

Monergism

Godly Fear

THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF FEAR AND ITS USEFULNESS

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GODLY FEAR:

Or, the nature and necessity of fear, and its usefulness.

Both to the driving sinners to Christ, and to the provoking Christians on in a godly life, through the several parts and duties of it, till they come to blessedness.

By Richard Alleine

Heb. 12.28.

Let us have Grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with
Reverence and Godly Fear.

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Reader,

The following Sermons, though set together into one Treatise, were preached upon divers. Texts of Scripture; and therefore thou wilt the

better bear it, if thou find not that exactness of Method, nor that evenness of Style which thou dost expect. All the Parts of it concenter in the same Design, though some of them seem a little more remote from it. Such as it is, the Whole is offered thee for thy Use; accompanied with the Author's Prayers for a Blessing from Heaven upon it and thee.

Thine in Christ, R. A.

GODLY FEAR:

OR, THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF FEAR, AND ITS
USEFULNESS, &C.

The Text Opened

PROV. 28.14.

Happy is the Man that feareth always.

You will not expect that I spend time in enquiring after the connection of these words, with the foregoing, or the following parts of this Chapter, if you consider the Book in which they are found, The Book of Proverbs; wherein many precious Truths are laid and packed together, but not connected together, this Book being rather a Golden Mine than a Golden Chain.

The words of the Text are an entire Proposition which may be logically resolved into, 1. A Subject, [the Man that feareth] together with the Circumstances of time [always]. 2. An Attribute, or something affirmed concerning this Man [happy], he is a happy Man.

For the opening of these words briefly.

[Happy] or blessed, or as it is in the Original, O the blessedness, O how blessed! He is a very happy Man, [the Man that feareth] that is, say some, The Man that feareth all the evil that is before him; the misery that is before him, the danger that he is in. Say others, The Man that feareth God, according as it's expressed, Prov. 23.17. that is, in the fear of God all the day long. Others, that walks cautiously and warily; Qui prospicit ne quid temere aggrediatur, nec absque debitâ deliberatione & consilio, sollicit cavens, ne quid boni omittat, nec in malum ruat. He that walks with Counsel and Care, that he neglects not his Duty nor fall into danger. Put all these Interpretations into one, and you have the full sense of the words. He that walking under an awe and reverence of God, and a sense of the danger he is in, wisely and warily orders his steps, that he be not surprised by Sin or by Wrath.

[Alway], The Chaldee renders it, Omnia, that feareth all things, that feareth himself, his Eyes, his Ears, his Tongue, his Table, his Estate, his Business, his Company, his Friends and his Enemies; that is, as far forth as they may be Inlets, or Instruments, or Temptations to Sin, and so may expose him to danger: But the word is [always], that feareth at all times, that is never secure.

The Doctrine that I shall hence insist upon is this.

Doct. A Life of Holy Fear is a Blessed Life.

In the opening hereof, I shall more particularly inquire,

1. What that Fear is, to which Blessedness is pronounced.
2. What that Blessedness is, which is pronounced to this Fear.

In the handling whereof, I shall together give in the proof of the Doctrine.

1. What that Fear is to which Blessedness is pronounced.

There is a Fear that is our weakness; As, 1. the Fear of the faint-hearted, a natural pusillanimity or cowardice; there are such weak Spirits in whom every little danger, or but the shadow of a danger, shakes their Hearts, and puts them into anxieties and disquiets. In what perpetual bondage do some timorous Spirits live! How restless are their hearts, like the troubled Sea that cannot be at rest, every little gust raises a storm! In what a daily and hourly succession of vexing disquiets do they live! 2. The Fear of the Scrupulous, about some supposed moral Evils which concern their practice; who through weakness of Understanding, or the abounding of Melancholy, do often fancy that to be Sin which is no Sin, and thereby fright themselves off from the use of their Liberty, and sometimes from their very Duty. Every Morsel that they eat, every Garment that they wear, they are afraid lest it be too much, or too good, or too fine, &c. and thereby scruple themselves out of their convenient Food, and all comely Apparel. Some poor Melancholic Christians dare not pray; for fear of taking the Name of God in vain: dare not come to the Table of the Lord at all, for fear of coming unworthily.

In this Fear there is a mixture of Good and Evil; there's something Good, an aversion from Sin, and tenderness of running into it; and there's something evil, a sinful mistake, counting that evil which is not evil; as we may not call Evil Good, so neither may we call Good Evil; this weakness, as it is evil so it is mischievous too, it leads us into Sin; we may sometimes sin for fear of Sin, and it brings us into Bondage; we may say concerning this fear of Sin, as the Apostle doth

concerning the fear of Death, Heb. 2.15. There are some, who through fear of [Sin] are all their life time subject to Bondage.

Of the two, it's much a less evil than the other extreme; better a scrupulous Conscience than a dissolute Conscience; better strain at a Gnat than swallow a Camel; there's less danger in being frightened at a Bug-bear, than not afraid of a Bear; whatever there be in Nicety, it's a virtue in comparison of Licentiousness! Yet this Fear, this groundless & mistaken Fear, is an evil and to be suppressed.

There is a Fear which is Men's great wickedness; a Fear of Religion and Righteousness; a Fear of the Labors and Severities of Religion, and of those Sufferings it may expose them to. Sometimes Men Fear the Yoke of Christ; they dare not be his Disciples, his Yoke they doubt will be too heavy for their Necks. To be tied up so short from every Sin, from all their Carnal Liberties and Pleasures to be held so close to painful Duty, and to such constant Duty, the foresight of it scares them back from Christ, they dare not be his Disciples. I would be a Christian, but I am afraid how I shall ever be able to bear his Yoke.

But mostly they Fear the Cross of Christ; they have heard what Christ expects, Matth. 16.24. If any will come after me, let him take up his Cross; and they see that it so falls out, that no sooner is the Yoke taken upon the Neck, but the Cross is presently laid on upon the Back. He that will be a sincere Christian must be a suffering Christian. All that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer Persecution, 2 Tim. 3.12. Must they so? Then serve Christ who dare for me. They dare not be Followers of the Lamb, for fear of being a prey to the Wolves.

There is a Fear which is Men's Punishment; the Fear of the Guilty, a guilty Heart is a terror to itself, a Magor-missabib, Fear round about,

and makes almost everything else a terror to it. Prov. 28.1. The wicked flee when no Man pursues, his guilt still dogs him at the heels, the terrors of the Lord fall on him, and horror and astonishment take hold of him. All these Fears are men's misery; and it may be said, with respect to these, Happy is the Man that never feareth.] But what is the Blessed Fear? Or, what is there in it? In short it is this,] It is such an aversion of the Heart from all manner of future Evils, whether of Sin or of Misery, which we apprehend ourselves in danger of, as puts the Soul upon making the best Provision it can for its security against them.] The Matter or Object of this Fear is Sin, together with all the Fruits of it. The Form or proper Nature of it, is an aversion, or starting back, or shrinking in from it. The Effect of it, is to put the Soul to its shifts for its own security against it.

There are implied or included in it these following Particulars.

1. There is Understanding in it. Psal. 111.10. The fear of God is the beginning of Wisdom; a good Understanding have they that do it. They are wise and understanding Men that Fear. As we Love not, so neither do we Fear, but whom or what we have some apprehension of; our Affections follow our Apprehensions; as our Love (we cannot love but what we apprehend to be good) so our Fear, we cannot fear but what we apprehend to be evil. Our mistakes are the ground of the inordinate workings of our Affections; when we apprehend that to be good which is not good, we love what we should not love; when we apprehend that to be evil which is not evil, we fear what we should not fear; when we apprehend that to be good which is evil, we love what we should fear; and when we apprehend that to be evil which is good, we fear what we should love.

The reason of our sinful Fear is our Ignorance. Ignorance both causes us to fear when we should not, and leaves us without fear of what we should fear.

1. Ignorance is the reason why we fear what we should not. How is it that there is so much Fear of Men in the World? Why, it is, because we understand them not; what a vain thing, what a weak thing they are, how short their power is, and how little 'tis that Man can do.

Did we know more, how great the Power of God is, how terrible the Wrath of God is, sure there would be more fear of God in the World: And did we know how little there is in the Power of Man, and in the Wrath of Man, we should ease ourselves of much of that Carnal Fear which now torments our Spirits. Isa. 2.22. Cease ye from Man, whose Breath is in his Nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of? [Cease ye from Man] as from trusting in him, so from fearing him, [for wherein is he to be accounted of?] How little is it that he can do for or against you? There's little help in him, and there's little hurt that he can do. Men pretend to be great, and make great boasts of their Power. So did Pilate to Christ, John 19.10. Knowest thou not that I have power to Crucify thee, and I have power to Release thee? What, art thou so sullen and so stubborn that thou wilt not speak to me? Consider Man the Power of Liberty and Bonds, the Power of Life and Death are in my hands. Dost thou not know me? Yes I know thee well enough, says Christ; Thou hast no Power but what is given thee, and therefore limited thee from Above. It's for those that know thee not to fear thee, I know thee well enough.

2. Men's Ignorance is the reason why they fear not what they should fear. Why is it that the ungodly fear not Sin? O it's because they know it not. Psal. 14.4. Have the workers of Iniquity no knowledge? Sure enough they have none, for they eat up my People as they eat Bread;

such Morsels would scald their Mouths, they would not dare to be such Persecutors and Destroyers of the People of God, they would be afraid to touch them if they did but know what they did.

How bold are Sinners upon Sin? How venturously do they run on? They Lie, they Swear, they commit Adultery, they Covet, they Defraud, they Oppress, they Persecute. But how is it that they are not afraid to do thus? O! They know not what they do.

They are the Men of Understanding, that Fear to transgress. Christians, those whose Minds are enlightened, dare not do as others do; they see what Sin is, they see it to be an unclean thing, odious and abominable in the sight of God; they see it to be a dangerous and deadly thing. They know God, and thereby understand Sin, which is contrary to him. They know the kindness of God, and the terrors of the Lord, and see that Sin is an unworthiness, and abusing of kindness, and disobliging of goodness, that makes a forfeit of the Divine Love, and exposes to his Wrath and Indignation.

They know the worth of a Soul; they have learned from their Lord, Matth. 16.26. that the whole World is not a price for it, neither sufficient to be its Ransom, nor to recompense its loss. They live in the Invisible World, and have taken a view both of that life which is the reward of the Righteous, and of that Death which is the recompense of the Sinners.

They see that Sin is the loss and the death of the Soul, the only poison that can kill that immortal part; by this alone Immortality is swallowed up of Death. They understand that sin, as it is the Worm that gnaweth at the root of all their hopes for hereafter, so it is the Wormwood which imbitters all their Comforts here; this is the Rust that eats out all their Treasures, the Moth that frets out all their Garments, the Stain that mars all their Beauty: In fine, this is it that

hath filled the World with vanity and vexation of Spirit, and Hell with torment. And hence it is that they fear it and fly from it. Dost thou not fear Sin? Sure thou dost not know it. O what a light thing doth the World make of it to sin against God! How open do our hearts lie to it! How easily doth it beset us! We are surprised by it every day and hour, Sin lies at the door, lies in wait for us; in our Fields, in our Houses, at our Tables, in our Closets; and how often doth it take us and carry us away for Captives? And still we make nothing of it; neither feeling the mischief it has done us, nor fearing those ruins which it is further bringing upon us. We can talk of the evil of Sin, of the folly of it, of the filthiness of it, but we cannot tremble at it; sure we do not know it, whatever we talk. The World would be all up in Arms against this Enemy, or else betake themselves to their heels, running away from it, were it thoroughly understood.

2. There is Faith in this Fear. It is but little that we can see of the evil of Sin; our understandings at the best have much dimness upon them; the weakness of our sight is helped out by Faith. Faith helps us to see with God's Eyes, it looks on all things as God looks on them. The Lord hath told us what he sees in Sin, what a Snare it is, what a Serpent it is, what a Plague it is, and what a Womb it is, big with all manner of Miseries and Mischiefs, which it's bringing forth upon us. God's Mouth is Eyes to Faith; by Faith we understand that it is even as it hath been told us of the Lord.

Faith helps us to a present view of Sin, and to a foresight of all that is behind; of all those Floods that this Serpent is casting out of his Mouth to devour the Soul; that Woe and that Wrath it's bringing upon Sinners, both here and hereafter. Future Evils that depend not necessarily on certain Causes, are no otherwise clearly to be discerned but by the Eye of Faith. And from this Faith this Fear

arises; as the Apostle, 2 Cor. 4.13. We have believed and therefore have we spoken; so may it also be said, We have believed and therefore fear. Heb. 11.7. [By Faith] Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, was moved with Fear. Sinner, art thou yet secure? Is the Evil of Sin yet unseen by thee? And thereupon is it but a light thing to thee? Canst thou make a mock of Sin? Canst thou make a sport of Sin? Canst thou take thy rest in Sin, and make a Tush at that Wrath that Sin is bringing upon thee? Believe God; What is it that the Lord hath spoken of it? God says, It is an evil and bitter thing, Jer. 2.19. A Root bearing Gall and Wormwood, Deut. 29.18. Like that Star which fell from Heaven, Rev. 8.11. whose Name was Wormwood, and which turned the Waters into Wormwood, of which Men died because they were so bitter. God says, It is an heavy thing which hath brought the whole Creation into Bondage, under which it groaneth and travelleth in pain, Rom. 8.22. God says, The Soul that sinneth shall die, Ezek. 18.20. Though the Devil says, He shall not die; though Men's hearts say, It is a matter of nothing; and because it is a common thing, count it but a very small thing, and can flout at others Fears. Yet God says, They are Fools that make a mock of Sin, Prov. 14 19. And God says thus, not only concerning some particular Sins, the most notorious, and those of the deepest die, Murders, Adulteries, Blasphemies; the World will say the same of these, He that doth such things is worthy of death. But God speaks it of Sin in Specie, the whole kind of it, little or great, the least sinful words, even vain words, the least sinful thoughts; yea, even of Sin in semine, the inward brood and spawn of Sin that lies in the heart, the evil dispositions and inclinations of the Soul, which have not broken forth into Act; the word is general; Rom. 6.23. The wages of Sin is Death. Believe God, believe and tremble.

3. There is Love in it. This Fear hath love lying in the bottom of it, from whence it arises; both the love of God and goodness, and that

natural and innocent self-love which God hath planted in us, and it is not our Sin but our Duty to maintain.

There is a Fear concerning which the Apostle saith, 1 John 4.18. Perfect Love casteth out Fear; but of this it may be said, sincere Love worketh Fear. Fear is Love's Servant, whose Office it is to preserve what and whom we love, from being offended, hurt, or lost. He that loves, will fear to lose or grieve, what and whom he loves. Dost thou love God? Thou wilt fear how thou displease or offend God. Dost thou love thy Soul? Thou wilt fear to lose it. As in good things temporal, Dost thou love thy Friend? Thou wilt fear to disoblige him. Dost thou love thine Estate, or thy Name, or thy Health? Thou wilt fear whatever may prejudice thee in them. So in good things Spiritual, our Love will set our Fear to be a guard about them. It cannot be, but where there's Love and a hazard of losing what we love, there will be Fear.

Sinners are without Fear about the Matters of God and of their Souls. Tell them of losing God, they fear it not; Why so? Why if they do, they love not God so well, but they can spare him well enough. Tell them of the danger of displeasing and offending God; It moves them not, they bear him no such good will as to fear to grieve him. An upright and honest Heart, and a good Conscience, they have no such regard to it, as thence to be withdrawn from any course that may hinder or deprive them of it.

'It is to little purpose to reason thus with them. Take heed of Sin, 'twill rob thee of thy God, 'twill defile thy Conscience, 'twill disgrace thy Profession, 'twill break thy Peace: This hath little weight with them, nor ever will, till they have more love for Spiritual Things.

'Twill hardly move them to tell them, your Souls will be lost, farewell to all your hopes of everlasting Life, if you take not heed of Sin; they

love their Lusts better than their Souls.

They love this World, they love their Money, and their Ease, and their Carnal Liberty; and hereby it appears they do, they are afraid of whatever may prejudice them in these things. In times of Persecution for Righteousness-sake, they Fear Religion as the Devil, they Fear Holiness more than Hell, they dare not be Godly for fear their Righteousness should be their ruin.

Our Love sets all our Affections on work. What we love, if it be absent, we desire it; if it be possible to be had, we hope for it; if we have it, we joy; if we lose it, we grieve; if we be in danger of losing it, we Fear.

Friend, Thou sayest thou lovest God, thy Soul, a good Conscience; what; and in such daily danger of losing all, and yet art not afraid? Thou sayest thou lovest not the World; thou hast an Estate in the World, and art eagerly hunting after more, and wilt make any shift thou canst to secure and increase it, but yet thou hopest thou dost not set thy heart upon it; But why then art thou so often in Fears? Thou art afraid of Christ, afraid of Conscience, thou darest not be an open Disciple, a bold Professor, because thou knowest not what it may cost thee; and dost thou yet say thou lovest not the World? Thy fear, Man, of what thou thinkest will prejudice thy worldly Interest, this Fear is a sign thou lovest.

The Saints Fear Sin, yea and all temptations to it: Why so? O 'tis because they love their God and their Souls.

4. There is in it an aversion from evil, both from Sin, and all the Fruits of Sin. The three former Particulars, are the causes of this Fear, but this is in the Nature of it. The Understanding discovers sin,
1. To be an Evil, a corruptive Evil, that will defile and pollute the

Soul; a destructive Evil, that will undo and destroy it. 2. To be an evil hardly to be escaped. It sees the Soul to be in danger of it every day and every hour; Evil as Evil, is not the Object of Fear, but Evil that we are in danger of. Evil as Evil, is the Object of Hatred, not so of Fear; there's no Fear of Sin in Heaven, because there's no danger of it. To hear of the Plague, or Sword, or Famine, or Earthquakes, or Fire in the Indies, or any other remote parts of the World, this doth not move Fear, it's far enough off us we are in no danger of it. But when the Plague is in the Town, when the next House is on Fire, then we are startled. 3. To be an Evil not to be endured, an intolerable Evil: Hereupon the Heart shrinks back from it, and is in pain, till it can be secured against it.

5. There is foresight in it. Fear is of future Evil, apprehended to be coming on; Prov. 22.3. A prudent Man foreseeth the Evil. This prudent Man is the very same with this fearing Man, as appears by the next words, [and hideth himself] 'tis Fear that makes Men hide.

A bold Sinner is blind and cannot see afar off, 2 Pet. 1.9. <H&G>, pur-blind, that can see things very near, but through the weakness of his Eyes cannot see at a distance, he is but shortsighted. Sinners are Men for the present, and they look not to what comes after. But says the Apostle, 2 Cor. 4.18. We look on the things that are not seen; as on the Good things, so on the Evil not seen.

He that Fears God, sees what's out of sight to the blear-eyed World. He sees Evils in the beginning of them, he sees Midnight in the Evening, he sees the Winter in the Autumn; He sees Evils in the causes of them, he sees the Storms in the Cloud, the Birth in the Conception.

James 1.15. Lust when it hath conceived bringeth forth Sin, and Sin when it is finished bringeth forth Death. What is there in a Thought?

What is there in a Lust, or an evil Motion? Who would fright himself with Fancies saith the Pur-blind World? I, but what will this Thought or this Lust bring forth? Who knows, saith the Fearing Soul, what a numerous Brood may spring forth out of this pregnant Womb? Lust when it hath conceived brings forth Sin; any Sin, the worst that can be imagined, multitudes of Sins, all manner of Iniquities. Lust will bring forth Sin, and what will Sin bring forth? Why, Sin when it is finished bringeth forth Death. A prudent Man foreseeeth all this, sees Sin's last in its first, its Fruits in its Root; he sees the product and issues of things that do appear; the burning down of the House, in the first Spark that kindles in the Thatch; in the entrance of the Thief in at the Door, he sees all the rifling and bloodshed that afterwards follows.

Sinner, how is it that thou art so secure? Friend, what seest thou? Some it may be will answer as the Prophet's Servant when he first went up to Carmel, 1 Kin. 18.43. I see nothing. Others will answer, as he did at his last going up, I see a Cloud, but it's but a little one no bigger than a Man's hand. But the Prophet saw a great Rain in that little Cloud. Sinner, thou that yet seest nothing, nothing to trouble thee, nothing to make thee afraid, look again and again, even unto seven times: Dost thou yet see a Cloud rising? Do not say it is a little one; take heed, if thy foresight do not, thy sense will quickly tell thee what a Storm there is in it.

Christian, how is it that [thou] art so secure? Where be thine eyes? Art thou blind also? Dost thou not see the Spark in the Thatch? Dost thou not see the Thief at the Door? Hast thou a Treasure within? Hast thou a God, a Conscience, a Soul? Hast thou Grace, hast thou Peace, hast thou Hope? And dost thou not see the Thief breaking in, and the Fire breaking out, that Lust that is in thine Heart, and the Temptations that are at the Door, ready to steal away or burn up

every good thing thou hast? How is it that there is no Cry heard within thee, Fire, Fire; Thieves, Thieves? Look to thyself, save thyself, O my Soul, from the mischiefs and miseries that are coming upon thee.

We may give a Judgment of what Sin is bringing forth, by observing what it hath brought forth: Fear will conclude, that what hath been may be; It's like to be my case which hath been the case of others. What hath Sin done upon the World? How hath it filled them with all Unrighteousness, Fornication, Covetousness, Wickedness, Maliciousness, Envy, Murder, Debate, Deceit, Malignity, &c. Rom. 1.29. What Fools, and Bruits, and Stocks hath it made them, fit for nothing but to be Fuel for the Eternal Fire.

And what hath it done even upon Christians, or the Professors of Christianity? How low hath it held many of them? So low, that they can hardly tell whether they are alive or dead; and those that have seemed to be gotten up a little higher, how often hath it pulled them down again, even to Death's Door. Some Professors it hath slain outright. The Christianity they seemed to have is dead and buried. O Friends, when you see what Sin and the Temptations thereof have done to others, is it not to be feared what it may do to you? May I not say to you, as Peter did to Sapphira, (if you look not the more carefully to it) Acts 5.19. The Feet of those that have buried thy Husband, are at the Door to carry thee out. The same Sins, the same Temptations that have slain your Friends and buried them, behold their feet are at the Door waiting for your Souls also. Open your eyes a little, and look who there are round about you; Behold the Pleasures of Sin waiting for you, behold the Gains of Unrighteousness waiting, behold your Carnal Friends and Sinful Companions, behold the Persecutions, and Scoffs, and Scorns, the Bonds, and Imprisonments that are waiting at the Door; and what

wait they for, but to carry out your Souls also dead, to those that you have seen slain before you? Hast thou seen what hath become of others, and dost not therein foresee what may become of thee, and canst thou yet be secure?

Christians, you are Men of like Passions, and subject to the same Temptations with other Men; there's the same Pride, the same Lust after the World, the same love of Carnal Pleasures, the same fears of Fleshly Sufferings rooted in your Natures: And do you not feel these Evil Roots sometimes budding, these Fires kindling? And have you not often suffered loss by them? Yet you hope you have a little Faith, some Love to Christ, some Hope towards God, some Conscience of Sin, some Affection for Things Above; let Lust alone a-while, venture on upon Temptations a-while; and O what leanness of Soul, yea, what Sickness, yea what Death may it bring upon you! What Carcasses may these living Souls quickly become? Lift up your eyes and look before you, foresee the Evil before you be surprised and swallowed up by it.

6. It hath forecast in it. Fear will make to beware, 'twill put us to our shifts, 'twill set us a considering, and contriving, and casting about, how we may best escape the danger we are in. Fear hath care going along with it, 2 Cor. 7.11. The Fearless ones, are the careless and the heedless ones. A fearing Christian will be a circumspect Christian; he looks to his Steps, and takes heed to his Ways that he sin not, Psal. 39.1. He will keep his Enemy in his Eye, that he fall not upon him at unawares. He is tender of transgressing, and therefore keeps his Watch, and stands upon his Guard continually. He sees he walks among Temptations and Snares, and therefore looks diligently to his Foot that it be not taken in the Snare. He sees how loose and heedless Christians do smart for their folly; he sees that Prevention is better than Repentance; and therefore though he will repent when he

is fallen, yet he would rather make as little Work as may be for Repentance; Rejoicing that he hath been kept from Iniquity, he prizes at a higher rate than repenting of Iniquity.

A Prudent Man is a Provident Man. I see, saith the Fearing Soul, I see I am in danger; my Soul is in danger, my Life is in danger, I stand in Jeopardy every hour. Evil is before me, and it may come upon me ere I am aware. And what if it should come upon me? Put the case I should be overtaken, overtaken of Sin, overtaken of Wrath, how bitter will then my Folly be unto me? Nay, there's no [may be] in the Matter; Evil will come upon me, and I shall not escape, if I look not the better to it. But is there no way to prevent it? Is there no security from the Snare, no refuge from the Storm, no shadow from the Heat? Must I fall? Must I sin, and be miserable, and perish, and is there no remedy? How may I escape? What's to be done to save myself from evil? These are the fore-castings of the Fearing Soul. And when they have found him out his Way, they hold him to it; when they have discovered a Refuge, they hasten him in. The Man-slayer needed no other Monitor, the Avenger of Blood at his Back, and the Fear in his Heart, put him to his Heels to hasten to the City of Refuge.

Heb. 11.7. By Faith Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet, (of a Deluge or Flood of Waters) moved with Fear, prepared an Ark to the saving of his House. Mark it, his Faith moved his Fear, and his Fear put him on providing an Ark against the Waters. A Flood cometh to wash away wickedness from the Earth, and to drown all the Sinners thereof. This Faith foresaw a hundred and twenty years before it came; and thereupon Fear cries out, O for an Ark to save from the Waters! It's no time to lie still and sleep, it's no time to sit eating and drinking, to be marrying and giving in marriage; an Ark, an Ark must be prepared to save from the Flood.

Let me here by the way put in a word or two to this Age and Nation.

Hath God said nothing? Doth Faith see nothing of a Flood coming upon us? Is there such a Deluge of Sin amongst us; and doth not that prophesy to us of a Deluge of Wrath? Lift up your Eyes Christians, stand and look through the Land, Eastward and Westward, Northward and Southward, and tell me what you see. Behold a Flood cometh, a Flood of Sin is already broken forth upon us, the Fountains of the great Deeps are broken up, and the Windows of Hell are opened, and is there not a mighty Stream of Iniquity running down, even from all Parties among us? From one Party, the openly profane, Behold a Flood of Atheism and Infidelity; amongst those that still bear the Name of Christ upon their Foreheads, what multitudes are there that are Pagans in Heart and Life? A Flood of Oaths, and Curses, and Blasphemies; Are there not many Men become like that Beast that arose out of the Sea, Rev. 13.1. having the Name of Blasphemy upon their Heads? A Flood of filthy Lusts and stupendous Adulteries; What a new Sodom is there sprung up out of the Ashes of the old, and hath not the Younger out-done the Deeds of the Elder? A Flood of Fury and Rage is broken forth, such a Flood as the Serpent cast out of his Mouth after the Woman, Rev. 12.15. Persecutions raised upon those that separate themselves from the filthiness of the Land.

And besides these Streams that come by the way of the Wilderness, behold another Stream that rises even in the Garden of the Lord; the Waters of the Sanctuary are become a muddy Stream and a troubled Sea, that casts up Mire and Dirt. A mixed Stream comes forth, Divisions, Contentions, Quarrelling's, Heresies, Hypocrisies, Unrighteousness, Unmercifulness, with but a very little Truth and Righteousness among. The Waters of Grace and Peace, the still Waters are but low Waters, and run so softly, as if the Fountain were

quite dried up; and instead thereof, Pride, Haughtiness, Headiness and Uncharitableness, how do they swell amongst us, and rise higher every day?

In this Flood of Sin, how easy is it for him that hath eyes, to see a Flood of Wrath even running in upon us to consume us from off the Earth: But all this while, where be the Noah's amongst us? What preparations is there making for an Ark against the Flood? How is it that we are so secure? There be many amongst us that are crying, A Flood, a Flood cometh, can our Land any longer bear the Iniquities of it? Can the Soul of God but be avenged of such a People as this? But how few of us are there heard crying, An Ark, an Ark, to save us from the Flood? And of those that cry an Ark, how very few are there that are preparing an Ark? How is it that we are not everyone shifting for ourselves, and hiding ourselves from the Evil to come? I do not mean shifting, to hide ourselves by our Wits, much less by our wickedness; woe to such shifters who make shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience, to save themselves from drowning, who choke themselves in the Mud, to save themselves from the Waters. But how is it that there is no more care taken to hide ourselves in God, to imbarque with Christ, and to lodge ourselves in the Ark of the Covenant of God? What hiding place have we but Christ? What Ark can we have, that will bear us up above the Waters, but the Ark of the Covenant? There we may be safe; in Christ, and out of danger; in Covenant with God, and out of fear of the Wrath of God.

How is it that there is no more enquiring, Am I in Christ? Am I in Covenant? Have I broken my Covenant with Death, and disannulled my Agreement with Hell? Am I no longer in League with my Sins and this evil World, have I broken with them all, and am I gotten within the Bond of the Covenant of God? If I think I have, yet am I not mistaken? Many Souls have been mistaken, have thought themselves

within, who have yet died without; and am not I mistaken also? Is the thing sure? Is Christ mine indeed?

How is it that there is no more asking the way to the City of Refuge? How may I get into Christ? Or how may I know whether I be in Christ or not? O how is it that we do not awaken our slumbering Spirits, and call upon our careless Hearts! Come on, O my lingering Soul, make haste, get thee up to the Rock; to Sanctuary, to Sanctuary; Awake thou Sleeper, carest thou not that thou perish? Come my Soul, enter thou into thy Chamber; hide thyself till the Indignation be over-past.

How is it that there is no more such care taken? Are we so solicitous as we should be about this matter? How is it with [you] Friends? Are you busy in considering, and fore-casting, and enquiring how you may escape? What is it that your fear of a Deluge hath put you upon, to provide yourselves against it? Is there anymore circumspection and heedfulness in your goings? Anymore tenderness of Sin? Are you throwing off those weights that will sink you with the multitude? Are you busy in breaking down your Sins, and building up yourselves, in hope of the Salvation of God? Behold how generally our other Matters do still take up our Time and Thoughts; we are building of Houses, and planting of Vineyards, and Buying and Selling, and Marrying and giving in Marriage, seldom giving ourselves leave to think of a Flood that's coming to take us all away. O fear, and let your fear set you on work to save yourselves from Misery and Ruin.

The foolish World laugh at this Fear; What jealous-headed melancholic Souls are these? What Dreams and Fancies do they fright themselves withal? And so did the old-World doubtless laugh at Noah, to see him such a Fanatic to amuse himself and others with such a strange conceit of a Flood, and to go build an Ark to save

himself from that Dream of a Deluge. What laughing and mocking think you was there then amongst them, to hear this Preacher of Righteousness to Preach, and prepare for such a strange incredible thing? Such mocking's are there of the Men of this World, at the fears and preparations of the Saints, against the Judgments of God. I, but when the Ark was finished, and Noah and his Family gotten in, and the Flood came in earnest; when they saw the Rain pouring down, the Waters swelling, the Seas roaring, and tumbling in, in whole Mountains of Waters upon them; where was the laugh of the World then? What a cry was their laugh then turned to? Let Sinners laugh at last when they shall see all these things come upon them, when the overflowing Scourge cometh, and they shall then see the derided Saints gotten into the Ark, and themselves left out to perish in the Waters.

Well, by this time you may see what this Fear is, or who is this Man that feareth. The Man of Understanding, that so knows God, his Goodness and Severity; that so knows Sin, its Malignity, and the Misery that it exposes to; that so believes God, that hath such a love for God and his own Soul, and such an aversion from Sin; that so foresees the danger he is in, of running into Sin, and falling into Misery, that he wisely and warily looks to himself, keeps himself from Iniquity, and hides himself from those Mischiefs and Miseries, which the rest of the World foolishly venture upon, and are destroyed by in the end. This is the Man that feareth, this is the happy Man.

2. What is that Blessedness that is pronounced to him that Feareth?

Happy is the Man that feareth. To Happiness two things are required.

1. Sufficiency.

2. Security.

1. Sufficiency. He that is in want is in misery; whatever he hath, how greatly soever he abounds; yet if he hath not all that he needs, yea, all that he desires; In the fullness of his Sufficiency he is in straits, The pain of what he desires and hath not, imbitters the pleasures of what he hath. No Sufficiency, no Satisfaction, short of Satisfaction, so far short of Happiness. He must have all things that would find rest in anything; He that possesses whatever he can desire, that's an happy Man, only to this must be added,

2. Security. What we have today, may be lost tomorrow. He that hath most, and holds it by such an uncertain Tenure, is so far from finding rest in what he hath, that he may be in greater perplexity than he that hath nothing. Therefore can there be no happiness in anything under the Sun; for besides the insufficiency of these worldly things, (the whole Earth is too little to fill the Soul, all this great World is not enough to fill the little World, Man) but besides this, were they sufficient, what security can be had for the continuance of them to us? They are all but casualties, they come and go, they have all their Wings, and who knows how soon they may take their flight? At the best, The things that are seen are but Temporal, 2 Cor. 4.18. There must be permanence & durableness in the matter of our Happiness. The durable Riches, the enduring Substance, an Inheritance that fadeth not away, and there must be security against their being lost or taken away.

Now this is the happiness of him that feareth, he hath sufficient, and what he hath is in safety.

1. He hath a sufficiency. This Fear, as appears from what hath been spoken, is a Religious Fear; the Fear of God is sometimes taken for all Religion; here only for one particular Branch of it, yet such as

argues the Truth of Religion, and entitles the Soul to the whole income and revenue of Religion. He that knows, believes, and loves God, and therefore fears and flies from Sin and Wrath, is certainly a Godly Man, and shall have his Inheritance with the Just.

The first Sermon that ever we read, that Christ Preached, begins with an enumeration of the Beatitudes of this very Man. He shall inherit the Earth, he shall be comforted, he shall be filled, he shall obtain Mercy, he shall see God, his is the Kingdom of Heaven. All these Graces that are there mentioned, Poverty of Spirit, Purity in Heart, hunger after Righteousness, Meekness, &c. are the particular Qualifications of this very Man. And we may write down after that Copy, Blessed is the Man that feareth, for his is the Kingdom of God; Blessed is the Man that feareth, for he shall be comforted, he shall obtain Mercy, he shall see God. This is the Man who shall inherit all things, Rev. 21.7. and shall want nothing, Psal. 34.10. He is provided for, for Soul and for Body, for this Life and that to come. The Promise is his Portion, and in the Promise there is all things. There's Bread in the Promise, and Clothes, and Houses, and Lands, and Friends; there's Grace and Glory in the Promise. And to have an Inheritance in the Promise, is to him as good as to have it in hand, and in some respects better. Thou art a Fool, Soul, who sayest with the Prodigal, Give me my Portion; 'tis better where 'tis, God will look better to thee, than thou to thyself.

2. He hath Security. All that he hath is in safety. He that hath most, and is in danger of losing all, as (I said before) is in greater perplexity than he that hath nothing to lose. The Poor Man sleeps in more quiet than he that hath his House full of Treasure, if he be in danger of the Robber. Enough is not enough, 'twill never content whilst there is hazard of losing all. The Man that feareth hath enough, and all he hath is in safety; Prov. 1.33. Whoso hearkeneth to me, shall dwell

safely, he shall be quiet from [fear] of evil. He that feareth shall be most free from fear, the Fear of God will fortify him against the Fears of the World.

Particularly consider these two things.

1. The Matters wherein his Happiness lies are sure. The Mercies of God are sure Mercies, that will neither fade away, nor can be taken away. If there be uncertainty in what a Christian hath of this World, he is well enough notwithstanding; these are not his Happiness, he may be as happy in his greatest penury, as in his greatest plenty. This is easily said, O that it were but soundly believed! What a calm and serene state might Christians then live in in the greatest tempests.

The Matters of a Christians happiness are sure and certain Things. The portion of the World is not capable of being made sure. As one says well;

The World flies, sometimes it pitches upon one Family, and then how happy do they account themselves; shortly after it takes its flight thence, and away to another, and thence to another, and another; and who knows whither? Come to a Family this year, and behold as Job 21.10. Their Bull gendereth and faileth not, their Cow calveth and casteth not her Calf. Their Fig-Tree blossoms, their Vine flourisheth; there are Flocks in the Fold, there are Herds in the Stall, and then they are all merry and at rest: They send forth their little Ones as a Flock, and their Children dance; they are clothed with Purple and Scarlet, and fare sumptuously every day; they take the Timbrel and the Harp, and rejoice at the sound of the Organ. Come to the very same Family a few years after, and all's gone, and then their Purple is turned into Sack-cloth, their Music into Mourning, and their Mirth into Heaviness.

The World runs upon Wheels. The Wheel of Providence is ever turning; now one's at the top of the Wheel, and then another comes up, and he that was just now at the top, by and by tumbles and the Wheel runs over him. How often do Rich Men break, and Poor Men get up for a while in their rooms, and then tumble down after them? Today then hast an Estate, and dwellest at ease in thine own ceiled House; but who can tell where he may find thou tomorrow? Today thou livest, and art in health, and nothing ails thee; tomorrow thou mayest die, the Grave may cover thee, and Worms may be feeding upon thee. Such an uncertain World this is, and at such uncertainties are the things thereof, and there's no preventing of it. It cannot be otherwise, the wisest, the wariest, the most provident and industrious Man in the World, do what he can, can never be at a certainty for two days together. The Thief, the Moth, the Fire, Sickness and Death, may quickly divide betwixt him and his portion, and take away either him from it, or it from him. But the Treasure of the Man that fears God, is a Treasure that faileth not, an enduring Substance.

2. His very Fear is a means to keep what he hath in safety. Jer. 32.40. I will put my Fear in their hearts that they shall not depart from me. Though when God hath hold of us, he will never lose his hold; yet he holds us by certain Cords, which should they break or give off, we should certainly be gone and be lost. One of these Cords is Faith, 1 Pet. 1.5. We are kept by the mighty Power of God, through Faith, unto Salvation. Another of these Cords is this of Fear. I will put my Fear into their hearts that they shall not depart from me. Whereupon we may say also, We are kept by the mighty Power of God [through Fear] unto Salvation. God makes use of our Fear of losing all, to prevent our loss. As if we should cease to believe, so if we should cease to Fear, we should be undone at last. Upon a little loosening of this Cord, how often do we suffer great loss? When we take head, and

grow bold and venturous; when we do forget our danger, and so lay by our Armor, how much mischief do we run ourselves into? Hast thou never lost thy Peace, and all sense of the love of God? Hast thou never lost thy Affections, and all thy delight in God? Hast thou never fallen by thy folly into Sin, into a vain and carnal frame, into a dead and barren state, and thereby provoked the Lord to withdraw and hide his Face from thee, and been cast back in the state of thy Soul? Dost thou not often see this to be thy case? Thou winkest if thou dost not; why, thou shouldst not have been so venturous, thou shouldst have feared in time, and all this mischief might have been prevented. Whilst Fear stands Sentinel, the Enemy hath the less hope of making an Invasion upon thee. But where this Fear is not, that Soul dwells like the wealthy Nation, Jer. 49.31. without care, and having neither Gates nor Bars, and so becomes a booty and a spoil to the Enemy. Where Care is the Gate, and Fear hath bolted the Gate, there all is in safety.

This Fear may expose and make more obnoxious to temporal Evils; How much do Christians often lose by their Fear? They lose their Friends, and lose their Estates and their Liberties, and sometimes their Lives, upon this very account, that they are afraid to sin against God. And yet all this while they are in safety, and when they have cast up their Accounts, they find they are no losers, though they have lost all that ever they had; their Souls are in safety, and that's enough to save them harmless under all their Sufferings. He whose Face is filled with the contempt of the Proud, whose back is bowed down that the ungodly may go over it, whose Name is made a scorn and derision, whose Goods become a booty and a spoil, and his very Life becomes a Sacrifice to the rage of the cruel, if he does but come off with the safety of his Soul, that's enough to make him abundant recompense for all. As Christ saith, Matth. 16.26. What shall it profit a Man to win the whole World and lose his own Soul? So may it not

be said, What shall it prejudice a Man to lose all the World if he save his own Soul? Thou knowest not what a Soul is, what the Salvation of a Soul is, thou knowest not what Eternity, what that Life and Death means, who canst not say, Let me escape that Death, let me obtain that Life, and it is enough. O study the World to come more, secure to thyself the eternal Inheritance, and then thou wilt say with the Psalmist, whatever thy condition be here, I will lay me down in peace and take my rest, for thou, Lord, makest me dwell in safety. But more of this hereafter.

By what hath been said, it appeareth, that the Man that feareth, is a happy Man, and wherein his happiness lies.

It's true, that in this World he is but inchoatively and incompletely happy; but a happy Man he is: As he that's Heir to a great Estate, even whilst he is under Age, and hath little in possession, may be said to be a Rich Man, especially if he be under the care of a faithful Guardian; no less may a Christian, even in his non-age, be said to be an happy Man. There's no happy Man in the World, if this be not he; When he is at lowest, it's better with him than with the best of Sinners. Some Sinners will grant their Conscience tells them so, that he that fears God, will have the best of it in the other World; but yet they conclude, that themselves have the better of it here. But they are mistaken, even in this Life, a Godly Man hath the better of Sinners. He knows little of God, he hath little understood the Joy of Faith, the Pleasure of Love, the Ease of Sincerity, the Peace of Conscience, the Gain of Godliness, that would exchange lives with the best of Sinners here in this World. The very hopes of the Saints fill them with more joy than the greatest possessions of the ungodly. I had rather take my lot with Job on the Dunghill, than with Nebuchadnezzar on his Throne; with Lazarus in his Sores and Beggary, than with Dives in his Purple and delicate Fare; with Paul in his Bonds, than with

Agrippa and Bernice in their Pomp; with that Prisoner at the Bar, than his Judges at the Bench. He that is otherwise minded, is guilty of one of these absurdities, either to think that God is not better than Creatures, or that the ungodly enjoy as much of God, as those that are Godly. If God be better than the World, if God be the present Portion of the Godly, and of them alone, then he that feareth God is the happiest Man even in this Life.

But O what will his blessedness hereafter be! What advantage will he have of Sinners in the other World? When the comparison shall no longer be betwixt God and the Creatures, betwixt the fullness of Heaven, and the fatness of the Earth; when the Question shall no longer be, which is best, peace of Conscience, or the prosperity of the World, the hopes of Glory, or the pleasures of Sin; the worst of Saints, or the Sinners best: But the question will then be, Which is the best, the Pleasures of the Saints, or the Plagues of Sinners; the Fruition of God, or Reprobation from God; the Joys Above, or the Pangs Beneath? Then let it be considered, then shall it be discerned who are the happy Persons, those that Fear God, or those that fear him not.

Use.

The Application is that which I chiefly intend, and this shall be by way of Information, Exhortation, and Direction; I shall put them all together. For the more effectual carrying on whereof, I shall inform and warn you;

1. Of the Opposites of this Fear.
2. Of the Grounds or Reasons, why men Fear not.
3. Of the Reasons why you should Fear.

4. What you should Fear.
5. How you should improve this Holy Fear.

I.

The Opposites of this Fear are

1. Rashness.
2. Audacity.
3. Security.

1. Rashness, Hastiness or Headiness in our way. Fear will make Men consider. 'Twas good Counsel which the Town-Clerk gave in the Tumult, Acts 19.36. that they did nothing rashly; Eccles. 5.2. Be not rash with thy Mouth, neither let thy heart be hasty to utter anything before God. The Apostle reckons hasty ones among the dangerous Persons, 2 Tim. 3.4. Men shall be heady, precipitates, running headlong on their course, acting not upon Counsel, but their sudden apprehensions, or any strong impulses of their hearts; at all adventures, whether it be right or wrong. Fear will make Men wary, and advised what they do.

Christians, if you would walk safely, look before you, speak nothing rashly, do nothing rashly, weigh your Thoughts and Intentions before you let them pass into action. How many Evils doth rashness and headiness run us upon? Those words which in a heat we have let fly, some of our hasty Carriages and Actions have sometimes cost us

many days sorrow and repentance, which had we been cautelous, and a little better advised, might have been prevented. Sometimes a sudden passion arises, and out it goes in angry and froward words, setting all in an uproar and combustion; by and by our hearts recur upon us, and then we wish, O that I had bit my Tongue, and not given it such an unbridled liberty. Sometimes we break out into rash censures of those that it may be are better than ourselves; whereupon when we reflect, we are ashamed that the Fool's Bolt was so soon shot, and wish we had been judging ourselves when we were censuring our Brethren. Take heed you mistake not rashness and headiness, for Zeal; I would not cool Godly Zeal, there's too little of it in the World. We need the Spur more than the Bridle; the Bellows, nor the Bucket. We may not quench true Zeal, the Lord be merciful to us, there is not so much of it to be found; we had more need cast on Oil than Water upon that Holy Fire; Zeal for Truth, Zeal for Righteousness and Holiness; how happy were it if there were more such Flames, if all our shining were also burning Lights? But Zeal must be regular; as for the Matter of it, it must be always in a good thing, Gal. 4.18. So it must be managed with good Counsel and Caution; mistaken Zeal is a Fire that devours that good that it pretends to promote.

But as you may not run headlong upon that which hath the face of Good, much less upon that which is apparently evil. It's dangerous to be heady in the Matters of God, wherein, in case we are right, we can never over-do; but much more mischievous to run headlong upon Sin; Jer. 8.6. Everyone turned to his course, as the Horse rusheth into the Battle, without fear or wit. O the witless mad-headed multitude of Sinners in the World, how do they rush on upon their wickedness? They will neither ask Counsel nor take Counsel, but on they will at a venture, come of it what will.

Stand Sinner and fear, fear and consider; what is it thou art doing? Whither is it thou art running? Thou wilt on thy Way, thou wilt after thy Lusts, and after thy Companions; thou wilt after these Riches, and these Pleasures, there's no stopping thee, nor putting thee to pause upon it; thou art all in haste, and impatient to be advised: But yet for all thy haste, take heed of what comes after, thy Bargain is not like to be so good as to require such haste; hasty Bargains seldom want woe. Whatever is done rashly, seldom comes to any other issue, but either Repentance or Ruin. Qui ante non cavet, &c. If thou wilt not Fear, thou wilt shortly find what 'tis to be thus headstrong and precipitant.

2. Audacity, or fool-hardiness, or mad venturousness upon known dangers. This is of kin to rashness, but is not the same. It is the other extreme to Cowardice; the mean betwixt both is Fortitude. The Fear we are now treating of, is not opposite to Fortitude as Cowardice is; 'tis not from pusillanimity, but from magnanimity that we thus fear. The most Heroic Spirits most fear to be base; Exod. 1.17. Those worthy Midwives feared God, and feared to sin against God, and therefore feared not the Wrath of the King.

And as this Holy Fear doth not argue faintheartedness, so neither doth that audacity argue fortitude. Is it valor or madness for a naked Man to run upon an Army of Enemies? Such Desperadoes as kick against the pricks, and run upon the Pikes of Divine Vengeance, who knowing the Judgment of God against them that do such things, will yet run their course of Iniquity, not fearing of Judgments, laughing at Reproofs, Threatening's and Warnings, and deriding those trembling Hearts that dare not run on with them to the same excess of riot. What gallantry of Spirit do they count themselves to have arrived unto? Gallantry of Spirit! What to dare the Almighty to his Face? To challenge Death and Hell to meet you in the Field? For the

Briars and Thorns to gather themselves to Battle against the devouring Fire? Sure if ever you come to your wits, you will understand how mad you have been.

Sinner, darest thou continue in thine unbelief and impenitency, when thou knowest that he that believeth not, shall be damned; he that repenteth not, shall perish forever? Darest thou to walk after thy Lusts, fulfilling the desires of the Flesh and of the Mind, when thou knowest that they that live after the flesh, shall die? Thou knowest what the place and the portion of the Proud, of the Covetous, of the Liars, of the Hypocrites is, and yet darest thou continue in the number and the way of these Men?

Dost thou dare to go down quick into the Pit, to take up thy dwelling in everlasting Darkness, and thy lodging in the Eternal Fire? Awaken from this Folly, put away this madness from thee; Awake and tremble to think what a desperate adventure thou hast hitherto run.

If you should see your Children in sport jumping over a boiling Furnace, dancing on the Battlements of a Tower, or in a frolic, standing on tip-toe on the Weather-cock of a Steeple, how would your Bowels turn, your Bones tremble, and all within you shake and shiver? And will you yet be more venturous and fool-hardy yourselves? If ever you come to yourselves, you will be your own Wonder and Fear.

3. Security, Carnal Security. Security is often taken for Safety. To have our Estates, or our Peace, or our Souls secured, is the same as to have them all in safety. Job 11.14, 15. If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, then shalt thou be secure, because there is hope, and thou shalt take thy rest in safety. This Carnal Security is a recklessness or carelessness of Heart; to be without sense of our danger, and without solicitude for our safety. The cares of this Life,

and the Pleasures of the Flesh, do stupefy the Sinners of the Earth; do lay their Souls a-sleep, and bind up their senses, so that they neither fear nor mind what's like to come upon them. This was the case of the old World, in the days of Noah, Luke 17.27. They did eat, they drank, they married, and were given in marriage, till the day came that Noah entered into the Ark. Their sensuality laid them all a-sleep, and they never dreamed of that Flood that came and destroyed them all. It is said of the Men of Laish, Judges 18.7. They dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, they were quiet and secure. They neither feared Enemies, nor made any provision against them, but left themselves open to the mercy of any Invader. Secure Sinners lay themselves open to all manner of mischiefs; the Tempter may come, the Avenger may come upon them before they are aware; and he that may come will come; The Lord of that Servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and appoint him his portion with Unbelievers, Luke 12.46.

O how sick is this World of this Lethargic Distemper! We cannot say, as once 'twas said, Isa. 33.14. The Sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the Hypocrites. Behold the Sinners all asleep, and who is there among the Hypocrites that fears? But how is it with you Sinners, are you in no danger? Is there no Devil in the World? Or is there no fear that he intends to hurt you? Is that Lion that used to walk up and down seeking whom to devour, is he now confined to his Den, so that he cannot hurt the Earth anymore? Are your Lusts, those Lion's Whelps, grown tame? Do they no longer war in your Members? Doth the World cease to be a temptation and a snare, and are you out of danger of that Perdition and Destruction, in which it draws its Lovers? Is there no danger of your becoming Proud, or Covetous, or Sensualists, lovers of Riches, lovers of Pleasures more than lovers of God; or is it no harm if you be so? Nay

what woeful Work hath been made upon you already? What inroads and invasions have been made, and are not your Souls already taken Captives? Behold that ignorance and folly, that impotence and weakness, that enmity and perverseness, that malice and envy wherewith your hearts are already filled, and that stupidity and senselessness under all these evils that appear upon you; What doth all this portend? Doth it speak good concerning you? Doth it say thus concerning you, these Men are in an happy state, there's no fear to Men in such a case? no fear of the Covetous, no fear of the Drunkards, and the Liars, and the Scoffers, they are all happy Men. Consider Man, whither doth Lust lead but to Sin, and whither doth Sin lead but to Death and to Hell? Be not mistaken, that's the Lake, that this whole Herd of Swine, being driven by the Devil, are running headlong into. Friends, this is the very case that the World is brought into, it lieth in Wickedness, and runneth upon Vengeance. And yet, behold, all at quiet, all secure; no news, nor noise, nor fear of danger, but all in peace. Dost thou not find, Sinner, that none of these things move thee, or put thee to any trouble or care. And is this sleepy Evil, the Disease only of the World? Are there none to be found, in the Churches of God, sick of the same Disease? Is there that watchfulness, that jealousy that should be upon those that profess themselves Christians, and to have escaped the pollutions of the World, through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Do these Virgins always stand with their Loins girded, and their Lights burning? Do not [our] Souls also lie open to the temptation? Is not our foot often taken in the snare? What means the dimness of our Light, the damp that is upon our Love, the spots upon our Faces, the clouds that we sometimes find upon all our Comforts? What means our poverty and leanness, our frequent decays and backsliding? How hath this World crowded in with so much of its Cares and Lusts, and hath seated itself so near the Throne of God? Are there no worldly Professors, no covetous, greedy Professors? Is it

a sign thou hast stood upon thy Guard, that there are so many Thorns sprung up, so many Thieves stolen in before thou wert aware? Dost thou not see how thou art surprised daily, and met with at every turn? Dost thou not often confess this to the Lord, and complain against thyself, what an uneven, unstable Soul thou art, and how many, and how great thy Falls and Corruptions are? And hast thou not still abundant matter of the same Complaints to make? Who would think 'twere possible, that such a soul should yet be secure and careless? Hast thou caught so many a Fall for want of fear of falling, how then canst thou but Fear? And yet after all this, after this sinning and falling, and confessing, and complaining, how quickly is all forgotten, and about the World again we go to our Businesses, to our Recreations, to this Company, to that, any whither, whither our Hearts or Occasions lead us, leaving ourselves as open to every Temptation that meets us, as if we had never suffered by it?

This Evil, as 'tis a common, so it is a dreadful Evil; there's a Woe denounced against it, Amos 6.1. Woe to them that are at ease in Zion. [To them that are at ease] that is, to them that are secure, as you have it in the Margin [In Zion] in the Church of God. Woe to the secure Israelites, to secure Professors; there's no Privilege, there's no Profession that will secure the Secure from the Woe and Wrath of God.

'It is a wretched thing to behold a secure Worldling, secure Aliens and Strangers from God, who know not the Judgments of God; but to see a company of secure Israelites, of secure Christians, to whom it hath been said, Awaken thou that sleepest, stand up from the Dead, save thyself from that misery that is coming upon the World; this is indeed a woeful and a wonderful thing. Thou that hast been warned so often, that hast been preached to, and prayed over, and hast been

as a Brand pulled out of the Burning, and yet no more to dread the Fire; thou that hast tasted of the bitterness of Sin, and felt the smart of it, and hast had thine Eyes opened to see what it is preparing for thee; thou that canst talk, sometimes of tenderness, of watchfulness, of care and heedfulness, and of the constant necessity thereof; art thou a secure careless Soul? Woe be unto thee.

Vers. 3. We have a particular Instance of one piece of this Security, [that put far away the evil day] which because it hath an influence upon the maintaining of this whole Disease; I shall enlarge a little upon it.

By the Evil Day, understand the day of retribution or recompense; whether it be the day of tribulation in this World, or the day of Death and of Judgment.

There is a double putting this evil day afar off. There is a putting it,

1. Far from our Reins.

2. Far from our Loins.

1. Far from our Reins; That is, from our Thoughts and Consideration; as Jer. 12.2. Thou art near in their Mouth, and far from their Reins. Thou art much spoken of, but little thought on. Thus Men put the Evil Day far off, when they do not think of such a day; it's out of sight and out of mind with them; 'tis the least of all their Thoughts, that there is an evil day coming. The thoughts of such a day, would have the same effect, as that cry that was made at the coming of the Bridegroom, Matth. 25.6. At midnight there was a Cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; and this cry turned Midnight into Morning; all the Sleepers awakened, and arose, and trimmed their Lamps.

How is it Friends that there is not such a Cry made every Day and every Night? How is it that your Hearts do not still cry in your Ears, The Day of the Lord is near, the Judge is at the Door, the Avenger is at the Heels, Behold the Bridegroom cometh? O this seldom enters into our Hearts, this Day of the Lord is far from our Reins.

If the Evil Day were kept nearer us, 'twould make Evil Works keep farther off. If when Men are jolly, and merry, and mad after their Lusts, and drunken into a dead sleep in their Sins; If whilst others are idle and slothful, are reckless and supine in their Spirits and Ways, laying by all care and circumspection over themselves, giving themselves up to the heedlessness of their sluggish hearts; and hereby led out into those sins & vanities which are the Fruits of such Security, if such Thoughts should arise in their Minds, and sit close upon their Hearts; How shall I answer for this in the Day of the Lord? Is not the Day of the Lord coming? Is it not near? May not the very next day be the Evil Day? And if it should prove to be so indeed, what a case am I in if my Judge should find me thus? How would such Thoughts scatter away Iniquity, and scare such drowsy Souls out of all their ease and slothfulness?

