost intends, in special, things extraordinary, yet on me it did then fasten with conviction, that I did want things ordinary, even that understanding and wisdom that other Christians had. On this word I mused, and could not tell what to do, especially this word faith put me to it, for I could not help it, but sometimes must question, whether I had any faith or no; for I feared that it shut me out of all the blessings that other good people had given them of God; but I was loath to conclude I had no faith in my soul; for if I do so, thought I, then I shall count myself a very castaway indeed.

48. No, said I with myself, though I am convinced that I am an ignorant sot, and that I want those blessed gifts of knowledge and understanding that other good people have; yet, at a venture, I will conclude I am not altogether faithless, though I know not what faith is. For it was showed

me, and that too, as I have since seen, by Satan, that those who conclude themselves in a faithless state, have neither rest nor quiet in their souls; and I was loath to fall quite into despair.

49. Wherefore, by this suggestion, I was for a while made afraid to see my want of faith; but God would not suffer me thus to undo and destroy my soul, but did continually, against this my blind and sad conclusion, create still within me such suppositions, insomuch that I might in this deceive myself, that I could not rest content, until I did now come to some certain knowledge, whether I had faith or no; this always running in my mind, But how if you want faith indeed? But how can you tell if you have faith? And, besides, I saw for certain, if I had not, I was sure to perish for ever.

50. So that though I endeavored at the first to look over the business of faith, yet in a little time, I better considering the matter, was willing to put myself upon the trial, whether I had faith or no. But alas, poor wretch, so ignorant and brutish was I, that I knew to this day no more how to do it, than I know how to begin and accomplish that rare and curious piece of art which I never yet saw nor considered.

51. Wherefore, while I was thus considering, and being put to my plunge about it, for you must know, that as yet I had in this matter broken my mind to no man, only did hear and consider, the tempter came in with his delusion, That there was no way for me to know I had faith, but by trying to work some miracle: urging those Scriptures that seem to look that way, for the enforcing and strengthening his temptation. Nay, one day as I was betwixt Elstow and Bedford, the temptation was hot upon me to try if I had faith, by doing of some miracle: which miracle at that time was this, I must say to the puddles that were in the horse pads, Be dry; and to the dry places, Be you the puddles. And truly, one time I was a-going to say so indeed; but just as I was about to speak, this thought came into my mind, But go under yonder hedge and pray first, that God would make you able. But when I had concluded to pray, this came hot upon me, That if I prayed, and came again and tried to do it, and yet did nothing notwithstanding, then be sure I had no faith, but was a castaway and lost. Nay, thought I, if it be so, I will never try yet, but will stay a little longer.

52. So I continued at a great loss; for I thought, if they only had faith, which could do so wonderful things, then I concluded that, for the present,

I neither had it, nor yet, for time to come, were ever like to have it. Thus I was tossed between the devil and my own ignorance, and so perplexed, especially at some times, that I could not tell what to do.

53. About this time, the state and happiness of these poor people at Bedford was thus, in a dream or vision, represented to me. I saw, as if they were set on the sunny side of some high mountain, there refreshing themselves with the pleasant beams of the sun, while I was shivering and shrinking in the cold, afflicted with frost, snow, and dark clouds.

Methought, also, betwixt me and them, I saw a wall that did compass about this mountain; now, through this wall my soul did greatly desire to pass; concluding, that if I could, I would go even into the very midst of them, and there also comfort myself with the heat of their sun.

54. About this wall I thought myself, to go again and again, still prying as I went, to see if I could find some way or passage, by which I might enter therein; but none could I find for some time. At the last, I saw, as it were, a narrow gap, like a little doorway in the wall, through which I attempted to pass; but the passage being very strait and narrow, I made many efforts to get in, but all in vain, even until I was well-nigh quite beat out, by striving to get in; at last, with great striving, methought I at first did get in my head, and after that, by a sidling striving, my shoulders, and my whole body; then I was exceeding glad, and went and sat down in the midst of them, and so was comforted with the light and heat of their sun.

55. Now, this mountain and wall, etc., was thus made out to me—the mountain signified the church of the living God; the sun that shone thereon, the comfortable shining of His merciful face on them that were therein; the wall, I thought, was the Word, that did make separation between the Christians and the world; and the gap which was in this wall, I thought, was Jesus Christ, who is the way to God the Father (⁴⁴John 14:6; ⁴⁰Matthew 7:14). But forasmuch as the passage was wonderful narrow, even so narrow, that I could not, but with great difficulty, enter in thereat, it showed me that none could enter into life, but those that were in downright earnest, and unless they left this wicked world behind them; for here was only room for body and soul, but not for body and soul, and sin.

56. This resemblance abode upon my spirit many days; all which time I saw myself in a forlorn and sad condition, but yet was provoked to a

vehement hunger and desire to be one of that number that did sit in the sunshine. Now also I should pray wherever I was, whether at home or abroad, in house or field, and should also often, with lifting up of heart, sing that of the 51st Psalm, “O Lord, consider my distress”; for as yet I knew not where I was.

57. Neither as yet could I attain to any comfortable persuasion that I had faith in Christ; but instead of having satisfaction, here I began to find my soul to be assaulted with fresh doubts about my future happiness; especially with such as these, Whether I was elected? But how, if the day of grace should now be past and gone?

58. By these two temptations I was very much afflicted and disquieted; sometimes by one, and sometimes by the other of them. And first, to speak of that about my questioning my election, I found at this time, that though I was in a flame to find the way to heaven and glory, and though nothing could beat me off from this, yet this question did so offend and discourage me, that I was, especially at some times, as if the very strength of my body also had been taken away by the force and power thereof. This scripture did also seem to me to trample upon all my desires,

“It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy” (~~☞~~ Romans 9:16).

59. With this scripture I could not tell what to do; for I evidently saw, that unless the great God, of His infinite grace and bounty, had voluntarily chosen me to be a vessel of mercy, though I should desire, and long and labor until my heart did break, no good could come of it. Therefore, this would still stick with me, How can you tell that you are elected? And what if you should not? How then?

60. O Lord, thought I, what if I should not, indeed? It may be you are not, said the tempter; it may be so, indeed, thought I. Why, then, said Satan, you had as good leave off, and strive no further; for if, indeed, you should not be elected and chosen of God, there is no talk of your being saved; “For it is neither of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”

61. By these things I was driven to my wits’ end, not knowing what to say, or how to answer these temptations. Indeed, I little thought that

Satan had thus assaulted me, but that rather it was my own prudence, thus to start the question; for, that the elect only attained eternal life, that I, without scruple, did heartily close withal; but that myself was one of them, there lay all the question.

62. Thus, therefore, for several days, I was greatly assaulted and perplexed, and was often, when I have been walking, ready to sink where I went, with faintness in my mind; but one day, after I had been so many weeks oppressed and cast down therewith, as I was now quite giving up the ghost of all my hopes of ever attaining life, that sentence fell with weight upon my spirit, “Look at the generations of old and see; did ever any trust in the Lord, and was confounded?”

63. At which I was greatly lightened and encouraged in my soul; for thus, at that very instant, it was expounded to me, Begin at the beginning of Genesis, and read to the end of the Revelations, and see if you can find that there was ever any that trusted in the Lord, and was confounded. So, coming home, I presently went to my Bible to see if I could find that saying, not doubting but to find it presently; for it was so fresh, and with such strength and comfort on my spirit, that I was as if it talked with me.

64. Well, I looked, but I found it not; only it abode upon me; then I did ask first this good man, and then another, if they knew where it was, but they knew no such place. At this I wondered that such a sentence should so suddenly, and with such comfort and strength, seize and abide upon my heart, and yet that none could find it, for I doubted not but it was in holy Scripture.

65. Thus I continued above a year, and could not find the place; but at last, casting my eye into the Apocrypha books, I found it in Ecclesiasticus 2:10. This, at the first, did somewhat daunt me; but because, by this time, I had got more experience of the love and kindness of God, it troubled me the less; especially when I considered, that though it was not in those texts that we call holy and canonical, yet forasmuch as this sentence was the sum and substance of many of the promises, it was my duty to take the comfort of it; and I bless God for that word, for it was of God to me: that word doth still, at times, shine before my face.

66. After this, that other doubt did come with strength upon me, But how if the day of grace should be past and gone? How if you have overstood the time of mercy? Now, I remember that one day, as I was walking into the country, I was much in the thoughts of this, But how if the day of grace be past? And to aggravate my trouble, the tempter presented to my mind those good people of Bedford, and suggested thus unto me, That these being converted already, they were all that God would save in those parts; and that I came too late, for these had got the blessing before I came.

67. Now was I in great distress, thinking in very deed that this might well be so; wherefore I went up and down bemoaning my sad condition, counting myself far worse than a thousand fools, for standing off thus long, and spending so many years in sin as I had done; still crying out, Oh, that I had turned sooner! Oh, that I had turned seven years ago! It made me also angry with myself, to think that I should have no more wit, but to trifle away my time till my soul and heaven were lost.

68. But when I had been long vexed with this fear, and was scarce able to take one step more, just about the same place where I received my other encouragement, these words broke in upon my mind, “Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled”; “and yet there is room” (^{14:22}Luke 14:22, 23). These words, but especially them, “And yet there is room”, were sweet words to me; for, truly, I thought that by them I saw there was place enough in heaven for me; and, moreover, that when the Lord Jesus did speak these words, He then did think of me; and that He, knowing that the time would come that I should be afflicted with fear that there was no place left for me in His bosom, did before speak this word, and leave it upon record, that I might find help thereby against this vile temptation. This, I then verily believed.

69. In the light and encouragement of this word, I went a pretty while; and the comfort was the more, when I thought that the Lord Jesus should think on me so long ago, and that He should speak those words on purpose for my sake; for I did then think, verily, that He did on purpose speak them, to encourage me withal.

70. But I was not without my temptations to go back again; temptations, I say, both from Satan, mine own heart, and carnal acquaintance; but I thank God these were outweighed by that sound sense of death and of the day of

judgment, which abode, as it were, continually in my view; I should often also think on Nebuchadnezzar, of whom it is said, He had given him all the kingdoms of the earth (²¹⁶Daniel 5:19). Yet, I thought, if this great man had all his portion in this world, one hour in hell fire would make him forget all. Which consideration was a great help to me.

71. I was almost made, about this time, to see something concerning the beasts that Moses counted clean and unclean. I thought those beasts were types of men; the clean, types of them that were the people of God; but the unclean, types of such as were the children of the wicked one. Now, I read that the clean beasts chewed the cud; that is, thought I, they show us we must feed upon the Word of God. They also parted the hoof; I thought that signified we must part, if we would be saved, with the ways of ungodly men. And also, in further reading about them I found that though we did chew the cud as the hare, yet if we walked with claws like a dog, or if we did part the hoof like the swine, yet if we did not chew the cud as the sheep, we were still, for all that, but unclean; for I thought the hare to be a type of those that talk of the Word, yet walk in the ways of sin; and that the swine was like him that parted with his outward pollution's, but still wanteth the Word of faith, without which there could be no way of salvation, let a man be never so devout (²¹⁴Deuteronomy 14). After this I found, by reading the Word, that those that must be glorified with Christ in another world must be called by Him here; called to the partaking of a share in His Word and righteousness, and to the comforts and first fruits of His Spirit, and to a peculiar interest in all those heavenly things which do indeed fore fit the soul for that rest and house of glory which is in heaven above.

72. Here, again, I was at a very great stand, not knowing what to do, fearing I was not called; for, thought I, if I be not called, what then can do me good? None but those who are effectually called, inherit the kingdom of heaven. But oh! how I now loved those words that spake of a Christian's calling! as when the Lord said to one, "Follow me", and to another, "Come after me". And oh! thought I, that He would say so to me too, how gladly would I run after him!

73. I cannot now express with what longings and breakings in my soul I cried to Christ to call me. Thus I continued for a time, all on a flame to be

converted to Jesus Christ; and did also see at that day, such glory in a converted state, that I could not be contented without a share therein. Gold! could it have been gotten for gold, what could I have given for it! had I a whole world it had all gone ten thousand times over for this, that my soul might have been in a converted state.

74. How lovely now was everyone in my eyes that I thought to be converted men and women! they shone, they walked like a people that carried the broad seal of heaven about them. Oh! I saw the lot was fallen to them in pleasant places, and they had a goodly heritage (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 16:6). But that which made me sick was that of Christ, in Mark, He went up into a mountain and called to Him whom He would, and they came unto Him (~~Mark~~ Mark 3:13).

75. This scripture made me faint and fear, yet it kindled fire in my soul. That which made me fear was this, lest Christ should have no liking to me, for He called “whom he would”. But oh! the glory that I saw in that condition did still so engage my heart that I could seldom read of any that Christ did call but I presently wished, Would I had been in their clothes; would I had been born Peter; would I had been born John; or would I had been by and had heard Him when He called them, how would I have cried, O Lord, call me also. But oh! I feared He would not call me.

76. And truly the Lord let me go thus many months together and showed me nothing; either that I was already, or should be called hereafter. But at last, after much time spent, and many groans to God, that I might be made partaker of the holy and heavenly calling, that Word came in upon me:

“I will cleanse their blood that I have not cleansed:
for the Lord dwelleth in Zion” (~~Joel~~ Joel 3:21).

These words I thought were sent to encourage me to wait still upon God, and signified unto me, that if I were not already, yet time might come, I might be in truth converted to Christ.

77. About this time I began to break my mind to those poor people in Bedford, and to tell them my condition, which, when they had heard, they told Mr. Gifford of me, who himself also took occasion to talk with me, and was willing to be well persuaded of me, though I think but from little grounds: but he invited me to his house, where I should hear him confer

with others, about the dealings of God with the soul; from all which I still received more conviction, and from that time began to see something of the vanity and inward wretchedness of my wicked heart, for as yet I knew no great matter therein; but now it began to be discovered unto me, and also to work at that rate for wickedness as it never did before. Now I evidently found that lusts and corruption's would strongly put forth themselves within me, in wicked thoughts and desires, which I did not regard before; my desires for heaven and life began to fail. I found also, that whereas my soul was full of longing after God, now my heart began to hanker after every foolish vanity; yea, my heart would not be moved to mind that that was good; it began to be careless, both of my soul and heaven; it would now continually hang back, both to, and in every duty; and was as a clog on the leg of a bird to hinder her from flying.

78. Nay, thought I, now I grow worse and worse; now am I farther from conversion than ever I was before. Wherefore I began to sink greatly in my soul, and began to entertain such discouragement in my heart as laid me low as hell. If now I should have burned at a stake, I could not believe that Christ had love for me; alas, I could neither hear Him, nor see Him, nor feel Him, nor savor any of His things; I was driven as with a tempest, my heart would be unclean, the Canaanites would dwell in the land.

79. Sometimes I would tell my condition to the people of God, which, when they heard, they would pity me, and would tell me of the promises; but they had as good have told me that I must reach the sun with my finger as have bidden me receive or rely upon the promise; and as soon as I should have done it, all my sense and feeling was against me; and I saw I had a heart that would sin, and that lay under a law that would condemn.

80. These things have often made me think of that child which the father brought to Christ, who, while he was yet a-coming to him, was thrown down by the devil, and also so rent and torn by him that he lay and wallowed, foaming (☞ Luke 9:42, ☞ Mark 9:20).

81. Further, in these days I should find my heart to shut itself up against the Lord, and against His holy Word. I have found my unbelief to set, as it were, the shoulder to the door to keep Him out, and that too even then, when I have with many a bitter sigh cried, Good Lord, break it open; Lord, break these gates of brass, and cut these bars of iron asunder (☞ Psalm

107:16). Yet that word would sometimes create in my heart a peaceable pause,

“I girded thee, though thou hast not known me” (Isaiah 45:5).

82. But all this while as to the act of sinning, I never was more tender than now; I durst not take a pin or a stick, though but so big as a straw, for my conscience now was sore, and would smart at every touch; I could not now tell how to speak my words, for fear I should misplace them. Oh, how gingerly did I then go in all I did or said! I found myself as on a miry bog that shook if I did but stir; and was there left both of God and Christ, and the Spirit, and all good things.

83. But, I observe, though I was such a great sinner before conversion, yet God never much charged the guilt of the sins of my ignorance upon me; only He showed me I was lost if I had not Christ, because I had been a sinner; I saw that I wanted a perfect righteousness to present me without fault before God, and this righteousness was nowhere to be found, but in the person of Jesus Christ.

84. But my original and inward pollution, that, that was my plague and my affliction; that, I say, at a dreadful rate, always putting forth itself within me; that I had the guilt of, to amazement; by reason of that, I was more loathsome in my own eyes than was a toad; and I thought I was so in God's eyes too; sin and corruption, I said, would as naturally bubble out of my heart, as water would bubble out of a fountain. I thought now that everyone had a better heart than I had; I could have changed heart with anybody; I thought none but the devil himself could equalize me for inward wickedness and pollution of mind. I fell, therefore, at the sight of my own vileness, deeply into despair; for I concluded that this condition that I was in could not stand with a state of grace. Sure, thought I, I am forsaken of God; sure I am given up to the devil, and to a reprobate mind; and thus I continued a long while, even for some years together.

85. While I was thus afflicted with the fears of my own damnation, there were two things would make me wonder; the one was, when I saw old people hunting after the things of this life, as if they should live here always; the other was, when I found professors much distressed and cast down, when they met with outward losses, as of husband, wife, child, etc.

Lord, thought I, what ado is here about such little things as these! What seeking after carnal things by some, and what grief in others for the loss of them! If they so much labor after, and spend so many tears for the things of this present life, how am I to be bemoaned, pitied, and prayed for! My soul is dying, my soul is damning. Were my soul but in a good condition, and were I but sure of it, oh! how rich I should esteem myself, though blessed but with bread and water; I should count those but small afflictions, and should bear them as little burdens. “A wounded spirit who can bear?”

86. And though I was thus troubled, and tossed, and afflicted, with the sight and sense and terror of my own wickedness, yet I was afraid to let this sight and sense go quite off my mind; for I found that, unless guilt of conscience was taken off the right way, that is, by the blood of Christ, a man grew rather worse for the loss of his trouble of mind, than better. Wherefore, if my guilt lay hard upon me, then I should cry that the blood of Christ might take it off; and if it was going off without it (for the sense of sin would be sometimes as if it would die, and go quite away), then I would also strive to fetch it upon my heart again, by bringing the punishment for sin in hell fire upon my spirits; and should cry, Lord, let it not go off my heart, but the right way, but by the blood of Christ, and by the application of Thy mercy, through Him, to my soul; for that scripture lay much upon me,

“without shedding of blood is no remission” (~~scrip~~ Hebrews 9:22).

And that which made me the more afraid of this was, because I had seen some who, though when they were under wounds of conscience, then they would cry and pray; but they seeking rather present ease from their trouble, than pardon for their sin, cared not how they lost their guilt, so they got it out of their mind; and, therefore, having got it off the wrong way, it was not sanctified unto them; but they grew harder and blinder, and more wicked after their trouble. This made me afraid, and made me cry to God the more, that it might not be so with me.

87. And now was I sorry that God had made me a man, for I feared I was a reprobate; I counted man as unconverted, the most doleful of all the creatures. Thus being afflicted and tossed about my sad condition, I counted myself alone, and above the most of men unblessed.

88. Yea, I thought it impossible that ever I should attain to so much goodness of heart, as to thank God that He had made me a man. Man indeed is the most noble by creation, of all creatures in the visible world; but by sin he has made himself the most ignoble. The beasts, birds, fishes, etc., I blessed their condition, for they had not a sinful nature, they were not obnoxious in the sight of God; they were not to go to hell fire after death; I could therefore have rejoiced had my condition been as any of theirs.

89. In this condition I went a great while; but when comforting time was come, I heard one preach a sermon upon those words in the Song 4.1, “Behold thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair.” But at that time he made these two words, “My love”, his chief and subject matter; from which, after he had a little opened the text, he observed these several conclusions:

1. That the Church, and so every saved soul, is Christ’s love, when loveless.
2. Christ’s love without a cause.
3. Christ’s love when hated of the world.
4. Christ’s love when under temptation, and under desertion.
5. Christ’s love from first to last.

90. But I got nothing by what he said at present, only when he came to the application of the fourth particular, this was the word he said: If it be so, that the saved soul is Christ’s love when under temptation and desertion; then, poor tempted soul, when thou art assaulted and afflicted with temptation, and the hidings of God’s face, yet think on these two words, “My love”, still.

91. So as I was a-going home, these words came again into my thoughts; and I well remember, as I came in, I said thus in my heart, What shall I get by thinking on these two words? This thought had no sooner passed through my heart, but the words began thus to kindle in my spirit, “Thou art my love, thou art my love”, twenty times together; and still as they ran thus in my mind, they waxed stronger and warmer, and began to make me

look up; but being as yet between hope and fear, I still replied in my heart, But is it true, but is it true? At which, that sentence fell in upon me, he

“wist not that it was true which was done by the angel”
(^{<4119>} Acts 12:9).

92. Then I began to give place to the word, which, with power, did over and over make this joyful sound within my soul, Thou art my love, thou art my love; and nothing shall separate thee from my love; and with that, ^{<4189>} Romans 8:39 came into my mind. Now was my heart filled full of comfort and hope, and now I could believe that my sins should be forgiven me; yea, I was now so taken with the love and mercy of God, that I remember I could not tell how to contain till I got home; I thought I could have spoken of His love, and of His mercy to me, even to the very crows that sat upon the ploughed lands before me, had they been capable to have understood me; wherefore I said in my soul with much gladness, Well, I would I had a pen and ink here, I would write this down before I go any farther, for surely I will not forget this forty years hence; but alas! within less than forty days, I began to question all again; which made me begin to question all still.

93. Yet still at times, I was helped to believe that it was a true manifestation of grace unto my soul, though I had lost much of the life and savor of it. Now about a week or fortnight after this, I was much followed by this scripture,

“Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you”
(^{<4231>} Luke 22:31).

And sometimes it would sound so loud within me, yea, and as it were call so strongly after me, that once above all the rest, I turned my head over my shoulder, thinking verily that some man had, behind me, called to me; being at a great distance, methought he called so loud; it came, as I have thought since, to have stirred me up to prayer, and to watchfulness; it came to acquaint me that a cloud and a storm was coming down upon me, but I understood it not.

94. Also, as I remember, that time that it called to me so loud, was the last time that it sounded in mine ear; but methinks I hear still with what a loud voice these words, Simon, Simon, sounded in mine ears. I thought verily,

as I have told you, that somebody had called after me, that was half a mile behind me; and although that was not my name, yet it made me suddenly look behind me, believing that he that called so loud meant me.

95. But so foolish was I, and ignorant, that I knew not the reason of this sound; which, as I did both see and feel soon after, was sent from heaven as an alarm, to awaken me to provide for what was coming; only it would make me muse and wonder in my mind, to think what should be the reason that this scripture, and that at this rate, so often and so loud, should still be sounding and rattling in mine ears; but, as I said before, I soon after perceived the end of God therein.

96. For about the space of a month after, a very great storm came down upon me, which handled me twenty times worse than all I had met with before; it came stealing upon me, now by one piece, then by another; first, all my comfort was taken from me, then darkness seized upon me, after which whole floods of blasphemies, both against God, Christ, and the Scriptures, were poured upon my spirit, to my great confusion and astonishment. These blasphemous thoughts were such as also stirred up questions in me, against the very being of God, and of His only beloved Son; as whether there were, in truth, a God, or Christ, or no? And whether the holy Scriptures were not rather a fable, and cunning story, than the holy and pure Word of God?

97. The tempter would also much assault me with this, How can you tell but that the Turks had as good Scriptures to prove their Mahomet the Savior, as we have to prove our Jesus is? And, could I think, that so many ten thousands, in so many countries and kingdoms, should be without the knowledge of the right way to heaven; if there were indeed a heaven, and that we only, who live in a corner of the earth, should alone be blessed therewith? Everyone doth think his own religion rightest, both Jews and Moors, and Pagans! and how if all our faith, and Christ, and Scriptures, should be but a think-so too?

98. Sometimes I have endeavored to argue against these suggestions, and to set some of the sentences of blessed Paul against them; but, alas! I quickly felt, when I thus did, such arguings as these would return again upon me, Though we made so great a matter of Paul, and of his words, yet how could I tell, but that in very deed, he being a subtle and cunning man, might

give himself up to deceive with strong delusions; and also take both that pains and travail, to undo and destroy his fellows?

99. These suggestions, with many other which at this time I may not, nor dare not utter, neither by word nor pen, did make such a seizure upon my spirit, and did so overweigh my heart, both with their number, continuance, and fiery force, that I felt as if there were nothing else but these from morning to night within me; and as though, indeed, there could be room for nothing else; and also concluded that God had, in very wrath to my soul, given me up unto them, to be carried away with them, as with a mighty whirlwind.

100. Only by the distaste that they gave unto my spirit, I felt there was something in me that refused to embrace them. But this consideration I then only had, when God gave me leave to swallow my spittle, otherwise the noise, and strength, and force of these temptations, would drown and overflow, and as it were bury all such thoughts or the remembrance of any such thing. While I was in this temptation, I should often find my mind suddenly put upon it, to curse and swear, or to speak some grievous thing against God, or Christ His Son, and of the Scriptures.

101. Now I thought, surely I am possessed of the devil; at other times again, I thought I should be bereft of my wits; for instead of lauding and magnifying God the Lord with others, if I have but heard Him spoken of, presently some most horrible blasphemous thought or other would bolt out of my heart against Him; so that whether I did think that God was, or again did think there were no such thing, no love, nor peace, nor gracious disposition could I feel within me.

102. These things did sink me into very deep despair; for I concluded, that such things could not possibly be found amongst them that loved God. I often, when these temptations have been with force upon me, did compare myself in the case of such a child, whom some gipsy hath by force took up under her apron, and is carrying from friend and country; kick sometimes I did, and also scream and cry; but yet I was as bound in the wings of the temptation, and the wind would carry me away. I thought also of Saul, and of the evil spirit that did possess him; and did greatly fear that my condition was the same with that of his (~~9964~~ 1 Samuel 16:14).

103. In these days, when I have heard others talk of what was the sin against the Holy Ghost, then would the tempter so provoke me to desire to sin that sin, that I was as if I could not, must not, neither should be quiet until I had committed that; now, no sin would serve but that; if it were to be committed by speaking of such a word, then I have been as if my mouth would have spoken that word, whether I would or no; and in so strong a measure was this temptation upon me, that often I have been ready to clap my hand under my chin, to hold my mouth from opening; and to that end also I have had thoughts at other times, to leap with my head downward, into some muck-hill hole or other, to keep my mouth from speaking.

104. Now I blessed the condition of the dog and toad, and counted the estate of everything that God had made far better than this dreadful state of mine, and such as my companions was; yea, gladly would I have been in the condition of dog or horse, for I knew they had no soul to perish under the everlasting weights of hell for sin, as mine was like to do. Nay, and though I saw this, felt this, and was broken to pieces with it, yet that which added to my sorrow was, that I could not find that with all my soul I did desire deliverance. That scripture did also tear and rend my soul, in the midst of these distractions,

“The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked” (²⁵⁷¹Isaiah 57:20, 21).

105. And now my heart was, at times, exceeding hard; if I would have given a thousand pounds for a tear, I could not shed one; no, nor sometimes scarce desire to shed one. I was much dejected to think that this should be my lot. I saw some could mourn and lament their sin; and others, again, could rejoice, and bless God for Christ; and others, again, could quietly talk of, and with gladness remember, the Word of God; while I only was in the storm or tempest. This much sunk me; I thought my condition was alone. I should, therefore, much bewail my hard hap; but get out of, or get rid of, these things, I could not.

106. While this temptation lasted, which was about a year, I could attend upon none of the ordinances of God but with sore and great affliction. Yea, then was I most distressed with blasphemies; if I have been hearing the

Word, then uncleanness, blasphemies and despair would hold me as captive there; if I have been reading, then, sometimes, I had sudden thoughts to question all I read; sometimes, again, my mind would be so strangely snatched away, and possessed with other things, that I have neither known, nor regarded, nor remembered so much as the sentence that but now I have read.

107. In prayer, also, I have been greatly troubled at this time; sometimes I have thought I should see the devil; nay, thought I have felt him, behind me, pull my clothes; he would be, also, continually at me in the time of prayer to have done; break off, make haste, you have prayed enough, and stay no longer, still drawing my mind away. Sometimes, also, he would cast in such wicked thoughts as these: that I must pray to him, or for him. I have thought sometimes of that-Fall down, or,

“if thou wilt fall down and worship me” (~~409~~ Matthew 4:9).

108. Also, when, because I have had wandering thoughts in the time of this duty, I have labored to compose my mind and fix it upon God, then, with great force, hath the tempter labored to distract me, and confound me, and to turn away my mind, by presenting to my heart and fancy the form of a bush, a bull, a besom, or the like, as if I should pray to those; to these he would, also, at some times especially, so hold my mind that I was as if I could think of nothing else, or pray to nothing else but to these, or such as they.

109. Yet, at times I should have some strong and heart-affecting apprehensions of God, and the reality of the truth of His gospel; but, oh! how would my heart, at such times, put forth itself with inexpressible groanings. My whole soul was then in every word; I should cry with pangs after God that He would be merciful unto me; but then I should be daunted again with such conceits as these: I should think that God did mock at these, my prayers, saying, and that in the audience of the holy angels, This poor simple wretch doth hanker after Me as if I had nothing to do with My mercy but to bestow it on such as he. Alas, poor fool! how art thou deceived; It is not for such as thee to have favor with the Highest.

110. Then hath the tempter come upon me, also, with such discouragement's as these: You are very hot for mercy, but I will cool you;

this frame shall not last always; many have been as hot as you for a spirit, but I have quenched their zeal. And with this, such and such who were fallen off would be set before mine eyes. Then I should be afraid that I should do so too; but, thought I, I am glad this comes into my mind. Well, I will watch, and take what heed I can. Though you do, said Satan, I shall be too hard for you; I will cool you insensibly, by degrees, by little and little. What care I, saith he, though I be seven years in chilling your heart if I can do it at last? Continual rocking will lull a crying child asleep. I will ply it close, but I will have my end accomplished. Though you be burning hot at present, yet, if I can pull you from this fire, I shall have you cold before it be long.

111. These things brought me into great straits; for as I at present could not find myself fit for present death, so I thought to live long would make me yet more unfit; for time would make me forget all, and wear even the remembrance of the evil of sin, the worth of heaven, and the need I had of the blood of Christ to wash me, both out of mind and thought; but I thank Christ Jesus these things did not at present make me slack my crying, but rather did put me more upon it, like her who met with the adulterer (^(~~1522~~)Deuteronomy 22:27); in which days that was a good word to me after I had suffered these things a while:

“I am persuaded that neither height, nor depth, nor life,” etc.,
 “shall separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus”
 (^(~~1588~~)Romans 8:38).

And now I hoped long life should not destroy me, nor make me miss of heaven.

112. Yet I had some supports in this temptation, though they were then all questioned by me; that in the third of ^(~~2481~~)Jeremiah, at the first, was something to me, and so was the consideration of the fifth verse of that chapter; that though we have spoken and done as evil things as we could, yet we should cry unto God, “My Father, Thou art the guide of my youth”; and should return unto Him.

113. I had, also, once a sweet glance from that in II Corinthians. 5.21: “For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” I remember, also, that one day as I

was sitting in a neighbor's house, and there very sad at the consideration of my many blasphemies, and as I was saying in my mind, What ground have I to think that I, who have been so vile and abominable, should ever inherit eternal life? that word came suddenly upon me,

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?” (~~488~~Romans 8:31).

That, also, was an help unto me, “Because I live, ye shall live also” (~~489~~John 14:19). But these were but hints, touches, and short visits, though very sweet when present; only they lasted not; but, like to Peter's sheet, of a sudden were caught up from me to heaven again (~~490~~Acts 10:16).

114. But afterwards the Lord did more fully and graciously discover Himself unto me; and, indeed, did quite, not only deliver me from the guilt that, by these things, was laid upon my conscience, but also from the very filth thereof; for the temptation was removed, and I was put into my right mind again, as other Christians were.

115. I remember that one day, as I was travelling into the country and musing on the wickedness and blasphemy of my heart, and considering of the enmity that was in me to God, that scripture came in my mind, He hath

“made peace through the blood of his cross” (~~500~~Colossians 1:20).

By which I was made to see, both again, and again, and again, that day, that God and my soul were friends by this blood; yea, I saw that the justice of God and my sinful soul could embrace and kiss each other through this blood. This was a good day to me; I hope I shall not forget it.

116. At another time, as I sat by the fire in my house, and musing on my wretchedness, the Lord made that also a precious word unto me,

“Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (~~3014~~Hebrews 2:14, 15).

I thought that the glory of these words was then so weighty on me that I was, both once and twice, ready to swoon as I sat; yet not with grief and trouble, but with solid joy and peace.

117. At this time, also, I sat under the ministry of holy Mr. Gifford, whose doctrine, by God's grace, was much for my stability. This man made it much his business to deliver the people of God from all those faults and unsound rests that, by nature, we are prone to take and make to our souls. He pressed up to take special heed that we took not up any truth upon trust-as from this, or that, or any other man or men- but to cry mightily to God that He would convince us of the reality thereof, and set us down therein, by His own Spirit, in the holy Word; for, said he, if you do otherwise when temptations come, if strongly, you, not having received them with evidence from heaven, will find you want that help and strength now to resist as once you thought you had.

118. This was as seasonable to my soul as the former and latter rain in their season; for I had found, and that by sad experience, the truth of these his words; for I had felt what no man can say, especially when tempted by the devil, that Jesus Christ is Lord but by the Holy Ghost. Wherefore I found my soul, through grace, very apt to drink in this doctrine, and to incline to pray to God that, in nothing that pertained to God's glory and my own eternal happiness, He would suffer me to be without the confirmation thereof from heaven; for now I saw clearly there was an exceeding difference betwixt the notions of flesh and blood, and the revelations of God in heaven; also, a great difference between that faith that is feigned, and according to man's wisdom, and of that which comes by a man's being born thereto of God (~~Acts~~ Matthew 16:15-17; ~~Acts~~ 1 John 5:1).

119. But, oh! now, how was my soul led from truth to truth by God! even from the birth and cradle of the Son of God to His ascension and second coming from heaven to judge the world.

120. Truly, I then found, upon this account, the great God was very good unto me; for, to my remembrance, there was not anything that I then cried unto God to make known and reveal unto me but He was pleased to do it for me; I mean not one part of the gospel of the Lord Jesus, but I was orderly led into it. Methought I saw with great evidence, from the relation

of the four evangelists, the wonderful work of God, in giving Jesus Christ to save us, from His conception and birth even to His second coming to judgment. Methought I was as if I had seen Him born, as if I had seen Him grow up, as if I had seen Him walk through this world, from the cradle to His cross: to which, also, when He came, I saw how gently He gave Himself to be hanged and nailed on it for my sins and wicked doings. Also, as I was musing on this, His progress, that dropped on my spirit, He was ordained for the slaughter (^{<4019>}1 Peter 1:19, 20).

121. When I have considered also the truth of His resurrection, and have remembered that word, “Touch me not, Mary,” etc., I have seen as if He leaped at the grave’s mouth for joy that He was risen again, and had got the conquest over our dreadful foes (^{<4017>}John 20:17). I have also, in the spirit, seen Him a man on the right hand of God the Father for me, and have seen the manner of His coming from heaven to judge the world with glory, and have been confirmed in these things by these scriptures following, ^{<4019>}Acts 1:9, 10; ^{<4075>}Acts 7:56; ^{<4002>}Acts 10:42; ^{<4072>}Hebrews 7:24; ^{<4003>}Hebrews 8:3; ^{<4018>}Revelation 1:18; ^{<4017>}1 Thessalonians 4:17, 18.

122. Once I was much troubled to know whether the Lord Jesus was both man as well as God, and God as well as man; and truly, in those days, let men say what they would, unless I had it with evidence from heaven, all was as nothing to me, I counted not myself set down in any truth of God. Well, I was much troubled about this point, and could not tell how to be resolved; at last, that in the fifth of the Revelations came into my mind, “And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb.” In the midst of the throne, thought I, there is His Godhead; in the midst of the elders, there is His manhood; but oh! methought this did glister! it was a goodly touch, and gave me sweet satisfaction. That other scripture also did help me much in this, “To us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be on his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace,” etc. (^{<4006>}Isaiah 9:6).

123. Also, besides these teachings of God in His Word, the Lord made use of two things to confirm me in these things; the one was the errors of the Quakers, and the other was the guilt of sin; for as the Quakers did oppose

His truth, so God did the more confirm me in it, by leading me into the scriptures that did wonderfully maintain it.

124. The errors that this people then maintained were:

1. That the holy Scriptures were not the Word of God.
2. That every man in the world had the spirit of Christ, grace, faith, etc.
3. That Christ Jesus, as crucified, and dying 1600 years ago, did not satisfy divine justice for the sins of the people.
4. That Christ's flesh and blood was within the saints.
5. That the bodies of the good and bad that are buried in the churchyard shall not arise again.
6. That the resurrection is past with good men already.
7. That that man Jesus, that was crucified between two thieves on Mount Calvary, in the land of Canaan, by Jerusalem, was not ascended up above the starry heavens.
8. That He should not, even the same Jesus that died by the hands of the Jews, come again at the last day, and as man judge all nations, etc.

125. Many more vile and abominable things were in those days fomented by them, by which I was driven to a more narrow search of the Scriptures, and was, through their light and testimony, not only enlightened, but greatly confirmed and comforted in the truth; and, as I said, the guilt of sin did help me much, for still as that would come upon me, the blood of Christ did take it off again, and again, and again, and that too, sweetly, according to the Scriptures. O friends! cry to God to reveal Jesus Christ unto you; there is none teacheth like Him.

126. It would be too long for me here to stay, to tell you in particular how God did set me down in all the things of Christ, and how He did, that He might do so, lead me into His words; yea, and also how He did open them unto me, make them shine before me, and comfort me over and over, both of His own being, and the being of His Son, and Spirit, and Word, and gospel.

127. Only this, as I said before I will say unto you again, that in general He was pleased to take this course with me; first, to suffer me to be afflicted with temptation concerning them, and then reveal them to me: as sometimes I should lie under great guilt for sin, even crushed to the ground therewith, and then the Lord would show me the death of Christ; yea, and so sprinkle my conscience with His blood, that I should find, and that before I was aware, that in that conscience where but just now did reign and rage the law, even there would rest and abide the peace and love of God through Christ.

128. Now had I an evidence, as I thought, of my salvation from heaven, with many golden seals thereon, all hanging in my sight; now could I remember this manifestation and the other discovery of grace, with comfort; and should often long and desire that the last day were come, that I might for ever be inflamed with the sight, and joy, and communion with Him whose head was crowned with thorns, whose face was spit on, and body broken, and soul made an offering for my sins: for whereas, before, I lay continually trembling at the mouth of hell, now methought I was got so far therefrom that I could not, when I looked back, scarce discern it; and oh! thought I, that I were fourscore years old now, that I might die quickly, that my soul might be gone to rest.

129. But before I had got thus far out of these my temptations, I did greatly long to see some ancient godly man's experience, who had writ some hundreds of years before I was born; for those who had writ in our days, I thought, but I desire them now to pardon me, that they had writ only that which others felt, or else had, through the strength of their wits and parts, studied to answer such objections as they perceived others were perplexed with, without going down themselves into the deep. Well, after many such longings in my mind, the God in whose hands are all our days and ways, did cast into my hand, one day, a book of Martin Luther; it was his comment on the Galatians-it also was so old that it was ready to fall piece from piece if I did but turn it over. Now I was pleased much that such an old book had fallen into my hands; the which, when I had but a little way perused, I found my condition, in his experience, so largely and profoundly handled, as if his book had been written out of my heart. This made me marvel; for thus thought I, This man could not know anything of

the state of Christians now, but must needs write and speak the experience of former days.

130. Besides, he doth most gravely, also, in that book, debate of the rise of these temptations, namely, blasphemy, desperation, and the like; showing that the law of Moses as well as the devil, death, and hell hath a very great hand therein, the which, at first, was very strange to me; but considering and watching, I found it so indeed. But of particulars here I intend nothing; only this, methinks, I must let fall before all men, I do prefer this book of Martin Luther upon the Galatians, excepting the Holy Bible, before all the books that ever I have seen, as most fit for a wounded conscience.

131. And now I found, as I thought, that I loved Christ dearly; oh! methought my soul cleaved unto Him, my affections cleaved unto Him, I felt love unto Him as hot as fire; and now, as Job said, I thought I should die in my nest; but I did quickly find that my great love was but little, and that I, who had, as I thought, such burning love to Jesus Christ, could let Him go again for a very trifle; God can tell how to abase us, and can hide pride from man. Quickly after this my love was tried to purpose.

132. For after the Lord had, in this manner, thus graciously delivered me from this great and sore temptation, and had set me down so sweetly in the faith of His holy gospel, and had given me such strong consolation and blessed evidence from heaven touching my interest in His love through Christ; the tempter came upon me again, and that with a more grievous and dreadful temptation than before.

133. And that was, To sell and part with this most blessed Christ, to exchange Him for the things of this life, for anything. The temptation lay upon me for the space of a year, and did follow me so continually that I was not rid of it one day in a month, no, not sometimes one hour in many days together, unless when I was asleep.

134. And though, in my judgment, I was persuaded that those who were once effectually in Christ, as I hoped, through His grace, I had seen myself, could never lose Him for ever-for “the land shall not be sold for ever, for the land is mine,” saith God (⁰⁸⁵²Leviticus 25:23)-yet it was a continual vexation to me to think that I should have so much as one such thought within me against a Christ, a Jesus, that had done for me as He

had done; and yet then I had almost none others, but such blasphemous ones.

135. But it was neither my dislike of the thought, nor yet any desire and endeavor to resist it that in the least did shake or abate the continuation, or force and strength thereof; for it did always, in almost whatever I thought, intermix itself therewith in such sort that I could neither eat my food, stoop for a pin, chop a stick, or cast mine eye to look on this, or that, but still the temptation would come, Sell Christ for this, or sell Christ for that; sell Him, sell Him.

136. Sometimes it would run in my thoughts, not so little as a hundred times together, Sell Him, sell Him, sell Him; against which I may say, for whole hours together, I have been forced to stand as continually leaning and forcing my spirit against it, lest haply, before I were aware, some wicked thought might arise in my heart that might consent thereto; and sometimes also the tempter would make me believe I had consented to it, then should I be as tortured upon a rack for whole days together.

137. This temptation did put me to such scares, lest I should at sometimes, I say, consent thereto, and be overcome therewith, that by the very force of my mind in laboring to gainsay and resist this wickedness, my very body also would be put into action or motion by way of pushing or thrusting with my hands or elbows, still answering as fast as the destroyer said, Sell Him; I will not, I will not, I will not, I will not; no, not for thousands, thousands, thousands of worlds. Thus reckoning lest I should in the midst of these assaults, set too low a value of Him, even until I scarce well knew where I was, or how to be composed again.

138. At these seasons he would not let me eat my food at quiet; but, forsooth, when I was set at the table at my meat, I must go hence to pray; I must leave my food now, and just now, so counterfeit holy also would this devil be. When I was thus tempted, I should say in myself, Now I am at my meat, let me make an end. No, said he, you must do it now, or you will displease God, and despise Christ. Wherefore I was much afflicted with these things; and because of the sinfulness of my nature, imagining that these things were impulses from God, I should deny to do it, as if I denied God; and then should I be as guilty, because I did not obey a temptation of the devil, as if I had broken the law of God indeed.

139. But to be brief, one morning, as I did lie in my bed, I was, at other times, most fiercely assaulted with this temptation, to sell and part with Christ; the wicked suggestion still running in my mind, Sell Him, sell Him, sell Him, sell Him, sell Him, as fast as a man could speak; against which also, in my mind, as at other times, I answered, No, no, not for thousands, thousands, thousands, at least twenty times together. But at last, after much striving, even until I was almost out of breath, I felt this thought pass through my heart, Let Him go, if He will! and I thought also, that I felt my heart freely consent thereto. Oh, the diligence of Satan! Oh, the desperateness of man's heart!

140. Now was the battle won, and down I fell, as a bird that is shot from the top of a tree, into great guilt, and fearful despair. Thus getting out of my bed, I went moping into the field; but God knows, with as heavy a heart as mortal man, I think, could bear; where, for the space of two hours, I was like a man bereft of life, and as now past all recovery, and bound over to eternal punishment.

141. And withal, that scripture did seize upon my soul,

“Or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat, sold his birthright; for ye know, how 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”

(~~scrip~~ Hebrews 12:16, 17).


142. Now was I as one bound, I felt myself shut up unto the judgment to come; nothing now for two years together would abide with me, but damnation, and an expectation of damnation; I say, nothing now would abide with me but this, save some few moments for relief, as in the sequel you will see.


143. These words were to my soul like fetters of brass to my legs, in the continual sound of which I went for several months together. But about ten or eleven o'clock one day, as I was walking under a hedge, full of sorrow and guilt, God knows, and bemoaning myself for this hard hap that such a thought should arise within me; suddenly this sentence bolted in upon me, The blood of Christ remits all guilt. At this I made a stand in my spirit; with that, this word took hold upon me,

“The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin”
( 1 John 1:7).

144. Now I began to conceive peace in my soul, and methought I saw as if the tempter did leer and steal away from me, as being ashamed of what he had done. At the same time also I had my sin, and the blood of Christ thus represented to me, that my sin, when compared to the blood of Christ, was no more to it, than this little clot or stone before me, is to this vast and wide field that here I see. This gave me good encouragement for the space of two or three hours; in which time also, methought I saw, by faith, the Son of God, as suffering for my sins; but because it tarried not, I therefore sunk in my spirit, under exceeding guilt again.

145. But chiefly by the afore-mentioned scripture, concerning Esau's selling of his birthright; for that scripture would lie all day long, all the week long, yea, all the year long in my mind, and hold me down, so that I could by no means lift up myself; for when I would strive to turn me to this scripture, or that, for relief, still that sentence would be sounding in me, “For ye know, how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”

146. Sometimes, also, I should have a touch from that in  Luke 22:32, “I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not”; but it would not abide upon me; neither could I indeed, when I considered my state, find ground to conceive in the least, that there should be the root of that grace within me, having sinned as I had done. Now was I torn and rent in heavy case, for many days together.

147. Then began I with sad and careful heart, to consider of the nature and largeness of my sin, and to search in the Word of God, if I could in any place espy a word of promise, or any encouraging sentence by which I might take relief. Wherefore I began to consider that third of  Mark, All manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, wherewith soever they shall blaspheme. Which place, methought, at a blush, did contain a large and glorious promise, for the pardon of high offences; but considering the place more fully, I thought it was rather to be understood as relating more chiefly to those who had, while in a natural state, committed such things as there are mentioned; but not to me, who

had not only received light and mercy, but that had, both after, and also contrary to that, so slighted Christ as I had done.

148. I feared therefore that this wicked sin of mine might be that sin unpardonable, of which he there thus speaketh,

“But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation” (~~4082~~ Mark 3:29).

And I did the rather give credit to this, because of that sentence in the Hebrews, “For ye know, how 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.” And this stuck always with me.

149. And now was I both a burden and a terror to myself, nor did I ever so know, as now, what it was to be weary of my life, and yet afraid to die. Oh, how gladly now would I have been anybody but myself! Anything but a man! and in any condition but mine own! for there was nothing did pass more frequently over my mind, than that it was impossible for me to be forgiven my transgression, and to be saved from wrath to come.

150. And now began I to labor to call again time that was past; wishing a thousand times twice told, that the day was yet to come, when I should be tempted to such a sin; concluding with great indignation, both against my heart, and all assaults, how I would rather have been torn in pieces, than found a consenter thereto. But alas! these thoughts, and wishings, and resolvings, were now too late to help me; the thought had passed my heart, God hath let me go, and I am fallen. Oh! thought I,

“that it was with me as in months past,
as in the days when God preserved me!” (~~4082~~ Job 29:2).

151. Then again, being loath and unwilling to perish, I began to compare my sin with others, to see if I could find that any of those that were saved had done as I had done. So I considered David’s adultery and murder, and found them most heinous crimes; and those too committed after light and grace received; but yet by considering, I perceived that his transgressions were only such as were against the law of Moses; from which the Lord Christ could, with the consent of His Word, deliver him; but mine was against the gospel, yea, against the Mediator thereof; I had sold my Savior.

152. Now again should I be as if racked upon the wheel, when I considered, that, besides the guilt that possessed me, I should be so void of grace, so bewitched. What, thought I, must it be no sin but this? Must it needs be the great transgression (~~1~~^{Psalm} 19:13)? Must that wicked one touch my soul (~~1~~^{1 John} 5:18)? Oh, what stings did I find in all these sentences!

153. What, thought I, is there but one sin that is unpardonable? But one sin that layeth the soul without the reach of God's mercy; and must I be guilty of that? Must it needs be that? Is there but one sin among so many millions of sins, for which there is no forgiveness; and must I commit this? Oh, unhappy sin! Oh, unhappy man! These things would so break and confound my spirit, that I could not tell what to do; I thought, at times, they would have broke my wits; and still, to aggravate my misery, that would run in my mind, "Ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected." Oh! none knows the terrors of those days but myself.

154. After this I came to consider of Peter's sin, which he committed in denying his Master; and indeed, this came nighest to mine, of any that I could find; for he had denied his Savior, as I, and that after light and mercy received; yea, and that too, after warning given him. I also considered, that he did it both once and twice; and that, after time to consider betwixt. But though I put all these circumstances together, that, if possible, I might find help, yet I considered again, that his was but a denial of his Master, but mine was a selling of my Savior. Wherefore I thought with myself, that I came nearer to Judas, than either to David or Peter.

155. Here again my torment would flame out and afflict me; yea, it would grind me, as it were, to powder, to discern the preservation of God towards others, while I fell into the snare; for in my thus considering of other men's sins, and comparing of them with my own, I could evidently see how God preserved them, notwithstanding their wickedness, and would not let them, as he had let me, to become a son of perdition.

156. But oh, how did my soul, at this time, prize the preservation that God did set about his people! Ah, how safely did I see them walk, whom God had hedged in! They were within His care, protection, and special providence; though they were full as bad as I by nature; yet because He

loved them, He would not suffer them to fall without the range of mercy; but as for me, I was gone, I had done it; He would not preserve me, nor keep me; but suffered me, because I was a reprobate, to fall as I had done. Now, did those blessed places, that spake of God's keeping His people, shine like the sun before me, though not to comfort me, but to show me the blessed state and heritage of those whom the Lord had blessed.

157. Now I saw, that as God had His hand in all providences and dispensation that overtook His elect, so He had His hand in all the temptations that they had to sin against Him, not to animate them unto wickedness, but to choose their temptations and troubles for them; and also to leave them, for a time, to such sins only as might not destroy, but humble them; as might not put them beyond, but lay them in the way of the renewing of His mercy. But oh, what love, what care, what kindness and mercy did I now see, mixing itself with the most severe and dreadful of all God's ways to His people! He would let David, Hezekiah, Solomon, Peter, and others fall, but He would not let them fall into sin unpardonable, nor into hell for sin. Oh! thought I, these be the men that God hath loved; these be the men that God, though He chastiseth them, keeps them in safety by Him, and them whom He makes to abide under the shadow of the Almighty. But all these thoughts added sorrow, grief, and horror to me, as whatever I now thought on, it was killing to me. If I thought how God kept His own, that was killing to me. If I thought of how I was falling myself, that was killing to me. As all things wrought together for the best, and to do good to them that were the called, according to His purpose; so I thought that all things wrought for my damage, and for my eternal overthrow.

158. Then, again, I began to compare my sin with the sin of Judas, that, if possible, I might find that mine differed from that which, in truth, is unpardonable. And, oh! thought I, if it should differ from it, though but the breadth of an hair, what a happy condition is my soul in! And, by considering, I found that Judas did his intentionally, but mine was against my prayer and strivings; besides, his was committed with much deliberation, but mine in a fearful hurry, on a sudden; all this while I was tossed to and fro, like the locusts, and driven from trouble to sorrow; hearing always the sound of Esau's fall in mine ears, and of the dreadful consequences thereof.

159. Yet this consideration about Judas, his sin, was, for a while, some little relief unto me; for I saw I had not, as to the circumstances, transgressed so foully as he. But this was quickly gone again, for, I thought with myself, there might be more ways than one to commit the unpardonable sin; also I thought that there might be degrees of that, as well as of other transgressions; wherefore, for aught I yet could perceive, this iniquity of mine might be such, as might never be passed by.

160. I was often now ashamed, that I should be like such an ugly man as Judas; I thought, also, how loathsome I should be unto all the saints at the day of judgment; insomuch, that now I could scarce see a good man, that I believed had a good conscience, but I should feel my heart tremble at him, while I was in his presence. Oh! now I saw a glory in walking with God, and what a mercy it was to have a good conscience before Him.

161. I was much about this time tempted to content myself, by receiving some false opinion; as that there should be no such thing as a day of judgment, that we should not rise again, and that sin was no such grievous thing; the tempter suggesting thus, For if these things should indeed be true, yet to believe otherwise, would yield you ease for the present. If you must perish, never torment yourself so much beforehand; drive the thoughts of damning out of your mind, by possessing your mind with some such conclusions that Atheists and Ranters do use to help themselves withal.

162. But oh! when such thoughts have led through my heart, how, as it were, within a step, hath death and judgment been in my view; methought the judge stood at the door, I was as if it was come already; so that such things could have no entertainment. But, methinks, I see by this, that Satan will use any means to keep the soul from Christ; he loveth not an awakened frame of spirit; security, blindness, darkness, and error is the very kingdom and habitation of the wicked one.

163. I found it hard work now to pray to God, because despair was swallowing me up; I thought I was, as with a tempest, driven away from God, for always when I cried to God for mercy, this would come in, It is too late, I am lost, God hath let me fall; not to my correction, but condemnation; my sin is unpardonable; and I know, concerning Esau, how that, after he had sold his birthright, he would have received the blessing,

but was rejected. About this time, I did light on that dreadful story of that miserable mortal, Francis Spira; a book that was to my troubled spirit as salt, when rubbed into a fresh wound; every sentence in that book, every groan of that man, with all the rest of his actions in his dolorous, as his tears, his prayers, his gnashing of teeth, his wringing of hands, his twining and twisting, languishing and pining away under that mighty hand of God that was upon him, was as knives and daggers in my soul; especially that sentence of his was frightful to me, Man knows the beginning of sin, but who bounds the issues thereof? Then would the former sentence, as the conclusion of all, fall like a hot thunderbolt again upon my conscience; “for you know how 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.”

164. Then was I struck into a very great trembling, insomuch that at sometimes I could, for whole days together, feel my very body, as well as my mind, to shake and totter under the sense of the dreadful judgment of God, that should fall on those that have sinned that most fearful and unpardonable sin. I felt also such a clogging and heat at my stomach, by reason of this my terror, that I was, especially at some times, as if my breast bone would have split in sunder; then I thought of that concerning Judas, who, by his falling headlong, burst asunder, and all his bowels gushed out (~~4000~~ Acts 1:18).

165. I feared also that this was the mark that the Lord did set on Cain, even continued fear and trembling, under the heavy load of guilt that he had charged on him for the blood of his brother Abel. Thus did I wind, and twine, and shrink, under the burden that was upon me; which burden also did so oppress me, that I could neither stand, nor go, nor lie, either at rest or quiet.

166. Yet that saying would sometimes come to my mind, He hath received gifts for the rebellious (~~3968~~ Psalm 68:18). “The rebellious,” thought I; why, surely they are such as once were under subjection to their prince, even those who, after they have sworn subjection to his government, have taken up arms against him; and this, thought I, is my very condition; once I loved Him, feared Him, served Him; but now I am a rebel; I have sold Him,

I have said, Let Him go if He will; but yet He has gifts for rebels, and then why not for me?

167. This sometimes I thought on, and should labor to take hold thereof, that some, though small, refreshment might have been conceived by me; but in this also I missed of my desire, I was driven with force beyond it, I was like a man that is going to the place of execution, even by that place where he would fain creep in and hide himself, but may not.

168. Again, after I had thus considered the sins of the saints in particular, and found mine went beyond them, then I began to think thus with myself: Set the case I should put all theirs together, and mine alone against them, might I not then find some encouragement? For if mine, though bigger than any one, yet should but be equal to all, then there is hopes; for that blood that hath virtue enough in it to wash away all theirs, hath also virtue enough in it to do away mine, though this one be full as big, if no bigger, than all theirs. Here, again, I should consider the sin of David, of Solomon, of Manasseh, of Peter, and the rest of the great offenders; and should also labor, what I might with fairness, to aggravate and heighten their sins by several circumstances: but, alas! it was all in vain.

169. I should think with myself that David shed blood to cover his adultery, and that by the sword of the children of Ammon; a work that could not be done but by continuance and deliberate contrivance, which was a great aggravation to his sin. But then this would turn upon me: Ah! but these were but sins against the law, from which there was a Jesus sent to save them; but yours is a sin against the Savior, and who shall save you from that?

170. Then I thought on Solomon, and how he sinned in loving strange women, in falling away to their idols, in building them temples, in doing this after light, in his old age, after great mercy received; but the same conclusion that cut me off in the former consideration, cut me off as to this; namely, that all those were but sins against the law, for which God had provided a remedy; but I had sold my Savior, and there now remained no more sacrifice for sin.

171. I would then add to those men's sins, the sins of Manasseh, how that he built altars for idols in the house of the Lord; he also observed times,

used enchantments, had to do with wizards, was a wizard, had his familiar spirits, burned his children in the fire in sacrifice to devils, and made the streets of Jerusalem run down with the blood of innocents. These, I thought, are great sins, sins of a bloody color; yea, it would turn again upon me: They are none of them of the nature of yours; you have parted with Jesus, you have sold your Savior.

172. This one consideration would always kill my heart, My sin was point-blank against my Savior; and that too, at that height, that I had in my heart said of Him, Let Him go if He will. Oh! methought, this sin was bigger than the sins of a country, of a kingdom, or of the whole world, no one pardonable, nor all of them together, was able to equal mine; mine outwent them every one.

173. Now I should find my mind to flee from God, as from the face of a dreadful judge; yet this was my torment, I could not escape His hand:

“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”
(³⁸¹⁸ Hebrews 10:31).

But blessed be His grace, that scripture, in these flying sins, would call as running after me,

“I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions; and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me, for I have redeemed thee”
(²³⁴² Isaiah 44:22).

This, I say, would come in upon my mind, when I was fleeing from the face of God; for I did flee from His face, that is, my mind and spirit fled before Him; by reason of His highness, I could not endure; then would the text cry, “Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.” Indeed, this would make me make a little stop, and, as it were, look over my shoulder behind me, to see if I could discern that the God of grace did follow me with a pardon in His hand, but I could no sooner do that, but all would be clouded and darkened again by that sentence, “For you know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.” Wherefore I could not return, but fled, though at sometimes it cried “Return, return”, as if it did holloa after me. But I feared to close in therewith, lest it should not come from God; for that other, as I said was still sounding in my

conscience, “For you know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected”, etc.

174. Once as I was walking to and fro in a good man’s shop, bemoaning of myself in my sad and doleful state, afflicting myself with self- abhorrence for this wicked and ungodly thought; lamenting, also, this hard hap of mine, for that I should commit so great a sin; greatly fearing I would not be pardoned; praying, also, in my heart, that if this sin of mine did differ from that against the Holy Ghost, the Lord would show it me. And being now ready to sink with fear, suddenly there was, as if there had rushed in at the window, the noise of wind upon me, but very pleasant, and as if I heard a voice speaking, Didst ever refuse to be justified by the blood of Christ? And withal my whole life and profession past was, in a moment, opened to me, wherein I was made to see that designedly I had not; so my heart answered groaningly, No. Then fell, with power, that word of God upon me,

“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh” (~~8025~~ Hebrews 12:25).

This made a strange seizure upon my spirit; it brought light with it, and commanded a silence in my heart of all those tumultuous thoughts that before did use, like masterless hell- hounds, to roar and bellow, and make a hideous noise within me. It showed me, also, that Jesus Christ had yet a word of grace and mercy for me, that He had not, as I had feared, quite forsaken and cast off my soul; yea, this was a kind of chide for my proneness to desperation; a kind of a threatening me if I did not, notwithstanding my sins and the heinousness of them, venture my salvation upon the Son of God. But as to my determining about this strange dispensation, what it was I knew not; from whence it came I knew not. I have not yet, in twenty years” time, been able to make a judgment of it; I thought then what here I shall be loath to speak. But verily, that sudden rushing wind was as if an angel had come upon me; but both it and the salvation I will leave until the day of judgment; only this I say, it commanded a great calm in my soul, it persuaded me there might be hope; it showed me, as I thought, what the sin unpardonable was, and that my soul had yet the blessed privilege to flee to Jesus for mercy. But, I say, concerning this dispensation, I know not what yet to say unto it; which was, also, in truth, the cause that, at first, I did not speak of it in the book;

I do now, also, leave it to be thought on by men of sound judgment. I lay not the stress of my salvation thereupon, but upon the Lord Jesus, in the promise; yet, seeing I am here unfolding of my secret things, I thought it might not be altogether inexpedient to let this also show itself, though I cannot now relate the matter as there I did experience it. This lasted, in the savor of it, for about three or four days, and then I began to mistrust and to despair again.

175. Wherefore, still my life hung in doubt before me, not knowing which way I should tip; only this I found my soul desire, even to cast itself at the foot of grace, by prayer and supplication. But, oh! it was hard for me now to bear the face to pray to this Christ for mercy, against whom I had thus most vilely sinned; it was hard work, I say, to offer to look Him in the face against whom I had so vilely sinned; and, indeed, I have found it as difficult to come to God by prayer, after backsliding from Him, as to do any other thing. Oh, the shame that did now attend me! especially when I thought I am now a-going to pray to Him for mercy that I had so lightly esteemed but a while before! I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because this villainy had been committed by me; but I saw there was but one way with me, I must go to Him and humble myself unto Him, and beg that He, of His wonderful mercy, would show pity to me, and have mercy upon my wretched sinful soul.

176. Which, when the tempter perceived, he strongly suggested to me, That I ought not to pray to God; for prayer was not for any in my case, neither could it do me good, because I had rejected the Mediator, by whom all prayer came with acceptance to God the Father, and without whom no prayer could come into His presence. Wherefore, now to pray is but to add sin to sin; yea, now to pray, seeing God has cast you off, is the next way to anger and offend Him more than you ever did before.

177. For God, saith he, hath been weary of you for these several years already, because you are none of His; your bawlings in His ears hath been no pleasant voice to Him; and, therefore, He let you sin this sin, that you might be quite cut off; and will you pray still? This the devil urged, and set forth that, in Numbers, when Moses said to the children of Israel, That because they would not go up to possess the land when God would have

them, therefore, for ever after, God did bar them out from thence, though they prayed they might, with tears (⁽⁴⁴⁻⁴⁵⁾Numbers 14:36, 37, etc.).

178. As it is said in another place (⁽¹²¹⁴⁾Exodus 21:14), the man that sins presumptuously shall be taken from God's altar, that he may die; even as Joab was by King Solomon, when he thought to find shelter there (⁽¹⁰²⁸⁾1 Kings 2:28, etc.). These places did pinch me very sore; yet, my case being desperate, I thought with myself I can but die; and if it must be so, it shall once be said, that such an one died at the foot of Christ in prayer. This I did, but with great difficulty, God doth know; and that because, together with this, still that saying about Esau would be set at my heart, even like a flaming sword, to keep the way of the tree of life, lest I should taste thereof and live. Oh! who knows how hard a thing I found it to come to God in prayer.

179. I did also desire the prayers of the people of God for me, but I feared that God would give them no heart to do it; yea, I trembled in my soul to think that some or other of them would shortly tell me, that God had said those words to them that He once did say to the prophet concerning the children of Israel, "Pray thou not for this people," for I have rejected them (⁽²⁸¹¹⁴⁾Jeremiah 11:14). So, pray not for him, for I have rejected him. Yea, I thought that He had whispered this to some of them already, only they durst not tell me so, neither durst I ask them of it, for fear, if it should be so, it would make me quite beside myself. Man knows the beginning of sin, said Spira, but who bounds the issues thereof?

180. About this time I took an opportunity to break my mind to an ancient Christian, and told him all my case; I told him, also, that I was afraid that I had sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost; and he told me he thought so too. Here, therefore, I had but cold comfort; but, talking a little more with him, I found him, though a good man, a stranger to much combat with the devil. Wherefore, I went to God again, as well as I could, for mercy still.

181. Now, also, did the tempter begin to mock me in my misery, saying, that, seeing I had thus parted with the Lord Jesus, and provoked Him to displeasure, who would have stood between my soul and the flame of devouring fire, there was now but one way, and that was, to pray that God the Father would be the Mediator betwixt His Son and me, that we

might be reconciled again, and that I might have that blessed benefit in Him that His blessed saints enjoyed.

182. Then did that scripture seize upon my soul, He is of one mind, and who can turn Him? Oh! I saw it was as easy to persuade Him to make a new world, a new covenant, or new Bible, besides that we have already, as to pray for such a thing. This was to persuade Him that what He had done already was mere folly, and persuade with Him to alter, yea, to disannul, the whole way of salvation; and then would that saying rend my soul asunder,

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved”
(~~4:12~~ Acts 4:12).