Friend consider, thou knowest what a life 'tis thou ordinarily livest; Art not thou one of those that art at ease in Zion? Art not thou the Man that dwellest careless, that art quiet and secure? Hast not thou left thy Soul, like that City that hath neither Gates nor Bars? Is not that heart of thine left open Night and Day? Let the Tempter come when he will, he may find easy entrance? Is not thine heart open to Temptations, yea, and open to Wrath and Vengeance? Wouldst thou be content the Day of the Lord should find thee thus? Art thou sure but that Day may find thee thus? Would not such a Voice from Heaven, Thy Day is come, strike thee into horror and amazement, and strike through thy easy lazy Soul, as a Dart through thy Liver? O

why wilt thou not try, what some thoughts of that Day might do, whether it would not persuade thee to a wiser course, and put thee into a better case, against it comes indeed?

It is a strange thing that it should be possible for Sinners, (that believe the Scriptures) not to think of a day of recompense. Hast thou not heard? Dost thou not read, that the Wages of Sin is Death? Dost thou not know that every working day must have its pay-day? Canst thou be Sowing daily, and never think of Reaping? And hast thou not learned, That as thy Sowing is, such must thy Reaping be? That an evil Seed-time, will bring forth an evil Harvest? Canst thou be Sowing Tares, and either not think of Reaping at all, or think of Reaping Wheat? Is this all the wit thou hast? Be not deceived, as Men Sow so shall they also Reap; he that Soweth to the Flesh, shall Reap Corruption; he that Soweth to the Spirit, shall Reap Life Everlasting, Gal. 6.7, 8. Know it in time, and throughout thy Sowing, think of thy Reaping-Day.

2. Men put the Evil Day far from their Loins. That is, though they do think of the Judgments of God, and as such, as both may overtake them, and if they fall, will fall heavy upon them, and grind them to Poulder; yet they count 'twill be a great while first, there may be time enough to prevent them, or at least the distance they apprehend of them, from them, makes them the less to be feared or regarded; Eccles. 1.8. Because Sentence against an evil work, is not executed speedily, therefore the Heart of the Sons of Men is fully set in them to do evil. Because Judgment is so long a-coming, therefore they grow bold in their Sin, as if 'twould never come. Not till after a long time, is almost the same with them, as never at all. As if because the Bench and the Gibbet, stand not both together, because the Sin and its Sentence, the Sentence and its Execution are not on the same day,

therefore there will be no Sentence, no Execution; as if because it's Sun-shine today, there were no fear of a Storm for many days after.

The Thoughts of Sinners, are like those words of Rebellious Israel, Ezek. 12.27. The Vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he Prophecieth of the Times that are far off. Those Scoffers who walk after their own Lusts, 2 Pet. 3.4. demand, in derision, Where is the Promise of his coming? Where is the Promise, that is, where is the Threatening of his coming? The same word that is a Promise to the Saints, is often a Threatening to Sinners. Where is the Threatening of his coming? There hath been much Preaching and Talking of the Day of the Lord, of a Black Day that's coming to pay all our Scores; this hath been foretold a long time ago, even in the days of our Forefathers, who are yet gone to their Graves in peace; and behold to this day, after the revolution of so many Ages, we see no sign of it, but all things are still as they were, and Men may sin at as cheap rates now as they did then. Those Rebel Jews, Isa 5.19. That drew Iniquity with Cords of Vanity, and Sin as it were with Cart-ropes, are so bold as to say, Let the Day of the Lord come, let it hasten that we may see it; let the Counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh that we may know it. Such Infidels were these Rebels become, that they made the Threatening's of the Lord a mere Mock, or a Dream, or a lying Vision, that would never come to pass.

But even among those that do believe that there is such a day a-coming, wherein the Lord will confirm the Word of his Servants, and perform the Counsel of his Messengers; even amongst them there are who say, Yet the Lord may delay his coming; I may have time enough to repent before it comes; not considering that though today it be said, [Time enough], yet tomorrow the word may be [Too late, too late], though now the word be [My Lord delayeth his coming], the next word may be [He is come], the Day of the Lord is come, and I

must no longer escape. O my foolish Soul, thou thoughtest such a day might come, but didst thou think it so near? Woe, woe, unto me, the Day of Vengeance is come, in a day that I thought not of, in an hour that I was not aware, He is come, he is come, to cut me in sunder, and to give me my Portion with Hypocrites. It is fallen unto me, as to some Women with Child, my Time is come before my Reckoning was out.

Friends, Is there nothing of this kind of Security also to be found, even among those that take themselves to be wiser than this Bedlam-World? How is it with many Professors of Religion? Do we live in hourly expectation of the Day of Retribution? Are we so vigilant, and so circumspect in our daily course, as Men that do believe that the Day of the Lord is at hand? How didst thou live yesterday? Didst thou carry it so as if that should have been thy last day? How dost thou behave thyself today? Dost thou now carry it so, as if thou expectedst to hear, This night shall thy Soul be taken away? Dost thou hear daily, as if thou wert hearing thy last Sermon? Dost thou pray daily, as if thou wert making thy last Prayer? Dost thou not sleep daily, and sin daily, as a Man that presumeth on many days to come? Dost thou never venture on a little sin, or on remissness in thy Duty with this thought, it will but be repenting of it after? Wouldst thou dare to do what sometimes thou dost, wouldst thou dare to neglect what sometimes thou dost neglect, wert thou sure there would be no time for repentance? Wouldst thou be so proud as thou art, or so covetous as thou art, or so vain or so slothful as thou art, if thou didst not count upon more day before thee? Darest thou never lie down one night in an unrepented Sin, for fear of what may be before the morning? O what Holy-Days, what Sabbath-Days would every day be, did we but daily think this may be my Judgment Day!] But dost thou use to think so? Thou hast thy fleshly designs already laid for tomorrow, and next day, and next year; tomorrow thou

sayest, thou wilt go to such a City, to buy, and to sell, and to get gain; next day to such a Fair, next day to such a Feast, to make merry with thy Friends; and there thou goest, and eatest, and drinkest, and tradest, and so thou meanest to go on from Year to Year; and all this, it may be, without such a thought [if the Lord will], or [what if I should not live till tomorrow]. Dost thou go up and down with thy Reckoning in thy Bosom? Is thine Account made ready? And dost thou carry it upon thine Heart where-ever thou goest? Dost thou charge it upon thyself to do nothing, but what thou wouldst be found doing? To go no whither, but where thou wouldst that thy Lord at his coming should find thee? Dost thou use to say to thyself, I would be loath to be found among the sluggish and slothful Servants, among the Hypocrites and deceitful workers, among the loose and profane ones; and therefore take heed, O my Soul, how thou be of that number, or Companion with them. How can I be sure, but if I venture to lie, or play the sluggard or the hypocrite, but I may be found so doing? How can I be sure, if I venture to have fellowship with the Ungodly, but I may be found among them? Thou wilt say, it may be, 'It is possible I may be found there, but 'tis not likely I shall, I hope I shall not, and so for once thou wilt venture it. Why this is thy Security, thou art one of them who put the evil day from them.

Well now these are the Opposites of this Fear, Rashness, Audacity, and Security.

II. The Grounds or Reasons of Men's Fearlessness

or why they fear not, these are especially these three;

1. Ignorance.

2. Unbelief.

3. Presumption.

1. One Reason why Men Fear not, is their Ignorance. This I have spoken some-what of before, and shall therefore speak the less now.

Blind Men have most cause of Fear of any Men; if they stand upon never so safe ground, yet for ought they know, danger may be near. If danger be never so near, and never so great, yet being not able to discover it, there's the less hopes of escaping it; whether they are in danger or out of danger; there's still place for Fear, because they know not where they are. Blind Men, of any Men, have most reason to Fear, and yet the Spiritual Blind are most out of Fear. Men's Ignorance, as it puts them past feeling, Ephes. 4.18, 19. so it puts them past Fear; they have so little light, as not to see the evil that is before them, and they have so little wit, as not to suspect the evil they see not.

There is not anything before them, or round about them, but they have need enough to fear it. Their very Hopes & Confidences, and the Refuges that they trust upon, if they knew what they were, would be formidable enough to them. Their Harbors in which they shelter

themselves, are Rocks at which they split and dash themselves, their very Supports are their Snares.

What is the Hope of the Sinner? It may be his Religion is his Hope; and what is his Religion? He believes there is a God, and is no Atheist; he trusts in Christ, and is no Infidel; he is a Protestant and no Papist; he prays and fasts, he is sober and honest, and harms no Man, and is no Publican; and this is his Righteousness, upon which he ventures his Soul. But if he knew but what his Belief and his Trust is, how far short of the Faith of God's Elect; if he understood what his Prayers and his Fasting's are, rather Images and Shadows, than the Things themselves; if he knew what lies and deceits, what a rotten Thread they are upon which he hangs his Hopes, and his Soul, 'twould make his Confidence his Terror. But he is ignorant, and is not able to say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

I would not take off Sinners from Praying and Hearing, and other Exercises of Religion; I would not disgrace that little Morality, that Temperance, Truth, Righteousness, that's found in any of them; 'twere well if all the Sinners of the Earth were Praying Sinners, and Hearing Sinners, if there were more morality found amongst the Unbelieving World. Prayer is a Duty, and our way to God; Righteousness is a piece of the Image of God in Man; a Jewel will sparkle, though it be set in a Swine's Snout. It's pity that they that have anything of God, should have so much of the Devil, that they in whom any little good is, should make such ill use of it as to undo themselves by it. But what are the Prayers, what is the Religion and Righteousness of these Men? What Carnal Devotion, what a Formal Religion, what blind and lame and sick Sacrifices do they satisfy themselves with? Which have nothing of Truth or Spirit within, no nor so much as a face or form of serious Godliness without. Yea, what is their Repentance, but a cold asking forgiveness, without

either forsaking, or so much as seriously confessing their Sins? What is their Righteousness, their Innocency and Harmlessness, they bless themselves in? It may be no more but this, they are less wicked than some others. Here is the Hope and the Trust of these blind Souls; But did they understand what Wood, Hay, and Stubble, what broken Reeds, what Cobwebs these are, their very Trust would be their Dread. But because they think it's right, and sound, because they think their Sand on which they build, is a Rock; this Babel, this confused and indigested heap of Rubbish, is their strong Tower, because they have not so much Light as to discover what Refuges of Lies these are; therefore 'tis that in the midst of danger they are out of fear.

The best of Sinners, if they understood it, is enough to make them afraid; and if their best be so, O what would their worst be! If their Religion be dangerous, what is their Irreligion? If there be so little hope in their Prayers, what is there in their mocking at Prayers? If they have reason to dread their Repentance, how would their Impenitence look? If what they account their Righteousness will be their Ruin, what will their Wickedness be, what will their Oaths, and their Blasphemies, and their Adulteries be?

But whatever they be, or whatever danger they be in, by the one or the other, by their Services or their Sins, by their Peace in Sin, or their War with God, they know it not, and so go on their way in quiet and secure.

2. Another Reason why Men Fear not, is their Unbelief. The Belief of a God, as it will make good Men Hope, so it will make evil Men Fear. He that believeth that God is, can hardly but believe that he is the Rewarder of the Righteous and the Sinner. If there be a God, there is a Judge; He that is the Maker, is certainly the Governor of the World;

and he that is their Governor, is their Judge. If there be a God, he is Holy, and therefore a lover of the Good, and hater of the Evil. If there be a God, he is Righteous, and will neither condemn the Innocent, nor hold the Wicked guiltless. If there be a God, he is Omniscient and All-seeing, there can be nothing, whether Good or Evil, that can be hid from his Eyes. If there be a God, he is Almighty, able to save and to destroy. As his Eye will find out, so by his Power he can revenge all ungodliness and wrong. If there be a Judge, one that is Holy, Righteous, All-seeing, and Almighty; if there be a Judge, then there shall be a Judgment, wherein every Man must give an account of himself, and receive the reward of his doings, whether they be good or evil, Rom. 2.6. 2 Cor. 5.10.

'It is Men's Atheism that lies at the bottom of their Security in sinning. The Devil would have found it hard work to have filled the World with so much wickedness, if he had not first filled it with Atheists and Infidels. Sinner, how is it that thou darest be as thou art, and live as thou dost? How canst thou eat, or drink, or sleep, for very fear? Dost thou not see how much wickedness thou compasses thyself about withal? What are thy Sins, but so many Devils or worse, and art not thou afraid of the Devil? Whether thou art or no, Remember that there is a God. Can that Holy One but hate such a Beast as thou art? Does not the All-seeing One see thee, will not his Eye find thee out? Will not the Almighty one be too strong for thee? Art thou stronger than he, and able to stand it out against him? Is there not a Judge to sit upon thee, before whose Bar thou must be brought forth to answer for all thine ungodliness? Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right? Will he either destroy the Righteous with the wicked, or will he spare the wicked with the Righteous? There is a God Sinner, there is a God, believe and fear.

The belief of the very being of a God, would make Sin to be feared; But what will the belief of what God hath said? The Word of God hath more plainly and fully declared, (beyond what might be gathered out of the bare notion of a God) what the Sinners of the Earth must expect to receive from his hands.

Why, what is it that the Lord hath spoken? Search the Scriptures, that's a Book (as to impenitent Sinners) like Ezekiel's Roll, Ezek. 2.10. Written all over with Lamentations, Mourning, and Woe. Herein is the Wrath of God revealed from Heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men, Rom. 1.18. Who hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the World, Acts 17.31. Who will appear in flaming Fire, rendering vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power, 2 Thess. 1.8, 9. Who shall be cast into the Lake of Fire, Rev. 20.15. These and many more like words are written against Sinners in the Scriptures of God. O were this Word believed, that it is indeed the Word of God; O were this God believed, that he is not as Man, that he should lie, or as the Son of Man, that he should repent, but will certainly perform, and do according to all things that are written in this Book; This would make the stout-hearted to faint, and the strong Sinner to bow down at his Feet. But because of Men's unbelief, therefore the Hearts of the Sons of Men are fully and fearlessly set in them to do evil.

O what Metal are believing Sinners hearts made of! What, dost thou believe the Scriptures, and yet not afraid to transgress? Believest thou that God resists the Proud, and yet does not thy Pride make thee afraid? Believest thou, that by thy lying, and covetousness, and oppression; or but by thy vain life, thy walking after the flesh, and fulfilling the lusts thereof, thou art treasuring up Wrath for thyself

against the Day of Wrath? And yet darest thou go on? Canst thou be quiet and secure? Sure that heart of thine is a very stone within thee. One would think it were not possible for such Sinners as believe the Scriptures, but we should find them all fallen upon their Faces, smiting upon their Thighs, shivering and quaking for fear of the Wrath of God, and the Judgment of the Great Day. But canst thou hold up thine Head, and keep on thy way, and mock at Fear? Sure either thy Belief is Unbelief, thou believest not what thou thinkest thou dost, or else thy heart is as the nether Millstone.

3. Another Reason why Men Fear not, is their Presumption. As Men's Unbelief, so some Men's Belief is the Reason why they do not Fear. Presumption is Belief without a Bottom, a House built upon the Sand, a Spider's Web spun out of their own Hearts; strong confidence founded on the weakness of a conceit, or the belief of a lie. This Presumption may be either,

1. Of the goodness of Men's present State; Or,
2. Of the happiness of their future State, whatever their present State be.

1. There is a Presumption of the goodness of their present State. It is some Men's unhappiness, that they believe themselves to be happy; their great danger, that they believe themselves to be out of danger. Some Unbelievers, and impenitent Sinners, take themselves to be Believers and Converts to Christ; some that are the Children of Hell, believe themselves to be the Children of God. This was the case of those Jews, John 8.39. who said, with great confidence, Abraham is our Father, we are the Children of Promise; and verse. 41. We have one Father, even God. Whatever thou accountest us, we are the Children of God.

And this Confidence Men sometimes grow up unto, upon little search or examining whether it be so or no. Nay, it may be the Reason is, their not examining at all how 'tis with them. Their case may be so extremely bad and unsound, that a very little search would break down all their confidence. There are multitudes that are persuaded, 'tis well with them, upon no other ground, but because they cannot tell how bad 'tis with them; and therefore they understand not their misery and danger, because they never searched nor looked into themselves, nor ever spent a serious thought about the state of their Souls. It is a wonderful thing that Men can so easily satisfy themselves in so great a case, as multitudes do.

Let a Minister of Christ come to deal with such Persons, let him go from House to House, from Man to Man, amongst the rude and ignorant Multitude, how far may he go, how many may he inquire of, e're he meet with one that is so much as in doubt but all is well?

Let him ask, How is it with your Soul? What hope have you in God? Why I doubt not, but by the Grace of God my condition is good, I hope in God all is well with me.

Let him go farther and ask, But are you not mistaken? Are you sure you are not? No, I do not question, but by the Grace of God, my Soul is in a good condition.

Let him yet inquire, What ground and reason can you give of the hope that is in you? And it may be all the answer that will be given, amounts to no more than this, I hope because I hope, I am persuaded because I am persuaded, my Mind gives me so, mine Heart tells me so, I can have no other thought, but that it is well, and shall be well with me.

There's many a Man that's like unto that Man pointed out Deut. 29.19. who though he heareth the words of God's Curse, blesseth himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imaginations of mine own heart. Though God speaks never a good word, though the Scriptures speak never a good word of such; though God curses such a Man, yet his own heart blesses him. Though God says to him, Thou Fool, thou Belial, thou Infidel, thou Child of the Devil, yet not a word is heard from his own heart, but, an honest Man, a good Christian, and a Child of God.

There is sometimes to be found, a poor trembling Christian, whom the Devil sets a cursing himself, when God doth bless him; that calls himself Hypocrite, Unbeliever, a Cast-away and Reprobate from God, though God calls him Beloved, and highly favored; and so there is that blesses himself whom God hath cursed.

It's vain to tell him, Thus saith the Lord, or to bid him search the Scriptures, hearken to what the Lord God will speak; or to say to him, as Jehoshaphat to the King of Israel, 1 Kings 22.7. inquire of the Prophet of the Lord. Doth God, his Scriptures, his Ministers, speak any good concerning thee? It's vain to speak thus to him. Thus saith mine heart, is more with him, than Thus saith the Lord. Thus my mind gives me, is enough to make him dis-believe the God of Truth; he will rather make God a liar, than not believe his lying heart.

Consider this, Sinners, whether this be not your case; God says, The Ignorant, the Unbelievers, Liars, Swearers, the evil Workers and Impenitent, are the Children of the Devil, and shall never inherit the Kingdom of God. And yet thou, though thou canst not say but that thou art ignorant, impenitent, an evil worker, given up to thy hearts lusts, and hardened in thy way, wilt not be persuaded but thou art a Child of God. God says thou art none of his, and thou wilt still say

thou art to his Face. Just thus was it with those Jews aforementioned, John 8.44. Christ tells them to their Faces, Ye are of your Father the Devil; and proves it to them, for, saith he, The Lusts of your Father ye do; and you are just like your Father, he was a Murderer from the beginning, and a Liar and the Father of it; and what else are you? And yet behold the confidence of the Men; No, we are Abraham's Seed, and the Children of God.

Sinner, who-ever thou art, that art doing the Lusts, and working the Works of the Devil, Christ speaks this very word to thee, which he here spake to those Jews, Thou art of thy Father the Devil. If yet thou sayest I hope not; God is my Father, and I am his Child, there is that Presumption that may keep thee from fearing, till thou too late feel the Wrath of God seizing upon thee. This Presumption, that 'tis so well with thee already, (that if it be possible I may make thee afraid of that which keeps thee from fear) know for a certain, it will endanger so to hold thee in thy wretched state, that 'tis never like to be better with thee than 'tis. This is it which hardens thee against Counsels and Reproofs, slights the tenders of Mercy, and out-faces the terrors of the Lord; this shuts up thine Ears and thine Heart against the word of Reconciliation, and does non-plus all the importunities of the Ministers of the Gospel. Let them bid thee believe, thou art a Believer already. Let them command thee to repent, Thou hast done it; let them warn thee to fly from the Wrath to come, and this is all the Fruit, thou tellest them thou art already passed from Death to Life. The confidence that thou art well enough already, is like to make the Preaching of Christ to be of none effect to thee.

And because this is such a brazen Wall as keeps Christ and Grace out of the Heart, and resists and repels all those Arguments which the

Word makes use of to persuade to Christ and Life, I shall make some batteries upon it as I pass along.]

The first step to Conversion is Conviction. Conviction is Presumption broken down, and the breaking in of that Fear which makes way for Faith. There are in Conviction these three things;

1. Illumination.

2. Redargution.

3. Consternation.

1. Illumination; the enlightening of the Mind, the opening of Sinners eyes, and making their Sin, and the danger that it exposes to, known unto them; the convincing Spirit brings the Commandment before them, by which is the knowledge of Sin, Rom. 7.7. and verse. 9. When the Commandment came, Sin revived, and appeared to be Sin, and exceeding sinful, verse. 13. It could be no longer hid, nor any longer be looked on as a light thing, but a very dreadful thing to be a Sinner; the truth is, we none of us know Sin as it is, some Light hath broken in upon our Hearts, but 'tis but little in comparison, and thereupon we can be venturous so far upon it, and too easily go out with it, and lick ourselves whole when we have sinned; but if we knew the Heart and the Tail of this Scorpion; what malignity there is in it, and what comes after, 'twould make us tremble and take heed: When the Spirit of the Lord brings the Commandment to us, and lays Sin by that, 'twill look with another face than now it does.

2. Redargution. The Spirit of God not only shows what Sin is, and what a fearful thing it is to be under Sin, but withal proves and demonstrates to Sinners, whatever their confidence hath been of the contrary, that they are under Sin; when the Commandment hath

done its work to discover Sin, and the evil of it, then Conscience is brought forth to do its work, to witness the Sinner guilty. Hast thou not sinned? Let Conscience speak; does not thine own Heart tell thee of thy Lying, and of thy Swearing, and of thy Coveting, and of thy company-keeping, and a World more of such evils that thou hast lived in? And hast thou ever been purged from thy Sins; hast thou repented and turned from thy evil Ways? Thou knowest thou hast not; thou art in love with Sin, in a league with Sin, and livest to this hour in the practice, and under the power of it. Is this the Man that hath been so confident of the goodness of his state, whose heart hath blessed him, and promised him that no evil shall befall him? What, a Sinner and yet at peace? What, an impenitent Sinner, and yet so confident thou shalt have peace? Thou must die, foolish Soul, thou must be judged and condemned, and suffer the vengeance of Eternal Fire; there's no shifting it off or escaping it, 'tis a plain case, the Evidence is full and undeniable; lay it to heart, for of a truth, thou art in an evil case. Here-upon as the effect of this Conviction, follows,

3. Consternation. Now the bold Sinner is knocked in the Head and laid on his back; now his old hopes give up the Ghost, and Fear and Astonishment take hold upon him. This Convincing Spirit, is the same which is called the Spirit of Bondage working Fear, Rom. 8.15. And when he is thus broken by Fear, and feeling all his hopes and supports falling under him, gives himself for a lost and undone Man; then he is made ready to the hand of him that comes to seek and to save that which is lost. He from whom just now, nothing was heard, but God I thank thee, I am not as other Men; is now brought to his, O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me?

Presumptuous Sinner, thou art never like to be happy, till thou be undone; there's no hope of thee, till thou be overcome of Fear. O cry unto the Lord to cure thee of thy confidence, to work thee to harder

thoughts of thy present state, if ever thou lookest it should be well with thee hereafter. What, dost thou yet retain thine old confidence? Wilt thou yet do all thou canst to maintain that good opinion of thy state, which thou hast hitherto had? What dost thou herein do, but resist that Spirit of God who would but break thee, that he might build thee up forever? Wilt thou not be undeceived? Wilt thou not be convinced? Wilt thou never know thy danger, till it be too late to be prevented?

But how shall I do to get mine heart awakened out of this dangerous state? Why, wouldst thou be delivered? Then,

1. Dread Presumption more than ever thou dreadedst Conviction. Every hard word, every close word from a Minister of Christ, how do Sinners shun it, and hide themselves as much as they can from it? Fear the fair speeches and smooth words that thy false heart speaks to thee, more than the sharpest rebukes thou receivest from the Mouth of God. Be willing to know the worst of thy case, before it be too late to be recovered. Be afraid to be deceived, flatter not thyself, and be afraid of the flatteries of others. Know it to be safer for thee to think worse of thyself than thou art, than to think it better than 'tis.

2. Wait for, and help on as much as thou canst, a thorough-Work of Conviction upon thee.

1. Give heed to, and improve the convincing Word. Heb. 4.12. The Word of God is quick powerful, and sharper than a two-edged Sword, piercing to the dividing asunder of the Soul and Spirit, of the Joints and Marrow, and is a discerner of the Thoughts and Intents of the Heart. But as quick and powerful as this Word is, yet it will not cut nor pierce unless it be duly heeded. Therefore as the Apostle speaks in another case, Heb. 2.1. We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard; to everything, to every word that the

Lord speaks; not only to his sweeter and softer words, his promising and comforting words, but to his sharper and harder words, his convincing and threatening words; every word of God is needed by us, and no word will do its work if it be not heeded.

Thou shouldst, when thou hearest such words as these, He that committeth Sin is of the Devil. He that doth not Righteousness is not of God. The Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. He that walketh after the Flesh shall die. He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his. If any Man love the World, the love of the Father abides not in him. Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.

Thou shouldst, when thou hearest such words, consider whose words are these; Is not this the Word of the Lord? Thou shouldst bethink thyself, to whom doth the Lord speak thus? Is it not to me? Am not I one of this number? Am not I Unrighteous? Am not I a Servant of my Flesh? Hath not my Life been a wicked Life, a worldly Life, a mere carnal Life? Have I been born again, and become a new Creature? Have I the Spirit of Christ? Is this proud Spirit, this froward Spirit, this vain Spirit, this lying contentious Spirit, is this the Spirit of Christ? Have I repented of my Sins, and returned from my sinful and foolish ways? Speak, O my Conscience, do not lie to me, but tell me truth, how dost thou find it? Sure I have been a Sinner, and a worldly and wicked liver, and I cannot find that I have repented, or been new-Born, and become a new Creature to this day. How then can I conclude, but that God hath spoken this word to me, Thou art the Man that shall die, and shall not see the Kingdom of God? And how canst thou but take these words from his Mouth into thine own, and confess, I am the Man?

2. Pray for the Convincing Spirit. The Word without the Spirit can do nothing, neither convince nor comfort thee: When God sent a Word into the World, he sent his Spirit along with it to make it prosper. He was promised to be sent to this very end, amongst others, to Convince the World of Sin, John 16.8. O pray for this Spirit; when thou hearest a word that strikes upon thy sore, lift up thine Heart to the Lord, let thy Spirit, thine Almighty Spirit, set home this Word upon mine Heart. I hear such a word as makes both mine Ears to tingle, and I cannot deny but it belongs to me; but for mine Heart, I cannot get it to stick; let the Spirit of the Lord sharpen this Nail, and drive it home. Here's a poor Minister does what he can, speaks as plainly, as closely, and as powerfully as he is able, does what he can to startle me, and to humble me, and break me; But, poor Man, he cannot do it, this Heart is too deep for him to reach it, too hard for him to pierce it; But where is the God of mine Heart? O let the Spirit of the Lord take the Pulpit, and set an edge upon this two-edged Sword, that its Iron may enter into my Soul. Cry thus unto the Lord; Say not as once Israel did, Let not the Lord speak to us anymore, but let Moses speak; Let this be thy Prayer, Let Moses speak, and the Prophets, and Pastors, and Teachers speak, but let the Lord speak also, and then there's hope I may hear.

3. Receive and retain the convincing Word, when it comes. Do not pray, Lord speak, and then turn away the Ear; Lord come in, and then shut the door against him; pray for the Holy Ghost, and then see, that you resist not the Holy Ghost. What the Apostle advises concerning the word of Exhortation, Heb. 13.22. [Suffer] the Word of Exhortation, will be much more needed here, suffer the Word of Conviction. It is a Word that will not be suffered by them that need it most. The proud and stubborn heart, either rises and swells, and flings it back in the Preacher's Face, or at least it builds a Fort against it; sometimes a Fort of Unbelief; I cannot believe my case is so bad;

and sometimes a Fort of Faith, (such a Faith as 'tis) I believe in Christ, and therefore as wicked as I am, through him I hope to be saved.

Friends, give the Word a free passage, let it have entrance into your Hearts; and how hot work soever it makes there, let it abide till it hath finished its Work. Give it time, hold upon thine Heart the sense of the misery and danger, the Word hath brought thee to, till the end be obtained. The sharpest Plaster will not raise a Blister as soon as it's clapped on, it must have time to work; and though it smart, it must be kept on till the work be done. Some Foolish Patients, if it put them to pain, will tear it off and throw it away. Sinner, hath the Word smitten thee, and cut thee to the heart? Hath it made thee raw, and clapped on a Plaster of Fire, the sense of Wrath and Judgment? Hath it made thee, who once wert a strong confident, and wouldst not suspect but thou wert in a safe and happy state; hath it made thee now to feel the Wrath of God abiding upon thee? Dost thou feel thy Peace broken, thy Hopes and thy Carnal Confidence broken down? Make them sure, never let them be built again; beware how thou ever recover to thy old Presumption again, but hold that Fear upon thy heart, till there be a. new and a sure Foundation laid, upon which thou mayest be built up in hope of Eternal Life.

Some foolish Sinners, when God hath discovered their unsoundness, and affrighted them with those dreadful Consequents that they see running in upon them like a Flood, their desires and endeavors are after present ease and quiet; if they can make a shift to be at rest and at ease for the present, (however it may be with them here-after) that's all they look after; they are more for hiding themselves from their Fears, than from their Danger; and glad they would be, if they could but get them back into their former state, wherein they felt no trouble, nor feared any evil. Some smitten Sinners, that are pursued

by the Terrors of the Lord, will often do, as the stricken Deer that's hunted by the Dogs, he will thrust himself, if it be possible, among the Herd, that there the Dogs may lose him. When the Word hath terrified a Sinner, and Conscience dogs him at the heels, so that he can be no-where at rest, away he will into the Herd amongst his Companions, with whom he was used to be merry, in hope to forget his trouble; his Carnal Friends will advise him, and he's ready enough to take their advice, to try what he can do, to drink away sorrow, and laugh away all his trouble; and this, it may be, may yield him a present relief, yea, and reduce him to a more secure and senseless state than ever before, wherein he may abide, and never know fear or trouble more, till he be brought to the King of Terrors, and all the evils he formerly feared, be come upon him to the uttermost, and he can no longer escape.

Beware of this folly, Sinner; Hath God convinced thee of thy Sin, and thy Danger, and pierced thy very Entrails, with a sense of that Wrath that hangs over thy head? Do not seek ease, in any other way, but by the removal of the cause of thy Fears. Be not such a Child as to think of hiding thyself from danger, by shutting thine eyes from seeing it. 'It is a poor Cure of a Disease, thy being laid to sleep, that thou mayest feel no pain.

Beware of running into the Herd again for ease: When God hath smitten thee, wilt thou to the Devil for a Cure? Keep thy Sore open, and do not skin it over, whilst the Core still remains within. Sinner, thou wert once far from fear or trouble; thou couldst once follow the World, and follow thy Sins, and live in a constant neglect of God and thy Soul, and nothing of all this troubled thee: Is this the state thou wouldst return to? Is it not safer to be a wounded than a secure Sinner? An awakened than a sleeping Sinner? Choose rather to live in God's Fire, than the Devils Mud; in God's Purgatory, than in the

Devil's Paradise. Wilt thou rather die of thy Lethargy, than endure those cuttings and scarifying's which might save thy Life? If thou art for ease, whether it be to Life or Death; or if thou wouldst purchase thy Peace on such terms as thine everlasting Ruin, then return to thy secure Presumptuous State.

Objection.

But I have confidence in God, and yet I hope I am not Presumptuous. I have good grounds for my Confidence. I have been convinced of my Sin; I have believed in Christ, and have joy and peace in believing, and by the Grace of God, do now go on my way, rejoicing in hope of everlasting Salvation.

Answer.

1. But hast thou examined the grounds of thy Confidence, whether they be sound or not? Hast thou put thy Faith to the Trial, whether it be indeed the Faith of God's Elect? What enquiry hast thou made into that change that is made upon thee? Thou mayest examine, and yet be unsound. Examination is a means to discover sincerity, but no mark to prove it. But dost thou not examine, and yet conclude thyself sound? Darest thou trust thine heart, without trying it? What is Presumption, if this be not, to conclude thyself to be what thou never provedst whether thou art or not? Though self-examination be no mark of sincerity, yet non-examination is a shrewd sign of Hypocrisy.

2. Dost thou never suspect thyself to be unsound? Does thine Heart never shake? Art thou not sometimes afraid, lest thy Confidence should deceive thee, lest all thy Hopes and thy Joys should prove a Delusion? Thy very being without Fear, is ground enough to make thee afraid.

When we observe how far many have gone in the Profession of Religion, to how high Attainments they have arrived, what a face of Holiness hath appeared in their Lives; and how great Peace, and what raptures of Joy they have had in their Hearts, and yet at last, by their total Apostasy from Christ, they have proved that they were all this while under a Delusion; when we consider such sad Instances, whereof we have seen so many, what does this speak unto us, but in the words of the Apostle, Be not high-minded but fear? Dost thou not yet Fear? Sure I am afraid of thee.

I will not say, how it may be with here and there one of the most grown and experienced Christians, those of the first and highest Form in the School of Christ, but for such as are but newly come in, or whatever their standing be, are but of low stature; by how much the more out of doubt they are, by so much the more it is to be doubted that they deceive themselves.

3. To answer more particularly. There are more mistakes than one that Professors of Religion may be subject to.

1. They may be mistaken in Faith, and count that to be Saving-Faith which is not so.

2. Though they have the true Notion of Saving-Faith, yet they may be mistaken in themselves.

I shall speak more at large to this afterwards, yet this word or two I shall put in here.

1. They may be mistaken in Faith, and count that to be Saving-Faith which is not so. That definition of Faith given by some Antinomians, That it is a believing that we are justified and shall be saved, hath doubtless deceived many. For,

1. If this be Saving-Faith, then one of these absurdities will unavoidably follow; either that all Men are not bound to believe, with a Saving-Faith, or that some Men are bound to believe a lie. Is there any Man, to whom the Gospel is Preached, that is not bound to believe in Christ? Is it not their Sin, who refuse Christ when he is tendered to them? Let these two Scriptures be considered, 1 John 3.23. This is the Commandment, that we should believe in the Name of his Son Jesus Christ; and Job. 16.9. He shall reprove the World—of Sin, because they believe not in me.

Now if all Men be bound to believe, and this be that belief they be bound to, to be persuaded they shall be saved; how can it be avoided, but that some are bound to believe a lie? Are all Men in a state of Salvation? Are all the Children of God? Hath the Devil never a Child in the World? Not one, if this Doctrine be true, that all are bound to believe they shall be saved, and yet none are bound to believe a lie.

2. If this be Saving-Faith, then happy are multitudes of the ungodly World. Who more confident that they shall be saved, than many ignorant and impenitent Sinners, amongst whom the first and most difficult Work of the Ministry lies in this, to break down their vain Confidence? Much of our hardest work might be saved, if we found the Sinners of the Earth under a desperation of Salvation in their present cases. 'It is this that is the great block in our way, and keeps back our Word from reaching their Hearts, that they will not be persuaded otherwise, but they shall to Heaven when they die.

But shall they be saved indeed who believe they shall? What, every one of them, the believing Hypocrite, the believing Drunkard, the believing Impenitent, even the very final Impenitent? Can Charity itself be so blind, as to think that not one of those Confidants ever

died impenitent? And can this be counted the Gospel-Faith, that will justify final Impenitents?

Come ye Hypocrites, come ye Earth-worms, come ye blind and brutish among the People, lift up your Ears and Heads, here is a Gospel (if it were but true) according to your own hearts; Fear not to be as wicked as you will, only believe you shall be saved, and you shall be saved.

But is this Gospel? I know the consequences of this Doctrine will be abhorred by its Assertors; But how can they be evaded?

Divers other Errors there are concerning Faith, which may lead Men into damnable mistakes, too long to mention.

2. Although they have the true Notion of Faith, yet they may be mistaken in themselves. They may think they have it when they have it not.

There are not a few, amongst those that profess Religion, who understand aright what Faith is, what a real Work of Grace means, and wherein the Truth of Christianity stands, who yet understand not their own hearts. There are who do not think that to be something which is nothing, who yet may be of those of whom the Apostle speaks, Gal. 6.3. who think themselves to be something when they are nothing, and so deceive their own selves. The Heart of Man is deep and dark, who can know it? Jer. 17.9. we have need of other Light than our own, the searcher of Hearts alone can help us to understand what there is within us.

The Heart of Man hath many Devices, Prov. 19.21. it hath so much folly, as to study to make the best of its case, being loath to see the worst; and it hath so much subtlety, as to put the best side outwards,

and to hide the worst out of sight. Many Men's great labor in Religion, is to persuade themselves that all is well; instead of a plain-hearted and impartial enquiry, whether they be upright or no, their business is, only to study Arguments to prove they are so. They will search out all the Arguments they can imagine for it, but they dare not look too far into the Objections against it. We would fain comfort our hearts, and thereupon greedily catch at every shadow that looks well, but dare not critically examine that which seems to speak good concerning us, whether it speak truth or no. The great question is, whether there be Grace in our Hearts or no? And we are so willing to believe there is, that we dare not look too deep, lest we should find there is none. The labor and trouble that a conviction of our unsoundness would put us to, is so displeasing to us, that we do all we can to save ourselves that trouble. If we be sound, we think the work is done; now we may sing, Return to thy Rest O my Soul, but if I should find myself to be short of sincerity, how much labor would it require to get to be sincere?

Now hereupon, the heart being so partial and overly in studying its case, what wonder is it that it should be deceived and mistaken? What wonder is it that he should think himself something, who is nothing, who is too willing, and hath so many devices to make his nothing look like something? And that it is so, that there are many that are thus deceived, there is too great evidence in the World.

There are many that can deceive none but themselves, and yet themselves they can deceive. Everyone that sees them, sees the very marks of a Hypocrite upon them; nobody can think well of them but themselves. They have taken to themselves the Name, and have something of the Complexion of the Children of God, yet their spot is not the spot of his Children. Their Complexion is rather a Paint than their natural Visage, and their spot looks out through their Paint.

Whilst there is the Profession of a Christian, of the Faith of a Christian, of the Hope of a Christian, what is there to be seen of the Holiness of a Christian? If there be a Paint of the Holiness too, yet he that observes it, may see Sin looking through it. The Humility that appears, the Meekness, the Spirituality, the Heavenliness of Mind, are all but a varnish. The Leprosy that hath fretted and eaten into the Wall, will break out through the Plaster, wherewith it's whited over. It's possible it's true, that others may be deceived in them also; these Pictures may be so drawn to the Life, that everyone may take them to be living Souls, and yet while they have a Name that they live, they may be dead, Rev. 3.1. Grace is Truth; a real thing, not a shadow or paint. This Truth is in the inward parts originally; Thou lovest Truth in the inward parts, Psal. 51.6. [thou lovest Truth] not Shadows or Images, but Realities [thou lovest Truth in the inward parts] inside Truth, a true Heart, a pure Conscience; he is a Christian which is one inwardly, Rom 2.29.

Grace is Life, the Life of God 'tis called, Ephes. 4.18. It is a Vital Power, that forms the Heart into the Image of God, that spirits and acts the whole Man, and that exerts and produces those Vital Operations which are according to God, and resists and works out that corruption which is contrary to God.

Grace is a Law; a Law in the Heart, Jer. 31.33. that commands and governs both it and the Life, contradicts and overcomes that evil Law, the Law of Sin that wars in the Members.

Grace is the fixing of the Heart upon God; the returning and coming back of the Soul from that vanity, after which it had lusted and gone awhoring, and the pitching of it upon him as the Center of all its Hopes, Aims, Desires, and Motions. It comes down from Above, even from the Father of Lights, and it fetches up the heart to him.

Grace is the healing of Nature; our participation of the Divine Nature, 2 Pet. 1.4. a Principle of Holiness in the Heart, which is the health of the Soul, and whereby it purgeth itself of all that corruption wherewith it was leavened and infected, and is reduced to that better Temperament from which by Sin it fell.

Grace is the establishment of the Heart in Good, Heb. 13.9. the firmness of the Soul; its being wrought to a good consistency; it does not leave the Soul hovering, and wavering, and hanging betwixt Good and Evil, but unalterably, though not perfectly, settles it upon Holiness and Righteousness. Though there be degrees in firmness, some weaker Christians are but unstable Souls, in comparison of those that are more deeply rooted, and more strongly fixed upon God and Godliness, yet the very weakest of real Christians, are so unalterably fixed upon God, and his holy Ways, that nothing in the World can so far change their Minds, as wholly to bring them back; but the main bent of their Hearts and Course is still for Holiness and Righteousness.

Now are there none among the Professors of Religion that know all this, and much more, yea, and feel something within which they judge to be the Babe springing in the Womb, the Life of God begotten in them, the New Creature brought to the Birth and brought forth; in whom all this is but a false Conception, and proves an Abortion at last?

Brethren, since there may be such mistakes, either the taking that for Faith or Grace which is not so, or the taking yourselves to have it within you when it is not there, (many have been thus mistaken, damnably mistaken, have gone down to the Chambers of Death, full of the hopes of Eternal Life) since it may be thus, beware that none of you be thus mistaken.] Beware of taking that for the Faith which will

save your Souls, which doth not save you from your Sins. Beware of venturing your Lives upon the strongest persuasion, that Christ is your Life, especially while you find that Sin is not dead. Beware of trusting to an outside Christianity, that dwells in the Head or upon the Tongue, whilst the Flesh and the World still have the possession of the Heart. Beware of trusting to that Godliness which hath somewhat touched and affected the Heart, but is but slight and shallow, and is not gotten deep into the Soul. Beware of trusting to that for Godliness, that is but a weak and feeble thing, that hath no life nor power in it, but is a dead thing, that doth not put forth itself in Vital Operations, that is over-topped and held captive by the Law of your Members; that is made use of to comfort you, but is not suffered to govern you, but is kept as an underling, and made to stand aside and give place to the Pleasures and Inclinations of your Flesh, that is laid up to help you in your need, and till then laid by, that it hinder you not in your Carnal Interests or Designs.

Take heed of counting that your Grace, which leaves you under the power of your old depraved Natures. Is not thy natural pride and haughtiness subdued? Dost thou continue froward, envious, of a fleshly and earthly heart, as thou wast used to be? Doth the old Stream run still? Or if it be at times bayed up, doth it ordinarily break down the Bay and run its wonted course? Fear that Grace that is thus overpowered by Nature.

Trust not to that for Grace, which is a wavering, in and out thing; that hath no consistency in it, but leaves thee a ductile sequacious Soul, carried about hither and thither with every Wind, and apt to be variously snapped, according to the several temptations or circumstances thou art in. Some Men's Godliness keeps pace with the Times, is upon the Wing, or hangs the Wing, according to the encouragement or discountenance of the days they live in. If Religion

hath gotten the Wind on its side, then they go on prosperously, and hang forth all their Sails, and will as soon strike Sail when the Wind is contrary. Some are Holy only in Affliction; when they are low and in trouble, when they are sick and in pain, and like to die, then O what complaining of Sin, what pretending's to Repentance, what breathings after Grace; then Reading, and Praying, and Meditations, and Discourses about the other World come in request; but when they prosper again, and are in health, all their Religion is laid by and forgotten. Others are Godly only when they are pleased, and all goes smoothly on with them. Every little gust of Affliction blows all their Grace off its legs. Some Men's Religion is much according to what their Company is. Who more zealous, and savory and lively, when they fall in amongst the Zealous? And yet at other times, as flat, and as carnal, and as vain as others, scarce a Thought or a Word of anything that good is, when it will disgust the Company.

If this be all the Religion thou hast, take heed of venturing thy Soul upon it, or of growing confident that this is Grace or Godliness.

And that which is Grace indeed, that Truth in the Inward Parts, that Life of God, that new Law in the Heart, that fixedness upon God, that health and that firmness of the Soul in Good; Beware you count not yourselves to have attained it before you have. Be sure before you be confident, whilst the case is doubtful, suspect yourselves; whilst you hope the best, fear the worst. Put it out of doubt, by searching more narrowly, and a more diligent improving. True Grace, where 'tis weak, is hardly discernible, the narrowest search will not do it. Whatever Arguments there may be for, there will be so many Objections against it, that will darken the evidence of them. The Confidence of a truly gracious Soul, that is but weak, may be a kind of Presumption, though he doth not presume, he hath what he hath not; though he hath it indeed, yet his Confidence that he hath it, may

be a kind of Presumption, because the Evidence is not so clear that he can rationally bottom a peremptory conclusion upon it.

To conclude this matter; Art thou persuaded that thou hast Faith, and that there is a gracious saving change wrought upon thee? Fear that thou mayest be mistaken; and in this Fear, search whether thou art mistaken or no, lest thou also at last should be found, and have thy portion with the Presumptuous and self-deceiving Souls. But of this more in its place.

2. There is a Presumption on future Mercy, how bad soever Men's present condition be. There are some self-condemned Persons the Die of whose Sins is so deep, that it cannot be varnished over, nor hid from their own eyes; their Consciences pass Sentence upon them for Hypocrites and Ungodly; and yet, though they see they be stark naught, abominable Branches, reprobate Silver at present, they are still without Fears, but it shall be well with them hereafter. Though their Consciences condemn them, yet they hope God will justify them. Conscience charges them as God did those ungodly ones, Psal. 50.17. Thou hatest Instruction, and casteth the Word of the Lord behind thee; when thou sawest a Thief, thou consentedst to him, and hast been partaker with the Adulterer. Thou hast been a Thief, an Adulterer, a Liar, a Scoffer, a Slanderer, these things thou hast done; Canst thou deny it? Or as Jer. 2.23. How canst thou say I am not polluted? How canst thou say I am not a Transgressor? See thy way in the Valley, trace thy Foot-steps, consider the course of thy Life, and see if all thy ways do not speak thee a wicked Man. But though Conscience charges them thus, and they cannot deny the Charge, but are forced to acknowledge all is true, and to confess, if there be ever a wicked Man in the World, I am one; if there be ever a vile Person in the Earth, I am one; if there be ever a graceless one under Heaven, I am the Man: yet though they know that they are wicked Ones, and

have no Grace at present, they still presume they shall have Mercy at last. God is a God of Pardons, if he should be extreme to mark Iniquities, who then shall stand? God is a merciful God; for whom did Christ die but for Sinners? Woe be to the World if God were no more merciful, if Christ were no more gracious than Men speak.

This was the Confidence of those pointed at before, Deut. 29.19. Who bless themselves in their Hearts, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine own heart, and add drunkenness unto thirst. Mich. 3.11. The heads of the People judge for Reward, the Priests thereof teach for Hire, the Prophets thereof divine for Money, they build up Zion with Blood, and build up Jerusalem with Iniquity. Here were a wicked Generation, Perverters of Judgment, Covetous, Oppressors, Bloody Men. What could these Men think of themselves? Could they be ignorant that they were abominable in the sight of God? What hope can they have of themselves? Yes, they have hope, yet they will lean upon the Lord; yet they trust in God, no evil shall come upon them.

This is a more common case than is imagined; Men could not be so hardy nor so venturous upon a course of known Iniquity, as we see them to be, did they not maintain in their hearts a secret hope of Mercy; yet I shall have Pardon, yet I shall have Peace, the Lord I trust will spare me, notwithstanding all that I have done. But let such Men consider, that by this their hope of obtaining Mercy in a state of Sin,

1. They make the Scriptures a lie.

2. They make Christ to do the Work of the Devil.

1. They make the Scriptures a lie. Thou doubtest not but that thou shalt be saved; But what art thou? It may be thou art an ignorant Soul all this while, one that knowest not God nor his Gospel. But

what says the Scriptures of such? Look into Job 18.21. Surely such are the Dwellings of the Wicked, this is the Place of him that knoweth not God. Where is his Dwelling? What is his Place? Look back into the former verses, verse. 14, &c. His Confidence shall be rooted out, it shall bring him to the King of Terrors; — Brimstone shall be scattered upon his Habitation — he shall be driven from Light to Darkness, and chased out of the World. This is the place of him that knoweth not God. Thou sayest no, this is not my place; my Confidence shall never be rooted out, it shall bring me to the King of Glory; I shall go out of Darkness into Light, I shall see the Salvation of God. What dost thou herein say, but Scripture thou liest; this is not my place, this dark and dismal Habitation shall be none of my Dwelling; I shall dwell with God in the Land of the Living? It may be thou art one that walkest after the Flesh, a Person of a carnal worldly Life; a Drunkard, an Epicure, an Earth-worm, given to thy pleasure, and ease, and mirth? A vain Person, yea, and one of the most vile of the Earth; and what saith the Scriptures of such? Why, look into Rom. 8.13. If ye live after the Flesh ye shall die. Colos. 3.5, 6. Mortify therefore your Members which are upon the Earth; Fornication, Uncleanness, inordinate Affections, evil Concupiscence, and Covetousness; for which things sake, the Wrath of God cometh upon the Children of Disobedience. Rom. 2.8.9. Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish upon every Soul of Man that doth evil. Psal. 9.17. The Wicked shall be turned into Hell, with all the Nations that forget God.

Thou art a wicked Man, thou canst not say but thou art, and yet thou art persuaded thou shalt to Heaven when thou diest. What then dost thou make of the Scriptures? Dost thou not herein say, 'tis a lying Word, there is no heed to be given to what it speaks? Whilst the Saints build their hopes on the Truth, what are thy hopes built upon, but on a supposition of the falsehood of the Scriptures? And so this

Word must prove; the Word of that God that cannot lie, must prove a false Word, or thou wilt be damned forever.

2. They make Christ to do the Work of the Devil, to help to fill the World with wickedness. Whilst God sent Christ to destroy, these make him to do, the Works of the Devil. They make the Savior of Sinners, to be the Minister of Sin; they make him not only a Friend of Sinners, but a Friend of Sin; and what is the Devil more? It must no longer be said, that Christ came to make an end of Sin, to redeem from all Iniquity, to fulfil all Righteousness; but to countenance and encourage Sin, and to fill the World with Unrighteousness. What Doctrine would the Devil preach other than this, Fear not to Sin, God is merciful; Continue in Sin, for Grace hath abounded?

If there were any ground for such an hope, we must quite invert the Gospel; and whilst the Apostle tells us, Tit. 2.11, 12. The Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all Men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live righteously, and soberly, and godly in this present World; It must be now written for Gospel, The Grace of God teacheth us to deny all Godliness, and to indulge to worldly Lusts, and to live wickedly, and filthily, and ungodlily in this present World, and yet still to look for the Blessed Hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ. Is this the Doctrine of Christ? It must be so or thou art undone. And if it be, what difference betwixt the Doctrine of Christ, and the Doctrine of Devils?

Presumptuous Sinner, stand and tremble. If the Word of God be not a lie, If the Holy Jesus came not to build, but to destroy the Works of the Devil, there's no hope for thee, but if thou continuest thus thou must perish forever.

Who shall bring thee into the Holy City? Who shall intercede and appear before God for thee? Will Christ do it? will he ever bring up the Servants of the Devil, and set them before the Throne of God, and say concerning them, These are my Redeemed Ones? These Liars, these evil Beasts, these slow Bellies, these Wantons, these Earthworms, these blind and brutish Souls, these Rebels that all their life-time set at naught all my Counsels, and rejected my Salvation, these are mine, I pray thee set the Crown upon their Heads, for they are worthy? Will Christ ever present such a Brood as these to his Father? Will he plead for entrance for such as these? Canst thou imagine that Christ would not blush and be ashamed, to bring such an unclean thing as thou art before his Father at last, and say, This is my Child, I pray thee let him live in thy sight? Will he say to the Father, O that Ishmael might live before thee? That these Bond-men, and Bastards, and Belials, that never knew thee, nor cared for thee, that never minded any such thing as Religion and Godliness in the World, but mocked and scoffed at all that did, that would never be persuaded to seek the Lord, or serve the Lord, but all their life long, gave themselves up to serve their Lusts and the Devil, Let there be an entrance for these into the Everlasting Kingdom? As black as they are, and as resolute as they were, never to be washed and made white with the Blood of the Lamb, yet they are mine, take them in. Sinner, if it were possible that Christ should thus plead for thee, (if thou be found in that day in the case that now thou art) by all the Power and Interest he hath in Heaven, he could not prevail for thee. He might as well prevail for Cain and Judas, yea, for Beelzebub himself, with all those black Legions which are already in Hell, and fetch them up from the Deep to sit upon Thrones of Glory, as ever he could prevail for thee. 'It is against the determinate Counsel and Purpose of God, against the Design and Tenor of the Gospel of Grace; Christ had never any Commission from his Father, to save or speak one word for any one Soul that lives and dies in his sins.

Objection.

But I will repent and turn from my Sins hereafter; how-ever I live now, I do not mean to die so, I will reform and amend my ways, and then I shall have Mercy.

Answer.

This also is thy Presumption; Thou neither wilt nor canst. Thou wilt repent thou sayest, but how long hast thou said so, and yet the time comes not. When wilt thou? Canst thou repent when thou wilt? Either thou canst, or thou canst not; If thou canst, why not now? Is it too soon for thee to be wise, and to be happy? Canst thou spare God, and his Grace and Favor, till hereafter? Hast thou not enough of the Devil yet? Art thou content to be his Bond-slave, to be made such a Fool and a Beast by him, yet a-while longer? Dost thou choose to leave thy Soul in hazard of Eternal Fire, for a few days more? If thou wert hungry, or naked, or harborless, wouldst thou say, 'tis time enough yet to have Bread or Clothes, or a House to put mine head in? If thou wert sick of the Stone, or the Gout, or the Colick, wouldst thou say, Let me lie a while, a little more torment, a few more of these Pangs and Gripes? It's more madness than all this, to say, Yet a little longer for Sin, and the Curse of God, and under the Power of the Devil.

If it be not in thy power now to repent, then how darest thou presume on an after-Repentance? Will it be more easy hereafter, when thy Sin is grown stronger, and thy Soul is grown weaker, and thine Heart harder, and put farther off from Repentance? I will return and step over to Christ at last. 'It is all one as if thou shouldst say, I will run from mine House, and my Home, and my Friends, as far as I can, all day, but I mean to step home again at night. Why Man, thou art a days journey from home, and canst thou step back in

a minute, what thou hast been running out all the day? Hast thou been running from Christ all thy Life long, and yet is there but a step betwixt thee and him? Thou hast been hampering thyself in the Net, and tying thyself to the Threshold of the Devil; hast been still knitting Knot upon Knot, all along thy time, to make thyself sure to him; and canst thou unravel in an hour the Webs thou hast been weaving, the Knots thou hast been tying all thy life long? It's true, it is not impossible; the Divine Grace may help at the last; but it is a strange thing, and so exceedingly unusual, that it's utterly improbable, that thou that hast been sinning all thy life, in Presumption upon Repentance in thy last hour, shouldst not then find it flying as far from thee, as thou dost now from it.

Presumptuous Sinner, thou that goest on in thy Sin, and countest upon Repentance at last, 'tis even such another piece of folly, as to count upon Mercy at last without Repentance: Thou mayest almost as well conclude, that God will pardon thee though thou never repent, as that God will give thee Grace to repent at last, who wilt not now accept of it.

And thus you have the Grounds and Reasons why Men Fear not; It is from their Ignorance, Unbelief, and Presumption.

III.

The Grounds and Reasons why we should Fear.

These are such as follow;

1. We have reason to Fear because of our Ignorance. Men's Ignorance is the reason why they Fear not, (as before) and yet it's a great reason why they should Fear. Who have so great reason to fear as the Blind? Every Bush may be a Thief, every Sheep may be a Wolf, every Lamb may be a Lion; for ought he sees to the contrary, every step may be into the Ditch, or into the Fire, or into the Water; where-ever he stands, or sits, or dwells, he knows not who or what may be near him; and have not such Men reason to Fear? Particularly by reason of Ignorance.