183. Now the most free, and full, and gracious words of the gospel were the greatest torment to me; yea, nothing so afflicted me as the thoughts of Jesus Christ, the remembrance of a Savior; because I had cast Him off, brought forth the villainy of my sin, and my loss by it to mind; nothing did twinge my conscience like this. Every time that I thought of the Lord Jesus, of His grace, love, goodness, kindness, gentleness, meekness, death, blood, promises and blessed exhortations, comforts and consolations, it went to my soul like a sword; for still, unto these my considerations of the Lord Jesus, these thoughts would make place for themselves in my heart; aye, this is the Jesus, the loving Savior, the Son of God, whom thou hast parted with, whom you slighted, despised, and abused. This is the only Savior, the only Redeemer, the only one that could so love sinners as to wash them from their sins in His own most precious blood; but you have no part nor lot in this Jesus, you have put Him away from you, you have said in your heart, Let Him go if He will. Now, therefore, you are severed from Him; you have severed yourself from Him. Behold, then, His goodness, but you yourself be no partaker of it. Oh, thought I, what have I lost! What have I parted with! What have I disinherited my poor soul of! Oh! it is sad to be destroyed by the grace and mercy of God; to have the Lamb, the Savior, turn lion and destroyer (Revelations. 6). I also trembled, as I have said, at the sight of the saints of God, especially at those that greatly loved Him, and that made it their business to walk continually with Him in this world; for they did, both in their words, their carriages, and all

their expressions of tenderness and fear to sin against their precious Savior, condemn, lay guilt upon, and also add continual affliction and shame unto my soul. The dread of them was upon me, and I trembled at God's Samuel's (~~1~~ 1 Samuel 16:4).

184. Now, also, the tempter began afresh to mock my soul another way, saying that Christ, indeed, did pity my case, and was sorry for my loss; but forasmuch as I had sinned and transgressed, as I had done, He could by no means help me, nor save me from what I feared; for my sin was not of the nature of theirs for whom He bled and died, neither was it counted with those that were laid to His charge when He hanged on the tree. Therefore, unless He should come down from heaven and die anew for this sin, though, indeed, He did greatly pity me, yet I could have no benefit of Him. These things may seem ridiculous to others, even as ridiculous as they were in themselves, but to me they were most tormenting cogitation's; every of them augmented my misery, that Jesus Christ should have so much love as to pity me when He could not help me; nor did I think that the reason why He could not help me was because His merits were weak, or His grace and salvation spent on them already, but because His faithfulness to His threatening would not let Him extend His mercy to me. Besides, I thought, as I have already hinted, that my sin was not within the bounds of that pardon that was wrapped up in a promise; and if not, then I knew assuredly, that it was more easy for heaven and earth to pass away than for me to have eternal life. So that the ground of all these fears of mine did arise from a steadfast belief that I had of the stability of the holy Word of God, and, also, from my being misinformed of the nature of my sin.

185. But oh! how this would add to my affliction, to conceit that I should be guilty of such a sin for which He did not die. These thoughts would so confound me, and imprison me, and tie me up from faith, that I knew not what to do; but, oh! I thought, that He would come down again! Oh! that the work of man's redemption was yet to be done by Christ! How would I pray Him and entreat Him to count and reckon this sin amongst the rest for which He died! But this scripture would strike me down as dead,

“Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him” (~~1~~ Romans 6:9).

186. Thus, by the strange and unusual assaults of the tempter, was my soul, like a broken vessel, driven as with the winds, and tossed sometimes headlong into despair, sometimes upon the covenant of works, and sometimes to wish that the new covenant, and the conditions thereof, might, so far forth as I thought myself concerned, be turned another way and changed. But in all these I was but as those that justly against the rocks; more broken, scattered, and rent. Oh, the unthought of imaginations, frights, fears, and terrors that are affected by a thorough application of guilt, yielded to desperation! this is the man that hath “his dwelling among the tombs” with the dead; that is, always crying out and “cutting himself with stones” (~~and~~ Mark 5:2-5). But I say, all in vain; desperation will not comfort him, the old covenant will not save him; nay, heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or tittle of the Word and law of grace shall fall or be removed. This I saw, this I felt, and under this I groaned; yet this advantage I got thereby, namely, a further confirmation of the certainty of the way of salvation, and that the Scriptures were the Word of God! Oh! I cannot now express what then I saw and felt of the steadiness of Jesus Christ, the rock of man’s salvation; what was done could not be undone, added to, nor altered. I saw, indeed, that sin might drive the soul beyond Christ, even the sin which is unpardonable; but woe to him that was so driven, for the Word would shut him out.

187. Thus was I always sinking, whatever I did think or do. So one day I walked to a neighboring town, and sat down upon a settle in the street, and fell into a very deep pause about the most fearful state my sin had brought me to; and, after long musing, I lifted up my head, but methought I saw as if the sun that shineth in the heavens did grudge to give light, and as if the very stones in the street, and tiles upon the houses, did bend themselves against me; methought that they all combined together to banish me out of the world; I was abhorred of them, and unfit to dwell among them, or be partaker of their benefits, because I had sinned against the Savior. O how happy, now, was every creature over what I was; for they stood fast and kept their station, but I was gone and lost.

188. Then breaking out in the bitterness of my soul, I said to myself, with a grievous sigh, How can God comfort such a wretch as I? I had no sooner said it but this returned upon me, as an echo doth answer a voice, This sin is not unto death. At which I was as if I had been raised out of a grave, and

cried out again, Lord, how couldest Thou find out such a word as this? for I was filled with admiration at the fitness, and, also, at the unexpectedness of the sentence, the fitness of the word, the rightness of the timing of it, the power, and sweetness, and light, and glory that came with it, was marvelous to me to find. I was now, for the time, out of doubt as to that about which I so much was in doubt before; my fears before were, that my sin was not pardonable, and so that I had no right to pray, to repent, etc., or that if I did, it would be of no advantage or profit to me. But now, thought I, if this sin is not unto death, then it is pardonable; therefore, from this I have encouragement to come to God, by Christ, for mercy, to consider the promise of forgiveness as that which stands with open arms to receive me, as well as others. This, therefore, was a great easement to my mind; to wit, that my sin was pardonable, that it was not the sin unto death (²⁶¹⁶1 John 5:16, 17). None but those that know what my trouble, by their own experience, was, can tell what relief came to my soul by this consideration; it was a release to me from my former bonds, and a shelter from my former storm. I seemed now to stand upon the same ground with other sinners, and to have as good right to the word and prayer as any of them.

189. Now, I say, I was in hopes that my sin was not unpardonable, but that there might be hopes for me to obtain forgiveness. But oh, how Satan did now lay about him for to bring me down again! But he could by no means do it, neither this day nor the most part of the next, for this sentence stood like a mill-post at my back; yet, towards the evening of the next day, I felt this word begin to leave me and to withdraw its supportation from me, and so I returned to my old fears again, but with a great deal of grudging and peevishness, for I feared the sorrow of despair; nor could my faith now longer retain this word.


190. But the next day, at evening, being under many fears, I went to seek the Lord; and as I prayed, I cried, and my soul cried to Him in these words, with strong cries: O Lord, I beseech thee, show me that thou hast loved me with everlasting love (²⁶¹⁸Jeremiah 31:3). I had no sooner said it but, with sweetness, this returned upon me, as an echo or sounding again, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love.” Now I went to bed at quiet; also, when I awaked the next morning, it was fresh upon my soul-and I believed it.

191. But yet the tempter left me not; for it could not be so little as an hundred times that he that day did labor to break my peace. Oh! the combats and conflicts that I did then meet with as I strove to hold by this word; that of Esau would fly in my face like to lightning. I should be sometimes up and down twenty times in an hour, yet God did bear me up and keep my heart upon this world, from which I had also, for several days together, very much sweetness and comfortable hopes of pardon; for thus it was made out to me, I loved thee whilst thou wast committing this sin, I loved thee before, I love thee still, and I will love thee for ever.

192. Yet I saw my sin most barbarous, and a filthy crime, and could not but conclude, and that with great shame and astonishment, that I had horribly abused the holy Son of God; wherefore, I felt my soul greatly to love and pity Him, and my bowels to yearn towards Him; for I saw He was still my Friend, and did reward me good for evil; yea, the love and affection that then did burn within to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ did work, at this time, such a strong and hot desire of revengement upon myself for the abuse I had done unto him, that, to speak as I then thought, had I a thousand gallons of blood within my veins, I could freely then have spilt it all at the command and feet of this my Lord and Savior.

193. And as I was thus in musing and in my studies, considering how to love the Lord and to express my love to Him, that saying came in upon me, “If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared” (Psalms. 130.3, 4). These were good words to me, especially the latter part thereof; to wit, that there is forgiveness with the Lord, that He might be feared; that is, as then I understood it, that He might be loved and had in reverence; for it was thus made out to me, that the great God did set so high an esteem upon the love of His poor creatures, that rather than He would go without their love He would pardon their transgressions.

194. And now was that word fulfilled on me, and I was also refreshed by it, Then shall they be ashamed and confounded,

“and never open their mouth any more because of their shame, when I am pacified towards them for all that they have done, saith the Lord God” ( Ezekiel 16:63).

Thus was my soul at this time, and, as I then did think, for ever, set at liberty from being again afflicted with my former guilt and amazement.

195. But before many weeks were over I began to despond again, fearing lest, notwithstanding all that I had enjoyed, that yet I might be deceived and destroyed at the last; for this consideration came strong into my mind, that whatever comfort and peace I thought I might have from the word of the promise of life, yet unless there could be found in my refreshment a concurrence and agreement in the Scriptures, let me think what I will thereof, and hold it never so fast, I should find no such thing at the end; “for the Scripture cannot be broken” (~~3005~~ John 10:35).

196. Now began my heart again to ache and fear I might meet with disappointment at the last, wherefore I began, with all seriousness, to examine my former comfort, and to consider whether one that had sinned as I have done, might with confidence trust upon the faithfulness of God, laid down in those words by which I had been comforted and on which I had leaned myself. But now were brought those sayings to my mind,

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance” (~~3006~~ Hebrews 6:4-6).

“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries” (~~3007~~ Hebrews 10:26, 27).

Even

“as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright; for ye know how 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” (~~3008~~ Hebrews 12:16, 17) .

197. Now was the word of the gospel forced from my soul, so that no promise or encouragement was to be found in the Bible for me; and now would that saying work upon my spirit to afflict me,

“Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy as other people” (³⁹⁰¹Hosea 9:1).

For I saw indeed there was cause of rejoicing for those that held to Jesus; but as for me, I had cut myself off by my transgressions, and left myself neither foot-hold, nor hand-hold, amongst all the stays and props in the precious word of life.

198. And truly I did now feel myself to sink into a gulf, as an house whose foundation is destroyed; I did liken myself, in this condition, unto the case of a child that was fallen into a mill-pit, who, though it could make some shift to scrabble and sprawl in the water, yet because it could find neither hold for hand nor foot, therefore at last it must die in that condition. So soon as this fresh assault had fastened on my soul, that scripture came into my heart, “This is for many days” (²⁷⁰⁴Daniel 10:14). And indeed I found it was so; for I could not be delivered, nor brought to peace again, until well-nigh two years and an half were completely finished. Wherefore these words, though in themselves they tended to discouragement, yet to me, who feared this condition would be eternal, they were at sometimes as an help and refreshment to me.

199. For, thought I, many days are not for ever, many days will have an end, therefore seeing I was to be afflicted, not a few, but many days, yet I was glad it was but for many days. Thus, I say, I could recall myself sometimes, and give myself a help, for as soon as ever the words came into my mind at first, I knew my trouble would be long; yet this would be but sometimes, for I could not always think on this, nor ever be helped by it, though I did.

200. Now while these scriptures lay before me, and laid sin anew at my door, that saying in the eighteenth of Luke, with others, did encourage me to prayer. Then the tempter again laid at me very sore, suggesting, That neither the mercy of God, nor yet the blood of Christ, did at all concern me, nor could they help me for my sin; therefore it was in vain to pray. Yet, thought I, I will pray. But, said the tempter, your sin is unpardonable. Well, said I, I will pray. It is to no boot, said he. Yet, said I, I will pray. So I went to prayer to God; and while I was at prayer, I uttered words to this effect, Lord, Satan tells me that neither Thy mercy, nor Christ’s blood, is sufficient to save my soul; Lord, shall I honor Thee most, by believing Thou wilt and canst? or him, by believing Thou neither

wilt nor canst? Lord, I would fain honor Thee, by believing Thou wilt and canst.

201. And as I was thus before the Lord, that scripture fastened on my heart, “O woman, great is thy faith” (^{<4158>}Matthew 15:28), even as if one had clapped me on the back, as I was on my knees before God. Yet I was not able to believe this, that this was a prayer of faith, till almost six months after; for I could not think that I had faith, or that there should be a word for me to act faith on; therefore I should still be as sticking in the jaws of desperation, and went mourning up and down in a sad condition, crying, Is His mercy clean gone? Is His mercy clean gone for ever? And I thought sometimes, even when I was groaning in these expressions, they did seem to make a question whether it was or no; yet I greatly feared it was.

202. There was nothing now that I longed for more than to be put out of doubt, as to this thing in question; and, as I was vehemently desiring to know if there was indeed hopes for me, these words came rolling into my mind,

“Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favorable no more?
Is his mercy clean gone for ever? Doth his promise fail for
evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger
shut up his tender mercies?” (^{<4970>}Psalm 77:7-9).

And all the while they run in my mind, methought I had this still as the answer, It is a question whether He had or no; it may be He hath not. Yea, the interrogatory seemed to me to carry in it a sure affirmation that indeed He had not, nor would so cast off, but would be favorable; that His promise doth not fail, and that He had not forgotten to be gracious, nor would in anger shut up His tender mercy. Something, also, there was upon my heart at the same time, which I now cannot call to mind; which, with this text, did sweeten my heart, and made me conclude that His mercy might not be quite gone, nor clean gone for ever.

203. At another time, I remember I was again much under the question, Whether the blood of Christ was sufficient to save my soul? In which doubt I continued from morning till about seven or eight at night: and at last, when I was, as it were, quite worn out with fear, lest it should not lay

hold on me, these words did sound suddenly within my heart, He is able. But methought this word scaps able was spoke so loud unto me; it showed such a great word, it seemed to be writ in great letters, and gave such a justly to my fear and doubt; I mean for the time it tarried with me, which was about a day, as I never had from that all my life, either before or after that (^{SK25} Hebrews 7:25).

204. But one morning, when I was again at prayer, and trembling under the fear of this, that no word of God could help me, that piece of a sentence darted in upon me, “My grace is sufficient.” At this methought I felt some stay, as if there might be hopes. But, oh, how good a thing it is for God to send His word! For about a fortnight before I was looking on this very place, and then I thought it could not come near my soul with comfort, therefore I threw down my book in a pet. Then I thought it was not large enough for me; no, not large enough; but now, it was as if it had arms of grace so wide that it could not only enclose me, but many more besides.


205. By these words I was sustained, yet not without exceeding conflicts, for the space of seven or eight weeks; for my peace would be in and out, sometimes twenty times a day; comfort now, and trouble presently; peace now, and before I could go a furlong as full of fear and guilt as ever heart could hold; and this was not only now and then, but my whole seven weeks” experience; for this about the sufficiency of grace, and that of Esau’s parting with his birthright, would be like a pair of scales within my mind, sometimes one end would be uppermost, and sometimes again the other; according to which would be my peace or trouble.

206. Therefore I still did pray to God, that He would come in with this scripture more fully on my heart; to wit, that He would help me to apply the whole sentence, for as yet I could not: that He gave, I gathered; but farther I could not go, for as yet it only helped me to hope there might be mercy for me, “My grace is sufficient”; and though it came no farther, it answered my former question; to wit, that there was hope; yet, because “for thee” was left out, I was not contented, but prayed to God for that also. Wherefore, one day, as I was in a meeting of God’s people, full of sadness and terror, for my fears again were strong upon me; and as I was now thinking my soul was never the better; but my case most sad and fearful, these words did, with great power, suddenly break in upon me,

“My grace is sufficient for thee, my grace is sufficient for thee, my grace is sufficient for thee,” three times together; and, oh! methought that every word was a mighty word unto me; as my, and grace, and sufficient, and for thee; they were then, and sometimes are still, far bigger than others be.

207. At which time my understanding was so enlightened, that I was as though I had seen the Lord Jesus look down from heaven through the tiles upon me, and direct these words unto me. This sent me mourning home, it broke my heart, and filled me full of joy, and laid me low as the dust; only it stayed not long with me, I mean in this glory and refreshing comfort, yet it continued with me for several weeks, and did encourage me to hope. But so soon as that powerful operation of it was taken off my heart, that other about Esau returned upon me as before; so my soul did hang as in a pair of scales again, sometimes up and sometimes down, now in peace, and anon again in terror.

208. Thus I went on for many weeks, sometimes comforted, and sometimes tormented; and, especially at some times, my torment would be very sore, for all those scriptures forenamed in the Hebrews, would be set before me, as the only sentences that would keep me out of heaven. Then, again, I should begin to repent that ever that thought went through me, I should also think thus with myself, Why, how many scriptures are there against me? There are but three or four: and cannot God miss them, and save me for all of them? Sometimes, again, I should think, Oh! if it were not for these three or four words, now how I might be comforted? And I could hardly forbear, at some times, but to wish them out of the book.

209. Then methought I should see as if both Peter, and Paul, and John, and all the writers, did look with scorn upon me, and hold me in derision; and as if they said unto me, All our words are truth, one of as much force as another. It is not we that have cut you off, but you have cast away yourself; there is none of our sentences that you must take hold upon but these, and such as these: “It is impossible; there remains no more sacrifice for sin” (Hebrews. 6). And “it had been better for them not to have known” the will of God, “than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them” ( 2 Peter 2:21). “For the Scriptures cannot be broken.”

210. These, as the elders of the city of refuge, I saw were to be the judges both of my case and me, while I stood, with the avenger of blood at my heels, trembling at their gate for deliverance, also with a thousand fears and mistrusts, I doubted that they would shut me out for ever.

211. Thus was I confounded, not knowing what to do, nor how to be satisfied in this question, Whether the scriptures could agree in the salvation of my soul? I quaked at the apostles, I knew their words were true, and that they must stand for ever.

212. And I remember one day, as I was in diverse frames of spirit, and considering that these frames were still according to the nature of the several scriptures that came in upon my mind; if this of grace, then was I quiet; but if that of Esau, then tormented; Lord, thought I, if both these scriptures would meet in my heart at once, I would which of them would get the better of me. So methought I had a longing mind that they might come both together upon me; yea, I desired of God they might.

213. Well, about two or three days after, so they did indeed; they bolted both upon me at a time, and did work and struggle strangely in me for a while; at last, that about Esau's birthright began to wax weak, and withdraw, and vanish and this about the sufficiency of grace prevailed with peace and joy. And as I was in a muse about this thing, that scripture came home upon me, "Mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (⁴⁰⁹³ James 2:13).

214. This was a wonderment to me; yet truly I am apt to think it was of God; for the word of the law and wrath must give place to the word of life and grace; because, though the word of condemnation be glorious, yet the word of life and salvation doth far exceed in glory (⁴⁰⁹² 2 Corinthians 3:8-12; ⁴⁰⁹⁵ Mark 9:5-7). Also, that Moses and Elias must both vanish, and leave Christ and His saints alone.

215. This scripture did also most sweetly visit my soul, "And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (⁴⁰⁹⁷ John 6:37). Oh, the comfort that I have had from this word, "in no wise"! as who should say, by no means, for no thing, whatever he hath done. But Satan would greatly labor to pull this promise from me, telling of me that Christ did not mean me, and such as I, but sinners of a lower rank, that had not done as I had done. But I should answer him again, Satan, here is in this word no such

exception; but “him that comes”, scaps him, any him; “him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” And this I well remember still, that of all the sleights that Satan used to take this scripture from me, yet he never did so much as put this question, But do you come aright? And I have thought the reason was, because he thought I knew full well what coming aright was; for I saw that to come aright was to come as I was, a vile and ungodly sinner, and to cast myself at the feet of mercy, condemning myself for sin. If ever Satan and I did strive for any word of God in all my life, it was for this good word of Christ; he at one end and I at the other. Oh, what work did we make! It was for this in John, I say, that we did so tug and strive; he pulled and I pulled; but, God be praised, I got the better of him, I got some sweetness from it.

216. But notwithstanding all these helps and blessed words of grace, yet that of Esau’s selling of his birthright would still at times distress my conscience; for though I had been most sweetly comforted, and that but just before, yet when that came into my mind, it would make me fear again, I could not be quite rid thereof, it would every day be with me: wherefore now I went another way to work, even to consider the nature of this blasphemous thought; I mean, if I should take the words at the largest, and give them their own natural force and scope, even every word therein. So when I had thus considered, I found, that if they were fairly taken, they would amount to this, that I had freely left the Lord Jesus Christ to His choice, whether He would be my Savior or no; for the wicked words were these, Let Him go if He will. Then that scripture gave me hope,

“I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” (~~scrip~~ Hebrews 13:5).

O Lord, said I, but I have left Thee. Then it answered again, “But I will not leave thee.” For this I thank God also.

217. Yet I was grievously afraid He should, and found it exceedingly hard to trust Him, seeing I had so offended Him. I could have been exceeding glad that this thought had never befallen, for then I thought I could, with more ease and freedom in abundance, have leaned upon His grace. I see it was with me, as it was with Joseph’s brethren; the guilt of their own wickedness did often fill them with fears that their brother would at last despise them (~~scrip~~ Genesis 50:15-17).

218. But above all the scriptures that I yet did meet with, that in the twentieth of Joshua was the greatest comfort to me, which speaks of the slayer that was to flee for refuge. And if the avenger of blood pursue the slayer, then, saith Moses, they that are the elders of the city of refuge shall not deliver him into his hand, because he smote his neighbor unwittingly, and hated him not aforetime. Oh, blessed be God for this word; I was convinced that I was the slayer; and that the avenger of blood pursued me, that I felt with great terror; only now it remained that I inquire whether I have right to enter the city of refuge. So I found that he must not, who lay in wait to shed blood: it was not the willful murderer, but he who unwittingly did it, he who did unawares shed blood; not of spite, or grudge, or malice, he that shed it unwittingly, even he who did not hate his neighbor before. Wherefore:

219. I thought verily I was the man that must enter, because I had smitten my neighbor unwittingly, and hated him not aforetime. I hated Him not aforetime; no, I prayed unto Him, was tender of sinning against Him; yea, and against this wicked temptation I had strove for a twelvemonth before; yea, and also when it did pass through my heart, it did in spite of my teeth: wherefore I thought I had right to enter this city, and the elders, which are the apostles, were not to deliver me up. This, therefore, was great comfort to me; and did give me much ground of hope.

220. Yet being very critical, for my smart had made me that I knew not what ground was sure enough to bear me, I had one question that my soul did much desire to be resolved about; and that was, Whether it be possible for any soul that hath indeed sinned the unpardonable sin, yet after that to receive though but the least true spiritual comfort from God through Christ? The which, after I had much considered, I found the answer was, No, they could not, and that for these reasons:

221. First, Because those that have sinned that sin, they are debarred a share in the blood of Christ, and being shut out of that, they must needs be void of the least ground of hope. and so of spiritual comfort; for to such “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins” (^{580B} Hebrews 10:26). **Secondly,** Because they are denied a share in the promise of life; they shall never be forgiven, “neither in this world, neither in that which is to come” (^{412B} Matthew 12:32). **Thirdly,** The Son of God excludes them also from a

share in His blessed intercession, being for ever ashamed to own them both before His holy Father, and the blessed angels in heaven (~~4188~~ Mark 8:38).

222. When I had, with much deliberation, considered of this matter, and could not but conclude that the Lord had comforted me, and that too after this my wicked sin; then, methought, I durst venture to come nigh into those most fearful and terrible scriptures, with which all this while I had been so greatly affrighted, and on which, indeed, before I durst scarce cast mine eye, yea, had much ado an hundred times to forbear wishing them out of the Bible; for I thought they would destroy me; but now, I say, I began to take some measure of encouragement to come close to them, to read them, and consider them, and to weigh their scope and tendency.

223. The which, when I began to do, I found their visage changed; for they looked not so grimly on me as before I thought they did. And, *first*, I came to the sixth of the Hebrews, yet trembling for fear it should strike me; which when I had considered, I found that the falling there intended was a falling quite away; that is, as I conceived, a falling from, and an absolute denial of the gospel of remission of sins by Christ; for from them the apostle begins his argument (ver. 1-3). *Secondly*, I found that this falling away must be openly, even in the view of the world, even so as “to put Christ to an open shame”. *Thirdly*, I found that those he there intended were for ever shut up of God, both in blindness, hardness, and impenitence: it is impossible they should be renewed again unto repentance. By all these particulars, I found, to God’s everlasting praise, my sin was not the sin in this place intended.

First, I confessed I was fallen, but not fallen away, that is, from the profession of faith in Jesus unto eternal life. *Secondly*, I confessed that I had put Jesus Christ to shame by my sin, but not to open shame; I did not deny Him before men, nor condemn Him as a fruitless one before the world. *Thirdly*, Nor did I find that God had shut me up, or denied me to come, though I found it hard work indeed to come to Him by sorrow and repentance. Blessed be God for unsearchable grace.

224. Then I considered that in the tenth of the Hebrews, and found that the willful sin there mentioned is not every willful sin, but that which doth throw off Christ, and then His commandments too. *Secondly*, That must also be done openly, before two or three witnesses, to answer that of the

law (ver. 28). **Thirdly**, This sin cannot be committed, but with great despite done to the Spirit of grace; despising both the dissuasions from that sin, and the persuasions to the contrary. But the Lord knows, though this my sin was devilish, yet it did not amount to these.

225. And as touching that in the twelfth of the Hebrews, about Esau's selling his birthright, though this was that which killed me, and stood like a spear against me; yet now I did consider, **First**, That his was not a hasty thought against the continual labor of his mind, but a thought consented to and put in practice likewise, and that too after some deliberation (^{<0281>}Genesis 25). **Secondly**, it was a public and open action, even before his brother, if not before many more; this made his sin of a far more heinous nature than otherwise it would have been. **Thirdly**, He continued to slight his birthright:

“He did eat and drink, and went his way;
thus Esau despised his birthright” (^{<0281>}Genesis 25:34).

Yea, twenty years after, he was found to despise it still. “And Esau said, I have enough, my brother; keep that thou hast unto thyself” (^{<0319>}Genesis 33:9).

226. Now as touching this, that Esau sought a place of repentance; thus I thought, **first**, This was not for the birthright, but for the blessing; this is clear from the apostle, and is distinguished by Esau himself; “He took away my birthright (that is, formerly); and behold, now he hath taken away my blessing” (^{<0274>}Genesis 27:36). **Secondly**, Now, this being thus considered, I came again to the apostle, to see what might be the mind of God, in a New Testament style and sense, concerning Esau's sin; and so far as I could conceive, this was the mind of God, that the birthright signified regeneration, and the blessing the eternal inheritance; for so the apostle seems to hint, “Lest there be any profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright”; as if he should say, Lest there be any person amongst you that shall cast off all those blessed beginnings of God that at present are upon him, in order to a new birth, lest they become as Esau, even be rejected afterwards, when they would inherit the blessing.

227. For many there are who, in the day of grace and mercy, despise those things which are indeed the birthright to heaven, who yet, when the deciding day appears, will cry as loud as Esau, “Lord, Lord, open to us”; but then, as Isaac would not repent, no more will God the Father, but will say, I have blessed these, yea, and they shall be blessed; but as for you, depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity (^{<127>}Genesis 27:33; ^{<128>}Luke 13:25-27).

228. When I had thus considered these scriptures, and found that thus to understand them was not against, but according to other scriptures; this still added further to my encouragement and comfort, and also gave a great blow to that objection, to wit, that the scripture could not agree in the salvation of my soul. And now remained only the hinder part of the tempest, for the thunder was gone beyond me, only some drops did still remain, that now and then would fall upon me; but because my former frights and anguish were very sore and deep, therefore it did oft befall me still, as it befalleth those that have been scared with fire, I thought every voice was Fire, fire; every little touch would hurt my tender conscience.

229. But one day, as I was passing in the field, and that too with some dashes on my conscience, fearing lest yet all was not right, suddenly this sentence fell upon my soul, Thy righteousness is in heaven; and methought withal, I saw, with the eyes of my soul, Jesus Christ at God’s right hand; there, I say, is my righteousness; so that wherever I was, or whatever I was a-doing, God could not say of me, He wants my righteousness, for that was just before Him. I also saw, moreover, that it was not my good frame of heart that made my righteousness better, nor yet my bad frame that made my righteousness worse; for my righteousness was Jesus Christ Himself, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever (^{<129>}Hebrews 13.8).

230. Now did my chains fall off my legs indeed, I was loosed from my affliction and irons, my temptations had fled away; so that, from that time, those dreadful scriptures of God left off to trouble me now; now went I also home rejoicing, for the grace and love of God. So when I came home, I looked to see if I could find that sentence, Thy righteousness is in heaven; but could not find such a saying, wherefore my heart began to sink again, only that was brought to my remembrance, He “of God is made

unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” by this word I saw the other sentence true (~~1~~1 Corinthians 1:30).

231. For by this scripture, I saw that the man Christ Jesus, as He is distinct from us, as touching His bodily presence, so He is our righteousness and sanctification before God. Here, therefore, I lived for some time, very sweetly at peace with God through Christ; Oh, methought, Christ! Christ! there was nothing but Christ that was before my eyes, I was not only for looking upon this and the other benefits of Christ apart, as of His blood, burial, or resurrection, but considered Him as a whole Christ! As He in whom all these, and all other His virtues, relations, offices, and operations met together, and that as He sat on the right hand of God in heaven.

232. It was glorious to me to see His exaltation, and the worth and prevalency of all His benefits, and that because of this: now I could look from myself to Him, and should reckon that all those graces of God that now were green in me, were yet but like those cracked groats and fourpence-halfpennies that rich men carry in their purses, when their gold is in their trunks at home! Oh, I saw my gold was in my trunk at home! In Christ, my Lord and Savior! Now Christ was all; all my wisdom, all my righteousness, all my sanctification, and all my redemption.

233. Further, the Lord did also lead me into the mystery of union with the Son of God, that I was joined to Him, that I was flesh of His flesh, and bone of His bone, and now was that a sweet word to me in ~~1~~Ephesians 5:30. By this also was my faith in Him, as my righteousness, the more confirmed to me; for if He and I were one, then His righteousness was mine, His merits mine, His victory also mine. Now could I see myself in heaven and earth at once; in heaven by my Christ, by my head, by my righteousness and life, though on earth by my body or person.

234. Now I saw Christ Jesus was looked on of God, and should also be looked on by us, as that common or public person, in whom all the whole body of His elect are always to be considered and reckoned; that we fulfilled the law by Him, rose from the dead by Him, got the victory over sin, death, the devil, and hell, by Him; when He died, we died; and so of His resurrection. “Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise,” saith he (~~23~~Isaiah 26:19). And again, “After two days

will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight” (~~AND~~ Hosea 6:2); which is now fulfilled by the sitting down of the Son of Man on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, according to that to the Ephesians, He “hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (~~AND~~ Ephesians 2:6).

235. Ah, these blessed considerations and scriptures, with many others of a like nature, were in those days made to spangle in mine eyes, so that I have cause to say, “Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness” (~~AND~~ Psalm 150.1, 2).

236. Having thus, in few words, given you a taste of the sorrow and affliction that my soul went under, by the guilt and terror that this my wicked thought did lay me under; and having given you also a touch of my deliverance therefrom, and of the sweet and blessed comfort that I met with afterwards, which comfort dwelt about a twelvemonth with my heart, to my unspeakable admiration; I will now, God willing, before I proceed any farther, give you in a word or two, what, as I conceive, was the cause of this temptation; and also after that, what advantage, at the last, it became unto my soul.

237. For the causes, I conceived they were principally two: of which two I also was deeply convinced all the time this trouble lay upon me. The first was, for that I did not, when I was delivered from the temptation that went before, still pray to God to keep me from temptations that were to come; for though, as I can say in truth, my soul was much in prayer before this trial seized me, yet then I prayed only, or at the most, principally for the removal of present troubles, and for fresh discoveries of His love in Christ, which I saw afterwards was not enough to do; I also should have prayed that the great God would keep me from the evil that was to come.

238. Of this I was made deeply sensible by the prayer of holy David, who, when he was under present mercy, yet prayed that God would hold him back from sin and temptation to come; “Then,” saith he, “shall I be upright, I shall be innocent from the scaps great transgression” (~~AND~~ Psalm 19:13). By this very word was I galled and condemned, quite through this long temptation.

239. That also was another word that did much condemn me for my folly, in the neglect of this duty (^{ROM} Hebrews 4:16), “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” This I had not done, and therefore was suffered thus to sin and fall, according to what is written, “Pray that ye enter not into temptation.” And truly this very thing is to this day of such weight and awe upon me, that I dare not, when I come before the Lord, go off my knees, until I entreat Him for help and mercy against the temptations that are to come; and I do beseech thee, reader, that thou learn to beware of my negligence, by the affliction that for this thing I did for days, and months, and years, with sorrow undergo.

240. Another cause of this temptation was, that I had tempted God; and on this manner did I do it. Upon a time my wife was great with child, and before her full time was come, her pangs, as of a woman in travail, were fierce and strong upon her, even as if she would have immediately fallen in labor, and been delivered of an untimely birth. Now, at this very time it was that I had been so strongly tempted to question the being of God, wherefore, as my wife lay crying by me, I said, but with all secrecy imaginable, even thinking in my heart, Lord, if thou wilt now remove this sad affliction from my wife, and cause that she be troubled no more therewith this night, and now were her pangs just upon her, then I shall know that thou canst discern the most secret thoughts of the heart.

241. I had no sooner said it in my heart, but her pangs were taken from her, and she was cast into a deep sleep, and so she continued till morning; at this I greatly marveled, not knowing what to think; but after I had been awake a good while, and heard her cry no more, I fell to sleeping also. So when I waked in the morning, it came upon me again, even what I had said in my heart the last night, and how the Lord had showed me that He knew my secret thoughts, which was a great astonishment unto me for several weeks after.

242. Well, about a year and a half afterwards, that wicked sinful thought, of which I have spoken before, went through my wicked heart, even this thought, Let Christ go if He will; so when I was fallen under guilt for this, the remembrance of my other thought, and of the effect thereof, would also come upon me with this retort, which also carried rebuke along with

it, Now you may see that God doth know the most secret thoughts of the heart.

243. And with this, that of the passages that were betwixt the Lord and His servant Gideon fell upon my spirit; how because that Gideon tempted God with his fleece, both wet and dry, when he should have believed and ventured upon his words, therefore the Lord did afterwards so try him, as to send him against an innumerable company of enemies; and that too, as to outward appearance, without any strength or help (Judges 6, 7). Thus He served me, and that justly, for I should have believed His word, and not have put an scaps if upon the all-seeingness of God.

244. And now to show you something of the advantages that I also gained by this temptation; and first, By this I was made continually to possess in my soul a very wonderful sense both of the being and glory of God, and of His beloved Son; in the temptation that went before, my soul was perplexed with unbelief, blasphemy, hardness of heart, questions about the being of God, Christ, the truth of the Word, and certainty of the world to come; I say, then I was greatly assaulted and tormented with atheism; but now the case was otherwise, now was God and Christ continually before my face, though not in a way of comfort, but in a way of exceeding dread and terror. The glory of the holiness of God did at this time break me to pieces; and the bowels and compassion of Christ did break me as on the wheel; for I could not consider Him but as a lost and rejected Christ, the remembrance of which was as the continual breaking of my bones.

245. The Scriptures now also were wonderful things unto me; I saw that the truth and verity of them were the keys of the kingdom of heaven; those that the Scriptures favor they must inherit bliss, but those that they oppose and condemn must perish evermore. Oh! this word, “For the Scriptures cannot be broken,” would rend the call of my heart; and so would that other, “Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.” Now I saw the apostles to be the elders of the city of refuge (~~Gen~~ Joshua 20:4), those that they were to receive in, were received to life; but those that they shut out were to be slain by the avenger of blood.

246. Oh! one sentence of the Scripture did more afflict and terrify my mind, I mean those sentences that stood against me, as sometimes I

thought they every one did, more, I say, than an army of forty thousand men that might have come against me. Woe be to him against whom the Scriptures bend themselves.

247. By this temptation I was made to see more into the nature of the promises than ever I was before; for I lying now trembling under the mighty hand of God, continually torn and rent by the thunderings of His justice; this made me, with careful heart and watchful eye, with great seriousness, to turn over every leaf, and with much diligence, mixed with trembling, to consider every sentence, together with its natural force and latitude.

248. By this temptation, also, I was greatly beaten off my former foolish practice, of putting by the word of promise when it came into my mind; for now, though I could not suck that comfort and sweetness from the promise as I had done at other times, yea, like to a man a-sinking, I should catch at all I saw; formerly I thought I might not meddle with the promise unless I felt its comfort, but now it was no time thus to do, the avenger of blood too hardly did pursue me.

249. Now therefore I was glad to catch at that word, which yet I feared I had no ground or right to own; and even to leap into the bosom of that promise, that yet I feared did shut its heart against me. Now also I should labor to take the Word as God had laid it down, without restraining the natural force of one syllable thereof. O what did I now see in that blessed sixth of John, “And him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out” (ver. 37). Now I began to consider with myself, that God had a bigger mouth to speak with than I had heart to conceive with. I thought also with myself that He spake not His words in haste, or in unadvised heat, but with infinite wisdom and judgment, and in very truth and faithfulness.

250. I should in these days, often in my greatest agonies, even flounce towards the promise, as the horses do towards sound ground that yet stick in the mire, concluding, though as one almost bereft of his wits through fear, on this I will rest and stay, and leave the fulfilling of it to the God of heaven that made it. Oh! many a pull hath my heart had with Satan for that sixth of John. I did not now, as at other times, look principally for comfort, though, O how welcome would it have been unto me! But now a

word, a word to lean a weary soul upon, that I might not sink for ever! it was that I hunted for.

251. Yea, often when I have been making to the promise, I have seen as if the Lord would refuse my soul for ever. I was often as if I had run upon the pikes, and as if the Lord had thrust at me to keep me from Him as with a flaming sword. Then I should think of Esther, who went to petition the king contrary to the law (^{<1718>}Esther 4:16). I thought also of Benhadad's servants, who went with ropes upon their heads to their enemies for mercy (^{<1718>}1 Kings 20:31). The woman of Canaan also, that would not be daunted, though called dog by Christ (^{<1718>}Matthew 15:21-8); and the man that went to borrow bread at midnight (^{<1718>}Luke 11:5-8), were great encouragement's unto me.

252. I never saw those heights and depths in grace, and love, and mercy, as I saw after this temptation. Great sins to draw out great grace; and where guilt is most terrible and fierce there the mercy of God in Christ, when showed to the soul, appears most high and mighty. When Job had passed through his captivity, he had "twice as much as he had before" (^{<1718>}Job 42:10). Blessed be God for Jesus Christ our Lord. Many other things I might here make observation of, but I would be brief, and therefore shall at this time omit them, and do pray God that my harms may make others fear to offend, lest they also be made to bear the iron yoke as I did.

I had two or three times, at or about my deliverance from this temptation, such strange apprehensions of the grace of God, that I could hardly bear up under it, it was so out of measure amazing, when I thought it could reach me, that I do think, if that sense of it had abode long upon me, it would have made me incapable for business.

253. Now I shall go forward to give you a relation of other of the Lord's leanings with me, of His dealings with me at sundry other seasons, and of the temptations I then did meet withal. I shall begin with what I met when I first did join in fellowship with the people of God in Bedford. After I had propounded to the church that my desire was to walk in the order and ordinances of Christ with them, and was also admitted by them; while I thought of that blessed ordinance of Christ, which was His last supper with His disciples before His death, that scripture, "This do in remembrance of me" (^{<1718>}Luke 22:19), was made a very precious word unto

me; for by it the Lord did come down upon my conscience with the discovery of His death for my sins; and as I then felt, did as if He plunged me in the virtue of the same. But, behold, I had not been long a partaker at that ordinance, but such fierce and sad temptations did attend me at all times therein, both to blaspheme the ordinance, and to wish some deadly thing to those that then did eat thereof; that, lest I should at any time be guilty of consenting to these wicked and fearful thoughts, I was forced to bend myself all the while to pray to God to keep me from such blasphemies; and also to cry to God to bless the bread and cup to them as it went from mouth to mouth. The reason of this temptation I have thought since was, because I did not, with that reverence as became me, at first approach to partake thereof.

254. Thus I continued for three-quarters of a year, and could never have rest nor ease; but at last the Lord came in upon my soul with that same scripture by which my soul was visited before; and after that I have been usually very well and comfortable in the partaking of that blessed ordinance, and have, I trust, therein discerned the Lord's body as broken for my sins, and that His precious blood hath been shed for my transgressions.

255. Upon a time I was somewhat inclining to a consumption, wherewith, about the spring, I was suddenly and violently seized with much weakness in my outward man, insomuch that I thought I could not live. Now began I afresh to give myself up to a serious examination after my state and condition for the future, and of my evidences for that blessed world to come; for it hath, I bless the name of God, been my usual course, as always, so especially in the day of affliction, to endeavor to keep my interest in the life to come clear before my eye.

256. But I had no sooner began to recall to mind my former experience of the goodness of God to my soul, but there came flocking into my mind an innumerable company of my sins and transgressions, amongst which these were at this time most to my affliction, namely, my deadness, dullness, and coldness in holy duties; my wanderings of heart, of my wearisomeness in all good things, my want of love to God, His ways, and people, with this at the end of all, Are these the fruits of Christianity? are these the tokens of a blessed man?

257. At the apprehension of these things my sickness was doubled upon me, for now was I sick in my inward man, my soul was clogged with guilt; now also was my former experience of God's goodness to me quite taken out of my mind, and hid as if it had never been, nor seen. Now was my soul greatly pinched between these two considerations. Live I must not, Die I dare not; now I sunk and fell in my spirit; and was giving up all for lost; but as I was walking up and down in the house, as a man in a most woeful state, that word of God took hold of my heart, Ye are

“justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in
Christ Jesus” (~~ROM~~ Romans 3:24).

But oh, what a turn it made upon me!

258. Now was I as one awakened out of some troublesome sleep and dream, and listening to this heavenly sentence, I was as if I had heard it thus expounded to me: Sinner, thou thinkest that because of thy sins and infirmities I cannot save thy soul, but behold My Son is by Me, and upon Him I look, and not on thee, and will deal with thee according as I am pleased with Him. At this I was greatly lightened in my mind, and made to understand that God could justify a sinner at any time; it was but His looking upon Christ, and imputing of His benefits to us, and the work was forthwith done.

259. And as I was thus in a muse, that scripture also came with great power upon my spirit, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us,” etc. (~~ROM~~ Titus 3:5; ~~ROM~~ Timothy 1:9). Now was I got on high; I saw myself within the arms of grace and mercy; and though I was before afraid to think of a dying hour, yet now I cried, Let me die. Now death was lovely and beautiful in my sight; for I saw we shall never live indeed till we be gone to the other world. Oh, methought this life is but a slumber in comparison of that above; at this time also I saw more in those words, “Heirs of God” (~~ROM~~ Romans 8:17), than ever I shall be able to express while I live in this world. “Heirs of God”! God Himself is the portion of the saints. This I saw and wondered at, but cannot tell you what I saw.

260. Again, as I was at another time very ill and weak, all that time also the tempter did beset me strongly, for I find he is much for assaulting the

soul when it begins to approach towards the grave, then is his opportunity, laboring to hide from me my former experience of God's goodness; also setting before me the terrors of death and the judgment of God, insomuch that at this time, through my fear of miscarrying for ever, should I now die, I was as one dead before death came, and was as if I had felt myself already descending into the pit; methought, I said, there was no way, but to hell I must; but behold, just as I was in the midst of those fears, these words of the angels carrying Lazarus into Abraham's bosom darted in upon me, as who should say, So it shall be with thee when thou dost leave this world. This did sweetly revive my spirit, and help me to hope in God; which, when I had with comfort mused on a while, that word fell with great weight upon my mind,

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

( 1 Corinthians 15:55).

At this I became both well in body and mind at once, for my sickness did presently vanish, and I walked comfortably in my work for God again.

261. At another time, though just before I was pretty well and savory in my spirit, yet suddenly there fell upon me a great cloud of darkness, which did so hide from me the things of God and Christ, that I was as if I had never seen or known them in my life; was also so overrun in my soul, with a senseless, heartless frame of spirit, that I could not feel my soul to move or stir after grace and life by Christ; I was as if my loins were broken, or as if my hands and feet had been tied or bound with chains. At this time also I felt some weakness to seize upon my outward man, which made still the other affliction the more heavy and uncomfortable to me.

262. After I had been in this condition some three or four days, as I was sitting by the fire, I suddenly felt this word to sound in my heart, I must go to Jesus; at this my former darkness and atheism fled away, and the blessed things of heaven were set within my view. While I was on this sudden thus overtaken with surprise, Wife, said I, is there ever such a scripture, I must go to Jesus? She said she could not tell, therefore I sat musing still to see if I could remember such a place; I had not sat above two or three minutes but that came bolting in upon me, “And to an innumerable company of angels,” and withal, Hebrews the twelfth, about the mount Sion, was set before mine eyes (verse 22-4).

263. Then with joy I told my wife, O now I know, I know! But that night was a good night to me, I never had but few better; I longed for the company of some of God's people that I might have imparted unto them what God had showed me. Christ was a precious Christ to my soul that night; I could scarce lie in my bed for joy, and peace, and triumph, through Christ; this great glory did not continue upon me until morning, yet that twelfth of the author of (~~scrip~~ Hebrews 12:22-4) was a blessed scripture to me for many days together after this.

264. The words are these, "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." Through this blessed sentence the Lord led me over and over, first to this word, and then to that, and showed me wonderful glory in every one of them. These words also have oft since this time been great refreshment to my spirit. Blessed be God in having mercy on me.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR'S CALL TO THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

265. And now I am speaking my experience, I will in this place thrust in a word or two concerning my preaching the Word, and of God's dealing with me in that particular also. For after I had been about five or six years awakened, and helped myself to see both the want and worth of Jesus Christ our Lord, and also enabled to venture my soul upon Him, some of the most able among the saints with us, I say the most able for judgment and holiness of life, as they conceived, did perceive that God had counted me worthy to understand something of His will in His holy and blessed Word, and had given me utterance, in some measure, to express what I saw to others for edification; therefore they desired me, and that with much earnestness, that I would be willing, at sometimes, to take in hand, in one of the meetings, to speak a word of exhortation unto them.

266. The which, though at the first it did much dash and abash my spirit, yet being still by them desired and intreated, I consented to their request,

and did twice at two several assemblies, but in private, though with much weakness and infirmity, discover my gift amongst them; at which they not only seemed to be, but did solemnly protest, as in the sight of the great God, they were both affected and comforted, and gave thanks to the Father of mercies for the grace bestowed on me.

267. After this, sometimes when some of them did go into the country to teach, they would also that I should go with them; where, though as yet I did not, nor durst not, make use of my gift in an open way, yet more privately still as I came amongst the good people in those places, I did sometimes speak a word of admonition unto them also; the which, they as the other received, with rejoicing at the mercy of God to meward, professing their souls were edified thereby.

268. Wherefore, to be brief, at last, being still desired by the church, after some solemn prayer to the Lord, with fasting, I was more particularly called forth, and appointed to a more ordinary and public preaching of the Word, not only to, and amongst them that believed, but also to offer the gospel to those who had not yet received the faith thereof; about which time I did evidently find in my mind a secret pricking forward thereto; though I bless God, not for desire of vain glory, for at that time I was most sorely afflicted with the fiery darts of the devil concerning my eternal state.

269. But yet could not be content, unless I was found in the exercise of my gift, unto which I was greatly animated, not only by the continual desires of the godly, but also by that saying of Paul to the Corinthians, “I beseech you, brethren (ye know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints), that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboreth” (~~1~~¹ 1 Corinthians 16:15, 16) .

270. By this text I was made to see that the Holy Ghost never intended that men who have gifts and abilities should bury them in the earth, but rather did command and stir up such to the exercise of their gift, and also did commend those that were apt and ready so to do, “They have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.” This scripture, in these days, did continually run in my mind, to encourage me and strengthen me in this work for God; I have also been encouraged from several other scriptures

and examples of the godly, both specified in the Word and other ancient histories (Acts 8:4; Acts 18:24, 25; 1 Peter 4:10; Romans 12:6; Foxe's Acts and Monuments).

271. Wherefore, though of myself of all the saints the most unworthy, yet I, but with great fear and trembling at the sight of my own weakness, did set upon the work, and did according to my gift, and the proportion of my faith, preach that blessed gospel that God had showed me in the holy Word of truth; which, when the country understood, they came in to hear the Word by hundreds, and that from all parts, though upon sundry and divers accounts.

272. And I thank God He gave unto me some measure of bowels and pity for their souls, which also did put me forward to labor with great diligence and earnestness, to find out such a word as might, if God would bless it, lay hold of and awaken the conscience, in which the good Lord had respect to the desire of His servant; for I had not preached long before some began to be touched by the Word, and to be greatly afflicted in their minds at the apprehension of the greatness of their sin, and of their need of Jesus Christ.

273. But I at first could not believe that God should speak by me to the heart of any man, still counting myself unworthy; yet those who were thus touched would love me and have a peculiar respect for me; and though I did put it from me, that they should be awakened by me, still they would confess it, and affirm it before the saints of God; they would also bless God for me, unworthy wretch that I am! and count me God's instrument that showed to them the way of salvation.

274. Wherefore, seeing them in both their words and deeds to be so constant, and also in their hearts so earnestly pressing after the knowledge of Jesus Christ, rejoicing that ever God did send me where they were; then I began to conclude it might be so, that God had owned in His work such a foolish one as I, and then came that word of God to my heart with much sweet refreshment,

“The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me; and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy” (Job 29:13).

275. At this therefore I rejoiced, yea, the tears of those whom God did awaken by my preaching would be both solace and encouragement to me; for I thought on those sayings,

“Who is he that maketh me glad but the same which is made sorry by me?” (~~and~~ 2 Corinthians 2:2);

and again, Though

“I be not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord” (~~and~~ 1 Corinthians 9:2).

These things, therefore, were as another argument unto me that God had called me to, and stood by me in this work.

276. In my preaching of the Word, I took special notice of this one thing, namely, that the Lord did lead me to begin where His Word begins with sinners; that is, to condemn all flesh, and to open and allege that the curse of God, by the law, doth belong to and lay hold on all men as they come into the world, because of sin. Now this part of my work I fulfilled with great sense; for the terrors of the law, and guilt for my transgressions, lay heavy on my conscience. I preached what I felt, what I smartingly did feel, even that under which my poor soul did groan and tremble to astonishment.

277. Indeed I have been as one sent to them from the dead; I went myself in chains to preach to them in chains; and carried that fire in my own conscience that I persuaded them to beware of. I can truly say, and that without dissembling, that when I have been to preach, I have gone full of guilt and terror even to the pulpit door, and there it hath been taken off, and I have been at liberty in my mind until I have done my work, and then immediately, even before I could get down the pulpit stairs, I have been as bad as I was before; yet God carried me on, but surely with a strong hand, for neither guilt nor hell could take me off my work.

278. Thus I went for the space of two years, crying out against men’s sins, and their fearful state because of them. After which the Lord came in upon my own soul with some staid peace and comfort through Christ; for He did give me many sweet discoveries of His blessed grace through Him. Wherefore now I altered in my preaching, for still I preached what I saw

and felt; now therefore I did much labor to hold forth Jesus Christ in all His offices, relations, and benefits unto the world; and did strive also to discover, to condemn, and remove those false supports and props on which the world doth both lean, and by them fall and perish. On these things also I staid as long as on the other.

279. After this, God led me into something of the mystery of union with Christ; wherefore that I discovered and showed to them also. And when I had traveled through these three chief points of the Word of God, about the space of five years or more, I was caught in my present practice and cast into prison, where I have lain above as long again, to confirm the truth by way of suffering, as I was before in testifying of it according to the Scriptures in a way of preaching.

280. When I have been preaching, I thank God, my heart hath often all the time of this and the other exercise, with great earnestness, cried to God that He would make the Word effectual to the salvation of the soul; still being grieved lest the enemy should take the Word away from the conscience, and so it should become unfruitful. Wherefore I did labor so to speak the Word, as that thereby, if it were possible, the sin and the person guilty might be particularized by it.

281. Also, when I have done the exercise, it hath gone to my heart to think the Word should now fall as rain on stony places, still wishing from my heart, O that they who have heard me speak this day did but see as I do what sin, death, hell, and the curse of God is; and also what the grace, and love, and mercy of God is, through Christ, to men in such a case as they are, who are yet estranged from Him. And, indeed, I did often say in my heart before the Lord, That if to be hanged up presently before their eyes would be a means to awaken them, and confirm them in the truth, I gladly should be contented.

282. For I have been in my preaching, especially when I have been engaged in the doctrine of life by Christ, without works, as if an angel of God had stood by at my back to encourage me. Oh, it hath been with such power and heavenly evidence upon my own soul, while I have been laboring to unfold it, to demonstrate it, and to fasten it upon the consciences of others, that I could not be contented with saying, I believe, and am sure;

methought I was more than sure, if it be lawful so to express myself, that those things which then I asserted were true.

283. When I went first to preach the Word abroad, the doctors and priests of the country did open wide against me. But I was persuaded of this, not to render railing for railing, but to see how many of their carnal professors I could convince of their miserable state by the law, and of the want and worth of Christ; for, thought I, This shall answer for me in time to come, when they shall be for my hire before their faces (~~GEN~~ Genesis 30:33).

284. I never cared to meddle with things that were controverted, and in dispute amongst the saints, especially things of the lowest nature; yet it pleased me much to contend with great earnestness for the word of faith and the remission of sins by the death and sufferings of Jesus; but I say, as to other things, I should let them alone, because I saw they engendered strife, and because that they neither, in doing nor in leaving undone, did commend us to God to be His. Besides, I saw my work before me did run in another channel even to carry an awakening word; to that therefore did I stick and adhere.

285. I never endeavored to, nor durst make use of other men's lines (~~ROM~~ Romans 15:18), though I condemn not all that do, for I verily thought, and found by experience, that what was taught me by the Word and Spirit of Christ, could be spoken, maintained, and stood to by the soundest and best established conscience; and though I will not now speak all that I know in this matter, yet my experience hath more interest in that text of Scripture than many amongst men are aware (~~ROM~~ Galatians 1:11, 12).

286. If any of those who were awakened by my ministry did after that fall back, as sometimes too many did, I can truly say their loss hath been more to me than if one of my own children, begotten of my body, had been going to its grave; I think, verily, I may speak it without an offence to the Lord, nothing hath gone so near me as that, unless it was the fear of the loss of the salvation of my own soul. I have counted as if I had goodly buildings and lordships in those places where my children were born; my heart hath been so wrapped up in the glory of this excellent work, that I counted myself more blessed and honored of God by this than if He had made me the emperor of the Christian world, or the lord of all the glory of the earth without it! O these words,

“He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death” (^{scrip}James 5:20).

“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life;
and he that winneth souls is wise” (^{scrip}Proverbs 11:30).

“They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament;
and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever” (^{scrip}Daniel 12:3).

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy” (^{scrip}1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20).

These, I say, with many others of a like nature, have been great refreshments to me.

287. I have observed, that where I have had a work to do for God, I have had first, as it were, the going of God upon my spirit to desire I might preach there. I have also observed that such and such souls in particular have been strongly set upon my heart, and I stirred up to wish for their salvation; and that these very souls have, after this, been given in as the fruits of my ministry. I have also observed, that a word cast in by the by hath done more execution in a sermon than all that was spoken besides; sometimes also when I have thought I did no good, then I did the most of all; and at other times when I thought I should catch them I have fished for nothing.

288. I have also observed, that where there hath been a work to do upon sinners, there the devil hath begun to roar in the hearts, and by the mouths of his servants. Yea, oftentimes when the wicked world hath raged most, there hath been souls awaked by the word. I could instance particulars, but I forbear.

289. My great desire in fulfilling my ministry was to get into the darkest places of the country, even amongst those people that were farthest off of profession; yet not because I could not endure the light, for I feared not to show my gospel to any, but because I found my spirit leaned most after awakening and converting work, and the Word that I carried did lead itself most that way also; “yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not

where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation" (⁴⁶⁵¹Romans 15:20).

290. In my preaching I have really been in pain, and have, as it were, travailed to bring forth children to God; neither could I be satisfied unless some fruits did appear in my work. If I were fruitless it mattered not who commended me; but if I were fruitful, I cared not who did condemn. I have thought of that, "He that winneth souls is wise" (⁴¹¹³Proverbs 11:30); and again, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord; and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath filled his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate" (⁴⁸⁷⁷Psalms 127:3-5).

291. It pleased me nothing to see people drink in opinions if they seemed ignorant of Jesus Christ, and the worth of their own salvation, sound conviction for sin, especially for unbelief, and an heart set on fire to be saved by Christ, with strong breathing after a truly sanctified soul; that it was that delighted me; those were the souls I counted blessed.

292. But in this work, as in all other, I had my temptations attending me, and that of diverse kinds, as sometimes I should be assaulted with great discouragement therein, fearing that I should not be able to speak the Word at all to edification; nay, that I should not be able to speak sense unto the people; at which times I should have such a strange faintness and strengthlessness seize upon my body that my legs have scarce been able to carry me to the place of exercise.

293. Sometimes, again, when I have been preaching, I have been violently assaulted with thoughts of blasphemy, and strongly tempted to speak the words with my mouth before the congregation. I have also at some times, even when I have begun to speak the Word with much clearness, evidence, and liberty of speech, yet been before the ending of that opportunity so blinded, and so estranged from the things I have been speaking, and have also been so straitened in my speech, as to utterance before the people, that I have been as if I had not known or remembered what I have been about, or as if my head had been in a bag all the time of the exercise.

294. Again, when as sometimes I have been about to preach upon some smart and scorching portion of the Word, I have found the tempter suggest, What, will you preach this? this condemns yourself; of this your own soul is guilty; wherefore preach not of it at all; or if you do, yet so mince it as to make way for your own escape; lest instead of awakening others, you lay that guilt upon your own soul as you will never get from under.

295. But, I thank the Lord, I have been kept from consenting to these so horrid suggestions, and have rather, as Samson, bowed myself with all my might, to condemn sin and transgression wherever I found it, yea, though therein also I did bring guilt upon my own conscience! “Let me die,” thought I, “with the Philistines” (^{<0763>}Judges 16:29, 30), rather than deal corruptly with the blessed Word of God, “Thou that teachest another, teachest not thou thyself?” It is far better that thou do judge thyself, even by preaching plainly to others, than that thou, to save thyself, imprison the truth in unrighteousness; blessed be God for His help also in this.

296. I have also, while found in this blessed work of Christ, been often tempted to pride and liftings up of heart; and though I dare not say I have not been infected with this, yet truly the Lord, of His precious mercy, hath so carried it towards me, that, for the most part, I have had but small joy to give way to such a thing; for it hath been my every day’s portion to be let into the evil of my own heart, and still made to see such a multitude of corruption’s and infirmities therein, that it hath caused hanging down of the head under all my gifts and attainments; I have felt this thorn in the flesh, the very mercy of God to me (^{<0712>}2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

297. I have had also, together with this, some notable place or other of the Word presented before me, which word hath contained in it some sharp and piercing sentence concerning the perishing of the soul, notwithstanding gifts and parts; as, for instance, that hath been of great use unto me,

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal” (^{<4331>}1 Corinthians 13:1, 2).

298. A tinkling cymbal is an instrument of music, with which a skilful player can make such melodious and heart-inflaming music, that all who

hear him play can scarcely hold from dancing; and yet behold the cymbal hath not life, neither comes the music from it, but because of the art of him that plays therewith; so then the instrument at last may come to naught and perish, though, in times past, such music hath been made upon it.

299. Just thus I saw it was and will be with them who have gifts, but want saving grace, they are in the hand of Christ, as the cymbal in the hand of David; and as David could, with the cymbal, make that mirth in the service of God, as to elevate the hearts of the worshippers, so Christ can use these gifted men, as with them to affect the souls of His people in His church; yet when He hath done all, hang them by as lifeless, though sounding cymbals.

300. This consideration, therefore, together with some others, were, for the most part, as a maul on the head of pride, and desire of vain glory; what, thought I, shall I be proud because I am a sounding brass? Is it so much to be a fiddle? Hath not the least creature that hath life, more of God in it than these? Besides, I knew it was love should never die, but these must cease and vanish; so I concluded, a little grace, a little love, a little of the true fear of God, is better than all these gifts; yea, and I am fully convinced of it, that it is possible for a soul that can scarce give a man an answer, but with great confusion as to method, I say it is possible for them to have a thousand times more grace, and so to be more in the love and favor of the Lord than some who, by virtue of the gift of knowledge, can deliver themselves like angels.

301. Thus, therefore, I came to perceive, that though gifts in themselves were good to the thing for which they are designed, to wit, the edification of others; yet empty and without power to have the soul of him that hath them, if they be alone; neither are they, as so, any sign of a man's state to be happy, being only a dispensation of God to some, of whose improvement, or non-improvement, they must, when a little love more is over, give an account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

302. This showed me, too, that gifts being alone, were dangerous, not in themselves, but because of those evils that attend them that have them, to wit, pride, desire of vain glory, self-conceit, etc., all of which were easily blown up at the applause and commendation of every unadvised Christian,

to the endangering of a poor creature to fall into the condemnation of the devil.

303. I saw therefore that he that hath gifts had need be let into a sight of the nature of them, to wit, that they come short of making of him to be in a truly saved condition, lest he rest in them, and so fall short of the grace of God.

304. He hath also cause to walk humbly with God, and be little in his own eyes, and to remember withal, that his gifts are not his own, but the church's; and that by them he is made a servant to the church; and that he must give at last an account of his stewardship unto the Lord Jesus; and to give a good account, will be a blessed thing.

305. Let all men therefore prize a little with the fear of the Lord; gifts indeed are desirable, but yet great grace and small gifts are better than great gifts and no grace. It doth not say, the Lord gives gifts and glory, but the Lord gives grace and glory; and blessed is such an one to whom the Lord gives grace, true grace, for that is a certain forerunner of glory.

306. But when Satan perceived that his thus tempting and assaulting of me would not answer his design, to wit, to overthrow my ministry, and make it ineffectual, as to the ends thereof; then he tried another way, which was to stir up the minds of the ignorant and malicious, to load me with slanders and reproaches; now therefore I may say, that what the devil could devise, and his instruments invent, was whirled up and down the country against me, thinking, as I said, that by that means they should make my ministry to be abandoned.

307. It began therefore to be rumored up and down among the people, that I was a witch, a Jesuit, a highwayman, and the like.

308. To all which, I shall only say, God knows that I am innocent. But as for mine accusers, let them provide themselves to meet me before the tribunal of the Son of God, there to answer for these things, with all the rest of their iniquities, unless God shall give them repentance for them, for the which I pray with all my heart.

309. But that which was reported with the boldest confidence, was, that I had my misses, my whores, my bastards, yea, two wives at once, and the

like. Now these slanders, with the other, I glory in, because but slanders, foolish, or knavish lies, and falsehoods cast upon me by the devil and his seed; and should I not be dealt with thus wickedly by the world, I should want one sign of a saint, and a child of God.

“Blessed are ye (said the Lord Jesus) when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake; rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (~~415~~ Matthew 5:11).

310. These things, therefore, upon mine own account, trouble me not; no, though they were twenty times more than they are. I have a good conscience, and whereas they speak evil of me, as an evil doer, they shall be ashamed that falsely accuse my good conversation in Christ.

311. So, then, what shall I say to those that have thus bespattered me? Shall I threaten them? Shall I chide them? Shall I flatter them? Shall I intreat them to hold their tongues? No, not I, were it not for that these things make them ripe for damnation, that are the authors and abettors, I would say unto them, Report it, because it will increase my glory.

312. Therefore I bind these lies and slanders to me as an ornament, it belongs to my Christian profession to be vilified, slandered, reproached and reviled; and since all this is nothing else, as my God and my conscience do bear me witness, I rejoice in reproaches for Christ's sake.

313. I also calling all those fools, or knaves, that have thus made it anything of their business to affirm any of the things afore-named of me, namely, that I have been naught with other women, or the like. When they have used to the utmost of their endeavors, and made the fullest inquiry that they can, to prove against me truly, that there is any woman in heaven, or earth, or hell, that can say, I have at any time, in any place, by day or night, so much as attempted to be naught with them; and speak I thus, to beg mine enemies into a good esteem of me? No, not I: I will in this beg relief of no man; believe or disbelieve me in this, all is a case to me.

314. My foes have missed their mark in this their shooting at me. I am not the man. I wish that they themselves be guiltless. If all the fornicators and adulterers in England were hanged by the neck till they be dead, scaps

John Bunyan, the object of their envy, would be still alive and well. I know not whether there be such a thing as a woman breathing under the copes of the whole heaven but by their apparel, their children, or by common fame, except my wife.

315. And in this I admire the wisdom of God, that He made me shy of women from my first conversion until now. Those know, and can also bear me witness, with whom I have been most intimately concerned, that it is a rare thing to see me carry it pleasant towards a woman, the common salutation of a woman I abhor, it is odious to me in whosoever I see it. Their company alone, I cannot away with. I seldom so much as touch a woman's hand, for I think these things are not so becoming me. When I have seen good men salute those women that they have visited, or that have visited them, I have at times made my objection against it, and when they have answered, that it was but a piece of civility, I have told them, it is not a comely sight; some indeed have urged the holy kiss but then I have asked why they made baulks, why they did salute the most handsome, and let the ill-favored go; thus, how laudable soever such things have been in the eyes of others, they have been unseemly in my sight.

316. And now for a wind up in this matter, I calling not only men, but angels, to prove me guilty of having carnally to do with any woman save my wife, nor am I afraid to do it a second time, knowing that I cannot offend the Lord in such a case, to call God for a record upon my soul, that in these things I am innocent. Not that I have been thus kept, because of any goodness in me more than any other, but God has been merciful to me, and has kept me; to whom I pray that He will keep me still, not only from this, but from every evil way and work, and preserve me to His heavenly kingdom. Amen.

317. Now as Satan labored by reproaches and slanders, to make me vile among my countrymen, that, if possible, my preaching might be made of none effect, so there was added hereto a long and tedious imprisonment, that thereby I might be frightened from my service for Christ, and the world terrified, and made afraid to hear me preach, of which I shall in the next place give you a brief account.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR'S IMPRISONMENT

318. Having made profession of the glorious gospel of Christ a long time, and preached the same about five years, I was apprehended at a meeting of good people in the country, among whom, had they let me alone, I should have preached that day, but they took me away from amongst them, and had me before a justice; who, after I had offered security for my appearing at the next sessions, yet committed me, because my sureties would not consent to be bound that I should preach no more to the people.

THE CONCLUSION

1. Of all the temptations that ever I met with in my life, to question the being of God, and the truth of His gospel, is the worst, and the worst to be borne; when this temptation comes, it takes away my girdle from me, and removeth the foundations from under me. Oh, I have often thought of that word, “Have your loins girt about with truth”; and of that, “When the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

2. Sometimes, when, after sin committed, I have looked for sore chastisement from the hand of God, the very next that I have had from Him hath been the discovery of His grace. Sometimes, when I have been comforted, I have called myself a fool for my so sinking under trouble. And then, again, when I have been cast down, I thought I was not wise to give such way to comfort. With such strength and weight have both these been upon me.

3. I have wondered much at this one thing, that though God doth visit my soul with never so blessed a discovery of Himself, yet I have found again, that such hours have attended me afterwards, that I have been in my spirit so filled with darkness, that I could not so much as once conceive what that God and that comfort was with which I have been refreshed.

4. I have sometimes seen more in a line of the Bible than I could well tell how to stand under, and yet at another time the whole Bible hath been to me as dry as a stick; or rather, my heart hath been so dead and dry unto it, that I could not conceive the least drachma of refreshment, though I have looked it all over.

5. Of all tears, they are the best that are made by the blood of Christ; and of all joy, that is the sweetest that is mixed with mourning over Christ. Oh! it is a goodly thing to be on our knees, with Christ in our arms, before God. I hope I know something of these things.

6. I find to this day seven abominations in my heart:

(1) Inclinations to unbelief.

(2) Suddenly to forget the love and mercy that Christ manifesteth.

(3) A leaning to the works of the law.

(4) Wanderings and coldness in prayer.

(5) To forget to watch for that I pray for.

(6) Apt to murmur because I have no more, and yet ready to abuse what I have.

(7) I can do none of those things which God commands me, but my corruption's will thrust in themselves, "When I would do good, evil is present with me."

7. These things I continually see and feel, and am afflicted and oppressed with; yet the wisdom of God doth order them for my good.

(1) They make me abhor myself.

(2) They keep me from trusting my heart.

(3) They convince me of the insufficiency of all inherent righteousness.

(4) They show me the necessity of flying to Jesus.

(5) They press me to pray unto God.

(6) They show me the need I have to watch and be sober.

(7) And provoke me to look to God, through Christ, to help me, and carry me through this world. Amen.

The Rev. Robert Philip, author of Bunyan's Life and Times, adds the following: Bunyan's liberation from prison was obtained from Charles II by Whitehead the Quaker. On his release he soon became one of the most popular preachers of the day, and was, if not the chaplain, "the teacher" of Sir John Shorter, the Mayor of London. Southey's Life.

But although free and popular, Bunyan evidently dreaded every new crisis in public affairs. He had reason to do so. Venner's conspiracy had increased the severity of his first six years' imprisonment. On the occasion of the fire in London, he was thrown into prison again. And soon after James II came to the throne in 1685, Bunyan conveyed the whole of his property to his wife by a singular deed, which can only be accounted for

by his suspicions of James and Jeffries, and by his horror at the revocation of the Edict of Nantz. The asylum which the refugees found in England did not prove to him that he was safe. No wonder; “Kirke and his lambs” were abroad, and the Bedford justices still in power.. It was under these circumstances that he divested himself of all his property, in order to save his family from want should he again be made a victim. The deed shows his solicitude for Mrs. Bunyan’s comfort and his confidence in her prudence. And his Elizabeth well deserved both.

Whatever Bunyan may have feared when he thus disposed of all the little property he had, nothing befell him under James II. He published “The Pharisee and Publican” in 1685, the year of the king’s accession; and in 1688, Charles Doe says “he published six books, being the time of King James II.’s Liberty of Conscience.” This appears from Doe’s list. It throws also much light upon Bunyan’s death. Such labor could not fail to sap his strength, even if he did nothing but carry the six books through the press, for none of them are small except the last. “He was seized with a *sweating distemper*,” says Doe, “after he published six books, which, after some weeks, proved his death.” The Sketch in the British Museum states that, “taking a tedious journey in a slabby rainy day, and returning late to London, he was entertained by one Mr. Strudwick, a grocer on Snow hill, with all the kind endearments of a loving friend, but soon found himself indisposed with a kind of shaking, as it were an ague, which increasing to a fever, he took to his bed, where, growing worse, he found he had not long to last in this world, and therefore prepared himself for another, towards which he had been journeying as a pilgrim and stranger upon earth the prime of his days.”

The occasion of his journey to Reading, which has always been called “a labor of love and charity,” will now be more interesting than it hitherto has been. It was not undertaken by a man in health, but by an overwrought author sinking under “a sweating distemper.” Mr. Ivimey’s account of Bunyan’s errand being the best, I quote it:

“The last act of his life was a labor of love and charity. A young gentleman, a neighbor of Mr. Bunyan, falling under his father’s displeasure, and being much troubled in mind on that account, and also from hearing it was his father’s design to disinherit him, or

otherwise deprive him of what he had to leave, he pitched upon Mr. Bunyan as a fit man to make way for his submission, and prepare his mind to receive him; which he, being willing to undertake any good office, readily engaged in, and went to Reading, in Bedfordshire, for that purpose. There he so successfully accomplished his design, by using such pressing arguments and reason against anger and passion, and also for love and reconciliation, that the father's heart was softened, and his bowels yearned over his son.

“After Mr. Bunyan had disposed everything in the best manner to promote an accommodation, as he returned to London on horseback, he was overtaken with excessive rains, and coming to his lodgings extremely wet, he fell sick of a violent fever, which he bore with much constancy and patience, and expressed himself as if he wished nothing more than to depart and to be with Christ, considering it as gain, and life only a tedious delay of expected felicity. Finding his strength decay, he settled his worldly affairs as well as the shortness of the time and the violence of the disorder would permit; and after an illness of ten days, with unshaken confidence he resigned his soul, on the 31st of August, 1688, being sixty years of age, into the hand of his most merciful Redeemer, following his Pilgrim from the city of Destruction to the New Jerusalem, his better part having been all along there in holy contemplation, pantings, and breathings after the hidden manna and the water of life.”

His tomb is in Bunhill Fields. His cottage at Elstow, although somewhat modernized, is substantially as he left it. His chair, jug, Book of Martyrs, Church Book, and some other relics, are carefully preserved at his chapel in Bedford; and best of all, his *catholic spirit* also is preserved there.



A RELATION OF THE IMPRISONMENT OF MR. JOHN BUNYAN,

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT BEDFORD,
IN NOVEMBER, 1660

**HIS EXAMINATION BEFORE THE JUSTICES. HIS
CONFERENCE WITH THE CLERK OF THE PEACE, WHAT
PASSED BETWEEN THE JUDGES AND HIS WIFE WHEN SHE
PRESENTED A PETITION FOR HIS DELIVERANCE, ETC.**

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my name's sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. ⁴¹⁵⁰Matthew 5:10, 11, 12.

The relation of my imprisonment in the month of November, 1660, when, by the good hand of my God, I had for five or six years together, without any great interruption, freely preached the blessed Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and had also, through his blessed grace, some encouragement by his blessing thereupon: the Devil, that old enemy of man's salvation, took his opportunity to inflame the hearts of his vassals against me, insomuch that tit the last f was laid ant for by the warrant of a justice, and was taken and committed to prison. The relation thereof is as followeth.

Upon the 12th of this instant, November, 1660, I was desired by some of the friends in the country to come to teach at Samsell, by Harlington, in Bedfordshire; to whom I made a promise, if the Lord permitted, to be with

them on the time aforesaid. The justice, hearing thereof, (whose name is Mr. Francis Wingate,) forthwith issued out his warrant to take me and bring me before him, and in the mean time to keep a very strong watch about the house where the meeting should be kept, as if we that were to meet together in that place did intend to do some fearful business, to the destruction of the country, when, alas! the constable, when he came in, found us only with our Bibles in our hands, ready to speak and hear the word of God, for we were just about to begin our exercise. Nay, we had begun in prayer for the blessing of God upon our opportunity, intending to have preached the word of the Lord unto them three present, but the constable's coming in prevented us. So that I was taken and forced to depart the room.

But had I been minded to have played the coward, I could have escaped and kept out of his hands; for when I was come to my friend's house there was whispering that that day I should be taken, for there was a warrant out to take me; which when my friend heard, he being somewhat timorous, questioned whether we had best have our meeting or not, and whether it might not be better for me to depart, lest they should take me and have me before the justice, and after that send me to prison, (for he knew better than I what spirit they were of, living by them.) To whom I said, No, by no means; I will not stir, neither will I have the meeting dismissed for this. Come, be of good cheer, let us not be daunted; our cause is good, we need not be ashamed of it; to preach God's word, it is so good a work that we shall be well rewarded if we suffer for that; or to this purpose. But as for my friend, I think he was more afraid of me than of himself. After this I walked into the close, where, I somewhat seriously considering the matter, this came into my mind: That I had showed myself hearty and courageous in my preaching, and had, blessed be grace! made it my business to encourage others; therefore thought I, If I should now run and make an escape, it will be of a very ill favor in the country; for what will my weak and newly-converted brethren think of it but that I was not so strong in deed as I was in word? Also I feared that if I should run now there was a warrant out for me. I might by so doing make them afraid to stand when great words only should be spoken to them. Besides, I thought that; seeing God of his mercy should choose me to go upon the forlorn hope in this country — that is, to be the first that should be opposed for the Gospel if

I should fly it might be a discouragement to the whole body that might follow after. And further, I thought the world thereby would take occasion at my cowardliness to have blasphemed the Gospel, and to have had some grounds to suspect worse of me and my profession than I deserved. These things with others, considered by me, I came in again to the house, with a full resolution to keep the meeting and not to go away, though I could have been gone about an hour before the officer apprehended me; but I would not, for I was resolved to see the utmost of what they could say or do unto me for, blessed be the Lord! I knew of no evil that I had said or done. And so, as aforesaid, I began the meeting,. but, being prevented by the constable's coming in with his warrant to take me, I could not proceed; but before I went away I spoke some few words of counsel and encouragement to the people, declaring to them that they saw we were prevented of our opportunity to speak and hear the word of God, and were like to suffer for the, same; desiring them that they should not be discouraged, for it was a mercy to suffer upon so good account, for we might have been apprehended as thieves or murderers, or for other wickedness; but, blessed be God! it was not so, but we suffer as Christians for well-doing, and we had better be the persecuted than the persecutors, etc. But the constable and the justice's man, waiting on us, would not be at quiet till they had me away and that we departed the house; but because the justice was not at home that day, there was a friend of mine engaged for me to bring me to the constable on the morrow morning; otherwise the constable must have charged a watch with me, or have secured me some other way, my crime was so great. So on the next morning we went to the constable, and so to the justice. He asked the constable what he did where we were met together, and what we had with us. I trow he meant whether we had armor or not; but when the constable told him that there were only met a few of us together I o preach and hear the word, and no sign of any thing else, he could not well tell what to say; yet because he had sent for me, he did adventure to put out a few proposals to me, which were to this effect: namely, what I did there? and why I did not content myself with following my calling, for it was against the law that such as I should be admitted to do as I did?

To which I answered that the intent of my coming thither and to other places was to instruct and counsel people to forsake their sins and close in

with Christ, lest they did miserably perish, and that I could do both these without confusion — to wit, follow my calling and preach the word also.

At which words he was in a chafe, as it appeared, for he said that he would break the neck of our meetings.

I said, It may be so. Then he wished me to get me sureties to be bound for me, or else he would send me to the jail.

My sureties being ready, I called them in, and when the bond for my appearance was made, he told them that they were bound to keep me from preaching, and that if I did preach their bonds would be forfeited. To which I answered that then I should break them, for I should not leave speaking the word of God, even to counsel, comfort, exhort, and teach the people among whom I came; and I thought this to be a work that had no hurt in it, but was rather worthy of commendation than blame.

Wingate. Whereat he told me that if they would not be so bound, my mittimus must be made and I sent to the jail, there to lie to the quarter sessions.

Now while my mittimus was a making the justice was withdrawn, and in comes an old enemy to the truth, Dr. Lindale, who, when he was come in, fell to taunting at me with many reviling terms.

Bunyan. To whom I answered that I did not come thither to talk with him, but with the justice Whereat he supposed that I had nothing to say for myself, triumphed as if he had got the victory, charging and condemning me for meddling with that for which I could show no warrant, and asked me if I had taken the oaths: and if I had not it was pity but that I should be sent to prison, etc.

I told him that if I was minded I could answer to any sober question that he should put to me. He then urged me again how I could prove it lawful for me to preach, with a great deal of confidence of the victory.

But at last, because he should see that I could answer him if I listed, I cited him to that in Peter, which saith, “As every man hath received the gift, even so let him minister the same,” etc.

Lindale. Ay, saith he, to whom is that spoken?

Bunyan. To whom? said I, why to every man that hath received a gift from God. “Mark,” saith the apostle, “As every man that hath received a gift from God,” etc And again, “You may all prophesy, one by one.” Whereat the man was a little stopped and went a softlier pace; but not being willing to lose the day, he began again, and said:

Lindale. Indeed I do remember that I have read of one Alexander, a coppersmith, who did much oppose and disturb the apostles, (aiming, it is like, at me, because I was a tinker.)

Bunyan To which I answered that I also had read of very many priests and Pharisees that had their hands in the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Lindale. Ay, saith he, and you are one of those scribes and Pharisees, for you, with a pretense, make long prayers to devour widows’ houses.

Bunyan I answered that if he had got no more by preaching and praying than I had (lone, he would not be so rich as now he was. But that Scripture coming into my mind, “Answer not a fool according to his folly,” I was as sparing of my speech as I could without prejudice to truth.

Now by this time my mittimus was made, and I committed to the constable, to be sent to the jail in Bedford, etc.

But as I was going two of my brethren met with me by the way, and desired the constable to stay, supposing that they should prevail with the justice, through the favor of a pretended friend, to let me go at liberty. So we did stay while they went to the justice, and after much discourse with him it came to this.-that if I would come to him again and say some certain words to him, I should be released; which when they told me I said if the words were such that might be said with a good conscience, I should, or else I should not. So through their importunity I went back again, but not believing that I should be delivered. For I feared their spirit was too full of opposition to the truth to let me go, unless I should in something or other dishonor my God and wound my conscience. Wherefore as I went I lift; up my heart to God for light and strength to be kept, that I might not do anything that might either dishonor him, or wrong my own soul, or be a grief or discouragement to any that were inclining after the Lord Jesus Christ.

Well, when I came to the justice again, there was Mr. Foster of Bedford, who coming out of another room, and seeing of me by the light of the candle, (for it was dark night when I went thither,) he said unto me, Who is there? John Bunyan? with such seeming affection as if he would have leaped on my neck and kissed me; which made me somewhat wonder that such a man as he, with whom I had so little acquaintance, and, besides, that had ever been a close opposer of the ways of God, should carry himself so full of love to me; but afterwards, when I saw what he did, it caused me to remember those sayings: “Their tongues are smother than oil, but their words are drawn swords.” And again, “Beware of men,” etc. When I had answered him that, blessed be God! I was well, he said, What is the occasion of your being here? or to that purpose. To whom I answered that I was at a meeting of people a little way off, intending to speak a word of exhortation to them; the justice hearing thereof, said I, was pleased to send his warrant to fetch me before him, etc.

Foster. So, said he, I understand; but well, if you will promise to call the people no more together, you shall have your liberty to go home, for my brother is very loth to send you to prison if you will be but ruled.

Bunyan. Sir, said I, pray what do you mean by calling the people together? My business is not anything among them when they are come together but to exhort them to look after the salvation of their souls, that they may be saved, etc.

Foster. Saith he, We must not enter into explication or dispute now; but if you will say you will call the people no more together, you may have your liberty; if not, you must be sent away to prison.

Bunyan. Sir, said I, I shall not force or compel any man to hear me, but yet if I come into any place where there is a people met together, I should, according to the best of my skill and wisdom, exhort and counsel them to seek out after the Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of their souls.

Foster. He said that was none of my work; I must follow my calling; and if I would but leave off preaching and follow my calling, I should have the justice’s favor and be acquitted presently.

Bunyan. To whom I said that I could follow my calling and that too — namely, preaching the word — and did look upon it as my duty to do them both as I had an opportunity.

Foster. He said to have any such meetings was against the law, and therefore he would have me leave off, and say I would call the people no more together.

Bunyan. To whom I said that I durst not make any further promise, for my conscience would not suffer me to do it. And again, I did look upon as my duty to do as much good as I could, not only in my trade, but also in communicating to all people wheresoever I came the best knowledge I had in the word.

Foster. He told me that I was the nearest the Papists of any, and that he would convince me of immediately.

Bunyan. I asked him wherein.

Foster. He said, In that we understood the Scriptures literally.

Bunyan. I told him that those that were to be understood literally, we understood them so, but for those that were to be understood otherwise, we endeavored to understand them.

Foster. He said, Which of the Scriptures do you understand literally?

Bunyan. I said this: “He that believes shall be saved.” This was to be understood just as it is spoken, that whosoever believeth in Christ shall, according to the plain and simple words of the text, be saved.

Foster. He said that I was ignorant and did not understand the Scriptures; for how, said he, can you understand them when you know not the original Greek? etc.

Bunyan. To whom I said that if that was his opinion, that none could understand the Scriptures but those that had the original Greek, etc., theft but a retry few of the poorest sort should be eyed, (this is harsh,) yet the Scripture saith “that God hides his things from the wise and prudent, (that is, from the learned of the world,) and reveals them to babes and sucklings.”

Foster. He said there were none that heard me but a company of foolish people.

Bunyan. I told him that there were the wise as well as the foolish that do hear me; and again, those that are most commonly counted foolish by the world are the wisest before God. Also, that God had rejected the wise and mighty and noble, and chosen the foolish and the base.

Foster. He told me that I made people neglect their calling, and that God hath commended people to work six days, and serve him on the seventh.

Bunyan. I told him that it was the duty of people (both rich and poor) to look out for their souls on those days as well as for their bodies, and that God would have his people exhort one another daily while it is called today.

Foster. He said again that there were none but a company of poor, simple, ignorant people that came to hear me.

Bunyan. I told him that the foolish and the ignorant had most need of teaching and information, and therefore it would be profitable for me to go on in that work.

Foster. Well, said he, to conclude, but will you promise that you will not call the people together any more, and then you may be released and go home?

Bunyan. I told him that I durst say no more than I had said, for I durst not leave off that work which God had called me to.

So he withdrew from me, and then came several of the justice's servants to me and told me that I stood too much upon a nicety. Their master, they said, was willing to let me go; and if I would but say I would call the people no more together, I might have my liberty, etc.

Bunyan. I told them there were more ways than one in which a man might be said to call the people together. As, for instance, if a man get upon the market-place, and there read a book or the like, though he do not say to the people, Sirs, come hither and hear; yet if they come to him because he reads, he by his very reading may be said to call them together,

because they would not have been there to hear if he had not been there to read; and seeing this might be termed a calling the people together, I durst not say I would not call them together, for then, by the same argument, my preaching might be said to call them together.

Wingate and Foster. Then came the justice and Mr. Foster to me again, (we had a little, more discourse about preaching, but because the method of it; is out of my mind I pass it,) and when they saw that I was at a point., and would not be moved nor persuaded,

Mr Foster ^{r2} told the justice that then he must send me away to prison, and that he would do well also if he would present all them that were the cause of my coming among them to meetings. Thus we parted.

And verily, as I was going forth of the doors, I had much ado to forbear saying to them that I carried the peace of God along with me, but I held my peace, and, blessed be the Lord! went away to prison with God's comfort in my poor soul.

After I had lain in the jail five or six days the brethren sought means again to get me out by bondsmen, (for so run my mittimus, that I should lie there till I could find sureties.) They went; to a justice at Elstow, one Mr. Crumpton, to desire him to take bond for my appearing at the quarter sessions. At the first he told them he would, but afterwards he made a demur at the business, and desired first to see my mittimus, which run to this purpose: That I went about to several conventicles in this country, to the great disparagement of the government of the Church of England, etc. When he had seen it he said that there might be something more against me than was expressed in my mittimus, and that he was but a young man; therefore he durst not do it. This my jailer told me. Whereat I was not at all daunted, but rather glad, and saw evidently that the Lord had heard me; for before I went down to the justice I begged of God that if I might do more good by being at liberty than in prison, that then I might be set at liberty, but if not, his will be done; for I was not altogether without hopes but that my imprisonment might be an awakening to the saints in the country; therefore I could not tell well which to choose, only I that manner did commit the thing to God. And verily at my return I did meet my God sweetly in the prison again, comforting of me and satisfying of me that it was his will and mind that I should be there.

When I came back again to prison, as it was musing at the slender answer of the justice, this word dropped in upon my heart with some life: “For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.”

Thus have I in short declared the manner and occasion of my being in prison, where I lie waiting the good will of God, to do with me as he pleaseth, knowing that not one hair of my head can fall to the ground without the will of my Father which is in heaven. Let the rage and malice of men be never so great, they can do no more nor go no farther than God permits them; but when they have done their worst, we know all things shall work together for good to them that love God. Farewell!

**HERE IS THE SUM OF MY EXAMINATION BEFORE JUSTICE
KEELIN, JUSTICE CHESTER, JUSTICE BLUNDALE,
JUSTICE BEECHER, AND JUSTICE SNAGG, ETC.**

AFTER I had lain in prison above seven weeks the quarter sessions were to be kept in Bedford for the county thereof, unto which place I was to be brought; and when my jailer had set me before those justices, there was bill of indictment preferred against me. The extent thereof was as followeth: That John Bunyan, of the town of Bedford, laborer, being a person of such and such conditions, he hath (since such a time) devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to church to hear divine service, and is a common upholder of several unlawful meetings and conventicles, to the great disturbance and distraction of the good subjects of this kingdom, contrary to the laws of our sovereign lord the king, etc.

The Clerk. When this was read, the clerk of the sessions said unto me, What say you to this?

Bunyan. I said that, as to the first part of it I was a common frequenter of the Church of God, and was also, by grace, a member with those people over whom Christ is the Head.

Keelin. But saith Justice Keelin, (who was the judge in that court,) Do you come to church, (you know what I mean,) to the parish church, to hear divine service?

Bunyan. I answered, No, I did not.

Keelin. He asked me, Why?

Bunyan. I said, Because I did not find it commanded in the word of God.

Keelin. He said, We were commanded to pray.

Bunyan. I said, But not by the common prayer-book.

Keelin He said, How then?

Bunyan. I said, With the Spirit. As the apostle saith, “I will pray with the Spirit, with understanding.”

Keelin. He said, We might pray with the Spirit, with understanding and with the common prayer-book also.

Bunyan. I said that those prayers in the common prayer-book were such as were made by other men, and not by the motions of the Holy Ghost within our hearts; and, as I said, the apostle saith he will pray with the Spirit and with understanding, not with the Spirit and the. common prayer-book.

Another Justice. What do you count prayer? Do you think is to say a few words over before or among people?

Bunyan. I said, No, not so; for men might have many elegant or excellent words, and yet not pray at all but when a man prayeth he doth through a sense of those things which he wants (which sense is begotten by the Spirit) pour out his heart before God through Christ, though his words be not so many and so excellent as other are.

Justices. They said that was true.

Bunyan. I said, This might be done without the common prayer-book.

Another. One of them said, (I think it was Justice Blundale or Justice Snagg,) How should we know that you do not write out your prayers first, and then read them afterwards to the people? This he spoke in a laughing way.

Bunyan. I said, It is not our use to take a pen and paper and write a few words thereon, and then go and read it over to a company of people.

But how should we know it? said he.

Bunyan. Sir, it is none of our custom, said I.

Keelin. But, said Justice Keelin, it is lawful to use common prayer, and such like forms, for Christ taught his disciples to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And further, said he, cannot one man teach another to pray? Faith comes by hearing; and one man may convince another of sin, and therefore prayers made by men and read over are good to teach and help men to pray.

While he was speaking these words, God brought, that word into my mind in the eighth of the ~~618~~ Romans at the 26th verse — I say God brought it, for I thought not on it before; but as he was speaking it came so fresh into my mind, and was set so evidently before me, as if the Scripture had said, Take me, take me; so when he had done speaking,

Bunyan. I said, Sir, the Scripture saith that “it is the Spirit that helpeth our infirmities;” for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with sighs and groanings which cannot be uttered. Mark, said I, it doth not say the common prayer-book teaches us how to pray, but the Spirit. “And it is the Spirit that helpeth our infirmities,” saith the apostle; he doth not say it is the common prayer-book,

And as to the Lord’s Prayer, although it be an easy thing to say, Our Father, etc., with the mouth, yet there are very few that can, in the Spirit, say the two first words of that prayer — that is, that can call God their Father — as knowing what it is to be born again, and as having experience that they *are* begotten of the Spirit of God, which if they do not all is but babbling, etc.

Keelin. Justice Keelin said that that was a truth.

Bunyan. And I say further, as to your saying that one man may convince another of sin, and that faith comes by hearing, and that one man may tell another how he should pray, etc. — I say men may tell each other of their sins, but it is the Spirit that must convince them. ^{f3}

And though it be said that faith comes by hearing, yet it is the Spirit that worketh faith in the heart through hearing, or else “they are not profited by hearing.” ^{<3012>}Hebrews 4:12.

And that though one man may tell another how he should pray, yet, as I said before, he cannot pray, nor make his condition known to God, except the Spirit help. It is not the common prayer-book that can do this. It is the “Spirit that showeth us our sins,” (^{<3136>}John 16:16,) and the “Spirit that showeth us a Savior,” (^{<4127>}Matthew 11:27,) and the Spirit that stirreth up in our hearts desire to come to God for such things as we stand in need of, even sighing out our souls unto him for them with groans which cannot be uttered. With other words to the same purpose. At this they were set.

Keelin. But, says Justice Keelin, what have you against the common prayer-book?

Bunyan. I said, sir, if you will hear me, I shall lay down my reasons against it.

Keelin. He said I should have liberty. But first, said he, let me give you one caution: take heed of speaking irreverently of the common prayer-book, for if you do so you will bring great damage upon yourself.

Bunyan. So I proceeded and said, My first reason was, because it was not commanded in the word of God, and, therefore I could not do it.

Another. One of them said, Where do you find it commanded in the Scripture that you should go to Elstow or Bedford, and yet it is lawful to go to either of them, is it not?

Bunyan. I said, To go to Elstow or Bedford was a civil thing, and not material, though not commanded, and yet God’s word allowed me to go about my calling, and therefore if it, lay there then to go thither, etc. But to pray was a great part of the divine worship of God, and therefore it ought to be done according to the rule of God’s word.

Another. One of them said, He will do harm; let him speak no further.

Justice Keeling. Justice Keelin said, No, no, never fear him; we are better established than so; he can do no harm; we know the common

prayer-book has been ever since the, apostles' time, and is lawful to be used in the church.

Bunyan. I said, Show me the place in the epistles where the common prayer-book is written, or one text of Scripture that commands me to read it, and I will use it. But; yet notwithstanding, said I, they that have a mind to use it, they have their liberty — that is, ^{f4} I would not keep them from it — bat for our parts, we can pray to God without it. Blessed be his name!

With that one of them said, Who is your God — Beelzebub? Moreover, they often said that I was possessed with the spirit of delusion and of the devil. All which sayings I passed over. The Lord forgive them! And further I said, Blessed be the Lord for it! we are encouraged to meet together and to pray, and exhort one another; for we have had the comfortable presence of God among us, for ever blessed be his holy name!

Keelin. Justice Keelin called this pedlar's French, saying that I must leave off my canting. The Lord open his eyes!

Bunyan. I said that we ought to exhort one another daily while it is called to-day, etc.

Keelin. Justice Keelin said that I ought not to preach, and asked me where I had my authority; with many other such like words.

Bunyan. I said that I would prove that it was lawful for me, and such as I am, to. preach the word of God.

Keelin. He said unto me, By what Scripture? I said, By that in ~~cor~~ 1 Peter 4:11, and ~~act~~ Acts 18, with other Scriptures, which he would not suffer me to mention. But hold! said he, not so many: which is the first?

Bunyan. I said, This: “As every man hath received the gift, even so let him minister the same unto another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God; if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God,” etc.

Keelin. He said, Let me a little open that Scripture to you. As every man hath received the gift — that is, said he, as every man hath received a trade — so let him follow it. If any man hath received a gift of tinkering, as thou

hast done, let him follow his tinkering. And so other men their trades. And the divine his calling, &c.

Bunyan. Nay, sir, said I, but it is most clear that the apostle speaks here of preaching the word; if you do but compare both the verses together, the next verse explains this gift, what it is, saying, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God;” so that it is plain that the Holy Ghost doth not so much in this place exhort to civil callings as to the exercising of those gifts that we have received from God. I would have gone on, but he would not give me leave.

Keelin. He said we might do it in our families, but not otherways.

Bunyan. I said, If it was lawful to do good to some, it was lawful to do good to more. If it was a good duty to exhort our families, it is good to exhort others; but if they held it a sin to meet together to seek the face of God and exhort one another to follow Christ, I should sin still, for so we should do.

Keelin. He said he was not so well versed in Scripture as to dispute, or words to that purpose. And said, moreover, that they could not wait upon me any longer; but said to me, Then you confess the indictment, do you not? Now, and not till now, I saw I was indicted.

Bunyan. I said, This I confess: we have had many meetings together, both to pray to God and to exhort one another, and that we had the sweet, comforting presence of the Lord among us for our encouragement, blessed be his name therefore I confess myself guilty no otherwise.

Keelin. Then said he, Hear your judgment: You must be had back again to prison; and there lie for three months following; and at three months’ end, if you do not submit to go church to hear divine service, and leave your preaching, you must be banished the realm; and if, after such a day as shall be appointed you to be gone, you shall be found in this realm etc., or be found to come over again without special license from the king, etc., you must stretch by the neck for it, I tell you plainly; and so he bid my jailer have me away.

Bunyan. I told him, As to this matter, I was at a point with him, for if I was out of prison to-day I would preach the Gospel again to-morrow, by the help of God.

Another. To which one made me some answer, but my jailer pulling me away to be gone, I could not tell what he said.

Thus I departed from them; and I can truly say, I bless the Lord Jesus Christ for it that; my heart was sweetly' refreshed in the time of my examination, and also afterwards at my returning to the prison; so that I found Christ's words more than bare trifles where he saith, "he will give a mouth and wisdom, even such as all the adversaries shall not resist or gainsay," and that his peace no man can take from us.

Thus have I given you the substance of my examination. The Lord make these profitable to all that ,shall read or hear them! Farewell.

**THE SUBSTANCE OF SOME DISCOURSE HAD BETWEEN THE
CLERK OF THE PEACE AND MYSELF, WHEN HE CAME TO
ADMONISH ME ACCORDING TO THE TENOR OF THAT LAW
BY WHICH I WAS IN PRISON.**

WHEN I had lain in prison other twelve weeks, and now not knowing what they intended to do with me, upon the third of April come Mr. Cobb unto me.. (as he told me,) being ,eat by the justices to admonish me and demand of me submittance to the Church of England, etc. When he was come into the house he sent for me out of my chamber; and when I was come unto him he said,

Cobb. Neighbor Bunyan, how do you do?

Bunyan. I thank you, sir, said I, very well, blessed be the Lord!

Cobb. Saith he, I come to tell you that it is desired you would submit yourself to the laws Of the land, or else at the next sessions is will go worse with you, even to be sent away out of the nation, or else worse than that.

Bunyan. I said that I did desire to demean myself in the world both as becometh a man and a Christian.

Cobb. But, saith he, you must submit to the laws of the land, and leave off those meetings which you were wont to have, for the statute law is directly against it; and I am sent to you by the justices to tell you that they do intend to prosecute the law against you if you submit not.

Bunyan. I said, Sir, I conceive that that law by which I am in prison at this time doth not reach or condemn either me or the meetings which I do frequent: that law was made against those that, being designed to do evil in their meetings, make the exercise of religion their pretense to cover their wickedness. It doth not forbid the private meetings of those that plainly and simply make it their only end to worship the Lord and to exhort one another to edification. My end in meeting with others is simply to do as much good as I can by exhortation and counsel, according to that small measure of light which God hath given me, and not to disturb the peace of the nation.

Cobb. Every one will say the same, said he: you see the late insurrection at London, under what glorious pretences they went, and yet indeed they intended no less than the ruin of the kingdom and commonwealth.

Bunyan. That practice of theirs I abhor, said I; yet it doth not follow that because they did so, therefore all others will do so. I look upon it as my duty to behave myself under the king's government, both as becomes a man and a Christian; and if 'm occasion was of/bred me I should willingly manifest my loyalty to my prince both by word and deed.

Cobb. Well, said he, I do not profess myself to be a man that can dispute; but this I say truly, neighbor Bunyan, I would have you consider this matter seriously and submit yourself; you may have your liberty to exhort your neighbor in private discourse, so be you do not call together an assembly of people; and truly you may do much good to the Church of Christ if you would go this way; and this you may do and the law not abridge you of it. It is your private meetings that the law is against.

Bunyan. Sir, said I, if I may do good to one by my discourse, why may I not do good to two? And if to two, why not to four, and as to eight, etc.?

Cobb. Ay, saith he, and to an hundred, I warrant you.

Bunyan. Yes, sir:, said I; I think I should not be forbid to do as much good as I can.

Cobb. But, said he, you may but pretend to do good, and indeed, notwithstanding, do harm by seducing the people; you are therefore denied your meeting so many together, lest you should do harm.

Bunyan. And yet, said I, you say the law tolerates me to discourse with my neighbor; surely there is no law tolerates me to seduce any one; therefore if I may by the law discourse with one, surely it is to do him good; and if I by discoursing may do good to one, surely by the as. me law I may do good to many.

Cobb. The law, saith he, doth expressly forbid your private meetings, therefore they are not to be tolerated.

Bunyan. I told him that I would not entertain so much uncharitableness of that Parliament in the 35th of Elizabeth, or of the queen herself, as to think they did by that law intend the oppressing of 'my of God's ordinances or the interrupting any in the way of God; but men may, in the wresting of it, turn it against the way of God; but take the law in itself, and it only fighteth against those that drive at mischief in their hearts and meetings, making religion only their cloak, color or pretence; for so are the words of the statute: "If any meetings, under color or pretense of religion," etc.

Cobb. Very good; therefore the king seeing that pretences are usually in and among people as do make religion their pretences only, therefore he, and the law before him, doth forbid such private meetings and tolerates only public; you may meet in public.

Bunyan. Sir, said I, let me answer you in a similitude. Set the case that, at such a wood corner, there did usually come forth thieves to do mischief; must; there therefore a law be made that every one that cometh out there shall be killed? May not there come out true men as well as thieves from thence? Just thus is it in this case; I do think there may be many that may design the destruction of the commonwealth, but it doth not follow therefore that all private meetings are unlawful; those that transgress, let them be punished; and if at any time I myself should do any act in my

conversation as doth not become a man and a Christian, let me bear the punishment. And as for your saying I may meet in public, if I may be suffered I would be glad to do it; let me have but meetings enough in public, and I shall care the less to have them in private. I do not meet in private because I am afraid to have meetings in public. I bless the Lord that ray heart is at that point that if any man can lay anything to my charge, either in doctrine or practice, in this particular, that can be proved error or heresy, I am willing to disown it, even in the very market-place, but if it be truth, then to stand to it to the last drop of my blood. And, sir, said I, you ought to commend me for so doing. To err, and to be a heretic, are two things; I am no heretic, because I will not stand refractorily to defend any one thing that is contrary to the word; prove any thing which I hold to be an error, and I will recant it.

Cobb. But, goodman Bunyan, said he, me-thinks you need not stand so strictly upon this one thing as to have meetings of such public assemblies. Cannot you submit, and notwithstanding do as much good as you can in a neighborly way, without having such meetings?

Bunyan. Truly, sir, said I, I do not desire to commend myself, but to think meanly of myself; yet when I do most despise myself, taking notice of that small measure of light which God hath given me, also that the people of the Lord (by their own saying) are edified thereby — besides, when I see that the Lord through grace hath in some measure blessed my labor — I dare not but exercise that gift which God hath given me for the good of the people. And I said further that I would willingly speak in public if I might.

Cobb. He said that I might come to the public assemblies and hear. What though you do not preach, you may hear. Do not think yourself so well enlightened, and that you have received a gift so far above others, but that you may hear other men preach; or to that purpose.

Bunyan. I told him I was as willing to be taught as to give instruction, and I looked upon it as my duty to do both; for, said I, a man that is a teacher, he himself may learn also from another that teacheth; as the apostle saith: “We may all prophesy, one by one, that all may learn;” that is, every man that hath received a gift from God, he may dispense it, that

others may be Comforted; and when he hath done he may hear, and learn, and be comforted himself of others.

Cobb. But, said he, what if you should forbear a while and sit still, till you see further how things will go?

Bunyan. Sir, said I, Wickliffe saith that he which leaveth off preaching and hearing of the word of God for fear of excommunication of men, he is already excommunicated of God, and shall in the day of judgment be counted a traitor to Christ.

Cobb. Ay, saith he, they that do not hear shall be, so counted indeed; do you therefore hear.

Bunyan. But, sir, said I, he saith, He that shall leave off either preaching or hearing, etc.; that is, if he hath received a gift for edification, it is his sin if he doth not lay it out in a way of exhortation and counsel, according to the proportion of his gift, as well as to spend his time altogether in hearing others preach.

Cobb. But, said he, how shall we know that you have received a gift?

Bunyan. Said I, Let any man hear and search, and prove the doctrine by the Bible.

Cobb. But will you be willing, said he, that two indifferent persons shall determine the case, and will you stand by their judgment?

Bunyan. I said, Are they infallible?

Cobb. He said, No.

Bunyan. Then said I, It is possible my judgment may be as good as theirs, but yet I will pass by either, and in this matter be judged by the Scriptures: I am sure that is infallible and cannot err.

Cobb. But, said he, who shall be judge between you, for you take the Scriptures one way and they another?

Bunyan. I said, The Scriptures should, and that by comparing one Scripture with another; for that will open itself if it be rightly compared. As, for instance, if under the different apprehensions of the word

mediator, you would know the truth of it, the Scriptures open it, and tell us that he that is a mediator must take up the business between two, and a mediator is not a mediator of one, “but; God is one, and there is one Mediator between God and man, even the man Jesus Christ.” So likewise the Scripture calleth Christ a complete, or perfect, or able high priest. That is opened in that he is called man and also God. His blood also is discovered to be effectually efficacious by the same things. So the Scripture, as touching the matter of meeting together, etc., doth likewise sufficiently open itself and discover its meaning.

Cobb. But are you willing, said he, to stand to the judgment of the Church?

Bunyan. Yes, sir, said I, to the approbation of the Church of God, (the Church’s judgment is best expressed in Scripture.) We had much other discourse, which I cannot well remember, about the laws of the nation and submission to governments; to which I did tell him that I did look upon myself as bound in conscience to walk according to all righteous laws, and that whether there was a king or no; and if I did anything that was contrary, I did hold it my duty to bear patiently the penalty of the law that was provided against such offenders, with many more words to the like effect; and said, moreover, that to cut off all occasions of suspicion from any, as touching; the harmlessness of my doctrine in private, I would willingly take the pains to give any one the notes of all my sermons, for I do sincerely desire to live quietly in my country and to submit to the present authority.

Cobb. Well, neighbor Bunyan, said he, but indeed I would wish you seriously to consider of these things between this and the quarter sessions and to submit yourself. You may do much good if you continue still in the land; but, alas! what benefit will it be to your friends, or what good can it do to them, if you should be sent away beyond the seas into Spain, or Constantinople, or some other remote part of the world? Pray be ruled.

Jailer. Indeed, sir, I hope he will be ruled.

Bunyan. I shall desire, said I, in all godliness and honesty to behave myself in the nation whilst I am in it. And if must be so dealt withal as you say, I hope God will help me to bear what they shall lay upon me. I

know no evil that I have done in this matter to be so used. I speak as in the presence of God.

Cobb. You know, saith he, that the Scripture saith, “The powers that are ordained of God?”

Bunyan. I said yes, and that I was to submit to the king as supreme, also to the governors as to them that are sent by him.

Cobb. Well, then, said he, the king commands you that you should not have any private meetings, because it is against his law; and he is ordained of God, therefore you should not have any.

Bunyan. I told him that Paul did own the powers that were in his day as to be of God, and yet he was often in prison under them for all that. And also, though Jesus Christ told Pilate that he had no power against him but of God, yet he died under the same Pilate and yet, said I, I hope you will not say that either Paul or Christ was such as did deny magistracy, and so sinned against God in slighting the ordinance. Sir, said I, the law hath provided two ways of obeying: the one to do that which I in my conscience do believe that I am bound to do actively; and where I cannot obey actively, there I am willing to lie down and to suffer what they shall do unto me. At this he sat still and said no more; which when he had done, I did thank him for his civil and meek discoursing with me and so we parted. Oh that we might meet in heaven! ^{f5} Farewell. J.B.

Here followeth a Discourse between my Wife and the Judges, with others, touching my Deliverance at the Assizes following; the which I took from her own mouth.

AFTER that I had received this sentence of banishing or hanging from them, and after the former admonition touching the determination of justices if I did not recant, just when the time drew nigh in which I should have abjured or have done worse, (as Mr. Cobb told me,) came the time in which the king was to be crowned. Now at the coronation of a king there is usually a releasement of divers prisoners by virtue of his coronation; in which privilege also I should have had my share, but that they took me for a convicted person, and therefore, unless I sued out a pardon, (as they called it,) I could have no benefit thereby notwithstanding; yet forasmuch

as the coronation proclamation did give liberty from the day the king was crowned to that day twelvemonth to sue them out, therefore, though they would not let me out of prison as they let out thousands, yet they could not meddle with me ,as touching the execution of their sentence, because of the liberty offered for the suing out of pardons. Whereupon I continued in prison till the next assizes, which are called midsummer assizes, being then kept in August, 1061.

Now at that assizes, because I would not leave any possible means unattempted that might be lawful, I did, by my wife, present a petition to the judges three times that I might be heard, and that they would impartially take my case into consideration.

The first time my wife went she presented it to Judge Hales, who very mildly received it at her hand, telling her that he would do her and me the best good he could, but he feared, he said, he could do none. The next day again, lest they should, through the multitude of business, forget me, we did throw another petition into the coach to Judge Twisdon who, when he had seen it, snapped her up and angrily told her that I was a convicted person, and could not be released unless I would promise to preach no more, etc.

Well, after this she yet again presented another to Judge Hales as he sat on the bench, who, as it seemed, was willing to give her audience; only Justice Chester, being present, stepped up and said that I was convicted in the court, and that I was a hot-spirited fellow, or words to that purpose, whereat he waived it and did not meddle therewith. But yet my wife, being encouraged by the high sheriff, did venture once more into their presence, (as the poor widow did to the unjust judge,) to try what she could do with them for my liberty before they went forth of the town. The place where she went to them was to the Swan Chamber, where the two judges and many justices and gentry of the country were in company together. She then, coming into the chamber, with a bashful face and a trembling heart began her errand to them in this manner:

Woman. My lord, (directing herself to Judge Hales,) I make bold to come once again to your lordship to know what may be done to my husband.

Judge Hales. To whom he said, Woman, I told thee before I could do thee no good, because they have taken that for a conviction which thy husband spoke at the sessions; and unless there be something done to undo that, I can do thee no good.

Woman. My lord, said she, he is kept unlawfully in prison; they clapped him up before there was any proclamation against the meetings; the indictment also is false; besides, they never asked him whether he was guilty or no; neither did he confess the indictment.

One of the Justices. Then one of the justices that stood by, whom she knew not, said, My lord, he was lawfully convicted.

Woman. It is false, said she; for when they said to him, Do you confess the indictment? he said only this, that he had been at several meetings, both where there was preaching the word and prayer, and that they had God's presence among them.

Judge Twisdon. Where at Judge Twisdon answered very angrily, saying, What! you think we can do what we list; your husband is a breaker of the peace and is convicted by the law, etc. Whereupon Judge Hales called for the statute-book.

Woman But, said she, my lord, he was not lawfully convicted.

Chester. Then Justice Chester said, My lord, he was lawfully convicted.

Woman. It is. false, said she; it was but a word of discourse that they took for a conviction, (as you heard before.)

Chester. But it is recorded, woman, it is recorded, says Justice Chester. As if it must be of necessity true because it was recorded I With which words he often endeavored to stop her mouth, having no other argument to convince her but, It is recorded, it is recorded.

Woman My lord, said she, I was awhile since in London, to see if I could get my husband's liberty, and there I spoke with my Lord Barkwood, one of the House of Lords, to whom I delivered a petition, who took it of me and presented it to some of the rest of the House of Lords, for my husband's releasement; who, when they had seen it, they said that

they could not release him, but had committed his releasement to the judges at the next assizes. This he told me; and now I come to you to see if any thing may be done in this business, and you give neither releasement nor relief. To which they gave her no answer, but made as if they heard her not.

Chester. Only Justice Chester was often up with this, He is convicted, and it is recorded. Woman If it be, it is false, said she.

Chester. My lord, said Justice Chester, he is a pestilent fellow; there is not such a fellow in the country again.

Twisdon What! will your husband leave preaching? If he will do so, then semi. for him.

Woman. My lord, said she, he dares not leave preaching as long as he can speak.

Twisdon See here, what should we talk any more about such a fellow? Must he do what he lists? tie: is a breaker of the peace.

Woman She told him again that he desired to live peaceably and to follow his calling, that his family might be maintained; and moreover said, My lord, I have four small children that cannot help themselves, of which one is blind, and have nothing to live upon but the charity of good people.

Hales. Hast thou four children? said Judge Hales; thou art but a young woman to have four children.

Woman. My lord, said she, I am but mother-in-law to them, having not been married to him yet full two years. Indeed I was with child when my husband was first apprehended, but being young and unaccustomed to such things, said she, I, being dismayed at the news, fell into labor, and so continued for eight days, and then was delivered, but my child died.

Hales. Whereat he, looking very soberly on the matter, said, Alas, poor woman!

Twisdon. But Judge Twisdon told her that she made poverty her cloak; and said, moreover, that he understood I was maintained better by running up and down a-preaching than by following my calling.

Hales. What is his calling? said Judge Hales.

Answer. Then some of the company that stood by said, A tinker, my lord.

Woman. Yes, said she, and because he is a tinker and a poor man, therefore he is despised and cannot have justice.

Hales. Then Judge Hales answered, very mildly, saying, I tell thee, woman, seeing it is so that they have taken what thy husband spoke for a conviction, thou must either apply thyself to the king, or sue out his pardon, or get a writ of error.

Chester. But when Justice Chester heard him give her this counsel, and especially (as she supposed) because he spoke of a writ of error, he chafed and seemed to be very much offended, saying, My lord, he will preach and do what he lists.

Woman. He preacheth nothing but the word of God, said she.

Twisdon. He preach the word of God! said Twisdon, (and withal she thought he would have struck her;) he runneth up and down, and doeth harm.

Woman. No, my lord, said she, it is not so; God hath owned him, and done much good by him.

Twisdon. God! said he: his doctrine is the doctrine of the devil.

Woman. My lord, said she, when the righteous Judge shall appear it will be known that his doctrine is not the doctrine of the devil.

Twisdon. My lord, said he to Judge Hales, do not mind her, but send her away.

Hales. Then said Judge Hales, I am sorry, woman, that I can do thee no good; thou must do one of those three things aforesaid — namely, either to apply thyself to the king, or sue out his pardon, or get a writ of error; but a writ of error will be cheapest.

Woman. At which Chester again seemed to be in a chafe, and put off his hat, and, as she thought, scratched his head for anger; but when I saw, said

she, that there was no prevailing to have my husband sent for, though I often desired them that they would send for him that he might speak for himself, telling them that he could give them better satisfaction than I could in what they demanded of him, with several other things, which now I forget — only this I remember, that though I was somewhat timorous at my first entrance into the chamber, yet before I went out I could not but break forth into tears, not so much because they were so hardhearted against me and my husband, but to think what a sad account such poor creatures will have to give at the coming of the Lord, ‘when they shall there answer for all things whatsoever they have done in the body, whether it be good or whether it be bad.

So when I departed from them the book of statutes was brought, but what they said of it I know nothing at; all, neither did I hear any more from them.

Some Carriages of the Adversaries of God’s Truth with me at the next Assizes, whirls, was on the Nineteenth of the First Month, 1662.

I SHALL pass by what befell between these two assizes — how I had, by my jailer, some liberty granted me more than at the first, and how I followed my wonted course of preach-lug, taking all occasions that were put into my hand to visit; the people of God, exhorting them to be steadfast in the faith of Jesus Christ, and to take heed that they touched not the common prayer, etc., but to mind the word of God, which giveth direction to Christians in every point, being able to make the man of God perfect in all things through faith in Jesus Christ, and thoroughly to furnish him up to all good works. Also how I having, I say, somewhat more liberty, did go to see Christians at London, which my enemies hearing of, were so angry that they had almost cast my jailer out of his place, threatening to in. diet him and to do what they could against him. They charged me also that I went thither to plot and raise division and make insurrection, which God knows was a slander; whereupon my liberty was more straitened than it was before, so that I must not look out of the door. Well, when the next sessions came, which was about the 10th of the 11th month, I did expect to have been very roundly dealt withal; but they passed me by and would not call me, so that I rested till the assizes,

which was the 19th of the first month following; and when they came, because I had a desire to come before the judge, I desired my jailer to put my name into the calendar, among the felons, and made friends to the judge and high sheriff, who promised that I should be called; so that I thought what I had done might have been effectual for the obtaining of my desire; but all was in vain; for when the assizes came, though my name was in the calendar, and also though both the judge and sheriff had promised that I should appear before them, yet the justices and the clerk: of the peace did so work it about that I, notwithstanding, was deferred and might not appear. And though I say I do not know of all their carriages towards me, yet this I know, that the clerk of the peace did discover himself to be one of my greatest opposers; for, first he came to my jailer, and told him that I must not go down before the judge, and therefore must not be put into the calendar; to whom my jailer said that my name was in already. He bid him put me out again; my jailer told him that he could not, for he had given the judge a calendar with my name in it, and also the sheriff another. At which he was very much displeased, and desired to see that calendar that was yet in my jailer's hand; who when he had given it him he looked on it and said it was a false calendar; he also took the calendar and blotted out my accusation, as my jailer had writ it, (which accusation I cannot tell what it was, because it was so blotted out,) and he himself put in words to this purpose: That John Bunyan was committed in prison, being lawfully convicted for upholding of unlawful meetings and conventicles, etc. But yet for all this, fearing that what he had done, unless he added thereto, would not do, he first ran to the clerk of the assizes, then to the justices, and afterwards, because he would not leave any means unattempted to hinder me, he comes again to my jailer, and tells him that if I did go down before the judge and was released, he would make him pay my fees, which he said were due to him; and further told him that he would complain of him at the next quarter sessions for making of false calendars, though my jailer himself, as I afterwards learned, had lint in my accusation worse than in itself it was by far. And thus was I hindered and prevented at that time also from appearing before the judge, and left in prison Farewell.

JOHN BUNYAN.

PRISON MEDITATIONS.

DEDICATED TO THE HEART OF SUFFERING SAINTS AND REIGNING SINNERS

FRIEND, I salute thee in the Lord,
And wish thou may'st abound
In faith, and have a good regard
To keep on holy ground.

Thou dost encourage me to hold
My head above the flood;
Thy counsel better is than gold:
In need thereof I stood.

Good counsel's good at any time;
The wise will it receive,
Tho' fools count he commits a crime
Who doth good counsel give.

I take it kindly at thy hand
Thou didst unto me write;
My feet upon Mount Zion stand,
In that take thou delight.

I am indeed in prison now
In body, but my mind
Is free to study Christ, and how
Unto me he is kind.

For the men keep my outward man
|Within their locks and bars,
Yet by the faith of Christ I can
Mount higher than the stars.

Their fetters cannot spirits tame,
Nor tie up God from me;
My faith and hope they cannot lame;
Above them I shall be.

I here am very much refreshed
To think, when I was out
I preached life and peace and rest
To sinners round about.

My business then was souls to save
 By preaching grace and faith,
 Of which the comfort now I have,
 And have it shall till death.

They were no fables that I taught,
 Devis'd by cunning men,
 But God's own word, by which were caught
 Some sinners now and then.

Whose souls by it were made to see
 The evil of their sin;
 And need of Christ to make them free
 From death, which they were in.

And now those very hearts that then
 Were foes unto the Lord,
 Embrace his Christ and truth, like men
 Conquer'd by his word.

I hear them sigh, and groan, and cry
 For grace to God above;
 They loathe their sin, and to it die;
 'Tis holiness they love.

This was the work I was about
 When hands on me were laid;
 'Twas this from which they pluck'd me out
 And vilely to me said:

You heretic, deceiver, come,
 To prison you must go;
 You preach abroad, and keep not home,
 You are the Church's foe.

But having peace within my soul,
 And truth on every side,
 I could with comfort them control,
 And at their charge deride.

Wherefore to prison they me sent,
 Where to this day I lie;
 And can with very much content
 For my profession die.

The prison very sweet to me
 Hath been since I came here,
 And so would also hanging be,
 If God would there appear.

Here dwells good conscience, also peace;
 Here be my garments white;
 Here, though in bonds, I have release
 From guilt, which else would bite.

When they do talk of banishment,
 Of death, or such like things,
 Then to me *God* send heart's content,
 That like a fountain springs.

Alas! they little think what peace
 They help me to, for by
 Their rage, ray comforts do increase;
 Bless God, therefore, do I.

If they do give me gall to drink,
 Then God doth sweet'ning cast —
 So much thereto that they can't think
 How bravely it doth taste.

For as the devil sets before
 Me heaviness and grief,
 So God sets Christ and grace much mere,
 Whereby I take relief.

Though they say then that we are fools
 Because we here do lie,
 I answer, Jails are Christ his schools,
 In them we learn to die.

'Tis not the baseness of this state
 Doth hide us from God's face;
 He frequently, both soon and late,
 Doth visit; us with grace.

Here come the angels, here come saints,
 Here comes the Spirit of God,
 To *comfort us* in our restraints
 Under the wicked's rod.

God sometimes visits prisoners more
 Than lordly palaces;
 He often knocketh at the door
 When he their houses miss.

The truth and life of heav'nly things
 Lift up our hearts on high,
 And carry us on eagles' wings
 Beyond carnality.

It takes away those clogs that hold
 The hearts of other men,
 And makes us lively, strong and bold
 Thus to oppose their sin.

By which means God doth frustrate
 That which our foes expects —
 Namely, our turning th' apostate,
 Like those of Judas' sect.

Here comes to our remembrance
 The troubles good men had
 Of old, and for our furtherance
 Their joys when they were sad.

To them that here for evil lie
 The place is comfortless,
 But not to me, because that I
 Lie here for righteousness.

The truth and I were both here east
 Together, and we do
 Lie arm in arm, and so hold fast
 Each other; this is true.

This jail to us is as a hill,
 From whence we plainly see
 Beyond this world, and take our fill
 Of things that lasting be.

From hence we see the emptiness
 Of all the world contains;
 And here we feel the blessedness
 That for us yet remains.

Here we can see how all men play
 Their parts, as on a stage —
 How good men suffer for God's way,
 And bad men at them rage.

Here we can see who holds that ground
 Which they in Scripture find:
 Here we see also who turns round
 Like weathercocks with wind.

We can also from hence behold
 How seeming friends appear
 But hypocrites, as we are told
 In Scripture everywhere.

When we did walk at liberty
 We were deceiv'd by them,
 Who we from hence do clearly see
 Are vile, deceitful men.

These politicians that profess
 For base and worldly ends,
 Do not appear to us at best
 But Machiavellian friends.

Though men do say we do disgrace
 Ourselves by lying here
 Among the rogues, yet Christ our face
 From all such filth will clear.

We know there's neither flout nor frown
 That we now for him bear,
 But will add to our heavenly crown
 When he comes in the air —

When he our righteousness forth brings
 Bright shining as the day,
 And wipeth off those sland'rous things
 That scorners on us lay.

We sell our earthly happiness
 For heavenly house and home;
 We leave this world because 'tis less
 And worse than that to come.

We change our drossy dust for gold,
 From death to life we fly;
 We let go shadows, and take hold
 Of immortality.

We trade for that which lasting is,
 And nothing for it give
 But that which is already His
 By whom we breathe and live.

That liberty we lose for him
 Sickness might take away;
 Our goods might also for our sin
 By fire or thieves decay.

Again we see what glory 'tis
 Freely to bear our cross
 For Him who for us took up his
 When he our servant was.

I am most free that men should see
 A hole cut through my ear;
 If others will ascertain ate,
 They'll hang a jewel there.

Just thus it is: we suffer here
 For Him a little pain,
 Who when he doth again appear
 Will with him let us reign.

If all must either die for sin
 A death that's natural,
 Or else for Christ, 'tis best with him
 Who for the last doth fall.

Who now dare say we throw away
 Our goods or liberty,
 When God's most holy word doth say
 We gain thus much thereby?

Hark yet again, you carnal men,
 And hear what I shall say
 In your own dialect, and then
 I'll you no longer stay.

You talk sometimes of valor much,
 And count such bravely mann'd
 That will no; stick to have a touch
 With any in the land.

If these be worth commending, then,
 That vainly show their might,
 How dare you blame those holy men
 That in God's quarrel fight?

Though you dare crack a coward's crown,
 Or quarrel for a pin,
 You dare not on the wicked frown,
 Nor speak against their sin.

For all your spirits are so stout
 For matters that are vain,
 Yet sin besets you round about;
 You are in Satan's chain.

You dare not for the truth engag'e,
 You quake at prisonment;
 You dare not make the tree your stage
 For Christ, that King potent.

Know, then, true valor there doth dwell
 Where men engage for God
 Against the Devil, death and hell,
 And bear the wicked's rod.

These be the men that God doth count
 Of high and noble mind;
 These be the men that do surmount
 What you in nature find.

First, they do conquer their own hearts,
 All worldly fears, and then
 Also the devil's fiery darts,
 And persecuting men.

They conquer when they thus do fall,
 They kill when they do die;
 They overcome then most of all,
 And get the victory.

The worldling understands not this,
 'Tis clear out of his sight;
 Therefore he counts this world his bliss,
 And doth our glory slight.

The lubber knows not how to spring
 The nimble footman's stage;
 Neither can owls or jackdaws sing
 When they are in the cage.

The swine doth not the pearls regard,
 But them doth slight for grains,
 Though the wise merchant labors hard
 For them with greatest pains.

Consider, man, what I have said,
 And judge of things aright;
 When all men's cards are fully play'd,
 Whose will abide the light?

Will those who have us hither cast?
 Or they who do us scorn?
 Or those who do our houses waste?
 Or us who this have borne?

And what tho' they us dear do cost,
 Yet let us buy them so;
 We shall not count our labor lost
 When we see others' woe.

And let us count those things the best
That best will prove at last;
And count such men the only blest
That do such things hold fast.

And let saints be no longer blam'd
By carnal policy,
But let the wicked be asham'd
Of their malignity.

SEASONABLE COUNSEL:

OR, ADVICE TO SUFFERERS.

BY JOHN BUNYAN.

*London: Printed for Benjamin Alsop, at the Angel
and Bible in the Poultry, 1684.*

ADVERTISEMENT BY THE EDITOR.

THIS valuable treatise was first published in a pocket volume in 1684, and has only been reprinted in Whitfield's edition of Bunyan's works, 2 vols. folio, 1767.

No man could have been better qualified to give advice to sufferers for righteousness' sake, than John Bunyan: and this work is exclusively devoted to that object. Shut up in a noisome jail, under the iron hand of persecution, for nearly thirteen years, in the constant fear of being hanged as a malefactor, for refusing conformity to the national liturgy, he well knew what sufferings were, and equally well did he know the sources of consolation. It was wisely ordered by Divine Providence, that before the king pardoned him, he had a legal return under the hand and seal of the sheriff of Bedfordshire, certifying the reasons of this frightful imprisonment. This is entered in the minutes of the Privy Council on the 8th and 15th of May, 1672; and it proves that he was thus cruelly punished for "being at conventicles for nonconformity" and for no other cause. In this "Advice" we find his opinion on the origin of persecution — the instruments — the motives — its cruelty — with cautions, counsels, and support to the persecuted. He considers persecution a strange anomaly, — "The reason is that Christianity is a harmless thing — that be it never so openly professed it hurts no man." Simple-hearted, honest John, thou drest. What wouldest thou have thought of a system by which all would have been taught to tag their laces and mend their own pots and kettles? What would have become of thy trade as a brazier?

Christianity teaches all mankind not to trust in those empires who profess to cure souls for Peter's pence, tithes, mortuaries, and profits; but to go by themselves to the Great Physician, and he will pour in his wine and oil, his infallible remedies for a sin-sick soul, without money and without price. To Bunyan this was not only harmless to others, but the most boundless mercy that God could bestow upon man. What could be more destructive to the hierarchy of popes, cardinals, and papal nuncios of the Latin, with the patriarchs, archimandrites, and papas of the Greek churches? A system by which all their services are dispensed with, and priestly and prelatial pride is leveled with the dust. Can we wonder that those who preached the holy, humbling, self-denying doctrines of the cross, were persecuted to the death? Bunyan's opinion is, that Satan is the author of persecution, by which he intended to root out Christianity. The whirlwind and the tempest drives away those who are not rooted and grounded in the faith, some of whom may have stood like stately cedars until the trying time of trial came. But the humble Christian in such a season takes deeper root — a stronger grasp. Faith, his anchor, is sure and steadfast; it enters eternity and heaven, where Satan can find no entrance to disturb its hold. In persecution, men are but the devil's tools, and little think that they are doing his drudgery.

The man of God declares the truth in plain terms, "No one is a Christian except he is born of God by the anointing of the Holy One." Carnal men cannot endure this; and then "the game begins," how such troublesome fellows may be put out of the way, and their families be robbed of their possessions to enrich the persecutors. "The holy places, vestures, gestures — the shows and outward greatness of false religion, are in danger." Their sumptuous ceremonies, glorious ornaments, new-fashioned carriages,^{F1} "will fall before the simplicity and majesty of truth." The Christian falls out with sin at home, and then with sinful ceremonies in divine worship. With him all that is not prescribed in the word of God is forbidden. Sentiments like these are a blow at the root of superstition with all its fraudulent emoluments. Hence the storms of persecution which fall on the faithful followers of Christ. Antichrist declares the excellency of human inventions to supply what he considers defects in God's system.

Such is the mad folly of the human heart! Dust and ashes find fault with a system which is the perfection of wisdom, mercy, and love. And such

their infatuation, that “none must be suffered to live and breathe that refuseth conformity thereto.” Mr. Bunyan’s cautions and counsels are full of peace — “submission to the powers that be.” Pray for the persecutor — return good for his evil. He is in the hand of God, who will soon level him with the dust, and call his soul to solemn judgment. Although the sufferer’s cause is good, do not run yourself into trouble — Christ withdrew himself — Paul escaped by being lowered down the city wall in a basket. If they persecute you in one city, flee to another. “A minister can quickly pack up and carry his religion with him, and offer what he knows of his God to another people.” God is the support of his persecuted ones. “His power in holding up some, his wrath in leaving of others; his making of shrubs to stand, and his suffering of cedars to fall; his infatuating of the counsels of men, and his making of the devil to outwit himself; his giving of his presence to his people, and his leaving of his foes in the dark; his discovering the uprightness of the hearts of his sanctified ones, and laying open the hypocrisy of others, is a working of spiritual wonders in the day of his wrath, and of the whirlwind and storm.” “Alas! we have need of these bitter pills at which we so much winch and shuck. The physician has us in hand. May God by these try and judge us as he judges his saints, that we may not be condemned with the world.” Such were the feelings of John Bunyan after his long sufferings; they are the fruits of a sanctified mind. Reader, great are our mercies — the arm of the persecutor is paralyzed by the extension of the knowledge of Christ. Still we have to pass through taunts and revilings, and sometimes the loss of goods; but we are saved from those awful trials through which our pilgrim forefathers passed. May our mercies be sanctified, and may grace be bestowed upon us in rich abundance, to enable us to pity and forgive those sects who, in a bye-gone age, were the tools of Satan, and whose habitations were full of cruelty. — GEO. OFFOR.

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

BELOVED, I thought it convenient, since many at this day are exposed to sufferings, to give my advice touching that to thee. Namely, that thou wouldest take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, and not suffer thyself to be entangled in those snares that God hath suffered to be laid in the world for some. Beware of “men” in the counsel of Christ “for they will deliver you up” (Matthew 10:17). Keep thou therefore within the bounds of uprightness and integrity towards both God and man: for that will fortify, that will preserve thee, if not from, yet under the rage of men, in a comfortable and quiet frame of heart. Wherefore do that, and that only, that will justify thy innocence, and that will help thee, not with forced speech, but with good conscience, when oppressed, to make thy appeals to God, and to the consciences of all men.