1. We know not our way.

2. We know not the Dangers that are in our way.

1. We know not our way. John 12.35. He that walketh in darkness, knoweth not whither he goeth. Whither art thou bound Soul? Thou art a Traveler, but to what City, to what Country art thou travelling? O, I am going to Canaan, to the New Jerusalem, I am travelling Heavenwards. But dost thou know the way to that good Land? Some of the most ignorant will answer, as Christ said to his Disciples, Wither I go I know, and the way I know; when the truth is, they neither understand the one nor the other.

The way to God, though it be a strait way, and leads directly on by a line, yet it's hard to hit upon. If I were to give but one general direction for finding the way to Heaven, this should be it; Take your first turning upon the right hand, and then keep straight on, without turning either to the right hand or to the left. The way that thou art now going is to Hell, but there is a turning on the right hand just before thee; Repentance, which is our turning out of the way of

Death, into the way of Life; take that turning, and then turn no more, but keep straight on to the end of thy Life.

But as strait a way as the way of Life is, it is not so easy to keep us in it. There are many turnings out on either hand; and at every Turning stands a Deceiver, calling to Passengers as they go, Turn in hither, this is the way, walk in it. The Pharisee stands at one Turning, and says, This is the way, The Law of Carnal Commandments, the formal and superstitious observation of the Externals of Religion. The Hypocritical Zealot stands at another, and says, This is the way, The Spirituals of Religion, believe in Christ, love God, and then live to thyself. The Sectary, of whatsoever Sect he be, says, Here is Christ, this is the way of Life, turn in hither, be one of Us and thou shalt do well. The Flesh stands and cries, Hearken to none of these, they are all blind Guides, and will lead thee into their own Ditch; come take this great and beaten Road in which thy Fore-fathers have gone before thee; Follow the Wise Men, and the Learned Men, and those multitudes that thou seest going before thee; Trust in the Mercy of God and trouble thyself no farther. And the Devil stands at every one of these Turnings; and if he can but persuade thee to take one of them, it comes much alike to him which it be.

Now what shall a poor ignorant Soul do in this case to hit the right, when there are so many false ways? He does not know the way himself, and he is like to meet with so many false Guides, how can he but Fear he may be misled and lost?

It fares with these Ignorant Souls, as with the Hosts of the Syrians, that were going to Dathan to slay Elisha, 2 Kings 6.19. Elisha smites them with blindness, and then leads them whithersoever he pleases. Out he goes to them and tells them, This is not the way, neither is this the City, come along with me and I will bring you to the Man

whom you seek, but he led them to Samaria. This blind Host thought they had been right, and going to Dathan; but when their eyes were opened, they saw themselves betrayed into Samaria, into the hands of their Enemies. Poor blind Soul, thy hope is Heaven, that's thy journeys end, thy Home to which thou sayest thou art travelling; and thou persuadest thyself thou art in the way thither, but for all this thou mayest be mistaken, thou mayest be going to Samaria, to Sodom, to Hell and not to Heaven, thou art in darkness, and knowest not whither thou goest; thou dost not know thy way, how then canst thou but fear whether thou art in the right way or the wrong?

2. By reason of Ignorance, we know not the dangers in our way. If we have some apprehension that the way is dangerous, yet we know not in particular where the danger lies, and so, ere we are aware, may fall into it. Some young Travelers, though they be told they be going a dangerous Road, yet know not the dangerous Places, nor the dangerous Persons that they fall upon; a Thief starts up out of a Bush where they never suspected him, and when he comes, by his fair Language and Carriage, they take him for a Friend, and suspect not he comes upon any evil Intention, till their loss too late teach them what he is.

What harm is there in such a vain fashion, in such a questionable recreation, in Cardings, Dicing's, Dancing's? What harm is there in a little carnal Mirth, or in vain and merry Company? They be not Drunkards, nor Swearers, nor Adulterers; there's nothing amongst them but honest mirth and pleasantness, what hurt is there in that? Why, what harm is there in falling among Thieves? What harm is there in being robbed of all thou hast? Hast thou never been a loser by such friendly Thieves? Hast thou lost none of thy precious Time amongst them, which thou couldst ill spare? Nay, have they not stolen away thy heart? It may be thou hast found thou wert of a

better Spirit, when thou camest amongst them, thou hadst some sense and savor of God and Religion upon thine heart, and some holy seriousness and tenderness; and when thou returnest, thou seest it's lost, thou hast left all thy Religion behind thee. Is this no harm; when thou hadst been served so once, wouldst thou be content to be served so again?

If thou hadst a cup of pleasant Wine before thee, and one should tell thee, Take heed, there's poison in the Cup, wouldst thou say, what harm is it if there be? If one should meet thee in a Wood or a Desert, and should offer thee Money, or Pleasure, or whatever thou wilt; if thou wilt be ruled by him, and do what he would have thee; and a Friend should tell thee, this may be the Devil that comes to truck with thee for thy Soul? Wouldst thou say, what harm is it if it be the Devil? What harm will it be to take his Money or his Pleasure?

Why this may be the case; In all those little things (as thou countest them) there may be poison in the Cup, there may be the Devil in the Company; the Pleasures that are before thee, the Money that is before thee, these may be the price the Devil is offering thee for thy life. May it be so? I, but I do not think 'tis so, my Soul may be safe enough for all that; why therefore fear that there may be such danger, and you never know or suspect it.

Nay, this Devil lies still in wait, not only in those places and ways, which look like suspicious places and suspicious ways; but he's every-where at hand, even where he is least suspected. When could Men think themselves more secure from the Devil, than when they are with God in Duties and Ordinances? But doth he never meet them there? Hath the Devil never met thee in thy Closet, or in the Congregation of the Lord? How is it at this very hour? Now that we are come together before the Lord, now that the Lord is instructing

us, and warning us of the danger we are in; Is there not one standing behind, and out of sight, either stealing away your hearts from minding the Warnings, or else contradicting the Word of the Lord? Come, come, these are but words and conceits, the Devil is far enough off, thou art in no such danger of him; are there no such whisperings in none of your ears at this time? Why, whose Voice is this? You little think whose 'tis; 'It is the Devil that thus speaks, to the end you may lose this Warning, and so he may have his advantage upon you. Lord open the eyes of these Men, (to use that Prayer for you, which the Man of God did for his Servant, 2 Kings 6.17.) So the Lord opened his eyes, and he saw all the Mountains full of Angels, Chariots of Fire, and Horses of Fire. If God should so open our eyes, I trust we should see this House full of the Angels of God ministering to us, but withal we should see this House full of Devils attempting to mischief us; a Devil at every Ear, a Devil at every Heart, trying his skill to stop the one and harden the other, from receiving this Word of the Lord. We are never a one of us more secure, than Joshua the High Priest, of whom we read, Zech. 3.1. That when he was standing before the Lord, Satan stood at his right hand to resist him. You will say again, it may be, you do not think 'tis so, why therefore Fear, that the Devil should be so near, and so busy with you, and you neither understand, nor will believe it though it be told you. Such Ignorance is cause enough of Fear.

If any of you should have been told, ten or twenty years ago, how the Devil would serve you, how he would hinder any word of Counsel or Instruction from prospering with you, how he would hold you under this Ignorance of God, and hardness and impenitence of Heart; you would have been like enough to answer, I hope not, I hope to get more of the knowledge of God, I hope God will bring me to Repentance one time or other, I hope his Word will prosper with me. And yet you see how 'tis, he hath sufficiently plaid the part of a Devil

with you, you were not so blind, or so dead, or so hard in your hearts many years ago, but you are every way as bad or worse at this day; and because you had not this foresight, to discern that thus it might be, had you not the more reason to Fear it would be so?

And what say you now as to the time to come? If it should be said unto you at this day, He that hath dealt thus by you hitherto, will be like enough to deal as bad or worse by you, to the end of your days, so that you shall never be brought to Repentance, nor ever recover yourselves out of the snares of the Devil; will you yet again say, I hope not, I fear it not? That very word is enough to make you tremble. If the God of this World had not blinded your Minds, he could never have thus hardened your Hearts.

If you that have known Christ, and have been in Christ, many years ago; If some of you should have been told, that if you looked not the better to it, the Devil would meet you at the very threshold of Christianity, and hold you there from making any farther entrance in, would keep you Babes and Infants in the Grace of God, that he would keep you all this time, so weak in the Faith, so cold in your Love, so barren in your Life, that all this while you should have gotten no more victory over this World, and the fleshliness of your Minds and Hearts, nor no more intimate acquaintance with God and your own Souls than some of you have at this day; If when you had been told, you were in danger of being served thus; If you had then answered, I do not Fear it, I should have made bold to tell you, You do not know what a Devil he is with whom you had to do; and now that you may know him better, by observing how he hath dealt by you hitherto, you will at length, I hope, learn to Fear.

What if the Devil should now appear to you in some bodily monstrous shape, would it not fright you? Why, you may see his foot,

though you do not see his face; you may see him in what he hath done in his temptations of you, and the unhappy success of them upon you, in that ruinous state your Souls are hereby in; and surely, Friends, to those that understand him, The Devil in a secret temptation, is more formidable than the Devil in an Apparition; the prints of his Hoofs, are a more dreadful sight than the Horns of his Head.

2. Another reason why we should Fear is, because of the deceitfulness of our Hearts. Whatever our dangers are from without, whatever designs or devices the Devil or the World have against us, yet if all were true within us, if our Hearts were true to us, our hazard were not so great; but, saith the Prophet, Jer. 17.9. The Heart of Man is deceitful above all things. So that we may not only say with the Prophet, Micah 7.5. Trust ye not in a Friend, put not confidence in a Guide; but with Solomon also, Prov. 28.26. He that trusteth his own Heart is a Fool. The deceitfulness of the Heart stands;

1. In its Treachery.

2. In its Subtilty.

1. In its Treachery. The Heart of a Man is false to itself, it is like the Devil, a lying Spirit, there is no believing it whatever it speaks. It's full of all guile, and will, if left to itself, betray itself into the hands of its Enemies.

2. In its Subtilty. It is a crafty Heart, it hath many plots and devices to deceive; Prov. 19.21. There are many devices in Man's Heart. It hath much of the Devil in it; not only of the falsehood of the Devil, (as before); It is a lying Spirit; nor only of the uncleanness of the Devil, this also is the wicked one; nor of the malice of the Devil, It is the Enemy; but of the cunning of the Devil, of the subtlety of the

Serpent, This Serpent also is more subtle than all the Beasts of the Field. It's true, it's also a silly Heart, easy to be beguiled; it is so subtle as to beguile, and yet so silly as easily to be beguiled; like those false Teachers, 2 Tim. 3.13. Deceiving, and being deceived.

The great and most mischievous deceits of the Heart, are its self-deceiving, Jam. 1.22, deceiving your own selves; and verse. 26. deceiveth his own heart. God cannot be deceived, and if Men be deceived in us, there is not so very much in that; but the most mischievous deceits, and which are most to be feared, are its deceiving of itself.

1. God cannot be deceived; He is the searcher of the Heart, Jer. 17.10. he knows what is in Man, better than the Spirit that is in him. God is greater than our Hearts, and knoweth all things. Our Hearts can tell us more of ourselves, than all the World can tell us; but God can tell us more of us, than we of ourselves. He hath a Key to every Chamber, a Window into every Corner, a Candle to search into our inmost parts. All things are naked and open before him, with whom we have to do, Heb. 4.13. He sees all that is lodging in us; all the Lusts of the Heart, yea, and all the Thoughts of the Heart are open to his Eye. Jer. 4.14. How long shall vain thoughts lodge within you? He sees what there is a doing within us. What good the Heart is at any time a-doing; any good desires that are a-working, any gracious designs that are going in the Heart; he sees what evil there is a-doing; an evil Motion cannot wag, a Lust cannot stir, but his eye is presently upon it. Isa. 1.16. Put away the evil of your doings [from before mine eyes], that is, put it quite away, cease to do evil; if it do but continue, though never so much in the dark, yet it cannot be hid from mine eyes.

What are these hearts of ours often a-doing in secret, which no others, and it may be not ourselves take notice of? When our eyes are closed, our hands are quiet, our tongues are silent, God knows what there may be doing within. There may be devilish devices contriving within, there may be dark counsels beneath; Heart may be Swearing, or Lying, or Stealing, or Coveting, or committing Adultery, whilst there's no noise of any such thing without. Yea, whilst the Tongue is praying, the Ears are hearing, the Eye is lift up to Heaven, the Heart may be in Hell, or on Earth, in the Field, in the Shop, in the Market, or who knows where; but God's Eye is upon it.

Friends, Who knows where our hearts are, or what they are a-doing at this hour? It may be, now God is a-preaching to you the Doctrine of Holy Fear, of Holy Watchfulness and Circumspection; some of your hearts may be un-preaching all that God speaks; may be preaching Liberty, Licentiousness, Slothfulness, Security to you, and telling you, there's no such danger, and no such need of Fear as hath been preached unto you.

Or if they do not contradict the Word that the Lord hath spoken, yet it may be they divert you from minding it, by telling you some impertinent Stories about other things; filling your heads with your business or pleasure, cutting you out your Work for tomorrow. Look inward, Friends, see if you can find your Hearts within, or whether they be not gone abroad you know not whither. But where-ever they are, or whatever they are doing, the Eye of the Lord is upon them; Men may dissemble, and deal deceitfully with God, but they cannot deceive him.

2. If they deceive Men, it is not so greatly considerable. Though that may be our wickedness too. If we hide ourselves from others, if we be better, or if we be worst than they apprehend us to be, there is not so

much in that. The Heart is cunning at this also in deceiving of Men; by palliating evil intentions, with fair and specious pretenses; by seeking them out corners to sin in, waiting for the twilight, or the darkness to be a covering for them; by smooth words and fair speeches, beguiling the Hearts of the simple, by a kiss of the Mouth, when there is war in the Heart, by putting the best side outward, putting on the clothing of a Sheep upon a Wolf or a Bear, the face of a Saint to cover the Soul of a Devil.

What is the Hypocrites Praying, or Fasting, or Alms, or savory Language and Discourse? What is all this for? 'It is but the Clothing his Heart hath provided him, to advance and set him up in the opinion of others? 'Tis to serve his pride or his covetousness, and to hide the poverty and rottenness which is within, out of sight. Beloved, are there none of us guilty upon this account? Whose Religion, and the Exercise thereof, are a mere carnal Design, whose Duties are a mere Device to beguile Men into a good Opinion of us, to raise up or keep up our Reputation amongst them? Is it not thus with some of us?

Soul, what hast thou been doing today? O, I have been Praying, and Hearing, and Fasting, or keeping a Sabbath to the Lord. No, thou liest, thou hast been juggling, and cheating, and deceiving of Men. If these have been the Work of thy Tongue, or thine Ears, or thine Eyes, to pray, to hear, to praise the Lord; thine Heart hath found other work to do, it hath been making a Garment of these Prayers and Praises to dress up itself in, thereby to commend and set it off before the Spectators; or it may be, to hide or carry on some treacherous or wicked Design, which needed such a covering.

The Heart is thus busy to deceive Men, but still its greatest and most mischievous deceitfulness, lies here, in deceiving itself. It is a horrid

wickedness to deal deceitfully with the Lord, to dissemble and lie unto God. It is folly to be false to him who we know will discover the cheat and its highest impiety. What is Iniquity, if Hypocrisy be not? And what Hypocrisy like mocking or lying unto God? It is Men's great sin to deal deceitfully with Men; But that which I would now lay before you, as a special reason why we should Fear our hearts, is their self-deceiving's; And how much Fear should be upon us, upon this account, will appear when we have considered these three things.

1. About what Men's Hearts deceive them.

2. By what Men's Hearts deceive them.

3. Of what Men's Hearts deceive them.

1. About what do Men's Hearts deceive them? And that is about that they are most deeply concerned to mind or regard. Particularly,

1. About Matters past, in their self-reflections and reckonings.

2. About matters present, in their Judgments or Opinions of their present case.

3. About matters to come, or their Determinations and Resolutions for the future.

1. Men's Hearts deceive them, about matters past, in their self-reflections and reckonings. It may be sometimes an eye may be cast back upon what is past, and such a word may be heard within, Soul, what hast thou done? How hast thou lived all thy time hitherto? What Evil hast thou done, or what Good hast thou done? The Heart presently makes its return; and though it hath not the Conscience, will make bold with the words of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 4.4. I know

nothing by myself, I know no hurt that I have done; or it may be, like those unfaithful Officers, who bring in their presentment, Omnia been, it will answer, I have done all things well, I have lived a harmless and an honest life. The little good that hath been done, looking on it by a false Glass, it sees it double to what it is; every Mite is a Shekel, every Shekel is a Talent; here it will be sure to over-reckon: And all the Evils that have been done, for an hundred or a thousand, it takes the Bill and writes down ten, or it may be but one, and that a little one; and perhaps it buries them all in the land of forgetfulness. As Sin had an Act for Toleration before, so it must now have an Act of Oblivion. And by this hiding of Sin it comes to pass, that Repentance also is hid from Men's eyes; No Man repented, nor said, what have I done? Jer. 8.6. The not-saying what have I done, much more the saying, I have done nothing amiss, will be a Bar against Repentance; And that's the usual issue of this falsehood of the Heart, about matters past, it holds under Impenitence.

2. Men's Hearts deceive them about Matters present, or in their judgment of their present states. What art thou? A Child of God, or a Child of the Devil? A Believer, or an Unbeliever? A sound Believer, or a Hypocrite? Men's hearts will be civil with them, and give them good language; A Child of the Devil, a Reprobate? These are hard words that will not be born, and shall not be uttered; whether it speaks true or no, it will be sure to speak good to them. O, a Child of God no doubt, an honest, and therefore a happy Man. Though perhaps it neither knows what God is, or what a Child of God means, nor what the difference is betwixt the Children of God and the Children of the Devil.

A faithful Heart will be (as I said before) a self-suspecting Heart, and such it should be. The Word tells us, there's Chaff in the Floor as well as Wheat, there are Tares in the Field as well as good Corn. Now

when the question is put, which is the Chaff, who are the Tares? Men's Hearts should answer, as the Disciples did, when Christ told them there was a Traitor among them, Mat. 26.21. they all answered. Lord is it I? Lord is it I? Men and Brethren, there are Infidels among you, there are Hypocrites among you; If I should speak thus from the Lord to this Congregation, this Question should run even through the whole Company; Lord is it I? Am not I a Hypocrite? Am not I one of these Unbelievers? But what do your Hearts say to you? O, I thank God it is not I, I am none of them; Hypocrites there are, but my Soul is upright. If a whole Congregation should be thus spoken to one by one, may be some of the best among them, that had least reason to suspect themselves, would cry out, Lord, is it I? I doubt I may be a Hypocrite, I fear how it may be with me; but for the most, and possibly the very worst among them, they would never stick to answer, I am none of them, I thank God I have an honest Heart, and am upright before God. Whence comes this now to pass? Why, that Heart of thine hath plaid the Devil with thee, and deceived thee.

3. About Matters to come. If the case be so plain, that the naughtiness of the Life past, and the unsoundness of the present state cannot be hid, then the Heart promises better things de futuro. I will look better to it hereafter, though I cannot at present, yet after a while I mean to become a new Man; stay but a while, and I will be sober; stay but a while, and I mean to have done with this vain or worldly Life, and to live in all things as becometh a Christian. Thus it promises, and its Promises must be taken. If I turn at last, 'twill be well enough, and turn I will shortly, I mean no other; and this must satisfy and be instead of present Repentance. How much credit there is to be given to such a Promise, the experience of many sufficiently tells. But though it hath been a known Deceiver, yet still it's trusted.

You that profess Religion, that own Christ, and hold Communion with his Saints, and are visibly walking in the way of Righteousness; If you should be asked, How long wilt thou hold this course, wilt thou hold out to the end? Today thou art with Christ, but where wilt thou be tomorrow? Now with the Disciples, but wilt thou never go over to the Scribes and Pharisees? Thou mayest feel the smart of Christianity, thou mayest become a Reproach and made a Prey. The Shepherds may be smitten, and the Flocks may be scattered; wilt thou not then forsake Christ, and run over to the Tents of the Uncircumcised? God forbid, says the heart presently; Turn from the Holy Commandment, deny Christ? No, though I die with him, I will never deny him. I, but there was one spake as much before you, 'twas the word of Peter's Heart, Mat. 26.35. And yet you know what followed; Consider him, and fear how it may be with you.

2. By what will our Hearts deceive us? By anything in the World; there's nothing comes a-miss to them, but some evil use or other they can make of it, either to entice to Sin, or to harden against Repentance, or to lay asleep in Security, or to build us up in Presumption. The Heart is such an Adversary, that can fight at any Weapon; such a Mountebank, that can make its Composition of any Ingredients, that can make a Poison of any Medicine, some way or other it can make use of anything, to serve it in its deceiving work.

By what did Eve's Heart deceive her? By an Apple. By what did Achan's Heart deceive him? By a Wedge of Gold. By what did Samson's Heart deceive him? By a Whore. By what was Esau deceived? By a Mess of Pottage. By what do poor Men's Hearts deceive them? By their Want and Penury. By what do rich Men's Hearts deceive them? By their Abundance and Variety. By what do evil Men's Hearts deceive them? By their Lusts they are drawn aside and enticed. By what do good Men's Hearts deceive them?

Sometimes even by the Good that is in them. The Heart of Man can make a Snare of every Creature, Condition, Relation, or Comfort, can make a Net for Souls of the coarsest or of the finest Thread; can undo them, by their Friends and by their Enemies, by their Prosperities and by their Adversities, by their Sins and their Righteousness. Where-withal may this Man be enticed to Sin, to neglect Christ and his Soul? Some Men's Hearts find that a Harlot will do it; others, that a drunken Companion will do it; others, that nothing but Gold and Silver will do it; others, that applause will do it; some that Idleness, others that Business, some that Friends, others that Enemies; some that Prosperity, others that Affliction, will be the likeliest Temptations; and accordingly it manages its deceiving work.

Our Hearts can deceive us by the best we have, by our Virtues, by our Duties, by our Privileges; and this is often the most dangerous deceit. The more generous the Wine in which thou receivest thy Poison, the more deadly the Potion.

Some Hypocrites Hearts tell them they are sincere; But how can they make them believe it? Why, if the Heart may not be believed for its own word, the Word of God must be brought to witness this lie. Doth not the Scriptures say, Rom. 10.9. If thou confess with thy Mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy Heart that God raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved? And do not I believe the Resurrection of Christ from the Dead? Do not I confess and acknowledge it? I believe it with all mine Heart, I confess it before all the World; and therefore without doubt I am in a state of Salvation.

If this will not do, but the Heart perceives there must be more in that belief than a notional Assent, there must be more in that Confession than a verbal Acknowledgment, than its Virtues, and Duties, and Privileges; its Prayers, and Hearings, and Alms; its Sobriety and

Temperance; its keeping of Sabbaths, and attending upon Ordinances, must all be called forth to testify: Am not I of God? Am not I in Christ? Let my Prayers speak, let mine Alms speak, let my Temperance, let my Patience, let my Sabbaths speak whose I am. I keep the Sabbath, whilst others pollute it; I hear, whilst others forbear; I pray and fast, whilst others neglect both, and therefore sure it must be well with me; when yet it may be, the Man is ignorant of the Spirit, and a secret Enemy against the Power and Purity of Religion all the while.

I might multiply Instances of the several sorts of the Heart's deceiving's, and show that there is nothing, but in some way or other, may be made use of to beguile us.

3. Of what may our Hearts deceive us? Even of all we have. Of what did our first Parents Hearts deceive them? Of their Portion in God, and their place in Paradise. Of what did Esau's Heart deceive him? Of his Birth-right and the Blessing. Of what did Samson's Heart deceive him? Of his Locks and of his Life. Of what did that Fool's Heart deceive him? Luke 12.20. Of his Soul. Isa. 44.20. A deceived Heart hath turned him aside, so that he cannot deliver his Soul.

You that believe yourselves Saints, are apt to think, that whatever you be deceived of, yet your Souls are safe, and therefore that you have no such need to Fear as other Men. But it may be you may be deceived in this, and this very confidence, That thy Soul is safe, may prove its eternal loss. But if you should come off at last, with the Salvation of your Souls, yet how many desperate hazards do you run of losing them, by hearkening to these evil Hearts? How much of your time do they steal away, which was given you for the working out your Salvation? How many Duties have they lost you? How many Ordinances have they lost you, which the Interest of your Souls could

ill have spared? What a dead, and dark, and carnal, and loose Spirit hast thou sometimes been bewitched into, wherein God hath been laid by, Soul hath been forgotten, Conscience hath been laid a-sleep, and all care about the things of God, hath been swallowed up of the cares of this Life? Is it nothing to thee to be in such a case? Doth it not grieve thee to think whither thou art fallen? And art thou not afraid what the issue may be? Whether ever thy Soul may be lifted up out of this Pit, whereinto it is sunk so deep in mud and mire? But if thou shouldest be asked now, Friend, how camest thou in hither? Who hath led thee into this Dirt? Who hath cast thee into this Pit? May be thou wilt be ready to answer as Eve did, The Serpent beguiled me in; or as Adam did, The Woman deceived me in; thou wilt find some else to father thy Faults upon; the Devil deceived me into this case, the World deceived me in, evil Company deceived me in; Like enough they did, But what could they all have done, if thine Heart had not joined with them? The hand of Joab is in all this; thine Heart is the Joab, that hath dealt this subtly and deceitfully with thee.

1 Kings 22.20. Who will persuade Ahab (saith the Lord that be may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead? I will go (saith the Devil) I will persuade him. But where-with wilt thou persuade him? I will be a lying Spirit in the Mouth of his Prophets; Go up and prosper, go up and prosper, that shall be the word that shall do it. There's no fear of falling at Ramoth, thou shalt prevail against thine Enemies, and return a Conqueror. If it shall be said in like manner, who shall persuade this foolish Man to go on his evil ways, that he may fall and perish? I will go, says his Heart, presently, I will be the Devil to persuade him; But wherewith wilt thou persuade him? O, I will be a lying Spirit within him. I will make him believe he shall prosper, and have peace in his way, he shall not fall, nor shall hurt come unto him.

Go, says God, to the Devil, and take heed, he says not so to that false Heart of thine; Go, thou shalt persuade, and thou shalt prevail. Thou shalt entice this idle Person, thou shalt harden this vain or this careless Person, and he shall hearken to thee, he shall follow thee till he fall and perish.

Christians, we have every one of us such a Heart as this, that is too ready to go upon such a wretched Errand. Have we not suffered much by it's treachery? Hath it not often tripped up our heels, or turned us out of our way? Hath it not betrayed us out of our Refuge, and led us aside after lying vanities? Though Grace hath been some security to us against it, yet hath it not often been too hard for all the Grace we have? Who is there of us that dares stand forth and say, My Heart, I hope, is no such heart; It is better than to deal thus with me; I dare trust it, it is a plain and honest heart, there's no deceit or guile found in it? Is there ever a one of you that dare say thus? What complaints are there every-where heard against it, even amongst the best of Christians?] But O what do Sinners hearts deceive them of? What a price is there in Sinners hands, if they had an heart to it? There's the Blessed Gospel before them, exhibiting Christ, and Pardon, and Life to them; they have the Scriptures before them; they have Sabbaths and Ordinances amongst them; but behold, they can make nothing of them. The Gospel is opened, and yet it is hid from them; Christ is preached, but 'tis not accepted by them; they can live under the preaching of the Word, be conversant at Prayers, Fasts, Sacraments, a whole Age together, and get nothing by them; they can dwell by the Wells of Salvation, and get not one drop of Water; live by the richest Mines, and get not a dust of Silver; walk in the Sun-beams, and see never a gleam of Light; come into the Store-houses, and yet starve for want of Bread; can get neither Grace nor Knowledge, but remain blind and dead, under all that Light that hath shined unto them.

But how is it, Sinner, that it's thus with thee? Whom hast thou to blame but thine own Heart? This hath been telling thee, either that thou hast no need of Christ, or his Grace, or that thou hast time enough before thee; or else hath diverted thee from giving heed to the Word of Life, by finding thee so much other work to do; and hereby thou seest how it hath left thee; It hath hitherto lost thee a Christ, lost thee a Gospel, lost thee Sabbaths and Ordinances, and is just losing thee thy Soul. This Heart is it that would not suffer thee, when thou hast been commanded to accept of Christ, or deliver thyself up to him. Any else that comes to demand it, thy Soul is presently delivered up. Let Lust come and require, Deliver up thy Soul to me; Let thy Companions come and demand, Deliver up thyself to us; Let the World, or let the Devil demand, Deliver up thy Soul to me; let me have the rule and the government of it, and up thou resignest it presently; any but Christ may have thee for asking.

Will the Men of Keilah deliver me up? Said David once, 1 Sam. 23.11. Will they Lord? or may I trust myself with them? Trust them not, says God, they will deliver thee up. Dost thou ask, will mine Heart deliver me up? Deliver me up to Lust, or to the World, or the snares of the Devil, or may I trust it? Trust it not, it will deliver thee up. But to Christ it will not deliver thee up.

It will be telling thee, that Christ is an austere Man, and thou shalt find him an hard Master;' twill show thee the Yoke and the Cross; How severe is his Government? How short his Allowance? How hard will be the usage thou must expect of him, or for his sake? And thereupon it will suggest, how much it doth befriend thee, in refusing to deliver thee up to him. It will never tell thee of thy need of Christ, of the gain that will come in by him; thou must not be suffered so much as to think of that; if thou turn aside at any time to commune with him, or to look within the Vail where his Treasures lie, it calls

thee off presently, or throws in the World, its Cares or its pleasures upon thee, to thrust out and turn thee aside from all such thoughts, lest he should gain thy consent and good liking. Thus thine Heart hath served thee all thy days, so that hitherto thou wilt none of Christ; and thus 'tis like to serve thee to the end of thy days, till there be no Christ, nor Mercy, nor Salvation to be had forever.

And thus have I given you a short hint of the deceitfulness of the Heart; and is not such an Heart to be feared? Is such an Heart to be trusted? An Heart that will deceive you, about everything that you are concerned to mind; about matters past, present, and to come; that will neither let you consider what you have done, nor know what you are, nor think whats like to become of you hereafter? That will deceive you, by everything you have to do withal; that can make every Relation, every Companion, every Condition, every Comfort, every Cross, every Creature, a Gin and a Trap to take your Souls? That will deceive you of all that ever you have; that like those Locusts and Caterpillars (the Plagues of Egypt) will not leave any green thing in you? That will deceive you of yourselves, of your lives; of that Christ, of that Gospel, which is all you have for Eternity; that will lie at you every day, every hour, as Delilah at Samson, to betray you into the hands of the Philistines, and cast you into the eternal Prison? Have you such a Heart? Have every one of you such a Heart? Have you proved by so long experience, what mischief it hath done you already, and yet not afraid?

O Christians, let us get more acquaintance with these Hearts of ours; if we do not fear them, 'tis because we know them no better. Let us observe them daily at their work, what colors and fair pretenses they have to palliate and lead unto Sin, what shifts and excuses they make for the neglect of Duty; what delays and putting's off, from the minding our necessary and most weighty concerns; and what wiles

and devices they have to lull us and hold us fast asleep, whilst our opportunities of obtaining Mercy, steal by us and are lost. Know this Heart of thine more thoroughly, and then tell me if thou dost not fear it?

If there be an Absalom in the Court, a Sheba in the City, a Judas in the Company, a Thief in the House, is there not cause of fear? Thou hast a Judas in thy Breast, a Thief in thy Bosom, thou hast not a Heart within thee, if thou hast not a mortal Enemy that seeks thy life.

As I said before, so I say again, Study and observe your Hearts more; believe the Truth of what hath been said; or if you will not believe your Ears, believe your own Eyes, believe your Experiences and Observations, (if you have been so wise as to make any Observations upon yourselves). Indeed that's the reason why we are so hard to believe, our Hearts are so bad, because we have no more observed them: Have you observed, have you considered how they have dealt with you? Who is it that hath kept you back from Christ, and short of the Grace of God? Or at least, Who is it that hath kept you so low and so barren, and such aa ill Steward of that Grace which you have received, has not thine own Heart had the great hand in it? Be not deceived, it is the same Heart still, and is like to take the same course.

That which hath hindered, doth hinder thee; that which hath deceived, doth deceive, and will deceive; thou canst never be secure from it whilst thou continuest in this World. Wherefore, O my Soul, since I cannot be out of danger, let me never be out of fear. Let Fools be secure and at rest, but as for me. Let me pass the time of my Sojourning here in Fear.

3. Another reason why we should Fear, is, because of the weight and importance of that work which we have to do in the World. What is

our Work here? Wherefore are we born, and live upon this Earth? 'It is to serve the Lord in the saving of our Souls. The Lord that made us, may and does require our whole Service; as there is none besides him to whom we owe our Being, so is there none other to whom we owe our Service. Him only shalt thou serve, Mat. 4.10. And God hath so ordered the matter, that we cannot better serve ourselves, than by serving of him; this is the Work of God, which he requires of us, to work out our own Salvation. Phil. 2.12. The best Men are the greatest self-seekers. 'It is a piece of self-denial, which God never requires of any Man, To neglect his own Soul. God would have all Men to be saved, 1 Tim. 2.4.

There are two Lord's that are served in the World; God and the Devil. The great Service that the Devil hath to be done, is to destroy Souls; his Name is the Destroyer, Rev. 9.11. and his work is to destroy; and this is it which he imposes upon all his Servants, to destroy every Man his own Soul. God is the Savior, so called, Isa. 45.15. and his whole work that he has to be done by his, is Salvation-work.

Friends, the first and great Service that God hath for every one of you to do, is to look well to those Souls of yours, to recover yourselves out of the Snares of the Devil, that you may obtain everlasting Salvation; if you can but acquit yourselves so in this World, that you get safe to Heaven when you die, God will say to you, Well done, good and faithful Servant. 'It is true, we have every one of us more Souls than our own to look too; I not only Ministers (whose special work it is) but everyone should do what he can to save the Souls of others; but our first Service is to look to our own Souls. Our Charity, and so our whole care, must begin at home. Deut. 4.9. Take heed to [thyself] and keep thy Soul, [thine own Soul] diligently. As Christ says, Luk. 16.12. He that will not be faithful in that which is another's, who shall trust him with that which is his own? May we not much more say here, he

that is not faithful in that which is his own, will be much less faithful in that which is another's. He that serves the Devil in destroying his own Soul, is not like to serve God in the saving of others Souls.

Well, this is your work you have to do in the World, To serve the Lord; And this is the Service that God expects, That you save your own Souls. Whatever you are faithfully doing this way, you are therein serving God. You may be saving your Estates, and therein serve the Devil; you may save your Names, and save your Lives, and therein serve the Devil; but when you are saving your Souls, you are still serving the Lord. The working out of our Salvation, is not only the business of our Religious Duties, but of all the Actions of our whole course. We are not only to Believe, and Repent, and Hear, and Fast, and Pray for our Lives, but to be carrying on our Salvation-Work in everything we do. As we may say, whether you Believe, or Repent, or Pray, or Hear; so also, whether you Eat, or Drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the Glory of God, and your own Salvation. Our future state, whether we are for Life or for Death, is not to be determined by some few of our better Deeds, but by the tenor of our whole course; look what thy Life is in this World, so shall thy Judgment be.

We are here in this World, upon our good behavior for the other World; and the short time we have here, is all we have for Eternity; our Everlasting Life or Death, will be determined by this little inch of time. Do in your day the Work you were sent into the World for, and you live and are blessed forever; spend your time in idleness, or impertinencies, live in the neglect of God or your Souls, let your great Work be left undone, or but half-done, and done deceitfully, and you die without remedy, die eternally.

And do you not yet see what cause you have to Fear? If you were doing anything of this World's Business, and knew your Life lay upon it, 'twould make your hand shake. Psal. 2.11. Serve the Lord with Fear. Phil. 2.12 Work out your Salvation with fear and trembling. Why should we Fear? Why should we Tremble? Why, because there is so great a Work lying upon our hands. What if this Work be done, and well done? Then you are made forever. What if you neglect or miscarry in this Work? Then you are lost irrecoverably. 'It is a matter of Life and Death that you are every day and hour upon; how can you think such a thought without a trembling Heart?

What a mighty influence would this consideration have upon your Duties? When you go to Pray, whether in the Closet, or in the Family, or in the Congregation, were you persuaded that your eternal state were so much concerned in it, would you not fear how you trifled in so great a Duty? And would not this Fear command in all your Powers, to join in so important a Service? How would it stand at the door, and keep out all those straggling thoughts, that at such times use to be thrusting in? Would such hasty and cursory Praying, such a flat and formal Devotion, which you ordinarily take up with then suffice you? You would sooner sweat than sleep at Prayer, your Hearts would burn within you, and not freeze, as they too often do; Tongue-Prayers, and Knee-Prayers, and Eye-Prayers, would be of as little account with you, as they are with God; all the Males in your Flock would be brought in, you would not dare to offer to the Lord a corrupt thing. You would take your best time, and time enough, you would put forth the utmost of your strength, you would not make your Souls to wait the leisure of your Flesh, or to take its leavings. It must not then be what you can spare from the World, what you can spare from your business or your pleasures that will do the turn; your eating time, your sleeping time, your working time, must be taken up this way, rather than want time for God and your Souls.

Dost thou complain of sleepiness in Prayer, of wanderings in Prayer, of want of time for Prayer? Think, Man, what Prayer is for; how much there is depending on the faithful discharge of it; and see if this doth not work such a Fear upon thine Heart, as will both find thee time, and keep thee waking.

When you go to hear the Word, if you considered, I am now hearing for my Life, the Lord God hath brought me before him, that he may tell me words whereby I may be saved; the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven are now opening to me; the most High comes down to show me the Path of Life; that Word that falls from the Preacher's Lips, is the Word by which I must be saved, and the Word by which I must be judged; 'tis the Everlasting Gospel I come now to hear, which is all I have for Eternity; I must stand or fall, live or die, according to the success of this Word upon me. As this is the only Word of Life, so this may be the only time of Life; God knows whether this may not be the last Warning, the last Instruction, the last Tender of Grace and Mercy that I may have forever; whether my hearkening to, or letting slip what I shall hear from the Lord this day, be not that which must give the final determination of mine Everlasting State. What would such thoughts, (did they sit close upon our Hearts, when we come to hear the Word) what would such thoughts work? Would they not command thee, take heed how thou hearest, give heed to the things thou hearest, fear how thou let them slip? Would a deaf Ear, a wandering Eye, a roving Imagination be then endured by thee? Wouldst thou then suffer, as ordinarily thou dost, those wandering Birds to catch up the incorruptible Seed as it falls upon thee? Would it not send thee home with a trembling Heart, at all such times when thou hast left all thou heardest behind thee?

Consider, Friends, where are you at this present? What makes you here this day? Let me reason with you a little before the Lord; How is it that all your Spirits are not standing upon the Watch-Tower, whilst the King of Glory passeth by? How is it that all your Ears, and Eyes, and Hearts, are not waiting for him? Why sit you here all the day idle? Do you not understand what Work 'tis you are upon? O take heed to yourselves, Salvation and Damnation are before you, and one of the two you are certainly working out. Is it indifferent to you which of the two it be? Is it all one to please God or to provoke him? To get you nearer, or to put you farther off from the Kingdom of God? What think you of such praying, and such hearing as you content yourselves with? Will the living God be served with such spiritless Duties? Is Death your way to Life? Are these dead and heartless Duties? Is this dead praying, and dull hearing, that upon which you will venture your Souls? Will you pray yourselves into Hell? While you have in your hands the Key of the Kingdom of Heaven, will you lock the Door with it, and shut yourselves out? Whilst others are swearing, and lying, and coveting, and cursing themselves to Hell, will you be hearing and praying yourselves thither? Whither else will such dead Duties carry you? Certainly such blessing is as cursing, such hearing is as hardening the Ears, such praying is as blessing an Idol. Will God regard Mockers? Will God be served with Wind and Words? O tremble! Fear lest you not only lose all your Duties, but be irrecoverably lost by them.

Again, what an influence would this Consideration have upon all the actions of your Life, if you understood and were sensible that all that ever you do, hath such a respect to your eternal state, that according to it, your final Sentence will be. Where-ever you are, whatever you are doing, you are serving God or the Devil, you are working for Life or for Death. There are no indifferent actions (considered, in

individuo, and with their Circumstances) that make neither one way or other, all our motions are either upward or downward.

Our Life is our Race, and every Action of our Lives is a step backward or forward, our going in or out of our way. Nay, our very doing nothing is doing something; if our ease or rest be idleness, it's serving the Devil; if it be a refreshing for our Work, it's serving God. We may be in a sense serving God when we be asleep, and we may also by our sleep be serving the Flesh and the Devil. We are ever either laying aside our Weights, or laying on more Weight; we are making us Wings, or making us Chains; helping ourselves on, or hindering us in our way. We are in this World as Merchants trading for Eternity. Our whole Life is a treasuring up good or evil for ourselves against the last day. We are always either buying or selling, buying the Truth or selling our Souls; we are upon the Exchange every day, and hour, either changing better for worse, or worse for better; every inch of our time, is our Talent to trade withal, and we are still laying it out to our gain or our loss.

Our Lives are our Seed-time; we are still sowing to the Harvest; what we sow in Time, we must reap in Eternity. Our Eating and Drinking, our Working and Playing, our Talking and our Silence, will one way or other spring up to our hands hereafter.

Do you understand this, Friends? Do you consider it? O what manner of Persons should we then be, what wary and circumspect Lives should we live? Would not this, if it were considered, dam up that stream of Iniquity that runs down through all our course? Would our covetous practices, our fraudulent and unrighteous dealings; would that lying and scoffing, that self-seeking and flesh-pleasing, which take up so much of our time; would this hold up the head against such a sense of the influence they must have upon our

eternal State? Should we then spend so much of our time in doing wickedly, or doing nothing? Would it not find us other Work, and work enough for our Time, our Tongues, and our Hands, and our Heads, and all our Powers? But we do not consider or understand.

When you are walking in the vanity of your Minds, after the Lusts of this World; what do you use to think of this? Or do you think nothing of it? I, so 'tis indeed, you will not then think what you are doing, but stand and pause awhile; when you are serving your flesh, can you think now I am serving the Lord, now I am working out my Salvation, now I am providing for my Soul, and laying up against the time to come? Dare you say, now I am sowing for Eternity, this is that which I would reap in the other World? This Mirth and this Jollity, this Pride and this Idleness, this Laughter and these Lyes; Let these and the Crop they will bring forth, be my Harvest hereafter? Would not the thoughts of such a Harvest, make you dread such a Seed-time.

Or else can you say, The time that I spend thus I can spare from my Soul, that care's taken already, Christ is sure, Heaven is sure to me; Now for the flesh, and mine ease, and my pleasure now for this present World, I have done enough for that to come? Or else will you say, These days of my Vanity and Earthliness, will, I hope, be left out of my Reckoning; my Prayers and my Alms, the good that I have done is so much, that my evil Deeds and Days will be over looked and past by?

But must not every Day, must not every Work be brought to Judgment? Doth not the Righteous and All-seeing God book down all? Is not the Sin of Judah written, as well as their Tears and Duties? Is not everything noted in his Book? And must not all things that are written therein, be read in that day? Canst thou look on this, and not

fear continually every day? 1 Pet. 1.17. If ye call on the Father, who without respect of Persons, judgeth according to every Man's Work, pass the time of your sojourning here in Fear. If you had to do with a God that would never call you to a Reckoning, whether you served him or not, or how much or how little you served him, or whom else you served besides him; if you had to do only with such a God, the matter were not then so much how you lived and spent your time: But if ye call on the Father, if you serve such a God, who will reckon with every one of you, and for everything you have done, you had need look better to it; Pass the time, the whole time, of your Sojourning here in Fear.

Beloved, if your own Souls were not so highly concerned, yet this Consideration, That the Work of your Lives is, to serve the Lord, would work you to Fear.

If you were upon some Service for a Prince, or a great Man of the Earth, suppose it were but to make him a Garment, would you not fear how you sullied it, or bungled upon it? Or if it were but to keep his Garden, would you not fear how you let it run to ruin? What is this God whom you serve? Is he not a great God, the King of all the Earth? Is he not an Holy God, and a Jealous God, that looks to be sanctified, and to be the Fear and the Dread of all those that serve him? Isa. 8.23. The Service of God is often expressed in Scripture, by fearing of God. Cornelius, Acts 10.2. was said to be a Man fearing God; that is, the same as a Man that served the Lord: And the Apostle exhorts, Heb. 12.28. That we have Grace in our Hearts, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and Godly Fear. Thou servest the Lord, but wouldst thou that thy Service be accepted with God? Then serve him with Fear.

Therefore, to the end to hold this Fear upon you, I shall add this Counsel.

Through your whole course, and all the parts of it, carry this express Notion upon your Hearts, That you are serving the Lord in all that you do. Do all you do as the Servants of the Lord, and look on every Duty as the serving of him. What the Apostle requires of the Servants of Men, is the Duty of every one of the Servants of God; Col. 3.23, 24. Whatever you do, do it heartily [as] unto the Lord, for ye serve the Lord Christ.

When you go to pray, think with yourselves, this is a Duty which I ow to God. I am going into my Closet, upon a Service I have to do for God there: When you give an Alms, or when you teach or instruct your Families, think with yourselves, these are Services which I have to perform, not only to my poor Brethren, to my ignorant Family, but I ow them to the Lord, and to him I will perform them; I have a Service to do for God amongst the Poor, I have a Service to do for God in my Family; God hath bid me Feed the one and Teach the other, and to whomsoever I do it, I will do it as unto the Lord.

And in like manner, in all the matters of your Life, in the ordering of your whole Conversation, let this be still in your Eye, and upon your Heart, God hath sent me forth as his Servant into the World; I have no business here but for the most High; I am born for him, I am fed, I am clothed, I live for him; all that ever I have are the Talents of my Lot, committed to me to use and improve for him. I am Debtor to no other, I am Servant to none else; whatever goes out any other way, this is no less than unfaithfulness to him, whose I am; and now I go bound for him; for his pleasure I was made, and to him I am devoted; this Life of mine, and every day of it, and every breath of it,

I consecrate to the Lord; his Servant I am, and 'tis no Work for me, that I cannot call serving the Lord.

What would such a Sentiment upon the Heart bring forth? What care, yea, what watchfulness, yea, what fear would it produce? What, shall I serve the Lord with that which cost me nothing? Shall cheap-Service, and easy-Service, and lazy-Service, and eye-Service, be all that the Lord God shall have of me? I dare not serve my Governor so, and how will my God take it? But what, shall I divide my Service betwixt the Lord and any other Master? Shall my Flesh be served, shall my Pride be served, shall my Covetousness, shall Men be served? Shall this Heart, or this Time, or this Estate be divided betwixt the Lord and them? How if the Lord find me in another Field, in another House, or upon other Work, than whither he sent and appointed me? How if he find any of his Talents wasted, his Goods conveyed away to another Master? How will he bear it? Yea, how shall I bear it? Art thou not afraid, O my Soul, how this will be born, and what a Reckoning thou mayest be brought to for it? O, let me fear to be such an evil Servant, that I may not fear the evil Servant's doom; let me continually fear, every day, that I may prevent the fear of the Reckoning-Day. Such a standing Impression, would this Notion of our being engaged in Service for God, kept constantly upon the Heart, produce.

This Notion, mingled with all our Thoughts, Duties, and Ways, and the Holy Fear it will bring forth, will not only hold us to constant Service, but will put us upon the highest and best Service. What is the Lord whom I serve? Is he not one who looks for all I have, and is he not worthy of all I have? What an honor is it to be the Servant of God, and what a terror to be none of that number? He is the best Master, he is worthy, he is worthy of the very best I have. Fear, and be ashamed, O my Soul, to put him off with anything that is not

worthy of him. What will an ingenious Spirit fear, more than to be base and unworthy.

Should you ask such a Person, Why are you so exact, and so tender, and so circumspect in your way? Why are you so busy, and so studious, and so laborious in your course? Why can you not, as well as others, take up with a lower and more remiss way of Religion? O, I dare not be so unworthy; I am the Servant of God, and through his Grace, I will serve him the best I can. He that is most Holy, and most Circumspect, that keeps the closest to his Work and his Rule, he is the best Servant to God; and as I am obliged, so I am resolved, through the help of God, to do him the most Honor, and the best Service I can. I should be a Wretch, a vile and unworthy Person, if I were otherwise minded.

The great God hath but few Servants in the World; hath he taken me into the number of those few? O, what shall I render? How can I be sufficiently thankful for that Grace? God hath but few Servants in the World, and the fewer the more serviceable have they need to be. The Devil hath many Servants, he hath those that serve him in every House, in every Town, there are whole Countries that are wholly peopled with the Servants of the Devil; and their Work is, to do all the dis-service and dishonor they can to God; to cherish the Flesh, and foment the Lusts thereof, to fill the World with wickedness, and to trample upon all that's left of God in it. What multitudes hath the Devil that serve him every-where, and how busy are they at their Work? God hath but a few Servants, and since he hath made me one of them, I will do him the best Service I can. Such a blessed and quickening influence, would such abiding thoughts have upon all the People of God.

As 'twould be on the contrary, If Sinners would carry this thought upon their Hearts, I am every day serving the Devil, it would be a Bridle to hold them in; so if People kept up such a thought, I am serving the Lord, 'twould be a Spur to quicken them on. Such a thought upon Sinners Hearts, I am serving the Devil, would strike such a fear, as would drive them quite backwards. The very same fear, which would animate Saints, would strike Sinners dead in the Nest.

If a Sinner that's going to the Ale-house, would seriously consider, and ask himself, Whither am I going, and upon whose Errand? And his Heart should answer, I am going to the Ale-house to serve the Devil; the Devil hath some Servants at work there for him, at their Drinking-work, Swearing-work, Scoffing-work, and I am going among them to help on the Devil's Work: And if others that are serving their Covetousness, or their Pride, or their Envy, if their Hearts should tell them, This also is serving the Devil; the Devil hath a great Work for thee to do, to damn that Soul of thine, and as many others as thou canst; The Devil would have thee to Hell with him, and hang up that Soul of thine in Chains of Fire. This he cannot do, unless thou wilt put thine own hand to the Work, and now he hath brought thee to it; in the course thou art now taking, thou art doing the Devil's Work, to destroy thine own Soul. Such thoughts would put Sinners to a stand, or at least slacken their pace.

If the Devil should possess a whole Country of People, as he hath sometimes possessed some particular Persons, and should set them a pulling down their own Houses, a burning their Corn and their Cattle, a tearing their own flesh, a pulling out their own Eyes, a butchering their Children, a pulling out one another's Throats; who would no the afraid to go dwell in that Country, to be hired to that cruel Work? Why, Sinners, 'tis worse work than this that the Devil

hath set you upon, and you are now a-doing; He hath set you on work to stab every Man his own Soul, to strike in Darts through our Livers, to kindle those Fires that will burn to the bottom of Hell, and to cast yourselves headlong into those Eternal Flames. Hadst thou such a thought as this upon thy Heart, didst thou but consider that this is it thou art doing, 'twould cool the heat of thy Lust, and hold thee back, at least from much of that wickedness thou art rushing upon.

And so it would be here, if Christians did consider what 'tis that they are a doing, in their following Holiness and Righteousness, that they are herein serving the Lord, and that in his recovering and saving Design; O how would it provoke them on! How is it that thou art such a slow-belly, that thou art such a drone, and such a slug in thy Work? Is he whom thou servest worthy of no more than this? Pluck up thy Spirits Man, thou art upon Service for the God of the whole Earth, and upon the noblest Service that thou art capable of; thou art sent forth upon the same Service, for which the Son of God was sent into the World, to save Souls, and to destroy the Works of the Devil; Jam. 5.20. If God should have employed thee but in those lower Works, that Christ did for the Bodies of Men, to open the Eyes of the Blind, to unloose the Tongue of the Dumb, to cast out Devils, to heal the Sick, and raise the Dead; wouldst thou have been so unwilling, and so backward at such Works? Thou art upon greater Works than these, to save thine own Soul, and those that see and hear thee.

God hath made thee one of that Chosen Generation, that Royal Priesthood, that Holy Nation, who are to serve him, by showing forth the Virtues of him that hath called them, 1 Pet. 2.9. To bear his Name, and to set forth his Praises in the World; thou art set up as the Image of God, as the Epistle of Christ; thou art sent forth as a Factor and Agitator for God, to negotiate for him in the Earth; to bear up his

Name, to propagate his Gospel, to enlarge his Kingdom; Art thou not afraid to trifle in such noble Works?

Think, O my Soul, what 'tis thou art for, and for whom thou livest; Shall I be as the Ox that eateth Grass, or as the Swine that lieth in the Mud, and tell the World, behold your King? This is the Image of your God? Shall the Epistle of Christ be nothing else but a Blank or Blots? Shall the Factor for Heaven have so much of his Occupation for Earth? Shall I teach Men to despise, and pollute, and blaspheme that worthy Name, which I am entrusted to advance and exalt? Shall any little that I do, suffice me in so great a Trust? Come on, O my Soul, remember thou servest the Living God, and therefore let me do him the best Service I can. Canst thou be too Holy? Canst thou be too Circumspect and too Active? I may be too sluggish, and too silent, and too shy, and too shamefaced; but can I be too busy, a too zealous for the Living God? Can I say of my best, this is too much? Can I say of anything less than my best, this is enough? 'It is the Lord God whom thou servest, fear to be unworthy. This is the advantage of our carrying this thought upon our Hearts, I serve the Lord, it will put us upon the best and highest Service.

Give me leave to add another Advantage, (though not of so proper consideration here); This thought, whilst it provokes us to the highest, will yet comfort us, touching the least and meanest of all our Services. Some poor weak Christians, are apt to discourage themselves in all they do, from this, that it is so very low and little that they do. I am a poor Creature, 'tis but little that I have to serve the Lord withal, I am ignorant and of weak understanding, I have not the Parts nor Gifts that others have; I might possibly serve the Lord better, were it not for this Fear which is upon me; I am afraid to speak of God, or of the Things of God; I am of slow Speech, and rude Language, I cannot express myself to any purpose; I am ashamed of

my teaching my Family, of my praying in my Family; I do it so brokenly and confusedly, that I fear I do more hurt than good in it.

I but, poor Man, as weak as thou art, and as weakly as thou dost, what thou dost, if thou do what thou canst, This is serving the Lord; and whether it be little or much, if thou canst but truly say, This is serving the Lord, thou mayst be comforted in it.

If Sinners considered that their little Sins were serving the Devil, 'twould make them afraid of the very least transgression. Some Sinners are not so great Sinners as others, they are not guilty of those higher and more notorious Crimes that some others are, and this quiets them and keeps off Fear from them.

Thou art no Drunkard, thou sayest, nor no Adulterer, nor no Blasphemer; I, but dost thou not live a carnal, vain, careless, earthly Life? And is not this serving the Devil? Though thou dost not serve the Devil in the Ale-house, or the Whore-house; though thou dost not serve the Devil with Oaths, and Curses, and Blasphemies, yet is it not the Devil still thou servest? Thou servest thy Covetousness, thou servest thy Pride, and thy sensual Appetite; thou neglectest Christ and thy Soul, and is not this serving the Devil? Such a thought, upon the most harmless of Sinners Hearts, yet I serve the Devil, would make him afraid. Is it a light thing to serve the Devil? Though I be not numbered among the chief of Sinners, though there be others worse than I, yet am not I under the same Master? Though I be among the hindermost of the Company, yet am not I one of them? This Life I live, is no serving God, and therefore 'tis doubtless the serving of the Devil. Take heed, O my Soul, If the Devil can but hold thee, 'twill be all one, whether it be by greater or smaller Cords; the Devil is dragging thee to Hell, and so he can but get the thither at last, it will be upon the matter all one to him whether it be by greater

or lesser Sins. Though he cannot persuade thee to ride post into the Pit, yet if he can but toll thee in, that shall suffice him, though it be but by a slower pace.