This is the advice that, I thank God, I have taken myself: for I find that there is nothing, next to God and his grace by Christ, that can stand one in such stead, as will a good and harmless conscience. ^{F2}

I hope I can say that God has made me a Christian: and a Christian must be a harmless man, and to that end, must embrace nothing but harmless principles. A Christian’s business, as a Christian, is to believe in Jesus Christ, and in God the Father by him; and to seek the good of all about him, according as his place, state and capacity in this world will admit, not meddling with other men’s matters, but ever following that which is good.

A Christian is a child of the kingdom of God, and that kingdom, take it as it begins in grace, or as it is perfected in glory, is not of this world but of that which is to come: and though men of old, as some may now, be afraid of that kingdom: yet that kingdom will hurt no man, neither with its principles, nor by itself. To instance somewhat, Faith in Christ: what harm can that do? A life regulated by a moral law, what hurt is in that? Rejoicing in spirit for the hope of the life to come by Christ, who will that harm? Nor is the instituted worship of our Lord of any evil tendency, Christianity teaches us also to do our enemies good, to “Bless them that hate us, and to pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us,” and what evil can be in that? This is the sum of the Christian religion, as

by the word may be plainly made appear: wherefore I counsel thee to keep close to these things, and touch with nothing that jostleth therewith.

Nor do thou marvel, thou living thus, if some should be so foolish as to seek thy hurt, and to afflict thee, because thy works are good (^{<682>}1 John 3:12, 13). For there is need that thou shouldest at sometimes be in manifold temptations, thy good and innocent life notwithstanding (^{<685>}1 Peter 1:6). For, to omit other things, there are some of the graces of God that are in thee, that as to some of their acts, cannot hew themselves, nor their excellency, nor their power, nor what they can do: but as thou art in a suffering state. Faith and patience, in persecution, has that to do, that to hew, and that to perform, that cannot be done, showed, nor performed any where else but there. There is also a patience of hope; a rejoicing in hope, when we are in tribulation, that is, over and above that which we have when we are at ease and quiet. That also that all graces can endure, and triumph over, shall not be known, but when, and as we are in a state of affliction. Now these acts of our graces are of that worth and esteem with God, also he so much delighteth in them: that occasion through his righteous judgment, must be ministered for them to hew their beauty, and what bravery ^{F3} there is in them.

It is also to be considered that those acts of our graces, that cannot be put forth, or hew themselves in their splendor, but when we Christianly suffer, will yield such fruit to those whose trials call them to exercise, that will, in the day of God, abound to their comfort, and tend to their perfection in glory (^{<686>}1 Peter 1:7; ^{<687>}2 Corinthians 4:17).

Why then should we think that our innocent lives will exempt us from sufferings, or that troubles shall do us such harm? For verily it is for our present and future good that our God doth send them upon us. I count therefore, that such things are necessary for the health of our souls, as bodily ^{F4} pains and labor are for [the health of] the body. People that live high, and in idleness, bring diseases upon the body: and they that live in all fullness of gospel-ordinances, and are not exercised with trials, grow gross, are diseased and full of bad humors in their souls. And though this may to some seem strange: yet our day has given us such an experimental proof of the truth thereof, as has not been known for some ages past.

Alas! we have need of those bitter pills, at which we so winch and shuck:
^{F5} and it will be well if at last we be purged as we should thereby. I am sure we are but little the better as yet, though the physician has had us so long in hand. Some bad humors may possibly ere long be driven out: but at present the disease is so high, that it makes some professors fear more a consumption will be made in their purses by these doses, than they desire to be made better in their souls thereby. I see that I still have need of these trials; and if God will by these judge me as he judges his saints, that I may not be condemned with the world, I will cry, Grace, grace for ever.

The consideration also that we have deserved these things, much ^{F6} silences me as to what may yet happen unto me. I say, to think that we have deserved them of God, though against men we have done nothing, makes me lay my hand upon my mouth, and causes me to hold my tongue. Shall we deserve correction? And be angry because we have it! Or shall it come to save us? and shall we be offended with the hand that brings it! Our sickness is so great that our enemies take notice of it; let them know too that we also take our purges patiently. We are willing to pay for those potions that are given us for the health of our body, how sick soever they make us: and if God will have us pay too for that which is to better our souls, why should we grudge thereat? Those that bring us these medicines have little enough for their pains: for my part, I profess, I would not for a great deal, be bound, for their wages, to do their work. True, physicians are for the most part chargeable, and the niggards are too loth to part with their money to them: but when necessity says they must either take physic, or die: of two evils they desire to choose the least. Why, affliction is better than sin, and if God sends the one to cleanse us from the other, let us thank him, and be also content to pay the messenger.

And thou that art so loth to pay for thy sinning, and for the means that puts thee upon that exercise of thy graces, as will be for thy good hereafter: take heed of tempting of God lest he doubleth this potion unto thee. The child, by eating of raw fruit, stands in need of physic, but the child of a childish humor refuseth to take the potion, what follows but a doubling of the affliction, to wit, frowns, chides, and further threatenings and a forcing of the bitter pills upon him. But let me, to persuade thee to lie down and take thy potion, tell thee, it is of absolute necessity, to wit, for thy spiritual and internal health. For, First, Is it better that thou receive

judgment in this world, or that thou stay for it to be condemned with the ungodly in the next? Second, Is it better that thou shouldest, as to some acts of thy graces, be foreign, and a stranger, and consequently that thou shouldest lose that far more exceeding, and eternal weight of glory that is prepared as the reward thereof? or that thou shouldest receive it at the hand of God, when the day shall come that every man shall have praise of him for their doings? Third, And I say again, since chastisements are a sign of sonship, a token of love: and the contrary a sign of bastardy, and a token of hatred (^{<3821>} Hebrew 12:6-8; ^{<3044>} Hosea 4:14). Is it not better that we bear those tokens and marks in our flesh that bespeak us to belong to Christ, than those that declare us to be none of his? For my part, God help me to choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: and God of his mercy prepare me for his will. I am not for running myself into sufferings, but if godliness will expose me to them, the Lord God make me more godly still: for I believe there is a world to come.

But, Christian reader, I would not detain thee from a sight of those sheets in thy hand: only let me beg of thee, that thou wilt not be offended either with God, or men, if the cross is laid heavy upon thee. Not with God, for he doth nothing without a cause, nor with men, for they are the hand of God: and will they, nil they; ^{F7} they are the servants of God to thee for good (^{<3974>} Psalm 17:14; ^{<3045>} Jeremiah 24:5). Take therefore what comes to thee from God by them, thankfully. If the messenger that brings it is glad that it is in his power to do thee hurt, and to afflict thee; if he skips for joy at thy calamity: be sorry for him; pity him, and pray to thy Father for him: he is ignorant and understandeth not the judgment of thy God, yea he sheath by this his behavior, that though he, as God's ordinance, serveth thee by afflicting of thee: yet means he nothing less than to destroy thee: by the which also he prognosticates before thee that he is working out his own damnation by doing of thee good. Lay therefore the woeful state of such to heart, and render him that which is good for his evil; and love for his hatred to thee; then shalt thou hew that thou art acted by a spirit of holiness, and art like thy heavenly Father. And be it so, that thy pity and prayers can do such an one no good, yet they must light some where, or return again, as ships come laden from the Indies, full of blessings into thine own bosom.

And besides all this, is there nothing in dark providence's, for the sake of the sight and observation of which, such a day may be rendered lovely, when it is upon us? Is there nothing of God, of his wisdom and power and goodness to be seen in thunder, and lightning, in hailstones? in storms? and darkness and tempests? Why then is it said, he

“hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm”

(~~3000~~ Nahum 1:3).

And why have God's servants of old made such notes, and observed from them such excellent and wonderful things. There is that of God to be seen in such a day as cannot be seen in another. His power in holding up some, his wrath in leaving of others; his making of shrubs to stand, and his suffering of cedars to fall; his infatuating of the counsels of men, and his making of the devil to outwit himself; his giving of his presence to his people, and his leaving of his foes in the dark; his discovering the uprightness of the hearts of his sanctified ones, and laying open the hypocrisy of others, is a working of spiritual wonders in the day of his wrath, and of the whirlwind and storm. These days! these days are the days that do most aptly give an occasion to Christians, of any, to take the exactest measures and scantlings of ourselves. We are apt to overshoot, in days that are calm, and to think ourselves far higher, and more strong than we find we be, when the trying day is upon us. The mouth of Gaal and the boasts of Peter were great and high before the trial came, but when that came, they found themselves to fall far short of the courage they thought they had (~~0088~~ Judges 9:38).

We also, before the temptation comes, think we can walk upon the sea, but when the winds blow, we feel ourselves begin to sink. Hence such a time is rightly said to be a time to try us, or to find out what we are, and is there no good in this? Is it not this that rightly rectifies our judgment about ourselves, that makes us to know ourselves, that tends to cut off those superfluous sprigs of pride and self-conceitedness, wherewith we are subject to be overcome? Is not such a day, the day that bends us, humbleth us, and that makes us bow before God, for our faults committed in our prosperity? and yet doth it yield no good unto us? we could not live without such turnings of the hand of God upon us. We should be overgrown with flesh, if we had not our seasonable winters. It is said that

in some countries trees will grow, but will bear no fruit, because there is no winter there. The Lord bless all seasons to his people, and help them rightly to behave themselves, under all the times that go over them.

Farewell. I am thine to serve thee in the gospel,

JOHN BUNYAN.

ADVICE TO SUFFERERS.

CHAPTER 1

EXTORTION OF THE TEXT EXPLAINED

“Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to Him in well doing, as unto a faithful creator” — ~~1000~~ 1 Peter 4:19.

THIS epistle was written to saints in affliction, specially those of the circumcision, for whom this Peter was an apostle. And it was written to them to counsel, and comfort them in their affliction. To *counsel* them as to the cause, for which they were in afflictions, and as to the right management of themselves, and their cause, under their affliction. To comfort them also both with respect to their present help from God, and also with reference to the reward that (they faithfully continuing to the end) should of God be bestowed upon them: all which we shall have occasion, more distinctly, to handle in this following discourse.

The text is a conclusion, drawn from the counsel and comfort which the apostle had afore given them in their suffering state. As who should say, my brethren, as you are now afflicted, so sufferings are needful for you, and therefore profitable and advantageous: wherefore be content to bear them. And that you may indeed bear them with such Christian contentedness, and patience as becomes you; commit the keeping of your souls to your God as unto a faithful Creator. “Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him [in well doing,] as unto a faithful Creator.”

In this conclusion, therefore, we have three things very fit for sufferers to concern themselves with.

I. Adirection to a DUTY of absolute necessity.

II. A description of the persons, who are unto this, so necessary a duty, directed.

III. An insinuation of the good effect that will certainly follow to those that after a due manner shall take this blessed advice.

The duty so absolutely necessary is, that sufferers “commit the keeping of their souls to God.” The sufferers here intended, are those “that suffer according to the will of God.” The good insinuated, that will be the effect of our true doing of this, is, we shall find God “a faithful Creator.”

We will first begin with the duty, that sufferers are here directed to, namely, the committing of their souls to God. “Let them — commit the keeping of their souls to him, in well doing.”

And I find two things in it that first call for explaining before I proceed. **1.** What we must here understand by “the soul.” **2.** What by “committing” the soul to God.

1. For the first: “The soul,” here, is to be taken for that most excellent part of man, that dwelleth in the body; that immortal, spiritual substance, that is, and will be capable of life, and motion, of sense and reason; yea, that will abide a rational being, when the body is returned to the dust as it was. This is that great thing, that our Lord Jesus intends, when he bids his disciples in a day of trial, fear him that can destroy both body and soul in hell (^{<0115>}Luke 12:5). That great thing, I say, that he there cautions them to take care of. According to Peter here, “Let them commit the keeping of their soul to him in well doing.”

2. Now to “commit” this soul to God, is to carry it to him, to lift it to him, upon my bended knees, and to pray him for the Lord Jesus Christ’s sake, to take it into his holy care, and to let it be under his keeping. Also, that he will please to deliver it from all those snares that are laid for it, betwixt this and the next world, and that he will see that it be forthcoming, safe and sound, at the great and terrible judgment, notwithstanding so many have engaged themselves against it. Thus David committed his soul to God, when he said

“Arise, O Lord, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul, O Lord, from the wicked, which is thy sword” (^{<0113>}Psalm 17:13).

And again,

“Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me: O Lord, make hast to help me. Let them be ashamed and confounded together that seek after my

soul to destroy it” (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 40:13, 14).

Thus, I have showed you what the soul is, and what it is to commit the soul to God. This then is the duty that the apostle here exhorteth the sufferers to, namely, to carry their soul to God, and leave it with him while they engage for his name in the world.

Now from the apostle’s exhortation to this great duty, I will draw these following conclusions.

First, *That when persecution is raised against a people, there is a design laid for the ruin of those people’s souls.* This, I say, doth naturally follow from the exhortation. Why else, need they to commit the keeping of their souls to God. For by this word, “Unto God to keep them,” is suggested; there is that would destroy them, and that therefore persecution is raised against them.

I am not so uncharitable, as to think, that persecuting men design this. But I verily believe that the devil doth design this, when he stirs them up to so sorry a work. In times of trial, says Peter,


“your adversary the devil walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (~~1 Peter~~ 1 Peter 5:8).

Alas! men in their acts of this nature, have designs that are lower, and of a more inferior rank. Some of them look no higher than revenge upon the carcass; than the spoiling of their neighbor of his estate, liberty, or life; than the greatening of themselves in this world, by the ruins of those that they have power to spoil. Their


“possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty: and they that sell them say, Blessed be the Lord, for I am rich”
(~~Zechariah~~ Zechariah 11:5).

Ay! But Satan will not be put off thus: it is not a bag of money, or the punishing of the carcass of such a people, that will please or satisfy him. It is the soul that he aims at; the ruin of the precious soul that he hath bent himself to bring to pass. It is this therefore that Peter here hath his heart concerned with. As, who should say, My brethren, are you troubled and persecuted for your faith? look to it, the hand of Satan is in this thing, and whatever men drive at by doing as they do, the devil designs no less than

the damnation of your souls. Ware hawk, saith the falconer, when the dogs are coming near her: especially if she be too much minding of her belly, and too forgetful of what the nature of the dog is. Beware Christian, take heed Christian; the devil is desirous to have thee.

And who could better give this exhortation than could Peter himself. Who for not taking heed as to this very thing, had like by the devil to have been swallowed up alive: as is manifest to them that heedfully read, and consider how far he was gone, when that persecution was raised against his Master ( Luke 22).

When a tyrant goes to dispossess a neighboring prince of what is lawfully his own: the men that he employeth at arms to overcome, and get the land, they fight for half-crowns, and the like, and are content with their wages: But the tyrant is for the kingdom, nothing will serve him but the kingdom. ^{F9} This is the case: Men when they persecute, are for the stuff, but the devil is for the soul, nor will any thing less than that satisfy him. Let him then that is a sufferer “commit the keeping of his soul to God:” lest stuff, and soul, and all be lost at once.

Secondly, A second conclusion that followeth upon these words, is this: That *sufferers, if they have not a care, may be too negligent as to the securing of their souls with God, even when persecution is upon them.* For these words, as they are an instruction, so they are an awakening instruction; they call as to people in danger; as to people, not so aware of the danger; or as unto a people that forget, too much, that their souls, and the ruin of them, are sought after by Satan, when trouble attends them for the gospel sake. As, who should say, when troubles are upon you for the gospel’s sake, then take heed that you forget not to commit your souls to the keeping of God. We are naturally apt with that good man Gideon, to be threshing out our wheat, that we may hide it from the Midianites ( Judges 6:11). But we are not so naturally apt to be busying ourselves to secure our souls with God. The reason is, for that we are more flesh than spirit, and because the voice of the world makes a bigger sound in our carnal mind, than the word of God doth. Wherefore Peter, here, calls upon us as upon men of forgetful minds, saying, Let them that suffer according to the will of God, have a care of their souls, and take heed, that the fears of the loss of a little of this world, do not make them forget the fear of the

losing of their souls. *That sufferers are subject to this*, may appear by the stir and bustle that at such a time they make to lock all up safe that the hand of man can reach, ^{F10} while they are cold, chill, remiss, and too indifferent about the committing of their soul to God to keep it. This is seen also, in that many, in a time of trouble for their profession, will study more to deceive themselves by a change of notions, by laboring to persuade their consciences to admit them to walk more at large, by hearkening to opinions that please and gratify the flesh, by adhering to bad examples, and taking evil counsels, than they will to make straight steps for their feet: and to commit the keeping of their souls to God. What shall I say, have there not been many, that so long as peace has lasted, have been great swaggerers for religion, who yet so soon as the sun has waxed warm, have flagged, have been discontented, offended, and turned away from him that speaketh from heaven? All which is because men are naturally apt to be more concerned for their goods, carnal peace, and a temporal life, than they are about securing of their souls with God. Wherefore I say, these words are spoken to awaken us to the consideration of soul-concerns, and how that should be safely lodged under the care, protection, and mercy of God, by our committing of it to him, for that purpose, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thirdly, Another conclusion that followeth upon this exhortation, is this: *That persecution doth, sometimes, so hotly follow God's people, as to leave them nothing but a soul to care for.* They have had no house, no land, no money, no goods, no life, no liberty, left them to care for. **ALL IS GONE BUT THE SOUL.** Goods have been confiscated, liberty has been in irons, the life condemned, the neck in a halter, or the body in the fire. So then all, to such, has been gone, and they have had nothing left them to care for, but their soul. "Let them commit the keeping of their soul to God." This conclusion, I say, doth naturally flow from the words. For that the apostle here doth make mention only of the soul, as of that which is left, as of that which yet remains to the sufferer of all that ever he had. Thus they served Christ; they left him nothing but his soul to care for. Thus they served Stephen; they left him nothing but his soul to care for, and they both cared for that,

"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,"

(^{<236} Luke 23:46).

said Jesus And, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” said Stephen (^{<4175>}Acts 7:59). As for all other things, they were gone. They parted the very clothes of Christ among themselves before his face, even while he did hang pouring out his life before them, upon the tree. “They parted my garments among them,” said he, “and upon my vesture did they cast lots” (^{<4175>}Matthew 27:35; ^{<4154>}Mark 15:24; ^{<4152>}John 19:24). This also has oftentimes been the condition of later Christians, all has been gone, they have been stripped of all, nothing has been left them but “soul” to care for. Job said that he had escaped with the skin of his teeth; and that is but a little: but he doth not escape with so much, that loses all that he has, life and all, we now except the soul. But,

Fourthly, Another thing that followeth from the words is this; namely, That *when the devil and wicked men have done what they could, in their persecuting of the godly; they have yet had their souls at their own dispose.* ^{F11} They have not been able to rob them of their souls, they are not able to hurt their souls. The soul is not in their power to touch, without the leave of God, and of him whose soul it is.

“And fear not them,” saith Christ, “which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul” (^{<4105>}Matthew 10:28).

This, I say, lies clear also in the text; for the exhortation supposes, that whatever the sufferers, there made mention of, had lost, they had yet their souls at their own dispose. Let them that suffer, even to the loss of goods, liberty, or life, “commit the keeping of their souls to God.” As, who should say, though the enemy hath reached them to their all, and stripped them of their all, yet I know, that their soul is not among that all: For their soul is yet free from them, at liberty, and may be disposed of, even as the sufferer will. Wherefore, let him commit the keeping of his soul to God, lest he also through his negligence or carelessness be also spoiled of that. The sufferer, therefore, hath his soul at his own dispose, he may give that away to God Almighty, in spite of all that the devil and the world can do. He may, indeed, see men parting his land, his household stuff, yea, his very raiment among themselves, but they cannot so dispose of his soul. ^{F12} They “have no more that they can do” (^{<4111>}Luke 12:4).

Fifthly, Another conclusion that followeth from these words is this, That *a man, when he is a sufferer, is not able to secure his own soul from the*

hand of hell by any other means, but by the committing of the keeping thereof to God. Do you suffer? Are you in affliction for your profession? Then keep not your soul in your own hand, for fear of losing that with the rest. For no man “can keep alive his own soul” (^{<417>}Psalm 22:29). No, not in the greatest calm; no, not when the lion is asleep: how then should he do it at such a time, when the horrible blast of the terrible ones shall beat against his wall. The consideration of this was that that made holy Paul, who was a man upon whom persecution continually attended, commit his soul to God (^{<417>}Acts 20:22-24; ^{<512>}2 Timothy 1:12). God, as I shall hew you by and by, is he, and he alone that is able to keep the soul, and deliver it from danger. Man is naturally a self-deceiver, and therefore is not to be trusted, any farther than as the watchful eye of God is over him. But as to his soul, he is not to be trusted with that at all, that must be wholly committed to God, left altogether with him; laid at his feet, and he also must take the charge thereof, or else it is gone, will be lost, and will perish for ever and ever. Wherefore it is a dangerous thing for a man that is a sufferer, to be a senseless man, as to the danger that his soul is in, and a prayerless man, as to the committing of the keeping of it to God. For he that is such, has yet his soul, and the keeping thereof, in his own deceitful hand. And so has he also that stays himself upon his friends, upon his knowledge, the promise of men, or the mercy of his enemies, or that has set in his mind a bound to himself, how far he will venture for religion, and where he will stop. This is the man that makes not God his trust, and that therefore will surely fall in the day of his temptation. Satan, who now hunteth for the precious soul to destroy it, has power, as well as policy, beyond what man can think. He has power to blind, harden, and to make insensible, the heart. He also can make truth in the eyes of the suffering man, a poor, little, and insignificant thing. Judas had not committed the keeping of his soul to God, but abode in himself, and was left in his tabernacle: and you by and by see what a worthy price he set upon himself, his Christ, and heaven, and all. All to him was not now worth thirty pieces of silver.

And as he can make truth in thy esteem to be little, so he can make sufferings great, and ten times more terrible, than he that hath committed the keeping of his soul to God shall ever find them. A jail shall look as black as hell, and the loss of a few stools and chairs, as bad as the loss of

so many bags of gold. ^{F13} Death for the Savior of the world, shall seem to be a thing both unreasonable and intolerable. Such will choose to run the hazard of the loss of a thousand souls, in the way of the world, rather than the loss of one poor, sorry, transitory life for the holy Word of God. But the reason, as I said, is, they have not committed the keeping of their soul to God. For he that indeed has committed the keeping of his soul to that great one, has shaken his hands of all things here. Has bid adieu to the world, to friends, and life: and waiteth upon God in a way of close keeping to his truth, and walking in his ways, having counted the cost, and been persuaded to take what cup God shall suffer the world to give him for so doing.

Sixthly, Another conclusion that followeth from these words, is, That *God is very willing to take the charge and care of the soul (that is committed unto him) of them that suffer for his sake in the world.* If this were not true, the exhortation would not answer the end. What is intended by, “Let him commit the keeping of his soul to God,” but that the sufferer should indeed leave that great care with him; but if God be not willing to be concerned with such a charge, what bottom ^{F14} is there for the exhortation? But the exhortation has this for its bottom, therefore God is willing to take the charge and care of the soul of him that suffereth for his name in this world.

“The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them
that trust in him shall be desolate” (^{PSALM} Psalm 34:22;
^{1 SAMUEL} 1 Samuel 25:28, 29).

None, not one that committeth his soul to God’s keeping in a way of well doing, but shall find him willing to be concerned therewith.

Ay, this, saith the sufferer, if I could believe this, it would rid me of all my fears. But I find myself engaged for God, for I have made a profession of his name, and cannot arrive to this belief that God is willing to take the charge and care of my soul. Wherefore I fear, that if trials come so high, as that life, as well as estate, must go, that both life, and estate, and soul, and all will be lost at once.

Well, honest heart, these are thy fears, but let them fly away, and consider the text again, “Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him, — as unto a faithful Creator.” These are

God's words, Christ's words, and the invitation of the Holy Ghost. When, therefore, thou readest them, be persuaded that thou hearest the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all of them jointly and severally speaking to thee and saying, Poor sinner, thou art engaged for God in the world, thou art suffering for his Word: leave thy soul with him as with one that is more willing to save it, than thou art willing he should: act faith, trust God, believe his Word, and go on in thy way of witness-bearing for him, and thou shalt find all well, and according to the desire of thy heart at last. True, Satan will make it his business to tempt thee to doubt of this, that thy way be made yet more hard and difficult to thee. For he knows that unbelief is a soul-perplexing sin, and makes that which would otherwise be light, pleasant, and easy, unutterably heavy and burdensome to the sufferer. Yea, this he doth in hope to make thee at last, to cast away thy profession, thy cause, thy faith, thy conscience, thy soul, and all. But hear what the Holy Ghost saith again: "He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy. He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight" (^{<1972>}Psalm 72:13, 14). These words also are spoken for the comfort of sufferers, ^{<1972>}Psalm 72:12. "For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper." Wherefore, let them that are God's sufferers, pluck up a good heart; let them not be afraid to trust God with their souls, and with their eternal concerns. Let them cast all their care upon God, for he careth for them (^{<1972>}1 Peter 5:7).

But I am in the dark.

I answer, never stick at that. It is most bravely done, to trust God with my soul in the dark, and to resolve to serve God for nothing, rather than give out. Not to see, and yet to believe, and to be a follower of the Lamb, and yet to be at uncertainty, what we shall have at last, argues love, fear, faith, and an honest mind, and gives the greatest sign of one that hath true sincerity in his soul. It was this that made Job and Peter so famous, and the want of it that took away much of the glory of the faith of Thomas (^{<1972>}Job 1:8-10, 21; ^{<1972>}Matthew 19:27; ^{<1972>}John 20:29). Wherefore believe, verily, that God is ready, willing, yea, that he looks for, and expects that thou who art a sufferer shouldest commit the keeping of thy soul to him, as unto a faithful Creator.

Seventhly. Another conclusion that followeth from these words is this, namely, That *God is able, as well as willing, to secure the souls of his suffering saints, and to save them from the evil of all their trials, be they never so many, divers, or terrible.*

“Let him commit the keeping of his soul to God,” but to what boot, if he be not able to keep it in his hand, and from the power of him that seeks the soul to destroy it? But “my Father which gave them me,” saith Christ, “is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand” (^{401B}John 10:29). So then there can be no sorrow, affliction, or misery invented, by which the devil may so strongly prevail, as thereby to pluck the soul out of the hand of him who has received it, to keep it from falling, and perishing thereby. The text therefore supposeth a sufficiency of power in God to support, and a sufficiency of comfort and goodness to embolden the soul to endure for him: let Satan break out, and his instruments too, to the greatest degree of their rage and cruelty.

1. There is in God a sufficiency of power to keep them that have laid their soul at his foot to be preserved. And hence he is called the soul-keeper, the soul-preserver, (^{414D}Proverbs 24:12)

“The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul” (^{401B}Psalms 121:5-7).

“The sun shall not smite thee”: that is, persecution shall not dry and wither thee away to nothing (^{413B}Matthew 13:6, 21). But that notwithstanding, thou shalt be kept and preserved, carried through and delivered from all evil. Let him therefore commit the keeping of his soul to him, if he is in a suffering condition, that would have it secured and found safe and sound at last. For,

(1.) Then thine own natural weakness, and timorousness shall not overcome thee. — For it shall not be too hard for God. God can make the most soft spirited man as hard as an adamant, harder than flint, yea harder than the northern steel.

“Shall iron break the northern iron and the steel?”
(^{415D}Jeremiah 15:12).

The sword of him is [used] in vain that lays at a Christian, when he is in the way of his duty to God: if God has taken to him the charge and care of his soul, he can shoe him with brass, and make his hoofs of iron (^{<4635>}Deuteronomy 33:25).

“He can strengthen the spoiled against the strong, so that the
spoiled shall come against the fortress”(^{<3088>}Amos 5:8;
^{<3330>}Ezekiel 13:9).

He can turn thee into another man, and make thee that which thou never wast. Timorous Peter, fearful Peter, he could make as bold as a lion. He that at one time was afraid of a sorry girl, he could make at another to stand boldly before the council (^{<4801>}Matthew 26; ^{<4013>}Acts 4:13). There is nothing too hard for God. He can say to them that are of a fearful heart, “Be strong, fear not” (^{<2390>}Isaiah 35:4). He can say, Let the weak say I am strong; by such a word, by which he created the world (^{<3828>}Zechariah 12:8).

(2.) Thine own natural darkness and ignorance shall not cause thee to fall; thy want of wit he can supply. — He can say to the fools, be wise; not only by way of correction, but also by way of instruction too. He “hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; — yea, things which are despised, — and things which are not, hath God chosen to bring to nought things that are” (^{<4012>}1 Corinthians 1:27, 28). Wisdom and might are his: and when, and where he will work, none can at all withstand him. He can give thee the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of his Son (^{<4017>}Ephesians 1:17). Yea, to do this, is that which he challengeth, as that which is peculiar to himself. “Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?” (^{<3336>}Job 38:36). And that he will do this that he hath promised, yea, promised to do it to that degree, as to make his, that shall be thus concerned for him, to top, and overtop all men that shall them oppose. I, saith he,

“will give you a mouth and wisdom, that all your adversaries shall
not be able to gainsay nor resist” (^{<4215>}Luke 21:15).

(3.) Thine own doubts and mistrusts about what he will do, and about whither thou shalt go, when thou for him hast suffered awhile, he can resolve, yea, dissolve, crush, and bring to nothing. — He can make fear

flee far away: and place heavenly confidence in its room. He can bring invisible and eternal things to the eye of thy soul, and make thee see that in those things in which thine enemies shall see nothing, that thou shalt count worth the loss of ten thousand lives to enjoy. He can pull such things out of his bosom, and can put such things into thy mouth; yea, can make thee choose to be gone, though through the flames, than to stay here and die in silken sheets. Yea, he can himself come near and bring his heaven and glory to thee. The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon them that are but reproached for the name of Christ (¹⁰⁴⁴1 Peter 4:14). And what the Spirit of glory is, and what is his resting upon his sufferers, is quite beyond the knowledge of the world, and is but little felt by saints at peace. They be they that are engaged, and that are under the lash of Christ; they are they, I say, that have it and that understand something of it.

When Moses went up the first time into the mount to God, the people reproached him for staying with him so long, saying,

“As for this Moses, — we wot not what is become of him”
(¹⁰³¹Exodus 32:1).

Well, the next time he went up thither, and came down, the Spirit of glory was upon him; his face shone, though he wist it not, to his honor, and their amazement (¹⁰³⁰Exodus 34:29-35). Also while Stephen stood before the council to be accused, by suborned men,

“All that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel” (⁴⁰⁶⁵Acts 6:15).

Those that honor God, he will honor, yea, will put some of his glory upon them, but they shall be honored. There is none can tell what God can do. He can make those things that in themselves are most fearful and terrible to behold, the most pleasant, delightful, and desirable things. He can make a jail more beautiful than a palace; restraint, more sweet by far than liberty. And

“the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt”
(⁵¹¹²Hebrews 11:26).

It is said of Christ, That

“for the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross,
despising the shame” (~~scrip~~ Hebrews 12:2).

But,

2. As there is in God a sufficiency of power to uphold, so there is in him also a sufficiency of comfort and goodness to embolden us: I mean communicative comfort and goodness. Variety of, and the terribleness that attends afflictions, call, not only for the beholding of things, but also a laying hold of them by faith and feeling; now this also is with God to the making of His to sing in the night. Paul and Silas sang in prison, the apostles went away from the council rejoicing, when they had shamefully beaten them for their preaching in the temple (~~scrip~~ Acts 5). But whence came this but from an inward feeling by faith of the love of God, and of Christ, which passeth knowledge? Hence he says to those under afflictions,

“Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer”
(~~scrip~~ Revelation 2:10).

There are things to be suffered, as well as places to suffer in; and there are things to be let into the soul for its emboldening, as well as things to be showed to it (~~scrip~~ Romans 5:5).

Now the things to be suffered are many, some of which are thus counted up: “They were tortured, — had cruel mockings and scourgings; — they were stoned, were sawn asunder, were slain with the sword, — were tempted; — they wandered about in sheep-skins, and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented” (~~scrip~~ Hebrews 11:35-37). These are some of the things that good men of old have suffered for their profession of the name of Jesus Christ. All which they were enabled by him to bear, to bear with patience; to bear with rejoicing; “knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better, and an enduring substance” (~~scrip~~ Hebrews 10:32-34). And it is upon this account that Paul doth call to mind the most dreadful of his afflictions, which he suffered for the gospel sake with rejoicing; and that he tells us that he was most glad, when he was in such infirmities. Yea, it is upon this account that he boasteth, and vaunteth it over death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, and every other creature: for he knew that there was enough in that

love of God, which was set on him through Christ, to preserve him, and to carry him through all (^{<471B>}2 Corinthians 12:9, 10; ^{<418V>}Romans 8:37-39). That God has done thus, a thousand instances might be given; and that God will still do thus, for that we have his faithful promise (^{<234B>}Isaiah 43:2; ^{<401B>}1 Corinthians 10:13).

To the adversaries of the church these things have also sometimes been showed, to their amazement and confusion. God showed to the king of Babylon that he was with the three children in the fiery furnace (^{<271B>}Daniel 3:24). God showed to the king of Babylon again, that he would be where His were, though in the lion's den (^{<271B>}Daniel 6:24).

Also, in later days, whoso reads Mr. Fox's Acts and Monuments, will also find several things to confirm this for truth. God has power over all plagues, and therefore can either heighten, or moderate and lessen them at pleasure. He has power over fire, and can take away the intolerable heat thereof. This those in the Marian days could also testify, namely, Hauks and Bainham, and others, who could shout for joy, and clap their hands in the very flames for joy. God has power over hunger, and can moderate it, and cause that one meal's meat shall go as far as forty were wont to do. This is witness in Elias, when he went for his life to the mount of God, being fled from the face of Jezebel (^{<119B>}1 Kings 19:8). And what a good night's lodging had Jacob when he fled from the face of his brother Esau: when the earth was his couch, the stone ^{F15} his pillow, the heavens his canopy, and the shades of the night his curtains ^{F16} (^{<027B>}Genesis 28:12-16).

I can do all things, said Paul, through Christ strengthening me. And again, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake. But how can that be, since no affliction for the present seems joyous? I answer, though they be not so in themselves, yet Christ, by his presence, can make them so: for then his power rests upon us. When I am weak, saith he, then I am strong; then Christ doth in me mighty things: for my strength, saith Christ, is made perfect in weakness; in affliction, for the gospel sake.

For when my people are afflicted and suffer great distress for me, then they have my comforting, supporting, emboldening, and upholding presence to relieve them: an instance of which you have in the three children and in Daniel, made mention of before. But what, think you, did

these servants of the God of Jacob feel, feel in their souls, of his power and comforting presence when they, for his name, were suffering of the rage of their enemies, — while, also, one, like the Son of God, was walking in the fire with the three; and while Daniel sat and saw that the hands of the angels were made muzzles for the lions' mouths.

I say, was it not worth being in the furnace and in the den to see such things as these? O! the grace of God, and his Spirit and power that is with them that suffer for him, if their hearts be upright with him; if they are willing to be faithful to him; if they have learned to say, here am I, whenever he calls them, and whatever he calls them to. "Wherefore," when Peter saith, "let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator." He concludes, that how outrageous, furious, merciless, or cruel soever the enemy is, yet there, with him, they shall find help and succor, relief and comfort; for God is able to make such as do so, stand.

CHAPTER 2

REASONS FOR THIS EXHORTATION

We will now come to touch upon that which may more immediately be called the reason of this exhortation; for, although all these things that have been mentioned before may, or might be called reasons of the point, yet there are those, in my judgment, that may be called reasons, which are yet behind. As,

1. Because, *when a man has, by faith and prayer, committed the keeping of his soul to God, he has the advantage of that liberty of soul to do and suffer for God that he cannot otherwise have.* He that has committed his soul to God to keep is rid of that care, and is delivered from the fear of its perishing for ever. When the Jews went to stone Stephen they laid their clothes down at a distance from the place, at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul, that they might not be a cumber or a trouble to them, as to their intended work. So we, when we go about to drive sin out of the world, in a way of suffering for God's truth against it, ^{F17} we should lay down our souls at the feet of God to care for, that we may not be cumbered with the care of them ourselves; also, that our care of God's truth may not be weakened by such sudden and strong doubts as will cause us faintingly to say, But what will become of my soul? When Paul had told his son Timothy that he had been before that lion Nero, and that he was at present delivered out of his mouth, he adds, And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom. He shall and will. Here is a man at liberty, here are no cumbersome fears. But how came the apostle by this confidence of his well-being and of his share in another world? Why, "he had committed the keeping of his soul to God," compare ~~STUD~~ 2 Timothy 1:12 with ~~STUD~~ 2 Timothy 4:18. For to commit the keeping of the soul to God, if it be done in faith and prayer, it leaves, or rather brings this holy boldness and confidence into the soul.

Suppose a man in the country were necessitated to go to London, and had a great charge of money to pay in there; suppose, also, that the way thither was become exceeding dangerous because of the highwaymen that continually abide therein, — what now must this man do to go on his journey cheerfully? Why, let him pay in his money to such an one in the country as will be sure to return it for him at London safely. Why, this is the case, thou art bound for heaven, but the way thither is dangerous. It is beset everywhere with evil angels, who would rob thee of thy soul, What now? Why, if thou wouldest go cheerfully on in thy dangerous journey, commit thy treasure, thy soul, to God to keep; and then thou mayest say, with comfort, Well, that care is over: for whatever I meet with in my way thither, my soul is safe enough: the thieves, if they meet me, can not come at that; I know to whom I have committed my soul, and I am persuaded that he will keep that to my joy and everlasting comfort against the great day. ^{F18}

This, therefore, is one reason why we should, that suffer for Christ, commit the keeping of our souls to God; because a doubt about the well-being of that will be a clog, a burden, and an affliction to our spirit: yea, the greatest of afflictions, whilst we are taking up our cross and bearing it after Christ. The joy of the Lord is our strength, and the fear of perishing is that which will be weakening to us in the way.

2. We should commit the keeping of our souls to God, because the final conclusion that merciless men do sometimes make with the servants of God is all on a sudden. They give no warning before they strike. We shall not need here to call you to mind about the massacres that were in Ireland, Paris, Piedmont, and other places, where the godly, in the night before they were well awake, had, some of them, their heart blood running on the ground. The savage monsters crying out, Kill, kill, from one end of a street or a place to the other. This was sudden; and he that had not committed his soul to God to keep it was surely very hard put to it now; but he that had done so was ready for such sudden work. Sometimes, indeed, the axe, and halter, or the faggot is showed first; but sometimes, again, it is without that warning. Up, said Saul to Doeg, the Edomite, and slay the priests of the Lord (⁽⁴²²¹⁾1 Samuel 22:11, 18, 19). Here was sudden work: fall on, said Saul, and Doeg fell upon them, “and slew on that day four score and five persons that did wear a linen ephod.” “Nob, also, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and

sucklings,” etc. Here was but a word and a blow. Thinkest thou not, who readest these lines, that all of these who had before committed their soul to God to keep were the fittest folk to die?

“And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought” (~~4057~~ Mark 6:27).

The story is concerning Herod and John the Baptist: Herod’s dancing girl had begged John the Baptist’s head, and nothing but his head must serve her turn; well, girl, thou shalt have it. Have it? Ay, but it will be long first. No; thou shalt have it now, just now, immediately. “And immediately he sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought.”

Here is sudden work for sufferers; here is no intimation beforehand. The executioner comes to John; now, whether he was at dinner, or asleep, or whatever he was about, the bloody man bolts in upon him, and the first word he salutes him with is, Sir, strip, lay down your neck, for I am come to take away your head. But hold, stay; wherefore? pray, let me commit my soul to God. No, I must not stay; I am in haste: slap, says his sword, and off falls the good man’s head. This is sudden work; work that stays for no man; work that must be done by and by; immediately, or it is not worth a rush. I will, said she, that thou give me, by and by, in a charger, the head of John the Baptist. Yea, she came in haste, and hastily the commandment went forth, and immediately his head was brought.

3. *Unless a man commits the keeping of his soul to God, it is a question whether he can hold out and stand his ground, and wrestle with all temptations.* “This is the victory, — even our faith”; and “who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth?” And what encouragement has a man to suffer for Christ, whose heart cannot believe, and whose soul he cannot commit to God to keep it? And our Lord Jesus intimates as much when he saith, “Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life.” Wherefore saith he thus? but to encourage those that suffer for his truth in the world, to commit the keeping of their souls to him, and to believe that he hath taken the charge and care of them. *Paul’s wisdom was, that he was ready to die before his enemies were ready to kill him.*

“I am now ready,” saith he, “to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand” (~~5006~~ 2 Timothy 4:6).

This is, therefore, a thing of high concern; to wit, the committing of the soul to God to keep it. It is, I say, of concern to do it now, just now, quickly, whether thou art yet engaged or no; for it is a good preparatory to, as well as profitable in, a time of persecution: consider it, I say. The apostle Paul saith that he and his companions were bold in their God, to profess and stand to the word of God (~~1~~¹ Thessalonians 2:2). But how could that be if they had the salvation of their souls to seek, and that to be sure they would have had, had they not committed the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing?

CHAPTER 3

HOW TO FULFILL THIS NECESSARY DUTY.

BUT what is committing of the soul to God?

Answer. I have, in general, briefly spoken to that already, and now, for thy further help, we will a little enlarge. Wherefore,

1. To commit is to deliver up to custody to be kept. Hence prisoners, when sent to the jail, are said to be committed thither. Thus Paul,

“haling men and women, committing them to prison” (^{<408>}Acts 8:3).

And thus Joseph’s master committed all his prisoners to him, to his custody, to be kept there according to the law (^{<132>}Genesis 39:22).

2. To commit, is not only to deliver up to custody, but to give in charge; that that which is committed be kept safe, and not suffered to be lost (^{<291>}Luke 16:11). Thus Paul was committed to prison, the jailer being charged to keep him safely (^{<463>}Acts 16:23).

3. To commit, is to leave the whole disposal, sometimes, of that which is committed to those to whom such thing is committed. Thus were the shields of the temple committed to the guard (^{<1147>}1 Kings 14:27) And Jeremiah to the hands of Gedaliah (^{<234>}Jeremiah 39:14).

And thus thou must commit thy soul to God and to his care and keeping. It must be delivered up to his care and put under his custody. Thou mayest also, though I would speak modestly, give him a charge to take the care of it.

“Concerning my sons [and concerning my daughters] and
concerning the work of my hands, command ye me”
(^{<261>}Isaiah 45:11).

Thou must also leave all the concerns of thy soul and of thy being an inheritor of the next world wholly to the care of God. He that doth this in the way that God has bid him is safe, though the sky should fall.

“The poor committeth himself unto thee, thou art the helper of the fatherless” (~~904~~ Psalm 10:14).

And for encouragement to do this, the Lord has bidden us, the Lord has commanded us, the Lord expecteth that we should thus do. Yea, thou art also bidden to commit thy way unto him (~~950~~ Psalm 37:5). Thy work unto him (~~908~~ Proverbs 16:3). Thy cause unto him (~~908~~ Job 5:8). Thy soul to him, and he will take care of all. And if we do this, as we should, God will not only take care of us and of our souls in the general, but that our work and ways be so ordered that we may not fail in either.

“I have trusted,” said David, “in the Lord, therefore I shall not slide” (~~900~~ Psalm 26:1).

Before I leave this, I will speak something of the way in which this commitment of the soul to God must be; and that is, “in a way of well-doing.” Let them commit the keeping of their souls to him “in well-doing”; or, in a way of well-doing. That is, therefore, the course that a godly man should be found in, at, in, and after he hath committed his soul to God to keep. And, as the apostle says in another place, this is but a “reasonable service” (~~901~~ Romans 12:1). For if God be so gracious as to take care of my soul at my request, why should not I also be so gracious as to be found in a way of well-doing at his bidding? Take care, master, of me for meat and wages, and I will take care, master, that thy work shall be faithfully done. This is honest, and thus should Christians say to God: and he that heartily, in this, shall mean as he saith, shall find that God’s ways shall be strength unto him.

A Christian is not to commit his soul unto God to keep, and so to grow remiss, carnal, negligent, cold, and worldly; concluding as if he had now bound God to save him, but sets himself at liberty whether he will longer serve him in trying and troublesome times or no. He must commit the keeping of his soul to him “in well-doing.” He may not now relinquish God’s cause, play the apostate, cast off the cross, and look for heaven notwithstanding. He that doth thus will find himself mistaken, and be

made to know at last that God takes the care of no such souls. “If any man draws back,” saith he, “my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” Wherefore, he that committeth the keeping of his soul to God must do it in that way which God has prescribed to him, which is in a way of well-doing. Alas! alas! there is never such a word in it; it must be done in a way of “well-doing.” You must think of this that would commit your souls to God in suffering and troublesome times.

You must do it in *well-doing*.

“In well-doing,” that is, in *persevering in ways of godliness*, both with respect to morals and also instituted worship. Thou, therefore, that wouldest have God take care of thy soul, as thou *believest*, so thou must *do well*; that is, do good to the poor, to thy neighbor, to all men, especially to the household of faith. Benjamin must have a Benjamin’s mess; and all others, as thou art capable, must feel and find the fruit of thy godliness. Thou must thus serve the Lord with much humility of mind, though through many difficulties and much temptation.

Thou must also *keep close to gospel worship, public and private*; doing of those things that thou hast warrant for from the word, and leaving of that or those things for others that will stick to them — that have no stamp of God upon them. Thou must be found doing of all with all thy heart, and if thou sufferest for so doing, thou must bear it patiently. For what Peter saith to the women he spake to, may be applied to all believers, “whose daughters ye are,” saith he, meaning Sarah’s,

“as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement”
(~~cor~~ 1 Peter 3:6).

So then, the man that has committed his soul to God to keep has not at all disengaged himself from his duty, or took himself off from a perseverance in that good work that, under a suffering condition, he was bound to do before. No; his very committing of his soul to God to keep it has laid an engagement upon him to abide to God in that calling wherein he is called of God. To commit my soul to God, supposes my sensibleness of hazard and danger; but there is none [no danger] among men when the offence of the cross is ceased. To commit my soul to God to keep, concludes my resolution to go on in that good way of God that is so dangerous to my

soul, if God taketh not the charge and care thereof. For he that saith in his heart, I will now commit my soul to God, if he knows what he says, says thus: I am for holding on in a way of bearing of my cross after Christ, though I come to the same end for so doing as he came to before me. This is committing the soul to him in well-doing. Look to yourselves, therefore, whoever you are that talk of leaving your souls with God, but do live loose, idle, profane, and wicked lives. God will not take care of such men's souls; they commit them not unto him as they should. They do but flatter him with their lips and lie unto him with their tongue, and think to deceive the Lord; but to no purpose. "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." It is he that sows to the Spirit that shall "reap life everlasting" (~~<K&T~~ Galatians 6:7, 8).

CHAPTER 4

WHO ARE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED IN THIS EXHORTATION.

I SHALL now come to the second thing contained in the text, namely, to give you a more distinct description of the men that are thus bid to commit the keeping of their souls to God. And they are thus described: they that “suffer according to the will of God.” “Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”

Two things are here to be inquired into.

1. What the apostle here means by the will of God.
2. What suffering according to the will of God is.

First, For the will of God, it is divers ways taken in the scriptures; as, sometimes, for electing, justifying, sanctifying acts of God; sometimes for faith, good life, and sometimes for suffering for his name (~~ROM~~ Romans 9; ~~EPH~~ Ephesians 1:11; ~~JOH~~ John 7:17; ~~1JOH~~ 1 John 3:23; ~~1THESS~~ 1 Thessalonians 4:3; ~~MAT~~ Matthew 7:21). But, by will of God here we must Understand,

1. His law and testament.
2. His order and designment.

First, By his will I understand his law and testament. This is called the revealed will of God, or that by which he has made himself, and how he will be worshiped, known unto the children of men. Now, I, understanding these words thus, must, before I go further, make this distinction, to wit, that there is a difference to be put betwixt them that suffer for the breach and those that suffer for keeping of this law and testament; for though both of them may suffer by the will of God, yet they are not both concerned in this text. A malefactor that suffereth for his evil deeds the due punishment thereof, suffereth, as other texts declare, according to the

will of God. But, I say, this text doth not concern itself with them; for both this text and this epistle is writ for the counsel and comfort of those that suffer for keeping the law and testament of God; that suffer for well-doing (~~1~~¹ Peter 3:13, 14, 17; ~~1~~¹ Peter 4:13, 14).

The man then that is concerned in this advice is he that suffereth from the hands of men for keeping of the word of God; and this is he that has license, leave, yea, a command to commit the keeping of his soul to God in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

We will a little enlarge upon this. He that keepeth the word of God is such an one that has regard to both the matter and manner thereof. The matter is the truth, the doctrine contained therein; the manner is that comely, godly, humble, faithful way of doing it which becomes a man that has to do with the law and testament of God; and both these are contained in the text. For, first, here is the will of God to be done; and then, secondly, to be done according to his will. "Let them that suffer according to his will": which words, I say, take in both *matter* and *manner* of doing. So then, the man that here we have to do with, and to discourse of, is a man that, in the sense now given, suffereth. *That which makes a martyr, is suffering for the word of God after a right manner; and that is, when he suffereth, not only for righteousness, but for righteousness' sake; not only for truth, but of love to truth; not only for God's word, but according to it, to wit, in that holy, humble, meek manner as the word of God requireth.* A man may give his body to be burned for God's truth, and yet be none of God's martyrs (~~1~~¹ Corinthians 13:1-3). Yea, a man may suffer with a great deal of patience, and yet be none of God's martyrs (~~1~~¹ Peter 2:20). The one, because he wanteth that grace that should poise his heart, and make him right in the manner of doing; the other, because he wanteth that word of the Holy One that alone can make his cause good, as to matter. It is, therefore, matter and manner that makes the martyr; and it is this man that is intended in the text which is aforesaid described. So then, they that suffer for the law and testament of God in that holy and humble manner that the Word requires, they are they that, by this Word of God, are commanded to commit the keeping of their souls to God.

From this consideration, two things present themselves to our sight.

1. That a man may be a Christian, and suffer, and yet not suffer, in the sense last given, according to the will of God.
2. There have been, and may yet be a people in the world that have, and may suffer in the sense of the apostle here, according to the will of God.

A few words to the first of these, namely, that a man may be a Christian, and suffer, and yet not suffer, in the sense of the apostle in the text, “according to the will of God.” He may be a Christian and yet not suffer as a Christian. He may want the matter, or, he may want the manner, of suffering as a Christian.

This is evident from what this apostle suggests in several places of this epistle. For, saith he, “If ye be buffeted for your faults” (⁽¹¹²⁾1 Peter 2:20). This supposeth that a Christian may so be; for he speaketh here to the same people, unto whom he speaketh in the text, though he putteth them not under the same circumstance, as suffering for well-doing. If ye be buffeted for your faults, for what God’s word calls faults, what thank have you from God, or good men, though you take it patiently?

So again,

“For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer
for well-doing, than for evil-doing” (⁽¹¹⁷⁾1 Peter 3:17).

Here it is plainly supposed that a Christian man may suffer for evil-doing, yea, that the will of God may be, that he should suffer for evil-doing. For God, if Christians do not well, will vindicate himself by punishing of them for their doing ill. Yea, and will not count them worthy, though they be his own, to be put among the number of those that suffer for doing well.

Again, “But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men’s matters” (⁽¹¹⁵⁾1 Peter 4:15). These are cautions to Christians to persuade them to take heed to themselves, their tongues and their actions, that all be kept within the bounds of the Word. For it would be a foolish thing to say, that these are cautions to persuade to take heed of that, into which it is not possible one should fall. It is possible for Christians to suffer for evil-doing, and therefore let Christians beware; it is possible for Christians to be brought to public justice for their faults, and therefore let Christians beware. It is possible

for Christians to suffer justly by the hand of the magistrate, and therefore let Christians beware. This also is insinuated in the text itself, and therefore let Christians beware.

The causes of this are many, some of which I shall now briefly touch upon.

1. Sin is in the best of men: and as long as it is so, without great watchfulness, and humble walking with God, we may be exposed to shame and suffering for it. What sin is it that a child of God is not liable to commit, excepting that which is the sin unpardonable? Nor have we a promise of being kept from any other sin, but on condition that we do watch and pray (⁴¹⁸Matthew 26:41).

2. It is possible for a Christian to have an erroneous conscience in some things, yea, in such things as, if God by his grace prevents not, may bring us to public justice and shame. Abishai, though a good man, would have killed the king, and that of conscience to God, and love to his master (⁴¹⁹1 Samuel 26:7, 8). And had David delivered him up to Saul for his attempt, he had in all likelihood died as a traitor. Peter drew his sword, and would have fought therewith, a thing for which he was blamed of his Master, and bid with a threatening, to put it up again (⁴²⁰Matthew 26:52).

3. Besides, oppression makes a wise man mad; and when a man is mad what evils will he not do?

4. Further, The devil, who is the great enemy of the Christians, can send forth such spirits into the world as shall not only disturb men, but nations, kings, and kingdoms, in raising divisions, distractions and rebellions. And can so manage matters that the looser sort of Christians ^{F19} may be also dipped and concerned therein. In Absalom's conspiracy against his father, there were two hundred men called out of Jerusalem to follow him,

“and they went in their simplicity, not knowing any thing”
(⁴²¹2 Samuel 15:11).

I thank God I know of no such men, nor thing: but my judgment tells me, that if Christians may be drawn into fornication, adultery, murder, theft, blasphemy or the like, as they may; why should it be thought impossible for them to be drawn in here. Wherefore I say again, watch and pray, fear

God, reverence his Word, approve of his appointments, that you may be delivered from every evil work and way.

I said afore that the will of God may be, that a Christian should suffer as an evil-doer; but then it is because he keepeth not within the bounds of that, which is also called the will of God. The will of God is, that sin should be punished, though committed by the Christians; punished according to the quality of transgressions: and therefore it is that he hath ordained magistrates. Magistrates, to punish sin, though it be the sin of Christians. They are the ministers of God, revengers, to execute wrath, the wrath of God upon them that do evil (^{F19} Romans 13). Wherefore, though the Christian as a Christian is the only man at liberty, as called thereunto of God; yet his liberty is limited to things that are good: he is not licensed thereby to indulge the flesh. Holiness and liberty are joined together, yea our call to liberty, is a call to holiness. ^{F20} Seek, and you shall find, that a quiet and peaceable life, in our respective places, under the government, is that which we should pray for, to wit, that we may without molestation, if it were “the will of God,” spend our days in all godliness and honesty among our neighbors. See ^{F21} 1 Timothy 2:1-8; ^{F22} 1 Peter 2:13-17.

[First. Caution to Christians as Christians.] — I would improve this a little, and first, to Christians as Christians: beware the cautions, that are here presented to you, be not neglected by you. The evils are burning hot, as hot as a red hot iron. It is the greatest blemish that can be to a Christian, to suffer as an evil-doer. To say nothing of the reproach that such do bring to the name of Christ, their Lord; to his law, their rule; and to the Christian profession, which should be their glory: the guilt and shame that evil actions will load the conscience with at such a time, can hardly be stood under. The man that suffereth as an evil-doer, and yet weareth the name of a Christian, what stumbling blocks doth he lay in the way of the ignorant in a kingdom? The devil told them before, that a Christian was a mischievous man; and to suffer for evil-doing, confirms them in that belief.

Consider also the difficulties that surely such must meet with in the last minutes of their life. For can it be imagined but that such an one must have combats and conflicts at the last, who carry in their consciences the guilt and condemnation that is due to their deeds, to the place which magistrates have appointed for them to receive the reward of their works at. Such an

one bereaves not only his own soul of peace, and his name of credit, but himself of life, his friends of all cause of rejoicing, and casteth reproach upon religion, as he is stepping out of the world. What shall I say, Christians as Christians have other things to do than to concern themselves in evil things, or to meddle in other men's matters. Let us mind our own business, and leave the magistrate to his work, office and calling among men also.

I speak now to them that are not by the king called to that employ. A Christian as such has enough to do at home, in his heart, in his house, in his shop, and the like. But if thou must needs be meddling, consider what place, office, calling or relation, God has put thee in, and busy thyself by the rule of the Word to a conscientious performance of that. Nor shalt thou want dignity, though thou art but a private Christian. Every Christian man is made a king by Christ (^{<680>}Revelation 5:10). But then, his dominion as such, doth reach no further than to himself. He has not dominion over another's faith (^{<412>}2 Corinthians 1:24). His office is to govern, and bridle, and keep under, himself; to watch over himself, and to bring his body into subjection to the will of God. The weapons that he has for this purpose are not carnal, but spiritual, and mighty through God. Let him govern then, if he will be a governor, his whole man by the Word. Let him bring down, if he must be bringing down, his own high imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. If he must be a warrior, let him levy war against his own unruly passions, and let him fight against those lusts that war against his soul (^{<410>}2 Corinthians 10:3-5; ^{<457>}Galatians 5:17; ^{<505>}James 3:3-8; ^{<411>}1 Peter 2:11).

I say therefore, if thou wilt needs be a ruler, thou hast a tongue, rule that; lusts, rule them; affections, govern them; yea, thou hast excellent graces, manage them, cherish, strengthen and replenish them according to the mind of that great one who has bestowed such power to rule, upon thee. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry (^{<505>}Colossians 3:5). Nor do I think that murmuring, shrinking, wincing, complaining, and the like, when men, governors, lay a yoke upon our necks, flow from any thing else, but love to our flesh, and distrust of the faithfulness of God to manage men, things, and actions for his church. The powers that be are ordered as well as ordained of God.

They are also always in God's hand, as his rod or staff for the good and benefit of his people. Wherefore we ought with all meekness and humbleness of mind to accept of what our God by them shall please to lay upon us (~~1~~ 1 Peter 5:6).

By what I now say, I do not forbid groaning and crying to God under affliction. I speak against striving to deliver ourselves from the affliction. And since men are, as I said, the rod, staff or sword in God's hand, we should apply ourselves unto him in faith in a way of prayer, intercession, supplication and giving of thanks for governors. For since they are sent of God, they must needs come with some good in their hand for us, also our prayers may make them more profitable to us. And this we ought to do without wrath and doubting; for this is that which is good, and acceptable unto God (~~1~~ 1 Timothy 2).

Besides, it is a sign that we forget ourselves when we complain for the punishment of our sins. If we look into ourselves, and ways, we shall see cause of more heavy stripes than yet God by men has laid upon us. What sin has yet been suppressed by all that has happened to us: if pride, covetousness, looseness, treacherous dealing, schisms, and other things, redressed by all the affliction that we have had? Yea, do we not grow worse and worse? Wherefore then should we complain? Where is repentance, reformation, and amendment of life amongst us? Why, then, do we shrink and winch. For my part, I have oftentimes stood amazed both at the mercy of God, and the favor of the Prince towards us; and can give thanks to God for both: and do make it my prayer to God for the king, and that God will help me with meekness and patience to bear whatever shall befall me for my professed subjection to Christ, by men.

We are bid, as I said afore, to give thanks to God for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority. Because, as I said, there is no man with whom we have to do, we doing as we should, but he bringeth some good thing to us, or doth some good thing for us. We will now descend from them that are supreme in authority, and will come to inferior men: and suppose some of them to act beyond measure, cruelly. What? Can no good thing come to us out of this? Do not even such things as are most bitter to the flesh, tend to awaken Christians to faith and prayer, to a sight of the emptiness of this world, and the fadingness of the best it yields? Doth not God by these

things oftentimes call our sins to remembrance, and provoke us to amendment of life? how then can we be offended at things by which we reap so much good, and at things that God makes so profitable for us?

Doth not God, oftentimes, even take occasions by the hardest of things that come upon us, to visit our souls with the comforts of his Spirit, to lead us into the glory of his word, and to cause us to savor that love that he has had for us, even from before the world began, till now. A nest of bees and honey did Samson find, even in the belly of that lion that roared upon him. And is all this no good? or can we be without such holy appointments of God? Let these things be considered by us, and let us learn like Christians to kiss the rod, and love it.

I have thought, again, my brethren, since it is required of us that we give thanks to God for all these men, it follows that we do with quietness submit ourselves under what God shall do to us by them. For it seems a paradox to me, to give thanks to God for them, that yet I am not willing should abide in that place that God has set them in for me. I will then love them, bless them, pray for them, and do them good. I speak now of the men that hurt me as was hinted afore. And I will do thus, because it is good so to do, because they do me good by hurting of me, because I am called to inherit a blessing, and because I would be like my heavenly Father. “Therefore if mine enemy hunger, let me feed him; if he thirst, let me give him drink” ^{F22} (⁴⁰⁵⁶ Matthew 5:43-48; ⁴⁰⁸⁹ 1 Peter 3:9; ⁴¹²⁷ Romans 12:17-20).

1. We must see good in that, in which other men can see none.
2. We must pass by those injuries that other men would revenge.
3. We must hew we have grace, and that we are made to bear what other men are not acquainted with.
4. Many of our graces are kept alive by those very things that are the death of other men’s souls.

Where can the excellency of our patience, of our meekness, of our long-suffering, of our love, and of our faith appear, if it be not under trials, and in those things that run cross to our flesh? The devil, they say, is good when he is pleased. But Christ and his saints, when displeased. ^{F23}

Let us therefore covet to imitate Christ and the scripture saints. Let us hew out of a good conversation, our works with meekness of wisdom. Let us take heed of admitting the least thought in our minds of evil, against God, the king, or them that are under him in employ, because, the cup, the king, all men, and things are in the hand of God (^{<4918>}Psalm 75:8; ^{<2085>}Proverbs 8:15; ^{<3101>}Proverbs 21:1; ^{<2185>}Lamentations 3:37). And he can make them better to us, than if they were as our flesh desireth they should.

I have often thought that the best Christians are found in the worst of times: and I have thought again, that one reason why we are no better, is because God purges us no more (^{<4911>}John 15). I know these things are against the grain of the flesh, but they are not against the graces of the Spirit. Noah and Lot, who so holy as they, in the day of their affliction? Noah and Lot, who so idle as they in the day of their prosperity? I might have put in David too, who, while he was afflicted, had ways of serving God that were special; but when he was more enlarged, he had ways that were not so good. Wherefore the first ways of David are the ways that God has commended: but the rest of his ways, such as had not pre-eminence (^{<4478>}2 Chronicles 17:3).

We have need of all, and of more than all that has yet befallen us: and are to thank God, since his word and patience have done no more good to us, that he hath appointed men to make us better. ^{F24} Wherefore for a conclusion, as we are to receive with meekness the engrafted word of God, so also we are with patience to bear what God, by man, shall lay upon us. O that saying of God to them of old, “Why criest thou for thine affliction? thy sorrow is incurable for the multitude of thine iniquity: because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee” (^{<3815>}Jeremiah 30:15). We have need to consider of, and to sit still and be quiet, and reverence the ordinance of God: I mean affliction.

And until we can in truth get hither in our spirits, I neither look to find very right Christianity amongst us, nor much of God among professors. When I think of Mordecai, and Daniel, yea, and of David too, and of the behavior of them all with respect to the powers that they were under, I cannot but think that a sweet, meek, quiet, loving, godly submission unto men for the Lord’s sake, is an excellent token of the grace of God in us. But,

Secondly, As I cannot but condemn the actions of such Christians as have been touched before, so I would caution weak Christians not to be offended with true religion for the miscarriages of their fellows. There are two things that are very apt to be an occasion of offence to the weak: one is, when the cross attends religion; the other is, when others that profess religion do suffer for evil-doing. To both these I would say this: —

1. Though the cross, indeed, is grievous to the flesh, yet we should with grace bear up under it, and not be offended at it.
2. And as to the second, though we should and ought to be offended with such miscarriage; yet not with religion, because of such miscarriage. Some, indeed, when they see these things, take offence against religion itself; yea, perhaps, are glad of the occasion, and so fall out with Jesus Christ, saying to him, because of the evils that attend his ways, as the ten tribes said to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon the king,

“What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse; to your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David,” (^{<1126>}1 Kings 12:16);

and so go quite away from him, and cleave no more unto him, to his people, or to his ways: but this is bad. *Shun, therefore, the evil ways of Christians, but cleave to the way that is Christian:* cast away that bad spirit that thou seest in any, but hold fast to thy Head and Lord. Whither canst thou go? the Lord Jesus has the words of eternal life (^{<488>}John 6:68). Whither wilt thou go? there is not salvation in any other (^{<4042>}Acts 4:12). Take heed, therefore, of picking a quarrel with Jesus Christ, and with his ways, because of the evil-doings of some of his followers. Judas sold him, Peter denied him, and many of his disciples went back and did walk no more with him; but neither himself nor his ways were the worse for that. Beware, therefore, that thou truly distinguish between the good ways of Jesus Christ and the evil ways of them that profess him; and take not an occasion to throw away thy own soul down the throat of hell, because others have vilely cast away their lives by transgressing of the law of God. Nay, let other men’s faults make thee more wary; let other men’s falls make thee look better to thy goings: shun the rock that he that went before thee did split his ship against; and cry to God to lead thee in a path that is plain and good, because of thy observers.

Further, Let not opposite Christians rejoice when they see that evil hath taken their brother by the heel. Hate *the garment*, the thing that is bad, and by which the name, and fame, and life of thy brother is so vilely cast away, thou shouldest; and take good heed lest it also touch thee, but yet thou shouldest pity thy brother, mourn for his hard hap, and grieve that a thing so much unbecoming Christianity should be suffered to show the least part of itself among any of those that profess the gospel.

Directions for the shunning of suffering for evil-doing, are they that come next to hand.

1. Therefore, wouldest thou not suffer as an evil-doer, then *take heed of committing* of evil. Evil courses bring to evil ends; shun all appearance of evil, and ever follow that which is good. And if ye be followers of that which is good, who will harm you (⁴⁰⁸³1 Peter 3:13)? Or if there should be such enemies to goodness in the world as to cause thee for that to suffer, thou needest not be ashamed of thy suffering for well-doing, nor can there be a good man, but he will dare to own and stand by thee in it. Yea, thy sufferings for that will make thee happy, so that thou canst by no means be a loser thereby.

2. Wouldest thou not suffer for evil-doing, then *take heed of the occasions of evil*. Take heed of tempting company. Beware of men, for they will deliver thee up. There have been men in the world that have sought to make themselves out of the ruins of other men. This did Judas, and some of the Pharisees (⁴⁰⁰⁷Matthew 10:17; ⁴²¹⁹Luke 20:19, 20). Take heed to thy mouth:

“A fool’s mouth calleth for strokes, —
and his lips are the snare of his soul” (⁴⁸⁸⁷Proverbs 18:7).

Take heed of indulging, and hearkening to the ease of the flesh, and of carnal reasonings, for that will put thee upon wicked things.

3. Wouldest thou not suffer as an evil-doer, then *take heed of hearing of any thing spoken that is not according to sound doctrine*: thou must withdraw thyself from such in whom thou perceivest not the words of knowledge. Let not talk against governors, against powers, against men in authority be admitted; keep thee far from an evil matter. My son, says

Solomon, fear thou the Lord, and the King, and meddle not with those that are given to change.

4. Wouldest thou not suffer as an evil-doer, *addict not thyself to play with evil*, ^{F25} to joke and jest, and mock at men in place and power. Gaal mocked at Abimelech, and said, Who is Abimelech that we should serve him? But he paid for his disdainful language at last (^{CH01}Judges 9). I have heard of an innkeeper here in England, whose sign was the crown, and he was a merry man. Now he had a boy, of whom he used to say, when he was jovial among his guests, This boy is heir to the crown, or this boy shall be heir to the crown; and if I mistake not the story, for these words he lost his life. ^{F26} It is bad jesting with great things, with things that are God's ordinance, as kings and governors are. Yea, let them rather have that fear, that honor, that reverence, that worship, that is due to their place, their office, and dignity. How Paul gave honor and respect unto those that were but deputy-kings and heathen magistrates, will greatly appear, if you do but read his trials before them in the book called, The Acts of the Apostles. And what a charge both he and Peter have left behind them to the churches to do so too, may be found to conviction, if we read their epistles.

5. Wouldest thou not suffer for evil-doing, then *take heed of being offended with magistrates, because by their state acts they may cross thy inclinations*. It is given to them to bear the sword, and a command is to thee, if thy heart cannot acquiesce with all things with meekness and patience, to suffer. Discontent in the mind sometimes puts discontent into the mouth; and discontent in the mouth doth sometimes also put a halter about the neck. For as a man, by speaking a word in jest may for that be hanged in earnest; so he that speaks in discontent may die for it in sober sadness. Adonijah's discontent put him upon doing that which cost him his life (^{CH03}1 Kings 2:13, 23). Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them; for they are subjected to the will and foot of God.

6. But, above all, get *thy conscience possessed yet more with this, that the magistrate is God's ordinance, and is ordered of God as such*: that he is the minister of God to thee for good, and that it is thy duty to fear him, and pray for him, to give thanks to God for him, and to be subject to him

as both Paul and Peter admonish us; and that not only for wrath, but for conscience sake (~~cf~~ Romans 13:5). For all other arguments come short of binding the soul, where this argument is wanting; until we believe that of God we are bound thereto. I speak not these things, as knowing any that are disaffected to the government; for I love to be alone, if not with godly men, in things that are convenient. But because I appear thus in public, and know not into whose hands these lines may come, therefore thus I write. I speak it also to show my loyalty to the king, and my love to my fellow-subjects; and my desire that all Christians should walk in ways of peace and truth.

CHAPTER 5

WHAT IT IS TO SUFFER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

I COME now to the second thing propounded to be spoken to, as to suffering, which is this. — THAT THERE HAVE BEEN, AND YET MAY BE, A PEOPLE IN THE WORLD THAT HAVE, AND MAY, SUFFER IN THE SENSE OF THE APOSTLE HERE, ACCORDING TO THE WILL OF GOD, OR FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE.

That there have been such a people in the world, I think nobody will deny, because many of the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, thus suffered. Besides, since the Scriptures were written, all nations can witness to this, whose histories tell at large of the patience and goodness of the sufferers, and of the cruelty of those that did destroy them. And that the thing will yet happen, or come to pass again, both Scripture and reason affirm.

First, Scripture. The text tells us, That God hath put enmity betwixt the woman and her seed, and the serpent and his seed (^{<ORIS>}Genesis 3:15). This enmity put, is so fixed that none can remove it so, but that it still will remain in the world. These two seeds have always had, and will have, that which is essentially opposite to one another, and they are “the spirit of truth and the spirit of error” (^{<ORIS>}1 John 4:6), sin and righteousness (^{<ORIS>}1 John 3:7, 8), light and darkness (^{<ORIS>}1 Thessalonians 5:5). Hence

“an unjust man is an abomination to the just; and he that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked” (^{<ORIS>}Proverbs 29:27).

So that unless you could sanctify and regenerate all men, or cause that no more wicked men should any where be in power for ever, you cannot prevent but that sometimes still there must be sufferers for righteousness' sake.

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (^{<ORIS>}2 Timothy 3:12).

Second, To prove this by reason is easy. The devil is not yet shut up in the bottomless pit — Antichrist is yet alive. The government in all kingdoms is not yet managed with such light, and goodness of mind, as to let the saints serve God, as he has said, whatever it is in some. And until then there will be in some places, though for my part I cannot predict where, a people that will yet suffer for well-doing, or for righteousness' sake.

In order to a right handling of this matter, I shall divide this head into these two parts — A. Show you what it is to suffer for well-doing, or for righteousness. B. Show you what it is to suffer for righteousness' sake. I put this distinction, because I find that it is one thing to suffer for righteousness, and another to suffer for righteousness' sake.

To begin with the first, namely, to show you what it is to suffer for righteousness. Now that may be done either passively or actively.

1. Passively, as when any suffer for righteousness without their own will, or consent thereto. Thus, the little children at Bethlehem suffered by the hands of bloody Herod, when they died for, or in the room and stead of, Jesus Christ (⁴¹²⁶Matthew 2:16). Every one of those children died for righteousness, if Christ is righteousness; for they died upon his account, as being supposed to be he himself. Thus also the children of Israel's little ones, that were murdered with their parents, or otherwise, because of the religion of them that begat and bare them, died for righteousness. The same may be said concerning those of them that suffered in the land of the Chaldeans upon the same account. I might here also bring in those poor infants that in Ireland, Piedmont, Paris, and other places, have had their throats cut, and their brains dashed out against the walls, for none other cause but for the religion of their fathers. Many, many have suffered for righteousness after this manner. Their will, nor consent, has been in the suffering, yet they have suffered for religion, for righteousness. And as this hath been, so it may be again; for if men may yet suffer for righteousness, even so, for ought I know, even in this sense, may their children also.

Now, although this is not the chief matter of my text, yet a few words here may do no harm. The children that thus suffer, though their own will and consent be not in what they undergo, may yet, for all that, be accepted

as an offering unto the Lord. Their cause is good; it is for religion and righteousness. Their hearts do not recoil against the cause for which they suffer; and although they are children, God can deal with them as with John the Baptist, cause them in a moment to leap for joy of Christ; or else can save them by his grace, as he saveth other his elect infants, and thus comprehend them, though they cannot apprehend him; yea, why may they not only be saved, but in some sense be called martyrs of Jesus Christ, and those that have suffered for God's cause in the world? God comforted Rachel concerning her children that Herod murdered in the stead, and upon the account of Christ. ^{F27}

He bids her refrain herself from tears, by this promise, that her children should come again from the land of the enemy, from death. And again, said he, Thy children shall come again to their own border; which I think, if it be meant in a gospel sense, must be to the heavenly inheritance. Compare ~~Jeremiah~~ ^{Jeremiah} 31:15-17 with ~~Matthew~~ ^{Matthew} 2:18, 28.

And methinks this should be mentioned, not only for her and their sakes, but to comfort all those that either have had, or yet may have, their children thus suffer for righteousness. None of these things, as shall be further showed anon, happen without the determinate counsel of God. He has ordered the sufferings of little children as well as that of persons more in years. And it is easy to think that God can as well foresee which of his elect shall suffer by violent hands in their infancy, as which of them shall then die a natural death. He has saints small in age as well as in esteem or otherwise and sometimes the least member of the body suffereth violence, as well as the head or other chief parts. And although I desire not to see these days again, yet methinks it will please me to see those little ones that thus have already suffered for Jesus, to stand in their white robes with the elders of their people, before the throne, to sing unto the Lamb.

2. Actively. But to pass this, and to come to that which is more directly intended to be spoken to, namely, to show you who doth actively suffer for righteousness. And,

First, It is he that chooseth by his own will and consent to suffer for it. All suffering that can be called active suffering, must be by the consent of the will; and that is done when a man shall have sin and suffering set before him, and shall choose suffering rather than sin. He chose

“rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season” (^{<812>}Hebrews 11:25).

And again, They did not accept of deliverance, that is, of base and unworthy terms,

“that they might obtain a better resurrection”
(^{<813>}Hebrews 11:35).

Indeed, no man can force a Christian to suffer as a Christian, without his own consent. All Christians are sufferers of will and consent. Hence it is said, they must take up their cross, by which taking up, an act of their will is intended (^{<1008>}Matthew 10:38; ^{<1024>}Matthew 16:24). So again, “Take my yoke upon you,” which also intends an act of the will (^{<4129>}Matthew 11:29). This, therefore, is the first thing that I would present you with. Not that an act of the will is enough to declare a man a sufferer for righteousness, it standing alone; for a man, through the strength of delusion, and the power of an erroneous conscience, may be willing to suffer for the grossest opinions in the world. But I bring it to show that actual suffering for righteousness must also be by the consent of the will — the mind of the man must be in it.

Second, He that suffereth for righteousness thus, must also have a good cause. A good cause is that which is essential to suffering for righteousness. A good cause, what is that? Why, verily, it is the truth of God, either in the whole of it, as contained in the Scriptures of truth, or in the parts of it, as set before me to believe, or do, by any part of that holy Word. This may be called the matter for which one suffereth; or, as it is called in another place, “the word of righteousness” (^{<813>}Hebrews 5:13). It may also be called the form of sound doctrine, or the like. Because without this Word, the matter and nature of God’s truths cannot be known. Pilate’s question, “What is truth?” will still abide a question, to those that have not, or regard not the Word, the rule of righteousness (^{<4838>}John 18:38). See then that thy cause be good, thou that wouldest know what it is to suffer for righteousness; step not an hair’s breadth without the bounds of the Word of truth; also take heed of misunderstanding, or of wringing out of its place, any thing that is there. *Let the words of the upright stand upright*, warp them not, to the end they may comply in show with any crooked notion. And to prevent this, take these three words as a guide, in

this matter to thee. They show men their sins, and how to close with a Savior; they enjoin men to be holy and humble; they command men to submit themselves to authority. And whatever is cross to these, comes from ignorance of, or from wresting, the rule of righteousness out of its place.

But more particularly, the word of righteousness — thy cause, within the bounds of which thou must keep, if thou wilt suffer for righteousness, is to be divided into two parts.

1. It containeth a revelation of moral righteousness.
2. It containeth a revelation of evangelical righteousness.

As for moral righteousness, men seldom suffer; only, for that. Because that is the righteousness of the world, and that, simply as such, that sets itself up in every man's conscience, and has a testimony for itself, even in the light of nature. Besides, there is nothing that maketh head against that; but that which every man is ashamed, by words to plead for, and that is immorality. And this is that which Peter intends when he saith,

“And if ye be followers of that which is good, who will harm you?” (61831 Peter 3:13).

If ye be followers of moral goodness. But if it should so happen, for the case is rare, that any man should make you sufferers because you love God, and do good to your neighbor, happy are ye. Though I do not think that the apostle's conclusion terminates there. But more of these things anon.

For let a man be a good neighbor in morals; let him feed the hungry, clothe the naked, give freely out of his purse to the poor, and do that which he would another should do to him; and stop there, and not meddle with the name of Christ, and he shall have but few enemies in the world. For it is not the law, but Christ, that is the stumbling-block, and the rock of offence to men (2084Isaiah 8:14, 15; 6083Romans 9:31-33).

Wherefore, there is in God's Word a revelation of another righteousness — a righteousness which is not so visible to, yea, and that suiteth not so with, the reason of man as that moral righteousness doth. Wherefore this righteousness makes men righteous in principle, and practice so, as is

foreign to natural men. Hence it is said to be foolishness to them (^{<624>}1 Corinthians 2:14). And again, “Its praise is not of men” (^{<629>}Romans 2:29). This righteousness is also revealed in the Scriptures, but the blind cannot see it. It is the work of the Holy Ghost in the heart, and is therefore called the fruits of the Spirit; and the grace, which in the head and fullness of it, is only to be found in Christ (^{<616>}John 1:16; ^{<508>}Colossians 1:19; ^{<504>}1 Timothy 1:14). This righteousness being planted in the heart, leads a man out by the Word of God, to seek for another righteousness, as invisible to, and foreign from, the natural man, as this. And that righteousness is that which properly is the righteousness of Jesus Christ — a righteousness that standeth in his obedience to his Father’s law, as he was considered a common or public person — a righteousness which he brought into the world, not for himself, as considered in a private capacity, but for those that shall by faith venture themselves upon him, to obtain by him life eternal (^{<659>}Romans 5:19; ^{<507>}Philippians 3:7-10).

Again, This closing by faith, with this righteousness thus found in Christ, and being taken therewith, leads me yet to another righteousness, which is instituted worship, appointed by Christ, for all his followers to be conversant in; this worship is grounded on positive precepts, and so on words of righteousness, called Christ’s words, Christ’s sayings, etc.

Now, upon this bottom begins the difference betwixt the men of God and the world. For, first, by this inward principle of righteousness we come to see, and say, that men by nature are not Christians, what privileges soever they may account themselves partakers thereof. But whosoever is a Christian, of God’s making so, is begotten and born of God, and made a new creature by the anointing received from the Holy One (^{<508>}James 1:18; ^{<638>}John 3:3, 5; ^{<657>}2 Corinthians 5:17, 18; ^{<602>}2 Corinthians 1:21; ^{<623>}1 John 2:20, 24, 27).

Now, this these carnal men cannot endure to hear of; because it quite excludes them, as such, from a share in the kingdom of heaven.

To this, again, the Christian stands and backs what he says by the Word of God. Then the game begins, and the men of the world are thoughtful how they may remove such troublesome fellows out of the way. But because the Christians love their neighbors, and will not let them thus easily die in their sins, therefore they contend with them, both by

reasonings, writings, sermons, and books of gospel divinity; and stand to what they say. The world, again, are angry with these sayings, sermons, and books, for that by them they are concluded to be persons that are without repentance, and the hope of eternal life. Here again, the carnal world judges that these people are proud, self-willed, pragmatistical, contentious, self-conceited, and so unsufferable people. The Christian yet goes on and stands to what he has asserted. Then the poor world at their last shift begins to turn, and overturn the gospel-man's sayings; perverting, forcing, stretching, and dismembering of them; and so making of them speak what was never thought, much less intended by the believer.

Thus they served our Lord; for, not being able to down with his doctrine, they began to pervert his words, and to make, as also they said afterwards of Luther's, some offensive, some erroneous, some treasonable, and that both against God and Caesar, and so they hanged him up, hoping there to put an end to things. But this is but the beginning of things; for the Christian man, by the word of the gospel, goes further with his censure. *For he also findeth fault with all that this man, by the ability of nature, can do for the freeing himself from the law of sin and death.* He condemns him by the Word, because he is in a state of nature, and he condemneth also whatever, while in that state, he doth, as that which by no means can please God (^{<6142>}Romans 14:23; ^{<8100>}Hebrews 11:6). This now puts him more out; this is a taking of his gods away from him. This is to strip him of his raiment, such as it is, and to turn him naked into the presence of God. This, I say, puts him out and out. These wild-brained fellows, quote he, are never content, they find fault with us as to our state; they find fault with us as to our works, our best works. They blame us because we are sinners, and they find fault with us, though we mend; they say, by nature we are no Christians, and that our best doings will not make us such. What would they have us do? Thus, therefore, they renew their quarrel; but the Christian man cannot help it, unless he would see them go to hell, and saying nothing. For the Word of God doth as assuredly condemn man's righteousness, as it doth condemn man's sin; it condemneth not man's righteousness among men, for there it is good and profitable (^{<8806>}Job 35:6-8), but with God, to save the soul, it is no better than filthy rags (^{<2606>}Isaiah 64:6).

Nor will this Christian man suffer these carnal ones to delude themselves with a change of terms; for the devil, who is the great manager of carnal men in things that concern their souls, and in the plea that they make for themselves, will help them to tricks and shifts to evade the power of the Word of God. Teaching them to call the beauties of nature grace, and the acts of natural powers the exercise of the graces of the Spirit, he will embolden them also to call man's righteousness the righteousness of Christ, and that by which a sinner may be justified in the sight of God from the law. *These tricks the Christian sees, and being faithful to God's truth, and desiring the salvation of his neighbor, he laboreth to discover the fallacy of, and to propound better terms for this poor creature to embrace, and venture his soul upon;* which terms are warranted by the New Testament, a stranger to which the natural man is. But, I say, the things which the Christian presseth, being so foreign to nature, and lying so cross to man's best things, are presently judged by the natural man to be fables or foolishness (⁴¹²⁴1 Corinthians 2:14). Wherefore here again, he takes another occasion to maintain his strife, and contention against the righteous man; raising of slanders upon him, and laying things to his charge that he understandeth not; charging also his doctrine with many grievous things. Namely, that he holdeth that man was made to be damned; that man's righteousness is no better than sin; that a man had as good to do ill as well; that we may believe, and do what we list; that holiness pleaseth not God; and that sinning is the way to cause grace to abound. Besides, say they, he condemneth good motions, and all good beginnings of heart to God-ward; he casteth away that good we have, and would have us depend upon a justice to save us by, that we can by no means approve of.

And thus the quarrel is made yet wider between the men of the world and Christian man. But there is not a stop put here.

For it is possible for the carnal man to be beaten out of all his arguments for himself and his own things, by the power and force of the Word; and *to be made to consent to what the Christian has said* as to the notion of the truth. I must not speak this of all. But yet the breach doth still abide; for that yet there appears to be no more with the man, but only the notion of things. For though the notion of things are those that of God are made the means of conveying of grace into the heart, *yet grace is not always with the notion of things;* the Word oftentimes standeth in man's understanding alone,

and remaineth there, as not being accompanied with such grace as can make it the power of God to salvation. Now, *when it is thus with the soul, the danger is as great as ever*, because there is a presumption now begotten in the heart that the man is in a saved condition, — a presumption, I say, instead of faith, which puffeth up, instead of enabling the soul after a godly manner to depend upon God for mercy through Christ. This is called the word of them that are puffed up; the *word only*, because not accompanied with saving grace (~~401E~~ 1 Corinthians 4:19; ~~401E~~ 1 Corinthians 8:1; ~~500E~~ 1 Thessalonians 1:5).

This the Christian also sees, and says *it is too weak to conduct the soul to glory*. And this, indeed, he says, because he would not that his neighbor should come short home. But neither can this be borne; but here again, the natural man with his notion of things is offended; and takes pet against his friend, because he tells him the truth, and would that he so should digest the truth, that it may prove unto him eternal life. Wherefore he now begins to fall out again, for as yet the enmity is not removed; he therefore counts him an unmerciful man, one that condemneth all to hell but himself; and as to his singularity in things, those he counteth for dreams, for enthusiasms, for allegorical whimsies, vain revelations, and the effects of an erroneous judgment. For the Lord has put such darkness betwixt Egypt and Israel, as will not suffer them to come together. But this is not all.

For it is possible for these carnal men to be so much delighted in the notion of things, as to addict themselves to some kind of worship of Christ, whose notions of truth have by them been received. And because their love is yet but carnal, and because the flesh is swelling, and is pleased with pomp and sumptuousness, therefore, to show how great an esteem such have for Christ, whom they are now about to worship, they will first count his testament, though good, a thing defective, and not of fullness sufficient to give, in all particular things, direction how they should, to their own content, perform their glorious doctrine. For here and there, and in another place, cry they, there is something wanting. Here, say they, is nothing said of those places, vestures, gestures, shows, and outward greatness that we think seemly to be found in and with those that worship Jesus. Here wants sumptuous ceremonies, glorious ornaments, new fashioned carriages, ^{F30} all which are necessary to adorn worship withal.

But now here again, the truly godly, as he comes to see the evil of things, maketh his objections, and findeth fault, and counts them unprofitable and vain (²⁹⁰Isaiah 29; ⁴⁶⁰Matthew 15; ⁴⁰⁰Mark 7).

But they again, seeing the things they have made are the very excellencies of human invention, and things added as a supplement to make up what, and wherein, as they think, that man that was faithful over his own house as a son was defective. They are resolved to stand upon their points, and not to budge an inch from the things that are so laudable, so necessary, so convenient, and so comely; the things that have been judged good, by so many wise, learned, pious, holy, reverend, and good men. Nay, if this were all, the godly would make a good shift; but their zeal is so great for what they have invented, and their spirits so hot to make others couch and bend thereto, that none must be suffered to their power to live and breathe, that refuseth to conform thereto. ^{F31} This has been proved too true, both in France, Spain, Germany, Italy, and other places; and upon this account it is that persecution has been kept alive so many hundred years in some places against the church of God.

From what has been said as to these things, this I collect as the sum — First, That man by nature is in a state of wrath and condemnation (⁴⁰⁰Ephesians 2:1-4; ⁴⁶⁰John 3:18). Secondly, That the natural man, by all his natural abilities, is not able to recover himself from this his condemned condition (⁴⁶⁰John 6:44; ⁴⁰⁰Ephesians 1:19, 20). Thirdly, That a man may have right notions of gospel things, that hath no grace in his heart (⁴⁰⁰1 Corinthians 13:2, 3). Fourthly, That to add human inventions to Christ's institutions, and to make them of the same force and necessity, of the same authority and efficacy, is nought; and not to be subjected to (²⁹⁰Isaiah 29:13; ⁴⁶⁰Matthew 15:8, 9; ⁴⁰⁰Mark 7:6, 7).

So then, he that saith these things, saith true; for the Scriptures say the same. This, then, is a good cause to suffer for, if men will that I shall suffer for saying so; because it is that which is founded upon the Word of God; and the Word is the ground and foundation of all true doctrine. Let him, then, that believeth what is here discoursed, and that liveth soberly and peaceably in this belief among his neighbors, stand by what he hath received, and rejoice that he hath found the truth. And if any shall afflict or trouble him for holding of these things, they afflict or trouble him for

holding to good things; and he suffereth at their hands because his cause is good.

And such an one may with boldness, as to this, make his appeal to the Bible, which is the foundation of his principles, and to God the author of that foundation, if what he holds is not good. He may say, “Lord, I have said, that man by nature is in a state of condemnation, and they make me suffer for that. Lord, I have asserted that man, by all his natural abilities, is not able to recover himself from this his condemned state, and they make me suffer for that. Lord, I have said that a natural man may have right notions of the gospel, and yet be without the saving grace thereof, and they make me suffer for that. Lord, I cannot consent that human inventions and doctrines of men should be joined with thy institution as matters of worship, and imposed upon my conscience as such, and they make me suffer for that. Lord, I own the government, pray for my superiors, live quietly among my neighbors, give to all their dues, feed the hungry, clothe the naked, relieve the afflicted, and show myself, by my faith and life, to be a true Christian man, and yet my neighbors will not let me alone. True, I cannot comply with all that some men would have me comply with; no more did Daniel, no more did Paul; and yet Daniel said, that he had to the king done no hurt (²⁰⁶²Daniel 6:22), and Paul said, ‘neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Caesar, have I offended anything at all’” (⁴²⁸Acts 25:8).

For he that keeps within the compass of God’s Word, hurts no man, gives just offence to no man, though he complieth not with all that are modes and ways of worship in the world. Nor can this appeal be judged injurious, if it be not attended with intercessions against them that hate us. But we will pass this, and come to a second thing.

Third, As he that suffereth for righteousness must have a good cause, so he that suffereth for righteousness must have a *good call*.

A man, though his cause be good, ought not by undue ways to run himself into suffering for it; nature teaches the contrary, and so doth the law of God. Suffering for a truth ought to be cautiously took in hand, and as warily performed. I know that there are some men that are more concerned here than some; the preacher of the Word is by God’s command made the more obnoxious man, for he must come off with a woe, if he preaches not

the gospel (^{<4196>}1 Corinthians 9:16). He, therefore, I say, doth and ought more to expose himself than other Christians are called to do. Yet it behoveth him also to beware, because that Christ has said to him, “Behold, I send you forth as sheep, or lambs, in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” (^{<4006>}Matthew 10:16; ^{<4009>}Luke 10:3). A man is not bound by the law of his Lord, to put himself into the mouth of his enemy. Christ withdrew himself; Paul escaped the governor’s hands, by being let down in a basket over the wall of the city (^{<4113>}2 Corinthians 11:32, 33). And Christ hath said, If they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another. If they will not let me preach here, I will take up my Bible, and be gone. Perhaps this is because I must preach in some other place. A minister can quickly pack up, and carry his religion with him, and offer what he knows of his God to another people (^{<4134>}Acts 13:44-47). Nor should a minister strive, I think, with the magistrate for place, or time. *But let him hearken to hear what God shall say by such opposition.* Perhaps the magistrate must drive thee out of this place, because the soul is in another place that is to be converted, or helped by thy sermon today. We must also in all things, show ourselves to be such as by our profession we would that men should believe we are, to wit, meek, gentle, not strivers, but take our Lord and our brethren the prophets for our examples.

But I will not here presume to give instructions to ministers; but will speak a few words in the general about what I think may be a sufficient call to a man to suffer for righteousness.

First, Every Christian man is bound by God’s Word to hold to, or stand by his profession, his profession of faith, and to join to that profession an holy godly life; because the Apostle and High priest of his profession is no less a one than Christ Jesus (^{<3001>}Hebrews 3:1; ^{<3013>}Hebrews 10:23). This by Christ himself is expressed thus, Let your light so shine (^{<4156>}Matthew 5:16). No man lighteth a candle to put it under a bushel. Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning (^{<4125>}Luke 12:35). And Paul bids the Philippians hold forth the word of life (^{<3076>}Philippians 2:16).

And more particularly, by all this, this is intended, that we should hide our faith in Christ from no man, but should rather make a discover of it by a life that will do so; for our profession, thus managed, is the badge, and the

Lord's livery, by which we are distinguished from other men.^{F33} So then, if, while I profess the truth of Christ, and so walk as to make my profession of it more apparent, I be made a sufferer for it, my call is good, and I may be bold in God and in my profession. This, Peter intends when he saith, "But and if ye suffer for righteousness" sake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear (~~1~~ 1 Peter 3:14, 15). Here, then, is a call not to meddle with the other, but to mind our own business; to walk in our Christian profession, and to adorn it with all good works; and if any man will meddle with me, and ask me a reason of the hope that I have, to give it him with meekness and fear, whatever follows thereupon. This, Peter should have done himself there, where he denies his Master thrice.

The reason is, for that Christianity is so harmless a thing, that, be it never so openly professed, it hurts no man. I believe that Christ will save me; what hurt is this to my neighbor? I love Christ because he will save me; what hurt is this to any? I will for this worship Christ as he has bid me; what hurt is this to anybody? I will also tell my neighbors what a loving one my Christ is, and that he is willing to be good to them as he has been good to me; and what hurt is this to the governor of a kingdom? But and if any man will afflict me for this, my cause is good, and also my call to stand full godly to my profession.

Secondly, There is sometimes a call to suffer for righteousness, even from the voice of necessity. That is, either when, by my silence, the truth must fall to the ground; or when, by my shrinking, the souls of other men are in danger. This, I say, is a call to suffer even by the voice of necessity. The case may be when God's ways may be trodden under foot; yea, his Word, and ways, and name, and people, and all. Thus Goliath did do, for several days together (~~1~~ 1 Samuel 17), and vaunted in his doing; and there was not a man, no, not in Israel, that durst answer him a word. And now was the spirit of David stirred in him, and he would put his life in his hand, and give this man an answer; and he saw there was reason for it — necessity gave him a call. Is there not a cause, saith he, lies bleeding upon the ground, and no man of heart or spirit to put a check to the bold blasphemer? I will go fight with him; I will put my life in my hand; if I die, I die.

Consider also what Daniel did when the law was gone out to forbid, for thirty days, petitioning any god or man, save the king only. At that time, also, not a man of Israel peeped (²⁰⁰Daniel 6:7). Now necessity walks about the streets, crying, Who is on the Lord's side? Who, etc. And Daniel answers, I am, by opening of his window, and praying, as at other times, three times a day, with his face towards Jerusalem (²⁰⁰Daniel 6:10). He heard this voice of necessity, and put his life in his hand, and complied with it, to the hazard of being torn in pieces by the lions.

Much like this was that of the three children; for when that golden image was set up, and worship commanded to be done unto it, not one, that we read of, durst stand upright when the time was come that bowing was the sign of worship. Only the three children would not bow: it was necessary that some should show that there was a God in heaven, and that divine worship was due alone to him (²⁰⁰Daniel 3:10-12). But they run the hazard of being turned to ashes, in a burning fiery furnace, for so doing. *But necessity has a loud voice, and shrill in the ears of a tender conscience:* this voice will awake jealousy and kindle a burning fire within, for the name, and cause, and way, and people, of the God of heaven.

Thirdly, There is sometimes a call to suffer for righteousness by the voice of providence. That is, when, by providence, I am cast for my profession into the hands of the enemies of God and his truth; then I am called to suffer for it what God shall please to let them lay upon me. Only, for the making of my way more clear in this matter, I will deliver what I have to say, with a caution or two. **1.** Thou must take heed that thy call be good to this or that place, at which, by providence, thou art delivered up. **2.** Thou must also take heed that, when thou art there, thou busiest thyself in nothing but that that good is. **3.** Thou must also take heed that thou stay there no longer than while thou mayest do good or receive good there. **4.** Thus far a man is in the way of his duty, and therefore may conclude that the providence of God, under which now he is, is such as has mercy and salvation in the bowels of it, whatsoever is by it, at the present, brought upon him.

Christ Jesus, our Lord, though his death was determined, and of absolute necessity, and that chiefly for which he came into the world, chose rather to be taken in the way of his duty than in any other way or anywhere else.

Wherefore, when the hour was come, he takes with him some of his disciples, and goeth into a garden, a solitary place, to pray; which done, he sets his disciples to watch, and falleth himself to prayer. So he prays once; he prays twice; he prays thrice: and he giveth also good doctrine to his disciples. And now, behold, while he was here, in the way of his duty, busying himself in prayer to God, and in giving of good instruction to his followers, upon him comes Judas and a multitude with swords and staves, and weapons, to take him; to which providence he, in all meekness, submits, for he knew that by it he had a call to suffer (~~405~~ Matthew 26:36-47).

In this way, also, the apostles were called to suffer, even while they were in the way of their duty. Yea, God bid them go into the temple to preach, and there delivered them into the hands of their enemies (~~406~~ Acts 4:1-3; ~~407~~ Acts 5:20-26).

Be we in the way of our duty, in the place and about the work unto which we are called of God, whether that work be religious or civil, we may, without fear, leave the issue of things to God, who only doth wonderful things. And he who lets not a sparrow fall to the ground without his providence, will not suffer a hair of our head to perish but by his order (~~408~~ Luke 12:6, 7). And since he has engaged us in his work, as he has if he has called us to it, we may expect that he will manage, and also bear us out therein; either so as by giving of us a good deliverance by way of restoration to our former liberty and service for him, or so as to carry us well out of this world to them that, under the altar, are crying, How long, holy and true: nor shall we, when we come there, repent that we suffered for him here. Oh! how little do saints, in a suffering condition, think of the robes, the crowns, the harps, and the Son that shall be given to them; and that they shall have when they come upon mount Zion (~~409~~ Revelation 6:11; ~~410~~ Revelation 14:1-7).

Fourthly, There is sometimes a call to suffer for righteousness by an immediate and powerful impulse of the Spirit of God upon the heart. This, I say, is sometimes, and but sometimes; for this is not God's ordinary way, nor are many of his servants called after this manner to suffer for righteousness. Moses was called thus to suffer when he went so often unto Pharaoh with the message of God in his mouth. And

“he endured, as seeing him who is invisible”
(~~312~~ Hebrews 11:25-27).

Paul was called thus to suffer, and he obeyed, and went, and performed that work, according to the will of God. This kind of call Paul calls a binding, or a being bound in the Spirit, because the Holy Ghost had laid such a command upon him to do so, that he could not, by any means, get from under the power of it.

“And now, behold,” saith he, “I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there”
(~~417~~ Acts 20:22).

For he that is under this call has, as I said, bonds laid upon his spirit, which carry him to the place where his testimony is to be borne for God; nor shall he, if he willingly submits and goes, as Paul did, but have an extraordinary presence of God with him, as he. And see what a presence he had; for after the second assault was given him by the enemy, even “the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome” (~~421~~ Acts 23:11). Thus God meeteth his people in their service for him, when he calls them aloud to do great service for him. The power of such a call as this, I say, is great, and men of ordinary spirits must needs give place thereto, and leave a man thus bound to the God that thus has bound him. All the help such can afford him is to follow him with our prayers, not to judge him or grieve him, or lay stumbling-blocks before him. No; they must not weep nor mourn for him, so as to make him sorrowful (~~422~~ Acts 21:12-14).

His friends may suggest unto him what is like to attend his present errand, as Agabus did by the Spirit to Paul when he took his girdle and bound himself therewith, to show him how his enemies should serve him whither he went. “Thus said the Holy Ghost,” said he, “so shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles” (~~423~~ Acts 21). But if this call be indeed upon a man, all sorrow is turned into joy before him; for he is ready, not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus (~~423~~ Acts 21:13).

Instances, also, of later times might be given of a call extraordinary to suffer for righteousness. For many, in the first three hundred years' persecution, when nobody knew what they were, would boldly come up to the face of their enemies and tell what they were, and suffer for what they professed, the death. I remember, also, the woman who, when her friends were gone before to suffer, how she came running and panting after, for fear she should not come thither time enough to suffer for Jesus Christ.

But I will give you an instance of later times, even in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, of an Hertfordshire man that went as far as Rome to bear his testimony for God against the wickedness of that place. This man, when he was arrived there, and had told them wherefore he was come, they took and condemned him to death, to wit, to be burned for an heretic. Now he was to ride from the prison to the place of execution upon an ass, with his face to the beast's tail, and was to be stripped from the shoulders to the waist, that he might be tormented all the way he went with burning torches continually thrust to his sides; but he, nothing at all afraid, spake in his exhortation to the people to fly from their sin and idolatry; he would also catch hold of the torches and put them to his sides, to show how little he esteemed the worst that they could do. Also, when he was come to the place of execution, he suffered there such cruelty, with so unconcerned a mind, and with such burning zeal for God's truth, testified against them while he could speak; that, all amazed, his enemies cried, he could not have suffered as he did but by the help of the devil. His name I have now forgot, but you will find it, with the story at large, in the third volume of Acts and Monuments, at the 1022 page. ^{F34}

CHAPTER 6

WHAT IT IS TO SUFFER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE

BUT we will pass this, and come to our second particular, namely, TO SHOW WHEN IT MAY BE SAID A MAN DOTHT NOT ONLY SUFFER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, BUT ALSO FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE.

To suffer for righteousness' sake must be either with the *intention* of the persecutor or else of the persecuted.

The persecutor, whatever the person's suffering is, if he afflicteth this person for a supposed good that he thinketh he hath or professeth, he make him suffer for righteousness' sake. So that, in this sense, a man that hath no grace may not only suffer for righteousness, but also for righteousness' sake. But this I intend not, because the text is not concerned with it.

The thing, therefore, now intended to be spoken to, is this, namely, when a man may be said to suffer what he suffereth upon a religious account, of love to, or for the sake of, that good that he finds in the truths of God, or because his heart is joined and espoused to the good of the truths that he professeth; not that there is any thing in any truth of God that is not good; but a man may profess truth, not for the sake of the goodness that is in it, but upon a remote account. Judas professed truth, not of love to the truth, but of love to the bag, and to the money that was put therein. Men may profess for a wife, for a trade, for friendship, or because profession is at such a time or in such a place, in fashion. I wish that there were no cause to say this. Now there is not any of these that profess the *truth for the truth's sake*, that profess the truth of love to it; nor shall they, should they suffer as professors, never so long, never so much, never so grievously, be counted of God among them that suffer for righteousness' sake; that is, of unfeigned love to righteousness. Wherefore, that I may

show you who may be said to suffer for righteousness' sake, I will propound and speak to several things.

1. Then, he that suffereth in the apostle's sense, for well-doing, or for righteousness' sake, sets his face against nothing but sin. He resisteth unto blood, striving against sin. Sin is the object of his indignation, because it is an enemy to God, and to his righteous cause in the world (^{SCB} Hebrews 12:3, 4). *Sin, I say, is that which such a man singleth out as his opposite, as his antagonist, and that against which his heart is set.* It is a rare thing to suffer aright, and to have my spirit, in my suffering, bent only against God's enemy — sin; sin in doctrine, sin in worship, sin in life, sin in conversation. Now then, he that suffereth for righteousness' sake has singled out sin to pursue it to death, long before he comes to the cross. It is sin, alas, and his hatred to it that have brought him into this condition. *He fell out with sin at home, in his own house, in his own heart, before he fell out with sin in the world, or with sin in public worship.* For he that can let sin go free and uncontrolled at home within, let him suffer while he will, he shall not suffer for righteousness' sake. And the reason is, because a righteous soul, as the phrase is, ^{QUB} 2 Peter 2:8, has the greatest antipathy against that sin that is most ready to defile it, and that is, as David calls it, one's own iniquity, or the sin that dwelleth in one's own flesh. I have kept me, says he, from mine iniquity, from mine own sin. People that are afraid of fire are concerned most with that that burneth in their own chimney; they have the most watchful eye against that that is like to burn down their own house first.

He also that suffereth for righteousness' sake, doth it also because he would not that sin should cleave to the worship of God; and, indeed, this is mostly the cause of the sufferings of the godly. They will not have to do with that worship that hath sinful traditions commixed with God's appointments, because they know that God is jealous of his worship; and has given a strict charge that all things be done according to the pattern showed to us in the mount. He knows also that God will not be with that worship, and those worshippers, that have not regard to worship by the rule of the testament of Christ. He is also against the sin that is apt to cleave to himself while he standeth in the presence of God. I will wash mine hands in innocency, so will I compass thine altar, O Lord. This man also chooses to be in the practical parts of worship, if possible, for he

knows that to have to do about holy things sincerely is the way to be at the remotest distance from sin. He chooses also to be with those holy ones that are of the same mind with him against sin; for he knows that two are better than one, and that a threefold cord is not easily broken. Wherefore look to yourselves, you that do, or may be called to suffer for religion: if you bend not yourselves against sin, if to be revenged of sin be not the cause of your suffering, you cannot be said to suffer for righteousness' sake. Take heed, therefore, that something else be not an inducement to thee to suffer. A man may suffer to save what he has: there is credit also and an applause; there is shame to conform; there is carnal stoutness of spirit; there is hatred of persecutors and scorn to submit; there is fear of contempt and of the reproach of the people, etc. These may be motives and arguments to a suffering state, and may really be the ground of a man's being in the jail; though he cries out in the meanwhile of popery, of superstition, and idolatry, and of the errors that attend the common modes of the religions of the world. I charge no man as though I knew any such thing by any; but I suggest these things as things that are possible, and mention them because I would have sufferers have a care of themselves; and watch and pray, because no man can be upright here that is not holy, that cannot pray, and watch, and deny himself for the love that he has to righteousness. I said it before, and will say it again, it is a rare thing to be set in downrightness of heart against sin.

2. Is it for the sake of righteousness that thou sufferest? Then *it is because thou wouldest have righteousness promoted, set up, and established in the world*; also thou art afflicted at those advantages that iniquity gets upon men, upon things, and against thyself.

“I beheld,” said David, “the transgressors, and was grieved; because men kept not thy word” (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 119:158).

And again, These are they that mourn for the abominations that are done among men (~~2000~~ Ezekiel 9:4). There is a great deal of talk about religion, a great deal of pleading for religion, namely, as to the formalities of this and the other way. ^{F35} But to choose to be religious, that I might be possessed with holiness, and to choose that religion that is most apt to possess me with it, if I suffer for this, I suffer for righteousness' sake. Wherefore say thus to thy soul, thou that art like to suffer for righteousness, How is it

with the most inward parts of my soul? What is there? What designs, desires, and reachings out are there? Why do I pray? Why do I read? Why do I hear? Why do I haunt and frequent places and ordinances appointed for worship? Is it because I love holiness? would promote righteousness, because I love to see godliness show itself in others, and because I would feel more of the power of it in myself? If so, and if thou sufferest for thy profession, thou sufferest, not only for righteousness, but also for righteousness' sake.

Dost thou thus practice, because thou wouldest be taught to do outward acts of righteousness, and because thou wouldest provoke others to do so too? Dost thou show to others how thou lovest righteousness, by taking opportunities to do righteousness? How is it, dost thou show most mercy to thy dog, ^{F36} or to thine enemy, to thy swine, or to the poor? Whose naked body hast thou clothed? Whose hungry belly hast thou fed? Hast thou taken delight in being defrauded and beguiled? Hast thou willingly sat down by the loss with quietness, and been as if thou hadst not known, when thou hast been wronged, defamed, abused, and all because thou wast not willing that black-mouthed men should vilify and reproach religion upon thy account (~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 6:7)?

He that loveth righteousness will do thus, yea, and do it as unto God, and of tenderness to the Word of God which he professeth. And he that thinks to make seeing men believe, that when he suffereth, he suffereth for righteousness' sake, and yet is void in his life of moral goodness, and that has no heart to suffer and bear, and put up, and pass by injuries in his conversation among his enemies at home, is deceived.

There are some Scriptures that are as if they were out of date among some professors, specially such as call for actual holiness and acts of self-denial for God; but it will be found, at the day of judgment, that they only are the peculiar people that are "zealous of good works" (~~2~~ Titus 2:14). God help us, it is hard now to persuade professors to come up to negative holiness, that is, to leave undone that which is bad; and yet this of itself comes far short of ones being found in practical goodness.

But this is the man that suffereth, when he suffereth for righteousness' sake, that makes it his business, by all lawful means, according to the capacity that God has put him in, to promote, set up, and establish

righteousness in the world; I say this is the man that suffereth for righteousness' sake, that suffereth for so doing; and I am sure that a life that is moral, when joined to the profession of the faith of the things that are of the Spirit of God, is absolutely necessary to the promoting of righteousness in the world. Hence Peter tells them that suffer for righteousness' sake, that they must have "a good conscience" — a good conscience towards God, towards men, towards friends, towards enemies (~~184~~ 1 Peter 3:14-16; ~~406~~ Acts 24:16; ~~421~~ Acts 23:1). They must have a good conscience in all things, being willing, ready, desirous to live honestly, godly, and righteously in this world, or else they cannot, though they may suffer for the best doctrine under heaven, suffer for righteousness' sake (~~5836~~ Hebrew 13:18). Wherefore,

3. Is it for righteousness' sake that thou sufferest? then *thy design is the ruin of sin*. This depends upon what was said before; for he that strives against sin, that seeks to promote righteousness, he designs the ruin of sin. "Be not," said Paul to the suffering Romans, "overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (~~622~~ Romans 12:21). To overcome evil with good is a hard task. To rail it down, to cry it down, to pray kings, and parliaments, and men in authority to put it down, this is easier than to use my endeavor to overcome it with good, with doing of good, as I said before. ^{F37} And sin must be overcome with good at home, before thy good can get forth of doors ^{F38} to overcome evil abroad.

Abraham overcame evil with good, when he quieted the discontent of Lot and his herdsmen, with allowing of them to feed their cattle in the best of what God had given him (~~4137~~ Genesis 13:7, 8).

David overcame evil with good, when he saved the life of his bloody enemy that was fallen into his hand; also when he grieved that any hurt should come to them that sought nothing so much as his destruction. "They rewarded me," saith he, "evil for good, to the spoiling of my soul. But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth. I humbled my soul with fasting, I behaved myself as though he had been my friend or brother; I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his mother." This is to overcome evil with good (~~4952~~ Psalm 35:12-14).

Job saith concerning his enemy, that he did not rejoice when evil found him; "neither have I," said he, "suffered my mouth to sin by wishing a

curse to his soul.” He means he did the quite contrary, and so overcame evil with good (^{<3822>}Job 31:29, 30).

Elisha overcame evil with good, when he received the men that came for his life, and had them where he might feast, and comfort them, and sent them home in peace to their master (^{<1769>}2 Kings 6:19-23).

The New Testament also is full of this, both in exhortations and examples, In exhortations where it is said, resist not evil, that is, with evil, but overcome evil with good (^{<1203>}Proverbs 24:29).

“But whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. — And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away. — Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil, and on the good — on the just, and on the unjust” (^{<4159>}Matthew 5:39-45).

“Bless them that persecute you: bless and curse not”
(^{<5214>}Romans 12:14).

“Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing” (^{<6103>}1 Peter 3:9; ^{<5214>}Romans 12:14).

This is righteousness — these are righteous courses. And as these are preceptively propounded, so they were as practically followed by them that were eminently godly in the primitive church.

“We are fools for Christ’s sake,” said Paul, “we are despised, we are hungry, thirsty, naked, and buffeted. — Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the earth, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day” (^{<4101>}1 Corinthians 4:10-13).

This is overcoming of evil with good, and he that has chosen to himself that religion that teaches these things, and that loves that religion because

it so teacheth him; if he suffereth for it, he suffereth for righteousness' sake.

4. He that suffereth for righteousness' sake, will carry righteousness whithersoever he goes. Neither the enemy, nor thy sufferings, shall be able to take righteousness from thee. Righteousness must be thy chamber mate, thy bed companion, thy walking mate: it is that without which thou wilt be so uncouth, as if thou couldest not live (¹³⁰¹Psalm 26, ¹³⁵⁷Psalm 25:21).

Paul in his sufferings would have righteousness with him, for it must be as it were his armor-bearer; yea, his very armor itself (¹⁴⁷²2 Corinthians 6:7). It is an excellent saying of Job,

“I put on righteousness, and it clothed me; my judgment was as a robe and a diadem. I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame; I was a father to the poor,” etc. (¹³⁹¹Job 29:11-16).

“Princes,” said David also, “did sit and speak against me, but thy servant did meditate in thy statues” (¹⁴³²Psalm 119:23).

A man that loves righteousness doth as Abraham did with his Sarah, carry it every where with him, though he goes, because of that, in danger of his life. Righteousness! It is the only intimate that a Christian has. It is that by which he takes his measures, that with which he consults, with respect to what he doth, or is to do, in the world. “Thy testimonies,” said David also, “are my delight, and my counselors.” The men of my counsel, in the margin (¹⁴³²Psalm 119:24).

David! He was the man of affliction; the suffering man in his day; but in all places where he came, he had righteousness, the law and godly practice with him. It was his counselor, as he was a man, a saint, a king. I dare say, for the man that suffers righteousness to be rent away from him by the violence and rage of men, and that casts it away, as David did Saul's armor, that he may secure himself; he has no great love for righteousness, nor to the cross for righteousness' sake.

“My righteousness I hold fast,” said Job, “and will not let it go: my heart shall not reproach me so long as I live” (¹⁴⁷⁶Job 27:6).

What? part with righteousness! A righteous Lord! A righteous Word! A righteous profession! A righteous life! to sleep in a whole skin: the Lord

forbid it me, and all that he has counted worthy to be called by his name. Let us carry it with us from the bed to the cross, and then it shall carry us from thence to the crown. Let it be our companion to prison and death, then shall we show that we are lovers of righteousness, and that we choose to suffer for righteousness' sake.

5. Dost thou suffer for righteousness' sake? why then, thy righteousness is not diminished, but rather increased by thy sufferings. Righteousness thriveth best in affliction, the more afflicted, the more holy man; the more persecuted, the more shining man (^{<4165>}Acts 6:15). The prison is the furnace, thy graces are the silver and the gold; wherefore, as the silver and the gold are refined by the fire, and so made more to show their native brightness, so the Christian that hath, and that loveth righteousness, and that suffereth for its sake, is by his sufferings refined and made more righteous, and made more Christian, more godly (^{<3839>}Zechariah 13:9). Some, indeed, when they come there, prove lead, iron, tin, and at the best, but the dross of silver; and so are fit for nothing, but there to be left and consumed, and to bear the badge, if ever they come from thence, of reprobate silver from the mouth and sentence of their neighbors (^{<3628>}Ezekiel 22:18-22; ^{<3468>}Jeremiah 6:28-30). But when I, says Job, am tried, "I shall come forth as gold" (^{<4230>}Job 23:10).

When Saul had cast one javelin at David, it made him walk wisely in all his ways. But when he added to his first fury, plots to take away his life, then David behaved himself yet more wisely (^{<4980>}1 Samuel 18:10-30). The hotter the rage and fury of men are against righteous ways, the more those that love righteousness grow therein. For they are concerned for it, not to hide it, but to make it spangle; not to extinguish it, but to greaten it, and to show the excellency of it in all its features, and in all its comely proportion. Now such an one will make straight steps for his feet,

"let that which is lame be turned out of the way"
(^{<5023>}Hebrews 12:13)

Now he shows to all men what faith is, by charity, by self-denial, by meekness, by gentleness, by long-suffering, by patience, by love to enemies, and by doing good to them that hate us; now he walketh upon his high places. Yea, will not now admit that so slovenly a conversation should come within his doors, as did use to haunt his house in former

times. Now it is Christmas, ^{F39} now it is suffering time, now we must keep holy day every day. The reason is, for that a man, when he suffereth for Christ, is set upon a hill, upon a stage, as in a theatre, to play a part for God in the world. And you know when men are to play their parts upon a stage, they count themselves, if possible, more bound to circumspection; and that for the credit of their master, the credit of their art, and the credit of themselves. For then the eyes of every body are fixed, they gape and stare upon them (^{<1027>}Psalm 22:17). And a trip here is as bad as a fall in another place. Also now God himself looks on. Yea, he laugheth, as being pleased to see a good behavior attending the trial of the innocent.

1. He that suffereth for righteousness' sake suffereth for his goodness, and he is now to labor by works and ways to convince the world that he suffereth as such an one.
2. He that suffereth for righteousness' sake has many that are weak to strengthen by his sweet carriages under the cross, wherefore he had need to exceed in virtue.
3. He also is by well-doing to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, he had need be curious and circumspect in all his actions.
4. He is to come in, and to be a judge, and to condemn, by his faith and patience in his sufferings, the world, with his Lord and fellows, at the appearing of Jesus Christ; he had need be holy himself. This, therefore, is the fit sign of suffering for righteousness' sake (^{<1011>}1 Corinthians 6:1-5; ^{<8101>}Hebrews 11:7; ^{<8006>}2 Thessalonians 1:5, 6; ^{<1008>}1 Peter 4:3-5).
6. He that suffereth, not only for righteousness, but also for righteousness' sake, *will not exchange his cause, though for it in a jail, for all the ease and pleasure in the world.* They that suffered for righteousness' sake of old, were tempted before they were sawn asunder (^{<8101>}Hebrews 11). Tempted, that is, allured, to come out of their present sufferings, and leave their faith and profession in irons behind them. Tempted with promises of promotion, of ease, of friendship, of favor with men. As the Devil said to Christ, so persecutors of old did use to make great promises to sufferers, if they would fall down and worship. But his is alone as if they should say, Butcher, make away with your righteousness, ^{F40} and a good conscience, and you shall find the friendship of the world. For there is no way to kill a

man's righteousness but by his own consent. This, Job's wife knew full well, hence she tempted him to lay violent hands upon his own integrity (~~Job~~ Job 2:9).

The Devil, nor men of the world can kill thy righteousness or love to it, but by thy own hand; or separate that and thee asunder, without thine own act. Nor will he that doth indeed suffer for the sake of it, or of love he bears thereto, be tempted to exchange it for the goods of all the world. It is a sad sight to see a man that has been suffering for righteousness, restored to his former estate, while the righteousness for which he suffered, remains under locks and irons, and is exposed to the scorn, contempt, reproach of the world, and trodden under the foot of men. ^{F41} "It is better," said Paul, "for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void." And it had been a hundred times better for that man, if he had never known the way of righteousness, than after he has known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto him.

The striving is, in persecution, for righteousness; to wit, whether it shall be set up, or pulled down. The sufferer, he is for setting up, and the persecutors are for pulling down. Thus they strive for the mastery. Now, if a man stands by his righteousness, and holds fast his good profession, then is righteousness set up; nor can it, so long, be pulled down. Hence, so long a man is said to overcome; and overcome he doth, though he be killed for his profession. But if he starts back, gives place, submits, recants, or denieth any longer to own that good thing that he professed, and exposed himself to suffering for; then he betrays his cause, his profession, his conscience, his righteousness, his soul, and all; for he has delivered up his profession to be murdered before his face: A righteous man falling down before the wicked, is as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring (~~Prov~~ Proverbs 25:26). But this, I hope, will not he do that loveth righteousness, and that suffereth for righteousness' sake. I do not say but that a man may slip here, with Peter, Origen, Hierom, Cranmer, Baynham, Ormis, ^{F42} and other good folk; but be he one of the right kind, a lover of righteousness indeed, he will return, and take revenge upon himself in a godly way, for so ungodly a fact.

7. He that suffereth not only for righteousness, but also for righteousness sake, *is not so wedded to his own notions as to slight or overlook the good*

that is in his neighbor. But righteousness he loves wherever he finds it, though it be in him that smiteth him (^{<4910>}Psalm 141:5). Yea, he will own and acknowledge it for the only thing that is of beauty and glory in the world. With the excellent in the earth is all such a man's delight. Wherefore I put a difference betwixt suffering for an opinion and suffering for righteousness; as I put a difference between suffering for righteousness and suffering for righteousness' sake.

If righteousness, if the stamp of God, if divine authority, is not found upon that thing which I hold, let men never suffer for it under the notion of righteousness. If sin, if superstition, if idolatry, if derogation from the wisdom of Christ, and the authority and perfection of his Word, be not found in, nor joined to that thing that I disown in worship, let me never open my mouth against it. I had rather fall in with, and be an associate of a righteous man that has no true grace, than with a professor that has no righteousness. It is said of the young man, though he went away from Christ, that he looked upon him and loved him (^{<4107>}Mark 10:17-22). But it is not said that ever he loved Judas. I know that the righteousness for which a good man suffereth, is not then embraced of the world, for that at such a time it is under a cloud. But yet there is righteousness also in the world, and wherever I see it, it is of a high esteem with me. David acknowledged some of his enemies to be more righteous than he acknowledged some of his servants to be (^{<4009>}2 Samuel 4:9-11; ^{<4031>}2 Samuel 3:31-35). It is a brave thing to have righteousness, as righteousness, to be the top-piece in mine affections. The reason why Christ was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows, was, because he loved righteousness, and hated iniquity more than they (^{<3009>}Hebrews 1:9). Love to righteousness flows from golden graces, and is that, and that only, that can make a man capable of suffering, in our sense, for righteousness' sake.

8. He that suffereth not only for righteousness, but also for righteousness' sake, *will take care that his sufferings be so managed with graciousness of words and actions, that it may live when he is dead; yea, and it will please him too, if righteousness flourishes, though by his loss.*

Hence it is that Paul said, he rejoiced in his suffering, ^{<5021>}Colossians 1:24; namely, because others got good thereby. And that he said,

“Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all” (☞Philippians 2:17).

But why rejoice in this? Why, because though his sufferings were to the distressing of his flesh, yet they were to the refreshing, comfort, and stability of others. This was it also that made him jostle with the false brethren among the churches; to wit,

“that the truth of the gospel might continue with them”
(☞Galatians 2:5).

When a man shall run the hazard of the ruin of what he has, and is, for righteousness, for the good and benefit of the church of God; that man, he managing himself by the rule, if he suffers for so doing, suffers not only for righteousness, but also for righteousness’ sake. “I endure all things,” said Paul, “for the elect’s sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory” (☞2 Timothy 2:10). Here was love, you will say, to persons; and I will say also, to things; to all the righteousnesses of God that are revealed in the world, that all the elect might enjoy them to their eternal comfort and glory, by Christ Jesus. For “whether we be afflicted,” says he, “it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation” (☞2 Corinthians 1:6).

The end of a man and his design, if that be to promote righteousness, he using lawful means to accomplish it, is greatly accepted of God by Christ; and it is a sign he is a lover of righteousness; and that if he suffereth for so doing, he suffereth not for well-doing, only as to matter of fact, but also for his love to the good thing done, and for its sake.

CHAPTER 7

ALL OUR SUFFERINGS SUBJECT TO GOD'S DISPOSAL.

I HAVE now done with that first head that was to be spoken to, as touching the law and testament; which we have said was to be understood of the will of God spoken of in the text: “Let them that suffer according to the will of God,” that is, according to his law and testament. Now we have showed what it is to suffer according to that; we come to another thing, namely: That by the will of God, we also understand his order and designment. For the will of God is active, to dispose of his people, as well as preceptive, to show unto us our duty. He then that suffers for righteousness’ sake, as he suffers for that which is good as to the matter of it, and as he suffers for that which is good, after that manner as becomes that truth for which he suffereth; so he that thus suffereth, suffereth by the order and designment of God. That, then, is the next thing that is to be spoken to, namely: —

God is the great orderer of the battle that is managed in the world against antichrist. Hence that battle is called,

“The battle of that great day of God Almighty”
(~~rich~~ Revelation 16:14)

It is not what enemies will, nor what they are resolved upon, but what God will, and what God appoints; that shall be done. This doctrine Christ teacheth when he saith,

“Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows” (~~om~~ Luke 12:6, 7).

He speaks in the verses before of killing, and bids them that they should not be afraid for that. “Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after

that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.” Then he leads them to the consideration of this, that the will of God governs, and disposes of his [people] to suffering; as well as declares to them for what, and how they should suffer, saying, “Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings,” etc.

Also in ~~(280)~~ Isaiah 8:9, 10 and in ~~(282)~~ Isaiah 2:12, 13, you have in sum the same thing inserted again. But we will not stay upon proof, but will proceed to demonstration hereof.

Pharaoh said he would, ay, that he would, but he could not touch so much as a thread or a rag of Israel, because the will of God was in that thing contrary to him. Saul said that he would have David, and to that end would search for him among the thousands of Judah; but David was designed for another purpose, and therefore Saul must go without him (~~(4825)~~ 1 Samuel 23:25) Rabshakeh said that he was come from Assyria to Jerusalem to make “Judah eat their own dung, and drink their own piss” (~~(282)~~ Isaiah 36:12). But God said he should not shoot an arrow there. And it came to pass as God had said (~~(283)~~ Isaiah 37:33; ~~(284)~~ 2 Kings 18; ~~(488)~~ 2 Chronicles 28). Jeremiah and Baruch’s enemies would have killed them, but they could not, for God hid them. How many times had the Jews a mind to have destroyed Jesus Christ; but they could not touch a hair of his head until his hour was come.

Those also that bound themselves in a curse, that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul, were forced to be foresworn, for the will of God was not that Paul should die as yet (~~(482)~~ Acts 23:12). This therefore should be well considered of God’s church, in the cloudy and dark day. “All his saints are in thy hand” (~~(483)~~ Deuteronomy 33:3). It is not the way of God to let the enemies of God’s church do what they will; no, the Devil himself can devour but “whom he may” (~~(488)~~ 1 Peter 5:8). And as no enemy can bring suffering upon a man when the will of God is otherwise, so no man can save himself out of their hands when God will deliver him up for his glory. It remaineth, then, that we be not much afraid of men, nor yet be foolishly bold; but that we wait upon our God in the way of righteousness, and the use of those means which his providence offereth to us for our safety; and that we conclude that our whole dispose,

as to liberty or suffering, lieth in the will of God, and that we shall, or shall not suffer, even as it pleaseth him. For,

First, God has appointed WHO shall suffer. Suffering comes not by chance, or by the will of man, but by the will and appointment of God. “Let no man,” said Paul, “be moved by these afflictions; for yourselves know that we are appointed thereunto” (~~1~~¹ Thessalonians 3:3). We are apt to forget God when affliction comes, and to think it a strange thing that those that fear God should suffer indeed (~~1~~¹ Peter 4:12). But we should not, for we suffer by the will and appointment of God. Hence they under the altar were bid to rest for a while, even until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed — mark that —

“should be killed, as they were, should be fulfilled”
(~~6~~⁶ Revelation 6:11).

Wherefore, suffering for righteousness and for righteousness’ sake, is by the will of God. God has appointed who shall suffer. That is the first.

Second, As God has appointed who shall suffer, so he has appointed WHEN they shall suffer for his truth in the world. Sufferings for such and such a man are timed, as to when he shall be tried for his faith. Hence, when Paul was afraid, at Corinth, that the heathens would fall about his ears, the Lord spake to him by night in a vision, saying,

“Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee”
(~~18~~¹⁸ Acts 18:9, 10).

His time of suffering was not yet come there. It is also said concerning Jesus Christ, that even then when “they sought to take him, no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come” (~~7~~⁷ John 7:30). The times, then, and the seasons, even for the sufferings of the people of God, are not in the hands of their enemies, but in the hand of God; as David said, “My times are in thy hand.” By the will of God, then, it is that such shall suffer at, but not until, that time. But,

Third, As God has appointed who and when, so he has appointed WHERE this, that, or the other good man shall suffer. Moses and Elias, when they appeared on the holy mount, told Jesus of the sufferings which he should

accomplish at Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the place assigned for Christ to suffer at; also, there must the whole of his sufferings be accomplished (⁴⁰⁸Luke 9:30, 31). The saints are sprinkled by the hand of God here and there, as salt is sprinkled upon meat to keep it from stinking. And as they are thus sprinkled, that they may season the earth; so, accordingly, where they must suffer is also appointed for the better confirming of the truth. Christ said, it could not be that a prophet should “perish out of Jerusalem” (⁴¹³Luke 13:33). But why could it not be that they should perish other where? Were there no enemies but in Jerusalem? Were there no good men but at Jerusalem? No, no; that was not the reason. The reason was, for that God had appointed that they should suffer there. So then, who, when, and where, is at the will of God, and they, accordingly, are ordered by that will.

Fourth, As God has appointed who, when, and where, so he has also appointed WHAT KIND of sufferings this or that saint shall undergo, at this place and at such a time. God said that he would show Paul beforehand how great things he should suffer for his sake (⁴¹⁶Acts 9:16). And it is said that Christ did signify to Peter beforehand

“by what death he should glorify God” (⁴¹⁹John 21:19).

When Herod had beheaded John the Baptist, and when the Jews had crucified Christ, it is said that they had but fulfilled what was “written of them” (⁴⁰³Mark 9:13; ⁴¹²Acts 13:29). Our sufferings, as to the nature of them, are all writ down in God’s book; and though the writing seem as unknown characters to us, yet God understands them very well. Some of them they shall kill and crucify, and some of them they shall scourge in their synagogue, “and persecute them from city to city” (⁴¹⁵Matthew 23:34). Shall God, think you, say, some of them they shall serve thus, and some of them they shall do so to; and yet not allot which some to this, and which to that, and which to the other trial?

Doubtless our sufferings fall by the will of God unto us, as they fell of old upon the people of Jerusalem. It was appointed by God who of them should die of hunger, who with sword, who should go into captivity, and who should be eaten up of beasts (⁴¹⁷Jeremiah 15:2, 3). So is the case here, namely, as God has appointed who, when, where, and the like, so he has, also, what manner of sufferings this or that good man shall undergo for his

name. Let it then be concluded, that hitherto it appears, that the sufferings of saints are ordered and disposed by the will of God. But,

Fifth, As all this is determined by the will of God, so it is also appointed FOR WHAT TRUTH this or that saint shall suffer this or that kind of affliction. Every saint has his course, his work, and his testimony, as is allotted him of God (~~(418)~~ Mark 13:34). John had a course, a testimony to fulfil for God (~~(4135)~~ Acts 13:25), and so had holy Paul (~~(5006)~~ 2 Timothy 4:6, 7), and so has every saint: *also, he that is to suffer has his truth appointed him to suffer for*. Christ had a truth peculiar to himself to bear witness to in a way of suffering (~~(4143)~~ Mark 14:61, 62). John had a truth peculiar to himself to bear witness to in a way of suffering (~~(4037)~~ Mark 6:17, 18). Stephen had also a truth, divers from them both, to which he bare a holy testimony, and for which he bravely died (~~(4055)~~ Acts 7:51-53).

If you read the book of Acts and Monuments, you may see a goodly variety as to this; and yet in all a curious harmony. Some are there said to suffer for the Godhead, some for the manhood, some for the ordinances of Christ, and some laid down their lives for the brethren. And thus far we see that he that suffers for righteousness' sake, suffers, in this sense, according to the will of God.

Sixth, As it is appointed who, when, where, what kind, and for what truth, by the will of God, this and that saint should suffer; so also it is appointed BY WHOSE HAND this or that man shall suffer for this or that truth. It was appointed that Moses and Israel should suffer by the hand of Pharaoh. And for this very purpose, said God, have I raised thee up, that is, to be a persecutor, and to reap the fruits thereof (~~(4099)~~ Exodus 9:16). It was also determined that Christ should suffer by the hand of Herod and Pontius Pilate;

“For of a truth,” said they, “against thy holy child Jesus — both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done” (~~(4005)~~ Acts 4:27).