Now as such a thought, I serve the Devil, would afright the least of Sinners, so will such a thought, I serve the Lord, comfort the least of Saints. But this by the way.

4. Another Reason why we should Fear, is, because of the great Treasure we carry about with us, whither-ever we go.

Christians are Travelers, and they travel with charge about them. This World is a dangerous World, the Passengers through it are in danger of falling among Thieves, which will spoil and rob them of their Treasure.

A Christian carries more Riches about him than the whole World is worth. He hath the whole Gospel within him, he hath the two Tables of the Covenant, his Heart is the Ark, in which they are laid up. He hath Christ in him, the Fruits of his Blood, his Pardon and Reconciliation; the graces and comforts of his Spirit, his evidences for Heaven; all the Records of the gracious Transactions betwixt God and his Soul, the Pawns and Pledges of Divine Love, the King's Broad-Seal, and the Earnest for Glory; all the Income of his Faith, the Returns of his Prayers, all that he hath gotten, all the Manna he hath gathered, the Hidden Manna, the White Stone, with the New Name, he carries all his Riches up and down with him, whither-ever he travels.

Hast thou any Divine Light in thine Heart? Any love for Christ, any zeal for God and his Gospel, any Tokens of his Love, or Tenderness of his Honor? Is there Peace, or Joy, or Hope within thee? All this thou art in danger of being robbed and spoiled of.

This is the Design that Satan hath upon thee, this is the Errand of every Worldly Lust, of every Temptation, every Companion, every Carnal Relation, every Change of Condition, every Carnal Pleasure, all thy Earthly Possessions; the Devil hath set them in ambush, and they lie in wait for thee, to rifle thee and spoil thee of all that ever thou art worth.

Hast thou never fallen amongst these Thieves, and suffered great loss by them? Hast thou been robbed, and art thou not afraid thou mayest again? Will not thy loss make thee more wise and wary?

How many Instances have there been of secure and unwary Christians, who, whilst they have been venturous upon Temptations, have trusted themselves amongst their vain Companions, indulged themselves a more free, and jolly, and easy, a more remiss, and flesh pleasing Life, or a more busy drudgery for this World, have, (as to their sense at least) lost all they had for the other World; Who when they have come a little to themselves, fall a mourning out Naomi's bitter Song; Ruth. 1.20. Call me no more Naomi, but call me Marah; I went out full, but I returned empty. Whilst mine Heart was tender, and mine Eye jealous; whilst I kept my watch, and kept my distance from this World and its Temptations; O, what Light, Love, Peace, Joy, did then shine upon and possess my Heart? Then I had a God, whom I could call mine own; then I had a Jesus, and could lean upon my Beloved; then I could believe, love, serve, delight in, enjoy, and praise the Lord.

But woe, woe to me, how is it now? Whilst I allowed myself a little more boldness, with this Flesh and this World, I have even lost all ere I was aware. I am fallen among Thieves, and what have they left me?

O mine Ease, my Pleasures, my Money, my Lands, which I have turned aside to, how have you served me? Whilst I have been loving, and following, and serving you, how have you rewarded me? Ah me, they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. Grace is not, Peace is no more to me, a good Conscience, where is it become? I can neither Believe, nor Love, nor Pray, nor Hope, nor anything else, but Fear and Lament. O had I feared always, this Fear had never come upon me.

Christians, Are there no such Instances, no such Cases in the World? And is there no fear that this may be any of your cases? Do not [you] also travel with Charge? Have you not a Treasure within you? What, have you been Professors so long, Believers so long; have you been Hearing, and Praying, and Fasting, and Laboring all this while, and have not gotten something you would be loath to lose? And is not the World still as very a Thief as ever? Does not the Devil lie in wait for you as well as for others? Is not his Eye upon that Chain about thy Neck, that Jewel in thy Bosom, and those Bracelets upon thy Hands, the Graces that appear upon thee? And hath he not a mind to beguile thee of them all? Are his Temptations so weak, or art thou so strong, that thou needest not fear them? As I told thee once heretofore, so I now tell thee again, He that is so weak as not to fear Temptations, is certainly not so strong as to resist them. Look to thyself, they are all standing at the catch for thee; thy Companions are catching, thine Estate is catching, thy Business is catching, thy Pleasures are all catching at thee, to spoil thee of all that ever thou hast.

Objection.

But he that hath nothing, hath no need to fear the Thief: As for me (saith the Sinner) I have nothing to lose, neither Grace nor Peace; it's for the Rich to fear, but I am so poor that I cannot be poorer; my

Estate is so bad, that the Devil can hardly make it worse than it is; I need not fear whither, or among whom I go, I cannot come amongst those that are worse than myself; why then should such an one as I Fear?

Answer.

1. Hast thou nothing to lose? Thou hast the more to get. Art thou content to be thus poor forever? Hitherto thou hast no Grace, thou hast no part in Christ, nor the Salvation of God; but what if thou shouldst never have? That which hath kept thee from Christ hitherto, and so wholly void and empty of the Grace of God hitherto, is like to keep thee so forever; and, O what if it should do so? If the Devil and this evil World should serve thee all thy days, as they have served thee to this day? What if thou shouldst continue thus blind, and thus hard, and in such a poor and wretched state of Soul to thy dying day? Darest thou go down thus to thy Grave? Darest thou stand thus in the Judgment? When it shall be then demanded of thee, What good hast thou done, or what good hast thou gotten, wouldst thou stand speechless? Consider in time, the less thou hast, the more thou hast to get.

2. Thou hast yet much to lose. As poor as thou art, thou mayest be poorer; thy case is not so bad but it may be much worse than 'tis. For,

1. Thou hast a day of Grace to lose. Though thou hast no Grace, yet thou hast a day of Grace; thou art yet under the means; thou art yet in a possibility of Grace, as wretched as thy state is, it is not desperate. The Word is nigh thee, the Door of Mercy is yet open; Behold the Lord stands at the Door and knocks; behold, he calleth thee, Come unto me and be saved; what is thy time for? Doth not the Lord say, as Rev. 2.21. I give this Sinner space to repent? What are Sabbaths, Ordinances, Ministry for? Is not the Acceptable Day yet

proclaimed? Is not the Word of Reconciliation yet preached unto thee? And do all these give thee no hope, no opportunity of obtaining Mercy? What if these were all lost and gone? If it were said unto thee, Time is past? What if thou shouldst never hear a Sermon more, never keep a Sabbath more, never see the face of a Minister of Christ more? If thou shouldst never again be instructed or invited to Christ, but shouldst be irrevocably given up to a Reprobate Mind, and an Heart that cannot repent? Is it nothing to thee, that Repentance is yet preached to thee, in the Name of the Lord Jesus? That the Ambassadors are still before thy Door, beseeching thee from the Lord, and praying thee in Christ's stead, Be thou reconciled to God? How would such a Day be prized in Hell? If the Ministers that are now sent to thee, were sent down amongst those damned Souls that are bound in Chains of Darkness, to carry down the Gospel to them? O, if those miserable Souls might have one Sabbath more, one hour of Grace more, one Sermon more of Repentance and Reconciliation preached unto them, how would their shrieks and howling's be turned into shouts and acclamations of joy? Why, Sinner, thou hast yet the Blessed Day before thee; when 'tis past and gone, then thou wilt know, too late, of what price it was.

2. Thou hast a Soul to lose. As poor as thou art, thou hast yet that which is more worth than all the World; Matth. 16.26. Thou dost not know the price of a Soul, who sayest, Thou hast nothing to lose. Sinners value their Souls at a low rate, 'tis the cheapest pennyworth that the Devil can buy in the World; Men sell them as cheap as Esau sold his Birth-right, for a Mess of Pottage; as the Rich Men sold the Poor, for a piece of Silver, or a pair of Shoes: a Soul for a Lust, a Soul for a Whore, a Soul for a Name; the lowest price the Devil bids, will hardly be refused.

But as low as Men rate it, a Soul is worth a Kingdom; all the Kingdoms in the World will not buy it from his hands, who knows it's worth. All the Crowns, and Scepters, and Thrones, and Dominions of all the Earth, put all together, one poor Soul will weigh them all down. And this is it, O Sinner, that thou hast to lose, and yet dost thou say thou hast nothing to lose? How canst thou also but live in Fear? Yea, who in the World hath greater reason to fear than thou? Is thy Soul so precious? Is thy Soul in danger of being lost? Is it so near gone, almost past recovery, every day, every hour, ready to drop down into that Pit, from which is no Redemption; How is it that such a thought shakes not thy Soul?

IV.

What you should Fear.

'It is too long to tell you of everything that is to be feared; Fear especially these Things following.

Fear

1. Your Delilah's, or your beloved Sins.
2. Your Jezebels, or your painted Sins.
3. Your Isaac's, or any beloved Creature.
4. The Cross, or Affliction.
5. The Curse, or Damnation.

1. Fear your Delilah's, or your beloved Sins. You have reason to fear every Sin, greater Sins, smaller Sins, common and ordinary Sins, strange and unaccustomed Sins; there's no Sin so gross, but it may be thy Sin; and there's no Sin so small, but it may be thy undoing; there's no Sin so great a stranger to thee, but one time or other it may give thee a visit; thou mayest be tempted to that Sin, which thou wast never tempted to in all thy life, thou mayest be over-come of that sin which thou never committedst all thy days before. Say not of any sin, this I fear not; it may be the next that comes; and if it come, thou hast that within thee may bid it welcome. Fear all Sin, but especially fear thy Beloved Sin; Fear whatever thou lovest in all the World, but especially the Sin of thy Love; there be some Sins that that thou canst

better spare, and what thou canst better spare, thou needest least to fear.

But what is this Beloved Sin, or how may I know which it is? 'It is worth your enquiry, and I shall give you the following marks or discoveries of it, by which you may understand, both what Sin it is that is your Beloved Sin, and how great reason you have to fear it.

1. The Beloved Sin hath easy entrance. The Apostle calls it, Heb. 12.1. The Sin that doth easily beset us. It lays Siege to the Soul, and it hath an easy Siege of it; it lies not long without the Walls, the Gates are quickly thrown open to it; whenever it comes to the Door, 'tis usually let in at the first knock. Strangers may be made to wait, or be sent packing, but this Friend must be fetched in and bid welcome; the Devil may save his labor to tempt to this Sin, itself is temptation enough. It is the Familiar of the Heart, one of its nearest Acquaintance.

2. It hath the command of all. The Beloved-Sin is the Master-Sin; 'tis by love that Sin rules; whatever hath gotten thy love, hath therein gotten the dominion in thee. Lovest thou God? Then at his command thou art. Lovest thou Sin? Then this becomes thy Lord, thou wilt deny or keep back nothing it will have. This Herodias may ask what she will and she shall have it; not half, but all, not the Baptist's Head, but thine own Head, and Heart, and Soul, and Life, all must be sacrificed to it. All the good thou hast, and not only this, but all other Sins and Lusts must stoop to it and serve it. For instance, If Pride be the Master-Sin, the whole Man, and all that ever he hath, must be Servants to it; yea, and every other Lust must either serve it, or give place to it. Covetousness, must get in Wealth to maintain it; Envy, must throw Dirt in others Faces that would eclipse it; Curiosity, must provide it of Ornaments, all the parts and powers of the Soul, all its

virtues and inward Endowments, all the actions of the Life, must all be made use of to serve and uphold it. Meekness, Temperance, Patience, Charity, Chastity; Preaching, Praying, Fasting, all our Religion must be pressed to do homage to this Idol; and whatsoever would be a disgrace, whether it be good or evil, must be laid aside, or trodden under-foot. If it be a disgrace to be covetous, Pride will be content to be poor; if it be a disgrace to be quarrelsome, Pride will be peaceable; yea, if it be a disgrace to be proud, Humility must serve it for a Covering and Ornament. If it be an honor to be Godly and Conscientious, the Proud will be a Professor; and if it be a disgrace or reproach, then farewell to Religion, Conscience hide thine head. Every thing must be entertained or rejected, according as it may serve or hinder it, and this Pride must have the ordering and disposing of all.

If Covetousness be the Master-Sin, then all we are or have must be at its command. The Sensual Appetite must be denied, and Hunger and Thirst must be born for its sake; Expensive Pride, or Wasteful Prodigality, must no longer be endured; Slothfulness and Idleness must by no means be indulged to; All our time, wits, parts, strength; all those vices, injustice, oppression, unmercifulness, must be hired to gather in Dust, to feed this greedy Worm. And the like may be said of any other Beloved Sin, it hath the command of all.

3. It must have no check nor control. The Beloved must dwell in quiet, do what I will, and none must say to it, What dost thou? Like that Fondling Adonijah, of whom 'tis said, 1 Kings 1.6. His Father had not displeased him at any time, nor said, Why hast thou done so? The Darling must be dandled, but never corrected or questioned; or if there be a necessity, and it cannot be avoided, that some check be given it, then the same charge must be given as concerning that other of David's Fondling's, Absalom, 2 Sam. 18.5. Deal gently with

the young Man. Not too harsh, not too close; Nay, my Sons, 'tis not well that I hear of you, said Eli to his wicked Sons, 1 Sam. 4.24. And that's the hardest word that will be born.

4. It's the last that's parted with. Reuben shall go, and Simeon shall go, and Judah shall go; but must Benjamin go to? My Son shall not go down, said once old Israel, Gen. 42. this Pride let it go, says the covetous Man, and this Sloth, and this Pleasure; but must this Mammon and my Heart be parted? It shall not go. This Covetousness, let it go, saith the proud Man, and this Ease and this Pleasure, but shall this Honor and these Ornaments go? If I be put to Labor, I can bear it; or if I be Poor, I can bear it: I can work hard, or fare hard, but I cannot be despised; though my Estate be brought low, and my Back be bowed down, yet my Spirit will not come down; this Pleasure I can spare, and this Ease, and this Honor, saith the peevish, but I cannot help it to be angry and impatient when I am provoked, Nature will have its vent; anything but this, but in this thing, the Lord pardon me, I cannot help it.

5. It's often the parting penny, betwixt Christ and the Soul, betwixt the Soul and Life. 'It is the last that's parted with, and sometimes 'twill never be parted with. Christ must go, and Life must go; the Soul must die, rather than this Sin not be saved alive. Doubtless there are Souls in Hell, that have parted with much, and would have parted with all but this one thing, their Beloved Sin; and for the sake of this they perish everlastingly. Was it not the care of that young Man that came to Christ for Eternal Life? Mark 10.21. He was fair for Life, only Christ tells him, One thing thou lackest. Get thee loose from the love of this Earth, and Heaven shall be thine. O, says his Heart, I have too much to lose, and I love it too well to part with it so; sorry I am I cannot: I have a good will to thee, I have a mind to live, abate me but this and I will be thine; but if this may not be, away he goes, sorry he

must die, but yet choosing Death, rather than the loss of that Idol, his great Estate.

Now, Friends, Is not such a Sin to be feared? That will find such an easy entrance that has the command of all, by which your Souls and Consciences, all your Parts and Powers, all your Time, and Estates, and Ways, are governed and disposed; that must do what it will, without check or control; that you can so hardly get rid of, and will so greatly hazard your foregoing forever your part in Christ; if anything in the World be like to keep you off, or draw you back from him, this is it that will do it, your Beloved Sin; Is not such a Sin to be feared?

Well, by what hath been said you may find it out, and know which it is; or it may be, there may be more than one of them; some Sinners serve many Masters, and know not which is the chief. Fear all your Sins, and do what you can to find out the Master-Sin, and take heed of it where-ever you meet it. Never count thyself in the least safety; whilst that Lust is alive, reward it as it would serve thee; Put thy finger upon the right Head, and then say, Thou must die Jonathan; thou must die, O my Sin, or my Soul must die by thine hand. But of this more hereafter.

2. Fear your Jezebels, or your painted Sins. An Enemy in a disguise is the more to be feared, as his advantage against us is the greater. The Devil is a Painter, that can limn some of the foulest Vices into the form of Virtues. As he can put an ugly vizer upon goodness, and with this foolish World, make Light pass for Darkness, Holiness for Hypocrisy, Tenderness for Troublesomeness, Zeal for Pride and Fury; so can he paint Sin into the form of Godliness. Covetousness must go for Frugality, Profuseness for Liberality, Sinful Compliance for Civility, Sinful Connivence for Modesty, Lukewarmness for

Moderation, Cowardice and Faint-heartedness for Prudence and Discretion.

Hast thou never a painted Jezebel with thee? No Lust, nor Vice, which thou allowest thyself in, thinking there's no harm in it? Fear this Harlot, that looks more modestly than her that hath her whorish Heart on her Forehead. Who is on the Lord's side, who? Throw her down. Hast thou anything within thee that is for Christ indeed? Let it down with this Jezebel. Pull off the Harlots Vail, and cast her out. Come in, yea rather, Get thee out thou Wife of Jeroboam, why feignest thou thyself to be another? Is this thy Frugality or Providence, to hoard up and hold back what the Lord calls for from thee? Is this thy good Husbandry? Too good an Husband to be Merciful; too good an Husband to be a good Christian: Get thee out thou Wife of Jeroboam, get thee out Covetousness, why feignest thou thyself to be another? Is this thy liberality, to spend thine Estate upon Harlots, or thy loose and vain Companions? Must thy luxury and thy riot eat up all thou hast? Is this thy casting thy Bread upon the Waters, to throw it down those filthy Kennels? Get thee out Prodigal, why feignest thou thyself to be another? Is this thy civility, to have fellowship with the unfruitful Works of Darkness, to hold friendship and intimacy with the lewd ones of the Earth, to have a kiss for the precious and the vile? Get thee out Ambo-dexter, why feignest thou thyself to be another? Art thou remiss and indifferent in the Matters of God? Art thou cowardly, and faint-hearted, where his honor is concerned; and is this thy Moderation or thy Prudence? Get thee out Laodicean, why feignest thou thyself to be another?

Friend, pull off the Mask from the Face, and see what's under. Thou knowest not what mischief thou mayest suffer, where thou suspected no harm; Fear a pretended Friend more than an open Enemy.

3. Fear your Isaac's, any beloved or over loved Creature. Fear not only the sins of thy love, but the Sons of thy love; the latter will be temptations to the former; thou mayest receive hurt from that which hath no hurt in it; an Innocent Child may be an Idol, and so may thine Husband, or thy Wife, or any Friend thou hast. Wherefore honourest thou thy Sons above me? 1 Sam. 2.29.

Fear, lest thy love to thy Friend make an abatement upon thy love to thy God; thy love to thy Children should cause thee to abuse thy God and them, by the neglect of that duty of Reproof and Correction thou owest them; take heed that thy tenderness to them, make thee not cruel to them and thyself; By nursing their untowardness, thou nourishest those Thorns that will pierce through thine own Soul.

Take heed thou have never an Isaac in all the World, not one Child, not one Relation, concerning which, if God should say to thee as to Abraham, Gen. 22. Offer up this Isaac whom thou lovest; or if Christ require of thee, as he doth of all his Disciples, Forsake Father or Mother, forsake Husband or Wife, forsake Son or Daughter; take heed lest thine Heart should answer, No, I will not offer them up, no, I cannot forsake them. What thou canst not part with, may be the parting of God and thy Soul.

And as any Beloved Friend, so any other Creature or Affair that thine Heart is set upon, may be a snare to thee. Fear that House that thou lovest, thy pleasant Habitation; Fear thy Money, and thy Fields, and thy Flocks, thy Meat and thy Drink that thou lovest; those Businesses and honest Employments thou takest most pleasure in. Thy good things may become thine evil things; thy Table may become thy Snare, thy savory Meat may become thy Poison, and that which is given thee for thy good, may be an occasion of falling. Thy Money may be thy Poverty, and thine honest Labors, when thine Heart is too

much in them, may be more mischievous than Idleness. How many foolish Souls are there, whom their Love hath held Prisoners to this Earth, and Exiles from Heaven; to whom their good things have done more mischief, than things apparently unlawful could ever do them?

How is it, Christian, that thy Soul is so seldom Above? O, thy delights are below. Whence is it that thou hast suffered so great loss in the matters of thy Soul? That whatsoever thou dost in the Matters of Religion prospers no more; that so small increases, and so many decays are to be found upon thee? Thou hast not been among the Drunkards, nor hast been partaker with the Adulterers; thou hast not been walking in the Counsel of the Ungodly, nor standing in the way of Sinners, nor sitting in the Seat of the Scornful, thou hast been no Liar, or Scoffer, or Oppressor; these things thy Soul abhors. O, but thou hast been an Idolater; thine Heart hath found thee out some Idol in the Earth, some Friend, or some Farm, or some honest Business, or some innocent Pleasure, (as thou thoughtest) and hath so chained itself to these, and been so taken up in the service of them, that hence 'tis with thee as 'tis. God hath opened his Store to thee, and filled thine hand with good things, and thou hast opened thy Mouth, and so filled thine Heart with them, that it's even choked up by them, and all Spiritual Good is even strangled within thee.

But wilt thou thus requite the Lord, O unworthy Soul? Shall he be a loser by his Bounty? Wilt thou become worse, for that he is so good? Wilt thou abuse Love? What is an abuse of Love, if not this, that the more he loves, the less he is beloved of thee? The more he gives, the less be returned; what was given to draw thine Heart, do's carry it away from him? Shall it be said, thou wouldst have been a better Servant, if he had not been so good a Master? If he had not given thee so great an Estate, so good a Wife, so dear a Child, thou wouldst have loved him more, and served him better than now thou dost?

Friends, if what you Love be not also your Fear, it will be like to be your Sin and your Misery. 'Twill draw your Heart from God, and so 'twill be your Sin, and 'twill provoke God to snatch it away from you, and then 'twill be your Misery. Whatever thou over-lovest, if the Lord mean thee good, look for it, to be stripped and bereaved of it. He will touch thee in the Apple of thine Eye, he will try thee in thine Isaac, and will tear off that Jewel, that entices thine Heart from him. And by how much the more thou lovest, by so much the greater will the parting torment be.

Good old Abraham had an Isaac, and in this Isaac he must be tried, and an hard trial he had; which how cheerfully soever he went through, yet consider the Circumstances of it, and then think what piercing trouble thy love to Creatures may bring upon thee.

Gen. 22.2. Take now (says God to Abraham) thy Son, thine only Son Isaac [whom thou lovest] — and offer him up for a Burnt-Offering. Hadst thou been in this Abraham's stead, what a Dagger in thine Heart would this Word have been? How would thy love to thine Isaac have risen up, and reasoned with the Lord thus?

If the Lord will have a Sacrifice, may not some other Creature be it? All the Beasts of the Field are his, and the Cattle upon a thousand Hills. Is there none amongst all these, wherewith the Lord will be pleased, but must he have a Man for a Sacrifice?

If he will have me Sacrifice a Man, may not a Stranger be the Man? Or if he will have one of mine own House, may not a Servant, or one of their Sons be accepted? If it must be a Son of mine own, may not Ishmael the Son of the Bondwoman be he? Must it be mine Isaac, and none but he? And why Lord is this word [whom thou lovest] added? What yet more load? 'Twould be some ease, if I could now

forget my love, and must this be now remembered? This is the Dart that kills my Soul.

But if this Son of mine, this only Son [by my Wife] this Isaac whom I love must go, must I myself offer him up? Must mine own hand be upon him? If this Isaac must be the Sacrifice, must none but Abraham be the Priest? O, what will the Country say of me, Is Abraham become a Murderer? And how shall I hold up my face to Sarah my Wife at my return? What shall I say to her, when she asks, Where is the Child? Where is Isaac my Son? O my Bowels, my Bowels, I am pained at mine Heart, mine Eyes fail, my Soul melts, my Lively is poured out on the Earth. How shall I say, Isaac is not, the Child is dead, and dead by mine own hand? How would Father and Mother fall together, and swoon and die as wounded in the streets?

How cheerfully and courageously soever, the good old Man behaved himself, under all these astonishing Circumstances; yet, O think, how it would have been with thee, hadst thou been this Abraham, and let that thought put thee in fear, concerning whomsoever thou dearly lovest.

Consider a little what the unhappy Fruits of thy own love are;

God says to thee, Take now thy Child, or thy Children, not and offer them up to me for a Burnt-Sacrifice, but take and bring them up for me for an Holy Seed; Instruct them, Govern and Educate them for me. Whose are all these that are in thine House? Are they not all mine, my Sons and my Daughters? And wherefore have I sent them thee? Is it not with this charge, Keep these Souls for me, bring them up for me? 'It is not for Bread only, or for Clothes, or for Trades, or for Portions that they are come into thine House, 'tis that they may be instructed to the Kingdom of God, and bred up to eternal Life.

Now how dost thou keep this charge of the Lord? Dost thou Teach them? Dost thou Govern them? Or are they not left a rude and unruly Company? But what is in the fault? Is not thy love in fault? Thou art so fond a Father, that thou canst not find in thine Heart to impose upon them anything that they like not, nor canst be so strict or severe as is needful to them. My Child is sickly, or unapt to learn, and I cannot put him so hard to it; My Child is wayward and disorderly, but I doubt how it would be with him if I should cross or correct him; I am fain to let him have his Will more than I would, for fear I should discourage or break his Spirit. I have but one, or but two, and if these should miscarry, what would become of me?

Why now, thou sees what reason thou hast to fear thy love, which is such a Tempter to thee to disobey thy God, and to tender the honor of thy Child more than the honor of thy Maker. If there be ever a one of thy Children that thou lovest above the rest, that must be let alone to be the rebellious Child.

God says to thee, Take not thy Child, but thy Bread, and thy Flesh, and thy Money, and Estate, and offer these up to me. Cast thy Bread upon the Waters. Draw forth thy Soul to the hungry. Give unto him that asketh; lend unto him that would borrow of thee; feed, clothe, harbor; for my sake do it. And yet how little goes out at his Word, either to Beggars or Borrowers? No, thou lovest what thou hast too well to part with it so.

God says to thee, Take but this Ram, or this Goat, thy Sins and thy Lusts, slay them and offer them up. No, thou wilt not do it. Thou lovest thine Enemies too, and they also must be spared. Though they will not spare thee, nor anything thou hast; thy Time, thine Estate, thy Name, and all that thou hast must be Meat for thy Lusts; yet

behold, they are loved, and must be spared, thou wilt not deliver them up.

God says sometimes to thee, Not take thou thy Child, but let me take him, be content that I lay mine hand upon him, and smite him with Sickness or Death. No, thou canst not bear it, but takest on, and murmurest, and art impatient, and wilt not be comforted or quieted.

Some Parents can better bear it that the Devil should take their Children, than that God should take them. If the Devil takes thy Child, and makes a Prodigal Child of him, makes a Drunkard of him, or a Rioter, if evil Company carry him away from thee into the Paths of the Destroyer, thou canst bear it with more patience, though possibly it be some trouble to thee. At least, if the Devil take him, and only make him a greedy Worldling or Muck-worm, though that make him a sure to Hell as Prodigality, yet this thou canst bear with ease. Though we may sometimes hear Parents say, I had rather my Child had been dead, it would not have been such an affliction to me to have followed him to his Grave, as it is to see him buried alive in Lewdness and Debauchery; yet to see him held by the Devil under a blind Mind, under an hard and impenitent Heart, so he be civil, and sober, and thirty for this World; though he be but a civil Infidel, a thrifty Unbeliever, this is not so heavily taken: But let God lay hands upon him, and take him away out of the World, and then no other noise is heard in the House, but such as was heard in Ramah, Matth. 2.18. Lamentation and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her Children, and would not be comforted, because they were not.

4. Fear the Cross, or Afflictions. You will say, this is strange counsel; the Scripture give the quiet contrary; Fear none of those things which

thou shalt suffer, Rev. 2.10. Fear not them that kill the Body, Luk. 12.4. I shall therefore show,

1. How we are not to fear the Cross.

2. How we are to fear the Cross.

1. How we are not to fear the Cross. Now the Cross must not be feared, either,

1. Out of tenderness to the Flesh; or,

2. Out of faintness of Spirit.

1. The Cross is not to be feared out of tenderness to the Flesh. By the Flesh understand, both our Bodies of Flesh and out fleshly Lusts.

1. Not out of tenderness to our Bodies. 'It is this which makes us shrink from, and shun the Cross, that it is such a trouble to our outward Man, that it puts it to so much pain and hardship. The Soul suffers not immediately by anything that Man can do unto us, but as it partakes in the sufferings of the Body. If our Bodies could bear with Ease their own Infirmities, the Soul could not feel them; what the Body cannot endure, makes the Soul sick, because of its tenderness towards it. Upon this account 'tis that we fear bodily Afflictions, but thus it must not be. A Christian is a Soldier, and Soldier must not fear, but endure hardness. 2 Tim. 2.3. Endure hardness as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ. It is not for tender Persons to be Soldiers; hunger and thirst, cold and weariness is their ordinary lot; and their hardness must be their Armor against all. It is not for tender Persons to be Soldiers, and therefore it is not for Christians to be tender; the most tender of Sin, of any Persons in the World, but not so of Sufferings.

There are several kinds of Sufferings we may be exposed to; some fall at a greater distance, when we are smitten only in our Goods or Estates; others come nearer, and touch our Flesh and our Bones; and these are they that are hardest born: The Devil, in his tempting Job, knew which was the tender part, and therefore reserves that for his last trial. Job 2.5. Put forth thine hand now, and touch his Bone and his Flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And if this tender part once becomes hardy, then thou art a Soldier fit to fight the Devil and his Armies. Christian, be not tender of thy Flesh, and then thou wilt not thence fear Sufferings.

2. Much less is the Cross to be feared, out of tenderness to our fleshly Lusts. Here let three things be considered;

1. The Intention of the Cross, is the Destruction of the Flesh.

2. 'It is this corrupt Flesh that makes the Cross to pinch.

3. This Flesh is no such Friend to us, that for its sake the Cross should be feared.

1. The Intention of the Cross, is the Destruction of the Flesh. Afflictions, as ill-favouredly as they look, come to us upon no ill intent; 'tis to save us from that which is worse. God delivers his People up to the Cross, to the same end for which the Church was to deliver up Offenders to the Devil, for the destruction of the Flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord Jesus. Sin must be put to death, and it must be put to the same death which Christ was put to, it must be Crucified. Rom. 6.6. Our Old Man is Crucified with him. [Our old Man] I, that's the Male-factor that must be executed on the Cross. God would have the Souls of his People to live and thrive; in warm weather the most hopeful Blades are even

choked up with Weeds, then come the Frosts, to kill the Weeds and save the Corn.

2. 'It is this corrupt Flesh that makes the Cross to pinch: 'It is the Flesh that's struck at, and 'tis that that smarts; Afflictions would fall more easy on mortified Hearts. Dead Flesh cannot feel. And therefore 'tis, that whatever complaints and groanings are heard from mortified Christians, 'tis usually much more for their Sins than for their Sufferings. Their Medicine is sharp, and puts them hard to it at first to bear it, but when it hath a little conquered their Disease, much of its tartness is allayed. 'It is their Sore or Disease that makes them so full of pain.

What's the reason that losses in Men's Estates, the spoiling of their Goods, that Poverty so vexes their Hearts, and puts them into such fits of Impatience? O, 'tis their Covetousness and the Cares of this Life, that are the Teeth of Poverty and Want. Had we once mortified our earthly Members, and learned in every Estate to be content, how easy would losses be?

What's the reason that contempt and disgrace raises such a storm in others? 'It is their Pride that cannot be patient. He whose Heart is humble, can be content to be humbled and laid low. The like may be said in all other afflictive cases; 'tis Lust that makes Affliction tedious.

3. The Flesh is no such Friend to us, that for its sake we should fear the Cross. 'It is near us 'tis true, and cannot suffer, but we ourselves suffer and are pained in it; But so 'tis, with an Ulcer in the Body, 'tis in thine own Flesh, and whatever smart is felt, 'tis thou that feelest it; but wouldest thou therefore fear to have thy Wound cured?

Christian, wouldst thou have thy Lusts live? Dost thou not pray for their Destruction? Dost thou not sigh and groan under them? Dost thou not wish, and wait, and hope, and long for thy Redemption from them? Dost thou count them as Enemies, and art thou afraid of that Weapon, that's now put into thine hand to avenge thee of thine Enemies?

Objection.

I would be glad this Flesh might die, but O may it not be put to an easier death? 'It is not their death that I fear, but those Instruments of death that are so tormenting.

Answer.

1. Then save thyself that torment, by laying thine own hand upon them. Prevent thy need of the Cross, by doing its Work thyself. Let it be thy daily Work, by Faith; by Prayer, by Watchfulness, by Self-denial, by Temperance, by Meditation, by Resolution, and such other gentle means, by degrees to destroy thy Lusts thyself; save the Cross its labor, by doing its Work to its hands.

2. Must they die an easy death? What, or else wilt thou not that they die at all? Will it be so easy for thy Soul to die by their hand, that thou wilt rather venture on that, than a little present trouble? Shall thy right hand, or thy right foot, cast thee and carry thee to Hell, because it would be painful to cut them off and cast them from thee? Is it become so easy to thee, to be in bondage to these Egyptians, that thou wilt rather serve at the Brick-kilns, than venture for thy Redemption on the hazards of the Red-Sea, or the hardships of the Wilderness? Fear this Flesh more than thou dost, and that Servitude it holds thee under, and that future Misery it's dragging thee to; Fear this more, and then thou wilt not fear thy Redemption, by what

means soever it be brought about. Thou wilt not say, Deal gently with mine Enemy, deal tenderly with this Flesh; Let it die Lord, let it die; let me be delivered from the Body of this Death, and I will not prescribe to thee for the way and means.

2. Fear not the Cross out of faintness of Spirit-Faint not when thou art chastened, saith the Apostle, Heb. 12.5. much less beforehand, before the chastening comes.

I shall put in a word or two, as Cordials, to preserve from fainting. Let these two things be considered.

1. The Lord is his Peoples God. This is his Covenant with them; Jer. 30.22. I will be your God, and you shall be my People. Let us consider a little, what great support this Promise yields. I will be your God. What's the meaning of that? What is there in this more than everyone may lay claim to? Is he not the God of all the Earth? Is he not the Sinner's God? Is he not the Drunkard's God, the Atheist's God, the God of them that say in their Hearts there is no God? He is so; The God that made them, the God that rules them, the God that Judges and will Condemn them.

This is a word of terror to the ungodly World. I am their God, that is, I am above them; as high as any of them are, I am higher than they, and will bring them down to the Dust of Death.

But what is there in this word as to Believers? What meaneth the most High, when he speaks this word, I will be your God, to them? The meaning is this, I will be your God in Covenant, I will be your Friend and your Father, your Portion and Heritage, your Rock and your Refuge forever. I am the Almighty God, and able to save you from all your distresses; I am the All-sufficient God, and able to

supply all your Wants and Necessities, and whatsoever I am all is yours.

Now Friend, when God says I am thine, what matters it, who or what can say, I am none of thine. Suppose the gods of the Earth should say to thee, Away, we are none of thine: Suppose thine old Friends and Acquaintance should say, Stand back, we are none of thine: Suppose thy nearest Relations, thy Father, or thy Brother, or thine Husband, or thy Wife should say, We are none of thine: Suppose thine House and thy Country should cast thee out, and say, neither are we thine: Yet this one word from the Lord, but I am thine, how would it support and abundantly satisfy thy Soul?

2. None so well know this ordinarily, that the Lord is their God, as his suffering People. It may be thou wilt say, Ah this word, this word, I am thine, what a good word is here? O were I but sure it were spoken to me, what then should I fear? Let the Lord but speak thus to [my] Soul, I will be thy God; and then let the World and the Devil too, speak what they can; we'll be thine Enemies, if God be thy Friend; we'll curse thee, if God bless thee; we'll hunt thee, if God harbor thee; we'll stick in thy sides, if God be in thine heart; we'll lay thee low enough, if God exalt thee; we'll be thy death, if he be thy life. Well, even do your worst, were I but sure the Lord hath said this word to me, I will be thy God, I will not fear though ye all be Devils unto me.

But O here's my great trouble, 'tis this which sinks my Soul, and makes mine Heart to faint within me; I see the World running against me, I see Troubles running upon me, and I am in great doubt whether God hath spoken this word to me, I will be thine.

Dost thou doubt? Dost thou not know whether God be thine? Why the day of Adversity, that's the time when thou mayest be most like

to know it.

There are none ordinarily that so well know that the Lord is theirs, as his suffering People. For,

1. God doth often show himself in a Storm, who hid himself in the Sun-shine.

2. The Sufferings of the Saints, will be the Proof of their Sonship.

1. God doth often reveal himself in a Storm, who hid himself from us in our Sunshine. Our days of Darkness, are often the times of Light and Love. Light from Above is most needed, and will be better accepted when 'tis darkest below. The hatred of the World, doth usually usher in the tidings of Divine Love. When thou art led into a Wilderness to be tempted and tried, there thou mayest expect he will speak comfortably to thee, Hos. 2.14. Why art thou afraid of Affliction? Wouldst thou not be glad to know the Lord is thine? Follow him into the Wilderness, and that may be the Vineyard where he will show thee his Loves.

2. The Sufferings of the Saints will be a Proof of their Sonship. Heb. 12.7. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with Sons. Our Sufferings for Christ, will be the evidence of our Sincerity to him. Prove that thou lovest Christ above all, and thou therein provest that God is thine; and what greater evidence that we love Christ above all, than this, that we can part with all things for him?

But then indeed it is necessary, that we be well assured, that 'tis from Love to Christ we suffer; there are Carnal Motives that may carry Men far into a suffering State. Pride may do much this way, or we may take up our Crosses for company. Some that are engaged with a suffering Party, the fear of the reproach of deserting them, may make

them ashamed to desert them; they may expose themselves to suffer reproach, for fear of reproach. That Idol, their own Names, may be the God for whose sake they suffer.

Such Suffering only as will prove thee to be Godly, will prove that God is thine. If you should suffer the loss of all things, and be utterly ruined and undone in the World, and all this upon the account of Christianity. If you should suffer Death for the Name of Christ, and yet not have the Love of Christ in you, as 'tis clear from 1 Cor. 13.3. Men may do; though you should be thus persecuted, and rejected of, and trodden under-foot of Men, yet at last you may be reprobated of God, and perish everlastingly.

This would be a dreadful thing in all your Sufferings, to have such a thought upon your Hearts, That you that profess Christ, and those that persecute you for it; you that come together to Pray, and Hear, and Fast, and those that Curse and Swear against you for it, may fall into the same Condemnation; and yet doubtless so it will prove in the end; If you love not the Lord Jesus in sincerity, whatever you suffer for him, you and they must dwell in the same Fire together; may be theirs may be the hotter, but the same Hell must hold Persecutors and Hypocrites.

Bare suffering therefore will not be your evidence for Heaven; But yet Christians that are sincere, and knew it not before, the Cross may prove their sincerity. Grace is never so well known as when it is put to the trial. Your Sufferings will be your trials; the trial of your Faith, the trial of your Love, 1 Pet. 1.6, 7. that so what lay in the dark before, may now be found unto Praise and Glory.

What sayest thou now, how canst thou faint under such Expectations? Wilt thou fear to be comforted? What greater comfort, than to have it proved to thee that thou art of God? And when will

that proof be made with the greatest evidence, but when thou art tried in the Fire? 'It is the Wind that discovers the Wheat, and the Fire that proves the Gold.

2. How we should fear the Cross. To this I shall answer in these two particulars.

1. Fear a surprisal by the Cross.

2. Fear the temptations of the Cross.

1. Fear a surprisal by the Cross. Fear lest it should overtake you unawares. The coming of the Lord to visit us, is never so terrible as it is, when 'tis as the coming of the Lord of that evil Servant to reckon with him; Luke 12.46. In a day that he looked not for him, in an hour that he is not aware. Luke 21.34. Take heed lest at any time your hearts be overcharged, —and so that day come upon you unawares.

God sometimes summons before he smites. Amos 4.12. Thus will I do unto you, and because I will do thus, prepare to meet thy God O Israel. But sometimes he comes, as he said he would, to the Church in Sardis, Rev. 3.3. I will come on thee as a Thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

This coming of the Lord finds some, as the coming of the Bridegroom Mat. 25. found the foolish Virgins, all asleep. Others it overtakes, as David and his Armies did the Amalekites, 1 Sam. 30.16. it finds them eating, and drinking, and dancing, and making merry. On others it comes, as the news of Sisera's death came to his Mother and her Ladies, finding them full of expectations of prosperity and triumph. Judge. 5.28. The Mother of Sisera looked out at a Window, and cried through the Lattess, why is his Chariot so long a coming? Why tarry the Wheels of his Chariot? They answered, Have they not sped? Have

they not divided the Prey? To every Man a Damosel or two, &c. They were full of expectations of his return in triumph; but the next news they heard of, was of the Nail and the Hammer, wherewith he was smitten dead to the ground. O what confusion and astonishment did this bring upon them?

How few of us are there, Friends, that can say of the troubles that befall us, as Job did of his, Job 3.25. The evil that I feared is come upon me? But how very few of us can say, The Evil that I am prepared for is come upon me? It found me on my Watch-Tower, and standing upon the Guard. I am ready, I am ready; ready for Sickness, ready for Poverty, ready for Bonds and Imprisonment, or anything else that may befall me.

O how unready do we mostly stand? And what sad work do Afflictions make with us, when they find us unready? Then we take on, and fret, and murmur, and despond, and are at our wits end. We can neither believe, nor pray, nor hope, nor submit. We that were just now full, and at ease, and at quiet, basking ourselves in that Sunshine that was upon our Tabernacle, promising ourselves, that our Mountain is made so strong, that it shall never be moved. On a sudden we are all Earthquakes and Clouds, and like the troubled Sea that cannot be at rest, but casts forth Mire and Dirt. Every Wind that blows upon us from without, raises such a tempest within, that we forget that we are Christians or Men, suffering our Hearts to boil up into Passions or Impatiencies, or to sink into such Despondencies, as if our hope were utterly cut off and perished from the Lord. These and such like are the Fruits of our Surprisal's by the Cross. Hath this never been thy case? Fear lest it be.

2. Fear the Temptations of the Cross. There's a double Temptation chiefly to be feared. In our Troubles, especially such as befall us for

the Name of Christ, we are in danger,

1. Of Pride.

2. Of a Fall.

1. Of Pride. As Men may be proud of their Grandeur in the World, so also of their Poverty and Contempt. As we may be proud of our Virtues and Services, so also of our Sufferings. The Soldiers Wounds and Scars are his Glory and Boasting. It is an honor to suffer for Christ, and some of us cannot bear this honor, without being exalted above measure; we cannot be cast down, but we are apt to be puffed up. Some of the Heathens have sacrificed their Lives for their Countries good; and yet not so much for their Countries, as for themselves, to purchase to themselves a Name and Renown. And is there no such vanity to be found amongst Christians? Fear this wickedness, which will both spoil you of the comforts of your Sufferings, and lose you your reward.

2. Of a Fall. Afflictions (such I mean as befall us for the Gospel's sake) are Temptations to Apostasy, and backsliding from Christ. Fear lest the Cross should be the parting point betwixt Christ and your Souls; lest it should be with you, as with his Disciples of old, who accompanied him to his Sufferings, and there forsook him and fled.

I have else-where spoken of the danger and dreadfulness of Apostasy, and shall therefore forbear to speak more of it now.

5. Fear the Curse; or the Wrath and Everlasting Vengeance of God. Luke 12.5. Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell. Fear not Man, for he can kill but once, when he hath killed the Body, he hath done his worst; but God can kill, and kill again; can

smite the Body into Dust, and the Soul into Hell. I say unto you, Fear him. Consider here three things.

1. To whom this warning was given thus to fear. And that is not to the multitude of his Hearers only, whereof there was so great a throng that they trod one upon another, but especially to his Disciples. He began to say to his Disciples, first of all, v. 1. and I say unto you my Friends, v. 4.

2. What was the special reason he here uses to urge and press his Disciples to fear God; and that is the Power of his Wrath, because he can cast into Hell.

3. What was the special matter of that fear he presses them to; and that is, lest he that can do it, should do it, should actually cast them into Hell. And this must be so, otherwise there had been no force in the consideration of his Power, to work to this Fear; for they might have replied, Though God can damn us, yet why should we fear ever the more, upon that account, whilst we are sure he will not? And so his Argument from God's Power to destroy, had come to just nothing. Who would fear Damnation ever the more for that God hath power to damn him, if he were out of Fear that he would ever do it? Therefore the sense must be, Fear God lest he should cast you into Hell.

Heb. 10.13. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. There is an afflicting Hand of God, and there is a revenging Hand of God, and both are to be feared; even the afflicting Hand of God is terrible. Heb. 12.5. Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord. Make not light of that, thou mayest find it heavy enough. God is terrible in his Judgments that he executeth on the Earth. He maketh the very Earth to tremble, when his Hand is lifted up. Those Hearts are harder than the Rocks, that will not rent when God smites. The

afflicting Hand of God is to be feared, but especially, and that which is here meant, It is a fearful thing to fall into the revenging Hands of the living God.

Heb. 12.29. Let us have Grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably, with Reverence and Godly Fear; for our God is a consuming Fire. The Lord Christ is sometimes resembled to a Refining Fire, Mal. 3.1, 2. The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come into his Temple. — But who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a Refiners Fire, — and he shall sit as a Refiner and Purifier of Silver. He shall purify, he shall save his People from their Sins, yet so as by Fire. God hath his Purgatory as well as his Hell; though not according to that Popish Dream, a Purgatory after this Life; Death will put an end to this purging Work in this Life; He hath his Purgatory, and his Purgatory hath its Fire; 'tis hot passing under the purging Work of God. But who can stand before him when he appeareth as a Consuming Fire? Who can dwell with the Devouring Fire, with the Everlasting Burnings? Isa. 33.14.

[Let us have Grace] that we may serve God with Fear. 'It is not for Sinners only, but for Saints also, to fear the Wrath of God. Those must, and these will: Grace will teach them to Fear. Hell is not so terrible to any, as to gracious Souls; those that most prize the Love of God, will most fear his Wrath. And the Lord looks it should be so, God will not be a loser by his Grace; he would not lose the awe of his Threatening's, by making us the Children of Promise; he would not have it forgotten that he is Righteous, by those that have tasted that he is Gracious.

And the People of God have need enough, whilst they are Children, to be kept in Fear, they are and must be, while they are under Age,

under this severe Tutor. They are too apt to be proud, and wanton, and froward Children, and have need, not only of the Cross on their Backs, but of the Curse in their Eye, to keep them in order. How sad is it with us, notwithstanding all those afrighting Arguments which God uses? How foolish, and peevish, and unruly are we, notwithstanding that double recompense of Reward, the Glory to come, and the Wrath to come, that's set before us? O what should we be, were there no such Arguments to be used with us?

Say not 'tis Mercenary to look on the Crown as the encouragement of Holiness, till it can be said, 'tis Mercenary to be governed or quickened by Love. What is it to have respect to the recompense of Reward, but so to eye the Love and Joy of the Lord, as to feel the Power thereof, oiling our Wheels, and drawing our Souls on after it?

Say not 'tis Servile, and that which must not be allowed, that those that are Sons should make use of the Curse as a bridle to Sin. This Beast must be dealt with as a Beast; Lust must be bridled and fettered with Fear, which will never be charmed or constrained by Love.

Heb. 4.1. Let us therefore fear, lest a Promise being left us, of entering into his Rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. Whilst we take encouragement from the Promise, the Promise of Entrance, let us take heed, by the fear of falling short.

Is there no fear of falling short? Art thou already so established & assured, that there's no doubt or hazard remaining of thy miscarriage? Are all the Enemies of thy Salvation so secured, that thou mayest now spare any piece of thine Armor? Hast thou outgrown the use, or the need of any of the Counsels and Caveats the Scriptures give? Look inward, see what a treacherous Heart thou hast lying there, undermining thine hopes; Is there never a Worm

still gnawing at thy Root? Are thy Lusts all dead, and is there no doubt of their Resurrection? Is there no guilt upon thine Head, nor guile in thine Heart? Hath neither Flesh, nor World, nor Devil any Power in thee? Is the Army totally broken, and is there no question of its rallying upon thee? Art thou so fully resolved for Holiness? Does the stream of thy Soul, and the bent of thy Life run so strongly and so evenly after the Lord, that thou hast a standing, infallible, and uninterrupted evidence of thy Sincerity, and an undoubted Security, for thy perseverance to the end? Is there not room for such a question, What if I should fall short? Art thou gotten beyond all possibility of miscarrying forever? Friends know, that a possibility of falling into the Wrath to come, were that Wrath thoroughly understood, would work more fear, than a certain expectation of all the Torments and Miseries of this Life. O Fear! Hast thou Faith? Believe and Fear. Hast thou Hope? Hope and Fear. Hast thou Joy? Rejoice with trembling. Rejoice in hope of the Glory of God, and tremble and fear his Wrath and Vengeance.

There will be this double use and advantage, (besides others) of this fear of the Curse.

1. 'Twill quicken our necessary fear of Sin.
2. 'Twill quench our sinful fear of the Cross.

1. This fear of the Curse, will quicken our necessary fear of Sin. Yea, and of all the temptations to it. Sin is the sting of Death, and this Death is the sting of Sin. How bitter would Sin taste, how ghastly would it look, were this Gall that lies in its Belly, this sting it carries in its Tail, discovered and heeded? Thou wouldst quickly be filled with thine own ways, didst thou but see what stands at their further end. That Bed of Scorpions, whither Sin is dragging thee, would make every Sin as a Snake or Adder.

And of all Sins, 'twould strike the Heart with the greatest fear of its beloved Sins. These are they especially, under which Hell lies in ambush for us; these are Hell's strongest Ropes, by which it pulls in Souls. Hath any Sin cast a Cord of Love about thee? That's it that's like to be the Rope to draw thee to the Slaughter. Thou canst get loose from many Sins at pleasure, but take heed, that foolish Heart of thine will die for its Beloved.

If thou ask, What wouldst thou have, O my my beloved Sin? What comest thou to me so often for? Why takest thou up thy dwelling so near mine Heart? It will answer, O 'tis to please thee, that I am so often with thee. I know thou lovest me, I am the delight of thine Heart, and the pleasure of thine Eyes, thou canst not be content without me.

I am that Ease, or that Wealth, or that Credit that thou lovest; Is there not a league betwixt me and thee? Am not I the nearest Friend thou hast? Thy Health, and thy Welfare, and thy Soul, are not so dear as I am to thee; thou lovest me, and therefore 'tis I come, that thou mayest have what thou lovest; But what hast thou now to say to it?

No, no, Traitor, 'tis my Life thou seekest, 'tis my Soul thou comest to steal away and devour. O, I dread thy fawning Face, thy smiles are Darts in mine Heart; I tremble at thy wooings and embraces. Get thee gone Harlot, thy kindnesses are deadly kindnesses; What means that Dagger in thine Hand, whilst thou thus kissest me with the kisses of thy Mouth? 'It is my Death thou art designing, I must die if I will any longer love thee; and what Death must I die? Is it a short and easy Death that thou art betraying me to? No, no, 'tis a bitter Death, and 'tis a lingering Death, an eternal Death that thou art preparing for me. This Heart hath been under-ground, in the dark Cavern of Pitch and Brimstone; I have been in the Deep, and viewed those

Chambers of Death, where thou lodgest thy Lovers: I have sent down my Spies, my thoughts have been below in the Belly of Hell. I have beheld how they lie in that Pit, roaring, and yelling, and blaspheming, raving mad with the anguish of their burning Souls; I have seen the very Smoke and Fire that devours them, the burning Teeth of that everlasting Worm that gnaws their Hearts, and the fury and rage of that Serpent that deceived them in. O, my Soul quakes, my Bones tremble, terror and astonishment have taken hold of me, at the Description my thoughts have brought me up of that place of torment. And thou, O my beloved Sin, even thou art it that art most like to carry me down and bury me there. If I die that Death, 'twill be by thy hand; if I run myself into that Fire, 'twill be for thy sake. Away from me thou proud Heart, get thee gone Covetousness, or Sensuality, or Slothfulness, or whatever the Name of my Beloved be; I dare not have anymore to do with thee; I fear thee more than ever I loved thee; I fear where thou mayest lay me before tomorrow, if I should suffer thee to lodge but one night more with me. Such dread of thy beloved Sin, would a fear of the Curse work in thee.

Friends, consider, Are there yet any Sins that have such power over your Hearts, are your Spirits so chained by them that you cannot get loose? O, look to those Chains of Fire, into which by this Chain of Love, your Sins are dragging you. Are you afraid of the Curse of God? Are you afraid to burn? Are you afraid to be racked, and torn, and gnawn, and ground under the Millstones of eternal Vengeance? Then be afraid of Sin. Let Hell be your Fear, and Sin will be your Fear; let Sin be your Fear, and it will be no longer your Love. If you will not fear this Fear, if you will laugh at Hell, you will sport at Sin. If you fear not to be Cursed, you will less fear to be Wicked; if you fear not Hell, you will hardly fear to be Devils on Earth. O, Sinners, steep all your pleasant Morsels in that Vinegar and Gall; spice all your stolen Waters with that Pitch and Brimstone; strow all your pleasant ways

with those Serpents and Adders, which will bite and sting your Souls forever. Mingle all your Carnal Delights with some such deep thoughts of what they are betraying you to, and then go on after them without fear if you can.

And as this fear of Wrath will work a fear of Sin, so will it also work the same fear of temptations to Sin. Sin and Temptation lead the same way, though Temptation be one remove farther back; Temptation leads to Sin, and Sin to Death. He that fears the Fowler, will fear the snare of the Fowler; he that fears the Hunter, will fear his Dogs and his Toils.

Get a fear of the Land of Darkness, and you will fear to be Companions of such as are travelling thitherward; fear the Plague, and thou wilt be no company for them, whose dwelling is in the Pesthouse. Afraid of Hell, and yet never well but when thou art amongst those Decoys that are enticing thee thither!

What are the Allurements of Sinners to the Ear of him that hath Death and Wrath in his Eye? Let them entice thee, Come, Let's be merry, let's to the Alehouse, or the Tavern, or to a Play; Let's feed to the full; let's cloth ourselves with the best; let's on with the Purple and Scarlet, and fare deliciously every day: Come along, cast in thy Lot among us, What art afraid of? Cherish thy Flesh, please thine Eyes and thy Humour. What will such Enticements do upon such a Heart? 'Twill be all one as if they should say, Come let's go Hang ourselves, or Drown ourselves, or Stab, or Poison ourselves. Come, let's make our Souls over to the Devil, and write ourselves free among the Dead; let us get us down quick into the Pit. What would thine Heart answer other than this? Away, O my Soul, have thou nothing to do with these Men, come not into their Secrets, no nor so much as into their Company. The like success would all other

Temptations have. He that's afraid of Passion, would shun Provocation; he that's afraid of Covetousness, would be afraid of an over-busy Life in the World, &c.

O Friends, how venturous are we! How little fear of Sin! And if there be any fear of Sin, how is it that it brings forth no more fear of Temptation? How seldom do we consider, This Company may be a snare unto me, God knows with what loss I may come off from them? This Garment, or this Ornament, or this Fashion, may be a Temptation to me, my proud and vain Heart cannot bear it? This over-thrifty, or over-busy Life, may be my undoing? This full Table, how can I allow it to myself, who am given to Appetite? I must lay a Law upon my Belly, and put a Knife to my Throat, when I see delicacies and such variety before me.

Where almost is this tenderness and wariness to be found? Yea rather, is it not despised and decried, as foolish scrupulosity where it is? Go Hypocrites, blot that Petition out of thy Prayer, Lead us not into Temptation; Never mock God with such a Prayer against Temptation, whilst thou deridest them that fear it. Study Hell more, till thou hast more fear of Sin; study Sin more and thou wilt not slight Temptation.

2. The fear of the Curse, will much allay our sinful fear of the Cross. The greater will swallow up the less. The torment of the Stone, will make us forget the aching of a Tooth. Who will fear the barking of a Dog, that hears the roaring of a Lion? Moses and Aaron's living Serpent, swallowed up the Serpents of the Magicians, Luke 12.4, 5. Christ there prescribes the Fear of God, as a cure of the Fear of Men.

As it is on the other side, The Favor of God casts a contempt on the Flatteries of Men; the rising Sun puts out all our Candles, 'tis in the night only that Glowworms shine. The more lively hopes of the Glory

to come, darken the Glory of this present World; the respect to the recompense of Reward, makes to despise the pleasures of Sin. What is a Comet in the day-light? What is a Cottage to him that hath a Crown in his Eye? What are Meat, and Drink, and Clothes, and Sports? What are all the blazes of these crackling Thorns, to the Light of the Countenance of God? Hast thou Faith? Hath thy Faith given thee a prospect of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light? Sure thou hast little of it, who still blessest thyself in the Earth. Get thee nearer the Lord, acquaint thyself more with him; say thou unto him, Stand thou at my right hand, and thou wilt say to the World, sit thou under my footstool.

Carnal Men make the World their God and their Heaven; when Riches increase, and Friends abound, and they are compassed about with pleasures, then their Hearts are glad, and their Glory rejoiceth. But how comes this to pass? Alas, poor Men, this is the best they know, they never saw nor understood any higher things than these; when they arrive to a plenteous and prosperous Estate, they are at the top of their delight, because they are come to the top of what they understand. The Saints have higher things in their Eye, they are gotten within ken of the Invisible Glory, and can therefore write upon all things under the Sun, Vanity of Vanities.

In like manner in the present case, As the favor of God will eclipse the World's Sun-shine, so the Terrors of the Lord will make all the World's storms to vanish away into a Mist. The darkness of the Shadow will be lost in the dark of the Night, the point of a Sword will heal the prick of a Pin.

O, what shall I do? The Devil is come down, and hath great wrath; the World is all in a flame against me; the Lions roar, the Bears and the Wolves are abroad after the Prey; I am despised, and rejected,

and trodden under-foot of Men; I am persecuted and hunted up and down this Wilderness, and am become a Runagate and a Vagabond in this Earth; I have lost my Friends, lost mine Estate, and they seek my Life also to take it away; O, what shall I do? What will become of me?

Thou art in a hard case indeed; but hast thou not greater things than that to trouble thyself about? How is it with thy Soul? Is not there a doubt, that the Wrath of the Almighty may be hanging over thine Head? Art thou in no danger of being rejected and reprobated of God? Of falling into the eternal Prison, of being driven into everlasting Banishment? What dost thou stand vexing and frightening thyself with the Wasps and the Hornets? Look down, look down to the Serpents and Scorpions, that thy Soul is in danger of falling in amongst. Take heed, take heed, lest the eternal God cast thee into his Prison, lay thee in his Irons. Let thy Soul dwell more amongst these greater Fears, the Terrors of the Lord, and thou wilt not so much mind the Terrors of Men. Thou wilt not regard the buzzing's of those Hornets, if thou fear more the biting's of those Serpents. Sanctify the Lord God in thine Heart, let him be thy Fear, let him be thy Dread, and then thou wilt be more able to say, I will not fear what Flesh can do unto me.

Now because this is the great Fear, and that which will not only secure us from unnecessary fears, but most powerfully stir up all other necessary Fears, I shall enlarge a little further here. And that this great Fear may be the more effectually wrought upon the Hearts of those to whom Fear especially belongeth, I shall take the Hammer, and drive home this Nail, upon those who are in greatest danger of the Curse of God; The unconverted Sinners of the Earth. In order whereto, I shall show more particularly,

1. What the Curse of God is.
2. That all unconverted Sinners are under the Curse.
3. That there is great danger that they may never escape it.

1. What the Curse of God is. It is called in Scripture, sometimes the Wrath of God, sometimes the Fury of God, sometimes the Vengeance of God, and his Fiery Indignation. The Curse of God is properly his Will to punish and plague, and take vengeance on Sinners. You may call it, God's Ill Will against Sinners. God's Blessing is his Good Will, and his Ill Will, this is his Curse. Joseph's Blessing, The good Will of him that dwelt in the Bush, Deut. 33.16. is the Portion of all the Saints; and in God's good Will is every good Thing; the precious Things of the Earth, and the fullness thereof, yea, and the precious Things of the Heaven also. Psal. 30.5. In his favor is Life. And in God's Ill Will is every evil Thing; thou needest no more to make thee perfectly miserable than this, that the Almighty bears thee ill Will. 'It is an Affliction to be under the ill Will of Men; for a Child to have the ill Will of his Father, for a Wife to have the ill Will of her Husband, for a Man to have the ill Will of his Neighbors, for a Subject to be under the ill Will of his Prince. But whatever there be in this, God's good Will, will make amends for all; though all the Family where thou livest, yea, though all the Country bear thee ill Will, if God bear thee good Will, thou art a blessed Man. If thou hast the good Will of all the World, and only God bears thee ill Will, thou art cursed with a Curse.

This Curse of God is;

1. Revealed in his Word.
2. Executed in part, in this World.

3. Pronounced in the last Judgment.

4. Executed in full, in the World to come.

1. The Curse of God is revealed in the Word of God. Rom. 1.18. The Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men. It is revealed from Heaven, that is, by the Law of God. The Law of God binds Sinners under the Curse of God, and declares to them what this Curse of God is.

2. The Curse of God is in part executed in this World. The Curse followed Sin close at the heels, and is executed on Sinners here;

1. In temporal Plagues. There is a Curse upon the Creatures, which were made for their use; Gen. 3.17. Cursed is the ground for thy sake. The whole Earth, with all things therein, hath something of the Curse cleaving to it; whereupon though it still be useful, yet there is something in it that is noxious to Man. Upon their labors, which often become fruitless, and ordinarily irksome and tiresome. In the sweat of thy face, thou shalt eat thy bread, Gen. 3.19. Upon their Estates, sometimes blasting and devouring them, entering into their Houses, and eating out the Timber thereof, and the Stones thereof; or else turning them into temptations and snares. Upon their Bodies, Sin wounds and bruises in Sickness and Death.

2. In Spiritual Evils inflicted upon the Souls of Sinners. The Curse of God, not only falls upon their outward Man, but enters into their very Hearts, upon which the Lord most signally executes this Curse, by leaving Sinners, and giving them up to blindness of Mind, to a reprobate Mind, Rom. 1.28. to hardness of Heart, Isa. 6.9. to the power of their Lusts, Psal. 81.12. whereby they are filled with all unrighteousness, and reserved as in Chains under darkness, to the Judgment of the great Day.

Sinner, thy blindness, thine hardness, thy walking after thy Lusts, in the Counsels of thy wicked Heart, this is the Curse of God upon thee, thy Sins are thy Curse. And that Impenitence, and that reprobate Mind which God gives some Sinners up unto, is their sealing under the Curse. God sometimes curses Sinners in this Life, as Christ cursed the fruitless Fig-tree; Mat. 21.19. Never Fruit grow on thee forever. Be thou never good for anything, never good Thought, never good Motion come into thee, never a drop of Dew or Rain fall upon thee, never a Bud or Blossom spring up in thee, nothing prosper in thee, but be thou barren forever of every good thing; let that Soul wither, and perish and die forever. This Curse is the most dreadful of all Curses above-ground, and the very next to Hell.

3. The Curse is pronounced in the last Judgment; in that terrible Sentence; Matth. 25.41. Depart from me ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels. Now that, if it be possible, Sinners may be awakened out of sleep, and be wrought to this Fear, I shall a little open the Mouth of the Pit, by opening this fearful Sentence. [Depart from me]. Depart whither? Why whithersoever it is, 'tis sad enough that 'tis, depart from me, from Christ. Christ is the Life; it can be no less than Death, to depart from Life.

[Ye Cursed], You that are bound under the Curse, you that have been filling yourselves with Curses, clothing yourselves with Curses, treasuring up Curses to yourselves all your time against this day, Get you gone with your Curses upon you; your Sins be upon you, your Guilt be upon you, your Blood be upon your own Heads forever. Ye are cursed with a Curse, bear ye that burden forever and ever.

[Into everlasting Fire]. And now you see whither 'tis they are to depart. I told you but now, that 'tis Misery enough, that they must

depart from Christ, and from the presence of the Lord. If Sinners were to be sentenced down to this Earth again, sent back to their Fields and Vineyards, to their Ale-houses and Whore-houses, to the best of their dirty pleasures here below; yet this, that they are sent into banishment from the Presence and Paradise of God, when God shall so far open their Eyes, as to let them see what they have lost, this would be an unspeakable torment to them. But this is not their place; when they are taken hence, they shall return hither no more, they must bid an eternal farewell to all their carnal and brutish ease and pleasures; their Houses and their pleasant Places shall know them no more forever. God will not leave them so much as the least of the left-hand Blessings, not a drop of Water to cool their Tongues; 'It is into the Fire they must go; The pain of Fire is the most tormenting of all the pains we know, and therefore made use of to shadow out those inexpressible intolerable pains, to which the ungodly shall be sentenced in that day. [Everlasting] Fire. What not yet at the bottom? No, this Gulf hath no bottom, they shall be ever knowing, and yet never know the worst of their Case, whatever they feel; the worst is still behind, because Eternity is still behind; they shall never have ease nor rest again, but shall be tormented night and day forever and ever.

[Prepared for the Devil and his Angels]. These are their Companions in their Tribulation. Must we into the Fire? But may we not have good Company in the Fire? God may be in the Fire with me. So he was in the case of the three Confessors, and then the fire could not burn. No, tis the Devil that will be with you in the fire, to torment and to be tormented with you forever. What is it to dwell in an Earthly House that's haunted with the Devil? What terror do they live in, whose dwelling is in haunted Houses? How are they scared, and frightened, to see the face of that Dragon, though shaped into the most beautiful form? Those that tremble so, to see the Devil in their

own Houses, what will it be to them, to be carried with him into his House, where he will be unclothed of all his Vizors, and no longer appear in the snape of a Man, no nor of a Lion or Bear, but will show himself a Devil. [And his Angels]. All the Legions of those unclean and damned Spirits, together with all those damned Souls their fellow-Sinners. All the filth and garbage of the Earth must lie rotting and stinking together in that dismal Hole. All the Atheists and Blasphemers, all the Adulterers and their Whores, all the Rioters and Drunkards, that have spent so many Days, and sat up so many Nights at the Wine and the strong Drink, shall now be filled with the Company they loved, and shall have an everlasting Night to lie drinking up the Wine of the Wrath of the Almighty, and of the Lamb, and suck up the dregs and bottom of that deadly Cup, which the Fury of the Most High hath mingled and appointed for them. This is their Sentence.

4. The Curse is executed in full in the World to come. Mat. 25.46. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment. Of this Sentence there will be, 1. no Repeal or Reversing, 'tis the final Sentence, and must be executed. 2. Nor will there be any Reprieve, but as the doom is past, away they immediately go into the place of Execution. Esther 7.8. As the Word went out of the King's Mouth, they covered Haman's Face; and away presently they carried him to the Gallows and hanged him up. As soon as ever this Word is spoken, Depart from me ye Cursed, &c. Down they are tumbled into that Fire prepared for them, which the Breath of the Lord, as a River of Brimstone, doth kindle and make to burn forever. Lay all this together, and then you will know what the Curse to be feared is.

2. Unconverted Sinners are under the Curse. We are all by Nature Children of Wrath, cursed Children, Ephes. 2.3. All the World is become guilty before God, Rom. 3.19. The whole World lieth in

wickedness, 1 Joh. 5.19. and he that lieth in wickedness, abideth in Death, and the Wrath of God abideth on him. This wicked and cursed state, is naturally the state of every Man, and whosoever is not Converted, he is under this Curse to this day. Not only the first-born of Sinners, the worst and most monstrous among them, whose Iniquities have marked them with a Curse in their Foreheads; but every Sinner, the most harmless amongst the whole Rout, every one of them, the Wrath of God abideth on him; and if he should die, and go out of the World in such a case, there's no hope of him but he must perish everlastingly.

How unsuitable are the jocund and merry Hearts of Sinners, to their state and condition? These Sons of Death, are most of them Sons of Laughter, the jolly ones of the Earth. When you pass by the Tents of evil Men, and behold them drinking and dancing, singing and sporting, and ruffling it out in their gallantry, as some of them do; or find them sleeping at their ease and out of fear, as 'tis with others of them; would you not say, Is this the noise, is this the guise of Men appointed to Death? Is this the sound of the Vessels of Wrath? Are these the Guilty Ones, and the Cursed Ones, whose Souls are in Chains, dragging down to the horrible Pit? One would think, by their Faces and Carriages, by their merry Days, and quiet Nights, that the Sinners of the Earth were fairest for Heaven, that they had shot the Gulf, and were past danger of miscarrying forever.

But what art thou, O Sinner? To whom dost thou belong? Whither art thou falling? What is thine Inheritance, or thy Portion from the Lord? Consider the Scriptures, Psal. 11.6. Upon the Wicked he shall rain Snares, Fire and Brimstone, and an horrible Tempest; this is the Portion of their Cup. This shall be their Portion hereafter, but what is their Portion here? John 3.18. He that believeth not, is condemned

already. And Joh. 3.6. The Wrath of God abideth on him. Every unconverted Sinner is under the Curse.

3. There is great danger he may never escape or be delivered from it. If he never be Converted, he can never escape. The Devil shall as soon break Prison, and make an escape from Hell to Heaven, as thou who diest an Impenitent, canst escape falling into that Prison. Mat. 18.3. Except ye be converted, ye cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. Continue Unconverted till thou diest, and 'tis impossible thou shouldst escape.

And there is very great danger, that thou that art yet an Unbeliever, and an Impenitent to this day, mayst never be a Convert to thy dying day. This is the last hope thou hast, that however it be with thee at present, yet hereafter thou mayest be brought in. But know that whatever hope thou hast of that, there is a very great hazard that it may never be; which will appear if thou consider these three things.

1. The multitudes of those that miscarry, that die in final Impenitency, and so perish everlastingly, to a very few that are Converted and Saved.

2. The constant miscarriage and succeslesness of all the means that have been hitherto used for thy Conversion.

3. The potent Adversaries, and the mighty opposition they make, and will make against thy Conversion.

1. Consider the multitudes of those that miscarry and die Impenitents, to a very few that are Converted and Saved. The Scriptures tell us, That there are but few that shall be saved. The real Converts are but a little Flock; Luk. 12.32. Mat. 7.13, 14. Strait is the Gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to Life, and few there be

that find it. But wide is the Gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to Destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Shall we believe our own Experiences? How many poor Souls do we see in the World, who walk on in the courses, and after the Lusts of this World, some in a blind and ignorant State; some in Lewdness and Luxury; some in Covetousness and Sensuality, in Carelessness and Carnal-security; who after a long course that they have thus run, at length drop into the Grave, and go out of the World, without the least token of sound Repentance: How many such Instances have we of Men going Unbelievers and Impenitents out of the World, to here and there one that gives any hopeful testimony of real Conversion? The number of Converts, to them that die in Impenitence (even in the judgment of the greatest Charity) is but a very small number.

Now, if any of you were sick of some dangerous Disease, as suppose the Pestilence, which were so generally mortal that it swept away whole Families, unpeopled Towns and Countries, and but here and there one did escape with his Life; if any of you were sick of this deadly Disease, would you not conclude your Life were in danger? Would you not be afraid you should not escape? O this Plague of the Heart, how much more mortal is it than the Plague of the Flesh? What multitudes doth it sweep away into the Pit, when but here and there one is left for Life and Glory?

2. Consider the constant miscarriage and succeslesness, of all the means that have been hitherto used for thy Conversion. This is not the first time thou hast been preached to; thou hast been warned of thy Sins, thou hast heard of Christ, and been persuaded to come into him long before this day, and not once nor twice, but it may be all thy days; And what hath been yet done upon thee?

Behold Man, after so long a time, yet thou art in thy Sins, yet thou art blinded and hardened, and running the same course as heretofore. O how little hope is there that that same Word should work at last, that hath hitherto done nothing upon thee! Will the Sword of the Spirit be more like to cut to the Heart, after it hath been so long blunted upon thine Iron Neck? Will the Devils Tenure be weakened by Prescription? Will he the easier out, by having so long held possession? Will this old Man grow weaker through Age? Will thy Disease grow more curable by continuance upon thee? Or is it likely, the very same Remedies will prevail at last, which have been so long used in vain?

If you were under some bodily Disease, and had used all the means that can be had; If you had had Physician upon Physician, Medicine upon Medicine; the best Physicians, the best Medicines, and still you were as short of a Cure as ever: If one Physician should have come and prescribed to you, and you would not take his Physic, or if you took it, yet it would not work; If after him should come another, and another, and still no success, but your Disease should continue, yea, and grow under the hands of all your Physicians, would you not conclude your case were deadly, and but little hope left that you should be recovered?

Consider Sinners, what hath the Lord hitherto done? What Ministry have you had? How many Physicians have been trying their utmost skill upon you, convincing you, warning you, beseeching you to turn from your Vanities to the Living God? Hath not the Lord God, by the Ministry of his Servants, been dealing with you, and treating with you these many years about this thing? And yet how far off? How ignorant of Christ, how obstinate against Christ, and how resolved for your old ways? What, and yet for all this, so much without fear, that all will be well at last? Look to yourselves, and know for certain,

that by how much the more means have been used, without success, by so much the more desperate is your case grown.

It's true, the Lord may make his Word to Work at last, to convert an obstinate Sinner, an old Sinner; He may do that by small means, which greater and more likely means have not done, the last stroke may break the Flint, the last Arrow may cleave the Pin, the last Word may do the Work, when so many have been lost and done nothing: But when there are so many Instances to the contrary, when it is so very seldom seen, wilt thou not only put thyself upon such a desperate adventure, but remain without fear of any hazard?

At most there is but a Peradventure for it. The Servants of Christ must be patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if [peradventure] God may give them Repentance, 2 Tim. 2.25. When we are sent forth to Preach to Sinners in the Name of the Lord, this is all we have for it, (as to any particular Persons) Who can tell what God may do? Whether he may bless our word to them or not? Peradventure he may, and peradventure he may not. Now that the Word is once again Preached to you this day, peradventure it may prosper upon some of you, peradventure you may hear, and be humbled, and be converted; Who can tell whether some or other of you may not? But there is a great doubt whether it may be so with thee or no, either now, or ever hereafter; what, and yet not afraid?

3. Consider the potent Adversaries there are, and the mighty opposition they make, and will make against thy Conversion. Know and lay to heart these three things;

1. If all that the Devil can do to hinder thee, will prevail, Thou shalt never be Converted.

2. If all that thine own flesh can do to hinder thee, will prevail, Thou shalt never be Converted.

3. If all that the World can do to hinder thee, will prevail, Thou shalt never be Converted.

1. If all that the Devil can do to hinder thee, will prevail, thou shalt never be converted, nor escape the Wrath and Curse of God. The Devil is great with Sinners, he can rule them at pleasure; 2 Tim. 2.25. They are led captive by him at his Will. The Devil's Will is a Law to Sinners, and such a Law as they are willingly subject to. The Devil's Government is not like to displease Sinners, for his Law is, That everyone should please himself; He looks for no more, than that everyone should do what is right in his own Eyes. Therefore shall this Bramble be King, as long as Sinners can carry it. If it should be put to vote in the World, who should be Ruler, God or the Devil, the Sinners of the Earth would give their vote for the Devil; as for the Lord God, they would say the same concerning the Father, as once those wicked Ones did concerning the Son, Luk. 14.19. We will not have him to reign over us. The Devil is mighty with Sinners, he is their Prince and their Ruler; as far as God lets him alone, he can order them at pleasure; they will follow this Lion whither ever he goes.

And this Devil is an Adversary to Souls, they shall certainly die and be damned, if he can do it; 1 Pet. 5.8. He walketh up and down seeking whom he may devour.

Sinner, when dost thou mean to return into the way of Life? When wilt thou to Christ? The Devil hath such power with thee, that if God leave thee to thyself, thou art never like to come to Christ till he be willing to let thee come. And when will that be? Who is it that hath kept thee from him all this time? I will tell thee, when he will drag thee to Christ; but by his good will, thou shalt never go before. If he

can but hold thee from him, till the Judgment, then he will drag thee before him, to receive thy Sentence for all thine ungodliness. When the Season of Grace is over, then thou mayest go, but if he can help it, never till then.

2. If all that thine own flesh can do to hinder thee, can prevail, thou wilt never be converted. Consider here two things;

1. Thy Flesh is against it.

2. Thy Flesh hath great power with thee.

1. Thy flesh is against thy Conversion. Rom. 8.7. The Carnal Mind is enmity against God; It is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. Particularly;

1. The Interest of the Flesh is against it.

2. The Inclinations of the Flesh are against it.

1. The Interest of the Flesh is against thy Conversion. By the Flesh, I mean corrupt Nature, called often Flesh in Scripture. Our carnal Minds, the Will of the Flesh, our fleshly Desires and Dispositions, and all the Lusts of it. This Flesh is concerned against God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ comes to Crucify the Flesh, Rom. 6.6. 1 John 3.8. For this cause the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil. No more Gluttony, no more Drunkenness, no more pleasing our Eyes, or our Throats, or our Appetites, Christ will have Lust starved, and no longer pampered. Christ will allow Necessaries, but his way is to keep the Flesh low; he will allow good Bread, and Bread enough, but often 'tis but coarse, and such as Lust will never be contented with, nor ever prosper by.

Hereupon the Flesh is concerned against Christ, to resist him, and to do whatever it can to keep him out. Who comes there? Says the Flesh, when Christ knocks. Who is it that calls after thee? To whom art thou joining thyself? What, to Christ? Wilt thou hearken to him? Then farewell all. No more Mirth and Pleasure, no more Ease or Jollity, no more Credit or Gain; Look to thyself, all's a going, and will be gone if Christ once sets footing in thee. Christ tells me, (saith the fleshly Heart) I shall find favor with God, I shall obtain the pardon of my Sins, and all the good things of the other World, if I will hearken to him. But who will keep me alive in this World? I must have Money, and Meat, and Drink, and Credit, and Friends, or else I am like to have but a poor Life of it here. The blessings of the other World will never help me to live and prosper in this World; I cannot feed myself, nor cloth myself, nor provide for my Family, with the promises and hopes of good things to come; and God knows, how little else Christianity will leave me. I am like to be but a poor, hunger-bitten, melancholic, forsaken Soul, if I hearken to Christ. Away (saith the Flesh) no more treaty about any such thing, which doth so evidently tend to thy prejudice and undoing.

2. The Inclinations of the Flesh are against it. The Flesh hangs towards Earth and Sin, and is contrary to God and Holiness. Rom. 8.5. Those that are after the Flesh, do mind, or savor, the things of the Flesh; and so do hang back from things Spiritual and Heavenly. What is this way of Life that Christ calls me to? It's quite contrary to me, my very Nature disgusts it, my temper and genius is against it. I was never acquainted with, nor accustomed to such a way, and I cannot abide it. This preciseness, and this scrupulosity and tenderness, I have more mind to laugh at it, than submit to it. It even turns my Stomach to see the folly of it in others, and I hate to be such a fool myself. I should be glad of the Salvation of Christ, but sure I shall never endure his Discipline. I am willing to save what I have,

and to make the best of what's before me: and that I am sure Christ will never suffer me, and therefore run after him who will, he must have me excused.

Dost thou know, O vain Man, what 'tis to swim against the Stream? And dost thou not feel thine inward Stream running against Holiness and serious Christianity? O when art thou like to come to it? Art thou not yet afraid it may never be? Especially when thou considerest; That,

2. The Flesh hath great power with thee. In Sinners, the Flesh is the great governing Principle; it bears rule in the whole Man. 'It is their Lord and their Law, and hence they are called, the Servants of Sin, Joh. 8.34. and said; to live after the Flesh, Rom. 8.13. Whatever wickedness is done by them, it is the Flesh that commands them to it. When-ever the Heart works to Envy, or works to Wrath, or to Pride, or to Covetousness, 'tis the Flesh that sets it thus on work. It is no more I that do it, but Sin that dwells in me, Rom. 7.17. And whatever good Works are hindered, 'tis the Flesh that hinders them. Rom. 7.19. I find a Law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me, so that the good that I would I do not. 'It is said of the Regenerate, much more true is it of Sinners. Bid a Sinner Repent, alas he cannot; bid him Pray, he cannot Pray; Bid him turn to Christ, and trust in Christ, and follow him; alas, poor Man, he cannot, his Flesh is against it, and hath such a rule over him, that he cannot resist it. The Devil rules without, and the Flesh rules within, and who can act against two such potent Rulers?

By the way, Sinners are in a poor case the while, that are under two such potent Governors, the Devil and Sin. How is it possible, O Sinners, you should be so secure, when the Devil is your King, and hath set up that young Devil, Sin, to be his Viceroy? If you saw a poor

Man cast into a Den, and there committed to the custody of a Lion and his Whelp; would it not pity your Heart to think, in what a case that poor Man were betwixt two such Keepers? Sinner, Sinner, Look to thyself, Behold the Lion and his Whelp; thy Soul is in a more dreadful case, under the command of Sin and of the Devil, than thy Carcass would be, under the Paw of those Ravenous Beasts; Save thyself from these Murderers.

3. If all that the World can do, to hinder Sinners Conversion, will do it, they will never be Converted. The World is against it, (the evil Men of the World, I here mean) they are all against the Conversion of Sinners. Particularly;

1. The Spirit of the World is against it.

2. The Examples of the World are against it.

1. The Spirit of the World is against it. The whole World is of the same Spirit, which the Scribes and Pharisees are said to be of, Mat. 23.13. They shut up the Kingdom of God against Men, and neither will enter in themselves, nor suffer those that are entering to go in. They are all of another Kingdom, and thereby Parties against Christ and his Kingdom; they are for making Proselytes, but 'tis for Hell, not for Heaven.

This Spirit of the World is a Spirit of Envy and Hatred against Christ and his Followers, Joh. 15.19. And this evil and envious Spirit, is that which vents itself in those Scoffs, Reproaches, and Persecutions, which they let fly and raise against every Soul, that so much as looks after serious Christianity. How full is the World of Experiences of this kind? No sooner is any Soul awakened from his Sins, making out after Christ, and showing himself among the Disciples, but presently the Birds of Prey are picking at him; His carnal Friends, will dissuade

and discourage him, the Ishmael's and Nimrods will be upon his back, mocking and reviling, hunting and persecuting him. Christ tells us, Luk. 15.10. There's joy in [Heaven] over one Sinner that repenteth; But what is there in Hell, or in the World, the Territories of Hell? O they are all in a rage, the Devil is maddened, when he hath lost a Captive, and resolves if he will be gone, not to let him go, without some marks of his Fury and Rage.

Sinner, thou art yet under the Power of the Devil, & it may be thou mayst never make an offer to be gone, but wilt abide with him in quiet till he carry thee home with him to his place; But if ever thou shouldst make an attempt to be gone from him, and to join thyself to Christ, behold he hath a whole World of Instruments ready, either to block up thy way, or stick in thy sides; And art thou not afraid, if it should come to this, that thou shouldst rather abide as thou art, than adventure on such Discouragements?

2. The Examples of the World are against it. How great is the power of Example? The whole World is much governed by Examples. Laws can do little in comparison of what Examples can do. There is a great influence that good Examples often have upon Men's Minds and Manners. Therefore Christ did not only make a way into the Kingdom by his Blood, nor only show us the way in his Doctrine, but also led us the way by his Example, 1 Pet. 2.21. Therefore also the Ministers of Christ are required, not only to feed the Flock by their Instructions, and to rule them by good Discipline, but to be Examples to the Flock, 1 Pet. 5.3. And therefore also Christians are required to give a good Example to the World, and one to another. 'It is a vain thing for us to exhort one another, Be humble, be sober, be meek, be merciful, whilst we ourselves are proud and unmerciful, passionate and revengeful; Give a good example, if you would do good by your good words; let not your Feet tread down, what your

Lips build up; destroy not by an evil Life, what you build by good Counsel. Thou that teachest another should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a Man should not commit Adultery, dost thou commit Adultery? Rom. 2.21, 22. Thou that sayest to another, Swear not, Lie not, give not place to Wrath, speak evil of no Man, Dost thou the same thing? Thou dost more mischief by thy evil Works, than ever thou art like to do good by thy good Speeches.

O (by the way) let us learn to bewail, and to be ashamed of our evil Examples that we have given. Ah Wretches, that ever any People should be charged concerning any Professors, as the Disciples were once charged concerning the Scribes and Pharisees, Mat. 23. Do as they say, but do not as they do. Shall this evil World have occasion to speak thus of any of the Preachers or Professors of Christianity, Beware of them, follow not after them; for behold, they bid Men beware of Covetousness, and yet who more covetous? They bid Men beware of Pride, and yet who more proud? They charge it upon others to be just, to be true, to be meek, and yet who more fraudulent, more false and peevish than themselves? O how much mischief do poor Sinners suffer by the evil Examples of some Professors? Good Examples draw mightily, but evil Examples more. But yet the evil Examples (of Professors) are not they by which Sinners are in the greatest danger of being kept back from Christ (though these be pernicious enough), but the evil Examples of the World. Sinners are of the World, and they are professedly for following of the World. Now what Examples do the profane World set before them? Whither are they leading them? Are they making towards Christ, and running from their Sins unto God? Does not the Stream run quite contrary? And does it not pass for a sufficient Encouragement to them in their evil ways, to think they do but as their Forefathers did before them, and as their Friends and their Neighbors do?

See how the Example of the World is urged against following of Christ, John 7.48, 49. Have any of the Rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this People who knoweth not the Law are cursed. What do ye mean ye foolish People to follow this Jesus? Do ye see any of the wise Men, or great Men, do any of the Rulers believe on him? And will ye think yourselves wiser than they? Go not after him, be none of his Disciples.

And is not the same Argument urged upon Sinners daily? Why should you trouble your heads about these Matters? About Repentance, and Regeneration, and Conscience, and making sure for the other World? Do the Pharisees, and High-Priests, do the great Men, and the wise Men, trouble themselves about any such Matters? It's true, there are a sort of People which know not the Law, a company of ignorant Souls, a heady and a giddy Generation, that trouble themselves and the World about these things; but what heed is to be given to them, a company of despicable, simple Souls? Do any of the wise or great Ones take this course?

Sinner, think with thyself, what a mighty influence this sort of Argument hath had upon thee hitherto? The World despise the Gospel, the World neglect Christ: The World are for the Flesh, for Liberty, and Care, and Pleasures, and Idleness, and against the Spirit of Christianity, the Stream runs downwards towards Sin and Hell; and hitherto thou hast been swimming with the Stream, hast gone with the Multitude, and hast troubled thyself about Christ and Religion as little as any of them. O tremble to think what great danger thou art in, that thou mayest still run down that Stream, and never stop till thou fall into that Gulf, from which there will be no Return or Redemption forever.

Now Sinner, lay all these things together, and then judge if thou hast not reason to fear thou mayest never escape the Wrath and Curse of God. It is evident, that whilst thou art unconverted, thou art under the Curse; Well, but yet thou hopest that one time or other thou mayest be Converted; But how great fear is there thou mayest not? All the ungodly World are against thy Conversion; thine own Flesh and the Devil are against it; all these will join together to hinder it if they can. And besides all the means that have been hitherto used, prosper not; thou hast been Preached to, thou hast been Prayed over, thou hast had many years of Warnings, and yet nothing hath prevailed. And what multitudes are there that have been in thy case, that have stood it out to the last and died in their Sins, to here and there one that have been Converted and Saved? Sure thou art in a fearful case, that Curse that hangs over thee, there's but little hope but it will light upon thee, and abide upon thee forever. O fear this Curse, fear it in time, that if it be possible thou mayest take warning and fly from the Wrath to come.

V.

Lastly; How should we improve this Holy Fear.

And now I am fallen upon that which I chiefly intended in the choice of this Subject. This Fear will be of general use, and of great advantage for the engaging us in, and the more successful managing of the whole business of Religion and Christianity, in all the parts and duties of it. I have a large Field before me, but I shall insist only upon these three general Directions.

1. Fear and Search.
2. Fear and Beware.
3. Fear and Follow after.

Direction 1. Fear and Search.

It will much help us to the understanding of our Work, if we could once get to an understanding of our state; to the understanding of our state, a search is necessary, and no such narrow search is like to be made, as when we search with Fear; therefore let the first Direction be, Fear and Search.

Let Fear set you on searching, and let it assist you in your search; let it follow you into every Corner both of your Heart and Life. Fear is suspicious, and Suspicion will be inquisitive; it will not take up with Reports or Appearances, but will inquire diligently whether Matters be so or no.

Christians know that they must pass under the search of God, and their fear how they shall abide his trial, will put them upon the more narrow trial of themselves.

Besides the great trial that will be in the last and general Judgment, which we use to have a special eye unto, in all our trials of ourselves, there is a search which God makes into us even in this life; And he searcheth us,

1. By his Eye.

2. By his Hand.

1. By his Eye. Psal. 11.4. His Eye behold, his Eye-lids try the Children of Men. Jer. 17.10. I the Lord search the Heart, I try the Reins. God searcheth not as Man searcheth, by enquiring into that which before was hid from him; his searching is no more but his beholding; he seeth the Heart, he beholdeth the Reins; God's very sight is searching. Heb. 4.13. All things are naked and open to his Eyes, <H&G>, dissected or anatomized. He hath at once as exact a view of the most hidden Things, the very Entrails of the Soul, as if they had been with never so great curiosity anatomized before him.

2. By his Hand; that is, by his Judgments and Chastisements, which he sends forth to try them that dwell upon the Earth, Rev. 3.10. Zeph. 1.12. I will search Jerusalem with Candles. Every Arrow which God shoots, is a Candle to search out Men's Iniquities. When God sends a Sword, or Famine, or Pestilence upon the Earth, these are the Lord's Searchers, which he hath sent forth to try the Children of Men.

A fearing Christian will search himself, that he may approve himself to the search of God's Eye, and that he may prevent the search of his Hand. God's Eye is upon me every day, proving mine Heart and my

Reins; I doubt he may see what he will not like in me: Search, O my Soul, what there is that may offend, and whether there be not something in thee also which the Lord loveth. God's Searchers are coming abroad, and who may abide the day of their coming? Is not Poverty to be feared? Is not Sickness to be feared? Is not Sword, or Famine, or Fire, to be feared? O what sharp work may these Searchers make upon me? Since 'tis so hard to endure, let me do what may be done, to prevent this kind of trial of the Lord, by trying myself. But especially this Fear will put us upon a search of ourselves, with respect to the severest Trial, in the final Judgment of God.

But what must we search for? Why what is it that thou dost Fear? Tell me that, and that will tell thee for what thou must search.

There are two things especially which thou hast to fear,

1. Lest there should not be found in thee that good thing which may evidence thee to be approved of God.
2. Whatever Evils there be in thee at which the Lord will be offended.

Fear this Fear and it will set you a searching accordingly.

1. Fear lest there should not be, and search whether there be Truth and Uprightness in thine Heart towards God; whether the Seed of God, his special Grace hath taken root in thee. The Ploughers have been ploughing, the Sowers have gone forth to sow, but what Seed hath there fallen upon mine Heart, and what Root hath it taken there?

Such a search should not be made without fear. The Apostle, 2 Cor. 13.5. exhorting to this Work, Examine yourselves whether ye be in

the Faith, prove your own selves, doth in the next words fright them to it. Know you not your own selves how that Jesus Christ is in you except you be Reprobates? Why should we examine? What if we be not in the Faith? Why you know what, says he, then you are Reprobates. You are Reprobates if ye be not Believers. Do ye know what 'tis to be under a Divine Anathema? To be in a state of Reprobation from God? Is there not a doubt that this may be found to be your case? O how can you but search whether it be or no? And how can you but fear, while you are making such a search? Are you not afraid to let yourselves go unsearched? Do you not tremble till you know how 'tis with you? And how can you set upon so great a Work without a trembling Heart?

Beloved, It is a strange thing, and it is a lamentable thing to observe, what stupendous Security there is upon the Hearts of Men concerning the state of their Souls. There's no need of searching, with the most they are already satisfied. 'It is well with my Soul, says one; I shall have peace, says another; I do not doubt of Mercy, through the Grace of God, says a third: and so go on through a whole crowd of Sinners, and you may have the same account, everyone at peace, everyone already satisfied. But how came you to be satisfied in so great a Case? Have you ever searched whether Matters be so well with you? Or else, how can you but fear that you may be mistaken?

And what if you should be mistaken? How strongly soever you are conceited of your uprightness, how impregnable soever your confidence is at present, notwithstanding all your boastings of your integrity, yet God will not take you upon your words; trust yourselves if you will, yet he will not trust you, you must be tried what you are; Rom. 14.12. Every one of us to must give an account of ourselves to God. Yet he will not take the account we give, without trying whether it be a true account; 2 Cor. 5.10. We must all appear before the

Judgment-Seat of Christ, <H&G>, we must be made manifest and laid open, (as the word imports) that it may plainly be seen what we are. And this severe search that shall be made in the Judgment, the Apostle calls in the next verse, the terror of the Lord. 'Twould shake the securest Hearts, to understand what a thorough search will be made of them in that day.

God will bring all things to light, God will lay all in the Ballance. What a dreadful Word was that to that King, Dan. 5.27. Thou art weighed in the Ballance, and found wanting. What if that should be your case at last? If God's Light should find you to be Darkness, if God's Ballance should find you too light? What if, whilst you count yourselves Children, God should find you Bastards; if whilst you count yourselves Vines, he should find you Thorns; if while you count yourselves Believers, Beloved, and Chosen of God, that day should declare you to be Infidels and Reprobates?

What if it should be so? You are stark Fools, and worse than mad, if you think such a question may not be put, What if I should be mistaken? Is such a mistake on which your eternal state depends, of so little consequence with you, as not to need such a question to be put about it? Are you so little concerned how matters shall go with you in the Judgment? Are you so little concerned what your final Sentence shall be? Which of you for Life, and which for Death? Who for Blessedness, and who for Burning? What Rocks are those Hearts of yours, if they do not rent and quake for fear? And if you do fear to think, what if I should be mistaken, let that Fear set you a searching, whether you have hitherto been mistaken or no.

Beloved, whether you fear or no, give me leave to tell you, I am afraid concerning you. 1. Some of you, I fear there are, upon whom there hath been no good wrought, no nor anything done towards it; not a

Clod broken, not a Thorn rooted out, not a Grain of good Seed fallen upon your Hearts. Upon whom the Lord hath been ploughing, as upon Rocks, sowing as upon Heaths, hammering as upon Anvils, hewing as upon Iron; who with those Rebels, Isa. 48.4. have Brows of Grass, and Iron Sinews; who have hitherto resisted the Holy Ghost, and put from you the Word of Life; whom both the Seed and the Showers that have fallen upon you, have left hard and barren, bringing forth nothing but Briars and Thorns; In whom Oaths, and Lyes, and Drunkenness, and such like, are all the Fruits that have been brought forth; who are far from God, and yet far from fear; whom a very little search might be enough to convince you, that you are in the Gall of Bitterness, and the Bond of Iniquity. If you would but cast an Eye upon God's Glass, your foul Faces would quickly show you what you are.

O Sinners, if you yourselves yet fear not, let others fears concerning you, thus far prevail with you, as to cast a serious Eye upon yourselves. Make a little enquiry, Is it not thus with me? Is not my Soul in this very case? If I should ask, Where are my Sins? Behold, they compass me round about; they are in mine Heart, and in my Mouth, and my whole Life is filled up with Iniquity. But if I should ask, Where is my Faith? where is my Repentance? Where is the new Heart and the new Life? Where is the Knowledge, and Love, and Life, and Fear of God? What could I say, what answer could I give? Make a little enquiry thus; a very little, to a Man in thy case, methinks should be enough to convince and awaken thee.

2. Others of you I fear there maybe, upon whom the Lord hath been at work, but the Work is not yet brought thorough. Upon whom though the Plough hath entered and made some sign, yet it hath not gone deep enough; though the Thorns, some of them, are cut down, yet their Root remaineth; though the Seed of God hath fallen upon

you, and some Blades have sprung up, yet it hath taken no root; upon whom though there appear some dawning towards the Day, yet you are not come to Sun-rising.

As for you, it is a mercy that there is something done, especially if there be still more a-doing. It is a mercy that the Lord hath made a motion of Love to you, and that he is not totally rejected; that there is a Treaty for Peace, whereof you have so far accepted, as to yield to a Cessation of Arms, and a forbearance of those open Acts of Hostility against God which have been; that the Drunkards are become sober, that the Swearers now fear an Oath; that the Enemies of God, and of all Righteousness, are now content to hear of a Reconciliation. This is a mercy.

Much more, That any of you are so far convinced of the misery of Sin, of the excellency and necessity of Religion and Godliness, that you are wrought to some good liking of the Holy Ways of God, and are wishing, and waiting, and making out after the Lord. This is a Mercy, because there is hope, that he that hath brought you hitherto, will bring you on farther and farther till he hath brought you home. But yet there is matter of great fear too, lest presuming you have already attained, you should sit down short of Saving-Grace, and so perish at last.

With a special respect to such as these, I shall show,

1. How such Persons may be wrought to this Fear.
 2. How this Fear will work to a farther Search.
1. To work this Fear in such, let these following Particulars be considered;

1. There are preparations to Grace, that are not Grace.
2. There are Images of Grace, that are not Grace.
3. There are some properties of gracious Persons, that are no certain Evidences of Grace.
4. There is no one Grace, that is really so, which will put us out of doubt.
5. Whatever we have, that is short of Saving-Grace, it may go back, and we may be reduced to a worse State than ever before.

1. There are preparations to Grace, that are not Grace. God usually takes time, and leads Men on to Christ by degrees; we are not presently Converts, as soon as we cease to Bedlams. There may be awakenings of sleepy Souls, there may be enlightening's of dark Souls, there may be shakings of obdurate and hardened Souls, which though they may have a tendency to farther good, yet may be far enough short of it. There may be the pangs of travel, which may never bring to the Birth. In particular,

1. There may be Conviction of Sin, and yet no Grace. Conviction is not Conversion. Ahab was once a Convinced Person, and so was Judas also, but never Converts.

2. There may be a good Opinion of Grace, where there is no Grace. The Way of Christ may be right in your Eyes, and yet your Hearts not be upright in his Eyes. You may be persuaded in your Hearts concerning the Way of Godliness, that this is the Good Way, that this is the Right Way, and an Excellent Way; that the Life of a Christian, led according to the Rules of the Gospel, is an Excellent Life; Rom.

2.18. Thou knowest his Will, and approvest the things that are more Excellent. And to this good Opinion Men may be wrought,

1. From the Self-evidencing Light of that Holy Doctrine, which prescribes and requires Godliness.

2. From the convincing Lives of the Sincere Professors of Godliness.

3. From the Self-condemnation that is to be observed in all other ways.

1. From the Self-evidencing Light of the Doctrine of Godliness. The Doctrine of Christianity proves itself to be of God, by that Divine Light that shines forth in it, there is a stamp of Divinity imprinted upon it. Is God a Holy God? So is this Doctrine a Holy Doctrine. Is God a Merciful and Gracious God? So is this Doctrine, a Doctrine of Mercy, a Doctrine of Grace; there is Grace and Mercy runs through the whole Body of it; nay, they are the very Soul and Life of it. Is God a God of Wisdom? The Doctrine of Christianity is the Wisdom of God in a Mystery. Is God a God of Truth and of Righteousness? Such is the Doctrine of the Gospel; that not only is according to Truth, and reveals the Righteousness of God, but requires Truth and imposes Righteousness upon all that will embrace it. What is more contrary to this Word of Truth than a Lye, or than Hypocrisy and Guile? What is more contrary to this Word of Righteousness than Unrighteousness? Doth the Word of the Gospel allow any Iniquity? Is there any guile found in it, or any toleration whereof in its Professors? Doth it not command all Righteousness, and condemn all Unrighteousness? Even while it justifies the Sinner, it condemns the Sin. This Religion is pure Religion, and undefiled before God, Jam. 1.25. Teaching us, that denying all ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present World, Tit. 2.13, 14. Now he that knows that God is an Holy and Wise

God, a God of Grace, of Truth, and of Righteousness, and does but understand the Scriptures, may, without any great difficulty, be led into a good opinion of that Godliness which is there held forth and required.

2. From the Convincing Lives of the Sincere Professors of Christianity. I do not say, from the Lives of all Professors; some Professors of Christianity there are, who are not Christians. Some such there are amongst Professors, who are disorderly walkers, whose Ways are so evidently contrary to their Profession, as if the Devil had led them into their Christianity, on purpose to disgrace the Gospel; and 'tis like enough, 'twas his doing indeed, to make Professors of them. This Tempter may tempt Men into Religion, as far as may serve his own ends, and Men's Lusts may make them Disciples. Such, I mean, who while they pretend to the Spirit, do walk after the Flesh, who hold the Truth in Unrighteousness, Rom. 1.18. who are proud, self-conceited, self-willed, heady, giddy, wandering and unstable Souls; like crooked Lines, that in some points touch with the Rule, but for the most part do swerve from it, on this hand and on that. Who are scrupulous about some smaller Matters, which they fancy to have an appearance of evil, and yet allow themselves in apparent Evils, straining at a Gnat, and swallowing a Camel, insisting much on some Circumstances, and neglecting the weightier Matters of the Law, like those Mat. 23.23, 24.

'It is but little that Godliness is beholden for the good Opinion it hath obtained to such as these; But to the sincere and single-hearted Professors, whose Lives are a Copy or Pattern of wholesome Doctrine, holding forth the Word of Life, exemplifying the Holy Rules laid down in Scripture, and showing forth the Virtues of Christ before the World. Who are in the World, as he was in the World; who live by Faith, and walk in Love, being humble, meek, peaceable,

merciful, temperate, true, righteous and holy, in all manner of Conversation. These are the Persons whose Lives do commend Godliness to the World; and force their very Hearts, many of them, to acknowledge: Sure this is the Way of God that these Men walk; it cannot be but God is in them of a very truth; sure these are the Servants of the Living God, this is Religion indeed; if there be any way of Life this is the way.

It's true, this way is every-where spoken against by the malicious, but the more like to be of God for that; So 'twas in the Apostles days, Acts 28.22. As for this Sect, we know it is every-where spoken against: Mark it, Christianity was counted by the malicious but a Sect or a Faction, and Christians but Sectaries; so they were counted and called, about 1600 years ago, and therefore 'tis no disparagement if they be counted so still.

But says the considering Sinner, let them be called what Men please, Sectaries, Seducers, Hypocrites, or what else malice can invent; yet as it was said of Christ, John 10.21. These are not the words of him that hath a Devil; so it may be said of his Followers, Call them what you will, yet these are not the Lives of Schismatics or Hypocrites, these Men are the Servants of the most High God, and their way is the way of Life.

3. From the Self-condemnation that all other ways carry in them. If this be not the way of Life, there's none; if these be not the Servants of God, there are none such in the World. For where are they else to be found? Are the Ignorant, and the Earthly, and the Irreligious, are these the Religious? Are the Carnal, and the Formal, and the outside Worshippers, that will give Christ the Cap and the Knee, and yet can Drink, and Riot, and Swear, and Scoff, are these the sincere Worshippers of God? This must be the Good Way, or which else can

it, with any tolerable probability, be imagined to be? Surely if this be not it, we must even all count to be damned, for there is no other, that so much as looks like the Path of Life.

The Atheist must say, I am not in the way to God, this Fool hath said in his Heart, There is no God.

The Pope with his Doctrine must say, I am not the Way, I am Antichrist, 'tis Christ only that brings us to God.

Formality must say, I am not the Way, for God is a Spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in Spirit and in Truth, John 4.24.

Profaneness must say, I am not the Way to God, I am the Way of Death, and my steps lead down to Hell. If there be any Way of Death in the World, profaneness is it.

Drunkards, and Swearers, and Revelers, and Rioters, if their Consciences may but have the privilege of their Tongues, will tell you, we are all out of the Way, we must take another course than the Devil and our Lusts will yet suffer us, or else woe to us that ever we were born; We would be loath to die in the Way we live in, we must turn a new Leaf or we are undone. These do not so much as pretend to be in the Way of Life.

Well, thus far now a Sinner may come; by beholding the Self-evidencing Light that is in the Doctrine of Godliness, the convincing Lives of the Sincere Professors thereof, the Self-condemnation that is in all other Ways, he may be led into a good Opinion of Sincere-Godliness. And this Good Opinion is but a little ground gotten towards it, It is not Godliness to think well of it.

3. Sinners good Opinion of Godliness, may beget good Inclinations towards it, and good wishes after it. Happy are those Souls that are in Christ, who walk not after the Flesh but after the Spirit; O that my Soul were among them, I could even find in mine Heart to be one of his Disciples. I am in a strait between two, (as the Apostle said in another case, Phil. 1.21.) and what I shall choose I wot not; fain I would be a Christian in earnest, I see it would be best for me to be so, and O that I were! But on the other side, how shall I bear the Labors and Sufferings of that way? What shall I do? What shall I choose? I would be a Disciple of Christ, but I am afraid what may come of it.

4. Sinners good Opinions and good Inclinations, may bring forth some ineffectual Attempts and Endeavors; they may set forth after Christ; their enlightened Minds may set their Hearts upon them, and cause them to fall a reasoning thus with themselves; If this be the good way, why should not I walk in it? Is a Godly Life such an Excellent Life? Can I approve it in others? Can I pronounce them blessed who so live? Come, my Soul, put in for a part in Christ, resolve once what thou wilt do, stay not in these Uncertainties, hang no longer betwixt Heaven and Hell; speak the word once, Wilt thou be for Christ? Shall the Sincere Christians God be my God, their Hopes my Hopes, their Life my Life? Shall I cast in my Lot among them, and take up my Lot with theirs? Come along, venture after the Lamb, venture for the Blessedness to come; set to Praying, set to Hearing, give thyself to the study and practice of that blessed course which thou knowest will have its Fruit unto Holiness, and its end Everlasting Life. And yet after all this, little or nothing may be done.

These now are fair Preparations to Grace, but this is not Grace. Conviction is not Conversion; the approving, and liking, and wishing for, and making some ineffectual Attempts and Offers at Godliness, this is not choosing and embracing it.

2. There are Images of Grace, which are not Grace. There is a form of Godliness which is not Godliness, 2 Tim. 3.5. An Image is not the same, an Image of a Man is not a Man, the Image of a Christian is not a Christian. The Image of Christ is a Christian, but the Image of a Christian is no Christian; as great a likeness as there is, yet there is as great a difference also as betwixt Living and Dead.

There is something like Faith which is not Faith, something like Repentance which is not Repentance; something like the New Man, and is not it, but the Old Man new dressed up; and so like it may be, in Complexion, in Language, in Carriage, that it is often taken to be the same. The Pangs of Travel may bring forth, but when all comes to all, it may be but a dead Child; there may be all the Parts, the Head, the Eyes, the Hands, and every Limb, but no Life; and yet when it is but newly brought forth, it may be hard to discern whether it be alive or dead; so difficult is it to discern between Common and Special Grace; so many Counterfeits have there been found, which have both been Deceivers and deceived, as is enough to make the Hearts of many Christians indeed to shake.

3. There are some Properties of Gracious Persons, which are no certain Evidences of Grace; but may be found also in Hypocrites. Nothing can evidence the Truth of Grace, but that which is so adequately proper to Saints, that it cannot be found in a Hypocrite. Whatever maybe found in a Hypocrite, can never certainly prove me to be no Hypocrite. Assuring Marks must be distinguishing Marks, such as separate betwixt the Precious and the Vile; and nothing can distinguish the Sound from the Unsound, but that which the Unsound cannot attain. As 'tis said of some Sinners, Deut. 32.5. Their Spot is not the Spot of his Children; So may it be said of all Saints, Their Grace is not the Grace of his Enemies; and we can never come to give a clear and comfortable Judgment of ourselves, till we

find something in us, which is not to be found in any Hypocrites in the World.

But some Properties there are of Sincere Christians, which may be found in Hypocrites; which yet some Divines have some-what unwarily made use of, and proposed for Peoples Trial of their States.

Indeed it is much to be wished, that we were more exact and cautelous in this Matter, than many of us are at this day. Though good use may be made of probable. Evidences, yet should we declare to our People, which are but probable Marks, and which are certainly concluding. Of those Properties of Christians, which some Divines have formerly given as Marks of Sincerity, I shall mention three;

1. Prayer.

2. Hearing the Word.

3. Reforming the Life.

1. Prayer. This is a property of a Sincere Christian, He is praying Person. Behold be prayeth, 'twas said of Paul, when he was a young Convert, Acts 9.11. The whole Generation of the Saints, are called, Psal. 24.6. a Generation of Seekers; This is the Generation of them that seek thee. But are there no praying Hypocrites, as well as praying Believers? See Mat. 6. Will he always call upon God? Saith Job, Chap. 27.10. But though he will not pray always, yet will he never pray?

2. Hearing the Word. This also is the property of Christians, they are Hearers of the Word. Joh. 10.27. My Sheep hear my Voice.

3. Reforming the Life. 1 Cor. 6.11. Such were some of you; that is, Drunkards, Revilers, Covetous, Fornicators, &c. but ye are washed.

Ye are now reformed Persons; and are there no reformed Hypocrites? Every Reformation is not Sanctification.

'It is a good sight to see Men that once lived like Heathens, and never called upon God, to set upon a course of serious Prayer. 'It is a good sight to behold others, that not only neglected the Word, but mocked at, and persecuted those that heard it, to be now become constant Hearers themselves. 'It is a good sight, and a comfortable, to behold those that were once loose livers, Drunkards, Swearers, &c. to become Reformed Persons, to see some see Men from Persecutors to become Professors of Religion; these things are a good fight, but they are no sure sign of Sincerity. Men may Pray, and Hear, and be much reformed in their Lives, and yet be short of Christ.

The neglect of Prayer and Hearing, and the going on in a course of Sin, are certain signs of a wicked Man; Thou that prayest not, and wilt not receive Instruction, and hatest to be reformed, art thou a Saint? Thy gross neglects, and thy evil doings, are Satan's Marks upon thee. Art thou still going on in thy wickedness? How canst thou say or think but that thou art of the wicked One? Yet the performance of these Duties, Praying, Hearing, and somewhat of Reformation, are no certain signs that thou art of God.

A total and thorough Reformation, a withdrawing ourselves from every evil way, a resigning up ourselves to the Government of Christ, and the Conduct of the Spirit, and an actual care and endeavor to walk uprightly according to the Truth of the Gospel, is the best and last proof of our Sincerity. But much Reformation there may be in the Life, and yet the Heart not right with God.

Beloved, while we are comforted over you, and rejoice that there is so much done upon many of you, as there is, that there are so many Praying Ones among you, who were wont to neglect Prayer; that

there are so many of you to be found at a Sermon, who were once more like to have been found in an Alehouse, (blessed be God that there is such visible Reformation among you, both of your Persons and Families). Besides those of you that have given a good proof of an inward Saving-change, even this that appears upon others of you, is a comfort to us; Yet beware how you venture your Souls upon this, though hopeful, yet I doubt but partial Reformation; and all this notwithstanding, fear lest you should, and look diligently that you do not fall short of the Grace of God at last.

4. There is no one Grace that is really so, if it be alone, that will put us out of doubt concerning our state. There is no one Mark by which we can give a certain judgment of ourselves, without the concurrent testimony of other Marks with it. The Graces of God in us, must give mutual testimony each to other, before any of them can give clear testimony to us. Our Love must prove our Faith to be sincere, our Holy Obedience must prove our Love to be sincere, before either our Faith or Love will prove either themselves or us to be so. If I have the very Faith of God's Elect, and I yet question whether I love or no; If I feel I love, and cannot prove 'tis in sincerity by my Obedience, neither the one nor the other will give me confidence before God. One Grace wanting, will be an Objection against those that appear. I believe, but sure I fear, 'tis not with Faith unfeigned, because I cannot find I love, and so in the rest.

Not but that any one Saving-Grace, where-ever it is found to be such, is an infallible Evidence of Sincerity; But still the doubt will be, whether this Grace I find, be Grace indeed; and unless it be witnessed, by the concurrence of other Graces, that doubt is never like, in an ordinary way, to be clearly resolved. Therefore that Exhortation of the Apostle, Add to your Faith Virtue, and to Virtue Knowledge, and to Knowledge Temperance, &c. 2 Pet. 1.5, 6. is

necessarily to be minded, in order to the obtaining that Assurance which the Apostle in the following Verses, directs and exhorts with diligence to follow after.