These are great instances, from which we may gather how all these things are ordered from thence down hitherto. For if a sparrow falls not to the ground without God, she shall not be killed without God; not by he knows

not who. And if a Christian man is better than many sparrows, it follows, that God concerns himself more with, for, and about him than with, for, or about many sparrows. It follows, therefore, in right reason, that as the person who is appointed to be the sufferer, so the persons who are appointed to be the rod and sword thereby to afflict withal. Thus far, therefore, the will of God is it that ordereth and disposeth of us and of our sufferings.

Seventh, As all these pass through the hand of God, and come not to us but by his will, so HOW as also LONG is really determined as any of them all. It is not in man, but God, to set the time how long the rod of the wicked shall rest upon the lot of the righteous. Abraham must be informed of this.

“Abraham,” says God, “know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years” (^{GEN}Genesis 15:13).

So the thralldom of Israel in Babylon was not only in the general appointed, but the time prefixed, how long (^{JER}Jeremiah 25:11, 12; ^{JER}Jeremiah 29:10). The time of the beast’s reign and of the witnesses walking in sackcloth are punctually fixed, and that beyond which they cannot go (^{REV}Revelation 11, ^{REV}Revelation 12, ^{REV}Revelation 13).

I know these are generals, and respect the church in the bulk of it, and not particular persons. But, as was hinted afore, we must argue from the greater to the lesser, that is, from four hundred years to ten days, from ten days to three, and so from the church in general to each particular member, and to the time and nature of their sufferings (^{REV}Revelation 2:10; ^{HOS}Hosea 6:2; ^{ACT}Acts 23:11).

CHAPTER 8

ADVICE GROUNDED ON THE DOCTRINE ESTABLISHED

AND thus, in a word or two, I have finished the first two parts of the text, and showed you what there is in Peter's counsel and advice; and showed you also, to whom his advice is given: in which last, as you see, I have showed you both what the will of God is, and what to suffer according to it. And particularly, I have, in a few words, handled this last, to show you that our sufferings are ordered and disposed by him, that you might always, when you come into trouble for his name, not stagger nor be at a loss, but be stayed, composed, and settled in your minds, and say, "The will of the Lord be done" (~~Act~~ Acts 21:14). I will also say unto you this by the way, that the will of God doth greatly work, even to order and dispose of the spirits of Christians, in order to willingness, disposedness, readiness, and resignation of ourselves to the mind of God. For with respect to this were those words last recited spoken. Paul saw that he had a call to go up to Jerusalem, there to bear his testimony for Christ and his gospel; but those unto whom he made know his purpose entreated him, with much earnestness, not to go up thither, for that, as they believed, it would endanger his life. But he answereth, What, mean ye to weep, and to break my heart? for I am ready, not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. And when he would not be persuaded, says Luke, we ceased, saying, "The will of the Lord be done."

From what has been thus discoursed, many things will follow; as,

First. That *the rod, as well as the child, is God's; persecutors, as well as the persecuted, are his, and he has his own designs upon both.* He has raised them up, and he has ordered them for himself, and for that work that he has for them to do. Hence Habakkuk, speaking of the church's enemies, saith,

“Thou hast ordained them for judgment; and, O mighty God, thou hast established them for correction” (⁽³⁹¹²⁾Habakkuk 1:12).

And, therefore, they are in other places called the rod of God’s anger; his staff (⁽²³⁰¹⁾Isaiah 10:5), his hand; his sword (⁽³⁹⁷³⁾Psalms 17:13, 14).

Indeed, to be thus disposed of, is a sad lot; the lot is not fallen to them in pleasant places, they have not the goodly heritage; but the judgments of God are a great deep. The thing formed may not say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? To be appointed, to be ordained, to be established to be a persecutor, and a troubler of God’s church — O tremendous judgment! O amazing anger!

Three things the people of God should learn from hence.

(1.) Learn to pity and bewail the condition of the enemy; I know thou canst not alter the counsel of God; appointed they are, established they are for their work, and do it they must and shall. But yet it becomes them that see their state, and that their day is coming, to pity and bewail their condition, yea, and to pray for them too; for who knows whether it is determined that they should remain implacable to the end, as Herod; or whether they may through grace obtain repentance of their doings, with Saul. And I say again, if thy prayer should have a casting hand in the conversion of any of them, it would be sweet to thy thoughts when the scene is over.

(2.) Never grudge them their present advantages.

“Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the workers of iniquity” (⁽³⁹¹⁶⁾Proverbs 24:19).

Fret not, though they spoil thy resting-place. It is God that has bidden them do it, to try thy faith and patience thereby. Wish them no ill with what they get of thine; it is their wages for their work, and it will appear to them ere long that they have earned it dearly. Their time is to rejoice but as in a moment, in what thus is gotten by them; and then they, not repenting, are to perish for ever, like their own dung (⁽³⁹¹⁵⁾Job 20:5-7).

Poor man, thou that hast thy time to be afflicted by them, that thy golden graces may shine the more, thou art in the fire, and they blow the bellows. But wouldest thou change places with them? Wouldest thou sit upon their

place of ease? Dost thou desire to be with them (^{<1841>}Proverbs 24:1)? O rest thyself contented; in thy patience possess thy soul, and pity and bewail them in the condition in which they are.

(3.) *Bless God that thy lot did fall on the other side*, namely, to be one that should know the truth, profess it, suffer for it, and have grace to bear thee up thereunder, to God's glory, and thy eternal comfort. This honor have not all his saints; all are not counted worthy thus to suffer shame for his name. Do this, I say, though they get all, and leave thee nothing but the shirt on thy back, the skin on thy bones, or an hole in the ground to be put in (^{<5812>}Hebrews 11:23-26).

(4.) Labor to be patient under this mighty hand of God, and be not hasty to say, When will the rod be laid aside? mind thou thy duty, which is to let patience have its perfect work. And bear the indignation of the Lord, because thou hast sinned against him, until he please to awake, to arise, and to execute judgment for thee (^{<3009>}Micah 7:9).

But to pass this.

Second. Are things thus ordered? then *this should teach us that there is a cause*. The rod is not gathered without a cause; the rod is fore-determined, because the sin of God's people is foreseen, and oftentimes the nature of the sin, and the anger of the Father, is seen in the fashion of the rod. The rod of my anger, saith God. A bitter and hasty nation must be brought against Jerusalem; an enemy fierce and cruel must be brought against the land of Israel. Their sins called for such a rod, for their iniquities were grievous (^{<3009>}Habakkuk 1:6).

This should teach us with all earnestness to be sorry for our sins, and to do what we can to prevent these things, by falling upon our face in a way of prayer before God. If we would shorten such days, when they come upon us, let us be lovers of righteousness, and get more of the righteousness of faith, and of compliance with the whole will of God into our hearts. Then I say, the days shall be shortened, or we fare as well, because the more harmless and innocent we are, and suffer, the greater will our wages, our reward, and glory be, when pay-day shall come; and what if we wait a little for that?

These things are sent to better God's people, and to make them white, to refine them as silver, and to purge them as gold, and to cause that they that bear some fruit, may bring forth more: we are afflicted, that we may grow (~~484B~~ John 15:2). It is also the will of God, that they that go to heaven should go thither hardly or with difficulty. The righteous shall scarcely be saved. That is, they shall, but yet with great difficulty, that it may be the sweeter.

Now that which makes the way to heaven so strait, so narrow, so hard, is the rod, the sword, the persecutor, that lies in the way, that marks where our haunt is, that mars our path, digs a pit, and that sets a net, a snare for us in the way (~~487D~~ 1 Samuel 23:22; ~~487D~~ Job 30:12-14; ~~487E~~ Psalm 9:15; ~~487D~~ Psalm 31:4; ~~487D~~ Psalm 35:7; ~~19B9110~~ Psalm 119:110; ~~487D~~ Psalm 140:5; ~~487D~~ Psalm 142:3).

This, I say, is that which puts us to it, but it is to try, as I said, our graces, and to make heaven the sweeter to us. To come frightened and hard pursued thither, will make the safety there the more with exceeding gladness to be embraced. And I say, get thy heart yet more possessed with the power of godliness; that the love of righteousness may be yet more with thee. For this blessedness, this happiness, he shall be sure of, that suffereth for righteousness' sake.

Third. Since the rod is God's as well as the child, let us not look upon our troubles as if they came from, and were managed only by hell. It is true, a persecutor has a black mark upon him, but yet the Scriptures say that all the ways of the persecutor are God's (~~276B~~ Daniel 5:23). Wherefore as we should, so again we should not, be afraid of men: we should be afraid of them, because they will hurt us; but we should not be afraid of them, as if they were let loose to do to us, and with us, what they will. God's bridle is upon them, God's hook is in their nose: yea, and God has determined the bounds of their rage, and if he lets them drive his church into the sea of troubles, it shall be but up to the neck, and so far it may go, and not be drowned (~~276B~~ 2 Kings 19:28; ~~276B~~ Isaiah 37:29; ~~276B~~ Isaiah 8:7, 8). I say the Lord has hold of them, and orders them; nor do they at any time come out against his people but by his license and commission how far to go, and where to stop.

And now for two or three objections: —

Objection. 1. But may we not fly in a time of persecution? Your pressing upon us, that persecution is ordered and managed by God, makes us afraid to fly.

Answer.. First, having regard to what was said afore about a call to suffer; thou mayest do in this even as it is in thy heart. If it is in thy heart to fly, fly: if it be in thy heart to stand, stand. Any thing but a denial of the truth. He that flies, has warrant to do so; he that stands, has warrant to do so. Yea, the same man may both fly and stand, as the call and working of God with his heart may be. Moses fled (^{<0025>}Exodus 2:15), Moses stood (^{<812>}Hebrews 11:27). David fled (^{<0021>}1 Samuel 19:12), David stood (^{<0028>}1 Samuel 24:8). Jeremiah fled (^{<0027>}Jeremiah 37:11, 12), Jeremiah stood (^{<0027>}Jeremiah 38:17). Christ withdrew himself (^{<0021>}Luke 9:10), Christ stood (^{<0021>}John 18:1-8). Paul fled (^{<0022>}2 Corinthians 11:33), Paul stood (^{<0022>}Acts 20:22, 23).

There are therefore few rules in this case. The man himself is best able to judge concerning his present strength, and what weight this or that argument has upon his heart to stand or fly. I should be loath to impose upon any man in these things; only, if thou fliest, take two or three cautions with thee: —

(1.) Do not fly out of a slavish fear, but rather because flying is an ordinance of God, opening a door for the escape of some, which door is opened by God's providence, and the escape countenanced by God's Word (^{<0022>}Matthew 10:23).

(2.) When thou art fled, do as much good as thou canst in all quarters where thou comest, for therefore the door was opened to thee, and thou bid to make thy escape (^{<0022>}Acts 8:1-5).

(3.) Do not think thyself secure when thou art fled; it was providence that opened the door, and the Word that did bid thee escape: but whither, and wherefore, that thou knowest not yet. Uriah the prophet fled into Egypt, because there dwelt men that were to take him, that he might be brought again to Jerusalem to die there (^{<0027>}Jeremiah 26:21).

(4.) Shouldest thou fly from where thou art, and be taken in another place; the most that can be made of it — thy taking the opportunity to fly, as was propounded at first — can be but this, thou wast willing to

commit thyself to God in the way of his providence, as other good men have done, and thy being now apprehended has made thy call clear to suffer here or there, the which before thou wert in the dark about.

(5.) If, therefore, when thou hast fled, thou art taken, be not offended at God or man: not at God, for thou art his servant, thy life and thy all are his; not at man, for he is but God's rod, and is ordained, in this, to do thee good. Hast thou escaped? Laugh. Art thou taken? Laugh. I mean, be pleased which way soever things shall go, for that the scales are still in God's hand.

(6.) But fly not, in flying, from religion; fly not, in flying, for the sake of a trade; fly not, in flying, that thou mayest have ease for the flesh: this is wicked, and will yield neither peace nor profit to thy soul; neither now, nor at death, nor at the day of judgment.

Objection. 2. But if I fly, some will blame me: what must I do now?

Answer. And so many others if thou standest; fly not, therefore, as was said afore, out of a slavish fear; stand not, of a bravado. Do what thou dost in the fear of God, guiding thyself by his Word and providence; and as for this or that man's judgment, refer thy case to the judgment of God.

Objection. 3. But if I be taken and suffer, my cause is like to be clothed with scandals, slanders, reproaches, and all manner of false, and evil speakings; what must I do?

Answer. Saul charged David with rebellion (^{<0218>}1 Samuel 22:8, 13). Amos was charged with conspiring against the king (^{<3170>}Amos 7:10). Daniel was charged with despising the king; and so also were the three children (^{<2183>}Daniel 6:13; (^{<2182>}Daniel 3:12). Jesus Christ himself was accused of perverting the nation, of forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and of saying that himself was Christ a king (^{<0231>}Luke 23:2). These things therefore have been. But, Canst thou, after a due examination of thyself, say that as to these things thou art innocent and clear? I say, will thy conscience justify thee here? Hast thou made it thy business to give unto God the things that are God's, and unto Caesar the things that are his, according as God has commanded? If so, matter not what men shall say, nor with what lies and

reproaches they slander thee, but for these things count thyself happy. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you — and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely (lying) for my sake (saith Christ). Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you (~~408~~ Matthew 5:11, 12). Comfort thyself therefore in the innocency of thy soul, and say, I am counted a rebel, and yet am loyal; I am counted a deceiver, and yet am true (~~408~~ 1 Samuel 24:8-12, ~~408~~ 2 Corinthians 6:8). Also refer thy cause to the day of judgment; for if thou canst rejoice at the thoughts that thou shalt be cleared of all slanders and evil speakings then, that will bear up thy heart as to what thou mayest suffer now. The answer of a good conscience will carry a man through hell to heaven. Count these slanders part of thy sufferings, and those for which God will give thee a reward, because thou art innocent, and for that they are laid upon thee for thy profession's sake. But if thou be guilty, look to thyself; I am no comforter of such.

CHAPTER 9

GOOD EFFECT OF OBSERVING THE FOREGOING ADVICE.

I COME now to speak to the third and last part of the text, namely, of the good effect that will certainly follow to those that, after a due manner, shall take the advice afore given. “Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”

Two things from the last clause of the text lie yet before us. And they are they by which will be shown what good effect will follow to those that suffer according to the will of God, and that commit their souls to his keeping.

I. Such will find him to *themselves* a CREATOR.

II. They will find him a *faithful* CREATOR. “Let them commit the keeping of their souls to him, as unto a faithful Creator.”

In this phrase, a *Faithful Creator*, behold the wisdom of the Holy Ghost, how fitly and to the purpose he speaketh.

King is a great title, and God is sometimes called a King; but he is not set forth by this title here, but by the title of a Creator; for it is not always in the power of a king to succor and relieve his subjects, that are suffering for his crown and dignity.

Father is a sweet title — a title that carrieth in it an intimation of a great deal of bowels and compassion, and God is often set forth also by this title in the holy Scriptures. But so he is not here, but rather as a CREATOR. For a father, a compassionate father, cannot always help, succor, or relieve his children, though he knows they are under affliction! Oh! but a Creator can. Wherefore, I say, he is set forth here under the title of Creator.

First, A CREATOR! *nothing can die under a Creator's hands.* A Creator can sustain all. A Creator can, as a Creator, do what he pleases.

“The Lord, the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary” (~~2418~~ Isaiah 40:28).

The cause of God, for which his people suffer, had been dead and buried a thousand years ago, had it not been in the hand of a Creator. The people that have stood by his cause had been out of both as to persons, name, and remembrance, had they not been in the hand of a Creator. Who could have hoped, when Israel was going in, even into the mouth of the Red Sea, that ever his cause, or that people, should have revived again. A huge host of the Egyptians were behind them, and nothing but death before and on every hand of them; but they lived, they flourished, they outlived their enemies, for they were in the hand of a Creator.

Who could have hoped that Israel should have returned again from the land, from the hand, and from under the tyranny of the king of Babylon? They could not deliver themselves from going thither, they could not preserve themselves from being diminished when they came there, their power was gone, they were in captivity, their distance from home was far, their enemies possessed their land, their city of defense was ruined, and their houses burned down to the ground; and yet they came home again: there is nothing impossible to a Creator.

Who could have thought that the three children could have lived in a fiery furnace? that Daniel could have been safe among the lions? that Jonah could have come home to his country, when he was in the whale's belly? or that our Lord should have risen again from the dead? But what is impossible to a Creator?

This, therefore, is a rare consideration for those to let their hearts be acquainted with that suffer according to the will of God, and that have committed the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing. They have a Creator to maintain and uphold their cause, a Creator to oppose its opposers. And hence it is said, all that burden themselves with Jerusalem

“shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it” (~~3217~~ Zechariah 12:3).

Second, A CREATOR! *A Creator can not only support a dying cause, but also fainting spirits.* For as he fainteth not, nor is weary, so “he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength” (~~2819~~ Isaiah 40:29). He is the God of the spirits of all flesh, and has the life of the spirit of his people in his own hand. Spirits have their being from him; he is the Father of spirits. *Spirits are made strong by him, nor can any crush that spirit that God the Creator will uphold.*

Is it not a thing amazing to see one poor inconsiderable man, in a spirit of faith and patience, overcome all the threatenings, cruelties, afflictions, and sorrows, that a whole world can lay upon him? None can quail ^{F43} him, none can crush him, none can bend down his spirit. None can make him to forsake what he has received of God — a commandment to hold fast. His holy, harmless, and profitable notions, because they are spiced with grace, yield to him more comfort, joy, and peace, and do kindle in his soul so goodly a fire of love to, and zeal for God, that all the waters of the world shall never be able to quench.

Ay, say some, that is because his is headstrong, obstinate, and one that will hear no reason. No, say I, but it is because his spirit is in the hand, under the conduct and preservation, of a Creator. A Creator can make spirits, uphold spirits, and make one spirit stronger to stand, than are all the spirits of the world to cast down. To stand, I say, in a way of patient enduring in well-doing, against all that hell can do to suppress.

Third, A CREATOR! *A Creator can bring down the spirits that oppose, and make them weak and unstable as water.* The Lord, the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, nor is weary; there is no searching of his understanding. He gives power to the faint, and to those that have no might, he increaseth strength; now mark, even the young shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall. A Creator can dash the spirits of the enemies with fear. God can put them in fear, and make them know that they are men and not God, and that their horses are flesh and not spirit. When the enemy came to take Jesus Christ, their spirits fainted, their hearts died in them; they went backwards, and fell to the ground. They had hard work to strengthen their spirits to a sufficiency of boldness and courage, though they brought halberts, and staves, and swords, and weapons with them, to take a naked ^{F44} man (~~4888~~ John 18:3-7).

And although this is that which is not so visible to the world as some other things are, yet *I believe that God treads down the spirits of men in a day when they afflict his people, oftener than we are aware of, or than they are willing to confess.* How was the hostile spirit of Esau trod down of God, when he came out to meet his poor naked brother, with no less than four hundred armed men? He fainted before his brother, and instead of killing, kissed him (^{<02304>}Genesis 33:4). How was the bloody spirit of Saul trod down, when David met him at the mouth of the cave, and also at the hill Hachilah (^{<02026>}1 Samuel 24:26)? God is a Creator, and as a Creator, is a spirit maker, a spirit reviver, a spirit destroyer; he can destroy body and soul in hell (^{<02115>}Luke 12:5).

Fourth, A CREATOR! *As a Creator, he is over all arts, inventions, and crafts of men that are set on work to destroy God's people,* whether they be soldiers, excellent orators, or any other whatsoever; we will single out one — the smith, that roaring fellow, who with his coals and his bellows makes a continual noise.

“I have created the smith,” said God, “that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy” (^{<02516>}Isaiah 54:16).

The smith, what is he? I answer, an idol maker, a promoter of false worship, and one that makes instruments of cruelty, therewith to help to suppress the true [worship] (^{<02517>}Isaiah 41:7; ^{<02518>}Isaiah 44:12; ^{<02519>}Isaiah 46:6).

“I have created the smith,” saith God, “that bloweth the coals in the fire.” The idol inventor, the idol maker, the supporter of idol worship, he is my creature, saith God, to teach that he has power to reach him, and to command his sword to approach him at his pleasure, notwithstanding his roaring with his bellows, and his coals in the fire. So then, he cannot do what he will in the fire, nor with his idol when he has made it; the instrument, also that he makes for the defense of his idol, and for the suppressing of God's true worship, shall not do the thing for the which it is designed by him. And so the very next verse saith: “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord” (^{<02517>}Isaiah 54:17). And the text saith moreover, I have created the waster to destroy.

The waster, what is that? Why, the smith makes an idol, and God has made the rust; the smith makes a sword, and God has made the rust. The rust eats them up, the moth shall eat them up, the fire shall devour them. “The wicked,” saith the Psalmist, “have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation. Their sword shall enter into their own heart, and their bows shall be broken” (^{<1571>} Psalm 37:14, 15).

All this can God do, because he is a Creator, and none but God can do it. Wherefore by this peculiar title of Creator, the apostle prepareth support for suffering saints, and also shows what a good conclusion is like to be made with them that suffer for righteousness’ sake, according to his will; and that commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Fifth, A CREATOR! *A Creator can make such provision for a suffering people, in all respects, as shall answer all their wants.* Have they lost their peace with the world? Have they no more peace with this world? Why, a Creator can make, create peace, can create peace, peace; peace with God, and peace with his conscience; and that is better than all the peace that can be found elsewhere in the world (^{<2579>} Isaiah 57:19). Have they lost a good frame of heart? Do they want a right frame of spirit? Why, though this is to be had no where in the world, yet a Creator can help them to it (^{<1511>} Psalm 51:10). Have they lost their spiritual defense? Do they lie too open to their spiritual foes? Why, this a Creator can help.

“And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defense.” (^{<2345>} Isaiah 4:5)

This is the work of the Spirit; for though the Spirit itself be uncreated, yet all the holy works of it in the heart are verily works of creation. Our new man is a creation; our graces are a creation; our joys and comforts are a creation ^{F45} (^{<4057>} 2 Corinthians 5:17, 18; ^{<4024>} Ephesians 4:24; ^{<3577>} Isaiah 65:17-19). Now a creation none can destroy but a Creator; wherefore here is comfort. But again, God hath created us in Christ Jesus; that is another thing. The sun is created in the heavens; the stars are created in the heavens; the moon is created in the heavens. Who can reach them, touch

them, destroy them, but the Creator? Why, this is the case of the saint; because he has to do with a Creator, he is fastened to Christ; yea, is in him by an act of creation (^{281B}Ephesians 2:10), so that unless Christ and the creation of the Holy Ghost can be destroyed, he is safe that is suffering according to the will of God, and that hath committed the keeping of his soul to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

And this I would have you consider moreover; the man that suffereth according to the will of God, committeth not such a soul to this Creator as dwells in carnal men — a naked soul, a graceless soul, a soul that has nothing in it but sin; but he commits a converted soul, a regenerate soul, a soul adorned, beautified, and sanctified, with the jewels, and bracelets, earrings, and perfumes of the blessed Spirit of grace.

And I say again, this is the work of a Creator, and a Creator can maintain it in its gallantry, and he will do so, but he will put forth acts of creating power for it every day.

Sixth, A CREATOR! He that can create can turn and alter any thing, to what himself would have it. He that made

“the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow
of death into the morning” (^{308B}Amos 5:8),

he can

“make the wilderness a pool of water,
and the dry land springs of water” (^{298B}Isaiah 41:18).

Our most afflicted and desolate conditions, he can make as a little haven unto us; he can make us sing in the wilderness, and can give us our vineyards from thence (^{280B}Hosea 2:14, 15). He can make Paul sing in the stocks, and good Rowland Taylor dance as he goeth to the burning stake. Jails, and mocks, and scourgings, and flouts and imprisonments, and hunger, and nakedness, and peril, and sword, and dens, and caves, and rocks, and mountains, God can so sweeten with the honey of his Word, and make so famous for situation by the glory of his presence, and so rich and fruitful by the communications of the Holy Ghost, and so easy by the spreading of his feathers over us, that we shall not be able to say, that in all the world a more commodious place, or comfortable condition, can be

found. Some have know this, and have been rather ready to covet to be here, than to shun and fly from it, as a most unsavory condition. ^{F46}

All these things, I say, God doth as a Creator. He hath created antipathies, and he can make antipathies close, and have favor one for another. The lion and the calf, the wolf and the lamb, the little boy and the cockatrice's den he can reconcile, and make to be at agreement. So, sufferings and the saint; the prison and the saint; losses, crosses, and afflictions, and the saint: he can make to lie down sweetly together.

Seventh, A CREATOR! A Creator can make up all that thou hast or shalt lose for the sake of thy profession by the hands of the children of men, be they friends, relations, a world, life, or what you can conceive of.

1. Hast thou lost thy friend for the sake of thy profession? Is the whole world set against thee for thy love to God, to Christ, his cause, and righteousness? Why, a Creator can make up all. Here, therefore, is the advantage that he hath that suffereth for righteousness' sake. Jonathan, the very son of bloody Saul, when David had lost the help of all his own relations, he must fall in with him, stick to him, and love him as he loved his own soul (¹⁸⁸¹1 Samuel 18:1-3). Obadiah, Ahab's steward, when the saints were driven even under ground by the rage of Jezebel the queen, he is appointed of God to feed them in caves and holes of the earth (¹⁸⁸³1 Kings 18:13). Yea, the very raven complied with the will of a Creator to bring the prophet bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh at night (17:6). When Jeremiah the prophet was rejected of all, yea, the church that then was, could not help him; he was cast into the dungeon, and sunk to a great depth there in the mire. God the Creator, who ruleth the spirits of all men, stirred up the heart of Ebed-melech the Ethiopian both to petition for his liberty, and to put him out of the dungeon by the help of thirty men (²⁸⁸⁰Jeremiah 38:7-13). These now, as Christ says, were both fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and as a loving wife or child (⁴¹⁰²Matthew 19:29).

2. Hast thou, for the sake of thy faith and profession thereof, lost thy part in the world? Why, a Creator can make thee houses as he did for the midwives of Egypt (⁴⁸¹³Exodus 1:20, 21), and can build thee a sure house as he did for David his servant, who ventured all for the love that they had to the fear of God and his way (⁴¹⁰⁰2 Samuel 7). David was thrust out of

Saul's house, and driven from his own, and God opened the heart of Achish the king of Gath to receive him, and to give him Ziklag. David, when under the tyranny of Saul, knew not what to do with his father and his mother, who were persecuted for his sake, but a Creator inclined the heart of the king of Moab to receive them to house and harbor (^{Q275}1 Samuel 27:5; ^{Q275}1 Samuel 22:3, 4).

3. Is thy life at stake — is that like to go for thy profession, for thy harmless profession of the gospel? Why, God the Creator is Lord of life, and to God the Lord belong the issues from death. So then, he can, if he will, hold thy breath in thy nostrils, in spite of all the world; or if he shall suffer them to take away this for his glory, he can give thee another ten times as good for thy comfort. “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal” (^{Q275}John 12:25).

4. Is thy body to be disfigured, dismembered, starved, hanged, or burned for the faith and profession of the gospel? Why, a Creator can either prevent it, or, suffering it, can restore it the very same to thee again, with great and manifold advantage. He that made thee to be now what thou art, can make thee to be what thou never yet wast. It doth not yet appear what we shall be, further than only by general words (^{Q275}1 John 3:2; ^{Q275}Philippians 3:21).

Eight, A CREATOR! Peter sets him before us here as a Creator, because he would have us *live upon him* as such; as well as upon his grace, love, and mercy. In Job's day this was bewailed, that none or but a few said,

“Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night?”
(^{Q275}Job 35:10).

CREATOR, as was hinted before, is one of God's peculiar titles. It is not given to him above five or six times in all the Book of God; and usually, when given him, it is either to show his greatness, or else to convince us that of duty we ought to depend upon him; and not to faint, if he be on our side, for or under any adversity, according as we are bidden in the text: “Let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful creator.” Shall God display his glory before us under the character and title of a Creator, and

shall we yet fear man? Shall he do this to us when we are under a suffering condition, and that on purpose that we might commit our souls to him in well-doing, and be quiet, and shall we take no notice of this?

“Who art thou, that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die, and of the son of man which shall be made as grass; and forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth?” etc. (<301D Isaiah 51:12, 13).

Had God concealed himself, as to his being a Creator, yet since he presenteth himself unto us by his Word under so many excellent titles as are given to no other God besides, methinks it should make us bold in our God; but when, for our relief, he shall add to all other that he verily is a Creator, this should make us rest in hope indeed.

Every nation will have confidence for their own gods, though but gods that are made with hands — though but the work of the smith and carpenter; and shall not we trust in the name of the Lord our God, who is not only a God, but a Creator and former of all things (<301D Micah 4:5), consequently, the only living and true God, and one that alone can sustain us? We therefore are to be greatly blamed if we overlook the ground, such ground of support and comfort as presenteth itself unto us under the title of a Creator; but then most of all, if, when we have heard, believed, and known that our God is such, we shall yet be afraid of a man that shall die, and forget the Lord our maker. We, I say, have heard, seen, known, and believed, that our God is the Creator. The heavens declare his glory, and the firmament showeth his handy-work, and thus he has showed unto us “his eternal power and Godhead” (<301D Romans 1:20).

Behold, then, thou fearful worm, Jacob, the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars; behold the earth, the sea, the air, the fire, and vapors. Behold, all living things, from leviathan and behemoth to the least that creepeth in the earth and waters. Yea, behold thyself, thy soul, thy body, thy fashion, thy building, and consider; thy God hath made even all these things, and hath given to thee this being; yea, and all this also he made of that which doth not appear (<301D Hebrews 11:1-3). This is that which thou art called to the consideration of by Peter, in the text; when he letteth fall from his apostolical meditation that thy God is the Creator, and commandeth that

thou, in thy suffering for him according to his will, shouldest commit the keeping of thy soul to him as unto a faithful Creator.

He that has the art thus to do, and that can do it in his straits, shall never be trodden down. His God, his faith; his faith, his God, are able to make him stand. For such a man will thus conclude, that since the Creator of all is with him, what but creatures are there to be against him? So, then, what is the axe, that it should boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or the saw, that it should magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against him that lifteth it up; or as if the staff should lift up itself as if it were not wood (^{<2916>} Isaiah 10:15). Read also ^{<2912>} Isaiah 40:12-31, and then speak, if God as Creator is not a sure confidence to all the ends of the earth that trust in, and wait upon him. As Creator, he hath formed and upholdeth all things; yea, his hands have formed the crooked serpent, wherefore he also is at his bay (^{<2913>} Job 26:13). And thou hast made the dragon in the sea; and therefore it follows that he can cut and wound him (^{<2919>} Isaiah 51:9), and give him for meat to the fowls, and to the beasts inheriting the wilderness (^{<2914>} Psalm 74:13, 14), if he will seek to swallow up and destroy the church and people of God (^{<2918>} Ezekiel 29:3, 4).

Ninth, A Creator is God! the God unto whom they that suffer according to his will are to commit the keeping of their souls — the Creator. And doth he take charge of them as a Creator? Then this should teach us *to be far off from being dismayed, as the heathens are, at his tokens*; for our God, the Lord, is the true God, the living God, the King of eternity (^{<2910>} Jeremiah 10:1, 2, 10). We should tremblingly glory and rejoice when we see him in the world, though upon those that are the most terrible of his dispensations. God the Creator will sometimes mount himself and ride through the earth in such majesty and glory, that he will make all to stand in the tent doors to behold him. O how he rode in his chariots of salvation when he went to save his people out of the land of Egypt! How he shook the nations! Then “his glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand: and there was the hiding of his power. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood, and measured the earth: he beheld, and drove asunder the nations; and the

everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting.” Then said the prophet,

“I saw the tents of Cushan in affliction: and the curtains of the land of Midian did tremble. Was the Lord displeased against the rivers? was thine anger against the rivers? was thy wrath against the sea, that thou didst ride upon thine horses and thy chariots of salvation?” (~~388~~ Habakkuk 3:3-8).

So David: “The earth shook and trembled,” said he; “the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. There went up a smoke out of his nostrils, and fire out of his mouth devoured: coals were kindled by it. He bowed the heavens also, and came down: and darkness was under his feet. And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly: yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. At the brightness that was before him his thick clouds passed, hail stones and coals of fire. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hail stones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils” (~~389~~ Psalm 18:7-15).

These are glorious things, though shaking dispensations. God is worthy to be seen in his dispensations as well as in his Word, though the nations tremble at his presence.

“Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down,” saith the prophet, “that the mountains might flow down at thy presence!” (~~390~~ Isaiah 64:1).

We know God, and he is our God, our own God; of whom or of what should we be afraid? (Psalm 46). When God roars out of Zion, and utters his voice from Jerusalem, when the heavens and the earth do shake, the Lord shall be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel (~~391~~ Joel 3:16).

Every man stayeth up, or letteth his spirit fail, according to what he knoweth concerning the nature of a thing. He that knows the sea, knows

the waves will toss themselves: he that knows a lion, will not much wonder to see his paw, or to hear the voice of his roaring. And shall we that know our God be stricken with a panic fear, when he cometh out of his holy place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity? We should stand like those that are next to angels, and tell the blind world who it is that is thus mounted upon his steed, and that hath the clouds for the dust of his feet, and that thus rideth upon the wings of the wind: we should say unto them, “This God is our God for ever and ever, and he shall be our guide even unto death.”

Our God! the Creator! He can turn men to destruction, and say, Return, ye children of men. When our God shows himself, it is worth the while to see the sight, though it costs us all that we have to behold it. Some men will bless and admire every rascally juggler that can but make again that which they only seem to mar, or do something that seems to outgo reason; yea, though they make thunderings and noise in the place where they are, as though the devil himself were there. Shall saints, then, like slaves, be afraid of their God, the Creator; of their own God, when he rendeth the heavens, and comes down? When God comes into the world to do great things, he must come like himself — like him that is a Creator: *wherefore the heavens and the earth must move at his presence, to signify that they acknowledge him as such, and pay him that homage that is due to him as their God and great Creator.*

We that are Christians have been trained up by his Son in his school this many a day, and have been told what a God our Father is, what an arm he has, and with what a voice he can thunder; how he can deck himself with majesty and excellency, and array himself with beauty and glory; how he can cast abroad the rage of his wrath, and behold every one that is proud, and abase him (^{384B} Job 40:9-11). Have we not talked of what he did at the Red Sea, and in the land of Ham many years ago, and have we forgot him now? Have we not vaunted and boasted of our God both in church, pulpit, and books; and spake to the praise of them that, instead of stones, attempted to drive antichrist out of the world with their lives and their blood; and are we afraid of our God? He was God, a Creator, then; and is he not God now? and will he not be as good to us as to them that have gone before us? or would we limit him to appear in such ways as only smile upon our flesh; and have him stay, and not show himself in his

heart-shaking dispensations until we are dead and gone? What if we must go now to heaven, and what if he is thus come down to fetch us to himself? If we have been wise as serpents, and innocent as doves — if we can say, Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor against Caesar, have we offended anything at all, of what should we be afraid? *Let heaven and earth come together, I dare say they will not hurt us.*

Our Lord Jesus, when dilating upon some of the great and necessary works of our Creator, puts check beforehand to all uncomely fears; to such fears as become not the faith and profession of a Christian. “Brother,” saith he, “shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name’s sake.” What follows? (verse 28), “Fear them not”; and again, in verse 31, “Fear ye not” (⁴¹⁰Matthew 10:21, 22).

So again (⁴¹¹Matthew 24): “Nation shall rise against nation — there shall be famines, pestilence’s, and earthquakes, etc. They shall deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you. — Many shall be offended, and shall betray one another. — And many false prophets shall arise, and deceive many.” And yet for all this we are bid not to be afraid, *for all these things, with all other are ordered, limited, enlarged and straitened, bounded and butted by the will, and hand, and power of that God unto whom Peter bids us commit the keeping of our souls, as unto a faithful Creator* (verse 7-11; ⁴¹²Mark 13:5-9). To wait for God in the way of his judgments doth well become a Christian.

To believe he loves us when he shows himself terrible to us, is also very much becoming of us. Wherefore has he given us grace? Is it that we should live by sense? Wherefore has he sometimes visited us? Is it that our hearts might be estranged from him, and that we still should love the world? And I say again, wherefore has he so plainly told us of his greatness, and of what he can do? Is it not *that we might be still when the world is disturbed*; and that we might hope for good things to come out of such providence’s that, to sense, look as if themselves would eat up and devour all?

Let us wait upon God, walk with God, believe in God, and commit ourselves, our soul, our body, to God, to be kept. Yea, let us be content to be at the disposal of God, and rejoice to see him act according to all his wondrous works. For this is a posture highly becoming them that say of God he is their Father, and that have committed the keeping of their souls to him as unto a Creator.

CHAPTER 10

ALL OUR FEARS DISPELLED BY GOD'S FAITHFULNESS.

A COMELY Thing It Is For The Soul That Feareth God, To Love And Reverence him in all his appearances. We should be like the spaniel dog, even lie at the foot of our God, as he at the foot of his master; yea, and should be glad, could we but see his face, though he treads us down with his feet.

Ay, says one son, so I could, if I thought this high God would regard me, and take notice of my laying of my soul at his foot, while I suffer for his Word and truth in the world. Why, do but see now how the Holy Ghost, for our help, doth hedge up that way in at which unbelief would come, that there might, as to this, be no room left for doubting. For as he calleth the God unto whom we are bid to commit the keeping of our soul, a Creator, so he saith that he is A CREATOR THAT IS FAITHFUL. “Let them commit the keeping of their souls unto him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator” — a Creator that will concern himself with the soul committed to his trust, and that will be faithful to it, according to all that he has promised.

This, therefore, of God's faithfulness being added to his might and power, is in itself a ground of great support to those that have in a way of well-doing committed themselves, their souls, to him to keep. A Creator; what is it that a Creator cannot do? A faithful Creator; what is it that one that is faithful will not do, that is, when he is engaged? And now he is engaged, because thou hast committed thy soul to him to keep, and because he has bid thee do so. Let them commit the keeping of their soul to him, as unto a faithful Creator. I have sometimes seen an unfaithful man engaged, when a thing has been committed to him to keep. A man that is a thief, a cheater, a defrauder, will yet be faithful to him that will commit a charge to him to keep. And the reason is, because, though he can steal, cheat, defraud, without being taken notice of; yet he must be seen and known, if he be

false in that which is committed to him to keep. I know the comparison is odious, yet such have been made by a holier mouth than mine, and as the case may be, they may be aptest of all to illustrate that which a man is about to explain. Hark what the unjust judge saith, says the Lord Jesus Christ (~~☞~~ Luke 18).

To commit thy soul to God is to trust him with it; to commit thy soul to God is to engage him to look to it. And if he should not be faithful now, he will not be so in any case. For himself has bidden thee do it; he has also promised to keep it, as has been already showed in the former part of this discourse. Besides, he is here said to be faithful — to be a faithful Creator. He challenges this of faithfulness to himself alone:

“Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar”

(~~☞~~ Romans 3:4).

This, therefore, doth still help to encourage them that would be faithful to him, to commit the keeping of our soul to him. A faithful man will encourage one much; how much more should the faithfulness of God encourage us?

Here, therefore, we have a closing word indeed; a word to wrap up the text with that is as full of good as the sun is of light. What can be fitter spoken? What can be added? What now is wanting to the help of him that has committed his soul to God to keep it while he is suffering according to his will in the world? He is engaged, as I said, by that act; thou hast committed thy soul to him to keep; he is engaged by his own Word; he has bidden thee commit thy soul to him to keep. He is engaged by his declaring of himself to be faithful; for that has encouraged thee to commit thy soul to him to keep. Besides, he has promised to do it; he has sworn to do it.

“For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, (as thou must do,) he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the great: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to hew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have

a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High-priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (^{36B7} Hebrews 6:13-20).

Thus you see what ground we have who suffer according to the will of God, and that have committed the keeping of our souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. Here, therefore, I might make a stop and conclude as to this advice; but now we are in, we will proceed a little further, and will fall upon three or four more particulars.

First, then, He will be faithful to us in this: He will keep us from those allurements of the world that a suffering saint is subject to. They that suffer have other kinds of temptations upon this account than other Christians have. The liberty of others, while they are in bonds, is a temptation to them. The peace of others, while they are in trouble, is a temptation to them. The enjoyments of others, while their houses are empty and their goods taken away, while their own water is sold unto them, and while they are buying their own wood, is a great temptation to them (^{36B8} Lamentations 5:4). And this temptation, were it not that we have to do with a God that is faithful, would assuredly be a great snare unto them. But “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted,” as to this, “above that ye are able” (^{36B3} 1 Corinthians 10:13).

Nay, a suffering man has not only these things lying before him as a temptation, but perhaps the wife of the bosom lies at him, saying, O do not cast thyself away; if thou takest this course, what shall I do? Thou has said thou lovest me; now make it manifest by granting this my small request. Do not still remain in thine integrity. Next to this come the children, all which are like to come to poverty, to beggary, to be undone for want of wherewithal to feed, and clothe, and provide for them for time to come. Now also come kindred, and relations, and acquaintance; some chide, some cry, some argue, some threaten, some promise, some flatter, and some do all, to befool him for so unadvised an act as to cast away himself, and to bring his wife and children to beggary for such a thing as religion. These are sore temptations. ^{F47}

Next to those come the terrors of men, the gripes of the laws, the shadow of death, and no man can tell what. All which are sufficient to pull a man from the gates of life, were he there, if the faithful Creator stands not to him. “But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” — “But God is faithful.” It saith not, that thou art: but “God is faithful” — to his Son, to whom he has given thee; to his promise, the which he has given thee; to his cause, to which he has called thee; and to thy soul, the which thou hast committed to his trust, and the which he also has taken the charge of, as he is a faithful Creator.

“And will not suffer thee to be tempted.” How, not tempted? No; not above what thou art able. He that tempts thee doth not at all consider thy strength, so as to stop when he sees thou art weak; he would have thee overthrown, for therefore it is that he tempteth thee. But God will not suffer that, because he is faithful, and because thou hast committed the keeping of thy soul unto him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

“Not tempted above that ye are able.” He saith not, above that ye are well able. Indeed, thy strength shall be proportioned to the temptation, but thou mayest have none over and above to spare; thou shalt not have a bigger load than God will give thee shoulders to bear. Christ did bear his burden, but it made him cry out, and sweat as it were great drops of blood, to carry it. Bear thy burden thou shalt, and not be destroyed by it; but perhaps thou mayest sometimes roar under it by reason of the disquietness of thy heart. “But he will with the temptation make a way of escape.” “With the temptation,” not without it; thou must be tempted, and must escape too. “With the temptation.” As sure as Satan is licensed, so sure he is limited; and when Satan has ended all the temptation, he shall depart from thee (^{Q11E} Luke 4:13). “He will with the temptation” — by such a managing of it as shall beak its own neck. God can admit Satan to tempt, and make the Christian wise to manage the temptation for his own escape.

“Make a way.” It may be thou seest no way of escape. It may be there is no way — no way in all the world, to escape. Well; but God can make a way. When Israel was hemmed in at the Red Sea, there was as then no way — no way in all the world, to escape. O! but God made a way, and a pathway too, and that through the mighty waters (^{Q11E} Exodus 15:8, 16;

~~Psalm~~ Psalm 106:9; ~~Psalm~~ Psalm 78:13). He will make a way with the temptation, or “will with the temptation make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” These are the words of the Holy Ghost, who is God; and they are spoken, yea, committed to record for this very purpose, that those that are under affliction might commit the keeping of their soul to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator. That is the first.

Second, He will also be faithful to us as to this: He will give us a competent measure of wisdom, that in our suffering condition we may in all things be made able to manage our state with discretion. We are perhaps weak of natural abilities, parts of utterance, or the like; and our adversaries are learned, eloquent, and ripe of parts. Thou hast the disadvantage on thy side, and they have what the world can afford to encourage them; thou art weak of spirit, they are bold and strong. The great and the mighty are with thy enemies, but on thy side there is no comforter (~~2000~~ Ecclesiastes 4:1).

Why now here is, as to this, and to what else can it be objected, the faithfulness of God engaged. First, in a general promise; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee (~~8000~~ Hebrews 13:5, 6). Secondly, we have an invitation to come to this faithful God for wisdom to assist and help. For after he had said,

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations — and let patience have her perfect work”; he adds, “If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him” (~~5000~~ James 1:2-5).

Here is more than an invitation, here is a promise — it shall be given him; and all to show us what a faithful Creator we have committed our souls unto. Doth any lack wisdom to know how to carry it in a time of trial: let them ask it of God — of the God that is wisdom itself; let him ask it of God, the liberal giver, who giveth to all men all that they have, and upbraideth not for their unworthiness.

Nor doth the Holy Ghost stop here, but enlarges himself in a more particular way to those that suffer according to the text, saying,

“But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak” (⁴⁰⁰Matthew 10:19).

I have often been amazed in my mind at this text, for how could Jesus Christ have said such a word if he had not been able to perform it? This text, therefore, declares him to be God. It is also a proof of faithfulness to those that suffer for him.

For it is as if he should say, Try me and trust me; if I stand not by you in a day of distress, never believe me more; — you, suffering according to the will of God, and committing your souls to him in well-doing; “I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist,” for so he has it in ⁴²¹⁵Luke 21:15. Here is no consideration of what capacity the people might be of, that were to be persecuted; but what matters what they are? if fools, it is no matter; if wise, it helpeth nothing. A mouth and wisdom is to be given; that of itself shall do. And this is according to that other scripture mentioned afore, where it saith,

“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn” (²⁵¹⁷Isaiah 54:17).

Although it may happen in this, as in the former temptation, the devil and his agents may give the saints, in their pleading for the truth, their bellies full both of cross answers, equivocations, sophistication’s, wrong glosses and erroneous interpretations; but truth shall prevail, shall turn the scale, and bear away the victory.

Third, He will also be faithful to us in this: we shall not want spiritual support to help us to bear up under our particular parts of suffering. I do not say that thou shalt be comforted all the while; but I say he will be to thee so faithful as to comfort thee under those thodes, ^{F48} gusts, blasts, or battering storms that beat against thy wall (²³¹⁰Isaiah 32:2).

Look then what present degrees or aggravating appearances are in thy afflictions; to such a degree shalt thou at times be supported. For as surely as ever the Spirit of God moved Samson at times in the camp of Dan, when he lay against the Philistines; so will the Spirit of God move in and

upon thee to comfort and to strengthen thee, whilst thou sufferest for his name in the world. As our afflictions abound for Christ, so shall our consolations abound by him (~~2~~² Corinthians 1:5). I have observed that God lays this, that he useth to comfort his people in a time of sufferings, as an aggravation of sin upon them that did use to shuck ^{F49} and shrink under sufferings.

“I,” saith he, “even I, am he that comforteth you; who art thou that thou shouldest be afraid of a man that shall die”
(~~2812~~ Isaiah 51:12)?

“God,” says the wise man, “hath set the one over against the other,” the day of adversity and the day of prosperity, “to the end that man should find nothing after him” to complain of (~~2074~~ Ecclesiastes 7:14). For as certainly as there is a time to mourn, so certainly there is a time to rejoice: set, I say, for them that suffer for God’s cause according to God’s will (~~2188~~ Ecclesiastes 3:4).

There are several degrees of suffering for righteousness; there is the scourge of the tongue, the ruin of an estate, the loss of liberty, a jail, a gibbet, a stake, a dagger. Now, answerable to these are the comforts of the Holy Ghost prepared, like to like, part proportioned to part, only the consolations are said to abound (~~2000~~ 2 Corinthians 1).

But the lighter the sufferings are, the more difficult it is to judge of the comforts of the Spirit of God, for it is common for a man to be comfortable under sufferings when he suffereth but little, and knows also that his enemy can touch his flesh, his estate, or the like, but little: I say, it is common for such a man to be comfortable in his sufferings, from the consideration that his enemies can touch him no further. And this may be the joy of the flesh — the result of reason, and may be very much, if not altogether, without a mixture of the joy of the Holy Ghost therewith. The more deep, therefore, and the more dreadful the sufferings are, the more clearly are seen the comforts of the Spirit, when a man has comfort where the flesh is dead, stirreth not, and can do nothing. When a man can be comfortable at the loss of all — when he is under the sentence of death, or at the place of execution — *when a man’s cause, a man’s conscience, the promise, and the Holy Ghost, have all one comfortable voice, and do all,*

together with their trumpets, make one sound in the soul; then the comforts are good, of the right kinds, of God and his Spirit.

I told you before that there are several degrees of sufferings; wherefore it is not to be expected that he that suffers but little should partake of the comforts that are prepared for them that suffer much. He that has only the scourge of the tongue, knows not what are the comforts that are prepared for him that meets with the scourge of the whip. And how should a man know what manner of comforts the Holy Ghost doth use to give at the jail and the gibbet, when himself, for righteousness, never was there?

But whether this or the other Christian knows it, God has his consolations for his suffering people; and those, too, such as are proportioned to the nature or degree of their sufferings; the which shall assuredly be made appear to them that shall after a godly manner stick to his truth, and trust him with their souls. Joseph was cast into prison; but God was with him. John was banished into the isle called Patmos, for the Word of God; but what revelations of God had he there! even such as he was a stranger to all his life before: this, therefore, is to be well heeded. For it is a demonstration of the faithfulness of God to those that, suffering according to his will, do commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

Fourth, He will also be faithful to us in this: He will not let the sharpness, nor keenness, nor venom of the arrows of the enemies of his people, reach so far as to destroy both body and soul at once; but he will preserve them, when what can be done is done, to his eternal kingdom and glory, is a marvelous thing; but it must be so, because God has called them to it. Therefore, after Peter had told them that the devil their adversary sought to devour them, and had bidden them resist him, steadfast in the faith, he saith,

“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal [kingdom and] glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you”

( 1 Peter 5:10).

The truth is, persecution of the godly was, of God, never intended for their destruction, but for their glory, and to make them shine the more

when they are beyond this valley of the shadow of death. Indeed, we oftentimes, when we are persecuted, do feel the terrors of our adversaries in our minds. But it is not because they can shoot them thither, nor because they of themselves have power to reach so far, but we, like fools, by our ignorance and unbelief, do admit them thither.

No suffering, nor inflicter of suffering, can reach the peace of the sufferer without his own consent. This is provision of God's making; yea, and if through our folly their terror is admitted to touch us, yet since we are not our own, but are bought with a price, we are not so at our own dispose, but that God will have the butting and bounding of their rage, as also a power to uphold and support our spirits. When I said my foot slipped, thy mercy, O Lord, help me up. And the reason why, by God's ordinance, the spirit is not to be touched in suffering, is, because that is it that is to sustain the infirmity of the sufferer; therefore God will have the spirit of his servants kept sound, and in good health (²¹⁸⁴Proverbs 18:14; ²⁵⁷⁶Isaiah 57:16).

The room, therefore, and the ground that the enemy has to play upon, is the body and outward substance of the people of God, but the spirit is reserved, for the reason hinted before, and also that it might be capable of maintaining of communion with God. And how else could they obey that command that bids them rejoice in tribulation, and glorify God in the fires? as it is (Romans 12; ²³¹⁵Isaiah 24:15).

But, I say, if they have not power to touch, much less to destroy body and soul for ever. The body is God's, and he gives that to them to destroy; the spirit is God's, and he keeps that to himself, to show that he has both power to do with us what he pleases, and that he will recover our body also out of their hand; for if the spirit lives, so must the body, when men have done what they can therewith. This is the argument of our Lord Jesus Christ himself (²²¹⁵Luke 20:37, 38).

Therefore the faithfulness of God not only is, but also will be seen, by them that dare trust him, till the next world, to his glory and their eternal comfort.

CHAPTER 11

GENERAL USES OF THE WHOLE DISCUSSION

We will now conclude with a short word by way of USE. You see how I have opened the text, and what hath naturally followed thereupon; from the whole of which may be gathered:

First, That *the people of God are a suffering people* — a people subject to trouble for their faith and profession. The reason is, besides what hath been said already, because the power of truth is in their hearts, and shows itself in their lives — a thing which the devil and the world can by no means abide. He that is born after the flesh persecuteth him that is born after the Spirit (~~ROM~~ Galatians 4:29). For they cannot agree in religion; the godly are so devout and the other are so profane, that they cannot do. Not but that God's people, as they are commanded, are willing to let them alone; but the other they cannot bear that they should serve God as they have said (~~MTS~~ Matthew 15:14), and hence ariseth persecution. The world also would have the religion of the godly to be counted false — a thing that the others can by no means endure, but will stand by and maintain, yet in all peaceable manner, their own ways before them, whatever it costs.

The Christian and the carnal professor are like those two harlots that you read of in the book of Kings, who strove for the living child, whose it should be, whose contest could not be decided until it came to the sword of the king (~~1KIN~~ 1 Kings 3). O, but when the sword was drawn, under a show as if the living child must now be cut in two, then the true mother was known from the false; for her bowels yearned upon her son (verse 26, 27). The world, what show soever they have for religion, and however they urge it, that the truth is with them, have no yearning of bowels for it. Let it be neither mine nor thine, said she, but divide it; but the woman whose the living child was, had not a heart to say so. Religion may lie and die in a ditch for all those that are given to their sins; nor doth their zeal appear, except when they are gripping of the godly for his faith towards

God. Bowels, yearning of bowels over God's condemned religion, is only found in the souls of those who own God has made it.

Second, Is it so? Are God's people a suffering people? Then *this should inform them that will be religious, to prepare themselves for what is like to attend them for their religion.* To prepare, I say, not with carnal weapons, but with the graces of the Spirit of God; that will help them with meekness and patience to endure. Sit down then, I say, and count up the cost, before for religion thou engagest too far; lest thou take upon thee to meddle with that which thou wilt not know what to do with in the end (⁽¹⁵¹⁸⁾Proverbs 25:8; ⁽¹⁴²⁵⁾Luke 14:25-30).

Many there be that are faulty here; they have taken upon them to profess, not considering what they have taken in hand may cost them. Wherefore, when troubles come indeed, then they start and cry. This they like not, because they looked not for it; and if this be the way to heaven, let who will go on in it for them. Thus they take offence, and leave Christ's cause and people to shift for themselves in the world (⁽¹⁴³³⁾Matthew 13:20, 21).

Third, But *let God's people think never the worse of religion, because of the coarse entertainment it meeteth with in the world.* It is better to choose God and affliction than the world, and sin, and carnal peace. It is necessary that we should suffer, because that we have sinned. And if God will have us suffer a little while here for his Word, instead of suffering for our sins in hell, let us be content, and count it a mercy with thankfulness.

“The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction: they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath” (⁽¹⁶²³⁾Job 21:30).

How kindly, therefore, doth God deal with us, when he chooses to afflict us but for a little, that with everlasting kindness he may have mercy upon us (⁽²⁵⁴¹⁾Isaiah 54:7, 8). And

“it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing” (⁽¹⁶⁸⁷⁾1 Peter 3:17).

Fourth, Look not, therefore, upon the sufferings of God's people for their religion, to be tokens of God's great anger. It is, to be sure, as our heavenly Father orders it, rather a token of his love; for suffering for the gospel, and for the sincere profession of it, is indeed a dignity put upon us — a

dignity that all men are not counted worthy of. Count it, therefore, a favor that God has bestowed upon thee his truth, and graces to enable thee to profess it, though thou be made to suffer for it (~~451~~ Acts 5:41). Thou mightest have been a sufferer for thy sins in hell, but thou art not; but contrariwise art, perhaps, suffering for conscience to God; this is a dignity. For that thou dost thus by virtue of a heavenly gift, on the behalf of Christ, for the gospel's sake, and according to the will of God. This is a dignity that a persecutor shall not be counted worthy of, until he first convert to Christ (~~3103~~ Philippians 1:29).

Fifth, Take thy affliction with meekness and patience, though thou endurest grief wrongfully.

“For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully” (~~4129~~ 1 Peter 2:19).

Lay thy hand, then, upon thy mouth, and speak not a word of ill against him that doth thee wrong; leave thy cause and thy enemy to God; yea, rather pray that his sin may not be laid to his charge; wherefore, as I said before, now show thyself a good man, by loving, pitying, praying for, and by doing good, as thou art commanded, to them that despitefully use thee (~~4154~~ Matthew 5:44). I know thy flesh will be apt to huff, and to be angry, and to wish, would thou mightest revenge thyself. But this is base, carnal, sensual, devilish; cast, therefore, such thoughts from thee, as thoughts that are not fit for a Christian's breast, and betake thee to those weapons that are not carnal. For the artillery of a Christian is the Word, faith, and prayer; and in our patience we must possess our souls (~~4715~~ 2 Corinthians 10:5; ~~4216~~ Luke 21:16-19).

Sixth, Be much in the consideration of the all-sufficiency of thy Father, whose cause thou hast espoused, whose Word thou hast chosen for thy heritage, and whose paths thou delightest to walk in. I say, be much in considering how all the world is sustained by him, and that all life and breath is in his hand, to continue or diminish as he pleases. Think with thyself also how able he is to rescue thee from all affliction, or to uphold thee in it with a quiet mind. Go to him continually, as to a fountain of life that is open for the supply of the needy. Remember also, if he comes not at thy call, and comforteth thee not so soon as thou desirest, it is not of want of love or compassion to thy soul, but to try thy graces, and to show

to the fallen angels that thou wilt serve God for nought, rather than give out. Also, if it seemeth to thee, as if God took no care of thee to help thee, but that he hath rather turned thee over to the ungodly; count this also as a sign that he delights to see thee hold fast his name, though thou art laid under the greatest of disadvantages. “If the scourge slay suddenly, [that is more than it hath done to thee,] he will laugh at the trial of the innocent” (~~Job~~ Job 9:23).

It is a great delight to our God to see his people hold fast their integrity, and not to deny his name, when under such cloudy dispensations and discouraging circumstances. And considerations that thy thus doing is pleasing in his sight through Christ, will be a support unto thee. God sees thee, though thou canst not now see him, and he observeth now thy way, though darkness is round about him; and when he hath tried thee, thou shalt come forth like gold.

Seventh, Take heed of setting of thyself a bound and period to thy sufferings, unless that period be the grave. Say not to thy afflictors, Hitherto, and no further, and here shall your proud waves be stayed. I say, take heed of doing thus, for fear God should let them go beyond thee. For a man is not prepared to suffer, further than he thinketh the enemy may be permitted to go. Hence Christ sets their bounds at the loss of life, and no nearer. So then, so far as they go beyond thee, so far they will find thee unprovided, and so not fortified for a reception of their onset with that Christian gallantry which becomes thee. Observe Paul; he died daily, he was always delivered unto death, he despaired of life; and this is the way to be prepared for any calamity. When a man thinks he has only to prepare for an assault by footmen, how shall he contend with horses? Or if he looks no further than to horses, what will he do at the swellings of Jordan (~~Jeremiah~~ Jeremiah 12:5)? Wherefore, set thine enemies no bounds: say not, They shall not pursue me to the death; have the sentence of death in thyself. For though they may but tick and toy with thee at first, their sword may reach thy heart-blood at last. The cat at play with the mouse is sometimes a fit emblem of the way of the wicked with the children of God. Wherefore, as I said, be always dying; die daily: he that is not only ready to be bound, but to die, is fit to encounter any amazement.

Eighth, If thine enemies would, or do, put thee under a cloud, if they wrap thee up in a bear's skin, and then set the dogs upon thee, marvel not at the matter; this was Joseph's, David's, Christ's, Stephen's portion, only be thou innocent; say nothing, do nothing that should render thee faulty; yea, say and do always that that should render thee a good neighbor, a good Christian, and a faithful subject. This is the way to help thee to make with boldness thy appeals to God; this is the way to embolden thy face against the faces of thine enemies; this is the way to keep thy conscience quiet and peaceable within thee; and this is the way to provoke God to appear for thy rescue, or to revenge thy blood when thou art gone.

And do this because it is thy duty — we must fear God and honor the king — and because this is the way to make the rock of thy enemies hard: few men have that boldness as to say, This I do against you, because you profess Christ. When they persecuted the Lord himself, they said to him,

“For a good work we stone thee not” (~~4008~~ John 10:33).

Religion that is pure is a hot thing, and it usually burns the fingers of those that fight against it; wherefore it is not common for men to oppose religion under its own naked complexion: wherefore the Jews sought to fasten other matters upon Christ to kill him for them; though the great spite they had against him was for his doctrine and miracles. It was for envy to that that they set themselves against him, and that made them invent to charge him with rebellion and treason (~~4078~~ Matthew 27:18; ~~4021~~ Luke 23:2).

Ninth, Wherefore it becomes all godly men to study to be quiet, to mind their own business, and as much as in them lies, to be at peace with all men; to owe no man any thing but love. Pray, therefore, for all that are in authority; pray for the peace of the country in which thou dwellest; keep company with holy, and quiet, and peaceable men. Seek by all good ways the promotion of godliness, put up injuries, be good to the poor, do good against evil, be patient towards all men; for “these things are good and profitable unto men” (~~5088~~ Titus 3:8).

Be not inclining to injure men behind their backs, speak evil of no man, reproach not the governor nor his actions, as he is set over thee; all his ways are God's, either for thy help or the trial of thy graces. Wherefore he

needs thy prayers, not thy revilings; thy peaceable deportment, and not a troublesome life. I know that none of these things can save thee from being devoured by the mouth of the sons of Belial (~~1212~~1 Kings 21:12, 13). Only, what I say is duty, is profitable, is commendable, is necessary; and that which will, when the devil has done his worst, render thee lovely to thy friends, terrible to thine enemies, serviceable in thy place as a Christian, and will crown the remembrance of thy name, to them that survive thee, with a blessing;

“The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot” (~~300~~Proverbs 10:7).

CHAPTER 12

CONCLUDING COUNSELS TO UNQUIET SUFFERERS.

I WILL conclude, then, with a word to those professors, if there be any such, that are of an unquiet and troublesome spirit. Friends, I may say to you, as our Lord said once to his disciples, “Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.” To wish the destruction of your enemies doth not become you. If ye be born to, and are called, that you may inherit a blessing, pray be free of your blessing: “Bless, and curse not.” If you believe that the God whom you serve is supreme governor, and is also wise enough to manage affairs in the world for his church, pray keep fingers off, and refrain from doing evil. If the counsel of Gamaliel was good when given to the enemies of God’s people, why not fit to be given to Christians themselves? Therefore refrain from these men, and let them alone. If the work that these men do is that which God will promote and set up for ever, then you cannot disannul it; if not, God has appointed the time of its fall.

A Christian! and of a troublesome spirit; for-shame, forbear; show, out of a good conversation, thy works, with meekness of wisdom; and here let me present thee with three or four things.

1. Consider, That though Cain was a very murderer, yet God forbade any man’s meddling with him, under a penalty of revenging his so doing upon his own head sevenfold.

“And the Lord said unto him, Therefore, whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold” (Genesis 4:15)

But why not meddle with Cain, since he was a murderer? The reason is, because he persecuted his brother for righteousness’ sake, and so espoused a quarrel against God; for he that persecutes another for righteousness’ sake sets himself against God, fights against God, and seeks to overthrow him. Now, such an one the Christian must let alone and stand off from,

that God may have his full blow at him in his time.^{F50} Wherefore he saith to his saints, and to all that are forward to revenge themselves, Give place, stand back, let me come, leave such an one to be handled by me. “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord” (^{<4029}Romans 12:19). Wherefore the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should slay him. You must not, indeed, you must not avenge yourselves of your enemies. Yea, though it was lawful once so to do, it is not lawful now. Ye have heard that it hath been said to them of old time, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but I say, said our Lord, Love them, bless them, do good to them, and pray for them that hate you (^{<4059}Matthew 5:43, 44).

2. Consider, *Revenge is of the flesh*, — I mean this our revenge of ourselves; and it proceeds from anger, wrath, impatience under the cross, unwillingness to suffer, from too much love to carnal ease, to estates, to enjoyments, to relations, and the like. It also flows from a fearful, cowardly spirit; there is nothing of greatness in it, except it be greatness of untowardness. I know there may, for all this, be pretences to justice, to righteousness, to the liberty of the gospel, the suppressing of wickedness, and the promoting of holiness; but these can be but pretences, or, at best, but the fruits of a preposterous zeal. For since, as has been often said in this treatise, the Lord hath forbidden us to do so, it cannot be imagined that he should yet animate any to such a thing by the Holy Ghost and the effects of the graces thereof. Let them, then, if any such be, that are thus minded, be counted the narrow-spirited, carnal, fleshly, angry, waspish-spirited professors — the professors that know more of the Jewish than of the Christian religion, and that love rather to countenance the motions, passions, and gross motions of an angry mind, that with meekness to comply with the will of a heavenly Father. Thou art bid to be like unto him, and also thou art showed wherein (^{<4055}Matthew 5:45-48).

There is a man hates God, blasphemes his name, despises his being; yea, says there is no God. And yet the God that he carrieth it thus towards doth give him his breakfast, dinner, and supper; clothes him well, and when night comes, has him to bed, gives him good rest, blesses his field, his corn, his cattle, his children, and raises him to high estate.^{F51} Yea, and this our God doth not only once or twice, but until these transgressors

become old; his patience is thus extended, years after years, that we might learn of him to do well.

3. Consider, A professor! and unquiet and troublesome, discontented, and seeking to be revenged of thy persecutors; *where is, or what kind of grace hast thou got?* I dare say, they, even these in which thou thus actest, are none of the graces of the Spirit. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law; but wrath, strife, seditions, traitors, and inventors of evil things are reckoned with the worst of sins, and sinners, and are plainly called the works of the flesh (~~ⲁⲓⲓ~~ Romans 1:29-31; ~~ⲁⲓⲓ~~ 2 Timothy 3:3, 4; ~~ⲁⲓⲓ~~ Galatians 5:19-21).