5. Whatever you have, and yet all short of Saving-Grace, it may all go quite back, and you may return to a worse estate than ever you were before. The unclean Spirit that is at present gone out, may return again, and thy latter end may be worse than thy beginning. Let us a little consider that Scripture, Mat. 12.33, 34, 35. When the unclean Spirit is gone out of a Man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest and findeth none; then he saith, I will return into my House from whence I came forth; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished; then goeth he, and taketh with him seven other Spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there, and the last state of that Man is worse than the first. Though this Text be parabolical, and was intended against that wicked Generation, yet is it applicable to particular persons still.

[When the unclean Spirit goeth out of a Man.] That Sinners are so vile and abominable, it is from that wicked Spirit, Satan, that dwells in them. Every Sinner is a possessed Person, possessed of a Devil. When they are a little reformed, they seem for the time to be dispossessed; but there is difference betwixt the Devil's going out, and his being cast out: Satan may a little with-draw from Souls, as to the Impetus or violence of his Suggestions and Operations, whilst still he holds his Dominion.

[He walketh through dry places]. What these dry places may be, is not so easy to determine; some by these loca arida, understand loca voana, void and empty places, the Deserts and Wastes of the Earth, where he finds no Body to tempt or molest. But could Satan think to find rest there, where was no House for him to lay his Head in?

Would the Tempter waste time in seeking whom to devour in those waste places, where he knew well enough there were none to be found? He knows too well where Sinners dwell, to go to seek them where they are not; more like to find the Devil in a Market, than in a Wilderness. This therefore seems not to be the sense.

May I give my conjecture? Why may not these dry places be the Saints on Earth, the Fountain of whose Blood is dried up? In whom the Sun hath dried up their Dirt and Mire, in which this Swine loves to wallow. Satan may have his Walks through the best of Men, but these are no Habitation for him. The Devil, with the Swine, hath his Habitation in the filthy places, in the Mud and Mire; or with the Behemoth, of whom 'tis said, Job 40.21. He lieth under the shady Trees, under the covert of the Reeds in the Fens. He loves to be in the Shade, where no Sun comes to disturb him; in the Moors and in the Fens, where he may have Mire enough to tumble in. Miry Moorish Hearts, dirty Fennish Souls, are the Dens of Devils; the Saints in comparison of these are dry places.

[He seeketh rest]. This notes two things.

1. When the Devil is gone out of any Person, he is never at rest till he is gotten in again, either thither whence he went out, or into some other Habitation where he may do mischief. Like Children, like Father; as 'tis said of them, so 'tis much more true of him, he rests not but in doing mischief.

2. The Devil loves to dwell where he may be at rest. That is, not from Work (his Work is his rest) but from Resistance or Opposition. In carnal and unclean Hearts, the unclean Spirit may be at rest; there's nothing to disturb or give him disquiet. He may dwell at ease, and rule and domineer at pleasure. Nay if he please he may be at rest, not only from Opposition, but from Work too; he may take up such

Habitations for his Houses to sleep in, his Work goes on whether he wakes or sleeps. Wicked Hearts do the Devil's Work to his hand, he may save himself much of his labor, they will run on to Death and Hell, without the Devils driving them.

Foolish Sinners are apt to think themselves secure from the Devil, they live in I constant calm, and find no such buffetings and blusterings of the Devil upon them, as some of the Saints do, but are in quiet and at peace, and thereupon are confident there's no Devil near them.

But stay Friends, not so confident; cast an eye upon Luk. 11.21. there you may read, When a strong Man armed keepeth the House, his Goods are in peace. It is not because the Devil is not near you, that you hear no more of him, but because he hath you sure enough, and needs not keep a stir to make you surer. Do but offer to depart and make an escape, give but a shake at his Yoke to get it off, and get you away towards Christ, and then you shall find whether the Devil be at hand or no. He is at rest in thee, Sinner, and that's the reason, thou hearest no news nor noise of him; he hath thee safe enough, or else thou shouldst be sure to find, he were not far off from thee.

[Seeking rest and findeth none]. He goes through these dry places, from Saint to Saint, from Heart to Heart, in hope to find entertainment, but is still disappointed. Here's little rest for me to be had; these dry places, I see, are no place for me; Here's such watching, and wrestling, and warring against me, such jealousies and suspicions of me; so much praying and complaining against me, that there's no stay for me here.

This, whether it be the Truth of the Text or no, I will not peremptorily determine; but a certain Truth it is, The Devil seeks entertainment in the Saints, but cannot find to his mind.

[Then he saith, I will return to mine House from whence I came out]. Well, I see, there's no hope of rest for me here, but I know whither I may go, and be welcome, I will back to my old Habitation.

[And when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished]. A little cleaner and hand former than when he left it, the Devil can allow Sinners a little Reformation. But though it be a little cleaned and garnished, yet it lies empty still; there's no other Tenant hath taken it up, though the Devil went out, yet Christ was not let in, but there it lies void for the next that comes.

[Then goeth he and taketh seven other Spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in, and dwell there, and the last state of that Man is worse than his first]. Beware of a returning Devil; the Devil at his return, often makes seven-fold worse work than before he did.

Friends, it may be there be some among you, in whom the unclean Spirit hath been ruling and spurring, and riding you post on, upon all manner of wickedness; Drunkenness, Whoredom, Swearing, Cursing, and all manner of Abominations; But at present it may be, he is for a season departed, and hath a little with-drawn from you; and now you are grown more sober, and temperate, and chaste; much reformed of what you once were; you are swept and garnished; you have laid by your former profaneness, and taken up the Profession of Religion, and put on a Form of Godliness; there is a better face upon you, and upon your ways; and now you think all's well, you are become new Men, and your state is happy.

But do you not stand empty still? Hath Christ taken up these Hearts, for his own Habitation? If the Unclean Spirit be gone out, is the Holy Spirit come in? How much soever you are Reformed, of what you have been, are you transformed by the renewing of your Mind? Are you not only garnished with common Grace, but are you furnished

with special Grace? Is Christ within you? If not, O take heed, the Devil may come about again, and make his re-entry upon you, and then you have not been so wicked heretofore, but you may become seven times more vile, and your latter end may be worse than your beginning.

Beloved, I hope and am persuaded, that there are divers among you, from whom, through the abundant Grace of God towards you, the unclean Spirit is not only withdrawn, but cast out; that you are not only a little overly swept and garnished, but established in the Grace of God. I hope and believe, that there are many here in whom the Holy Spirit hath gotten such footing, that the Devil shall never come in again, to set up his Throne, or take up his Rest in you; But yet I warn you, especially the younger Professors among you, to maintain a Godly Jealousy of yourselves, and to fear how it may be with you.

Now Friends, consider what hath been said; Are there Preparations for Grace which yet are no Grace? Are there Images of Grace, which yet are no Grace? And may they be so well like, that they are often taken to be the same? May you have many Properties of Sincere Christians, and yet be no Christians? May all you have of them, go back, and come to worse than nothing? Believe this, and see if it work not fear in you.

Objection.

But is this the Work of a Minister of the Gospel, to fill poor Christians Heads and Hearts with Doubts and Fears? The Word of the Gospel is a Word of Peace, a comforting Word; and that's the charge laid upon the Ministers of the Gospel, Isa. 40.1, 2. Comfort ye, comfort ye my People, speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, cry unto her — that her Iniquity is pardoned. And the poor People of God have need enough to be comforted, they have fears enough from the

World, and their own evil Hearts, and do you make Christ to be the Minister of fear to them also? Our Doubts are our Sins, our Fears are our Infirmities, and do you go about to nourish our Diseases? The Word of Christ is the Food of Souls, and 'tis but poor feeding for Christ's Sheep to feed them with Fear.

Solution.

1. All are not Christ's Sheep, that are found in Sheeps Clothing; the Devil hath some Goats in Christ's Fold. All are not Israel, that are of Israel, Rom. 9.6. And whilst it is really a question, whether thou be not one of the Devil's Goats, he does thee no harm, that puts thee in fear whether thou be or no. This fear is not to fright thee out of the Fold, but to fright thee into a Sheep. I shall do thee no harm, if I can fright thee to Heaven.

2. What's one Man's Meat, may be another Man's Poison; and what's one Man's Poison, may be another Man's necessary Meat. All Christians are not of a like Spirit, and what's poison for some may be proper for others. Some poor, broken, melancholic Souls are all fears, and must have Comforts preached unto them; others are secure, confident, and yet careless Ones, and these have as much need of terror. Comforts preached to the doubting and distressed Ones, may be poison to the secure and careless, and yet for the sake of the distressed, they must be preached; and terror preached to the secure, may be poison to the distressed, and yet they must be preached for the securers sakes.

The Ministers of the Gospel must be good Stewards, giving to everyone their Portion, Luk. 12.42. Comfort to whom comfort belongeth, and fear to whom fear; On some have compassion, making a difference; others save with fear, Jude 22, 23. And as Ministers must give, so People must take everyone their own

Portions; as Ministers must divide, so People must apply the Word of God aright. Let every Man take his own Portion, and not be catching at that which is another's. There is too great an aptness in the distressed, to lay hold on those words, that are spoken to the secure; if there be ever an affrighting word in a whole Sermon, that's my Portion, saith the Distressed, this Word belongs to me; and so the secure are too ready to lay hold on those healing and comforting words, which belong to the broken and distressed; both these Evils must be heedfully avoided; but whether People will apply the Word of God aright or no, there's no help for it, but Ministers must divide it aright, and give to everyone their Portion.

3. There is an awaking fear, that quickens to our Duty, and prepares for comfort, and this will lightly hurt no Body; and there is a disquieting and discouraging fear, that disheartens to Duty, and deprives of Comfort, and this will do no Body any good.

4. This Fear I am preaching to you, will lead you to the better and surer hope. These Doubting's will be of great use to put us in the way of getting above our Doubts. As there is a Confidence which will end in terror, so there are Fears and Doubting's, the Fruit whereof will be Quietness and Assurance forever. This will more fully appear in the next Particular, wherein I am to show,

2. How this Fear will, work towards a farther search. Hitherto I have been endeavoring to work this Fear upon Professors Hearts, concerning their States; and now I shall show how this Fear will work.

The Fear lest our Souls should be yet unsafe, will,

1. Put hard to come to a certainty; And to this end will,

2. Put us close upon a more narrow search.

3. Put in Objections in order to the making all clear and plain.

1. It will put hard to come to a certainty; nothing short will satisfy it. Fear hath pain in it, the fearing Christian is in pain till his Doubts be resolved, and this pain will press him to make sure. He will be thankful for Probabilities, and will make the most of them; as a drowning Man will catch at every Twig, that may keep his Head above Water, till he can get better hold. A Christian that Fears, will not make nothing of Probabilities, nor yet will take up with them instead of Certainties. The Confident Sinner will venture all upon conjecture; if his Heart do but speak him fair, and tell him he is safe, that shall satisfy him. 'It is an amazing thing to consider, what broken Reeds Fools do stay themselves upon. Fear will make all as sure as it can. And there is some hope in that, that we are bent upon making sure; He that will not rest in uncertainties, is in the fairer way to come to a certainty.

2. Fear will put us on close upon the narrowest search. It will not take up with Reports or Opinions, but will search the Records, whence it may be like to get satisfactions. And there are two Books of Records that will be inquired after and looked into, the Book of the Scriptures, and the Book of Conscience. In one, the Book of the Scriptures, it will examine, what are the plainest and most certain Marks of Sincerity; when it hath found a Mark, it will inquire, May not this be also in a Hypocrite? And will not pitch on anything, but that which cannot be found in any Hypocrite in the World: Then it enquires into Conscience, and compares the two Books together.

The word tells me, He that is in Christ is a new-Creature. 2 Cor. 5.17. He that is born of God, is a Believer, 1 John 5.1. Is a lover of God, 1 John 4.7. He that loveth, doth keep the Commandments of God, and

his Commandments are not grievous, 1 John 5.3. The Children of God are Children that will not lie, are meek, merciful, holy, harmless. The Disciples of Christ, are such as deny themselves, take up their Cross, and follow him. These and such-like are found in the Scriptures, to be the signs of the Children of God.

And what sayest thou O my Conscience, are these things found in me? Where is my Faith? What Love have I for God? What witness to my Love, in my Obedience? What Truth, Mercy, Meekness, Humility, Patience is to be discerned in me? Come forth O my Graces, where are you? Show yourselves in the light of the Sun. And what can you testify O my ways for me? Speak Conscience, what is the life which I have lived, Is it a life of Faith, a life of Love and Holy Obedience?

If Conscience speaks in the affirmative, and gives in its answer, through the Grace of God, I find it thus with me; Then

3. Fear will make Objections, and put in farther Questions. It's true, he that is a New-Creature is in Christ; he that believeth and loveth and obeyeth the Lord, is born of God; and I find that there is something in me, that looks like the New-Creature, that looks like Faith and Love, &c. But may not all these be but the Images of Grace? Is my Faith the very Faith of God's Elect? Do I love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, do I obey from the heart that form of Doctrine that is delivered to me? May there not be as great a change upon a Hypocrite, may not Hypocrites believe, and love, and obey, as far as ever I have done? And until the matter be brought to this issue, that there is something found, such a Faith, such a Love, such Holy Obedience, as cannot be found in Hypocrites; till then, this Fear (which will ever suspect the worst) will nor give over, but still will come on, with question upon question. How shall I know my Faith is

right, and how shall I prove my Love and Obedience to be sincere? I am still at a loss, and in doubt how it is with me.

By this time you may see, what an advantage there is in this Fear, to help us to a right understanding of our states, it will never rest searching, till we be clearly satisfied.

Well, but now you will say, will you leave us here. Shall our Fear still follow us with' How may we know? How may we prove, that all this is in Sincerity? Will you not help us out here? What can you farther say, that may non-plus our Fears, and quiet us against such anxious and troublesome [How may I know's]? May there nothing be brought forth to our help, concerning which it may be said [by this thou mayest know] even all that thou desirest.

To this I answer, 'tis hard to bring up a Christian, in this imperfect state, to such full and infallible, and satisfactory evidence; of the soundness of his state, that he should never again need to put the question, How may I yet make a fuller proof of myself? Yet such marks there are laid down in Scripture, and such helps there are, for the clear discerning of them, as may put a Christian beyond all perplexing and disquieting Doubts and Fears.

And to the end I may, both the better assist the Fearing Christian, to out-grow his groundless Fears, and also may more effectually stir up the Fears of the unsound, I shall a little enlarge here, and lay down the most distinguishing Marks I find in Scripture, to bring the Soul to a settlement. Though I have endeavored something this way in my *Vindiciae Pietatis*, yet I shall here also say something to this purpose. Now the marks that I shall lay down of true and saving-Grace, shall be these three.

1. A resolved choice of God for our portion and Happiness.

2. An actual embracing of Christ, as he that shall bring us to God.

3. A giving up ourselves to the practice of a Godly life.

The first mark,

1. A resolved choice of God, for our portion and happiness. Here our fear will be putting in, for satisfaction in 2 particulars:

1. How may I know, that he that hath chosen God, is indeed a Godly man?

2. How may I know, that I have sincerely chosen God?

To the first Inquiry, I shall give in the answer from Scripture and Reason.

1. From Scripture; This is the choice that the Scripture Saints, have been recorded to have made. This was Moses his choice, Heb. 11.25, 26. Choosing rather to suffer afflictions with the people of God, then to enjoy the pleasures of Sin. —For he had respect to the recompense of reward. This was David's choice, Psal. 16.2.5. O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, thou art my Lord. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance. This was Asaph's choice, Psal. 73.25, 26. Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. —God is the strength of mine heart, and my portion forever. This was Mary's choice, Luk. 10.42. Mary hath chosen the good part which shall never be taken from her. There are but two parts, one of which everyone chooses; the good part, and the evil part. The good part is God, and things above; there is none good but one, that is God; and there is nothing good, but one thing, the grace and good will of God; the evil part, are all things below: All the good things of the world, are the evil part; a good Estate, a good Name, a good

House, good Friends, though they be good in their kind, yet are an evil portion, and he whose portion they are, is an evil man, Psal. 17.4. Mary was a good Woman, and 'tis evident she was so, for she made a good choice: she chose the good part, which shall never be taken from her.

2. From Reason. There are two things included in this choice of God, that are infallible evidences of a godly man. Our choosing of God for our happiness, includes in it,

Our preferring of God above all things.

Our being made like unto God.

1. Our preferring of God above all things. Every man will choose the best; that is, that which he judges best, and loves best. The reason of men's choice is, their liking that which they choose, better than that which they refuse. He that neglecting God, chooses this world for his portion, therein takes the Crown off the head of the Lord, and sets it upon the world, and says of it, this is better for me, then God; he that neglecting the world, chooses God for his portion, therein says, God is better than all.

2. Our choosing of God for our happiness, infers our being made like unto God. Every man chooses for himself, according to his own heart. 'It is the heart that makes the choice, and it chooses that which is most suitable to it. The heart that chooses God, 'tis a sign, both that it likes God best, and is made like unto God.

As by men's particular choices, here below, you may judge what spirit they are of; he that chooses the pleasures of the flesh, shows himself to be of a sensual heart; he that chooses riches, shows himself to be of a covetous heart; he that chooses the honors and poms of the

world, shows himself to be of a proud heart; so in men's general choice, he that chooses for himself here below, proves himself a worldly-minded man, and he that chooses for himself above, therein appears to be of an Heavenly mind. He that hath chosen God, 'tis a sign that he is made like unto God, 'tis divine grace in the heart, that hath made the choice.

There's one of these two ruling powers in every heart, Nature or Grace, and look which of the two hath the rule, 'tis that which hath the casting voice, in the choice that's made; and each of these, do choose what's suitable to them. Corrupt nature chooses what's suitable to it, and finding nothing in God, nor in all the world to come, that will please it, it chooses for itself below; And a gracious heart chooses what's most suitable to it; and finding as little to content it in this world, as a carnal heart doth in Heaven, therefore gets it up, and takes its lot above. Nothing will content grace, but God and Glory, and nothing but grace, can be content with God alone. The heart of man will never be carried up to Heaven, to pitch there, till there be something of Heaven, first let down into it, to fetch it up.

Now, he that prefers God above all, and is made like unto God, is certainly a godly man; and thus the first enquiry is answered. It is evident, that he that hath chosen God is a godly man, for this is laid down, as a special character of the Saints in Scripture, and in this choice of God, is included, our preferring God above all, and one being made like unto him.

2. How may I know that I have sincerely chosen God? Here lies the main doubt to be resolved. There be many that say, God is my portion, I have chosen him for my inheritance, and they think as they speak, and yet do but deceive themselves; I hope I have sincerely

chosen the Lord, but yet am in fear, lest I also may be deceived. How may I know whether it be so or no? To this I answer, you may know that you have sincerely chosen the Lord,

1. If you have chosen him deliberately.
2. If you have chosen him absolutely.
3. If you carefully pursue your choice.
4. If you measure your [present] happiness, by the communion you have with him, and the clearness of your title to him.
5. If you be willing and resolved, to forsake all things for his sake.

1. If you have chosen God deliberately; if your choice be not in a sudden fit, but be the result of the deepest consideration. Sudden bargains are often, as suddenly repented of. A light unadvised choice, is not like to hold, and while it holds, there's no great heed to be given to it. Some men are such unstable Souls, that their whole life almost, is nothing else but choosing and changing, when we choose understandingly, and deliberately, when we have thoroughly considered the great reasons for our choosing God, his worthiness and excellency, and our own necessity; and have also weighed all the inconveniencies thereof, and all the objections against it, and do find, that the reasons for, do infinitely overbalance all that can be said against it, and hereupon determine for God, that's like to be found a sincere choice.

2. If you have chosen him absolutely, as that which you will stand to, to the last, whatever inconveniencies may follow. When there are no ifs nor ands, no reserves in your heart, nor place lest for repentance. When your choice runs not, as Jacob's conditional vow, Gen. 28.20.

If the Lord will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I return to my Fathers house in peace, [then] the Lord shall be my God; but without any such if's, whether he will feed me or no, cloth me or no, let him do with me as he will for that, I am resolved however, the Lord shall be my God.

And indeed, so was Jacob too, however the words sound. This was never intended by him, as the condition of his Religion, (there's no other condition of that, but if, or since the Lord will be my God, he shall be my God) Jacob was in bond to God before, and here he enters into a new bond, lays a new obligation upon himself, every one of these Mercies, shall be so many new cords, to bind me fast to the Lord; but whether these new cords were added or no, whether the Lord would keep, or feed, or cloth him, or no, 'twas never his intent, but his old bond should stand however, that the Lord should be his God.

And as there are no reserves, nor conditions in this our choice of God, so is there a resolution against repenting of our choice, whatever should happen. A Christian chooses once for all, chooses and changes not. His choice of God is like to God's choice, Psal. 110.4. I have sworn and will not repent, says he, concerning Christ. The gifts and calling of God, much more the Election of God, are without repentance, Rom. 11.29. where we choose God absolutely, we leave no place for repentance.

3. If you carefully pursue your choice. Thus was it with Paul, who had chosen for himself above, and taken his aim at the right mark, the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, he says, Philip. 3.12, 13. I follow after, I reach forward, I press to the mark. Some vain men persuade themselves, that they have chosen God, and yet

seldom or never look after, nor take any care to obtain, and make sure of him whom they have chosen; they choose God, but never follow God, nor take the way that leads to the blessedness to come. Sincere choice, takes in both end and means. When the choice of our hearts doth govern the course of our lives, and doth effectually bend our course towards the obtaining of him, whom we have chosen; when this becomes our main drift and scope; This I pray for, this I wait for, this I labor for, this I live for; I have nothing else to do, but to serve and make sure of God; if I can but so live, as to please God here, and get to Heaven when I die, whatever I miscarry in, 'tis all I look for; this argues such a choice of God, as will certainly argue us to be of God. To choose God, and yet to live to ourselves, to choose Heaven for our portion, and yet to have our conversation in the earth; an idle and inefficacious choice, that doth not effectually command us after him, whom we have chosen, but let us run our old carnal course, is a vanity and a delusion.

4. If you measure your [present] happiness, by the communications of God to you, and the clearness of your title to him. He that hath chosen God for his happiness, look how much he possesses, and enjoys of God, and to what degree of clearness he is come, concerning his Evidences for Heaven, to such a degree of happiness, he counts himself to have arrived; whilst he can love, and please, and serve the Lord, and maintain a confidence of his acceptance with him, so long he can rejoice; when he is estranged from God, he is as a man undone. Therefore is it, that Christians set themselves to get as much of God here, and as sure a claim to the inheritance of the Saints in light, as possibly they can. Everyone would make as sure of happiness as he can, and would be happy as soon as he can, would get, as much as may be, into present possession.

Hence are those breathings, and thirsting's, and rejoicings of the Saints, which we read of in Scripture. As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee O God; my Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God, Psal. 42.1, 2. My Soul thirsteth for thee, my Flesh longeth for thee—thy loving kindness is better than life—My Soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, when my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips, Psal. 63. O that my ways were so directed, to keep thy Statutes. O let me not wander from thy Commandments, Psal. 119.5.10. For in keeping them is great reward, Psal. 19. I have set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved; therefore mine heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth, Psal. 16.8, 9. Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me; thou hast put gladness in my heart, Psal. 4.6, 7.

Christians can never have good days, longer than they are walking with God, and beholding his face in righteousness; this is their Heaven on Earth. The reflection of the face of God, in his Holy Image, that appears upon them; the irradiations of his Holy Spirit, and the light of his countenance, whilst they are walking in the Law of the Lord; the prospering of their Souls in the grace of God, and the comforts of the Holy Ghost, this is the sunshine of their lives. Their countenance is fallen, their heart is sick, they reckon themselves among the dead, when God and their Souls are parted. He hath no part in God, that can live comfortably without him.

It's true, the pleasure that the Saints take in God, is more or less, according to the different degrees of their love to God; and accordingly will the sense of his absence be more or less. There is a desiring love, which is the highest attainment of some weaker Christians, and there is a delighting love, which is the attainment of the more grown Christians. The purer and stronger the love, the

greater pleasures comes in, from the object of it, and the more impatience follows from its distance, and estrangement from it. The love of weaker Christians puts forth, in thirsting's after the Lord, but they taste but little of the sweetness; but the more grown can sit down under his shadow with great delight; yet neither the one nor the other, can be at ease or contented without him.

Again, there is a difference in the Natural temper, and constitutions of Christians; some are naturally of lively and warm affections, and of a cheerful and serene Spirit; others are of more flat, and dull, and heavy spirits, and this will make a difference upon their sense of things Spiritual. Yea, and the same persons, at several times may be differing from themselves, by reason of bodily distempers or occasional discomposure's, which may have such an influence upon their Spirits, that they may at such seasons, not only have lost the sweetness of Divine communion, but the sense also of its want; and those very duties, wherein they were wont to have delightful converse with God, may seem the most uneasy and wearisome work of their time.

But yet, whoever he be, that in ordinary, can be satisfied, at ease, and be merry, whilst he is a stranger from God, and neither finds pleasure in him, nor takes comfort in pleasing of him; this man can never conclude that God is his portion. He that is least in the Kingdom of God, will doubtless be able to say, Lord whom have I in Heaven, yea, [or in Earth] besides thee.

Sinner, thou sayest, that thou also hast chosen the Lord; but how is it that he is no more looked after, or regarded by thee? How is it that thou canst live so much without God in the world, and find no miss of his presence? Art thou content to be miserable whilst thou livest here? Or hast thou chosen two portions, this world to be thy portion

here, and God only for hereafter? I, that's the truth of the case; thou foreseest that this world will not last always, but thou must after a while, be gone and leave all behind thee; whilst these things will last, thou wilt take up with them, but when they fail thee, thou countest upon God at last; and so he must only stand by as thy last refuge; when all else is gone, then God must be thy happiness. Is this thy choice of God, when thou canst only say, Rather God than nothing? So I may be sure of thee hereafter, I care not for thee now?

He that hath not chosen God for his happiness in both worlds, hath sincerely chosen him for neither. Canst thou say, thou hast chosen him for thy happiness in this world also, when thou canst count thyself happy without him? Canst thou want communion with him, and yet be at hearts ease? Canst thou take the prosperities of this world, to supply the want of a God? The smiles of fortune, instead of smiles from Heaven? Will thy twilight or candle-light serve thee instead of Sun-light? Canst thou quiet and comfort thyself thus, God is none of my acquaintance, but I have good acquaintance enough in the world? God is angry with me, but I have many good friends about me that bear me good will? My work for Heaven goes but sadly on, but yet I prosper and thrive in the Earth? I have none of the best hearts, I confess, but yet I have a good House, and a good Estate? 'Twould be sad indeed if I had nothing either above or below, either within or without me, if both Heaven and Earth had cast me out; but whilst one of them holds, 'tis well, mine own Cistern is full, and so long I can spare the Fountain. Canst thou comfort thyself thus? Deceive not thyself, God is not the portion, thine heart hath chosen; thou wilt never find rest in anything else, who hast pitched on him as thine only happiness, and till thou hast made him alone, thou hast not made him at all, the portion of thy Soul.

5. If you are willing and resolved to forsake all things for his sake. God and this world, are proposed to our choice, and this is included, in the very nature of choosing, that one be taken and the other left; 'tis not choosing, to take both, one of the two must be parted with, or neither can be said to be chosen; and so the word tells us, Luk. 14.33. Whoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple.

This seems to be an hard word; but is it so indeed? Is it hard to part with all our Brass, and to receive it in Gold? To exchange our rags for better clothing, our husks for better seeding? What is Earth to Heaven? Is all thou hast in the world, too great a price to redeem thy Soul from Death, and to instate it in everlasting blessedness? If these things could redeem thee, wouldest thou say, 'tis too much to give, this Earth is more than Heaven is worth?

But farther consider, It is not so hard as it seems to be; for, what is it to forsake all that we have? God would not have us to throw away our Estates, and make ourselves voluntary Beggars; to give away our Houses, and take up our Habitation in Dens or Caves; to give away all our bread, and our clothes, and leave ourselves to hunger and nakedness.

God would not have us to break the peace with the world, to disoblige and fall out with all our friends, and to become strangers to our own flesh; God would not have us studiously to offend Father and Mother, to despise Brethren and Sisters; to be undutiful or unnatural, to be surly, and rude, and uncivil to any, and thereby create ourselves enemies, and trouble; 'tis for the honor of Christianity that we behave ourselves sweetly, and courteously, and dutifully towards all; and 'tis the Interest of Christianity, that those that fear God, be good Husbands, and provident, and have Estates to

serve him withal in their generations. This is not the meaning of our forsaking of all, to cast ourselves into voluntary poverty, or studiously to make ourselves the objects, and reproach of the world.

That forsaking of all, which is necessary to, and will prove our sincere choosing the Lord, must be,

1. In esteem and affection; so as no longer to account or love anything we have, as our portion and happiness. God will not allow us two portions, one for the Flesh, another for the Spirit; one for this world, another for the world to come; God will be all in both worlds. As we may not serve two Masters, Luk. 16.13. So neither may we have two portions; we cannot serve, and we may not love God and Mammon. God will be all or nothing to us, he will as soon allow us two God's, as two portions; when we make the world our happiness, we make it our God; and then we make it our happiness, when we prize it too highly, love it too dearly, seek it too hotly; when we prize, or seek, or love the world more than God, or otherwise than in subordination to him.

2. In vote and resolution, to let all go at the good pleasure of God. To forsake all, is to get the heart loose from all, to stand with a mind prepared, and ready to part with all whenever God will. To be able heartily to say, If God will have it so, I am willing to be poor, and every way as low as he pleases. Now I live in credit, but if God will have it so, I am willing of contempt and disgrace; now I have friends, but if God shall see it good to leave me no friend in the world, I am content; now I live, and am in health, and prosper, and flourish, but whenever the Lord will, I am content to wither, and suffer, and die for his Name.

A willingness to be poor, whenever God will have it so, this is a forsaking our riches; a willingness to be in disgrace, to lose our

friends, or our lives at the pleasure of the Lord, this is our forsaking all these. He that will lose his life or estate when God calls him to it, in his account, he doth lose it; there be more Martyrs in the world, than have suffered at a stake; if thine own heart hath given thee to the flames, as a witness or Sacrifice to God, 'tis accepted with him, as if thou hadst been actually offered up.

Abraham's intention and attempt to offer up Isaac for a burnt-offering, was the same thing with God, as if he had done it, and had this testimony from the Lord, that he did it, Heb. 11.17. By Faith Abraham when he was tried, offered up Isaac, Gen. 22.16, 17. Because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy Son, therefore blessing I will bless thee.

Friend, art thou willing to be undone, willing to lay down thy life, when e're God shall put thee to it? God will say the like to thee, because thou hast done this thing, therefore blessing I will bless thee, as 'tis on the other side, he whose heart withholds himself, or anything that he hath; that will rather deny Christ, than suffer for him; he whose heart is against it, and will not offer himself up, though he should never be tried, or put to it, the Lord will say to that man, because thou hast done this thing, hast forsaken me, rather than thou wouldst suffer for me, therefore cursing I will curse thee. O how many Apostates in heart are there, who did never actually Apostatize, but would have done it, had they been put upon the trial? Heart-Martyrs shall be accepted, and Heart-Apostates shall be rejected, even as they that are actually such.

3. In practice or execution, so as actually to let all go, whenever God doth call for it. Particularly,

1. To suffer the loss of all, whenever it comes to be a case, that we must either suffer or sin. Whoso hath sincerely chosen God, will

choose affliction rather than iniquity. Elihu, Job. 36.21. would prove Job to be a Hypocrite, by this, that he had chosen iniquity rather than affliction; and if he could have made good the antecedent, that Job had made such a choice, the consequent would have been strong against him.

It's true, every act of Sin, nay of sinning deliberately, and that when the temptation to it is is not great, doth not certainly evidence us to be Hypocrites; the Lord be merciful to us all, if it were so: the best of men turn aside too often, from God to Sin, even when we are not much tempted to it, by suffering. But however, this is the principle, that everyone that is sincere, proposes to himself to live by, to suffer rather than to Sin, to lose all that he hath, rather than lose his integrity; and his ordinary care and endeavor is, that his practice be according to this principle.

2. To use all as God would have him. He that will not give an Alms, will much less give himself for a Sacrifice; he that cannot spare his bread to the Lord, how will he spare his life? He that bestows and employs all that ever he hath, according as God by his ordinary providence, calls and appoints him, that lays up, and lays out, only according to God's order, hath herein done that thing which will give him great ground of confidence, that he hath an heart, that will let go all whenever he is called to it.

The second Mark.

2. An actual embracing of Christ, as he that shall bring us to God. 'It is Christ alone that must bring us to that God whom we have chosen. 1 Pet. 3.18. Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Joh 14.6. I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh to the Father, but by me. And everyone that cometh unto him, he will certainly bring to the Father.

Now for the trial of our sincere embracing of Christ, I shall put it upon this one thing, our hearty consent to Christ. Christians are joined to Christ in a marriage union, Hos. 2.19. and 'tis consent that makes the Marriage. Consent to Christ is our will to have him, and our willing Christ, is our taking and embracing him. Gen. 24.58. when Rebekah was asked the question, Wilt thou go with this man? Wilt thou have Isaac for thine Husband? She said I will go; there's her consent: and that's the condition upon which Christ becomes ours; whosoever [will] let him take of the water of life freely.

Now our unfeigned consent unto Christ, includes in it, and will be evidenced by,

Our approving of Christ.

Our accepting of Christ.

Our dedication and yielding ourselves up to Christ.

Only I must tell you, there is one thing that is necessarily pre-required to this consent; and that is, a distinct knowledge of Christ; a knowledge of his person, who, and what manner of person he is; a knowledge of his proper place, in which he stands, and his proper work that he is to do, in order to the bringing us to God; as in general, that he is the Mediator betwixt God and Man; in particular, that he is our Prophet and Teacher, sent to us from God, to show us the path of life; that he is our Priest and Sacrifice, that he is our King and Ruler. A knowledge of the conditions that he imposes, and the Laws he gives to them that will be his Disciples, and that expect salvation by him; as, to believe and obey the Gospel, to repent and be converted. These things must be first distinctly known, otherwise in consenting to Christ, we do we know not what, we subscribe to a

blank. Our close with Christ must be an understanding close, otherwise it signifies nothing.

This being premised, I shall now show;

1. That our consent to Christ notes, our approving and good liking of Christ. Therefore we read, that Peter in his Preaching Christ to the Jews, that he might Preach them to Christ; endeavors first, to gain their approbation of him; and that he might be approved of them, he tells them, that he was approved of God, Act. 2.22. Ye men of Israel, here these words, Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by signs and miracles. If he could not have assured them, of God's approbation of him, there had been little hope of gaining their approbation; and if he had not their approbation, there had been no hope of their acceptance. The same Apostle tells us, 1 Pet. 2.4. that he was disallowed of men; and those that disallowed, despised and rejected him. He was to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, 1 Cor. 1.23. But as for them that are called, they had other manner of thoughts of him; to them he is, Christ, the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God. They might have been invited long enough, before they would have come, if they had not been first persuaded that he is the Power and Wisdom of God. Wilt thou consent unto Christ? He must have thy approbation, or he can never have thy consent.

There must be an approving and liking of his Person; of his personal excellencies, and worthiness to be embraced. Men must be well satisfied, both of his sufficiency, that he is able to save to the uttermost, those that come to God by him; and of his faithfulness, that he will do it. He that is not satisfied, that 'tis safe venturing upon Christ, will never be persuaded to it.

There must be an approving and good liking of his whole way of Salvation; of all that he hath done, of all that he hath suffered, of all that he demands and requires in order hereto. And as they must be able to say, He hath done all things well; so must they say also concerning what he requires, Good is the Word of the Lord. What doth the Lord require? Will he be trusted? Will he be loved? Will he be obeyed? Will he have me for his servant? My estate, my time, my strength, my body, my soul, to be all at his Service? Good is the Word of the Lord, it is but right it should be so, it's best thus to be his.

2. Our consent to Christ, notes our accepting him. Approving is not all, he may be approved and yet rejected, *video meliora proboque &c.* there are who approve the things that are excellent, and yet will not embrace them, Rom. 2.18. there must be an accepting of Christ, as well as an approving. There is

An assent to a Proposition, and

A consent to a Proposal.

1. There is an assent to a Proposition. As to instance in that of the Apostle, 1 Tim. 1.15. Christ came into the world to save Sinners. There may be an assent to this, that this is a true saying, and worthy of all acceptation, which is short of accepting. 'It is one thing to say, I believe and am persuaded in my heart, that Christ is a Savior of Sinners, and is worthy of all acceptation, and another thing to say, I accept him.

2. There is a consent to a Proposal. Christ is not only declared in the Gospel to be the Savior of Sinners, that chosen one, that mighty one, upon whom their help is laid, but there is an offer made, of this Jesus unto Sinners, who are all invited to look unto him, to come unto him

and be saved, Matth. 11.28. and also assured, that whosoever come unto him, and believe in him, shall not be confounded, 1 Pet. 2.6.

In the Preaching the Gospel, the Lord not only gives us this record concerning his Son, that in him is Eternal life, and that he that hath the Son, hath life, 1 Joh. 5.11, 12. but withal makes this proposal to every Sinner, wilt thou have this Jesus? Shall this Savior be thy Savior? If thou wilt have him, thou shalt. Do not say now, sure he is worth the having; if redemption from death, if everlasting life, be worth the having, then Christ is worth the having; but say on, wilt thou have him? Shall it be a match betwixt Christ and thy Soul? Shall he be thine, and wilt thou be his? Does thine heart say, I will, I accept, I henceforth take him for mine own, and will trust myself with him; I put my life into his hands, here my Soul shall pitch. Upon this stone which is laid in Zion, will I adventure all? Does thine heart say to all this, I will? This is thy sincere consent to Christ, provided that there be.

3. A dedication, and giving up the Soul to Christ. The matter that is to be consented to, is, not only that Christ be ours, but that we be his. Our consent that he should be ours, is our taking him, and our consent that we should be his, is our giving ourselves to him. It is said of the Macedonian Christians, 2 Cor. 8.5. they gave themselves to the Lord. This giving ourselves to Christ, hath in it, the giving him

The right of us.

The possession of us.

1. The giving him the right of us. He hath indeed a right to us already, whether we give ourselves to him or no; he hath bought us, and paid for us, we are his by purchase, 1 Cor. 6.19, 20. Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price. And yet though we be his already, he

expects that we give ourselves to him; he loves the claim by gift, above that, which comes only by purchase; and therefore he requires, Prov. 23.26. My Son give me thine heart. Thou mayest say, it is not mine to give; what have I to give to the Lord? All is his already, I am his, with all that I have. The Father hath given all to the Son, and he hath paid dear enough to purchase the Lordship of me. Well, though thou be his own already, canst thou not say, Take me then, Lord take me as thine own? 'It is more than rebellious Sinners will say, though they be his by right, yet they will rob him of his right, and hold back his own from him. They give themselves away from Christ, to the Devil and to the World. They might say to these, when they demand, give me thine heart, it is not mine to give; but they will not say so here, but whether it be theirs or no, away they give it.

But Christ expects, that thou which hast given away his right to another, hast given thyself to the world, and the lusts of thy flesh; shouldst fetch thyself back again from these, and restore thyself to him. And indeed our giving ourselves to the Lord, is but our acknowledging his right to us, and our making restitution, our restoring to him his stolen goods. Go, carry home thine heart to him, and deliver it up; and when he says to thee, it is not thine own, take the word from his mouth, true Lord, it is not mine own, it is thine, and here it is for thee, take it to thee; and till thou dost this, he will none of thee. He will be thy Lord and thy Judge, whether thou wilt or no, but he will not be thy Savior without thy consent; thou shalt be his vassal, but canst never count thyself his Disciple till thou pass over thyself to him, by thine own act and deed.

Sinner, thou sayest that thou art Christ's, but how camest thou to be his? O! He hath redeemed and bought me, thou sayest. But is this all? So he did Judas, he bought that Traitor, that sold his Master; what, hast thou no better claim to Christ, than that Son of perdition,

and will this comfort thee? Consider man, though Christ hath bought thee, hast thou not gone under hand, and sold thyself away from him? Hast thou not let in Sin and the Devil into Christ's right, and wilt thou yet say, I am the Lord's? The Devil will tell thee, thou art mine, the world will tell thee, thou art mine, and thine own Conscience may tell thee, I fear 'tis too true, I am the Devil's indeed, I am the World's indeed, for I have given myself to them, and I never yet fetched myself back, and restored to Christ his right; which yet thou must do, before he will own thee for his Disciple.

2. The giving him the possession, and the use of us. Christians are called the possession of Christ, Ephes. 1.14. the purchase and possession, and 'tis we ourselves that must put him into possession. Therefore are we required, to yield up ourselves to him, Rom. 6.13. to yield up ourselves to the Spirit of Christ, that he may sanctify us, and fit us for our Masters use, to yield up ourselves to the authority and government of Christ, to be used and employed in his Service, Rom. 6.16. His servants ye are to whom ye obey. Thus to give ourselves to Christ, is to give ourselves to Christianity; to give ourselves to God, is to give ourselves to the practice of Godliness; to be actually employed and used by the Lord, in all that he hath for us to do.

Christ, thou sayest, hath the right of thee, but who hath the possession of thee? Thou hast given thyself to Christ, but hast thou given thyself to Christianity? Thou callest thyself his Servant, but dost thou obey him as his Servant? Art thou given to the works of Christ, given to Praying, given to Hearing, given to Holiness? He hath thy name, but who hath the use of thee? To him thou hast devoted thyself, but by whom art thou employed? Thou hast parts, thou hast strength, thou hast an estate, thou hast time, but upon whom, or upon what, are all these actually bestowed? Wilt thou say, thou hast given thyself to Christ, when the Devil hath still the

possession, or the world and thy flesh have still the use of thee, and of all that thou hast? Dost thou serve this world, and walk after the flesh, and yet wilt comfort thyself with this, that thou hast given thyself to Christ?

Brethren, there may be a damnable mistake here, and you that are professors, look to it, that none of you be thus mistaken, to your everlasting ruin. It may be, thou hast sometimes gone into thy closet, and there falling upon thy knees, hast said, possibly with some affection, Lord I am thine, I here give myself to thee, Body and Soul, and all that I have, to be thine forever; and when thou hast thus done, away thou goest, rejoicing and comforted. But shortly after, the sense of this transaction is worn off, and the power of it utterly lost, and about the world thou goest as aforetime, walking at the same vain, carnal and careless rate, as thou wert used to do. What dost thou think of such a dedication? Hast thou sincerely dedicated thyself to Christ, when thou sufferest sin and the world still to have the possession, and the use of thee? Art thou sincerely given to Christ, when thou art not given to Christianity? Art thou given to Christianity, who art still so given to thy flesh, given to thy will, given to thine appetite, given to pleasure, and ease, and idleness? Trust not to any closet-Transactions, how solemn or affectionate soever they be, that have not so much power as to bring thee in, and deliver thee up, and actually engage thee in the Service of him, to whom thou hast thus passed thyself over. But of this indeed, it is most proper to speak, in the next mark.

The third Mark.

3. A giving up ourselves to the practice of a Godly life.

That a Godly life is necessary, to prove the sincerity of our choice of God, and our close with Christ, is sufficiently evident from what hath

been said in the two former marks; now it remains, that I add something for farther trial, whether the life which we live be indeed a Godly life.

I have spoken to this, in the third mark of the truth of Grace which I have given in my *Vindiciae pietatis*, to which I must refer you, and shall now only add,

That he that lives a sincere Godly life, hath such a standing care, to please God in all things, that he resolves and endeavors,

1. Not to allow himself in any known sin.
 2. Not to allow himself in the neglect of any known duty.
1. He that lives a sincere Godly life, makes it his care and endeavor never to allow himself in any known sin. Rom. 7.15. the evil that I do, I allow not.

Now there may be a double allowance of sin,

1. Positive, when we have such a lust after any iniquity, that our hearts, not being able to bear a restraint, do give themselves a toleration for it.
2. Interpretative, when we commit or live in any known sin, and connive at ourselves in it; and though we do not peremptorily resolve, for continuing this liberty for it, yet neither do we resolve against it. Non-resolution against sin is the door left open to it; when we do not hate nor resist it, when we pray not, watch not, strive not against it. It may be we wish in the general, that we could overcome, and avoid every iniquity, and are content that God should effectually restrain us by his grace, so it be, without putting us to the trouble and labor of laying any painful restraint upon ourselves; yet when

any particular sins come, and we are tempted to them, they find the door left open to them, we wink at them, and swallow them down; even this must be interpreted an allowance of them. He that sees the Thief at the door, though he do not say, pray come in, yet if he shut not the door against him, is accessory to his own Robbery. It is a vain thing for thee to say, the evil which I do I allow not, when thou doest nothing to withstand it. If thou wilt not resist, thou doest thereby invite the tempter and his temptations.

Grace, in the nature of it, is an enemy against Sin. These two are contrary, Gal. 5.17. and though it be too weak wholly to overcome, yet will it make opposition against it. It's true, that actual allowance, especially of some lesser sin, is not utterly inconsistent with the truth of grace, in this our imperfect state; but he that resolves not to watch against, to strive against every sin, that hath any standing reserve of a liberty for any one (in this thing the Lord pardon me) how dwelleth the grace of God in him?

Men's allowing themselves thus in any sin, is an argument that they are in a league with sin; and he that is in a league with any sin, his heart is not right with God. Our engaging ourselves to the Lord, doth necessarily include in it our breaking with sin; and our walking in friendship with God, is our living in the defiance of Sin. Hast thou friendship with Sin? Where is then thy friendship with God? Do'st thou say thou hast not friendship with Sin, nor art in any league with it? How is it then, that it hath such free access to thee? Consider it well, didst thou maintain in thine heart, an enmity against sin, thou wouldest take more heed, how thou gavest it entertainment: Wilt thou open thy bosom to a viper? Wouldest thou spread forth thine arms to a Serpent? Sure thou art of kin to these venomous beasts, or thou wouldest never allow them such freedom with thee. It is at least a shrewd suspicion that thou art of the seed of the Serpent, or thou

wouldest never take into thy bosom these young Serpents, thy lusts to be thy play-mates. And if thus thou doest, and thine heart will not hear of being totally shut of its liberty with them, the case is then plain, thou art in such a league with sin, as will conclude thee out of Covenant with God.

2. He that lives a Godly life, doth heartily resolve and endeavor, never to allow himself in the neglect of any known duty.

By duties I mean, not only those special acts of worship, Prayer, Hearing, &c. but all acts of obedience to the will of God; both those more general and complex Duties, of working out our salvation, of walking as becometh the Gospel, of making sure our Calling and Election, &c. and every particular duty comprehended under these; those which have a more immediate respect to God, our living in the faith, fear, and love of the Lord; those also which have an immediate respect to ourselves: our living soberly, temperately, in patience, &c. and those which respect others: doing good to all men, admonishing, reproving, comforting, showing mercy, &c. as there is occasion, and we have opportunity. As we are Christians, we are indebted to others, to our Families, to our Neighbors, to our Friends, and to our Enemies. I instance in all these, in special, in second-table Duties, both because there can be no proof made of the uprightness of our conversations, without looking into particulars, and because there are many professors who pretend to great heights in the matters of the first table, who in second-table duties, are sadly remiss and negligent. Even these latter, are so essential to true Godliness, that whatever proofs we seem to have of our sincerity, our neglects of these, especially our allowed neglects will call all into question.

Those that will live Godly in Christ Jesus, must live in all good Conscience towards God, and towards men also. God will have his

people to stand complete in his whole will; that they may herein both approve themselves in his sight, and also show forth his virtues before men, so that the world may see that the spirit of Christianity is not a fanatic and feeble thing, but hath a power in it to make a visible and universal change, in the manners and ways of those that are possessed with it, that Christians may appear to be the mercy, and the blessings, and the beauty of the world. That Countries may see, that Families may see that it is a mercy that there are some Godly ones among them; that the unbelieving Wife may see, that it is a mercy to have a believing Husband; that Grace hath made him better natured, more loving, more gentle, more tender of her good; that the unbelieving Husband may see, what a blessing it is to him to have a believing wife, that grace hath made her both a better woman, and a better Wife; more meek, more patient, more careful to please her Husband; that the unbelieving Families or persons may find that it is a comfort and advantage to them to have so good a Master, to live by so good a neighbor, that pities them, that prays for them, and even Preaches to them, by his holy life and good example.

To be professors of Christianity, and yet to be all one in our conversations towards others, as quarrelsome, as contentious, as unmerciful, as unsavory and unuseful as those that pretend to no Religion; to have those about us to say, if there be grace in them, 'tis all one as to us, as if there were none; it had been all one for me, if my Father, or my Master, or my Husband, or my Wife, or my Neighbor had never meddled with anything of Religion; he is the same man, she is the same woman, as proud, as pettish, as unkind, as unmerciful, as negligent of my good, that it could not have been worse with me, if there had been no such thing as Religion in them. What doest thou think of all the Godliness thou hast, if thou give occasion to have it thus said of thee?

Well all these particulars, and every other thing required in the Word of God, I understand by duties.

Now this is a man of a Godly life; he who having chosen God, and embraced Christ Jesus the Lord, doth set his heart in all things to walk uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, without allowing himself in the neglect of anything, that he knows pro hic & nunc to be his duty; whose prayer it is, Hide not thy Commandments from me, whose study it is, to know the whole will of God, and whose endeavor it is to walk in all the Commandments of God blameless; this is a man of a Godly life. This is according to the plain intent and meaning of his covenant with God, and this is his faithfulness in the covenant. Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy Commandments. [Then shall I not be ashamed] that is, then shall I be upright in the way, and have boldness both before God and Men, [when I shall have respect] that is when it is in mine heart, to do thy whole will, without giving myself leave, to turn aside, either to the right hand or the left.

He that Lives in the neglect of the acts of worship, that prays not, and hears not, he that neglects the general duties, that sets not himself to seek the Kingdom of God, to work out his own Salvation, to walk as becometh the Gospel, but takes up with a careless, carnal, worldly, slothful life; whether he finds he allows himself in these great neglects, or thinks he does not, though his heart smites him, and will not suffer him to be quiet, or go out with such a life in peace, the very neglect, or not engaging in these great and most necessary duties, does prove him an ungodly man; and 'twill not help this man to say, I allow not myself in these neglects, for where-ever there is grace, there will be praying, and hearing, and something done towards the working out our Salvation. 'Twill never be found any man's godliness, that he allows not himself to live thus ungodlily, when yet

he does it. Though he gives not himself a deliberate toleration, if yet his heart take leave, to live thus without God in the world, his ways will betray him, whose and what he is.

Yea and those, that do something in those great and general duties; yet if they allow themselves in the neglect of any particular duties, that they know to be such, in the neglect of Righteousness, in the neglect of Mercy, in the neglect of their Families, and the duties they owe to them, in the neglect of Neighbor or Strangers, and the duties they owe to them, and can wink at, and dispense with themselves herein, such men can never prove but their Religion is vain.

Art thou a Godly man, who art an unrighteous and unmerciful man? Art thou a good Christian, who art no good Husband? Art thou a good Woman, who art an evil Wife? Art thou a good Man, who art a bad Neighbor, and givest thyself leave to be so? Art thou a Godly man, whom halting after the Lord, must serve thee instead of walking with God? Art thou a follower of Christ, who wilt have him abate thee some of his demands, abate thee truth, abate thee mercy, abate thee self-denial, or if he will not abate it to thee, anything that thou likest not, thou wilt abate it to him? Is this to be undefiled, or entire in the way of the Lord? Will God call that uprightness, which cannot be called integrity? And that sure cannot be counted integrity, which advisedly leaves out any one of the Commandments of God.

But now he that gives himself to Prayer, Hearing, and praising the Lord, who makes it the scope and business of his life, to please God, and make sure for eternity, studying and endeavoring to approve himself in everything, to him who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, and to keep himself unspotted of the world, this is a Godly man, this is Religion indeed.

Though through infirmity, in many things he fall short; he prays, but is sick of his praying, he hears, but is ashamed to think how he hears; his Spirit is so often clouded and clogged with corruptions and infirmities, that he can feel no life, nor take any comfort in anything he does; though by the power of corruption and temptation, he be at times put besides praying, and other duties, and be sometimes found in the field, when he should have been in his Closet, in the Market, when he should have been at Church; though he find his heart too often, running off from his work, and slinking away after his earthly businesses, and gains; and the vigorous prosecution of his design for heaven, be sometimes intermitted; though he sometimes fail in the ruling of his spirit: in the governing of his thoughts and passions, and hereupon be surprised, by fits of pride, or of anger or impatience, (the more it is thus, the more doubtful will he unavoidably be, touching his state: and therefore dread to let thy lusts get head, or take encouragement from their word) yet if the bent of his heart and his course be towards the Lord, and his intention and endeavor, be to fulfil after him, not indulging but judging himself, for all his failings, and striving within himself, to stand complete in all the will of God, this man is a godly man: and because he will not pardon himself, God will certainly pardon, and overlook all his infirmities and failings, and graciously accept him in Christ Jesus, to whom be glory forever, amen.

Now brethren, to gather up all that hath been said, (for I would not have you to try by one, but by all three marks laid down) and so to bring this trial to an issue. That soul that hath deliberately, and absolutely chosen the Lord for his portion, resolving to stand to his choice, and not to change forever, that makes it the business of his life, to pursue his choice, and counts it the only happiness of his life to serve and enjoy that God whom he hath chosen; and for his sake is willing to suffer the loss of all things; that so heartily approves of

Christ, and his Gospel, that he accepts, and adventures his soul, and his hopes, upon him alone; that hath so dedicated himself, and given up, both the right and the possession of himself to him, that he accounts himself no longer his own, but is a servant and follower of Christ in righteousness and holiness of life, heartily resolving and endeavoring, never to allow himself in any known sin, nor in the neglect of any known duty; though his weaknesses be great, his falls and failings be many, this man is beyond all question, a sincere godly man.

Doest thou yet fear, whether thou be the man? Let that fear, set thee a searching once and once again; let it follow thee into thine heart, and through all thy ways; let it lay thee in the balance, and compare thee with this portraiture of a godly man, which is now set before thee; if this will not serve to quiet and satisfy thee, I know no more to say to thee, but that thou diligently set thyself, by increasing in the grace of God, and outgrowing thy sinful weaknesses and failings, to outgrow thy fears and thy doubts.

And when at length thou art come to a clear judgment, that this is thy case, then, Son be of good comfort thy sins are forgiven thee; if God have ever a child, if there be ever an heir of the Kingdom of heaven in the world, thou art one. If thou be not mistaken in thyself, but this be a true character of thee, I am mistaken in the Gospel, if, thou be not a Godly and a blessed man. Thou hast sincerely chosen the Lord, and that's a sure sign that he hath chosen thee, John 15.16. Thou art sincerely come unto Christ, and therefore he will in no wise cast thee out, John 6.37. Thou orderest thy conversation aright, and therefore, to thee will he show the Salvation of God, Psal. 50.23. Thou shalt see the good of his chosen, and rejoice with the joy of his people, and glory with his inheritance.

And now methinks, there should be a particolored face, upon this mixed company, some of you methinks, should have the joy of the Lord in your countenances, and his praises in your lips. What, hath the Almighty brought me hitherto? Hath he indeed taken me for his own, and marked me up for life? Hath he given me an heart to pitch upon him, and to accept of his son, and thereby witnessed that I am accepted of him? Is this his very Image which is to be seen upon mine heart and life, and may I now say with boldness, I am my beloveds and my beloved is mine? Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Others methinks, should be sighing and shaking for fear. These are the blessed of the Lord, but O in what case am I? Woe is me, if none be the Lord's but those that have thus chosen him for theirs; if none be the redeemed ones of Christ, but those that are his followers in holiness, and righteousness, O I dread to think, whose I am! Have I chosen the Lord? Am I a follower of Christ? Woe, woe is me, 'tis too evident that I have chosen earth and vanity and am a follower after lies. Ah wretch that I am, are all my hopes, is all my confidence now at last come to this?

Sinner, how is it that thy soul is not yet in sackcloth and ashes, that trembling and astonishment hath not taken hold of thee? Art thou yet in quiet, art thou yet at ease? Is it nothing to thee, to see thyself without Christ, and without God in the world? Or canst thou wink so fast, that thou canst not yet see that this is thy very case? Sure thou hast lost either thine eyes, or thine heart, if thy fears are not yet fallen upon thee.

As for you O beloved, whom these marks have proved to be the Lord's, Rejoice in the Lord ye righteous, and again I say rejoice; and

study to confirm and establish your hearts in the joy of the Lord, by walking worthy of that grace wherein you stand.

And thus I have dispatched the first branch, of the first direction. Search what good there is in you, or whether there be the grace of God in truth in your hearts.

2. Search what evils there are found in you. You that have made a through proof of the grace of God in you, by what hath been already said, this part of the direction which yet remains, is intended, as to you, to humble you under, and make you more watchful against those evils which yet remain.

But its chiefly intended to that sort of professors, who having but slightly searched themselves, have gotten up to a confidence, that they are the children of God.

In order to your making a further discovery of yourselves, besides what hath been already hinted to the same purpose, let me advise you to search yet deeper, what sins and corruptions there may be found in you, you hope there is the good seed sown, but what tares are there to be found in you? Some tares will be found in the best fields, some weeds will remain in the best gardens; but search if there be no rank-weeds, such as use not to be found in the garden of the Lord, whether there be no gross, nor reigning sins with any of you; or if any such be, whether they be suffered to grow and get head, and overtop, and choke those hopeful blades, whenever they appear, is your hand upon them to pluck them up, or your foot upon them to tread them down: Deal faithfully, and pass through all your fields, mark and observe your ways, and see what you can find.

Or if your life be clearer than it hath been, and you find not much above ground, search what's underground, dig down to the roots;

descend into your hearts, and when you go down into these deeps, go down trembling, to think what you may find there, though you have washed your face, and wiped your mouth, and cleansed your hands, yet fear what you may find below. Men that go down into the bottom of a deep Well, or into some dark vault, or cavern of the earth, they go down trembling, there may be toads or snakes, Jym and Ohim may dwell there; and you also know not, what you may find in your deeps. Tremble as you go down in search after the evils of your hearts. If there be no oaths nor lies, no murders, or adulteries, in your lives, yet there may be whole nests of them, in your hearts. See if there be no Images of Jealousy set up there, before which all within you fall down and worship; if there be not another God within, besides him that hath gotten the name without. Search narrowly, from room to room, from corner to corner, it may be you may find such evils, as may amaze and astonish you.

If the Lord should lead you through your hearts, as once he led the prophet, Ezek. 8.5. &c. from place to place, and first showed him the Image of jealousy, and then by a hole through a wall, and a door, led him further, where he saw every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts, & all the Idols of the house of Israel portrayed upon the wall, and the ancients of Israel worshipping them; and leading him yet further, he saw more and more, and greater abominations than these. If you should thus go in search through your hearts, God knows, what abominations you might find, which yet you have not discovered nor suspected. It may be, you may find the world sitting upon the throne within you; and if there be not the form of every creeping thing, yet all the beasts of the field, your horses and your oxen and your Sheep, may be portrayed and engraven upon your hearts, these temples of the Lord, may be made stables, and stalls, and folds, and barns, where your cattle and your corn may be lodged and laid up; nay possibly you may find them

dunghills, full of Toads and Adders; lies and adulteries, and all manner of unclean lusts may be breeding in them. Or If you find nothing else, see if that Image of Jealousy [Self] be not found behind the curtain, sitting upon the throne of God, with a crown of pride upon its head, and all within you, even your very religion, doing homage to it, and being made its servants.

Friends, you little think what an inside you may have, whatever your outside be. Dig through the wall, look through the hole, and enter by the door, and search with trembling, lest, where you hope to find Christ and the spirit of grace, you should find the unclean spirit with his abominations.

There have been many in the world, who have been taken for sincere converts, yea, and eminent Christians, in whom the devil hath seemed to be slain at the first shot, the old man hath seemed to be knocked down, at the first blow; and all on a sudden there hath appeared a spring tide of holy joys and heavenly affections, and their souls have been, as it were caught up into the third heaven, as soon as they have gotten their heads up out of the mud and mire; and yet after awhile, the old man gets heart again, and those lusts which had been laid asleep for the time, have risen, up and gotten head again, and that filthy fountain, which was thought to have been quite drained, and dammed up, hath broken its bay, and cast out as great a flood of iniquities as ever there was before.

O fear, lest it should be thus with thee, lest whatever there be at top, there be that lying at the bottom, which may undo thee forever: lest sin and the devil be only laid asleep, but not slain; lest, though the enemy be beaten out of the field, he be but only beaten into his hold, where he still fortifies himself. And be sure though he should have lost his outworks, yet whilst he makes good the strong hold, though

the channels be swept and cleansed, yet if the sink be choked up with mud and filth; though the issues of the Apostumes be stopped and dried, yet if the bag and core be not gotten out; though thou hast quite another face, and seemest quite another man than heretofore, though everyone that sees thee rejoices in the change that's made upon thee, and with the greatest confidence proclaims the, A convert, a disciple, an Israelite indeed, and thou blessest thyself in thine own heart, saying, Now I have peace yet is there that within, which will break down all thy hopes, and make thy friends ashamed of their joys they once had over thee. Fear lest this should be thy case, and get thee down into thine heart, and search yet again, whether it be or no.

Brethren, I would not check the least buds of the spring, I would not nip the first blossoming's, towards true grace & peace; I would cherish the least of the new creatures of God, from the first springing of the babe in the womb; O that every soul among you, were come so far onward, as the little ones among you. God forbid, that any of you should be discouraged or frightened back, by your being put in fear, that you are not yet come home. But however, he that is gotten up to a confidence, that the work is done, that he hath the seed of God, and the life of God within him, let him search if there be not such hidden wickedness's within him, which he never minded, nor thought on, that may give him just ground to fear, and in fear to put it again to the question, whether his estate be so good, and so sure as he concluded it.

Direction. 2. Fear and beware.

That's a special use of fear, to make to beware. Fear sin and beware of it, fear the wrath of God, and beware, that it fall not on thee. Particularly.

Fear and Hide.

Fear and Flee.

1. Fear and hide. When our first parents had sinned, and were afraid, Gen. 3.7.8. They went and hid themselves, from the presence of God, among the trees of the garden. Its true, 'twas but a poor hiding place, that they found, there was never a tree in all the garden, that had shade enough, to hide them from the all seeing eye; but yet you see how their fear works, it made them to hide. Prov. 22.3. A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself. If you ask, what or when, or how shall we hide, I answer,

1. Get your sins hid. Psal. 32.1. Blessed is he whose sin is covered. There is a covering of sin, which proves a curse. Prov. 28.13. He that covereth his sin shall not prosper, there is a covering it, by not confessing it, or which is worse, by denying it. Gehazi's covering; a covering of sin by a lie; and there is also a covering of sin by justifying ourselves in it; I have not done this thing, or I did not evil in it, all these are evil coverings, he that thus covereth his sin, shall not prosper. But there is a blessed covering of sin. Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven and whose sin is covered, forgiveness of sin, is the hiding it out of sight, and that's the blessedness.

There is an uncovering of sin, which is something towards its covering. He that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall have mercy, Prov. 28.13. confession is the way to remission. Sin is never hid till it be thus opened

There is an impudent opening of sin, and a penitent opening of it.

1. An impudent opening of sin, Isa. 3.9. They declare their sin as Sodom, they hid it not; they are naked and are not ashamed; they make their boast of sin, and glory in their shame.

2. There is a penitent opening of sin, and that is, by confessing it, and condemning ourselves for it; and this is the opening, that is the way to hide it. Confession leads on to repentance, and repentance to remission, the confessing penitent carries his sin to Christ for a pardon, and that's its covering. In that time the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found. Jerem. 50.20. [in that time] in what time? Why in the day of pardon, as in the last words of the verse. [shall the iniquity of Israel be sought for] who will seek for it? Will God rip up old sores? Will God rake up old quarrels? Who will seek it? Why 1. Whether God seek it or no, to be sure, the accuser, Satan will be seeking for it. Yea and 2. God also, the justice of God, in a sense, maybe said to seek for it, the righteousness of God will (as I may so speak) have inquiry made, if any sin still stand upon Israel's and Judah's score; if any uncanceled bills, or uncrossed scores, may be found against them, but what ever enquiry be made in that day, the day of pardons, there shall be none found. Their remission is such a covering of sins, as righteousness will not look through, to revenge them.

Beloved, get your sins thus hidden, see that they do not lie open to the revenger; confess them, repent of them, get you to Christ for a pardon. Do not deny or extenuate them, 'tis sad covering sin with sin, that will be as the dipping the wool in the furnace the second time, the dye will be the deeper. Get the Covenant, the blood of the Covenant for a covering. Carry your sores and your ulcers open before the Lord, for his covering. Lord 'tis a vain thing for me to deny it, or to excuse what I have done, it cannot be excused; I have done foolishly, I have done wickedly, and mine iniquity is marked before thee, I am an unclean thing, all wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores. A covering Lord a covering to hide this unclean thing out of

sight, a garment Lord, a garment rolled in blood, to hide the shame of my nakedness.

Friends, are your sins hid? Yes, mine are I hope; but what covering hast thou gotten? There are five sorts of coverings (besides those already mentioned) under which men's sins are often hid.

1. A covering of ignorance; they know not sin to be sin, the blind see not their own spots, and thereupon think there are no spots upon them; their darkness serves them for a covering Thou that sayest thine heart is clean, it may be 'tis for want of eyes, thou seest not what a heart it is, when do we hear ever a word of complaint, or confession from thee? There is no soundness in my flesh, (saith the psalmist) because of thine anger, nor rest in my bones by reason of my sin, my wounds stink and are corrupt, my loins are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh, Psal. 38.3. &c. Such are the complaining's of the righteous, but when dost thou complain? Thou art whole and sound, thou sayest; I but tis because thou art blind, thou thinkest so; if God should open thine eyes, thou wouldest see such sights, as would amaze thee.

2. Oblivion, or their own forgetfulness, whilst men's sins are fresh in their memory, they are sometimes afraid, but after a while, they are forgotten, and all buried in Oblivion. Thou a good Christian? Thou an honest man, and hast done no harm? Remember thyself, look to the days of old, call back the things that are past. Where wert thou at such a time, and such a time, what wert thou then a doing? Call to mind thine oaths, and thy lying, and thy drunkenness and thy companions in sin. Hast thou done nothing amiss? Rub up thy memory, and that will help thine eye sight.

3. Hardness of heart, some sinners can feel nothing; and they can see nothing but what they feel. Nothing is evil with them, but what is

uneasy, nothing is sin, but what smarts. The Apostle tell us, Eph. 4.18.19. That men without understanding are past feeling, and sure those that are without feeling, are so much the more past understanding; the brawn upon their hearts, is a film upon their eyes. Seest thou nothing to trouble thee? O hard heart! What, such a drunkard, such a scoffer, such an earthworm, such a prodigal, and yet seest thou nothing to trouble thee? If God should but smite this rock, that would open thine eyes.

4. Some hide their sins, in other men's greater sins, by looking on the greater blazes of other men's sins, their own embers, that lie most under the ashes are not seen. If they can say with the Pharisee, I am not as other men, they will not see, but they are honest men, and no hurt found in them.

5. Others will hide their sins in the Church, will take up some little profession of religion, and make so much reformation, as will give them admission into a congregation of Christians, or it may be but into a sect or party, that call themselves Christians; to whom when they have once joined themselves, there's an end of their old sins. If they have gotten a new skin upon them, and are hanged on, as members of the body of Christ, (as they think) then they go for new men, and all their old things are vanished away.

But sinners, are these the only coverts, in which your sins are hid? In your ignorance, in your forgetfulness, &c. From whose eyes will these coverings hide them? Will they hide them from God's eyes, or is it only from your own eyes? Is this all you need, to hide yourselves from yourselves? Woe be to those men, whose sins are open before the eyes of the Lord, and only hid from their own.

Will any of these coverings hide them from the Lord? Because you see not, doth not God see? Because you have forgotten, hath God

forgotten? O if there were such a book of remembrance, of all that you have done, presented to you, as is written against you before the the Lord, how pale would your faces grow? If God should now come in amongst us, and read over to each sinner, the roll that is written against him, what a trembling congregation would this be: how would you look one upon another, as men astonished! How would you strike upon your breasts, and smite upon your thighs, and speak trembling, men and brethren, what shall we do! What ease would it be to you, when you hear so much written in your own books, to think there is more written against some others? And what if you be gotten into the church, and your sins be buried under the shadow of the Altar, under your profession of religion? Will not God see them there?

Consider sinners, are your sins repented of and pardoned? Hath the Lord cast them behind his back, and blotted them out of his book? You have made a shift to blot them out of yours, but what if they should be still found on God's book? Nay is it not certainly so, do they not all stand there against you, even all the sins you have committed in your lives? O look ye out for a better covering; hast ye, hast ye, cry for a pardon, sue out an act of oblivion from heaven, look unto Jesus, get your sins nailed to his cross, and buried in his grave. Repent and be converted that your iniquities may be blotted out, and in that day, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none, and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found.

2. Get your souls hid; hid with Christ in God. I flee unto thee to hide me, Psal. 143.9. I will trust in the covert of thy wings, Psal. 61.4. Christ will be no hiding place for your sins, unless your souls also take sanctuary in him. Get thee in to Christ; if thou be found in him, thy sin shall not be found. Hide thee from Christ, in Christ; in the blood and bowels of Christ a Savior, from the fury and wrath of

Christ a judge. Great is the wrath of that day; there will be no enduring, and there can be no escaping that wrath, but by himself. Woe be to those that shall then be found out of Christ, in whatever else they be found. The kings of the earth, and the great men, the Rich men and the Captains and the mighty men (that are found out of Christ). shall hide themselves in dens, and the rocks of the mountains, and shall say to the mountains, fall on us, and to the rocks, cover us, and hide us from him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand, Rev. 6.15.16.17.

O sinners, you that have ventured it, to stand out from Christ hitherto, look before you, to that great day that comes; you that neglect the Mercy, think how you can possibly escape the Wrath of the lamb. Trust not to the secrecy of dens, to the mercy of mountains, to the might of rocks; these will all be as deaf to your cry, as you are to the cry of the Lord. Now you have a rock before you, which will then be a refuge; put you into the clefts of this rock, and the indignation shall pass over you, stay out at your utmost peril.

Wretched souls, how is it that tis so hard, to persuade you in to Christ? How is it that the clefts of this rock, have so long opened to you, yea that the rock hath followed you, and cried after you, put in hither and you shall be safe, and yet so few have been persuaded in? Lord how few! How many still stand without, and it may be, are mocking at the fears of them that are gotten in.

Sinner, how canst thou think without a trembling heart of being found out of Christ, in that great day of his wrath? O fear, fear and beware, fear and hide; hide thyself in Christ, and then thy great fear will be over, There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, Rom. 8.1.

But how may we hide ourselves in Christ? I answer,

1. Cry unto him to take you in.

2. Consent to him while he offers to take you in.

1. Cry unto him to take you in; to sprinkle you with his blood, which alone will save you from his wrath, say, but with a better heart, and in a better sense, than they did, in the words of those Jews, Math. 27.25. His blood be upon us, and our children.

There's a double sense, in which these words may be spoken,

1. The guilt of his blood be upon us,

2. The atonement of his blood be upon us.

'Twas in the first sense that those wicked Jews imprecated, his blood be upon us, let the guilt of his blood be upon us, let our own souls answer for the fact, of putting him to death.

Beware sinners, that that precious blood be not thus found upon you. Impenitent sinners, the guilt of Christ's blood is upon them, they are his betrayers and murderers, and by their impenitence in sin, they allow the deeds of those wicked ones that crucified him.

What's said of Apostates, Heb. 6.6. is chargeable upon all impenitent sinners, They crucify the Son of God afresh, for.

1. It was sin that did crucify Christ, both as the meritorious cause, and as the instrumental cause, 'twas the sin of the Jews that set them on work.

2. There is such malignity in sin, that if it were able, would fetch Christ out of heaven again, and put him to death again.

3, Impenitent sinners stand with this weapon in their hand, to do their worst towards the repeating this wicked fact.

4. There is in the crucifying of Christ, a putting him to death, and a putting him to shame; the former they would do, and the latter they do, once and once again. What a shame was it, that his crucifiers cast upon him, in crying out, not this man but Barrabbas, Impenitent sinners do the like; in turning from Christ to thy sin, thou also sayest, not Jesus but Barrabbas; these murderers for me, not Christ but my lusts, and wickedness; and though there be not such a word in thy mouth, yet this is the cry of thy fact, the guilt of his blood be upon me.

Sinners, your going on in your sins, is a kind of doing that wicked act, of crucifying Christ, once and once again. Every oath that you swear, every lie that you tell, every scoff that you cast out, against Christ and his ways; is your crucifying him afresh. This is the voice of your sins, crucify him, crucify him; on with his mocking robes and crown again, spit at him and buffet him again, scourge him again, up with him to the cross, and nail him, and pierce him again. Every sinner is bringing in more thorns, and more nails, and more vinegar and gall, and more spears to thrust him thorough. Here, take my thorns, saith one, take my nails, saith another, take my sponge and my spear saith another, and strike to the heart. And the cry of this your fact is, the guilt of his blood be upon us. Tremble O impenitents, did you ever think that there had been so much in your impenitence as this?

But 2. There is the Atonement of Christ's blood, and in this sense tis, I exhort you to cry; his blood be upon me; let that blood of sprinkling, which speaks better things than the blood of Abel, as it is

peace and a propitiation for sinners, so let it be upon me. Beg of Christ to take you in, and make you partakers of the merit of his blood, of the virtue of his blood, whereby your iniquities may be pardoned, and purged away; that when they are sought for, they may not be found. Go sinner, go unto Jesus, lift up thine eyes, lift up thy voice, stand crying at his door, Lord open to me, Lord take me in among thy pardoned ones, let the blood of the lamb be sprinkled upon me.

2. Consent to Christ, whilst he offers to take you in, you may know what's to be done, to get in to Christ, by considering over that special mark which I have already given you, to prove your being in Christ. It is your consent, that will prove you to be in Christ, and the same which will be your evidence, will give you entrance in him.

Sinners, give your consent to Christ; get your hearts to approve of him, to be well satisfied, that tis safe venturing upon him, that he is a sure refuge, that both can and will hide you from the wrath to come. Accept of Christ; If you be satisfied that tis safe venturing with him, make your adventure, embark with this faithful Pilot, and with him trust yourselves. Dedicate and give yourselves to him, as his right and property, and be sure he will hide his own. Speak unto him this hour, here I am Lord, no longer mine own, I here pass away and make over myself unto thee forever; take me as thine own, for thine I am resolved to be; take me for thine, own, and take care of me as thine own, I am thine save me. Give him the right, and give him the present possession of you; rise up this day ye servants of the Lord, and go and serve him. What wilt thou have me to do Lord? How wilt thou have me to live? Speak Lord, I will henceforth know no other voice but thine; this world shall be no longer heard, against the voice of Christ, this flesh shall be no longer heard, against the voice of Christ, depart usurpers, I am neither mine own nor yours, what have

I any longer to do with you? I am Christ's, and him only will I serve, and through the help of the Lord I will go from this place, bound in the spirit, and resolved in mine heart; to be governed guided and employed by him alone. This is the full and settled purpose of mine heart, and O that this my resolution may be attended with such an effectual power, that may make a present actual change upon my whole course and way of life. Well I will go in the strength of the Lord, and let me find the presence and the power of the Almighty with me. O that I might not go out of this house, nor be seen in the streets, but the tongues of those that see me, might say, where hath this man, or this woman been this day? What hath been done to them? Whence is this strange change? Is not this the man that was born blind? Is not this the cripple that sat for alms at the beautiful gate of the Temple? Said they once: is not this the man that lived in blindness, and in ignorance of God? Is not this he, that was such a lame, halting, trifling vain walker? How do we see him to have his eyes open, and living in the grace and power of God? What a change is here? How comes this to pass? Surely this man hath been with Jesus; surely he is become one of the Lord's, and the spirit of the living God is in him.

What say you friends, are you now for such a change? Come and give yourselves thus to the Lord, and then fear not, to commit yourselves to his custody; trust him for your pardon, trust him for protection, leave the care of your souls upon him forever. Faithful is he that hath called you, and will take care of you. Now you have a sure title to him, and are hid in his blood, and this blood of the lamb, shall be to you as the scarlet line on the window of Rahab, was to her, Josh. 2.18. or as the blood of the Paschal lamb sprinkled on the lintels, and door-posts of Israel, Exod. 12. your certain security, that the indignation shall pass over you, and the destroyer shall not hurt you forever.

2. Fear and flee, the ordinary effect of fear is flight, and the reason of flight is fear. There are three things in flight. 1. There is departure in it; be gone, get thee up out of this place said the Angels once to Lot, Gen. 19. 2. There is haste in it. Flight is a departure in haste. Haste thee, stay not in all the plain. 3. It is in order to an escape, escape for thy life, escape to the mountains.

Flee sinner, flee away from thy sins and live. What day thou hidest thee in Christ, thou must leave thy sins behind thee, or if thou carriest them to Christ with thee (which comes all to one) it must be only to be crucified, particularly,

1. Flee out of thy state of sin.

2. Flee from the practice of sin.

2. Flee out of thy state of sin, to say no more in this place to fright thee to thy heels, know that thy state of sin is a state of bondage, Act. 8.23, thou art a mere bondsman to the devil and thy lusts. Dost thou not feel the chains on thy neck, & the fetters on thy feet? Art thou not made to serve under thine enemies, whom thou canst not find in thine heart but to obey, though it be to the cutting of thine own throat? Thou art not left at liberty, to act as a Christian, according to the Gospel, no nor as a man according to thine own reason and conscience, but art made a mere brute of, to serve the pleasure of the devil and thy lusts. Art thou content to live and die such a slave? Behold, the whole world is for liberty; what groanings are there under oppression, what outcries against impositions, and invasions, upon rights and privileges, and what impatience of vassalage and servitude? And canst thou be so patient, of the impositions of lust, and thy vassalage under the devil? Canst thou dwell forever, under the usurpers? Is there any tyranny like that of thy will and lust? Is

the worst of servitudes only, easy to be born? Arise thou slave, shake off thy fetters, get thee up out of thine house of bondage.

It is not barely a cessation from the acts of sin, that I am now pressing you to; (let him that stole, steal no more, let him that was a swearer, or a liar, or a drunkard, swear no more, put away lying, and turn away from the wine and the strong drink) but get you free from your state of sin, get you up out of prison, cease not only from doing the work, but continue not under the dominion of the devil, be no longer the practicer, no nor the prisoners of sin.

Christ came not to make your prison more clean or more easy, to cast out some of your filth, or to get you an abatement of some of your drudgery work, but to bring forth the prisoners out of prison, Isaiah. 42.7. Christ calls not to the prisoners, to take their rest, or to do their masters work by halves, no nor barely to let it all alone; but he says to the prisoners go forth, Isa. 49.9.

Sinners are not only employed, and set on work by sin and the devil, but they are sold under sin, held under sin, shut up under unbelief. They are prisoners, not only by constraint but by consent also, they are voluntary prisoners, they have made a league with sin, and are its covenant-servants; they are not only prisoners to Satan but to their own hearts, the heart of man is become so very a devil, that it is its own gaoler; the devil cannot commit a sinner into safer custody, than by making his own heart his keeper.

Sinners, those hearts of yours are become such Devils incarnate, so desperately set against Christ, so deeply engaged in soul-damning works, that if God should leave you to the custody and conduct of your own natures, these will lead you on to your damnation. 'It is now become natural to sinners, to hate the Lord and his way of life; Sin hath made such changelings of them from what they originally

were, that 'tis their nature to play the fools, and the beasts; 'tis their nature to be proud, to be froward, to be malicious, 'tis men's corrupt nature, that so strongly inclines them, to follow the Devil and flee from Christ. The Chicken doth not more naturally follow the Hen, and flee from the Kye; than Sinners do follow that Kye, the Devil, and flee from Christ.

As 'tis said of the Devil, Joh. 8.44. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, so may it be said of sinners, when they do wickedly, they do of their own; when they lie, and swear, and mock, and riot, they do of their own. Their inward part is very wickedness, Psal. 5.9. Their hearts are a fountain of iniquity, Jer. 6.7. As a fountain casteth forth waters, so she casteth forth wickedness. She casteth forth her wickedness, not only continually, as a fountain casts out waters (the fountain runs night and day, Summer and Winter, from year to year) but with the same freedom also, there's no need of the Pump or the Bucket, to fetch it up, it flows forth of itself.

Such a state as this, are sinners in; they are Prisoners, and voluntary Prisoners, natural slaves; whose servile spirits are altogether suited to their servile state; who whilst they continue thus, are fit for nothing else but to be made slaves of, they are fit for no other Master but the Devil, for no other work but wickedness. Corrupt nature is their chain to bind them to the Devil, and his cord to drag them to destruction.

Art thou not afraid, Sinner, to stay any longer in such a state? Sure thou dost not know where thou art, or thou couldest not but fear. When Christ intends to fetch sinners out, he first makes them to see where they are. Isa. 42.7. He opens the blind eyes, and brings forth the Prisoners from the Prison. He opens their eyes, not barely that they may see their way out, but that they may see, what a Prison 'tis

they are in, what a vile Prison, what a strong Prison, what Irons there are upon them, and what a dark hole, and dismal dungeon, there is in the bottom of it, into which they are dropping, and unto which they are reserved in these chains and fetters. There's little hope of persuading sinners out, till upon the sight of their misery and danger, they are afraid to continue longer there.

O I am afraid, and yet I cannot get loose; why what is it that hinders thee? O this evil heart holds me in, whatever danger I am in, this evil nature will venture it all, rather than go to Christ. All within me cries in mine ears, stay, stay where thou art, this bondage is liberty, in comparison of that state that Christ would bring me to. Ay, that's it indeed, this corrupt nature is thy Prison and thy Gaoler; and till the power of nature be broken, till the stream of nature be turned, till those bars and gates be cut in pieces, the fleshly will and its lusts, by which thou art holden in, there will be no getting forth. Thou hast been called back often, and yet thou goest on as thou didst; how comes this to pass? Why thy nature leads thee on, thy nature holds thee fast, Hos. 6.7, You [like men] have transgressed, you like men have been hardened; you have done like yourselves. Like men! Like brutes or stocks rather, why that's the same, man is become brutish, and his foolish heart turned into a senseless stock, and yet this heart must have the custody and government of thee.

O flee every one of you, flee away from yourselves, arise, escape for your lives; is this the state out of which you are so loath to depart? Men and Brethren, save yourselves from this woeful state. O generation, who hath forewarned you, that you should flee, (shall I say?) nay, who hath bewitched you, that you will not flee from the wrath to come? Get you up, get you up out of this evil state. How is it that you stir not? How is it that we yet hear no such cry among you,

Master save us, we perish. Thus saith the King, Come out; will you say, no, but I will die here? Flee Sinners,

1. As Lot out of Sodom, though you must leave all behind you; all your substance, all your kindred and acquaintance; the fire and the brimstone is coming, get you gone and leave all behind you.

2. As Israel out of Egypt, whatever difficulties be in the way; the Mountains, the Red-Sea, the Wilderness, could not keep Israel to the brick-kilns. God will make a way through the Sea, through the most astonishing difficulties if you will venture to follow him out. Say not 'tis hard, say not 'tis impossible to escape; the Mountains shall be made a plain, the Sea shall become dry Land, the wilderness shall become a fruitful Land, to the followers of the Lord.

3. Flee as men out of a house all on fire, or a sinking ship, in haste. Say not 'twill be time enough tomorrow, or hereafter; the house burns, the beam is falling, the ship is sinking, away, away, e're it be too late. 'It is no time to stand delaying, 'tis no time to stand deliberating, Shall I, shall I? Today if you will hear his voice, 'tis high time to awaken out of sleep.

Rise up every man and woman, shake off your fetters, slay your keeper (some Prisoners have broken Prison by knocking their Gaoler on the head) get this old heart slain, and get you a new heart, when that's once done, then you have broken Prison, and your souls are escaped.

2. Flee the practice of Sin. Say not I am now in Christ, and my sin shall never separate me from him. If Christ do not separate thee from thy sins, thy going on in them, will prove thee separate from Christ, Isa. 1.16. Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil. An evil life, argues an evil state, thou hast no part in

Christ, who art still going on in thy wickedness; the practice of sin doth both evidence and uphold the power of sin; what clearer evidence that sin is Lord still, than when its Laws are obeyed? Who can think that the root is dead, whilst the branches bear and flourish? How is a tree known, but by its fruits? Its true, that Moss and Mushrooms, and such like excrescencies, may grow out of the best trees, but yet it may be still said of all trees, By their fruits ye shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Do men gather Gourds of Vines, or Hawes of the fig-tree?

2 Tim. 2.19. Let everyone that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity. Art Thou in Christ, who art not turned from thy sins? Do not say, I hope I may be, (however) hereafter, and so indulge thyself thy liberty in sin, till Christ come and set thee free; but whether thou be in Christ, or yet short of him, put away iniquity from thee; let there be a present forbearance of the acts of sin, and that will be a means to destroy its habits; as it is with some plants, by cutting them off above ground, you may kill the roots. Do not say, I will be a Drunkard, till God give me a new heart, I will go on in this swearing, and lying, and mocking, till God work a change upon this evil heart; this is thy resisting the work of God, and such a wicked resolution as may provoke the Lord to leave thee forever, under the power of Sin and the Devil. Whatever thou be, go presently and put away every iniquity from thee, greater or smaller, open or secret, corporal or spiritual wickedness's, have done with them all. Do not only lament, or mourn for sin, but fight against it, and the best fighting is by flying. The Soldiers of this world when they flee once, the fight is lost; but Christ's Soldiers never fight well but when they fly; when you fly sin you have won the field; when the Devil flies, he is overcome; when you fly, you have overcome.

Flee all sin, but especially your beloved and accustomed sins, remember what I have said of these already. Be not the men you have been used to be, do not the evils you have loved to do. I do not yet mean, that you should only change your sins, forbear covetousness, and turn prodigals, give off your drudgery for this world, and give yourselves to idleness, forbear profaneness, and turn hypocrites, but put away all iniquity, especially your accustomed and beloved sins.

Friends, whenever you see your old sins, that have gotten your hearts, coming upon you, and assaulting you, as suppose pride, suppose covetousness, or sinful anger, or the like, which you have been used to be overcome by, whenever you find yourselves tempted to any of these again, let your hearts startle at it, Here comes my deadly enemy. I know you of old, what a snare you have been to me, what a mere slave you have made of me. I remember how it hath been with me, all the time that I have been governed by this covetousness, led by these companions, commanded by these passions, or this fleshly appetite; these are they, that kept me back from Christ, that thrust out every good thought, quenched every good motion, resisted every good word, that was spoken to me. When the Word of God, the Ministers of Christ, and mine own Conscience called upon me, Go foolish Soul, join thyself to Christ, make thy peace with God, accept of Grace, submit to Mercy, turn at his reproofs, such was their power over me and I was so bewitched to them, that I could not bring mine heart to hearken to the Lord.

And are [you] come to me again? Tempting me and enticing me again after you? What, shall I be a Drunkard again? An Earth-worm, an Epicure, and flesh-pleaser again? Away, away, I have done with all iniquity, but especially I must have an eye to you, I dare not touch with you for my life, and therefore come my soul, put on thine armor,

stand upon thy guard, and resist them. And in special call up fear to thine help, and set that for thy Sentinel against them.

Fear will quickly espy, and will give the alarm to the Soul. Rise Samson, the Philistines are upon thee. Rise Soul, the Devil is at thy back, sin lies at the door; Fear will espy, and will not slight the danger we are in. The flesh counts sin a friend, that comes to do it a kindness: or if it be apprehended as an enemy, that's like to do the Soul a mischief, presumption will tell you, the mischief may not be great; if it make a breach upon thy peace, 'tis but repenting afterwards, and that will make it up; whatever wound it makes upon thy heart, it may soon be healed; the best that is, may be drawn aside and yet do well enough.

Or if Conscience say, it is not to be made light of, it is a dangerous and deadly enemy, yet security will tell you, the enemy is yet afar off, take thine ease, and trouble not thyself before the time. When the tempter is come, 'twill be time enough to look about thee.

But now fear will hold sin in constant suspicion, and it will ever suspect the worst, look to thyself, he is at hand that betrays thee, sin lies at the door watching for entrance, and if it get in once, God knows what mischief it may do thee, e're ever thou get clear of it.

Whatever mischief sin hath done to any person in the world, thy fear will suspect it may do as bad by thee. How many Souls has this pride made to fall into the condemnation of the Devil? How many Souls hath this covetousness drowned in perdition and destruction? How many Souls has this evil company led down into the deep? What did Nebuchadnezzar's pride do by him? Why it drove him from men, amongst the beasts of the field. How did lust and luxury serve the prodigal? It fetched him out from his fathers house, and left him at the Pigs trough. Whether did the rich man's gluttony carry him?

From the pleasures of his Table to the torments of Hell. What kindness did Gehazi's bribes do for him? They smote him a leper. What advantage did Achan's Gold, Judas his Silver, Ananias his lie, bring to them? Was not death all their wages? Yea, it will put it to be considered, what sin hath done, not only to particular persons, but to Kingdoms and Nations, to Countries and Cities. what brought it on the whole world? A flood of waters to destroy them. What on Sodom? It burnt it to ashes. What on Shiloh? Destruction and Devastation. Look to thyself Soul, this same enemy that hath made such woeful work everywhere in the world; this very enemy stands watching at thy door; every little sin that comes, thou knowest not who, or what may be at its heels: Dost thou not see Sword, and Famine, and Pestilence following after it! Behold the Devil leading on the Van, and Death and Hell bringing up the Rear.

O what easy admission and entertainment (notwithstanding all this mischief sin hath done) do fearless Souls ordinarily give unto it? It's suffered to come upon them as it will, to lodge with them, and dwell with them, and walk with them. It meets them at every turn, at their Tables, their Beds, in their Shops, in their Fields, and yet it is with them, as if there were no enemy near. If your houses were haunted with the Devil, you would flee out of them; if you saw Death in every cup of excess, if you saw a toad in every gluttonous dish, would you not be startled at it, if you saw Robbers and Murderers at your heels, would you not run for it? How is it that you are not running for your lives? Fear and you will run. How is it that you are no more carefully enquiring, which way may I take to escape? There's such a sin, or such a sin that is upon me every day, how may I get rid of it? Fear, and that will both put you upon asking, and help you to find out your way to escape.

But oh how is it, that there should be yet any pleading for, or excusing sin in the world! Such fools there are everywhere found, who are only afraid of their friends, who are watching and fighting against their Remedy; who fall foul with a friendly admonisher, with a faithful reprover; so far from taking heed of sin, that they can hardly take it well to be bid to take heed of it. Let anyone come and say to them, Friend, dost thou well to be angry? Dost thou well to be idle and vain, to be thus heady and willful in thy way? And it may be instead of an [I thank you for your friendly warning] this shall be all, [What's that to you? Look to yourself, and meddle not with me] Shame upon this folly and madness. Fear Sin as you ought, and you will never fly in the face of a faithful reprover.

To conclude this direction; if you will but hearken to me in this one thing, so fear as to flee Sin, you will at once escape all that can hurt you. If I bid you flee from a Serpent, a Cockatrice may meet you; if you flee from the Sword, the Famine may meet you; if you flee from the Famine, the Pestilence may devour you; if you flee from the wrath of Man, the wrath of God may fall on you; only flee Sin, and you are out of danger forever.

Direction. 3. Fear and follow after.

This Direction will concern,

The Unbelievers.

The Believers.

(1.) For Unbelievers, who are yet void of the Grace of God, my word to them shall be this; Follow after true and saving Grace, in fear of

falling short of it. Heb. 12.15. Looking diligently, least any man fail of the Grace of God. This Direction hath been in part prevented, in what hath been said in the two former: our seeking to get into Christ, and to get out of a state of sin, is the same in effect as to seek after Grace. What I shall add to what hath been said, shall be only these two words.

1. Let your aim be at Sincerity, and be sure you take not up with anything that's short of it. This, I take it, may fairly be accounted the sense of that counsel of Solomon, Prov. 23.23. Buy the Truth. The words may as well be rendered, Buy Truth, or Sincerity; get an upright heart, whatever it cost you.

Truth is sometimes taken objectively, for the Doctrine of Truth; the true Doctrine of Godliness. Sometimes it's taken subjectively for Sincerity and Integrity, that Truth in the inward parts, which God loveth, Psal. 51.6. Both may be here intended, but especially the latter. It is pernicious and dangerous to fall short of either, but especially of the last. To be false to our Religion, is more dangerous of the two, than to be of a false Religion. A hypocritical Christian is in a worse case than an honest Infidel; there is more hope of some conscientious Papists, than of licentious Protestants.

Buy Truth. Whatever you miss of, whatever it costs you, get Sincerity and Uprightness. To buy it, here notes, 1. To make it our own. Make Religion your own; not only by getting a right Notion of it, a clear understanding, wherein the sincerity of Godliness lies, nor barely by holding the truth, and owning it in a bold profession, (there are that hold the truth in unrighteousness) but by getting it formed and engraven upon your hearts, and subjecting all your powers to the Authority and Government of it; not only holding the Truth, but suffering the Truth to take hold of you, and to form you into its own

image. This is to make Religion our own. 2. To buy, notes, to make it our own by way of Exchange, by parting with, and doing away whatsoever is inconsistent with it.

Buy sincerity whatever it cost you; it may cost you much ere you can get it. It must be bought, though not by a price; a price you have not to give; all that you have is not of that value to be a price for Grace. But though you have nothing to buy it with as a Price, yet you have something to part with as a Condition, without which you cannot obtain; all that you have must go for it, Luk. 14.33.

I have spoken much already, to show you wherein Sincerity stands; study well those marks I have laid down, for Christians to prove themselves by, and then propose it to yourselves, never to give over till you are gotten up to that spirit and life of Godliness, that will abide the trial of those marks: Resolve to pursue it to the utmost, whatever it may cost thee. If thine Estate must go for it, let it go; better be poor than ungracious: if thou must lose thy Friends, bid farewell to them all; better be an Abject than a Hypocrite: if thy Name and reputation must go, let it go; better be a Reproach than a Reprobate: if thy sloth and beloved ease must go, and it will cost thee labor and pains, as certainly it will; buckle to thy work, better Labor than eternal Poverty. Stick at no terms, whatever the Lord imposes, submit to it. Let me have Grace Lord, and let it stand me in whatever thou pleasest. Take from me what thou wilt, impose on me what thou wilt, only help me to bear and perform, and I am content, so that I may be partaker of that Grace which accompanies Salvation.

Friends, let me again beseech and exhort you, thus resolvedly to follow on after sincerity and soundness, and beware you do not conclude you have obtained before you have, and so fall short at last. Once more let me remember you of what I have already told you,

There are preparations for Grace which are not Grace, there are Images of Grace which are not Grace, there is something like Faith and like Repentance, which are not the same.

Have you set out after Christ? Hath the Lord awakened any of your Souls? Is the sleeping Devil roused, and hath he raised such storms as he sometimes does at his casting out? Doth Conscience stir? Hath it worried thee out of thine old sleep and security? Hath the great Shepherd sent forth his dogs, thy fears, after thee, to fetch thee in? And is thy Soul now in motion towards Christ? Art thou put upon praying, and hearing, and considering thy ways, and attempting an amendment? Hast thou thus set out after the Lord? O take heed thou take not up thy rest here, follow on till thou obtain.

Friends, 'tis great pity, that any of you should come so far, and yet not come thorough, but perish in the way. Take encouragement from what is already done, but take not up your stand here: count not this all, and yet do not count it nothing. Man, be of good courage, the Lord who hath brought thee hitherto, hath therein said to thee, as to that Scribe, Mark 12.34. Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God. O thank God for that word; the next word may be, The Kingdom of God is within thee. What within a step of Christ? O take courage and put on, one stroke further, and thou hast shot the gulf; a little more Prayer, a little more Labor, and the work may be done. Follow on after the Lord, and hope in God; behold how he cometh, leaping over the Mountains; behold the Father of this poor Prodigal, running to meet his returning Son. The Sun of Righteousness, (behold) is even rising upon thee; O shall the Sun go back, or stand still? Cry to the Lord, Arise, shine upon this dark and benighted Soul, bring in that light of Life, which is already dawning upon me. O let not Sin and the World, now thou art gotten so near, pull thee back or hold thee at the door. Come on, come on poor Soul, the salvation of God is near, even

ready to be revealed upon thee, the Lord stands waiting to be gracious to thee. Whilest thou canst not say, I have already attained, follow after, and thou shalt attain, and apprehend, and be apprehended of Christ; I will not say as Moses, Stand still, but go on, and thou shalt see the salvation of God.

But yet, as there is hope, so there is also hazard; thou art still between hope and fear, let both join together, and force out thy stronger cries, When Lord? When Lord? I see thou hast dealt graciously by others, now one's brought in, then another, but my Soul still sticks; though something be done, yet how little is it? Woe is men, I am but as a Cake half backed, half persuaded, half resolved; O when shall this almost come up to altogether? Shall this be the day, when it shall be said, Salvation is come into this heart? O come Lord, when so many be taken, let not me be left; when so many be brought home, let not me be left at half-way; though I have been so long a coming towards thee, I doubt I am not yet come to thee; though I be come to thy door, do I not hitherto stand without? Lord take me in, Lord take me in, make me one of thy Disciples, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile.

Cry thus, lift up each one his Soul, and beg this Grace of the God of Grace. Beg and believe, believe and hope, hope and run, and wait for the Salvation of the Lord; but pray in fear, run in fear, wait in fear, lest after all this, you should fall short of the Grace of God. Heb. 4.1. Let us therefore fear, lest a Promise being left us, of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

2. Take encouragement to seek Grace from the Promise of obtaining. Matth. 7.7. Ask, and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you; for everyone that asketh receiveth, &c. Jam. 1.5. If any of you lack Wisdom, let him ask it of

God, who gives to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. If any man lack Grace, let him ask it; he that will not be a Beggar shall ever be poor. Let him ask, and it shall be given him; it is not to be had without asking, and it is to be had for the asking. There are four especial Encouragements in this Promise.

1. The Lord [giveth] He is not like to him that sets up himself above God, Antichrist, who Sells all he has; God giveth, you shall have it freely, without money and without price, Isa. 55.1.

2. [To all men] to any man that asks, and asks aright, to the worst as well as the best. Those that need it most, if they be duly sensible of their need, are most like to speed; the emptiest Vessels are those that God will fill, the foulest Vessels are those that God will cleanse; he will give Grace to any (that seek it as they ought) to the worst as well as the best.

3. [Liberally] A drop is more than thou deservest, but if thou wilt, the whole Fountain shall be thine; thou, as poor as thou art, mayst have Grace, and have it in abundance: these dry trees, these pining and perishing and starveling Souls, that sit lamenting your poverty, go to God and you may all have enough; every Vessel shall be filled with the water of Life.

4. [And upbraideth not] he will not upbraid any man, nor upon any account, that is a serious suitor to him. 1. He will not upbraid any man, with boldness or sauciness. If a poor man come to a Prince, to beg any great Favor from him, what is his ordinary entertainment? What a saucy Fellow is here? Here's a bold Beggar indeed, get you gone, you are a saucy fellow; God will not upbraid any of you so, you may come boldly to the throne of Grace. 2. He will not upbraid any man with his unworthiness; Sirrah you are a Rebel, and mine Enemy; remember how you have carried it to me; and besides, you

are such a poor and inconsiderable thing, that you are never like to do me much service, if I should give you never so much; get you gone: thus men upbraid, but God will not do so; he hath gifts for Rebels, Grace for his Enemies, the unworthiest among them all; he hath put them into the hands of his Son, on purpose to distribute amongst such. Psal. 68.18. How is it Sinner, that thou hast gotten no grace all this time? How is it that thou art not yet before the throne of Grace, a begging for it? O I am an unworthy wretch, a vile sinner, a rebel against God, sure he will not look upon such a one as I; No? Yes, he will look upon any one that comes, he upbraideth no man. 3. He will not upbraid any man with coming too often, or asking too much. He will not say as men to Beggers, Why you were here but yesterday, my door can never be empty for you. He will not say, Can you not be content with a little? will not one Alms suffice you? God will rather say, why have you stayed so long ere you came? Why have I heard no sooner? Or why hear I no oftener of you?

Go Sinner, speak to the Lord, for that poor graceless Soul of thine, beg thy pardon, ask his Grace and Mercy; knock at his door, and lie at his door, take no other answer but an Alms; God doth not use to send away his Beggers, that will not be denied, but sooner or later he will surely give unto them.

(2.) For Believers, who have already obtained Grace in truth, my word to them shall be, Follow on towards perfection, in fear of falling back from, or walking unworthy of that Grace wherein you stand. Hast thou obtained Grace? Hast thou so indeed? May be, now thine heart will be ready to say to thee, Fear not, thou art now out of danger of miscarrying forever, thou art passed from Death to Life, and shalt not come into condemnation. But yet take heed, for,

1. If thou be so secure from condemnation as thou thinkest thou art, yet thy Fear is one of those necessary Means by which thou must be preserved from it. As the Apostle saith concerning Faith, 1 Pet. 1.5. so may we say concerning Fear, We are kept by the mighty power of God [through Fear] unto salvation. Consider that Scripture, Jer. 32.40. I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.

2. If thou be indeed secured from wrath, art thou secured from sin also? Is there no fear that sin may hurt thee, though thou shouldst not die for it? Is there nothing to be feared but Hell? Is there no fear but that of a Slave? If thou be a Child of God, is there no fear of disingenuity and unworthiness? If thou be his Servant, is there no fear of ill husbandry? If thou be his Disciple, is there no fear of non-proficiency? He hath nothing of Christ, that thinks nothing is to be feared, but wrath and damnation.

Fear Sin, fear to be unworthy, unthankful, unfruitful, fear sinful decays, and declining's, and negligence's, and in that fear follow on towards perfection. Particularly,

1. Follow on the work of Mortification, in fear lest whatsoever wound sin hath received, it should recover and get head again. Hast thou gotten it a little under? Make it as sure as thou canst, though thou hast gotten over Jordan, and hast set thy foot on the banks of Canaan, yet the Canaanite is still in the land, and will be a briar and thorn unto thee. Thou wilt never have peace, thou wilt never prosper in the Grace of God, but according as thou prosperest in thy war against sin. Dost thou ever design to come to anything in Religion, and to grow up in the Grace of God? Let thine eye and thine hand be upon this adversary, which will otherwise certainly keep thee down, and it may be bring thee much lower than thou art this day.

'It is with Grace in an unmortified heart, as with poor Israel in Egypt, 'tis under Oppression. The task-masters were upon Israel's backs, to keep them in bondage; they were not their own men, to do as they would, they could not go and serve the Lord, their tyrants would not suffer them: and thus it's like to be with thee. Rom. 7. When I would do good, evil is present with me. O these Egyptians have me in hold, I am so captivated to the Law of sin, that I cannot do the thing that I would. What an hard servitude am I under? Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?

Only, betwixt oppressed Israel and this oppressed Israelite (the new Creature) there is this difference, Israel, by how much the more they were oppressed, by so much the more they grew and multiplied; 'twas more than all Egypt could do to keep them barren. But Grace will never grow and fructify under the oppression of Sin; Grace oppressed by affliction, will prosper and grow, as Israel did; Christians are seldom in such a thriving state as when under trouble; and that may comfort us under all the oppressions of men; we may be as holy under them all, we may serve the Lord as well, it may be, better, we may enjoy the Lord as much, it may be more, in our afflicted, than in our prosperous state. But under the tyranny and usurpation of sin, Grace cannot thrive; 'twill hardly be kept alive whiles lust so lords it over it.

When the poor Soul under this oppression of lust, groans and cries, as poor Israel did, Let me go, let me go, that I may serve the Lord; the flesh possibly, when in a fright, (as the Egyptians did when they were smitten with their plagues) may say, Go, go and serve the Lord; be as holy as thou wilt, get thee up out of Egypt, get thee on towards Heaven. But then shortly after when the fright is over, it falls on again, and it may be, doubles the bondage. Go serve the Lord: To your work, says the flesh; or it may be, To your play, you shall not go.

Or if the Soul hath gotten a little more liberty than ordinary, these Egyptians will after it again, Israel can never get free, and be let alone to serve the Lord indeed, till the Egyptians be dead.

'It is in vain to hold a treaty with our flesh, to make terms and to article with it, for a larger allowance; till this enemy be dead, thy Soul will never prosper, nor go comfortably on its way. Get Egypt into the Red Sea, let thy Sin be drowned in that Sea of Blood, the Blood of Christ; that's the only Ocean in which Sin will drown and die; when thou hast it there, then that oppressed thing within thee will grow and increase mightily, when Sin is dead, then Grace will thrive.

Grace in an unmortified heart, is as a spark of fire in green wood, it will not burn, all the blowing it up will hardly keep it alive, the sap and moisture of the wood will choke it; when the sticks are dried, then 'twill burn. O what a flame of holy Affections, what a flame of Love and holy Desires would break forth! What burning and shining Lights should we be, if these green Faggots, our lusts, were dried up and withered? When you are dead to sin, then you shall be alive unto God, Rom. 6.11.

Christian, art thou nothing concerned for that little Grace that's in thee? Preserve it, for it is thy Life; and look upon thy lusts as its Oppressors and Murderers, that would strangle the babe in thy womb; and never count thyself secure, till they be dead which seek this child's life. Say within thine heart, I go in fear of my life, of them; there's no binding them to the Peace, or the good Behaviour, they are thy mortal Enemies, and thou canst have no security but in their death.

But how shall I do to get my sins mortified?

Why, first let me ask thee, art thou so sensible of the evil of them, and the mischiefs thou art like to suffer by them, that thou darest not let them live? Art thou so heartily afraid of them, that nothing less than their death will give thee quiet? Art thou more afraid of thy living lusts, than of the labor and the smart that their death will cost thee? Who would bear the cutting off of a limb, an arm or a leg, that is not sensible that his life is concerned in it? This mortifying work is one of the most painful works of a Christian; It is not so difficult to tell you how you should do it, as to make you willing to do it. Physicians sometimes have a harder task, to persuade to the taking of the Physic, than to cure the Disease when once the Patient is willing; and when no other Arguments will prevail, 'tis Fear at last that must do it. Art thou in such a fear of thy Disease, that this does swallow up thy fear of thy remedy? Art thou for the death of sin, how painful soever it may be to thee? Why if thou art in good earnest, then take these following Directions:

1. Lay the axe to the Root of sin.
2. Put a Knife to the Throat of sin.
3. Put a Bridle on its Jawes.
4. Set thy Foot on the Neck of sin.

1. Lay the Axe to the root of sin. When Christ appeared in the World, to cut off impenitent sinners, it is expressed thus, Matth. 3.10. Now also is the Axe laid to the root of the tree; every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down. Sure enough the tree must down, when it is cut up at the root. What was to be done by those sinners, do thou by sin, lay the Axe to the root. There are sometimes some hopeful assaults made against sin, which yet prosper not, because the blow goes not to the root; the branches may be lopped, the Acts of sin

may be cut off, the Drunkard may cease from his Wine, and the Adulterer from his Harlots; swearing and lying and oppression, may be all cut down as to what appears; but soon after, all these branches and evil fruits may sprout forth, and grow up again; the root was not touched, whatever was done upon the boughs. The heart-Adulteries, and heart drunkenness, the swearing and lying and oppressing heart, the root of all these wickedness's remained untouched. Let that inward corruption of Nature, which is the root of Actual sin, be first and most effectually laid at. The root of sin is to be destroyed,

By the Word of Christ.

By the Blood of Christ.

1. By the Word of Christ. Heb. 4.12. The Word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow. It reaches to the inwards, and pierces the Entrails. Like the Lightning, it will melt the sword in the scabbard, 'twill break the bones, 'twill slay the babe in the womb. When they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, Act. 2.37. Friends, do not open the Ear only, but open the Breast to the Word, set the point of this Sword to the very heart of your sins, and count not that it hath done its work, whatever slaughter it hath made of your sins without, till the Soul of them, the inward pravity of your Natures, and the inward lusts immediately issuing thence, have received their mortal wound.

2. By the Blood or Death of Christ, Rom. 6.6. Our old man is crucified with him. Ay, that's it that must do it; 'tis Christ crucified that must crucify sin.

We read Mark 5.29. of a Woman, that had been many years afflicted with an issue of Blood, who by the influence of Christ, through the

touch of his hem, had the fountain of her blood dried up, and so her bloody issue cured. The irruptions and breakings forth of lust into action, are as so many Issues of blood running upon us; the workings of pride, the workings of Covetousness, sensuality, and the like, are a filthy flux, so many unclean issues, or running sores upon us. Those that sport themselves with their sins, are as men that make a sport of their filthy ulcers and unclean diseases.

Now the way of cure of these unclean issues, may be illustrated from that Scripture. There are three things to be noted in the cure of that woman.

1. The bloody Issue was cured by the drying up the Fountain of her blood. These filthy fluxes of lust and wickedness, will never be cured, till their Fountain be dried up, till the Body of sin be destroyed.

2. The fountain of her blood was dried up by virtue issuing from Christ. There went out virtue from him, 'tis said, upon which the woman was cured. Sin can never be slain but by virtue and influence from Christ: Therefore he is said to be a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, Zech. 13.1. Here's a Fountain prepared against a Fountain; and a fountain of blood against a fountain of blood; the blood of Christ is a fountain opened, to drain out and dry up our fountain of iniquity. 1 Joh. 1.7. The Blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.

3. The virtue of Christ was received, and the cure wrought, by a touch of the hem of his garment: that is, by the faith of the woman, who said, that is, who believed, If I may touch the hem of his garment, I shall be whole. Her faith was it which got out the virtue, as Christ himself afterwards testifies, verse. 34. Thy faith hath made thee whole.

Friends, would you be healed of your plagues? Go to Christ for a cure. Put forth the hand of faith and touch: touch, not the hem of his garment, but his side and his heart, his hands and his feet; touch this Jesus as a crucified Jesus; Christ can heal you with a touch, but he will not touch your diseased Souls, unless your faith first touch him.

We read, Numb. 21. that a look of a stung Israelite (which was the same thing with this woman's touch) on the brazen Serpent, got out such virtue from him who was signified by that Serpent, as cured him of his sting. Christ looked on by faith, will not only heal thee of the sting, but will kill the Serpent, that it shall never smite thee with such a deadly sting again.

Go to Christ sinner, say within thyself, If I can but touch him, I shall be made whole; look to the brazen Serpent, and both thou shalt be healed, and the fiery Serpent slain. Believe that there is such virtue in Christ, as will do the cure, and lay hold and rely upon him for it. Bring thy unclean fountain to that fountain which is opened for sin and for uncleanness, and thou shalt certainly find that this blood of Christ shall cleanse thee from all sin.

Thou that art a Saint mayst set thy *Probatum est* to this remedy; thou hast been with Jesus, and thy Faith hath made thee whole; thine Old man is crucified with him, and the body of sin is destroyed; only, because the cure is but begun, and must be perfected by degrees, by the same remedy, as long as thou livest in this imperfect state; by renewed acts of faith upon the blood of Christ, expect thy total cure. From the continual issuing forth of the same virtue, by which sin hath received its deaths wound, let it die daily, till it cease to be forever.