But I say, where is thy love to thine enemy? where is thy joy under the cross? where is thy peace when thine anger has put thee upon being unquiet? Where is thy long-suffering? for, as thou actest, not ought but thy waspishness can be seen. Where, also, is thy sweet, meek, and gentle spirit? and is goodness seen in thy seeking the life or the damage of thy enemy? Away, away; thy graces, if thou hast any, are by these, thy passions, so jostled up into corners, and so pent for want of room and liberty to show themselves, that, by the Word of God, thou canst not be known to be of the right kind, what a noise soever thou makest.

A Christian, when he sees trouble coming upon him, should not fly in the face of the instrument that brings it, but in the face of the cause of its coming. Now the cause is thyself, thy base self, thy sinful self, and thy unworthy carriages towards God under all the mercy, patience, and long-suffering that God has bestowed upon thee, and exercised towards thee. Here thou mayest quarrel and be revenged, and spare not, so thou take vengeance in a right way, and then thou wilt do so when thou takest it by godly sorrow (~~ⲁⲓⲓ~~ 2 Corinthians 7:10, 11).

A Christian, then, should bewail his own doings, his own unworthy doings, by which he has provoked God to bring a cloud upon him, and to cover him with it in anger. A Christian should say, This is my wickedness, when a persecutor touches him; yea, he should say it, and then shut up his mouth, and bear the indignation of the Lord, because he has sinned against him. “Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this

is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart” (^{<2418>}Jeremiah 4:18).

4. Consider, *What conviction of thy goodness can the actions that flow from such a spirit give unto observers?* None at all; yea, a spirit of unquietness under sufferings, and that seeketh to be revenged of those that do, for thy faith and the profession thereof, persecute thee, is so far off of giving conviction to beholders that thou art right, that it plainly tells them that thou art wrong. Even Julian the apostate, when he had cast away whatever he could of Christ, had this remaining with him — that a Christian ought to take with patience what affliction fell upon him for his Master’s sake; and would hit them in the teeth with an unbecoming behavior, that complained or that sought redress of them that had abused them for their faith and godly profession. What will men say if you shrink and winch, and take your sufferings unquietly, but that if you yourselves were uppermost, you would persecute also? Much more have they ground to say so, when you will fight lying on your backs. Be quiet, then, and if thine enemy strike thee on one check, turn to him the other; and if he also revile and curse thee, down upon thy knees and pray for him. This is the way to convince thy observers that thou art a godly man. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do, was one of those things that convinced the centurion that Jesus was a righteous man; for he stood by the cross to watch and see how Jesus carried it in these his sufferings, as well as to see execution done (^{<1751>}Matthew 27:54; ^{<1731>}Luke 23:34-47).

5. Consider, A professor, unquiet and turbulent under sufferings, and seeking his own revenge, *cannot be a victor over what he should, nor a keeper of God’s commandments.*

(1.) How can he be a victor over himself that is led up and down by the nose by his own passions? There is no man a Christian victor but he that conquers himself, but he that beats down and keeps under this body, his lusts, his passions, in the first place. Is he that is led away with divers lusts a victor? Is he that is a servant to corruption a victor? And if he that is captivated by his anger, wrath, passion, discontent, prejudice, etc., be not led away by them, I am under a mistake. So then, to quarrel with superiors, or with any that are troublesome to

thee for thy faith and thy profession, bespeaks thee over-mastered and captive, rather than a master and a conqueror.

(2.) The same may be said upon the second head. He keepeth not the commandments of God; for those teach him other things, as I have also showed. The great gospel commands terminate in self-denial; but if self-revenge is self-denial, I am besides the Book. Christ, in the book of the Revelation, sets him that keeps the commandments of God a great way off from him that taketh and smiteth with the sword:

“He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints” (⁶⁶³⁰ Revelation 13:10).

That is, in that they forbear to do thus, and quietly suffer under those that thus take it and afflict the godly with it. Again,

“Here is the patience of the saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” (⁶⁶⁴² Revelation 14:12).

A patient continuing in well-doing; and if suffering for righteousness be well-doing, then a patient continuing in that, as in other things, is the way to keep God’s commandments (⁶⁶⁴⁴ Romans 2:7).

So that, I say, he keepeth not God’s commandments that is angry with his enemies, and that seeks to be revenged of him that doth him ill. You know the subject I am upon.

“The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (⁶⁶⁴⁶ James 1:20).

Wherefore, professors, beware, and take heed to your spirits, and see that you let not out yourselves under your sufferings in such extravagancies of spirit against your enemies as is no way seemly nor convenient.

6. Consider, Men that are unquiet and discontented, and that seek revenge upon them that persecute them for their profession, do, by so doing, also put themselves upon the brink of those ruins that others are further from. These men are like the fly that cannot let the candle alone until she hath

burned herself in the flame. Magistrates and men in power have fortified themselves from being attacked with turbulent and unruly spirits by many and wholesome laws. And, indeed, should they not do so, one or other, perhaps, would be quickly tempted to seek to disturb them in the due exercise of their authority. Now the angry man, he is the fly that must be tripping and running himself upon the point of these laws; his angry spirit puts him upon quarrelling with his superiors, and his quarrelling brings him, by words spoke in heat, within the reach of the net, and that, with the help of a few more, brings his neck to the halter. Nor is this, whatever men think, but by the just judgment of God. “Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation” (^{<613D}Romans 13:2; ^{<17D2}Esther 2:21-23). Wherefore, let the angry man take heed; let the discontented man take heed. He that has a profession, and has not grace to know, in this matter, to manage it, is like to bring his profession to shame. Wherefore, I say, let such take heed; and the graces afore mentioned, and the due exercise of them, are they and that which can keep us out of all such dangers.

7. Consider, And what comfort can such a man have who has, by his discontent and unruly carriages, brought himself, in this manner, to his end; he has brought himself to shame, his profession to shame, his friends to shame, and his name to contempt and scorn. Bad men rejoice at his fall; good men cannot own him, weak men stumble at him; besides, his cause will not bear him out; his heart will be clogged with guilt; innocency and boldness will take wings and fly from him. Though he talketh of religion upon the stage ^{F52} or ladder, that will blush to hear its name mentioned by them that suffer for evil-doing. Wherefore, my brethren, my friends, my enemies, and all men, what religion, profession, or opinion soever you hold, fear God, honor the king, and do that duty to both which is required of you by the Word and law of Christ, and then, to say no more, you shall not suffer by the power for evil-doing.

A FAMILIAR CATECHISM:

OR, INSTRUCTION FOR THE IGNORANT,

Being a salve to cure that great want of knowledge which so much reigns in young and old. prepared and presented to them in a plain and easy dialogue pitted to the capacity of the weakest.

“My People perish for lack of Knowledge.” — ~~2006~~ Hosea 4:6.

DEDICATION TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN AND ABOUT BEDFORD,

Walking in the Faith and Fellowship of the Gospel; Your Affectionate Brother and Companion in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus Christ, Wisheth all Grace and Mercy by Jesus Christ. Amen.

HOLY AND BELOVED,

ALTHOUGH I have designed this little treatise for public and common benefit, yet considering that I am to you a debtor, not only in common charity, but by reason of special bonds which the Lord hath laid upon me to you-ward, I could do no less, (being driven from you in presence, not affection,) but first present you with this little book. Not that you are wanting in the things contained herein, but to put you again in remembrance of first things, and to give you occasion to present something to your carnal relations, that may be (if God will) for their awakening and conversion. Accept it, therefore, as a token of my Christian remembrance of you.

Next, I present it to all those unconverted, old and young, who have been at any time under my preaching, and yet remain in their sins. And I entreat them also, that they receive it as a token of my love to their immortal souls. Yea, I charge them as they will answer it in the day of terrible judgment, that they read, ponder, and receive this wholesome medicine

prepared for them. Now the God of blessing bless it to the awakening of many sinners, and the salvation of their souls, by faith in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Yours, to serve you by my ministry (when I can) to your edification and consolation,

JOHN BUNYAN

BUNYAN'S CATECHISM: OR, INSTRUCTION FOR THE IGNORANT.

CHAPTER 1.

OF GOD THE CREATOR,

Question. How many gods are there?

Answer. To the Christian there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we of him. ^{<418>}1 Corinthians 8:6.

Question. Why is not the God of the Christians the God of them that are no Christians?

Answer. He is their Maker and Preserver; but they have not chosen him to be their God. ^{<417>}Acts 17:24 ; ^{<418>}Psalm 36:6 ^{<419>}Judges 10:14.

Question. Are there then other gods besides the God of the Christians?

Answer. There is none other true God but HE; but because they want the grace of Christians, therefore they choose not him, but such gods as will suit with and countenance their lusts. ^{<418>}John 8:44.

Question. What gods are they that countenance the lusts of wicked men?

Answer. The devil, who is the god of this world; the belly, that god of gluttons, drunkards, and riotous persons; and idol pleasures and vanities, which are for the most part the gods of the young. ^{<418>}John 8:44; ^{<419>}2 Corinthians 4:4; ^{<418>}Philippians 3:19; ^{<419>}Exodus 32:6; ^{<419>}1 Corinthians 10:7; ^{<419>}2 Timothy 2:22; ^{<418>}1 John 5:21.

Question. Who is a Christian?

Answer. One that is born again, a new creature; one that sits at Jesus' feet to hear his word; one that hath his heart purified and sanctified by faith which is in Christ. ^{<4008>}John 3:3, 5, 7; ^{<4126>}Acts 11:26; ^{<4159>}Acts 15:9; ^{<4188>}Acts 26:18; ^{<4157>}2 Corinthians 5:17.

Question. How do you distinguish the God of the Christians from the gods of other people?

Answer. He is a Spirit. ^{<4004>}John 4:24.

Question. Is there no other Spirit but the true God?

Answer. Yes, there are many spirits. ^{<6001>}1 John 4:1.

Question. What spirits are they?

Answer. The good angels are spirits; the bad angels are spirits; and the souls of men are spirits. ^{<8007>}Hebrews 1:7, 14; ^{<1221>}1 Kings 22:21, 22 ; ^{<4183>}Revelation 16:13, 14; ^{<4175>}Acts 7:59; ^{<8023>}Hebrews 12:23.

Question. How then is the true God distinguished from other spirits?

Answer. Thus: No spirit is eternal but he no spirit is almighty but he, no spirit is incomprehensible and unsearchable but he. He is also most merciful, most just, most holy. ^{<6329>}Deuteronomy 33:27; ^{<4171>}Genesis 17:1; ^{<4158>}Psalms 145:3; ^{<3178>}Micah 7:18; ^{<8347>}Job 34:17; ^{<9012>}1 Samuel 2:2.

Question. Is this God, being a Spirit, to be known?

Answer. Yes, and that by his works of creation, by his providences; by the judgments that he executeth, and by his word.

Question. Do you understand him by the works of creation?

Answer. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-work;" so that the "invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; even his eternal power and Godhead." ^{<9111>}Psalms 19:1, 2; ^{<6010>}Romans 1:20.

Question. Do his works of providence also declare him?

Answer. They must needs do it, since through his providence the whole creation is kept in such harmony as it is, and that in despite of sin and devils; also if you consider that from an angel to a sparrow, nothing falls to the ground without the providence of our heavenly Father. <102> Matthew 10:29.

Question. Is he known by his judgments?

Answer. God is known by his judgments which he executeth; the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. <103> Psalm 9:16.

Question. Is he known, by his word?

Answer. Yes, most clearly; for by that he revealeth his attributes, his decrees, his promises, his way of worship, and how he is to be pleased by us.

Question. Of what did God make the world?

Answer. Things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. <104> Hebrews 11:3.

Question. How long was he in making the world?

Answer. In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and on the seventh day God ended all his works which he had made. <105> Exodus 20:11; <106> Genesis 2:2.

Question. Of what did God make man?

Answer. The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. <107> Genesis 2:7.

Question. Why doth it say, God breathed into him the breath of life? Is man's soul of the very nature of the Godhead?

Answer. This doth not teach that the soul is of the nature of the Godhead, but sheweth that it is not of the same matter as his body, which is dust. <108> Genesis 18:27.

Question. Is not the soul then of the nature of the Godhead?

Answer. No; for God cannot sin, but the soul doth; God cannot be destroyed in hell. but the souls of the impenitent shall be. ~~2804~~ Ezekiel 18:4;
~~4008~~ Matthew 10:28.

CHAPTER 2

OF MAN'S SIN.

Question. How did God make Man in the day of his first creation?

Answer. God made Man upright. In the image of God created he him.

<0029> Ecclesiastes 7:29; <0027> Genesis 1:27.

Question. Did God when he made Man, leave him without a rule to walk by?

Answer. No; he gave him a law in his nature, and imposed upon him a positive precept; but he offered violence to them, and brake them both.

<0038> Genesis 3:3, 6.

Question. What was the due desert of that transgression?

Answer. Spiritual death in the day he did it, temporal death afterwards, and everlasting death last of all. <0027> Genesis 2:17; <0039> Genesis 3:19;

<0056> Matthew 25:46.

Question. What is it to be spiritually dead?

Answer. To be alienate from God, and to live without him in the world, through the ignorance that is in men, and through the power of their sins.

<0048> Ephesians 4:18, 19.

Question. Wherein doth this alienation from God appear?

Answer. In the love they have to their sins; in their being loth to come to him; in their pleading idle excuses for their sins; and in their ignorance of the excellent mysteries of his blessed gospel. <0040> Ephesians 2:2, 3, 11, 12;

<0028> Romans 1:28; <0048> Ephesians 4:18, 19.

Question. What is temporal death?

Answer. To have body and soul separate asunder; the body returning to the dust as it was, and the spirit to God that gave it. ^{<1088>}Genesis 3:19; ^{<1127>}Ecclesiastes 12:7.

Question. What is everlasting death?

Answer. For body and soul to be separate for ever from God, and to be cast into hell-fire. ^{<1127>}Luke 13:27; ^{<1196>}Mark 9:43.

HOW WE COME INTO THE WORLD.

Question. Do men go body and soul to hell so soon as they die?

Answer. The body abideth in the grave till the sound of the last trump; but the soul, if the man dies wicked, goes presently from the face of God into hell, as into a prison, there to be kept till the day of judgment. ^{<1152>}1 Corinthians 15:52; ^{<2302>}Isaiah 24:22; ^{<1221>}Luke 12:20.

Question. Do we come into the world as upright as did our first parent?

Answer. No; he came into the world sinless, being made so of God Almighty; but we come into the world sinners, being made so by his pollution.

Question. How doth it appear that we came into the world polluted?

Answer. We are the fruit of an unclean thing, are defiled in our very conception, and are by nature the children of wrath. ^{<1344>}Job 14:4; ^{<1505>}Psalms 51:5; ^{<4118>}Ephesians 2:3.

Question. Can you make further proof of this?

Answer. Yes, it is said, that by one man came sin, death, judgment, and condemnation, upon all men. ^{<1152>}Romans 5:12, 15-19.

Question. Do we then come sinners into the world?

Answer. Yes, we are transgressors from the womb, and go astray as soon as we are born, speaking lies. ^{<2408>}Isaiah 48:8; ^{<1505>}Psalms 58:3.

Question. But as Adam fell with us in him, so did he not by faith rise with us in him? For he had no seed until he had the promise.

Answer. He fell as a public person, but believed the promise as a single person. Adam's faith saved not the world, though Adam's sin overthrew it.

Question. But do not some hold that we are sinners only by imitation?

Answer. Yea, being themselves deceived. But God's word saith, we are children of wrath by nature, that is, by birth and generation.

Question. Can you bring further proof of this?

Answer. Yes. In that day that we were born, we were polluted in our own blood, and cast out to the loathing of our persons. Again, the children of old that were dedicated unto the Lord, a sacrifice was offered for them at a month old, which was before they were sinners by imitation.

<300> Ezekiel 16:4-9 : <0084> Numbers 18:14-16.

Question. Can you make this appear by experience?

Answer. Yes. The first things that bloom and put forth themselves in children, show their ignorance of God, their disobedience to parents, and their innate enmity to holiness of life; their inclinations naturally run to vanity. Besides, little children die; but that they could not, were they not of God counted sinners; for "death is the wages of sin." <0062> Romans 6:23.

Question. What is sin?

Answer. It is a transgression of the law. <0084> 1 John 3:4.

Question. A transgression of what law?

Answer. Of the law of our nature, and of the law of the ten commandments, as written in the holy scriptures. <0012> Romans 2:12, 14, 15; <0013> Exodus 20.

Question. When doth one sin against the law of nature?

Answer. When you do any thing that your conscience tells you is a transgression against God or man. <0014> Romans 2:14, 15.

Question. When do we sin against the law as written in the ten commandments?

Answer. When you do any thing that they forbid, although you be ignorant of it. ^{<950>}Psalm 19:12.

Question. How many ways are there to sin against this law?

Answer. Three. By sinful thoughts, by sinful words, and also by sinful actions. ^{<810>}Romans 7:7 ; ^{<1058>}Matthew 5:28; ^{<1129>}Matthew 12:37; ^{<810>}Romans 2:6.

Question. What if we sin but against one of the ten commandments?

Answer. Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all; for he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill; now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art a transgressor of the law. ^{<9100>}James 2:10, 11.

CHAPTER 3

OF THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN.

Question. Where will God punish sinners for their sins?

Answer. Both in this world, and in that which is to come. ^{<0034>}Genesis 3:24; 4:10-12; ^{<0033>}Job 21:30.

Question. How are men punished in this world for sin?

Answer. Many ways, as with sickness, losses, crosses, disappointments, and the like. Sometimes also God giveth them up to their own hearts' lusts, to blindness of mind also, and hardness of heart; yea, and sometimes to strong delusions, that they might believe lies, and be damned.

^{<0035>}Leviticus 26:15, 16; ^{<0037>}Amos 4:7, 10; ^{<0024>}Romans 1:24, 28; ^{<0021>}Exodus 4:21; ^{<0002>}Exodus 9:12-14; ^{<0017>}Zephaniah 1:17; ^{<0010>}Romans 11:7, 8; ^{<0011>}2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12.

Question. How are sinners punished in the world to come?

Answer. With a worm that never dies, and with a fire that never shall be quenched. ^{<0044>}Mark 9:44.

Question. Whither do sinners go to receive this punishment?

Answer. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. ^{<0017>}Psalms 9:17.

Question. What is hell?

Answer. It is a place and a state most fearful. ^{<0025>}Luke 16:25, 28; ^{<0025>}Acts 1:25.

Question. Why do you call it a place?

Answer. Because in hell all the damned shall be confined as in a prison, in their chains of darkness for ever. ^{<0015>}Luke 12:5, 58; ^{<0016>}Luke 16:26; ^{<0006>}Jude 1:6.

Question. What sort of a place is hell?

Answer. It is a dark bottomless burning lake, large enough to hold all that perish. ^{<123>}Matthew 22:13; ^{<611>}Revelation 20:1, 15 ; ^{<238>}Isaiah 30:33; ^{<172>}Proverbs 27:20.

Question. What do you mean when you say it is a fearful state?

Answer. I mean that it is the lot of those that are cast in thither to be tormented in a most fearful manner, namely, with wrath and fiery indignation. ^{<813>}Romans 2:9; ^{<812>}Hebrews 10:26, 27.

Question. In what parts shall they be thus fearfully tormented?

Answer. In body and soul: for hell-fire shall kindle upon both beyond what now can be thought. ^{<103>}Matthew 10:28; ^{<262>}Luke 16:24; ^{<313>}James 5:3.

Question. How long shall they be in this condition?

Answer. These shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night; for they shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. ^{<154>}Matthew 25:46; ^{<641>}Revelation 14:11; ^{<510>}2 Thessalonians 1:9.

Question. But why might not the ungodly be punished with this punishment in this world, that we might have seen it and believe?

Answer. If the ungodly should have been rewarded with punishment in this world, it would in all probability have overthrown the whole order that God hath settled here among men. For who could have endured here to have seen the flames of fire, to have heard the groans, and to have seen the tears perhaps of damned relations, as parents or children? Therefore, as Tophet of old was without the city, and as the gallows and gibbets are built without the town; so Christ hath ordered, that they who are to be punished with this kind of torment, shall be taken away. "Take him away," saith he, (out of this world,) "and cast him into outer darkness, and let him have his punishment there; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Besides, faith is not to be wrought by looking into hell, and seeing the damned tormented before our eyes; but by hearing the word of God.

For he that shall not believe Moses and the prophets, will not be persuaded, should one come from the dead; yea, should one come to them in flames to persuade them. ^{<423>}Matthew 22:13; ^{<507>}Romans 10:17; ^{<267>}Luke 16:27-31.

Question. Are there degrees of torments in hell?

Answer. Yes; for God will reward every one according to his works. “Woe to the wicked! it shall go ill with him, for the reward of his hands shall be given him.” ^{<381>}Isaiah 3:11.

Question. Who are like to be most punished there, men or children?

Answer. The punishment in hell comes not upon sinners according to age, but sin; so that, whether they be men or children, the greater sin, the greater punishment; for there is no respect of persons with God. ^{<811>}Romans 2:11.

Question. How do you distinguish between great sins and little ones?

Answer. By their nature, and by the circumstances that attend them.

Question. What do you mean by their nature?

Answer. I mean, when they are very gross in themselves. ^{<481>}2 Chronicles 33:2; ^{<395>}Ezekiel 16:52.

Question. What kind of sins are the greatest?

Answer. Adultery, fornication, murder, theft, swearing, lying, covetousness, witchcraft, sedition, heresies, or any the like. ^{<469>}1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; ^{<493>}Ephesians 5:3-6; ^{<505>}Colossians 3:5, 6; ^{<453>}Galatians 5:19-21; ^{<623>}Revelation 21:8.

Question. What do you mean by circumstances that attend sin?

Answer. I mean light, knowledge, the preaching of the word, godly acquaintance, timely caution, etc.

Question. Will these make an alteration in the sin?

Answer. These things attending sinners, will make little sins great, yea, greater than greater sins that are committed in grossest ignorance.

Question. How do you prove that?

Answer. Sodom and Gomorrah wallowed in all, or most of those gross transgressions above mentioned: yea, they were said to be sinners exceedingly; they lived in such sins as may not be spoken of without blushing, and yet God swears that Israel, his church, had done worse than they; and the Lord Jesus also seconds it in that threatening of his, “I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom than for thee.” ^{<368>}Ezekiel 16:48; ^{<412>}Matthew 11:24; ^{<400>}Luke 10:12.

Question. And was this the *reason*, namely, because they had such circumstances attending them as Sodom had not?

Answer. Yes; as will plainly appear, if you read the three chapters above mentioned.

Question. When do I sin against light and knowledge?

Answer. When you sin against convictions of conscience, when you sin against a known law of God, when you sin against counsels and dissuasion of friends, then you sin against light and knowledge. ^{<413>}Romans 1:32.

Question. When do I sin against the preaching of the word?

Answer. When you refuse to hear God’s ministers, or hearing them, refuse to follow their wholesome doctrine. ^{<436>}2 Chronicles 36:16; ^{<424>}Jeremiah 25:4, 7; ^{<435>}Jeremiah 35:15.

Question. When else do I sin against preaching of the word.

Answer. When you mock, or despise, or reproach the ministers; also when you raise lies and scandals of them, or receive such lies or scandals raised; you then also sin against the preaching of the word, when you persecute them that preach it, or are secretly glad to see them so used. ^{<440>}2 Chronicles 30:1, 10; ^{<418>}Romans 3:8; ^{<400>}Jeremiah 20:10; ^{<405>}1 Thessalonians 2:15, 16.

Question. How will godly acquaintance greaten my sin?

Answer. When you sin against their counsels, warnings, or persuasions to the contrary; also when their lives and conversations are reproof to you, and yet against all you will sin. Thus sinned Ishmael, Esau, Eli's sons, Absalom, and Judas; they had good company, good counsels, and a good life set before them by their godly acquaintance. But they sinned against all, and their judgment was the greater. Ishmael was cast away, Esau hated, Eli's sons died suddenly, Absalom and Judas were both strangely hanged. ^{<0210>}Genesis 21:10; ^{<8080>}Galatians 4:30; ^{<3008>}Malachi 1:3; ^{<0022>}1 Samuel 2:22, 25; ^{<0034>}2 Samuel 18:14.

Question. Are sins thus heightened, distinguished from others by any special name?

Answer. Yes; they are called rebellion, and are compared to the sin of witchcraft; they are called willful sins; they are called briars and thorns, and they that bring them forth are nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned. ^{<0023>}1 Samuel 15:23; ^{<8000>}Hebrews 10:26; ^{<8000>}Hebrews 6:7, 8.

Question. Are there any other things that can make little sins great ones?

Answer. Yes; as when you sin against the judgments of God. As for example, you see the judgments of God come upon some for their transgressions, and you go on in their iniquities; as also when you sin against the patience, long-suffering, and forbearance of God, this will make little sins great ones. ^{<0020>}Daniel 5:21-24 ; ^{<8000>}Romans 2:4, 5.

CHAPTER 4

OF SEEKING SALVATION YOUNG.

Question. Did ever God punish little children for sin against him?

Answer. Yes; when the flood came, he drowned all the little children that were in the old world; he also burnt up all the little children which were in Sodom; and because upon a time the little children at Bethel mocked the prophet as he was going to worship God, God let loose two she-bears upon them, which tore forty and two of them to pieces. ² Kings 2:23, 24.

Question. Alas! what shall we little children do?

Answer. Either go on in your sins; or

“remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come.” ¹ Ecclesiastes 12:1.

Question. Why do you mock us, to bid us go on in our sins? You had need pray for us, that God would save us.

Answer. I do not mock you, but as the wise man doth; and besides, I do pray for you, and wish your salvation.

Question. How doth the wise man mock us?

Answer. Thus:

“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 thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee to judgment.” ¹ Ecclesiastes 11:9.

Question. What a kind of mocking is this?

Answer. Such a one as is mixed with the greatest seriousness; as if he should say, Aye, do, sinners; go on in your sins if you dare; do, live in your vanities; but God will have a time to judge you for them.

Question. Is not this just as when my father bids me be naughty if I will; but if I be naughty, he will beat me for it?

Answer. Yes; or like that saying of Joshua, “If it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve.” Serve your sins at your peril. ^{<12>}Joshua 24:15.

Question. Is it not best then for me to serve God?

Answer. Yes; for they that serve the devil must be where he is, and they that serve God and Christ, must be where they are. ^{<12>}John 12:26;
^{<12>}Matthew 25:41.

Question. But when had I best begin to serve God?

Answer. Just now. “Remember *now* thy Creator.” Now thou hast the gospel before thee, now thy heart is tender, and will be soonest broken.

Question. But if I follow my play and sports a little longer, may I not come time enough?

Answer. I cannot promise thee that — for there be little graves in the churchyard; and who can tell but that thy young life is short; or if thou dost live, perhaps thy day of grace may be as short, as was Ishmael’s of old. Read also ^{<12>}Proverbs 1:24-26.

Question. But if I stay a little longer before I turn, I may have more wit to serve God than now I have; may I not?

Answer. If thou stayest longer, thou wilt have more sin, and perhaps less wit; for the bigger sinner, the bigger fool. ^{<12>}Proverbs 1:22.

Question. If I serve God sometimes, and my sin sometimes, how then!

Answer. No man can serve two masters: thou canst not serve God and thy sins. God saith, “My son, give me thy heart.” Also thy soul and body are his; but the double-minded man is forbidden to think that he shall

receive any thing of the Lord. ^{<4054>}Matthew 6:24; ^{<4123>}Proverbs 23:26; ^{<4161>}1 Corinthians 6:20; ^{<5007>}James 1:7, 8.

Question. Do you find many such little children as I am serve God?

Answer. Not many; yet some I do. Samuel served him, being a child; when Josiah was young he began to seek after the God of his father David; and how kindly did our Lord Jesus take it, to see the little children run tripping before him, and crying, “Hosanna to the son of David!” ^{<0081>}1 Samuel 3:1; ^{<4045>}2 Chronicles 34:3; ^{<4215>}Matthew 21:15, 16.

Question. Then I am not like to have many companions, if I, thus young, begin to serve God, am I?

Answer. “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” Yet some companions thou wilt have. David counted himself a companion of all them that love God’s testimonies; all the godly, though grey-headed, will be thy companions; yea, and thou shalt have either one or more of the angels of God in heaven to attend on, and minister for thee. ^{<4073>}Matthew 7:13, 14; ^{<4062>}Psalms 119:63; ^{<4180>}Matthew 18:10.

Question. But I am like to be slighted, and despised by other little children, if I begin already to serve God; am I not?

Answer. If children be so rude as to mock the prophets and ministers of God, no marvel if they also mock thee; but it is a poor heaven that is not worth enduring worse things than to be mocked for the seeking and obtaining of. ^{<4022>}2 Kings 2:23, 24.

Question. But how should I serve God? I do not know how to worship him.

Answer. The true worshipers worship God in spirit and truth. ^{<4001>}John 4:24; ^{<4005>}Philippians 3:3.

Question. What is meant by worshiping him in the Spirit?

Answer. To worship him in God’s Spirit and in my own; that is, to worship him, being wrought over in my very heart by the good Spirit of

God, to a hearty compliance with his will. ^{<6019>}Romans 1:9; 6:17; ^{<6415>}Psalms 101:3.

Question. What is it to worship him in truth?

Answer. To do all that we do in his worship according to his word; (for his word is truth;) and to do it without dissimulation. ^{<8815>}Hebrews 8:5; ^{<8717>}John 17:17; ^{<1306>}Psalms 26:6; ^{<1389>}Psalms 118:19, 20. You may take the whole thus: Then do you worship God aright, when in heart and life you walk according to his word.

Question. How must I do to worship him with my spirit and Heart?

Answer. Thou must first get the good knowledge of him. “And thou Solomon, my son, (said David,) know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart.” Mind you, he first bids know him, and then serve him with a perfect heart. ^{<1339>}1 Chronicles 28:9.

Question. Is it easy to get a true knowledge of God?

Answer. No. Thou must cry after knowledge, and lift up thy voice for understanding. “If thou seekest for her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.” ^{<3011>}Proverbs 2:1-5.

Question. How comes it to be so difficult a thing to attain the true knowledge of God?

Answer. By reason of the pride and ignorance that is in us, as also by reason of our wicked ways. ^{<1904>}Psalms 10:4; ^{<4018>}Ephesians 4:18, 19; ^{<5016>}Titus 1:16.

Question. But do not all profess they know God?

Answer. Yes; but their supposed knowledge of him varieth as much as do their faces or complexions, some thinking he is this, and some that.

Question. Will you show me a little how they vary in their thoughts about him?

Answer. Yes. Some count him a kind of heartless God, that will neither do evil nor good; some count him a kind of ignorant and blind God, that

can neither know nor see through the clouds; some again count him an inconsiderable God, not worth the enjoying, if it must not be but with the loss of this world, and their lusts. Moreover, some think him to be altogether such a one as themselves, one that hath as little hatred to sin as themselves, and as little love to holiness as themselves. ^{<301>}Zephaniah 1:12; ^{<302>}Job 22:12, 13; ^{<303>}Job 21:9-16; ^{<304>}Psalms 1:21.

Question. Are there any more false opinions of God?

Answer. Yes. There are three other false opinions of God. **1.** Some think he is all mercy and no justice, and that therefore they may live as they list. **2.** Others think he is all justice and no mercy, and that therefore they had as good go on in their sins and be damned, as turn and be never the better. **3.** Others think he is both justice and mercy, but yet think also, that his justice is such, as they can pacify with their own good works, and save themselves with their own right hand, (^{<305>}Romans 3:8; ^{<306>}Jeremiah 2:25; ^{<307>}Job 40:14,) contrary to these scriptures, ^{<308>}Habakkuk 1:13; ^{<309>}Isaiah 45:21.

Question. How then shall I know when I have the true knowledge of God?

Answer. When the knowledge of him and the Holy Scriptures agree.

Question. The Scriptures! Do not all false opinions of him flow from the Scriptures?

Answer. No, in no wise. It is true, men father their errors upon the Scriptures, when indeed they flow from the ignorance of their hearts. ^{<310>}Ephesians 4:18.

Question. But how if I do not understand the Holy Bible? Must I then go without the true knowledge of God?

Answer. His name is manifested by his word. The Scriptures are they that testify of him, and they are able to make the man of God perfect in all things, and wise unto salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. ^{<311>}John 17:6-8; ^{<312>}John 5:39; ^{<313>}2 Timothy 3:15, 16.

Question. But what must one that knoweth not God do, to get the knowledge of God?

Answer. Let him apply his heart unto the Scriptures, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, (even this world,) until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in his heart. ^{<127>}Proverbs 22:17; 23:12; ^{<119>}2 Peter 1:19, 20.

Question. But how shall I know when I have found by the scriptures the true knowledge of God?

Answer. When thou hast also found a true knowledge of thyself. ^{<115>}Isaiah 6:5; ^{<115>}Job 42:5, 6.

Question. What is it for me to know myself?

Answer. Then thou knowest thyself, when thou art in thine own eyes a loathsome, polluted, wretched, miserable sinner, and that not any thing done by thee can pacify God unto thee. ^{<115>}Job 42:56; ^{<115>}Ezekiel 20:43, 44; ^{<1124>}Romans 7:24.

J. B.

CHAPTER 5

OF CONFESSION OF SIN.

Question. You have showed me, if I will indeed worship God, I must first know him aright; now then to the question in hand. Pray how must I worship him?

Answer. In confessing unto him. ^{<400>}Nehemiah 9:1-3.

Question. What must I confess?

Answer. Thou must confess thy transgressions unto the Lord. ^{<4815>}Psalms 32:5.

Question. Was this the way of the godly of old?

Answer. Yes. Nehemiah confessed his sins, David confessed his sins, Daniel confessed his sins, and they that were baptized by John in Jordan confessed their sins. ^{<400>}Nehemiah 1:6; ^{<4915>}Psalms 32:5; ^{<2004>}Daniel 9:4; ^{<4006>}Matthew 3:6.

Question. What sins must I confess to God?

Answer. All sins whatsoever. For he that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy. ^{<4003>}Proverbs 28:13; ^{<6009>}1 John 1:9.

Question. But how if I do neither know nor remember all my sins?

Answer. Thou must then search and try thy ways by the holy word of God. ^{<2104>}Lamentations 3:40; ^{<4910>}Psalms 77:6.

Question. But how if I do not make this search after my sins?

Answer. If thou dost not, God will; if thou dost not search them out and confess them, God will search them out and charge them upon thee, and tear thee in pieces for them. ^{<4910>}Psalms 1:21, 22.

Question. Where must I begin to confess my sins?

Answer. Where God beginneth to show thee them. Observe then where God beginneth with conviction for sin, and there begin thou with confession of it. Thus David began to confess; thus Daniel began to confess. ^{<107>}2 Samuel 12:7-14; ^{<218>}Daniel 9:3-9.

Question. What must I do, when God hath showed me any sin, to make right confession thereof?

Answer. Thou must follow that conviction, until it shall bring thee to the original and fountain of that sin, which is thine own heart. ^{<108>}1 Kings 8:38; ^{<151>}Psalms 51:5.

Question. Is my heart then the fountain and original of sin?

Answer. Yes.

“For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”

^{<172>}Mark 7:21-23.

Question. When a man sees this, what will he think of himself?

Answer. Then he will not only think, but conclude, that he is an unclean thing; that his heart has deceived him; that it is most desperate and wicked; that it may not be trusted by any means; that every imagination and thought of his heart (naturally) is only evil, and that continually. ^{<260>}Isaiah 64:6 ^{<189>}Proverbs 28:26; ^{<340>}Isaiah 44:20; ^{<006>}Genesis 6:5.

Question. You have given me a very bad character of the heart; but how shall I know that it is so bad as you count it?

Answer. Both by the word of God, and by experience.

Question. What do you mean by experience?

Answer. Keep thine eyes upon thy heart, and also upon God’s word, and thou shalt see with thine own eyes the desperate wickedness that is in

thine heart; for thou must know sin by the law, that bidding thee do one thing, and thy heart inclining to another. ^{<810>}Romans 7:7-9.

Question. May I thus then know my heart?

Answer. Yes; that is, something of it, especially the carnality of thy mind, “because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be.” ^{<810>}Romans 8:7.

Question. Can you particularize some few things wherein the wickedness of the heart of man shows itself?

Answer. Yes; by its secret hankering after sin, although the word forbids it; by its deferring repentance; by its being weary of holy duties; by its aptness to forget God; by its studying to lessen and hide sin; by its feigning itself to be better than it is; by being glad when it can sin without being seen of men; by its hardening itself against the threatenings and judgments of God; by its desperate inclinings to unbelief, atheism, and the like. ^{<102>}Proverbs 1:24-26; ^{<362>}Isaiah 43:22; ^{<302>}Malachi 1:12, 13; ^{<002>}Judges 3:7; ^{<102>}Jeremiah 2:32; ^{<142>}Psalms 106:21; ^{<302>}Hosea 2:13; ^{<102>}Proverbs 30:20; ^{<102>}Jeremiah 2:25; ^{<812>}Romans 1:32; 2:5; ^{<302>}Zechariah 7:11-13.

Question. Is there any thing else to be done in order to a right confession of sin?

Answer. Yes. Let this conviction sink down into thy heart, that God sees much more wickedness in thee than thou canst see in thyself. If thy heart condemn thee, God is greater than thy heart, and he knows all things; besides, he hath set thy secret sins in the light of his countenance. ^{<602>}1 John 3:20; ^{<902>}Psalms 90:8.

Question. Is there any thing else that must go to a right confession of sin?

Answer. Yes. In thy confessions thou must greaten and aggravate thy sin by all just circumstances.

Question. How must I do that?

Answer. By considering against how much light and mercy thou hast sinned; against how much patience and forbearance thou hast sinned; also

against what warnings and judgments thou hast sinned; and against how many of thine own vows, promises, and engagements, thou hast sinned; these things heighten and aggravate sin. ^{<1500>}Ezra 9:10-16.

Question. But what need I confess my sins to God; seeing he knows them already?

Answer. Confession of sin is necessary for many reasons.

Question. Will you show me some of those reasons?

Answer. Yes. One is, by a sincere and hearty confession of sin thou acknowledgest God to be thy Sovereign Lord, and that he hath the right to impose his law upon thee. Exodus 20.

Question. Can you show me another reason?

Answer. Yes. By confessing thy sin, thou subscribest to his righteous judgments that are pronounced against it. ^{<1500>}Psalms 51:3, 4.

Question. Can you show me another reason?

Answer. Yes. By confessing thy sins, thou showest how little thou deservest the least mercy from God.

Question. Have you yet another reason why I should confess my sins?

Answer. Yes. By so doing thou showest whether thy heart loves it, or hates it. He that heartily confesseth his sin, is like him who having a thief or traitor in his house, brings him out to condign punishment; but he that forbears to confess, is like him who hideth a thief or traitor against the laws and peace of our Lord the King.

Question. Give me one more reason why I should confess my sins to God.

Answer. He that confesseth his sin casteth himself at the feet of God's mercy; utterly condemns and casts away his own righteousness; and concludeth there is no way to stand just and acquit before God, but by and through the righteousness of another; whither God is resolved to bring thee, if ever he saves thy soul. ^{<1500>}Psalms 51:1-3; I ^{<1000>}John 1:9; ^{<1000>}Philippians 3:6-8.

Question. What frame of heart should I be in, when I confess my sins?

Answer. Do it heartily, and to the best of thy power thoroughly. For to feign, in this work, is abominable; to do it by the halves, is wickedness; to do it without sense of sin cannot be acceptable. And to confess it with the mouth, and to love it with the heart, is a lying unto God, and a provocation of the eyes of his glory.

Question. What do you mean by feigning and dissembling in this work?

Answer. When men confess it, yet know not what it is; or if they think they know it, do not conclude it so bad as it is; or when men ask pardon of God, but do not see their need of pardon; this man must needs dissemble.

Question. What do you mean by doing it by the halves?

Answer. When men confess some, but not all that they are convinced of; or if they confess all, yet labor in their confession to lessen it; or when in their confession they turn not from all sin to God, but from one sin to another. "They turned, but not to the Most High;" none of them did exalt him. ^{<1818>}Proverbs 28:13; ^{<1818>}Job 31:33; ^{<1818>}James 3:12; ^{<1818>}Hosea 7:16.

Question. What is it to confess sin without the sense of sin?

Answer. To do it through custom, or tradition, when there is no guilt upon the conscience; now this cannot be acceptable.

Question. What is to confess it with the mouth, and to love it with the heart?

Answer. When men condemn it with their mouth, but refuse to let it go; when with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. ^{<1812>}Job 20:12, 13; ^{<1812>}Jeremiah 8:5; ^{<1812>}Ezekiel 33:31.

Question. But I asked you what frame of heart I should be in, in my confessions?

Answer. I have showed you how you should not be. Well, I will show you now, what frame of heart becomes you in your confessions of sin. Labor by all means for a sense of the evil that is in sin.

Question. What evil is there in sin?

Answer. No man with the tongue can express, what may by the heart be felt, of the evil of sin. But this know, it dishonoreth God, it provoketh him to wrath, it damneth the soul. ^{<400>}Romans 2:23; ^{<400>}Ephesians 5:6; ^{<500>}2 Thessalonians 2:12.

Question. What else would you advise me to, in this great work?

Answer. When we confess sin, tears, shame, and brokenness of heart become us. ^{<400>}Jeremiah 1:4; ^{<500>}Isaiah 22:12; ^{<500>}Psalms 51:17; ^{<500>}Jeremiah 31:19.

Question. What else becomes me in my confessions of sin?

Answer. Great detestation of sin, with unfeigned sighs and groans, that express thou dost it heartily. ^{<500>}Job 42:5, 6 ^{<500>}Ezekiel 9:4; ^{<500>}Jeremiah 31:9.

Question. Is here all?

Answer. No; tremble at the word of God; tremble at every judgment, lest it overtake thee; tremble at every promise, lest thou shouldst miss thereof. “For (saith God) to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at my word.” ^{<500>}Isaiah 66:2; ^{<500>}Hebrews 4:1, 2.

Question. What if I cannot thus confess my sins?

Answer. Bewail the hardness of thy heart; keep close to the best preachers; remember that thou hangest over hell, by the weak thread of an uncertain life; and know God counts it a great evil, not to be ashamed of, nor to blush at sin. ^{<500>}Isaiah 63:17; ^{<500>}Jeremiah 6:15; ^{<500>}Jeremiah 8:12.

Question. Are there no thanks to be rendered to God in confessions?

Answer. O! yes. Thank him that he hath let thee see thy sins; thank him that he hath given thee time to acknowledge thy sins; thou mightest now have been confessing in hell. Thank him also that he hath so far condescended as to hear the self-bemoaning sinner, and that he hath promised surely to have mercy upon such. ^{<500>}Jeremiah 31:18-20.

CHAPTER 6

OF FAITH IN CHRIST.

Question. I am glad that you have instructed me into this part of the worship of God; I pray tell me also how else I should worship him?

Answer. Thou must believe his word.

Question. Is that worshiping God?

Answer. Yes. “After the way which you call heresy, (said Paul,) so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things that are written in the law and the prophets,” etc. ~~<814>~~ Acts 24:14.

Question. Why should believing be counted a part of God’s worship?

Answer. Because, without faith it is impossible to please him.
~~<810>~~ Hebrews 11:6.

Question. Why is it not possible to please him without believing?

Answer. Because, in all true worship a man must believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. Besides, he that worships God, must also of necessity believe his word; else he cannot worship with that reverence and fear that becomes him, but will do it in a superstitious, profane manner. “For whatsoever is not of faith is sin.”
~~<812>~~ Romans 14:23.

Question. But do not all believe as you have said?

Answer. No.

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” And again, “The children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.” ~~<816>~~ John 3:6; ~~<8108>~~ Romans 9:8.

Question. What do you mean by that?

Answer. Thou must be born twice, before thou canst truly believe once.
<RR> John 3:3, 5.

Question. How do you prove that?

Answer. Because believing is a Christian act, and none are true Christians but those that are born again. But I mean by believing, believing unto salvation.

Question. Can you prove this?

Answer. Yes; they that believe in the name of Christ, are such as are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. <RI2> John 1:12, 13.

Question. What is believing?

Answer. It is such an act of a gracious soul, as layeth hold of God's mercy through Christ. <RS1> Acts 15:11.

Question. Why do you call it an act of a gracious soul?

Answer. Because their minds are disposed that way, by the power of the Holy Ghost. <RS3> Romans 15:13.

Question. If such a poor sinner as I am would be saved from the wrath to come, how must I believe?

Answer. Thy first question should be, On whom must I believe? <RS5> John 9:35, 36.

Question. On whom, then, must I believe?

Answer. On the Lord Jesus Christ. <RI2> Acts 16:31, 32.

Question. Who is Jesus Christ, that I might believe in him?

Answer. He is the only begotten Son of God. <RI6> John 3:16.

Question. Why must I believe on him?

Answer. Because he is the Savior of the world. 2 Peter 3; <RI4> 1 John 4:14.

Question. How is he the Savior of the world?

Answer. By the Father's designation and sending.

“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.” <B17> John 3:17.

Question. How did he come into the world?

Answer. In man's flesh; in which flesh he fulfilled the law, died for our sins, conquered the devil and death, and obtained

eternal redemption for us. <B04> Galatians 4:4; <B08> Romans 10:3, 4; <B09> Romans 8:3; <B04> Hebrews 2:14, 15; <B04> Hebrews 6:20.

Question. But is there no other way to be saved but by believing in Jesus Christ?

Answer. There is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved; and therefore he that believeth not shall be damned.

<B02> Acts 4:12 ; <B06> Mark 16:16 ; <B08> John 3:18, 36.

Question. What is believing on Jesus Christ?

Answer. It is a receiving of him with what is in him, as the gift of God to thee a sinner. <B12> John 1:12.

Question. What is in Jesus Christ, to encourage me to receive him?

Answer. Infinite righteousness to justify thee, and the Spirit without measure to sanctify thee. <B34> Isaiah 45:24, 25; <B04> Daniel 9:24; <B08> Philippians 3:7, 8; <B04> John 3:34.

Question. Is this made mine, if I receive Christ?

Answer. Yes; if thou receive him as God offereth him to thee. <B06> John 3:16.

Question. How doth God offer him to me?

Answer. Even as a rich man freely offereth an alms to a beggar, and so must thou receive him. <B06> John 6:32-36.

Question. Hath he indeed made amends for sin? and would indeed have me accept of what he hath done?

Answer. That he hath made amends for sin, is evident, because God for Christ's sake forgiveth thee. And it is as evident that he would have thee accept thereof, because he offereth it to thee, and hath sworn to give thee the utmost benefit, namely, eternal life, if thou dost receive it; yea, and hath threatened thee with eternal damnation, if after all this thou shalt neglect so great salvation. ^{<4063>}Ephesians 4:32; ^{<4064>}Romans 3:24; ^{<4065>}Matthew 28:19; ^{<4066>}Acts 13:32, 33, 38, 39; ^{<4067>}Hebrews 6:17, 18 ^{<4068>}Hebrews 2:3; ^{<4069>}Mark 16:16.

Question. But how must I be qualified, before I shall dare to believe in Christ?

Answer. Come, sensible of thy sins, and of the wrath of God due unto them; for thus thou art bid to come. ^{<4070>}Matthew 11:28.

Question. Did ever any come thus to Christ?

Answer. David came thus; Paul and the jailer came thus; also Christ's murderers came thus. ^{<4071>}Psalms 51:1-3; ^{<4072>}Acts 9:6; ^{<4073>}Acts 16:30, 31; ^{<4074>}Acts 2:37.

Question. But doth it not seem most reasonable that we should first mend and be good?

Answer. "The whole have no need of the physician, but those that are sick. Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." ^{<4075>}Mark 2:17.

Question. But is it not the best way, if one can, to mend first?

Answer. This is just as if a sick man should say, Is it not best for me to be well before I go to the physician; or as if a wounded man should say, When I am cured I will lay on the plaster.

Question. But when a poor creature sees its vileness, it is afraid to come to Christ, is it not?

Answer. Yes; but without ground; for he hath said, "Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not. And to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at my word." ^{<4076>}Isaiah 35:4 ^{<4077>}Isaiah 66:2.

Question. What encouragement can be given us thus to come?

Answer. The prodigal came thus, and his father received him, and fell upon his neck and kissed him. Thus he received the Colossians, and consequently all that are saved. Luke 15; ^{<102>}Colossians 2:13.

Question. Will you give me one more encouragement?

Answer. The promises are so worded, that they that are scarlet sinners, crimson sinners, blasphemous sinners, have encouragement to come to him with hopes of life. ^{<318>}Isaiah 1:18; ^{<403>}Mark 3:28; ^{<467>}John 6:37; ^{<1247>}Luke 24:47; ^{<4136>}Acts 13:36.

Question. Shall any one that believeth be saved?

Answer. If they believe as the scriptures have said ; if the scriptures be fulfilled in their believing. ^{<473>}John 7:38; ^{<523>}James 2:23.

Question. What do you mean by that?

Answer. When faith, which a man saith he hath, proveth itself to be of the right kind, by its acts and operations in the mind of a poor sinner. ^{<529>}James 2:19-23.

Question. Why, are there many kinds of faith?

Answer. Yes; there is a faith that will stand with a heart as hard as a rock; and a short, winded faith, which dureth for a while; in time of temptation such fall away. ^{<483>}Luke 8:13.

Question. Is there any other kind of faith?

Answer. Yes; there is a faith that hath no more life in it, than hath the body of a dead man. ^{<526>}James 2:26.

Question. Is there yet another of these unprofitable faiths?

Answer. Yes; there is a faith that is of ourselves, and not of the special grace of God. ^{<418>}Ephesians 2:8.

Question. Tell me if there be yet another?

Answer. There is a faith that standeth in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God. <418>1 Corinthians 2:5.

Question. Is here all?

Answer. No; there is a faith that seems to be holy, but it will not do, because it is not the most holy faith. <602>2 Peter 2:20; <810>Jude 20.

Question. Alas! if there be so many kinds of faith that will not profit to salvation, how easy is it for me to be deceived?

Answer. It is easy indeed! And therefore the Holy Ghost doth in this thing so often caution us, “Be not deceived; let no man deceive you; and if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.” <418>1 Corinthians 6:9; <481>Ephesians 5:6; <810>Galatians 6:3.

Question. But is there no way to distinguish the right faith from that which is wrong?

Answer. Yes; and that by the manner of its coming and operation.

Question. What do you mean by the manner of its coming?

Answer. Nay, you must make two questions of this one; that is, what is it for faith to come? and in what manner doth it come?

Question. Well, then, what is it for faith to come?

Answer. This word, *faith comes*, supposeth thou wert once without it; it also supposeth, that thou didst not fetch it whence it was; it also supposeth it hath a way of coming. <483>Galatians 3:23, 25.

Question. That I was once without it, you intimated before; but must I take it without proof for granted?

Answer. I will give you a proof or two. “God hath concluded them all in unbelief;” and again it is said, “faith comes;” and again the Holy Ghost insinuateth our estate to be dreadful before faith come. <813>Romans 11:32; 10:17; <483>Galatians 3:23.

Question. Why, how is it with men before faith comes?

Answer. Without faith, or before faith comes, it is impossible to please God; for whether their actions be civil or religious, they sin in all they do. “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination,” and “the plowing of the wicked is sin.” ^{<1204>}Proverbs 21:4, 27.

Question. Is not this a very sad condition?

Answer. Yes; but this is not all; for their present unbelief bindeth them over to wrath, by shutting them up to the law; it also draweth them away from God, and will drown them in everlasting damnation, if the grace of God prevent not. ^{<802>}Galatians 3:23; ^{<807>}Hebrews 3:17, 18; ^{<808>}John 3:36.

Question. What if a man saw himself in this condition?

Answer. There are many see themselves in this condition.

Question. How came they to see it?

Answer. By the preaching and hearing of the word of God. ^{<808>}John 16:8, 9.

Question. And what do such think of themselves?

Answer. They do not only think, but know that in this condition they are without Christ, without hope, and without God in the world. ^{<811>}Ephesians 2:11, 12.

Question. Are not they happy that see not themselves in this condition?

Answer. Yes; if they have seen themselves delivered therefrom by a work of faith in their souls; else not.

Question. How do you mean?

Answer. I mean, if they have seen themselves delivered from this state, by being by the word and Spirit of God implanted into the faith of Christ. ^{<817>}Romans 11:17-19.

Question. Are not they happy that are never troubled with this sad sight of their condition?

Answer. They are just so happy as is that man who lieth fast asleep in his house while it is on fire about his ears. Can a man be happy that is ignorant that he is without God, and Christ, and hope? Can a man be happy that is ignorant that he is hanging over hell by the poor weak thread of an uncertain life? For this is the state of such a one.

Question. But may not faith come to a man without he see himself to be first in this condition?

Answer. It is God's ordinary way to convince men of this their sad condition, before he revealeth to them the righteousness of faith, or worketh faith in them to lay hold of that righteousness. John 16:9-11; Galatians 3:23, 25.

Question. How then do you conclude of them that never saw themselves shut up by unbelief under sin and the curse of God?

Answer. I will not judge them for the future; God may convert them before they die. But at present their state is miserable ; for because they are shut up and held prisoners by the law, by their lusts, and by the devil, and unbelief, therefore they cannot so much as with their hearts desire that God would have mercy upon them, and bring them out of their snares and chains.

Question. Then do you count it better for a man to see his condition by nature, than to be ignorant thereof?

Answer. Better a thousand times to see it in this world, than to see it in hell-fire; for he must see it there or here. Now if he sees it here, this is the place of prayer; here is the preaching of the word, which is God's ordinance to beget faith. Besides, here God applieth promises of mercy to the desolate, and Christ also hath protested, that he that cometh to him, He will in no wise cast out. John 6:37.

Question. I am convinced that I was once without faith, and also that I cannot fetch it; but pray tell me the way of its coming?

Answer. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Romans 10:17.

Question. How by hearing?

Answer. God mixeth it with the word, when he absolutely intendeth the salvation of the sinner, ^{<S00D>}Hebrews 4:2, 3 ; ^{<H038>}Acts 13:48.

Question. And how do men hear, when faith is mixed with the word?

Answer. They hear the word not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God, which worketh effectually in them that believe. I Thessalonians 2:13.

Question. Pray tell me now the manner of its coming?

Answer. It comes through difficulty; it comes gradually.

Question. What are the difficulties which oppose it at its coming?

Answer. Sense of unworthiness, guilt of conscience, natural reason, unbelief, and arguments forged in hell, and thence suggested by the devil into the heart against it. ^{<L078>}Luke 5:8; ^{<H024>}Mark 9:24; ^{<I065>}Isaiah 6:5; ^{<R048>}Romans 4:18-21.

Question. How doth faith come gradually?

Answer. Perhaps at first it is but like a grain of mustard seed, small, and weak. ^{<M020>}Matthew 17:20.

Question. Will you explain it further?

Answer. Faith, at first, perhaps may have its excellency lie in view only, that is in seeing where justification and salvation, are; after that it may step a degree higher, and be able to say, 'It may be,' or 'Who can tell but I may obtain this salvation?' Again, it may perhaps go yet a step higher, and arrive to some short and transient assurance. ^{<S010>}Hebrews 11:13; ^{<J013>}Joel 2:13, 14; ^{<Z018>}Zephaniah 2:3; ^{<P010>}Psalms 30:7.

Question. But doth faith come only by hearing?

Answer. It is usually begotten by the word preached; but after it is begotten, it is increased several ways. It is increased by prayer; it is increased by Christian conference; it is increased by reading; it is increased by meditation; it is increased by the remembrance of former experiences.

^{<2775} Luke 17:5; ^{<1024} Mark 9:24; ^{<8112} Romans 1:12; 16:25, 26; ^{<5042} 1 Timothy 4:12-16; ^{<1668} Matthew 16:8, 9.

Question. What do these things teach us?

Answer. They teach us that the men of this world are very ignorant of, and as much without desire after faith. They neither hear, nor pray, confer, nor read, nor meditate, for the sake of faith.

Question. But you said even now, that this faith was distinguished from that which profiteth not to salvation, as by the manner of its coming, so by its operation. Pray what is its operation?

Answer. It causeth the soul to see in the light thereof, that there is no righteousness in this world that can save the sinner. ^{<2340} Isaiah 64:6.

Question. How doth it give the soul this sight?

Answer. By giving him to understand the law, and his own inability to do it. ^{<805} Galatians 2:15, 16.

Question. And doth it always show the soul where justifying righteousness is?

Answer. Yes; it shows that justifying righteousness is only to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ, in what he hath done and suffered in the flesh. ^{<265} Isaiah 45:24, 25; ^{<1018} Philippians 3:3-9.

Question. How doth faith find this righteousness in Christ?

Answer. By the word, which is therefore called the word of faith, because faith by that findeth sufficient righteousness in him. ^{<506} Romans 10:6-9.

Question. How else doth it operate in the soul?

Answer. It applieth this righteousness to the sinner, and also helps him to embrace it. ^{<812} Romans 3:21, 22; ^{<403} 1 Corinthians 1:30; ^{<822} Galatians 2:20.

Question. How else doth it operate?

Answer. By this application of Christ, the soul is quickened to life, spiritualized, and made heavenly. For right faith quickeneth to spiritual

life, purifies and sanctifies the heart; and worketh up the man that hath it, into the image of Jesus Christ. ^{<SID>}Colossians 2:12, 13; ^{<HEB>}Acts 15:9; ^{<AKK>}Acts 26:18; ^{<AKK>}2 Corinthians 3:18.

Question. How else doth it operate?

Answer. It giveth the soul peace with God through Jesus Christ. ^{<ROM>}Romans 5:1.

Question. Surely Christ is of great esteem with them that have this faith in him. Is he not?

Answer. Yes, yes. Unto them therefore which believe he is precious; precious in his person, precious in his undertakings, precious in his word. ^{<ROM>}1 Peter 2:7; 1:18, 19; ^{<ROM>}2 Peter 1:3, 4.

Question. Can these people then, that have this faith, endure to have this Christ spoken against?

Answer. O, No! This is a sword in their bones, and a burden that they cannot bear. ^{<PSA>}Psalms 42:10; ^{<ZEP>}Zephaniah 3:18, 19.

Question. Doth it not go near them when they see his ways and people discountenanced?


Answer. Yes; and they also choose rather to be despised and persecuted with them, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. ^{<HEB>}Hebrews 11:24, 25.

Question. Do they not pray much for his second coming?

Answer. Yes, yes; they would fain see him on this side the clouds of heaven. Their conversation is in heaven, from whence they look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. ^{<PHI>}Philippians 3:20.

Question. And do they live in this world as if he were to come presently?

Answer. Yes; for his coming will be glorious and dreadful, full of mercy and judgment.

“The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works therein shall be burnt up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!”  2 Peter 3:10, 11.

CHAPTER 7

OF PRAYER.

Question. Well, I am glad that you have showed me that I must worship God by confession of sin, and faith in Jesus Christ. Is there any other thing a part of the true worship of God?

Answer. Yes, several; I will mention only two more at this time.

Question. What are they?

Answer. Prayer and self-denial.

Question. Is prayer then a part of the worship of God?

Answer. Yes; a great part of it.

Question. How do you prove that?

Answer. “O come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.” ^{<19518>} Psalm 95:5.

Question. Is there another scripture proves it?

Answer. Yes. “Then she came and worshipped him, saying, Lord help me.” ^{<11525>} Matthew 15:25.

Question. What is prayer?

Answer. A sincere, sensible, affectionate, pouring out of the soul to God in the name of Christ, for what God hath promised. ^{<10518>} Proverbs 15:8; ^{<26118>} Jeremiah 31:18, 19; ^{<19413>} Psalm 42:2, 3 4; ^{<13413>} John 14:13, 14; ^{<15114>} 1 John 5:14.

Question. Doth not everybody pray?

Answer. No. “The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God ; God is not in all his thoughts.” ^{<10114>} Psalm 10:4.

Question. What will become of them that do not pray?

Answer. They do not worship God, and he will destroy them. “Pour out thy fury (said the prophet) upon the heathen, and upon the families that call not upon thy name.” ^{<990>}Psalm 79:6; ^{<24025>}Jeremiah 10:25.

Question. But seeing God knoweth what we want, why doth he not give us what we need, without praying?

Answer. His counsel and wisdom leadeth him otherwise.

“Thus saith the Lord, I will yet be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them.” ^{<2337>}Ezekiel 36:37.

Question. Why will God have us pray?

Answer. Because he would be acknowledged by thee, that he is above thee; and therefore would have thee come to him as the mean come to the mighty. Thus Abraham came unto him. ^{<01827>}Genesis 18:27, 30.

Question. Is there another reason why I should pray?

Answer. Yes; for by prayer thou acknowledgest, that help is not in thine own power. ^{<0106>}2 Chronicles 20:6, 12.

Question. What reason else have you why I should pray?

Answer. By prayer thou confessest that help is only in him. ^{<0920>}Psalm 62:1.

Question. What other reasons have you?

Answer. By prayer thou confessest thou canst not live without his grace and mercy. ^{<0143>}Matthew 14:30; ^{<30407>}Hebrews 4:16.

Question. Are all that pray heard of the Lord?

Answer. No.

“They looked, (that is, prayed,) but there was none to save them; even unto the Lord, but he answered them not.”

^{<0122>}2 Samuel 22:42.

Question. To what doth God compare the prayers which he refuseth to answer?

Answer. He compareth them to the howling of a dog. ^{<3074>}Hosea 7:14.

Question. Who be they, whose prayers God will not answer?

Answer. Theirs who think to be heard for their much speaking, and vain repetition. ^{<100>}Matthew 6:7.

Question. Is there any other, whose prayer God refuseth?

Answer. Yes; there are that ask and have not, because what they ask, they would spend upon their lusts. ^{<5008>}James 4:3.

Question. Is there any other, whose prayer God refuseth?

Answer. Yes. "If I regard iniquity in my heart," the Lord will not hear my prayer. ^{<1008>}Psalms 66:18.

Question. Is the regarding of sin in our heart such a deadly hindrance to prayer?

Answer.

"Son of man, (saith God,) these men have set up their idols in their heart, and have put the stumbling-block of their iniquity before their face; should I be inquired of at all by them? 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." ^{<3408>}Ezekiel 14:3, 8.

Question. Whose prayers be they that God will hear?

Answer. The prayers of the poor and needy. ^{<1806>}Psalms 34:6; ^{<3417>}Isaiah 41:17.

Question. What do you mean by the poor?

Answer. Such as have poverty in spirit. ^{<1008>}Matthew 5:3.

Question. Who are they that are poor in spirit?

Answer. They that are sensible of the want and necessity of all those things of God, that prepare a man to the kingdom of heaven.

Question. What things are they?

Answer. Faith, hope, love, joy, peace, a new heart, the Holy Ghost, sanctification. See ~~1818~~ James 2:5; ~~1818~~ 2 Thessalonians 2:16; ~~1818~~ Ezekiel 36:26, 27.

Question. What do you mean by the needy?

Answer. Those whose souls long, and cannot be satisfied without the enjoyment of these blessed things. ~~1818~~ Psalm 63:1; ~~1818~~ Psalm 119:20.

Question. Will God hear the prayers of such?

Answer. Yes. “For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with good things.” ~~1818~~ Psalm 107:9.

Question. How shall I know that I am one of those to whom God will give these things?

Answer. If thou seest a beauty in them beyond the beauty of all other things. ~~1818~~ Psalm 110:3.

Question. How else shall I know he heareth me?

Answer. If thou desirest them for their beauty’s sake. ~~1818~~ Psalm 90:14, 17.

Question. How else should I know I shall have them?

Answer. When thy groanings after them are beyond expression. ~~1818~~ Romans 8:26.

Question. How else should I know, and so be encouraged to pray?

Answer. When thou followest hard after God in all his ordinances for the obtaining of them. ~~1818~~ Psalm 27:4; ~~1818~~ Isaiah 64:5.

Question. How else should I know?

Answer. When thou makest good use of that little thou hast already. ~~1818~~ Revelation 3:8.

Question. Are here all the good signs that my prayers shall be heard?

Answer. No; there is one more, without which thou shalt never obtain.

Question. Pray what is that?

Answer. Thou must plead with God the name and merits of Jesus Christ, for whose sake only God giveth thee these things.

“If we ask any thing in his name, he heareth us;” and, “whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, (saith Christ,) I will do it.”

^{<B443} John 14:13, 14.

Question. Doth God always answer presently?

Answer. Sometimes he doth, sometimes he doth not. ^{<2716} Isaiah 30:19;
^{<2700} Daniel 10:12.

Question. Is not God's deferring a sign of his anger?

Answer. Sometimes it is not, and sometimes it is.

Question. When is it no sign of his anger?

Answer. When we have not wickedly departed from him by our sins.
^{<2817} Luke 18:7.

Question. When is it a sign of his anger?

Answer. When we have backslidden; when we have not repented some former miscarriages, ^{<3544} Hosea 5:14, 15.

Question. Why doth God defer to hear their prayers that have not wickedly departed from him?

Answer. He loves to hear their voice, to try their faith, to see their importunity, and to observe how they can wrestle with him for a blessing.
Song 2:14; ^{<4152} Matthew 15:22-29 ; ^{<4105} Luke 11:5-8; ^{<4325} Genesis 32:25-27.

Question. But is not deferring to answer prayer a great discouragement to praying?

Answer. Though it is, because of our unbelief, yet it ought not to be, because God is faithful. “Therefore men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” ~~QRI~~ Luke 18:1-7.

CHAPTER 8

OF SELF-DENIAL.

Question. I am glad you have thus far granted my request; but you told me that there was another part of God's worship; pray repeat that again?

Answer. It is self-denial.

Question. Now I remember it well. Pray how do you prove that self-denial is called a part of God's worship?

Answer. It is said of Abraham, that when he went to offer up his son Isaac upon the altar for a burnt-offering, which was to him a very great part of self-denial, that he counted that act of his, worshiping God.

Question. Will you be pleased to read the text?

Answer. Yes. "And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship," etc. This now was when he was going to slay his son Isaac. ^{<1215}Genesis 22:5.

Question. What is self-denial?

Answer. It is for a man to forsake his all for the sake of Jesus Christ. Meaning, that we prefer Christ above all things this world affords, or the heart can wish for. Which the Christian may with good reason do, for in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead; he has unsearchable riches of wisdom and knowledge to bestow, all-sufficient grace and strength, to enable us to do and suffer his will, and everlasting glory in heaven. — W.M.

Question. Will you prove this by a scripture or two?

Answer. Yes. "Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." ^{<2433}Luke 14:33.

Question. Indeed this is a full place. Can you give me one more?

Answer. Yes. “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ; yea doubtless and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,” etc.

<1080> Philippians 3:7, 8.

Question. These two are indeed a sufficient answer to my question. But pray will you now give me some particular instances of the self-denial of them that have heretofore been the followers of Christ?

Answer. Yes. Abel denied himself, to the losing of his blood. Abraham denied himself, to the losing of his country and his father’s house. Moses denied himself of a crown and a kingdom, and of ease and tranquillity. Joseph denied himself of fleshly lusts. <1048> Genesis 4:8; 12:1-4; <8124> Hebrews 11:24-27; <1317> Genesis 39:7, 8, 9.

Question. But these men each of them denied themselves but of some things; did they?

Answer. You see Abel lost all, his blood and all; Abraham left his country, to the hazard of his life; so did Moses, in leaving the crown and kingdom, and Joseph in denying his mistress. <1123> Genesis 12:13; <8127> Hebrews 11:27; <1330> Genesis 39:10-15.

Question. Will you discourse a little particularly of self-denial?

Answer. With all my heart.

Question. First then, pray in what spirit must this self-denial be performed?

Answer. It must be done in the spirit of faith, of love, and of a sound mind; otherwise, “if a man should sell all that he hath and give to the poor, and his body to be burnt besides, it would profit him nothing.” <4311> 1 Corinthians 13:1, 2, 3.

Question. Who are like to miscarry here?

Answer. They whose ends in self-denial are not according to the proposals of the gospel.

Question. Who are they?

Answer. They that suffer through strife and vain-glory; or thus, they who seek in their sufferings the praise of men more than the glory of Christ, and profit of their neighbor.

Question. Who else are like to miscarry here?

Answer. They that have designs, like Ziba, to ingratiate themselves by their pretended self-denial into the affections of the godly, and to enrich themselves by this means. ^{<066>}2 Samuel 16:1-4.

Question. Are there any other like to miscarry here?

Answer. Yes; they that by denying themselves think with the Pharisee, to make themselves stand more righteous in God's eyes than others. ^{<088>}Luke 18:11, 12.

Question. Who else are in danger of miscarrying here?

Answer. They who have fainted in their works; they whose self-denial hath at last been overcome by self-love. ^{<888>}Galatians 3:4; 6:9.

Question. Shall I propound a few more questions?

Answer. If you please.

Question. What then if a man promiseth to deny himself hereafter and not now, is not this one step to this kind of worship?

Answer. No, by no means. For the reason why this man refuseth to deny himself now, is because his heart at present sticks closer to his lusts and the world, than to God and Christ.

Question. Can you give me a scripture instance to make this out?

Answer. Yes. Esau never intended for ever to part with the blessing; he intended to have it hereafter. But God counted his not choosing it at present, a despising of it, and a preferring of his lusts before it: and therefore when *he* would, God would not, but rejected both him and his tears. ^{<025>}Genesis 25:30-34; ^{<824>}Hebrews 12:14-16.

Question. How and if a man shall say thus, ‘I am willing to deny myself in many things,’ though he cannot deny himself in all, is not this one step in this part of the worship of God?

Answer. No, in no wise; for this man doth just like Saul, he will slay a part, and will keep a part alive. The kingdom must be taken from him also. I Samuel 15:23.

Question. How if a man be willing to lose all but his life?

Answer. “He that will save his life shall lose it, but he that will lose his life for my sake, (saith Christ,) shall save it unto life eternal.” ^{<1625>}Matthew 16:25; ^{<1625>}John 12:25.

Question. How if a man *has been* willing to lose all that he hath, but is not now; will not God accept of his willingness in time past, though he be otherwise *now*?

Answer. No; for the true disciple must deny himself daily, take up his cross daily, and go after Jesus Christ. ^{<1625>}Luke 9:23.

Question. But how if a man carrieth it well *outwardly*, so that he doth not dishonor the gospel before men, may not this be counted self-denial?

Answer. No, if he be not right at heart. For though man looketh on the outward appearance, God looketh at the heart. ^{<1625>}1 Samuel 16:7.

Question. But if I be afraid my heart may deceive me in this great work, if hard things come upon me hereafter, is there no way to find out whether it will deceive me then or no?

Answer. I will give you a few answers to this question, and will show you first whose heart is like to deceive him in this work.

Question. Will you befriend me so much?

Answer. Yes. 1. He that makes not daily conscience of self-denial, is very unlike to abide a disciple for time to come, if difficult. Judas did not deny himself daily, and therefore fell when the temptation came. ^{<1625>}John 12:6.

Question. Will you give me another sign?

Answer. Yes; he that indulgeth any one secret lust under a profession, is not like to deny himself in all things for Christ.

Question. Who are they that indulge their lusts?

Answer. They that make provision for them, either in apparel, or diet, or otherwise. ^{<583>}Romans 13:12-14; ^{<2806>}Isaiah 3:6-21; ^{<3068>}Amos 6:3-6.

Question. Who else do so?

Answer. They that excuse their sins, and keep them disguised, that they may not be reprehended, as Saul did. ^{<0518>}1 Samuel 15:18-22.

Question. Who else are they that indulge their lusts?

Answer. They that heap up to themselves such teachers as favor their lusts. ^{<5002>}2 Timothy 4:3, 4; ^{<2300>}Isaiah 30:10.

Question. Who else do indulge their sins?

Answer. They that choose rather to walk by the imperfect lives of professors, than by the holy word of God; or thus, they that make the miscarriages of some good men an encouragement unto themselves to forbear to be exact in self-denial; these

“eat up the sins of God’s people, as men eat bread.”
^{<3007>}Hosea 4:7-9.

Question. Will you now show me who are like to do this part of God’s worship acceptably?

Answer. Yes; he whose heart is set against sin as sin, is like to deny himself acceptably. ^{<8717>}Romans 7:13, 14.

Question. Who else?

Answer. He that hath the sense and savor of forgiveness of sins upon his heart. ^{<0514>}2 Corinthians 5:14.

Question. Who else is like to deny himself well?

Answer. He that hath his affections set upon things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. ^{<5001>}Colossians 3:1-5.

Question. Who else is like to deny himself well for Christ?

Answer. He that seeth a greater treasure in self-denial than in self-seeking.
<712> 2 Corinthians 12:9-11; <812> Hebrews 11:24-26.

Question. Are there no other signs of one that is like to do this part of God's worship acceptably?

Answer. Yes; he that takes up his cross daily, and makes Christ's doctrine his example. <467> Luke 6:47, 48; <812> John 12:25, 26.

Question. But how do you discover a man to be such a one?

Answer. He keepeth his heart with all diligence; he had rather die than sin; ill carriages of professors break his heart; nothing is so dear to him as the glory of Christ. <1042> Proverbs 4:23; <8115> Numbers 11:15; <1088> Philippians 3:18; <4024> Acts 20:24.

Question. Pray can you give me some motive to self-denial?

Answer. Yes; the Lord Jesus denied himself for thee. What sayest thou to that?

Question. Wherein did Christ deny himself for me?

Answer. He left his heaven for thee; he denied for thy sake to have so much of this world as hath a fox or a bird, and he spilt his most precious blood for thee. <8128> John 6:38; <4058> Luke 9:58; <4082> 2 Corinthians 8:9; <6015> Revelation 1:5.

Question. Can you give me another motive to self-denial?

Answer. Yes. "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" <4086> Mark 8:36.

Question. But why doth God require self-denial of them that will be saved?

Answer. God doth not require self-denial as the means to obtain salvation, but hath laid it down as a proof of the truth of a man's affections to God and Christ.

Question. How is self-denial a proof of the truth of a man's affections to God?

Answer. In that for the sake of his service he leaveth all his enjoyments in this world. Thus he proved Abraham's affections; thus he proved Peter's affections; and thus he proved their affections that you read of in the gospel. ^{<122>}Genesis 22:12; ^{<108>}Matthew 4:18-22; ^{<105>}Luke 9:57-63.

Question. What reason else can you produce why God requireth self-denial?

Answer. Self-denial is one of the distinguishing characters by which true Christians are manifested from the reigned ones. For those that are feigned flatter God with their mouth, but their hearts seek themselves; but the sincere, for the love that he hath to Christ, forsaketh all that he hath for his sake. ^{<108>}Psalms 128:36, 37; ^{<108>}Ezekiel 33:31, 32.

Question. Is there yet another reason why God requireth self-denial of them that profess his name?

Answer. Yes; because by self-denial the power and goodness of the truths of God are made manifest to the incredulous world. For they cannot see but by the self-denial of God's people, that there is such power, glory, goodness, and desirableness in God's truth as indeed there is. ^{<108>}Daniel 3:16, 28; ^{<108>}Philippians 1:12, 13.

Question. Have you another reason why God requireth self-denial?

Answer. Yes; because self-denial prepareth a man, though not for the pardon of his sin, yet for that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, that is laid up only for them that deny all that they have for the Lord Jesus, for his name and cause in this world. ^{<108>}2 Corinthians 4:8, 9, 10, 17; ^{<108>}2 Thessalonians 1:5, 6.

Question. Before you conclude, will you give me a few instances of the severity of God's hand upon some professors that have not denied themselves when called thereto by Him?

Answer. Yes, willingly. Lot's wife, for but looking behind her towards Sodom, when God called her from it, was stricken from heaven, and turned

into a pillar of salt. Therefore remember Lot's wife.* ^{<197>}Genesis 19:17, 26; ^{<173>}Luke 17:31, 32. *Unbelief, disobedience, worldly-mindedness, contempt of God's threatenings, and lingerings after the forbidden society of lewd and wicked persons, prove the destruction of many precious souls. Considering therefore our own weakness and depravity, we should be ever attentive to the good word of infallible truth, believe it, and intreat the Lord to make us happy partakers of all its great and precious promises. — W. M.

Question. Can you give me another instance?

Answer. Yes. Esau, for not denying himself of one morsel of meat, was denied a share in the blessing, and could never obtain it after, though he sought it carefully with tears. ^{<125>}Genesis 25:32-34; ^{<125>}Hebrews 12:15, 16.

Question. Have you at hand another instance?

Answer. Yes. Judas, for not denying himself, lost Christ, his soul, and heaven; and is continued the great object of God's wrath among all damned souls. ^{<115>}John 12:5, 6; ^{<121>}Luke 22:3-6; ^{<134>}Matthew 26:14-16; ^{<125>}Acts 1:25.

Question. Will you give me one more instance, and so conclude?

Answer. Yes. Ananias, and Sapphira his wife, did, for the want of self-denial, pull upon themselves such wrath of God, that he slew them, while they stood in the midst before the Apostles. ^{<111>}Acts 5:1-15.

CHAPTER 9

THE CONCLUSION.

BEFORE I wind up this discourse, I would lay down these few things for you to consider and meditate upon.

- 1.** Consider, that seeing all and every one by nature are accounted sinners, it is no matter whether thy actual sins be little or great, few or many; thy sinful nature hath already laid thee under the curse of the law.
- 2.** Consider, that therefore thou hast already ground for humiliation, sins to repent of, wrath to fly from, or a soul to be damned.
- 3.** Consider, that time stays not for thee, and also that as time goes, sin increaseth; so that at last the end of thy time, and the completing of thy sin, are like to come upon thee in one moment.
- 4.** Bring thy last day often to thy bed-side, and ask thy heart, If this morning thou wast to die, if thou be ready to die or no?
- 5.** Know it is a sad thing to lie a dying, and to be afraid to die; to lie a dying, and not to know whither thou art going; to lie a dying, and not to know whether good angels or bad must conduct thee out of this miserable world.
- 6.** Be often remembering what a blessed thing it is to be saved, to go to heaven, to be made like angels, and to dwell with God and Christ to all eternity.
- 7.** Consider how sweet the thought of salvation will be to thee, when thou seest thyself in heaven, whilst others are roaring in hell.

The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.

PASTORAL LETTERS:

ADDRESSED TO SEVERAL MEMBERS
OF THE CHURCH OF BEDFORD.

BY JOHN BUNYAN,

*Written by the Appointment, and Subscribed in the Name and With
the Consent of the Church.*

PASTORAL LETTERS.

LETTER 1

TO MR. ANTHONY HARRINGTON, OF BEDFORD.

(1669-1672.)

Mr. Harrington, prior to 1650, was a leading man among the Dissenters of Bedford. His zeal so provoked John Gifford, (in his ungodliness,) that he thought often of killing him. Mr. Harrington was driven from his family by persecution in 1669; but returned in 1681. During the first part of this interval — from August 1668 to 1672 — Bunyan was allowed by his kind jailer to attend the church meetings, and was “regularly present.” J. N. B

DEARLY BELOVED BROTHER,

GRACE, mercy, and peace be with you always, by Jesus Christ our Lord, to the praise of God the Father, and your everlasting consolation and increase of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen. Blessed be God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who by him hath called us unto his kingdom in glory; 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, even the forgiveness of our sins, according to the riches of his grace.

With length of days is understanding. Your long progress in the ways of God and our Father, hath given you rich experience of that grace that is not only laid up for us in Christ, but to be brought unto us when he shall be revealed from heaven with all his saints. Wherefore, brother, make it manifest that you are one of those scribes we read of, that is not only instructed *into*, but *unto* the kingdom of God. Let it be seen by all your ways that the secrets of God are with you, and that you have in store things new and old in your heart, as in God’s treasure house. Gravity

becometh the ancients in the house of God. Fathers should be examples unto children.

We are comforted in the remembrance of thee, Brother, while we consider, that notwithstanding thy natural infirmity, yet thou prizest good conscience above thine own enjoyments. And since thou couldst not with quiet enjoy it at home, thou hast left thy concerns in this world, (though in much hazard and danger,) that thou mayest keep it abroad. But remember the good word of God; “No man shall desire thy land, when thou shalt go to appear before the Lord thy God, thrice in the year.” Wherefore, let neither the remembrance of what thou hast left, nor thought of its being subject to casualty, either distract thee in thy communion with God, or prevail with thee to do aught against good conscience, or unworthy thy grey hairs ; which are then the glory of old men, when found in the way of righteousness. John saith, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” Having always a good conscience towards God, and towards men — this is armor of righteousness, both on the right hand, and on the left. You, brother Harrington, have lived to see the slippery and unstable nature that is in earthly things; wherefore we beseech you to expect no more therefrom than the word of God hath promised; which is as much in little as in much thereof, if not more in many respects. “He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack.” While Israel sat by the flesh-pots in Egypt, they had no manna, they drank not the water out of the rock; these things were reserved for their wilderness condition — to support them in the waste howling wilderness. We speak this to encourage you, knowing you are subject to temptation with us. For we hope it is because God loveth you, that he hath driven you from your incumbrances, that you may have occasion before you die, therein to solace yourself with your God, and the Lord Jesus Christ; we mean, that you may do it with more leisure and less distraction, than when the lowing of the oxen had continual sound in your ears. Man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth: wherefore, being denied a fullness here is no token of God’s displeasure against our spiritual welfare, but rather, yea always the contrary. Let not these dispensations then discourage and distress your mind. Bless God for the hope that is laid up for you in heaven, whereof you have heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.

God is wise, and doth all things for the best, for them that love him. You know not yet, but you may know afterward, what sins and temptations God hath prevented, by driving you thus from your habitation ; and how hereby he hath made way for the exercise of some graces, that could not so well discover themselves in their virtues, when you was here. How subject we are to dote upon, and to be entangled with the snares, that lay couched and hid in this present world, you have great experience with us. Which, because God disliketh, (it being uncomely for the men of another world,) therefore often God plucketh down and pulleth up what we build and plant. It was customary with our Fathers to dwell in tents, and houses made with boughs; for they sought a city that hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God. When we are desolate, then we trust in God, and make prayers and supplications to him night and day. God help you therefore, that you spend your vacant hours, not as they that wept for Tammuz, but as they who plainly confess to all that they are strangers and pilgrims in the earth.

Brother, we write not but by way of exhortation, beseeching you that you call to remembrance your vows and tears, when you have been in distress; and that you would arm yourself with that mind you read of, ^{811D} Hebrews 12:2, 3, 9; that you may have your garments always white, and that your head may lack no ointment. You cannot be there, where no eyes are upon you; you are a spectacle to God, angels, and men; and being exalted to the profession of Christianity, and also to the communion of God and saints, you can neither stand nor fall by yourself, but the name, and cause, and people of God shall, in some sense, stand and fall with you. Yea, let us have joy in thee, brother; refresh our spirits in the Lord. We have confidence in thee, that thou wilt be circumspect to the adorning of the doctrine of God our Savior. Keep close to the words of faith and sound doctrine, wherein thou hast been instructed; and shun profane and vain babbling, not having to do with men of corrupt minds, that thy profession be not canker-eaten. Hear the word of God with diligence, and pray much for the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. And remember that God hath said, Though there were any of you cast out to the uttermost part of heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them into the place, that I have chosen to set my name there.

Finally, Brother, Farewell. Grace be with thee, Amen. Written by the appointment of the congregation to which you stand related in the faith of the Gospel, and subscribed with their consent by the hands of your brethren,

JOHN BUNYAN, ETC.

LETTER 2

TO REV. JOHN WILSON. (1669.)

The Minister to whom the following Letter is addressed, Mr. Wilson of Hitchin, became the first pastor of the Baptist church there, in 1667. The letter of dismissal from Bedford is signed by Bunyan. Mr. Wilson afterwards became joint Editor with Mr. Chandler of Bedford, of the folio edition of Bunyan's works, in 1692. See *Ivimey's Life of **Bunyan***. J.N.B.

OUR DEARLY BELOVED BROTHER WILSON,

GRACE, mercy, and peace be with thee, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. Blessed be God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of all mercy, and the God of all comfort, for the abundant grace bestowed on thee, brother; and for that thou art so called, so preserved in Christ Jesus; who, we trust, will preserve thee to his kingdom and glory: to whom be honor and power everlasting.

We are comforted in thee, our dearly beloved, when we remember that from a child, thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ; which faith was also in thy tender years fruitful and flourishing in thy gracious heart, to the great comfort of us thy brethren, and the glory of that grace that hath translated us out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

It is also joy to us to behold, that notwithstanding thy lot is cast in a place of high transgression; yet thou showest out of a good conversation thy works with meekness of wisdom. God help thee, brother, to remember the days of thy youth; the first ways of David were best. There are but few can say as Caleb, "As my strength was forty years since, so it is now, both to go out and come in before the people of God."

'Tis also said of Moses at the day of his death, his natural force was not abated; neither did his eyes wax dim. Brother, be always looking into the perfect law of liberty: and *continue* therein. The customs of the people are vain; learn therefore of no man any of the deeds of darkness; we must give an account of ourselves to God. It argueth not only wisdom, but great

grace, when the soul makes all lie level to the word and Spirit of God: when he scorneth and counteth that unworthy his affections, that hath not on it the stamp of the things of heaven. It is said of the children of Israel, “They saw God, and did eat and drink.” That is the right eating and drinking indeed. The glory of young men, is their strength to overcome the wicked one. “My son,” says Solomon, “if thy heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine.”

Now, brother, God hath not only counted you worthy to believe in his Son, but also to profess him before the world. Wear his name in your forehead. They that Christ will own for his servants for ever, must say plainly, ‘I love my Master:’ they must declare plainly, they seek a country. The first note of the peril of the last times is, “Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, proud,” etc. “O man of God! fly these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life; whereunto thou art also called, and hast witnessed a good profession before many witnesses.”

‘Tis said of Hananiah, “he feared God above many.” God continue our joy of thee, brother. Our hope of thee is steadfast, through grace; trusting in the Lord, that he that hath begun a good work in thee, will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ. It is a strange sight to behold those who did feed delicately, to be desolate in the street; and they that were brought up in scarlet, to embrace dunghills. We speak not these things to shame thee, but as our beloved brother, we warn thee. “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust.” Watch and be sober. And if thou be inclined to sleep, let that of Delilah rouse thee: “The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!”

Grace be with thee. The Lord is at hand. Behold the Judge stands at the door. Amen. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

Written by the appointment, and subscribed in the name and with the consent of the congregation.

JOHN BUNYAN, ETC.

LETTER 3

TO MRS. TILNEY, OF BEDFORD, AFTER HER REMOVAL TO LONDON. (1672.)

The following Letter to Mrs. Tilney, (the benevolent widow whom Foster pillaged and the poor wept for,) Dr. Southey says, “interdicts her from communicating with a church of which her son-in-law, Mr. Blakey, was Minister, because he was not a Baptist.” This is certainly not the reason assigned in the letter; nor is it likely to be the true one, when we consider their views of communion. Mr. Philip, in his “Life and Times of Bunyan,” assigns the very opposite reason. But the letter speaks for itself. Mr. Ivimey justly says of it, that it is “an example of discipline worthy the imitation of all the churches of Christ.” J.N.B.

OUR DEARLY BELOVED SISTER TILNEY,

GRACE, mercy, and peace be with you by Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

I received your letter, and have presented it to the sight of the brethren, who, after due consideration of your motion, have jointly concluded to give you their answer.

This for yourself, (honored Sister,) you are of high esteem with the church of God in this place, both because his grace hath been bestowed richly upon you, and because of your fruitful fellowship with us; for you have been a daughter of Abraham while here, not being afraid with any amazement. Your holy and quiet behavior also, while with patience and meekness, and in the gentleness of Christ, you suffered yourself to be robbed for his sake, hath the more united our affections to you in the bowels of Jesus Christ. Yea, it hath begotten you reverence also in the hearts of them who were beholders of your meekness and innocency while you suffered; and a stinging conviction, as we are persuaded, in the consciences of those who made spoil for themselves: all which will redound to the praise of God our Father, and to your comfort and everlasting consolation by Christ in the day he shall come to take vengeance for his people, and to be glorified in them that believe.

Wherefore we cannot, (our honored Sister,) but care for your welfare and increase in all good in the faith and kingdom of Christ, whose servant you are, and whose name is written in your forehead; and do therefore pray God and our Father that he would direct your way, and open a door into his temple for you, that you may eat his fat and be refreshed, and that you may drink the pure blood of the grape. And be you assured that with all readiness we will help and forward you what we can therein; for we are not ashamed to own you before all the churches of Christ.

But, our dearly beloved, you know that for our safety and for your profit, it is *behooffal* that we commit you to such, to be fed and governed in the word and doctrines, as we are sufficiently persuaded shall be able to deliver you with joy, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints: otherwise we (that we say not you) shall receive blushing and shame before him and you. Yea, and you also, our honored Sister, may justly charge us with want of love, and a due respect for your eternal condition, if for want of care and circumspection herein, we should commit you to any from whom you should receive damage; or by whom you should not be succored, and fed with the sincere milk of the incorruptible word of God, which is able to save your soul.

Wherefore we may not, neither dare, give our consent that you feed and fold with such whose principles and practices, in matters of faith and worship, we as yet are strangers to: and have not received commendations concerning, either from works of theirs, or epistles from others. Yourself indeed have declared that you are satisfied therein; but, elect Sister, seeing the act of delivering you up, is an act of ours, and not yours, it is convenient, yea, very expedient, that we as to so weighty a matter be well persuaded before.

Wherefore we beseech you, that for the love of our Lord Jesus Christ, you give us leave to inform ourselves yet better before we grant your request ; and that you also forbear to sit down at the table with any, without the consent of our brethren. You were, while with us, obedient, and we trust you will not be unruly now. And for the more quick expedition of this matter, we will propound before you our farther thoughts.

1. Either, we shall consent to your sitting down with brother Cockain, brother Griffith, brother Palmer, or others who of long continuance in the

city, have showed forth their faith, their worship, or good conversation with the word.

2. Or, if you can get a commendatory epistle from brother Owen, brother Cochin, brother Palmer, or brother Griffith, concerning the faith and principles of the person and people you mention, with desire to be guided and governed by; you shall see our readiness in the fear of God, to commit you to the direction and care of that congregation.

Choose you whether of these you will consent unto, and let us know of your resolution. And we beseech you for love's sake, you show with meekness your fear and reverence of Christ's institution, your love to the congregation, and regard to your future good.

Finally, we commit you to God and the word of his grace; who is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified. To God the only wise, be glory and power everlasting. Amen.

Your affectionate brethren, to serve you in the faith and fellowship of the gospel,

JOHN BUNYAN, *etc. etc.*

Sent from Bedford, the 19th of the 4th month, 1672.

LETTER 4

TO MRS. HUSTWHAT.

TO OUR BELOVED SISTER KATHERINE HUSTWHAT.

OUR dearly beloved Sister: — The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, and the God of all comfort, bless thee with abundance of grace and peace through the knowledge of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory evermore. Amen.

It is a comfort to us thy brothers and sisters (with whom grace hath made thee a member of the Lord Jesus) when we remember thy first faith and hope in the Lord Jesus Christ; being persuaded that those beginnings shall not end but in that kingdom and glory which God hath prepared for those that love him. In which persuasion we are the more confirmed, since we hear (to our increase of joy) how our God supporteth thee in all thy temptations and spiritual desertions thou meetest with in the world. The poor and afflicted people, God will save. To be distressed and tempted while here, is a manifestation of our predestination to the ease and peace of another world. Predestinated to be conformable, or (as in the old translation) predestinated “that we should be like-fashioned even to the shape of his Son.” A great part of which lieth in our being distressed, tempted, afflicted as he. And therefore it was, when he was departing hence to the Father, that he as it were looked back, as over his shoulder, to such, saying, “You are they that have continued with me in my temptations; and unto you I appoint a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me.”

Sister, thy keeping low and being emptied from vessel to vessel, is that thou mightest be kept sweet and more clean in thy soul, than thou wouldst, or couldst otherwise be. The first ways of David were his best; and yet those ways were most accompanied with affliction. They that are naked and lodge without clothing, that have no covering in the cold, and that are wet with the showers of the mountains; these embrace the rock for want of a shelter. As outward distresses make us prize outward blessings; so temptations and afflictions of soul make us prize Jesus Christ. He

suffereth us to hunger, and to wander in a bewildered condition, that we may taste and relish the words of God, and not live by bread alone. Temptations always provoke to spiritual appetite; and are therefore very necessary for us, yea, as needful as work and labor to the body, without which it would be overrun with diseases, and unfit for any employment. Therefore, our beloved Sister, stir up the grace of God that is in thee, and lay hold by faith on eternal life, to the which thou art also called ; and count when thou art tempted much, yet the end of that temptation will come; the end, and then the effect. And remember that even our dearest Lord could not break off the temptation in the middle; but “when Satan had ended *all* the temptation, then he departed from him for a season.”

The gospel which thou hast received is no cunningly devised fable, but the very truth and verity of God, and will undoubtedly bring to those that believe, grace and glory, honor and immortality, eternal life, and a world to come. This is the true grace of God wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Wherefore be not shaken in mind, or troubled with unbelief or atheism. Look to the promise, look to Jesus, look to his blood, and what worth it hath with the justice of God for sinners. The Lord direct thy heart into the love of God, and the patient waiting for Jesus Christ, who at his coming will gather the saints together unto him, even those who have made a covenant with him by sacrifice.

Lastly, Sister, farewell. Watch and be sober; have patience to the coming of the Lord; and in the meanwhile look to thy lamp. The Lord pour of his golden oil into it, and also into the vessel of thy soul. Keep thy work before thee, and be renewed in the spirit of thy mind. Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing. We commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith which is in Christ Jesus; to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, one God, be glory and dominion now and for ever.

Written by the appointment of this congregation, and subscribed by their consent, by your dear brethren, who pray for you, and entreat your prayers for this despised handful of the Lord’s heritage.

JOHN BUNYAN, etc. etc.

MR. JOHN BUNYAN'S DYING SAYINGS.

OF SIN.

SIN is the great block and bar to our happiness, the procurer of all miseries to man, both here and hereafter. Take away sin, and nothing can hurt us; for death, temporal, spiritual and eternal, is the wages of it.

Sin, and man for sin, is the object of the wrath of God. How dreadful therefore must his case be who continues in sin! for who can bear or grapple with the wrath of God!

No sin against God can be of little; because it is against the great God of heaven and earth; but if the sinner can find out a little God, it may be easy to find out little sins.

Sin turns all God's grace into wantonness: it is the dare of his justice, the rape of his mercy, the jeer of his patience, the slight of his power, and the contempt of his love.

Take heed of giving thyself liberty of committing one sin, for that will lead thee to another, till by an ill custom it become natural.

To begin a sin is to lay a foundation for a continuance: this continuance is the mother of custom, and impudence at last the issue.

The death of Christ giveth us the best discovery of ourselves, in what condition we were in that nothing could help us but that; and the most clear discovery of the dreadful nature of our sins: for if sin be so dreadful a thing as to wring the heart of the Son of God, how shall a poor wretched sinner be able to bear it?

OF AFFLICTION.

NOTHING can render affliction so insupportable as the load of sin. Would you therefore be fitted for afflictions? Be sure to get the burden of your sins laid aside, and then what affliction soever you may meet with will be very easy to you.

If thou canst hear and bear the rod affliction which God shall lay upon thee, remember this lesson. Thou art beaten that thou mayest be better.

The Lord useth his flail of tribulation, to separate the chaff from the wheat.

The school of the cross is the school of light; it discovers the world's vanity, baseness, and wickedness, and lets us see more of God's mind. Out of dark affliction comes a spiritual light.

In times of affliction we commonly meet with the sweetest experiences of the love of God.

Did we heartily renounce the pleasures of this world, we should be very little troubled for our afflictions: that which renders an afflicted state so insupportable to many, is because they are too much addicted to the pleasures of this life, and so cannot endure that which makes a separation between them.

OF REPENTANCE AND COMING TO CHRIST.

THE end of affliction is the discovery of sin, and of that to bring us to a Savior. Let us therefore, with the prodigal, return unto him, and we shall find ease and rest.

A repenting penitent, though formerly as bad as the worst of men, may by grace become as good as the best.

To be truly sensible of sin, is to sorrow for displeasing of God, to be afflicted that he is displeased by us, more than that he is displeased with us.

Your intentions to repentance, and the neglect of that soul-saving duty, will rise up in judgment against you.

Repentance carries with it a divine rhetoric, and persuades Christ to forgive multitude of sins committed against him.

Say not with thyself, to-morrow I will repent; for it is thy duty to do it daily.

The gospel of grace and salvation is above all doctrines the most dangerous, if it be received in word only by graceless men; if it be not attended with a sensible need of a Savior, and bring them to him. For such men as have only the notion of it are of all men most miserable; for by reason of their knowing more than heathens, this shall only be their final portion, that they shall have greater stripes.

OF PRAYER.

BEFORE you enter into prayer, ask thy soul these questions: **1.** To what end, O my soul, art thou retired into this place? Art thou not come to discourse the Lord in prayer? Is he present, will he hear thee? Is he merciful, will he help thee? Is thy business slight, is it not concerning the welfare of thy soul? What words wilt thou use to move him to compassion?

To make thy preparation complete, consider that thou art but dust and ashes, and he the great God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, “that clothes himself with light as with a garment;” that thou art a vile sinner, he a holy God; that thou art but a poor crawling worm, he the omnipotent Creator.

In all your prayers forget not to thank the Lord for his mercies.

When thou prayest, rather let thy heart be without words, than thy words without a heart.

Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer.

The spirit of prayer is more precious than treasures of gold and silver.

Pray often; for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan.

OF THE LORD'S DAY, SERMONS, AND WEEKDAYS

HAVE a special care to sanctify the Lord's day; for as thou keepest it, so will it be with thee all the week long.

Make the Lord's day the market for thy soul, let the whole day be spent in prayer, repetitions, or meditations; lay aside the affairs the other parts of the week: let the sermon thou hast heard be converted into prayer. Shall God allow thee six days, and wilt not thou afford him one?

In the church be careful to serve God: for thou art in his eyes, and not in man's.

Thou mayest hear sermons often, and do well in practicing what thou hearest; but thou must not expect to be told thee in a pulpit all that thou oughtest to do, but be studious in searching the Scriptures, and reading good books. What thou hearest may be forgotten; but what thou readest may be better retained. Forsake not the public worship of God, lest God forsake thee, not only in public but in private.

In the week-days when thou rises, in the morning, consider,

1. Thou must die.
2. Thou mayest die that minute.
3. What will become of thy soul. Pray often.

At night consider,

1. What sins thou hast committed.
2. How often thou hast prayed.
3. What hath thy mind been bent upon
4. What hath been thy dealing.

5. What thy conversation.

6. If thou callest to mind the errors of the day, sleep not without a confession to God, and a hope of pardon. Thus, every morning and evening, make up thy accounts with Almighty God, and thy reckoning will be the less at last.

OF THE LOVE OF THE WORLD.

NOTHING more hinders a soul from coming to Christ than a vain love of the world; and till a soul is freed from it, it can never have a true love for God.

What are the honors and riches of this world, when compared to the glories of a crown of life?

Love not the world; for it is a moth in a Christian's life.

To despise the world, is the way to enjoy heaven; and blessed are they who delight to converse with God by prayer.

What folly can be greater than to labor for the meat that perisheth, and neglect the food of eternal life?

God or the world must be neglected at parting-time; for then is the time of trial.

To seek yourself in this world is to be lost; and to be humble is to be exalted.

The epicure that delighteth in the dainties of this world, little thinketh that those very creatures will one day witness against him.

OF SUFFERING.

It is not every suffering that makes a martyr, but suffering for the word of God after a right manner: that is, not only for righteousness, but for righteousness' sake; not only for truth, but out of love to truth; not only for God's word, but according to it; to wit, in that holy, humble, meek manner, as the word of God requireth.

It is a rare thing to suffer aright, and to have thy spirit in suffering bent only against God's enemy, sin; sin in doctrine, sin in worship, sin in life, and sin in conversation.

The devil, nor men of the world, can kill thy righteousness, or love to it; but by thy own hand; or separate that and thee asunder without thy own act. Nor will he that doth indeed suffer for the sake of it, or out of love he bears thereto, be tempted to exchange it for the good will of all the world.

I have often thought, that the best of Christians are found in the worst of times; and I have thought again, that one reason why we are no better is because God purges us no more. Noah and Lot, who so holy as they in the time of their afflictions? And yet who so idle as they in the time of their prosperity?

OF DEATH AND JUDGMENT.

As the devil labors by all means to keep out other things that are good, so to keep out of the heart as much as in him lies, the thoughts of passing from this life into another world; for he knows, if he can but keep them from the serious thoughts of death, he shall the more easily keep them in their sins.

Nothing will make us more earnest in working out the work of our salvation, than a frequent meditation of mortality; nothing hath greater influence for the taking off our hearts from vanities, and for the begetting in us desires after holiness.

O sinner, what a condition wilt thou fall into when thou departest this world, if thou depart unconverted! Thou hadst better have been smothered the first hour thou wast born; thou hadst better have been plucked one limb from another; thou hadst better have been made a dog, a toad, a serpent, than to die un-converted: and this thou wilt find true if thou repent not.

A man would be counted a fool to slight a judge before whom he is to have a trial of his whole estate. The trial we have before God is of otherwise

importance; it concerns our eternal happiness or misery; and yet dare we affront him?

The only way for us to escape that terrible judgment, is to be often passing a sentence of condemnation upon ourselves here.

When the sound of the trumpet shall be heard, which shall summon the dead to appear before the tribunal of God, the righteous shall hasten out of their graves, with joy, to meet their Redeemer in the clouds; others shall call to the hills and mountains to fall upon them, to cover them from the sight of their Judge. Let us therefore in time be posing ourselves which of the two we shall be.

OF THE JOYS OF HEAVEN.

THERE is no good in this life but what is mingled with some evil. Honors perplex, riches disquiet, and pleasures ruin health. But in heaven we shall find blessings in their purity, without any ingredient to embitter, with every thing to sweeten them.

Oh! who is able to conceive the inexpressible, inconceivable joys that are there? None but they who have tasted of them. Lord, help us to put such a value upon them here, that in order to prepare ourselves for them, we may be willing to forego the loss of all those deluding pleasures here.

How will the heavens echo of joy, when the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall come to dwell with her husband for ever!

Christ is the desire of nations, the joy of angels, the delight of the Father. What solace then must that soul be filled with, that hath the possession of him to all eternity!

Oh! what acclamations of joy will there be when all the children of God shall meet together, without fear of being disturbed by the antichristian and Cainish brood!

Is there not a time coming when the godly may ask the wicked, What profit they have in their pleasure? What comfort in their greatness? And what fruit in all their labor?

If you would be better satisfied what the beatifical vision means, my request is, that you live holily, and go and see.

OF THE TORMENTS OF HELL.

HEAVEN and salvation is not surely more promised to the godly, than hell and damnation is threatened to, and shall be executed on, the wicked.

When once a man is damned, he may bid adieu to all pleasures.

Oh I who knows the power of God's wrath! None but damned ones.

Sinners' company are the devil and his angels, tormented in everlasting fire with a curse.

Hell would be a kind of paradise, if it were no worse than the worst of this world.

As different as grief is from joy, as torment from rest, as terror from peace, so different is the state of sinners from that of saints in the world to come.

A CONTINUATION OF MR. BUNYAN'S LIFE,

**BEGINNING WHERE HE LEFT OFF, AND CONCLUDING WITH
THE TIME AND MANNER OF HIS DEATH AND BURIAL;
TOGETHER WITH HIS TRUE CHARACTER, ETC.**

READER, The painful and industrious author of this book has already given you a faithful and very moving relation of the beginning and middle of the days of his pilgrimage on earth; and since there yet remains somewhat worthy of notice and regard, which occurred in the last scene of his life; the which, for want of time, or for fear some over-censorious people should impute it to him as an earnest coveting of praise from men, he has not left behind him in writing; wherefore, as a true friend, and long acquaintance of Mr. Bunyan's, that his good end may be known, as his evil beginning, I have taken upon me, from my knowledge, and the best account given by other of his friends, to piece this to the thread too soon broke off, and so lengthen it out to his entering upon eternity.

He has told you at large, of his birth and education; the evil habits and corruptions of his youth; the temptations he struggled and conflicted so frequently with; the mercies, comforts, and deliverances he found; how he came to take upon him the preaching of the Gospel; the slanders, reproaches, and imprisonments that attended him, and the progress he notwithstanding made, by the assistance of God's grace, no doubt to the saving of many souls. Therefore take these things, as he himself has methodically laid them down in the words of verity; and so I pass on as to what remains.

After his being freed from his twelve years' imprisonment, and upwards, for nonconformity, wherein he had time to furnish the world with sundry good books, etc., and by his patience, to move Dr. Barlow, the then Bishop of Lincoln, and other churchmen, to pity his hard and unreasonable sufferings, so far as to stand very much his friends, in procuring his enlargement, or there perhaps he had died, by the noisomeness and ill usage of the place; being now, I say, again at liberty, and having, through

mercy, shaken off his bodily fetters, for those upon his soul were broken before, by the abounding grace that filled his heart, he went to visit those that had been a comfort to him in his tribulation, with a Christian-like acknowledgment of their kindness and enlargement of charity; giving encouragement by his example, if it happened to be their hard haps to fall into affliction or trouble, then to suffer patiently for the sake of a good conscience, and for the love of God in Jesus Christ. towards their souls, and by many cordial persuasions, supported some, whose spirits began to sink low, through the fear of danger that threatened their worldly concernment, so that the people found a wonderful consolation in his discourse and admonitions.

As often as opportunity would admit, he gathered them together, though the law was then in force against meetings, in convenient places, and fed them with the sincere milk of the word, that they might grow in grace thereby. To such as were any where taken and imprisoned upon these accounts, he made it another part of his business to extend his charity, and gather relief for such of them as wanted.

He took great care to visit the sick, and strengthen them against the suggestions of the tempter, which at such times are very prevalent; so that they had cause for ever to bless God, who had put it into his heart, at such a time, to rescue them from the power of the roaring lion, who sought to devour them. Nor did he spare any pains or labor in travel, though to the remote counties, where he knew, or imagined any people might stand in need of his assistance; insomuch that some of these visitations that he made, which were two or three every year, some (though in a jeering manner no doubt) gave him the epithet of *Bishop Bunyan*, whilst others envied him for his so earnestly laboring in Christ's vineyard; yet the seed of the word he all this while sowed in the hearts of his congregation, watered with the grace of God, brought forth in abundance, in bringing in disciples to the church of Christ.

Another part of his time he spent in reconciling differences, by which he hindered many mischiefs, and saved some families from ruin; and in some fallings-out, he was uneasy until he found a means to labor a reconciliation, and become a peace-maker, on whom a blessing is promised in holy writ; and indeed, in doing this good office he may be said to sum up his days, it

being the last undertaking of his life, as will appear in the close of this paper.

When in the late reign, liberty of conscience was unexpectedly given and indulged to dissenters of all persuasions, his piercing wit penetrated the veil, and found that it was not for the dissenters' sakes they were so suddenly freed from the persecutions that had long lain heavy upon them, and set in a manner, on an equal foot with the church of England, which the papists were undermining, and about to subvert. He foresaw all the advantages that could redound to the dissenters, would have been no more than what Polyphemus, the monstrous giant of Sicily, would have allowed Ulysses, viz., That he would eat his men first, and do him the favor of being eaten last. For although Mr. Bunyan, following the examples of others, did lay hold of this liberty, as an acceptable thing in itself, knowing God as the only Lord of conscience, and that it is good at all times to do according to the dictates of a good conscience, and that the preaching the glad tidings of the Gospel is beautiful in the preacher; yet in all this he moved with caution and holy fear, earnestly praying for averting the impendent judgments, which he saw, like a black tempest, hanging over our heads for our sins, and ready to break upon us, and that the Ninevites' remedy was now highly necessary. Hereupon he gathered his congregation at Bedford, where he mostly lived, and had lived and spent the greater part of his life; and there being no convenient place to be had for the entertainment of so great a confluence of people as followed him, upon the account of his teaching, he consulted with them for the building of a meeting-house, to which they made their voluntary contributions, with all cheerfulness and alacrity; and the first time he appeared to edify, the place was so thronged, that many were constrained to stay without, though the house was very spacious, every one striving to partake of his instructions, that were of his persuasion, and show their good will towards him, by being present at the opening of the place. And here he lived in peace and quiet of mind, contenting himself with that little God had bestowed upon him, and sequestering himself from all secular employments to follow that of his call to the ministry; for as God said to Moses, he that made the lips and heart, can give eloquence and wisdom, without extraordinary acquirements in an university.

During these things there were regulators sent into all cities and towns corporate, to new-model the government in the magistracy, etc., by turning out some, and putting in others. Against this Mr. Bunyan expressed his zeal with some warmness, as foreseeing the bad consequence that would attend it, and labored with his congregation to prevent their being imposed on in this kind: and when a great man in those days coming to Bedford upon some such errand, sent for him, as it is supposed, to give him a place of public trust, he would by no means come at him, but sent his excuse.

When he was at leisure from writing and teaching, he often came up to London, and there went among the congregations of the nonconformists, and used his talents to the great good-liking of the hearers; and even some, to whom he had been misrepresented, upon the account of his education, were convinced of his worth and knowledge in sacred things, as perceiving him to be a man of sound judgment, delivering himself plainly and powerfully; insomuch that many who came spectators for novelty, rather than to be edified and improved, went away well satisfied with what they heard; and wondered, as the Jews did at the apostles, viz., whence this man should have these things; perhaps not considering that God more immediately assists those that make it their business industriously and cheerfully to labor in his vineyard.

Thus he spent his latter years in imitation of his great Lord and Master, the ever-blessed Jesus; he went about doing good; so that the most prying critic, or even malice herself, is defied to find, even upon the narrowest search or observation, any sully or stain upon his reputation, with which he may be justly charged; and this we note, as a challenge to those that have had the least regard for him, or them of his persuasion, and have one way or other appeared in the front of those that oppressed him; and for the turning whose hearts, in obedience to the commission and commandment given him of God, he frequently prayed, and sometimes sought a blessing for them, even with tears; the effects of which, they may, peradventure, though undeservedly, have found in their persons, friends, relations, estates; for God will hear the prayers of the faithful, and answer them, even for those that vex them, as it happened in the case of Job's praying for the three persons that had been grievous in their reproach against him, even in the day of his sorrow.

But yet let me come a little nearer to particulars, and periods of time, for the better refreshing the memories of those that knew his labor and sufferings, and for the satisfaction of all that read this book.

After he was sensibly convicted of the wicked state of his life, and converted, he was baptized into the congregation, and admitted a member thereof, viz., in the year 1655, and became speedily a very zealous professor. But upon the return of King Charles to the crown in 1660, he was, on the 12th of November, taken, as he was edifying some good people that was got together to hear the word, and confined in Bedford jail for the space of six years, till the act of indulgence to dissenters being allowed, he obtained his freedom by the intercession of some in trust and power, that took pity of his sufferings. But within six years afterwards, he was again taken up, viz., in the year 1666, and was then confined for six years more; when the jailer took such pity of his rigorous sufferings, that he did as the Egyptian jailer did to Joseph, put all the care and trust in his hand. When he was taken this last time he was preaching on these words, viz., “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” And this imprisonment continued six years; and when this was over, another short affliction, which was an imprisonment of half a year, fell to his share. During these confinements, he wrote these following books, viz., “Of Prayer by the Spirit,” “The Holy City’s Resurrection,” “Grace Abounding,” “Pilgrim’s Progress,” the first part.

In the last year of his twelve years’ imprisonment, the pastor of the congregation at Bedford died, and he was chosen to that care of souls, on the 12th of December, 1671. And in this charge he often had disputes with scholars that came to oppose him, as supposing him an ignorant person; and though he argued plainly, and by Scripture, without phrases and logical expressions, yet he non-plussed one who came to oppose him, in his congregation, by demanding, Whether or no we had the true copies of the original Scriptures? And another, when he was preaching accused him of uncharitableness for saying, “It was very hard for most to be saved:” saying, by that he went about to exclude most of his congregation. But he confuted him, and put him to silence, with the parable of the stony ground, and other texts out of the 13th of Matthew (~~400~~ Matthew 13), in our Savior’s sermon out of a ship; all his methods being to keep close to the Scriptures, and what he found not warranted there, himself would not

warrant nor determine, unless in such cases as were plain, wherein no doubts nor scruples did arise.

But not to make any further mention of this kind, it is well known that this person managed all his affairs with such exactness as if he had made it his study, above all other things, not to give occasion of offence, but rather suffer many inconveniences to avoid it, being never heard to reproach or revile any, what injury soever he received, but rather to rebuke those that did. And as it was in his conversation, so it is manifested in those books he has caused to be published to the world; where, like the archangel disputing with Satan about the body of Moses, as we find it in the Epistle of St. Jude, he brings no railing accusation, but leaves the rebukers, those that persecuted him, to the Lord.

In his family he kept very strict discipline, in prayer and exhortations, being in this like Joshua, as that good man expresses it, viz., “Whatsoever others did, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” And indeed a blessing waited on his labors and endeavors; so that his wife, as the Psalmist says, “was like a pleasant vine upon the wall of his house, and his children like olive-branches round his table; for so shall it be with the man that fears the Lord;” and though by reason of the many losses he sustained by imprisonment and spoil, of his chargeable sickness, etc., his earthly treasure swelled not to excess, he always had sufficient to live decently and creditably; and with that he had the greatest of all treasures, which is content: for as the wise man says, “that is a continual feast.”

But where content dwells, even a poor cottage is a kingly palace; and this happiness he had all his life long, not so much minding this world, as knowing he was here as a pilgrim and stranger, and had no tarrying city, but looked for one not made with hands, eternal in the highest heavens. But at length, worn out with sufferings, age, and often teaching, the day of his dissolution drew near; and death, that unlocks the prison of his soul, to enlarge it for a more glorious mansion, put a stop to his acting his part on the stage of mortality. Heaven, like earthly princes, when it threatens war, being always so kind as to call home its ambassadors before it be denounced. And even the last act or undertaking of his was a labor of love and charity: for it so falling out, that a young gentleman, a neighbor of Mr. Bunyan’s, happening into the displeasure of his father, and being much

troubled in his mind upon that account, as also for that he had heard his father purposed to disinherit him, or otherwise deprive him of what he had to leave, he pitched upon Mr. Bunyan as a fit man to make way for his submission, and prepare his father's mind to receive him; and he, as willing to do any good office as it could be requested, as readily undertook it; and so riding to Reading in Berkshire, he there used such pressing arguments and reasons against anger and passion, as also for love and reconciliation, that the father was mollified, and his bowels yearned towards his returning son.

But Mr. Bunyan, after he had disposed all things to the best for accommodation, returning to London, and being overtaken with excessive rains, coming to his lodging extremely wet, fell sick of a violent fever; which he bore with much constancy and patience, and expressed himself as if he desired nothing more than to be dissolved, and be with Christ, in that case esteeming death as gain, and life only a tedious delaying felicity expected; and finding his vital strength decay, having settled his mind and affairs, as well as the shortness of time and the violence of his disease, would admit, with a constant and Christian patience, he resigned his soul into the hands of his most merciful Redeemer, following his pilgrimage from the city of Destruction to the New Jerusalem, his better part having been all along there, in holy contemplation, pantings and breathings after the hidden manna, and water of life, as by many holy and humble consolations, expressed in his letters to several persons in prison, and out of prison; too many to be here inserted at present. He died at the house of one Mr. Straddock, a grocer at the Star on Snowhill, in the parish of St. Sepulchre, London, on the 12th of August, 1688, and in the 60th year of his age, after ten days' sickness; and was buried in the new burying-place near the Artillery Ground; where he sleeps to the morning of the resurrection, in hopes of a glorious rising to an incorruptible immortality of joy and happiness, where no more trouble and sorrow shall afflict him, but all tears be wiped away; when the just shall be incorporated as members of Christ their head, and reign with him as kings and priests for ever.

AN ELEGY

ON THE DEATH OF THE WORTHY AND PIOUS MR. JOHN BUNYAN,

**LATE PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL AT BEDFORD, AND
AUTHOR OF THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS, HOLY WAR, AND
THE ADVOCATESHIP OF JESUS CHRIST, WITH MANY MORE
EXCELLENT BOOKS; WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE ON FRIDAY
THE LAST DAY OF AUGUST, 1688.**

DEEP waters run the stillest, and the grief
That's greatest, courts the eyes to give relief.
The pious BUNYAN'S newly dead, what eye
But mourns the loss of so much industry!
And such a loss, for which who will not spend
A tear, 's not Labor's nor Religion's friend.
This Pilgrim's Progress now is finished,
And Death hath laid him in his earthly bed.
World! do thy worst, for surely such souls are
Crown'd as victorious in the Holy War!
Then study well (let that be all thy strife,)
His exhortation to a holy life.

Grief must command your silence, but impart
In silent tears, the language of your heart.
Lament, O Bedford's friends, your wretched case,
Your candlestick's remov'd out of his place;
Heaven hath thought fit to give him a remove
Your shining light's a fixed star above!
Hark! look above! those saints rejoice to see
Dear Bunyan added to their company!
And you star-gazing tribe, should you be blest
To find a star that's brighter than the rest,
'Tis holy Bunyan's soul; for all conclude,
He is a star of the first magnitude.

ANOTHER ELEGY.

WHEN private persons by death's stroke do fall,
 A private grief may serve the funeral:
 But when the leaders of the people die,
 Grief knows no bounds, and sorrow swells more high.

Well may it then draw rivers from our eyes,
 Since BUNYAN'S dead, whose death does so surprise:
 BUNYAN! whose zeal, whose love, no pen can paint.
 Who in his Master's work did never faint;
 Who like a rock for truth's defense has stood;
 And spent himself in doing sinners good.
 This was his work, this was his business still,
 To save the sinner, and the sin to kill.
 He from above had gain'd that heavenly art,
 To captivate the stoutest sinner's heart;
 And often those who came but to deride,
 In earnest of their undone state have cried
 And though they hell itself have so out-braved,
 They've changed their note to, How shall I be saved?

In types and shadows he'd a mighty reach;
 Out of the law he would the gospel preach,
 At such a rate as would make all admire,
 And fill their hearts with wonder and desire:
 Those that have heard him could not choose but see
 Sinai and Zion might full well agree.

When for conviction on the law he fell,
 You'd think you heard the groans of souls in hell;
And then almost at every word he spake,
Men's lifts would quiver, and their hearts would ache.
 But when he came to speak t' a doubting soul,
 His very bowels would within him roll

To such a soul there's none could be more free,
 T' advance the riches of free grace than he,
 He had so great a sense upon his heart,
 Of grace that God did to himself impart.

And as his preaching powerfully wrought,
 So did his practice; he both lived and taught.
He in the pulpit preached truth first, and then
He in his practice preached it o'er again.

Others to this he always did persuade,
And herein he was their example made.

Free from the world he sat, and did declare
That we both strangers here and pilgrims are;
He to this pilgrim state did so invite,
And did thereof so excellently write,
*That many by his writings have been won,
All hazards for this pilgrim state to run.*

His works are many, and they do him praise,
And will a monument to his mem'ry raise.

Well, since our sighs and tears are all in vain,
And we can ne'er recall him back again;
Let us however labor this to do,
Follow his doctrine and example too.
Let's prize his memory, and pray that we
May have our hearts filled with God's love as he:
Whose constant wish was, he might Jesus see.
Yea, that he might unto his wounds draw near,
And see both hands and feet, and print o' th' spear!
These were the breathings of his holy heart,
That he might be with Christ, and never part.
He has his wish: with Christ he must remain,
Till in the clouds he brings him back again.

AN ACROSTIC.

JUST is the will of God that now is done,
Our hopes, when placed on creatures, soon are gone;
Henceforth let's learn to place our trust in God,
Note well his providence, and mark his rod.
By this let's also learn to have our eyes
Unto that God from whence come all supplies.
None can make up thy loss, dear friend, but He;
You safe are landed in eternity:
And (as you lately to a friend did tell)
Now lodged in heaven, in despite of hell.

EPITAPH.

HEAVEN hath the jewel; earth doth keep in trust,
For a short time, the pious Bunyan's dust,
Until the resurrection of the just.

THE END.

FOOTNOTES

ADVISE TO SUFFERS

- ^{ft1} Not equipages to ride, but dainty formalities. — Ed.
- ^{ft2} “A good and harmless conscience”; not as the procuring cause of confidence in God’s tender care of us, but as the strong evidence of our election and regeneration. — Ed.
- ^{ft3} “Bravery”; magnificence or excellence. “Like a stately ship, with all her bravery on, and tackle trim, sails filled,” etc. — Samson Agonistes. — Ed.
- ^{ft4} “Bodily pains”; bodily industry or painstaking. — Ed.
- ^{ft5} “Winch”; to wince or kick with impatience. “Shuck”; to shrug up the shoulders, expressive of dislike or aversion. — Ed.
- ^{ft6} “Much”; in a great degree.
- ^{ft7} “Will they, nil they”; nillan, a Saxon word, meaning “not will” or contrary to the will — whether with or against their will. “Need hath no law; will I, or nil I, it must be done.” — Damon and Pathias, 1571. “If now to man and wife to will and nil The self-same thing, a note of concord be, I know no couple better can agree.” — Ben Johnson. — Ed.
- ^{ft9} Wicked men sell themselves to do the devil’s work. How degrading to the dignity of man! Enlisting under a foreign prince to destroy their own nation, and in so doing to destroy themselves. For an account of the atrocities and horrors of this war, read the history of the Waldenses. — Ed.
- ^{ft10} This frequently happened. In Bedford, Nic. Hawkins attended a meeting, and was fined two pounds; but when the harpies went to take away his goods, finding that “they had been removed beforehand, and his house visited with the small pox, the officers declined entering.” — Persecution in Bedford, 1670, p. 6. — Ed.

- ^{ft11} “Dispose”; power, disposal. “All that is mine, I leave at thy dispose.” — Shakespeare. — Ed.
- ^{ft12} In Ireland, whole provinces were desolated, both by Protestants and Papists, with a ferocity scarcely credible. In England, the state awfully tormented its pious Christian subjects, to whom their Lord’s words must have been peculiarly consoling: “Fear not them which kill the body.” Did they suffer? How holy were their enjoyments! — Ed.
- ^{ft13} An awful instance occurred soon after the publication of this “Advice.” John Child, a Baptist minister, one of Bunyan’s friends, to escape persecution, conformed, and became terrified with awful compunction of conscience. His cries were fearful: “I shall go to hell”; “I am broken in judgment”; “I am as it were in a flame.” In a fit of desperation he destroyed himself on the 15th October, 1684. — Ed.
- ^{ft14} “What bottom”; what ground or foundation. — Ed.
- ^{ft15} This identical stone is said to be in the chair on which our monarchs are crowned in Westminster Abbey. — Ed.
- ^{ft16} In so unbounded, eternal and magnificent a mansion, well might he exclaim, “This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.” Where God meets us with his special presence, we ought to meet him with the most humble reverence; remembering his justice and holiness, and our own meanness and vileness. — Ed.
- ^{ft17} The only way of driving sin out of the world is to make known the Savior. Reader, can you solve Mr. Bunyan’s riddle? When fierce persecution rages — when the saints are tormented with burning, hanging, and imprisonment — then, like Stephen, to fix our eyes upon Jesus, and the gates of heaven open to receive us, submitting with patience to the will of God. This is the way to drive out sin. — Ed.
- ^{ft18} How indescribably blessed is the Christian. It is true that he has to perform his pilgrimage through an enemy’s country, beset with snares, pit-falls, and temptations; but in all his buffetings and storms of sorrow, his soul is safe; God is a wall of fire round about it, and the glory in the midst of it. He will guide us by his counsel, and then receive us to his glory. — Ed.
- ^{ft19} “Looser sort of Christians”; among Christians there are gradations of character. Some are fixed upon the Savior, and can say, “For me to live

is Christ.” Such decision ensures safety and happiness; while the looser sort are subject to many sorrows and continual danger. May we press on towards the mark. “Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.” — Ed.

ft20 This truth ought to be imprinted on every heart. As the absence of darkness is light, so liberty from the thralldom of sin, and from the slavery of Satan, essentially induces holiness of life. Thus holiness and liberty are joined together. — Ed.

ft22 If this was our conduct, how soon should we get rid of our enemies: “for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.” Who would risk such punishment a second time? — Ed.

ft23 This old proverb is a very striking illustration of the words of Paul: “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” — Ed.

ft24 The saint must be “made meet for the inheritance.” If he neglects the means given in the Word, his Father, in mercy,
 “will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men” (~~1074~~ 2 Samuel 7:14).

— Ed.

ft25 “But if you give sin entrance at the door, It’s sting will in, and may come out not more.” Bunyan’s Caution.

ft26 An equally cruel scene took place in the presence of Stow, the historian, in the reign of Elizabeth. The bailiff of Romford coming to London, was asked by the curate of Aldgate the news: he replied, “Many men be up in Essex,” [Qu. not in bed?]. For this he was hung the next morning in front of Mr. Stow’s house. How grateful ought we to be that such sanguinary laws have fled, with the dark mists of error and cruelty, before the spreading light of the gospel. — Ed.

ft27 They shed their blood for Him who afterwards shed his blood for them. These were the infantry of the noble army of martyrs. If these infants were thus baptized with blood, though their own, into the church triumphant, it could be said that what they got in heaven abundantly compensated for what they lost on earth. — Henry.

- ft30 “New-fashioned carriages”; not equipages to ride in, but dainty formalities. “Nor in my carriage a feigned niceness shown.” — Dryden. “Trades in the carriage of a holy saint.” — Shakespeare. — Ed.
- ft31 Bunyan, when sent to prison, was thus threatened: “If you do not go to church, or transport yourself, you must stretch by the neck for it.” This led to those painful reflections: “If I should make a scrabbling shift to clamber up the ladder, yet I should, either with quaking or other symptoms of faintings, give occasion to the enemy to reproach the way of God and his people for their timorousness.” — Grace Abounding, No. 334. — Ed.
- ft32 A life of faith and holiness is the Christian’s badge and livery. No particular costume, that may conceal a carnal heart — not a baptismal profession, that may be made by a hypocrite; but it is “the hidden man of the heart,” evidenced by a “meek and quiet spirit — in all holy conversations and godliness.” This is the Christian’s badge and livery, by which he becomes “a living epistle, known and read of all men.” — Ed.
- ft34 These awful cruelties were practiced upon Richard Atkins, in July, 1581. He went to Rome to reprove the people of idolatry. In St. Peter’s Church, he knocked the chalice out of the priest’s hand, and spilt the wine; he then endeavored to seize the host, but was prevented. For these mad pranks he suffered savage torments. — Fox, edit. 1631, vol. 3, p. 1022. — Ed.
- ft35 Every Christian must be decided in his own conscience as to the formalities of religion; but he who prefers talking of forms and ceremonies to communion in the substance, is in a melancholy state. — Ed.
- ft36 What a severe reproach it is to human nature, to see a lovely child in rags and shoeless, running the streets, exposed to the pitiless weather, while a splendid equipage passes, in which a lady holds up her lapdog at the window to give it an airing!! Is not this a greater crime than sends many a poor wretch to the treadmill? — Ed.
- ft37 Revenge naturally rises in the mind of man under a sense of injury. To return good for evil is one of the effects of the new birth. But while

this is done, it is also our duty to petition kings and parliaments to remove evils. — Ed.

ft38 “Forth of doors”; out of doors, public. — Ed.

ft39 “Now it is Christmas”; instead of keeping one day in the year to commemorate the nativity of Christ in excessive feasting, every day must be kept holy, in the recollection both of the birth and death of the Savior. All eyes are upon the young convert, watching for his halting; therefore, let every day be holy. — Ed.

ft40 A striking expression. If a man’s righteousness be killed, it must be by his own will. He must be the butcher to kill himself. — Ed.

ft41 It is indeed sad to see professors, for the sake of paltry pelf, or to escape from persecution, denying the Lord Jesus. It subjects religion to scorn and contempt, and doubles the sorrows and sufferings of real Christians. Bunyan expresses himself here in a most admirable manner. — Ed.

ft42 Bunyan’s familiarity with these illustrious men was obtained by reading Fox’s Acts and Monuments, when in prison. — Ed.

ft43 “Quail”; to overpower. Well might the abettors of Antichrist wonder at the Christian’s support under the most cruel tortures. While “looking unto Jesus” and the bright visions of eternal glory, like Stephen, he can pray of his enemies, and tranquilly fall asleep while undergoing the most frightful sufferings. — Ed.

ft44 “A naked man”; unarmed, or defenseless.

“Had I but serv’d my God with half the zeal I serv’d my king, he would not in mine age Have left me naked to mine enemies.”
Shakespeare’s Wolsey. — Ed.

ft45 How impossible is it for a natural man to understand this new creation — a new heart, a new birth. How different is regeneration to water-baptism. How awful the delusion to be mistaken in this, the foundation of all hope of a blessed immortality. “Create in me a clean heart, O God!” How consoling the fact: “Now a creation none can destroy but a Creator!” and “changes not, therefore we are not consumed.” — Ed.

ft46 “O happie he who doth possesse
Christ for his fellow-prisoner, who doth gladde
With heavenly sunbeames jails that are most sad.”

Written on the prison walls of the Tower of London by William
Prynne. — Ed.

ft47 “Sore temptations” poor Bunyan found them. When dragged from his
home to prison, he speaks of his poor blind daughter in language of
impassioned solicitude: “Poor child, thought I, what sorrow art thou
like to have for thy portion in this world! Thou must be beaten, must
beg, suffer hunger, cold, nakedness, and a thousand calamities, though I
cannot now endure the wind shall blow upon thee! Oh! the hardships I
thought my blind one might go under would break my heart to pieces.”
— “The parting with my wife and poor children hath oft been to me in
this place as the pulling my flesh from my bones.” — Grace
Abounding, 327, 328. — Ed.

ft48 “Thodes”; whirlwinds. This word does not occur in any English
dictionary or glossary. It gave me much trouble, and a walk of seven
miles, to discover its meaning. It is the Saxon for noise, whirlwind,
turbulence. This provincial word was probably derived from some
Saxon tribe that settled in Bedfordshire. — Ed.

ft49 “To shuck”; to shake violently — from which is the noun, “a pea-
shuck,” the shell from which peas have been shaken. — Ed.

ft50 How correct, but how dismal a picture is here drawn of the persecutor!
God has wise and holy ends in protecting and prolonging the lives even
of very wicked men. “Slay them not, lest my people forget; scatter
them by thy power.” Compare ^{<2000}Ecclesiastes 8:10. Pity the
persecutor — pray for him; but if he repent not, stand off; “God will
have his full blow at him in his time,” and crush him down into misery
and despair. — Ed.

ft51 Like a multitude of passages in Bunyan’s writings, this passage is
exceedingly striking. It illustrates our Lord’s words in ^{<4154}Matthew
5:44, 45:

“Love your enemies — that ye may be the children of your Father
which is in heaven.”

— Ed.

^{ft52} “Stage”; upon which many a Nonconformist stood with his head in the pillory. “Ladder” to the gallows, upon which victims suffered death by hanging. — Ed.

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