2. Put a knife to the throat of sin. My meaning is, cut it short of that Provision that would feed and nourish it. The old man is given to

Appetite, and you know what the counsel is in that case, Prov. 23.2. Put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite. Look how many lusts there are, so many sorts of feedings there are, to keep them in heart: Pride must have ornaments, or honor, applause, respect and observance, and for want of other feeding, 'twill feed upon thoughts, upon our self-reflections and dotages; any vain conceit of some worth or excellency we find in us. Covetousness must have money, houses and lands, the hopes of getting, and the content of possessing them. Sensuality must have carnal pleasure and mirth, wine and strong drink, and dainties and varieties, &c. and whilst the flesh may have its lust, it grows headstrong and imperious, there's no way to keep it tame, but by keeping it short of what it craves. Make no provision for the flesh, (saith the Apostle, Rom. 13.14.) to fulfill the lusts thereof. And you may observe it, that he prescribes this as a remedy to cure those intemperance's, riot and drunkenness, chambering and wantonness, strife and envying, mentioned ver. 13.

It may be thou complainest sometimes of thy corruptions, of the impetuousness of lust, of the unruliness of thy spirit, and confessest it, and prayest against it; but whilst thou prayest, thou canst not find in thine heart to make thy lust to fast, it must have its provision still allowed it. It may be even when thou art praying against thy pride, thou letst it feed upon thy very Prayer; thy eloquence or affectionate Enlargement, or anything thou apprehendest to be praise-worthy, this must be meat for thy pride. It may be thou prayest against thy covetousness or sensuality, but as soon as thou art off thy knees, away thou goest, to work for the one, or to thy play to please the other. When some of thy last words are, lead us not into temptation, it may be thy very next steps may be running into temptation; this is but mocking of God, and deluding thyself. If thou wouldest prosper against this enemy, whilst thou stormest it by seeking to God, starve it by denying thyself.

3. Put a bridle on its Jaws. My meaning is, restrain it from its acting's; if thou canst not prevent its conception, strangle it in the birth; if the fire be kindled within, yet give it no vent: allow not the lust of thine heart, the privilege of thy mouth, or the command of thine hand: if thou canst not restrain thy covetous desires, yet hold in from covetous practices; if thou lovest the wine and the strong drink, yet withhold the cup from the lip; if thou canst not so easily rule thy spirit, yet bridle thy tongue; the fire of passion doth not waste by spending, but rather increases: the ordinary preventing and restraining the acts of sin, will weaken its habits. I have heard some persons vainly speaking at this rate, when I have anger in mine heart out it must, and then I am friends; and so take it for their virtue rather than their sin, that they cast out all their mire and dirt in a storm, because then a calm follows. Thou fool, hast thou conquered thine unruly spirit, by suffering thyself to be thus conquered by it? What doest thou think of him that conquers his lust by going to an Harlot? When thou hast eased thy stomach, by thy Bedlam-language, then there is a calm; but thou neither considerest the sin of letting fly thine angry words, nor yet wilt mind that the fire will kindle the sooner, for that it finds so easy a vent. Damme up the furnace, and that's the best way to quench the coals.

4. Set thy foot on the neck of Sin. Have any of thy lusts fallen before thee? Make them sure, tread them under thee, that they rise not up again; do not slight them as conquered enemies, which now thou needest no more to fear; those which are now under thy foot, if thou look not well to them, may be Lord's over thee again. Hath the Lord humbled thy proud heart, broken thy unruly spirit, and seemed to turn a Lyon into a Lamb? Whilst thou sayest, I hope I shall never be proud again, never be so froward or peevish again, whilst thus thou hopest, thou shalt not, yet still fear lest thou shouldest; whilst sin hath any life in it, thou art still in danger; as we use to say of dying

men, whilst there is life there is hope; so may it be said of these dying beasts, while there is life there is fear. Let that fear be as the foot upon their necks, to prevent their rising and return upon thee.

Well, thus set upon sin, let it be destroyed; reward it as it would serve thee, and because it will be long a dying, let it be killed all the day long, draw not back thine hand, whilst its life is left in it.

O what an advantage will the death of sin be to the life of holiness! When the body of sin is dead, 'twill stink; dead bodies will do so, and all the issues of it will be noisome and loathsome to thee. Lust is never deadly, but when it lives, and is sweet and pleasant; when it dies and stinks, and is become an annoyance to thee, it will be the less thine hindrance; it hath now done its worst, the more it offends, the less it will hurt.

Do'st thou find sin sweet? Is it still a pleasure to thee? Beware of it, 'tis a sign 'tis still alive; it would stink if it were dead, thou wouldest nauseate it, thy stomach would rise against it: O this stinking pride, this stinking covetousness, these stinking pleasures, away with them, my very soul is sick with the stench they make, and when sin stinks, then holiness will be pleasant, and the work of holiness a delight: the very severities of Religion will be sweet, when the pleasure of sin ceases.

The death of sin is all our diseases cured, the lean and consumptive Soul will now revive and recover, and be strengthened for its work. The crucifying of sin is the casting off our weights that hang on to hinder us in our way, Heb. 12.1, 2. Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth easily be set us, and run with patience the race that is set before us, 'tis ill running with weights upon our backs. Lust is such a weight upon the Saints, as Conscience is upon sinners; some sinners Consciences, make them drive heavily on, in their way of sin;

when they can once knock off this weight, when they can kill Conscience, and get themselves rid of its checks and controls, then they rush on upon iniquity, as the horse rusheth into the battle; let the Saints serve their Lusts as Sinners do their Consciences, and then they may run with patience the race which is set before them.

There is a sore evil that is seen under the Sun, Sinners all upon the Tantivie, riding post towards Hell (O how sprightly, O how hot are they upon their chase of sin and vanity) and poor cripple-Christians, but barely wagging on, by a Snail-creeping motion, heavenward. O 'tis a sign that the weights do yet hang on; thou art yet heavy laden, thou carriest too many bundles of thorns upon thy back, too many burdens of earth and flesh upon thine heart, to make any hast heavenward; lay aside these weights, tread down these worldly lusts, throw off these worldly cares, and carnal desires and delights; yea, get this carnality which is the body of Sin, and the very soul of that body, to be slain and crucified with Christ, and when thou art dead with Christ, thou shalt live the better to him. He that is dead, is freed from sin, Rom. 6.7. and verse. 18.22. Being made free from sin, ye then become the Servants of Righteousness, and so shall have your fruit unto holiness, and your end everlasting life.

O what a visible improvement should we quickly see on the professing world, did we prosper more in our mortifying work; then would the languid and pale-faced Saints have blood in their cheeks, and more spirits in all their veins: the young man within would be fresh and ruddy, were the old man once well laid; then would the Plants grow up into Trees, and the Shrubs into Cedars; then will the lame man leap as an Hart, and the tongue of the dumb be loosed; then would this vile image of earth and flesh vanish and disappear, and the Spirit of Glory and of God would more visibly rest upon us, and we should go forth, as the Sun out of his Chamber, and rejoice as

the strong to run our course: Then should we be seen to be a Royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar people, showing forth the virtues of him that hath called us, out of darkness into his glorious and marvelous light. Then, when the pricking briar, and the grieving thorn, that pride, that earthliness, and carnality, shall be thus cut in their very root, when all our fleshly fooleries and dotages, and all the vexations, pets and passions of persons and parties shall shrink in and wither, then shall all those daughters of the morning, Faith, and Love, and Mercy, and Meekness, and Humility, Peace, and Gentleness, lift up their heads in our Gates, and we that have been the reproach and dishonor, shall appear the Children and Glory of our Father.

Go therefore presently to the Lord Jesus, carry these Malefactors to the Cross; get the Spear to be thrust through the heart, and nail every member of this body of sin, there let them perish and die, and then shall you see the beauty of holiness looking forth as the morning, fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an Army with Banners. Only to this I must add,

Nurse up the grace that is in you, and let it have its perfect work, in fear of receiving the grace of God in vain. When the Lord gives grace, he lays the same charge upon us as Paul on Timothy, 2 Tim. 1.14. That good thing which was committed to thee, keep by the Holy Ghost. Our grace is to be kept by us,

As Nurses.

As Stewards.

1. As Nurses, By our cherishing and improving of it; the weeding of the Garden, will be the thriving of the Flowers, but they must be nourished, as well as cleared of weeds; rotten weeds will be soil for

the Herbs, but they must be warmed and watered also, by the influences of the Sun and Clouds. In order to our nourishing of grace, are all our Receiving duties; such as are Prayer, Hearing, Sacraments, &c. our being conversant aright in these duties, are our sucking in, and feeding upon that milk, and that bread of life, by which grace grows. As pleasant as our food is, and as great a delight as there is in feeding upon it, we are froward Children, and have need of the rod to fright us to the breast: God that hath provided such food for us, and hath made us under such a constant necessity of it, will be angry with us if we slight it. If the sense of your own need do not, let the fear of the divine displeasure bring you carefully and diligently to attend on his means, and so to attend that you may grow thereby: Come to the Word, come to Prayer, and other Duties, not only in obedience because you have a command for it, but come in hope and expectation of growing by them because you have a promise. Look not on them only as parts of that homage which you owe to God, but as means to obtain from God, and whereby you may grow up unto him. Attend thus, and attend with diligence; be afraid to trifle; worship God with reverence and Godly fear. Fear as it is a bridle to sin, so will it be a spur to every duty.

Christians, Is there no fear you may be faulty here? Consider how it hath been, consider not only what you have done, but how you have done it, and what you have gotten. I have been a Disciple of Christ, an hearing Disciple, a praying Disciple, but cui bono? What advantage hath it been to me? Do I thrive? Doth my Soul prosper? What discernible difference is there, betwixt me that pray, and hear, and come to the Table of the Lord, and them that hear not, and pray not? What, have so many years duties brought me in no more than I had when I first began? Am I as much a babe now, as when I sucked my first milk? Have I lain at dry breasts? At wells in which there is no water? Or what's the matter, that after all this time, I find no more

improvement? Sure there hath been nourishment ministered, they are full breasts, they are the wells of Salvation that I have been at; but foolish Soul that I am, I have but played with the breasts instead of sucking, and with the bucket instead of drawing; and hence 'tis, that 'tis no better with me. Methinks the fruit thou find'st of such trifling, methinks that lean and starveling Soul of thine should call upon thee, to look to it, and make a better use of such precious means as are before thee. Show me not the meat, but show me the man; tell me not, thou hast been waiting at the gates of Wisdom, thou hast been feeding by the Shepherds tents; tell me not how far, or how often thou goest to hear; tell me not that thy house is an house of Prayer; that thy Closet, that thy Family, that thy Bible can witness for thee; the blindness of thy mind, the coldness, and carnality, and vanity of thy life do sufficiently evidence what a poor feeder thou hast been, whatever good meals thou hast been at. Tremble to think that such means as thou hast had, should leave thee in such a case as thou art this day; and since thy wonted course will not do to fetch thee up into a better case, what remains, but that thou bethink thyself, and henceforth resolve to put on to another manner of care and diligence; and never again satisfy thyself with any kind of performances whatsoever, that do no more answer their end. Awaken from thy drowsy Religion, and henceforth pray not as at other times, hear not as in the former days, but stir up all thy powers, engage all the grace thou hast, call up all the faith, the hope, the love, the desires thou hast, make all the strength thou canst, and bow thyself with thy might before the Lord, open thy mouth wide, and thus wait on him, until he come and rain down righteousness upon thee, and thy Soul become as as a well-watered Garden, and as a Spring of waters, whose waters fail not.

2. As Stewards. Keep what thou hast for use, our receiving duties are for our returning duties: Get in, in order to laying out, and be faithful

in laying out well, whatever you have received. The Rivers must pay themselves as a tribute to the Ocean, from which they arise and are filled; To whom much hath been given, of them much is required, Luk. 12.48. and to whom anything is given, be it much or little, so much must be returned; those that are rich in grace, are thereby enriched unto good works, and those that are enriched unto good works, must be rich in good works, 1 Tim. 6.18.

What hast thou, that thou hast not received? And what hast thou received, that thou owest not for? And what account wilt thou make, if thou set not thine heart to pay what thou owest? If our first enquiry be, what have I received? Our next must be, what have I done? Or, what have I to do? What do you more than others? Said Christ to his Disciples, Math. 5.47. I have not done by others, as I have done by you; they have not been taught as you have been taught, they have not been fed as you have been fed; they have not seen, nor heard, nor tasted, what you have done; think not that it can be born, that you do no more, nor no better than they, Coloss. 2.6.7. As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Is Christ in thee? Let the life of Christ be made manifest in thy life; as he was, so be thou in the world; he went about doing good, go thou and do likewise. Hast thou faith? Hast thou the love of Christ in thee? Where is thy work of faith? Where are thy labors of love? Hast thou been filled with the fruits of righteousness, with meekness, humility, mercy, patience? Let them all have their perfect work, that thou mayest be entire, lacking nothing.

Our first fruits must be brought forth upon ourselves, our first care and business must be, to work out our own Salvation, to keep, every one of us, our own vineyard. Thou hast an heart of thine own to keep,

and a tongue to keep, and eyes and hands to look to, and govern well; thou hast thy thoughts, and thy passions, and thine appetite, and thy Conscience, and thy conversation to take care of; and the grace thou hast received, is firstly to be exercised upon thyself. But though thy work begin there, yet it must not end there; thou hast thy family to govern, thou hast thy father's family, the household of faith, to look after; yea, and thou hast a larger charge than this, as thou hast opportunity, do good to all; Gal. 6.10. thou art set to be a guide to the blind, a light to them that are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, an example of the believers; yea, and of the unbelievers also, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.

Now Christians, know your work, and set to your work; serve the Lord with the best you have, and serve the Lord with all you have; and all this in fear, lest you should receive the grace of God in vain. I beseech you, saith the Apostle, take heed of that, 2 Cor. 6.1. I beseech you, that you receive not the grace of God in vain. Then the grace of God is received in vain, not only, when nothing is done by it, but in a degree it may be said to be received in vain, when its fruits are not proportionable, there is not so much done as might have been done: When he that hath received ten talents, brings forth no more fruit than might have been brought forth with five; when he that hath received five talents, hath done no more good, than might have been done with two; all our receiving's that are over and above the proportion of our fruits, all the over-plus of them, is received in vain. He that is a knowing Christian, if he lives not to better purpose, than a Christian of little knowledge; he that is an ancient experienced Christian, if he be no more useful in his life, than he that is but a babe, that which he hath received above what this babe hath received, is received in vain, and the Lord may say to him, wherefore is this waste?

What, art thou a man of knowledge, and hast had such long acquaintance with God, and such experiences of his special love and kindness to thee, and doest thou keep all so much to thyself, that thou art of little more use in thy generation, than a child? Hath the Lord taken thee into his heart, showed thee his loves, comforted thee in Prayer, counseled thee in his Word, feasted thee at his Table, caused his grace so to abound towards thee, and made thee glad with the light of his countenance, and all for no more but this? Hath he furnished thee, and fitted thee for every good work, and yet art thou thus barren and unfruitful? An unuseful and unactive spirit in a Christian, is an unhappiness, and an unworthiness, which yet possibly some that are none of the lowest form for attainments, may have reason enough to charge themselves withal; and to conclude, that though they have not altogether, yet they have very much received the grace of God in vain.

Brethren beloved, let us study, and let us learn that wisdom which is from above, which is full of good fruits, dare not to be found among the barren of the flock, nor of those trees which do little better than cumber the ground. Once more let me put the spur to the side: What if the Lord should come among his fig-trees, and find so little fruit upon thee? Art thou not afraid, thou mightest hear that word, Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? Consider friend, what fruits are there found upon thee? The fruits of the flesh, may be, are still hanging on; what clustres are there of them? Hatred, variance, emulation, strife, wrath, envying, pride, covetousness, what a vintage is there of these wild grapes? But where are the fruits of the spirit? What a small gleaning is there of them to be found, and what shriveling's are those that are? Wouldest thou that thy Lord should find it thus with thee? We read Cant. 4.16. when the Church was in a thriving fruitful state, she prayed, Let my beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. Do'st Thou make that Prayer? O

no, I am afraid he should come and find me thus; thy Prayer is more like to be, Let my Lord delay his coming. But how long must he stay? Thine heart would shake within thee, to think that he should find thee thus; but when, O when shall it be better with thee? Take this pruning hook (fear will serve thee for such a use) and lop off these evil fruits, that the fruits of righteousness may spring up in their room. When shall the Roses and the Pomegranates bud? When shall the fragrant spices flow forth? Those blessed fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, when shall these sprout once?

Christians, do you not wish 'twere better with you? Can you bear your own barrenness? Is not this vain, empty, fruitless life an offense to you? Do you not confess 'tis low water with you? Do you not complain of your uselessness and unprofitableness? But shall this be all? Shall we never have better fruit to bring before the Lord, but our confessions and complaints of our want of fruit, but our self-bemoaning's, and self-judging's for our barrenness? Better this, than nothing, but when shall it be better? When shall we hear the voice of joy, and praise, and thanksgivings to the Lord, for blessing our fields with increase? When shall we be able to say, See O Lord, thy blood hath not been shed in vain? Thy spirit hath not been poured out upon me in vain? Behold the winter is past, and the spring comes on; the flowers appear, the fig tree putteth forth, and the vines with the tender grapes give a goodly smell; Behold the fruits of that blessed blood and spirit in the reviving of this dead heart, in the fructifying of this barren heart. My Soul make thy boast of God; though I have nothing of mine own, but what I loath and am ashamed of; yet here's, through rich mercy, something of his fruits I have brought forth; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me, and his grace hath not been bestowed on me in vain.

Come on thou withering Soul, cry out with the Spouse, Awake thou North-wind, and come thou South, blow upon my Garden: let the Spirit of the Lord breath upon me, that my Spices may flow forth, and my fruits may appear; and then thou mayest go on, now let my beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

I cannot enumerate the particular fruits that you should bring forth, they are all the fruits of righteousness; but in hope that after all that hath been said, your fear of being found among the barren, may prepare you to receive some farther instruction for your growth, and fructifying in every good work: I shall only lay before you seven things, which if they be in you and abound, will make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Follow after,

1. Power.
2. Activity.
3. Severity.
4. Simplicity.
5. Ingenuity.
6. Spirituality.
7. Pleasure.

1. Power. Grace in the very being of it, includes power, 1 Cor. 4.20. The Kingdom, or grace of God is not in word, but in power. Natural men have natural powers, but there is nothing of spiritual power in them; wishes and velleities they may have, after that which is really and spiritually good. O that I could forsake this world, and crucify

this flesh, and follow God, and walk worthy of the Gospel in all things; thus they may wish, and desire, but for their hearts they cannot come to it; they cannot bring forth their wish into a will, nor their will into performance. The least child of God hath more of the power of God in him, than the most knowing and the very best of natural men: all the parts and virtues of a natural man, do fall as much short (as to this spiritual vital power) of the least of Saints, as a dead man does of a living child.

But yet, where there is grace in the beginnings of it, in comparison of what it may grow to, its power may be small, and its strength may be but weakness. How great is the power of the healthy above the sickly and faint? How much is the power of a man above the power of an infant? 'It is well thou art alive, but wilt thou still be but a child? O what weakly Souls are many amongst the living Souls! How ordinary is this complaint, To will is present with me, but how to perform I find not. O how many frustraneous attempts, and ineffectual offers do we make at a holy fruitful life; we wish for more care, and more diligence, and more usefulness; but still we fall short, we are reaching towards, but cannot reach to it. We judge ourselves for our failings, we groan under our imperfect duties, we are sick of those corruptions that are mingled with them, but we cannot overcome them; we lament our barrenness, we hunger and thirst after more fruitfulness, and yet we cannot obtain: we cannot do the good that we would, we cannot forbear to do the evils that we would not; so weak is our heart, that though we can weep over our falls, and failings, yet we cannot amend them.

But art thou not afraid to continue thus? What if death should overtake thee thus? How wouldest thou die, when thy sin is so much alive? Yea, how canst thou live in any peace, whilst thou seest thou livest to so little purpose? Therefore my Brethren, let me exhort you

in the words of the Apostle, Ephes. 6.10. Be ye strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put forth the power that you have received, & trust on God for more. Put forth that power that you have, & thats the way to increase your strength. Do not make yourselves to be weaker than you are; say not, 'tis for want of power, that 'tis no better with you, when 'tis for want of care and industry; much more certainly might be done, if we were better Stewards of what we have: Let there not be a pretense of weakness to excuse your laziness; do what thou canst, thou canst do more than thou doest; and if indeed thy strength be but small, thou knowest whether to go for more. Study well, and lay hold on that word, Isa. 40.28, 29.31. Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? —He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength. —They that wait on the Lord, shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as the Eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not be faint. Christians, let it not suffice you, that you are men of understanding and good affections, get a Spirit of power, as well as of love and of a sound mind.

2. Activity. An unactive spirit is next to impotence. Awaken from thy lifeless reckless temper; put away sloth thou sluggard, wilt thou still be a drone? This drone hath a sting, thine own Soul will feel it, sooner or later, that thy sloth will sting thee to the heart.

Christians, let it appear, that the spirit of the living God is in you, by your sprightfulness and vivacity. Shall the evil spirit be the only active spirit? Shall sinners flow forth in vanity and wickedness, shall their filthy waters be such a quick and running stream, and shall the waters of the Sanctuary, be but as a standing pool? Be bent for holy action, be prepared and ready for every good work. It's said Ephes.

2.10. that Christians are created unto good works: in the very make and constitution of the new creature, we may read its use and end; we are new made, for this very end and purpose, we are adopted and prepared for an active useful life, for those good works which God hath ordained that we should walk in them. Thou hadst need stir up thyself, and put thyself on, lest thou quickly come to question, whether thou be a new creature or no, if thou continuest so backward, and unready to that, for which the new creature is.

Hast thou grace indeed? Blow off the ashes from that living coal, that it may burn and shine out in a gracious life. Fire it the most active of all the elements, it will not be enclosed, but will find a vent for its flames; sure thou hast little of that divine fire in thine heart, that canst so easily keep it within.

O what wonders are sluggish Christians! Life without motion, Fires that burn not, Suns standing still, Souls condensed into the gravity of Carcasses, the winged Spirits become as the creeping things of the earth; when shall these immortal sparks recover and come to themselves? Christians be impatient with these your slothful hearts; let there be no sleep in your eyes, till your sleepy Souls be awakened. Be ashamed that you who talk, what God hath done for you, should have no more to say of what you have done, or are ready to do for him. Set every wheel in motion, and thereby fit them for more easy motion, let them stand no longer still; fear, lest your rust should eat out all your strength. Be henceforth for an active life; bethink the time, that hath been run out in sleep, and now awaken and begin to live in good earnest.

3. Severity, or strict and painful holding ourselves to our rule. Christians must be men of action, but they must not act wildly or loosely, and at all adventures, but their actions must be regular, they

must be punctual and strict to their rule. Christ's commands, some of them are hard sayings, and will put the flesh hard to it; but whatever they be, they must be submitted to, Matth. 28.20. Teaching them to observe [all things] whatsoever I have commanded you. As Christ is severe in his impositions upon us, so Christians must be severe in their impositions upon themselves, and must not abate to themselves a title of their hardest duty. Christians must be rigid; to be rigid in the way of any party of them that are, or that call themselves Christians, is an evil. A rigid Presbyterian, a rigid Independent or Anabaptist, are such in the wrong of their brethren: but it is a duty, and an excellency to be a strict and rigid Christian; provided, that our rigor be more to ourselves and to our own flesh, than to all the world besides.

Now to bring you to this Severity, let me exhort you to these three things.

1. Fear to be offended at the severities of Religion.
2. Fear to baulk anything of the severities of Religion.
3. That you may not fear the severities of Religion, fear the severity of Christ against Irreligion.

1. Fear to be offended at the severities of Religion. Blessed is he that shall not be offended in me, Matth. 11.6. The fear of Christian strictness, is that which keeps back many a Soul from Christ. A Christian! Who that understands what 'tis to be a Christian, will ever be able to bear it? 'It is too hard service for me to yield myself to; to put myself under such a Law, as ties me up so short, from all that mine heart desires, and holds me so close to things so contrary to me, how can I endure it? The attempting a universal change, of the scope, the customs, the pleasures, and the whole way of my life, how

grievous are the thoughts hereof? The matter of my design, the nature of my work, the temper of my society, to whom I must join myself, being all spiritual and heavenly, how contrary are they to me? The forsaking my Friends and Companions, the abandoning my pleasures, the bounding my liberty, the bridling mine Appetite and Passions, the laying a law upon my senses, the watching every word of my mouth, and every thought of mine heart, the holding myself on by line and by rule, in a way of constant painful duty, without any allowance of the least turning aside, to the right hand or the left, no though it were to the saving of my life, who can with patience think of it? All these things are against me. How many Souls have there been in the World, whom such forethoughts of Christianity have kept back from Christ, and held under the power of the Devil?

But though it doth not prevail thus far upon thee, thou wilt adventure after Christ however, though thou dost not say in thine heart, this yoke is not to be born, and so throw it away, yet possibly thou mayst say, 'tis hard to be born, and think much of it, that less might not suffice: Thou wilt yield to it in the general, but too often when it comes to be a Case, that thou thyself art put harder than ordinary to it, thy flesh flings, and throws, and murmurs, and thou art for the time ready to bethink, and repent of thy Christianity. Hath it never been thus with thee? Fear lest it should, and still remember, Blessed is he that shall not be offended in me. That is, not so only as not to renounce me, but not so much as to complain or groan, or drive heavily under me. Good is the Word of the Lord, that's a word becoming the heart and tongue of a Disciple.

2. Fear to baulk any of the severities of Religion. 'It is one thing to say, (even in the heart) Good is the Word of the Lord, and another thing to submit cheerfully to it, when it comes to the pinch. By severity, I mean, not unreasonable roughness or rigor to ourselves,

the unnecessary afflicting or macerating our bodies, by self-whippings and scourging's, or Penances, going barefoot, or in sordid and vile raiment, as 'tis used in the Church of Rome; but by severity, I mean, strictness and exactness to our Rule, whatever pain or prejudice it may cost us, or expose us to. Our holding ourselves closely to every duty, in special to those harder duties, of self-denial and mortification; the taming of our flesh, the beating down our bodies, and bringing them in subjection, by temperance and necessary abstinence; those ungrateful duties, admonishing, reproving, withdrawing from offenders, and whatsoever else our Lord hath imposed upon us. Particularly, there is,

1. Severity in imposing upon ourselves; when we are not partial in the Law, taking only Christ's easier words, and leaving out the harder, but do charge our whole duty upon ourselves; and when we do not deal too gently or remissly with ourselves, only telling our hearts, this is thy duty, and it would be good for thee to observe it, but do deal more closely, and charge it home; See to it, O my Soul, that thou keep the charge of the Lord; It must be done, dare not for thy life to favor thyself, or spare thy flesh, by neglecting thy duty.

2. Severity in observing and performing our whole Duty. When we are not only, not like the Scribes and Pharisees, Matth. 23.4. Who bind heavy burdens, and lay them on other men's shoulders, no nor such as bind heavy burdens for our own shoulders, and yet not touch them with one of our fingers; but whatever Conscience bids us do, that we observe and do. 'It is one thing to lay good Laws, and prescribe good Rules to ourselves, and another thing to observe them. We must yoke ourselves to our work, and go on diligently under the yoke. We must not only not quarrel with our rules, as too strait for us, but keep touch with them, and not indulge ourselves the least swerving from them. Some Professors there are whose Religion

is all in their Rules, and their Rules they have only in their Books or their heads, and but little in their hearts; who would be excellent Christians, if their lives were according to what they prescribe to themselves. When they are in secret upon their considering work, they propose holy Rules, and make good decrees: oh if they were but observed, what Christians would they be; but when they come abroad their Rules are left behind them, and it may be never remembered, till they return to their Closets again; O what a difference is there, betwixt the same persons in their Closets, and in the Fields or Markets? Friends, they are not strait rules, but strict practices that our Lord requires.

3. Severity in reckoning. When we make every day a Judgment day, and reckon with ourselves as God will reckon with us, strictly. God will bring every work to Judgment. Of every idle word men must give an account. Greater sins, smaller faults, our commissions, and our omissions, the matters of fact, and the circumstances of them must be reckoned up. Nothing must slip our reckonings, but what hath slipped our memories, and we must keep that Register carefully.

4. Severity in censuring and judging ourselves for our sins and failings. When we will not wink at our faults, no nor mince or excuse them, 'twas my oversight, or 'twas my weakness, but rebuke ourselves sharply, I have done foolishly, I have done naughtily, gathering up all the circumstances that may give our sins their due aggravations, and so passing our censures accordingly.

Such a strict and punctual course as this, hath a formidable aspect, not only to sinners, but even to some of the sincere weaklings among Christians. But however it looks, baulk it not, nor any part of it. Will you pinch upon Conscience, because that would pinch upon the flesh? Will you deny Christ, rather than deny yourselves? Every

shuffling or shifting off a known Duty, is a degree of denying of Christ. Hast thou given [thyself] unto Christ, and wilt thou deny him anything he will have of thee? Must this flesh be spared in his cause, who spared not his Life for thee? Did he say, 'tis too hard to obey, 'tis too hard to suffer, 'tis too hard to die, may not less than my Blood, than my Soul serve their turns? And yet wilt thou say, 'It is too hard to serve him, 'tis too hard to live wholly to him, may nothing less than all I have serve, may not something, may not a little suffice him? This flesh will be like enough to say so, 'tis too hard, 'tis too much that Christ requires, something may be spared to my ease, to my appetite, to my credit, and will grumble and murmur, if it may not. But shall thy Soul say, after this saying of thy flesh?

Doth thy Soul say, 'It is but reason that Christ should have all, 'tis but reason that Christ alone should be served, and served in everything, and to the utmost that he requires? It is best for me, that I be wholly his, the very severities of Christ will be better to me, than the liberties of the flesh; the pains of Christianity, than the pleasures of Sin; let me have the weariness of the Saints, rather than the ease of Sinners; let the yoke of Christ wring, rather than be thrown off? Doth not thy Reason and thy Conscience speak thus in thee, and yet must the grudging's and repining's of the flesh carry it?

Christians, if it be better to be a Disciple of Christ than a stranger, if it be better to be a close and a thorough-paced Disciple, than to bungle and halt, if it be the strictness of Christianity, out of which its sweetness grows (the more exact conformity, the more sweet communion with Christ) if there be meat in all his work, and his hardest work be the most savory meal, then O why do we so wrong ourselves, by keeping aloof and following him by halves, taking up with the easier parts, and slinking away from that which is more difficult, and thereby feeding only on the husk and shell of

Christianity, leaving the kernel to those that will be so wise as to take pains for it.

Friends, shall we yet be for strictness? Will you resolve, will you venture upon it? Who are there of you that will yet be persuaded to follow after the Lord? That will be exact Conformists? That will be close Disciples, punctual Christians, punctual in your words, punctual in your practices, whose hearts shall say now according to the Apostles words, Phil. 1.27. My Conversation shall be in all things as it becometh the Gospel; mine eye, and mine aim, and mine endeavor shall be, to stand complete in all the wills of God?

O that there were such a heart in us! But O the fearful heart, O the sluggish heart that we still feel within us. O these poor and low spirits, that have no ambition for the excellencies of Religion, and cannot bear its difficulties. What a pitiful maimed thing is the Religion of many Professors? How little is there in it? What easy, lazy, sleepy Disciples are they? How unequal are their spirits, how uneven their goings, how weak are their hearts, how slow are their motions Heavenwards, and how often do they step aside, to save themselves from labor or trouble? Never a little hotter service is in sight, but their flesh calls them off, and away they go presently after it. When is it that that voice is heard within thee, Pity thyself, spare thyself, but it does prevail? Such a word, It is not for mine ease, it is not for my credit, or it is not safe for me, what a mighty charm is it, to still and countermand the loudest calls of Christ and Conscience?

But consider friend, whose voice is it that speaks thus to thee? Why whose voice was it that spake the like words to Christ, when he spake of his sufferings, Matth. 16.22. Be it far from thee Lord, this shall not be unto thee; Pity thyself, Master, and let it not be thus unto thee: whose voice was this? Christ tells us whose in the next words, Get

thee behind me Satan: 'twas the Devil that spake thus, by Peter's mouth; and 'tis this same Devil that by the mouth of thy flesh, speaks the like to thee. Why man, art thou afraid to hearken to Christ, and art thou not afraid to hearken to the Devil?

Beloved, we are few of us so much Christians, as to be able to endure hardness, and therefore 'tis we are so easily and so often called off. Well, but however, as little as we have attained, let us put on after it. Inure yourselves to hardness, and that's the way to endure it. Be severe a while, and you will be the better able to bear severity; Fear in good earnest, how you ever again baulk a Duty, and after a while you will find, that the hardest Duty is not to be feared.

3. That you may not fear the severities of Religion, fear the severity of Christ against Irreligion. Thou canst not bear the work of Righteousness, but how wilt thou bear the wages of Unrighteousness? If thou canst not be tied up so strait by the cords of his Discipline, how wilt thou endure the chains of his indignation? If the severities of his service, be to thee a stumbling-stone, the wrath of the Lamb will be a mill-stone; if this stone fall upon thee, it will grind thee to powder, Matth. 21.44.

Sinners let their tongues run at a wild rate, I must have my ease, I must have my liberty, I was never in bondage, and cannot now endure it, to come under such a severe restraint: But thou that professest thyself to be one of his Disciples, wilt thou say as these say, I cannot bear it, I cannot endure it? Canst thou burn? What thinkest thou of the everlasting severity? Consider what thou dost, either submit to Christ's Pastoral Rod, or fall forever under his Iron Rod, wherewith he will crush thee to pieces, like a Potters Vessel.

Why is this the case? Must I bow or burn? Must I come under his Government, or be ground under his Millstones? O I have done; no

more reasoning with flesh and blood, no more picking quarrels with Religion, whatever there be in it, I dare not but submit to it all, for fear a worse thing come unto me. Well, but wilt thou submit then? Wilt thou set thine heart to all his words? Wilt thou set thy Neck to all his works?

This is the third thing now I exhort you to follow after; Severity and strictness in the ways of the Lord, which because it hath something more of asperity and roughness in it, than those that follow, there will be so much the more need of Fear, to bring us to it.

4. Simplicity. Severity may be in Hypocrisy; the Scribes and Pharisees were severe, severe in their Fasts, disfiguring their faces, looking with sad and dejected countenances; severe in the observation of the Rites, Customs and Traditions of their Fathers, yea and of the Letter of the Law of God; there were very strict sects of them, Act. 26.5. and yet they were Hypocrites. Simplicity notes,

The Heart in our work.

Singleness of heart.

1. Simplicity notes Heartiness in our Work; nothing is plain and honest but that which is hearty, doing the Will of God from the heart, Ephes. 6.6. Ye have obeyed from the heart, Rom. 6.17. My Son give me thy heart, Prov. 23.26. What is it to give God the heart? This is one thing comprehended in it, to give him the heart for a servant, or to serve him with the heart. He that gives God the heart, gives him the best he hath, and gives him all he hath; the heart will command the tongue, and the hands, and the time, and the Estate, to be all at his service; which way the heart goes all goes. Serving the Lord with the heart, is serving him in good earnest; we do but play with duty,

we do but mock God, where the heart is not; 'tis only serving him in spirit, that is serving him in truth.

Friends be real, and in good earnest in what you do: let all your Religion come deep, let your Prayers and your Praises, and all the exercising yourselves to Godliness of life, be the streaming's and issuing's forth of your hearts to the Lord. Whatever you do, do it heartily as unto the Lord. Serve the Lord, as you have been used to serve your flesh, in good earnest. What you have done for your Estates, what you have done for your Names, or for your safety, you have done it heartily, and shall that only which we do for God, and for our Souls, be done without a heart? What is God? What are our Souls and the concernments of them, that they should be thus put off? Is this heartless service all that God is worthy of? Will he accept it at our hands, or is it no matter whether he accept it or no? Is this spiritless service answerable to the worth of our Souls, and the weight of Eternity? Will you venture all upon shadows and lies? Are we but in Jest, when we talk of a God, or a Christ, or a World to come? Are our hopes and fears about hereafter, but delusions and dreams? Do you believe from the heart, and dare you not obey from the heart? How can you say, you believe there is a God indeed, that of a very truth there is such a Heaven, and such a Hell, in one of which your immortal Souls must dwell forever? How can you believe such things, and not feel your very inwards, even all the Powers of your Souls, engaged about them? Am I speaking to those that believe not, is it not to you that believe, that I now direct my words? Consider friends The God in whom you believe, is a Spirit, and will be served in Spirit and in Truth; God is a great God, and infinitely worthy of the best, and of all you have; your Souls are precious, eternal Life and eternal Death are serious things, and which of these two will be your lot, is a serious question; and sure these most serious things, do call for your most serious and hearty attendance upon them. Away

with all guile and hypocrisy, provoke not the jealous God, fool not away your Souls by trusting to lies. Worship God in the Spirit, lift up your Souls in your Prayers, chasten your Souls in your Fasting's.

And as your Souls must be in your Lips, in your Eyes, in your Ears, while you are solemnly worshipping of God, so let your Hearts be in your Hands too, in all that you have to do. Let your heart have a hand in all the actions of your lives. Eccles. 9.10. Whatever thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; that is, do it with all your heart; the heart is the might of the man. God is the strength of the heart, and the heart is the strength of the man.

Sinners, when they go forth upon service for the Devil, they carry their heart in their hands. Micah 7.3. They do evil with both hands, earnestly. [Earnestly,] there's the heart in their hands. They do their worst that God will suffer them. Thou hast done iniquity, as thou couldest, Jer. 3.5. as much as ever thou wert able. As Sinners do their worst, so let Christians do the best they can.

Whatever thou hast to do for thine own Soul, by gathering in, and treasuring up against the time to come, do the most and the best thou canst; be as hearty in laying up treasure in Heaven, as ever thou hast been in laying up treasure on Earth. Whatever service thou hast to do for God in thy generation, by doing good to others, do it with all thine heart. In your instructing, admonishing, counseling, reproof; in your working righteousness, in your showing mercy; in your promoting and encouraging any good work, or preventing evil; in your propagating serious Religion, in your pulling poor sinners as brands out of the burning, and rescuing them out of the power of the Devil, in compelling the straggling and wandering Sheep into the Fold of the Lord, or whatever else you have before you, do it heartily as unto the Lord.

What a world of good might a generation of hearty Christians do in the World? How many Souls might be the better for them? How many Families might bless God for them? The blessing of Souls ready to perish, might come upon them; they may be the blessings of a whole Country; they may be Lights to the World, and Life to the dead; Eyes to the blind, Tongues to the dumb, Feet to the lame, and strength to them that have no might; the Kingdom of God, the Gospel of Christ, would be advanced and adorned by them, and the Synagogues of Satan even depopulated and destroyed. And how greatly would this both abound to their own account, and tend to their own improvement in the Grace of God?

But woe to many of us, yea and to the poor world also, because an excuse must serve us instead of a heart, (we want time, we want parts; either opportunity or ability we have not; thus we talk, when 'tis an heart only that's wanting.) Hence 'tis we stand so many of us like cyphers, a company of useless and insignificant Souls, which the Gospel and the Interest of Christ might spare and find little miss of in the world. Friends, do but find a heart, and that will find you time and ability, for other manner of service than hitherto you have done. Well, this is one thing implied in Simplicity, Heartiness.

2. Singleness of heart. Singleness of heart notes, both plainness of heart, without juggles and cheats, or pretensions of what is not intended, and oneness of heart (as I may so speak) that does not divide itself betwixt more Lord's than one, more Ends than one, but runs out one way; that has but one to serve, and but one thing to do. But of this having spoken largely elsewhere, I shall say no more here.

5. Ingenuity, with good will doing Service, Ephes. 6.7. this good will notes that good nature, which by grace we are wrought to, inclining and disposing, us to a more noble and free, to a more cheerful and

ready serving the Lord. An ingenuous Christian doth not only serve the Lord really, and without guile, but readily and cheerfully; it's sweet to him to do good: he bears good will to God for himself: he feels the infinite goodness and worthiness of the Lord to melt and draw forth his Soul towards him: the name and honor of God is in his heart, and is so dear and precious to him, that he feels something within him, prompting him to all manner of expressions of love and duty to him. He is become good natured, and so not only in point of gratefulness, he returns love for love, good will for good will, duty for kindness, which he hath received; but it is a pleasure to him, to return good will for goodness, love for his worthiness to be beloved. The name of God he would have to be above every name; it is his delight, and therefore his desire, that as the Lord is infinitely honorable, so he should be abundantly honored; the very thing, the magnifying and exalting the Lord, is the great thing that sits upon his heart, it is a pleasure to him that God is pleased, and this he loves that God should be loved and served; and hence is his care, hence are his labors, this is the spring-head of all his duties, and God is the Ocean into which his streams do run. He speaks for God, and works for God, and lives for God; he studies to be holy and righteous, he is busy and industrious, he is watchful and painful, and fruitful in good works, that he may thereby show forth the virtues of him that hath called him, and glorify his Father which is in Heaven. He understands and feels, that what he thus does for God, is to himself also, and will abound to his own account and everlasting blessedness, and the good will he bears to his own Soul, and the hopes he has of his own reward, are as oil to his wheels, but his good will to his God, is the main spring that sets them all a going: O follow after this blessed frame, get you such an ingenuous Spirit, and then how sweet and easy will the very severities of Religion be? The nearer you come up to this, by so much the less need will you have of that fear, which is so necessary to bring you hitherto. Fear will now resign

up to love, to do its work more immediately by itself. Not but that there may be still some use of it, more or less; so long as there is sin before us, and any danger of our falling into it, so long will love cause us to fear; but as we are more grown up above the power of sin, and are not so greatly in danger of it, so fear abates. By how much the more perfect love, by so much the more hatred of sin, and so much the less fear of it. Love will now make as effectual a resistance against sin, by Hatred, as it did before by fear; and for our course of duty, we shall now run, not with patience only, but with cheerfulness, the race that's set before us; a cheerful willing horse will the less need the rod or spur.

6. Spirituality. This and the former are twins, and grows up together. How fit is the spiritual man, and how free will he be for spiritual work? The new man is a spiritual man; he is such from his birth, Joh. 3.6. that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit; but whilst he is a child, there is so little of spirit appearing in him, that the Apostle sticks not to call him carnal, 1 Cor. 3.1. I could not speak to you as to spiritual, but as unto carnal [even as to babes in Christ] but as this Child grows up towards a perfect stature, so he becomes more spiritual from day today; and accordingly he prospers in his work.

O Christians, get you to be of a more elevated raised spirit, through the more abundant diffusion of the spirit of Grace upon your hearts. Live more in the contemplation of God, Behold his face in righteousness, and you shall be satisfied with his likeness, Psal. 17.15. 2 Cor. 3.18. Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed from glory to glory, into the same Image. Hereafter we shall be perfectly like him, because we shall see him as he is, 1 Joh. 3.2. and by how much the more we see him here, by so much the more like him. Acquaint yourselves with God, divine converses beget intimacy in Heaven, and none so Heavenly as God's intimates; we

are too great Strangers in Heaven, to have much of Heaven upon our hearts; distance breeds difference, by being such strangers, we become more alienated from the life of God. There is nothing more ordinary, than to receive the tincture of our society upon our hearts; we like our acquaintance, and are apt to grow like them. Be familiar with the spiritual God, and you will become more spiritually minded; no such advance towards divine conformity, as divine communion; conformity will prepare for communion, and communion will increase conformity.

Christians, Be spiritual, your work is spiritual; it lies in the exercise of spiritual Graces, in the performance of spiritual duties, in the offering up spiritual Sacrifices. Your encouragements are spiritual encouragements; spiritual privileges, comforts and rewards, favor and acceptance with God, fellowship and friendship with God, peace of Conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost.

What are all these spiritual works, and spiritual encouragements, to carnal hearts? How unfit is the spirit of a brute for the work of a man? And how unsuitable is the Spirit of a man, (the carnal mind) to the work of a Christian? They that are in the flesh (fleshly men) cannot please God, Rom. 8.8. 1 Pet. 2.5. Ye also, as lively stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy Priesthood, to offer up spiritual Sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Sowing of fields, planting of Orchards, buying, and selling, and trading, are as proper works, for the beasts of the earth, and as much they are like to do at it, as blessing, and praising, and serving the living God, to carnal men. Sinners, you also come together to pray, and hear, and Sing, and serve the Lord; but you are like to make as good works of it, as to the spirit of these duties, as your Cattle would do, at building your houses, or keeping your markets; and by how much the more any

amongst Christians are like you, by so much the more unskillful are they like to be at the work of God.

And what are spiritual encouragements, to carnal hearts? How little would it quicken and provoke carnal men, on in the Service of God, to tell them, as you grow more serviceable, so you shall be more acceptable to God; as you abound in duty, so your grace, and your comfort, and your hopes, and your joy shall abound? If you could tell them, This is the way to be rich, to rise and grow great in this world; you shall gain favor and friendship with men; the Dignities and Preferments, the Gold and the Silver shall be shared amongst the most active and industrious Christians. What multitudes would this fetch in to be Disciples, and what contending would there be, who should be the most forward of all Christ's followers? But whilst this is all we can say, you shall find grace in the eyes of the Lord, you shall have treasure in Heaven, we see by experience enough, how little this will move them. Get these hearts to be more Spiritualized, and then you will find both the work of God and his rewards, to be most acceptable work, and the highest encouragements.

Friends, what's the reason that we so lose all our arguments, which the Lord puts into our mouths, to persuade you to more serviceable and fruitful life? We open the good treasure of Heaven to you, we set the unsearchable riches of Christ before your eyes, and do what we can to enamor you of them, thereby to allure on your lazy hearts, to kindle desire, to quicken to labor, but nothing will do; you are as slow and as heartless in your pursuit of these invisible treasures, as if nothing had been told you, of their worth and excellency; how comes this to pass? Why are you not yet carnal? I, that's it, that spiritual good things are no more taking with you; your fleshly ways, your fleshly pleasures, your fleshly converses and correspondences, have

so kept alive, and fed, and fomented the carnality of your hearts, that they cannot discern or taste the things of the Spirit.

When we are become more spiritual, we shall savor and relish spiritual things, and then shall we feel what attractives they will be; our desires will be above, our delights will be above, our hearts will be lost to these carnal things, we shall leave this earth to earthly minds; when this mantle of flesh is fallen off, and we are gotten up into the Chariots of fire, then shall we ride upon the high places of the Heavens, and our wings shall carry us on swiftly, towards the mountains of Spices.

As far forth as we are become spiritual, our motions upward will become natural; and by how much the more natural, by so much the more strong and pleasant: the rougher things of Religion, will be then more smooth, and the hard things easy; 'tis this flesh that creates us difficulties, when the flesh is swallowed up of Spirit, difficulties shall be swallowed up of delight, and then shall we go on our way rejoicing, then shall we labor and abound in the work of the Lord, when we shall thus taste, and see that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

Lastly, Follow after pleasure, the Pleasure of Religion: This will spring up to you out of the former branches, as I have already hinted. Get you such a Spirit of power and holy activity, grow up to that exactness, simplicity, ingenuity, and spirituality, that you may drink of their pleasures. Here I shall show,

1. That Religion hath its pleasure.
2. That the pleasures of Religion are the portion of the grown Christian.

3. What the particular pleasures of Religion are, that we should be reaching after.

1. Religion hath its pleasures. You may remember, I have been lashing and leading you on hitherto, at least within a step or two, by fear. And though your fears will now, in great part be left behind you, I would not yet leave you. That which follows, will be of this use to you, to encourage you to bear the rougher conduct of fear, all along your younger time, by that sweeter course you shall have of it, when fear shall give up to love; as the pleasures that comes in, from the hopes of freedom, doth allay and sweeten the severities of an apprenticeship.

Religion hath its pleasure. It hath its tartness, and its trouble, as you have seen already; so much unpleasantness it hath in its fore view, that foolish Sinners shun it, and run away from it, for fear. They will not touch the Roses, for fear of the prickles. As 'tis with Saints, so 'tis with Holiness, 'tis a Lily among thorns; these thorns not only hurt the Lilies, but keep back the hand of the gatherers; how many more than there are, would be reaching after this precious flower, but for fear of being scratched.

Well, but whatever there be in Religion to affright, it hath much more to invite us to it; Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace, Prov. 36.17. They shall be abundantly satisfied, with the fatness of thine house, and thou shalt make them drink of the River of thy pleasures, Psal. 36.8. what, and how great the pleasures of Religion are, will be made appear in the third particular.

2. The pleasures of Religion are the portion of the grown. They lie deep, they are some of those deep things of God, which the Spirit of God will reveal, 2. Cor. 2.10. 'tis not everyone, that hath a little Religion, that is gotten down so deep, as its pleasure lies. It is with

the pleasure of Religion, as with the Plagues of Sinners, they both lie at the bottom. The best of sin is at top, Sinners first draughts are the sweetest, when they have drank down to the bottom of their cup, then they taste the dregs. Beware Sinner, of what comes after thy pleasant days; thou hast yet tasted but the best of Sin, thou art not come to the bottom of thy cup, there the gall and the wormwood lies.

And so on the other side, the top, and the outside of Godliness, hath more harshness in it, 'tis the inside and the bottom of it, that is most pleasant, there its sweetness lies.

Young beginners and smatterers in Religion, seem to have made a bad exchange: they have lost the sweetness of sin, and pleasures of the flesh, and are not come at the sweetness of Religion; their pleasant days are gone, and what have they in exchange? Behold, for peace they have great bitterness, for ease weariness, for mirth heaviness. If Christians that are come but to the entry of Christ, should hope for no more than they taste or see, they would be ready to wish themselves back in the tents of wickedness.

It is really a blessed exchange that they make, who with Moses, Heb. 11.25. choose the afflictions of Religion, rather than the pleasures of sin. The very sufferings of the Saints, are a better portion, than the rejoicings of Sinners, the Winter of Godliness hath more Sun-shine, than the Summer of Sin; honest poverty is better than the Mammon of unrighteousness, and honest labor and travail, than wicked ease and idleness. He whose carnal laughter is turned into Godly sorrow, his sorrow will end in Godly joy.

This joy, though the entrance of Godliness be the way to it, yet the Infants in Religion, do seldom taste of it. God uses to do, as Christ at that feast, Joh. 2.10. he keeps the best wine till last. The pleasures of Religion are the portion of those that have gotten up to the power of

Religion: Whilst the weaker Christians feed themselves on their fears and sorrows, and the most of their Religion lies in their humblings and mourning's for sin, those that are grown up to be strong in the Lord, do feel the joy of the Lord to be their strength; and when we have experience of this pleasure of Religion, it is both a sign of our growth, and will be our sail to carry us on, with more vigor and swiftness.

3. What the pleasures of Religion are. I shall mention but these four,

1. The pleasure of Sincerity.

2. The pleasure of Success.

3. The pleasure of Ease.

4. The pleasure of Love.

1. The pleasure of Sincerity. Sincerity hath such sweetness in it, as no man knows but he that hath it; a stranger shall not intermeddle with this joy. This pleasure is not known by every Christian, that is sincere. Where is sincerity in every real Christian, but he hath little of the pleasure of it, that hath not the knowledge of it. Weak Christians are in doubt, whether they be sincere or not: those that are but one degree above hypocrites, are still in fear that they are but hypocrites; they that know themselves upright, can rejoice with that joy of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 1.12. This is our rejoicing, the testimony of our Conscience, that in all simplicity and Godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world.

O the galls and stings of a guileful heart! Whatever specious shows there may be, of Religion without, whatever approbation, or applause the hypocrite may obtain from men; whatever tickling delight, in a

great repute, for an eminent Christian, he may feel for a while; whatever pleasure his gifts and commendable performances, may feed him with; yet the Conscience of hypocrisy, and guile within, after the flush of that carnal pleasure is over, will sting him into bitterness and anguish. Much good may do hypocrites, with all their applauses and self-exaltations, a plain, honest, upright heart, hath more serenity and sweetness, than comes in by all the admiring's and Euge's in the world.

Friends, would you live a voluptuous life? Get you an upright heart: would you have all within you to be sweetness? Beware of the leaven of hypocrisy: would you prove yourselves no hypocrites? Then be improving daily; let sincerity be growing up towards perfection, and then it will be known what it is, Nichodemus will in a while, appear to be Nathaniel, an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile. Let it be thus with thee, and then thou mayest take up the Psalmists words, Psal. 4.7. Thou hast put gladness in mine heart, more than in the time, when their corn and wine increased.

2. The pleasure of success. 'It is a comfort to see something coming in; when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life; disappointment is distress. To ask and not to have, to sow and not to reap, to work and not to have to eat, to buy, and sell, and travail, and trade, and never to prosper in anything, but to be as poor, and low, as those that are idle; I need not tell you, how sad and uncomfortable it is. To take upon us to be the Servants of Christ, to take up the professing trade, the praying trade, and the hearing trade, and to find all we do, to come to just nothing; I have been praying, and hearing, and hoping, and yet still I am where I was; Lust holds up the head, Grace hangs the wing; doubts and fears, dullness and darkness still abide upon me as heretofore, I am as carnal, and earthly, and barren, as very a child in Religion, as I was many years since; O what a weary and

uncomfortable life is this! To have so many things a doing, and nothing done; O how heartless a thing is it.

When we have good success, when we see our Souls prospering, this will wash our steps with butter, and strew our ways with rose-buds, and make pleasant all our paths.

One of the great joys of the world, is the joy of the Harvest; and the joy of the Saints is expressed by that, Isa. 9.3. They joy before thee, according to the joy in harvest. The Harvest is the success of men's labors, and that's their joy, to see they have not labored in vain.

Christians, though they are never like in this life, to see the Harvest in the sheaf, yet 'tis a joy to them to see a Harvest in the blade; to perceive that the seed is not dead and rotten under the clods, but springing up to the Harvest; this is a pleasant sight. It is not such a pleasure to the Husbandman, to walk through his fields, where he hath been ploughing and sowing, and to behold the thriving beginnings of a hopeful crop, to see all green, and fresh, and hearty, and strong, this is not such a pleasure to the Husbandman, as 'tis to a Christian, to see a spring of Grace in his Soul.

Now I see, 'tis not in vain to sow to the spirit, to serve and wait on God. Where is all thy praying, where is all thy laboring? God knows where 'tis saith the barren Soul, I doubt 'tis all lost, I can see no sign of it remaining; that's a sad Soul. But ask thus of the thriving Christian, where is all thy praying, and thy laboring? And he can answer, O I thank God, 'tis here to be seen; This field of mine, a few years since, lay all fallow, rough, and hard, and nothing that was good, was to be found upon it; but now, (O how it joys mine heart to find it so) the good seed that hath been buried here, is not dead, 'tis gotten up above ground, the Lord hath let me see something of his grace breaking forth, and it increases and grows up daily in me. The

hard and stubborn, is now become a melting and broken heart, the proud and froward, is now become an humble and quiet spirit; It hath cost me something, many a sad thought, many a sigh, many a tear; but though I came hardly by it, here 'tis by the grace of God, the barren hath brought forth, this dry tree hath blossomed, this sluggish heart, to which the very thoughts of a laborious fruitful life, were once so irksome, that I doubted that I should never have come to anything, but should have lived and died a drone; O what a comfort it is to me to see it thus hopefully come on. A diligent Christian will have such successes, his labor shall not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15.58. and when he sees what good success he has, then let him speak, what a pleasure it is to him.

Christian, Thou hast been at thy work, but what fruit hast thou found? Hast thou prospered? Hast thou sped well? Dost thou see of the travail of thy Soul? Is thy sin weakened? Is the world conquered, is grace quickened in thee? Is it so, and is it not a pleasure to thee to find it so? Doth it not please thee, that thou art not so vain, nor so earthly, nor so proud as thou hast been? Doth it not glad thee at the heart, to find that the Lord hath been with thee, and blessed thee, and helped thee, in what thou hast set thine heart unto? And how lookest thou now, on thy remaining works? Wilt thou anymore drive so heartlessly, and so heavily on, as thou wast wont to do? Wilt thou anymore cry out, Hard service? A weary life? Sure thou canst not; what thou findest coming in, will make thy very labor and thy sweat, to be sweetness to thee.

3. The pleasure of Ease. Ease hath a pleasure in it; not only ease or rest from our work, but ease in our work, when we can carry it on with ease; by how much the harder our work is in itself, by so much the greater pleasures will it be, when we can go easily through it. Christ tells us, Matth. 11.30. that his yoke is easy, and his burden

light. Christ's yoke is an hard and an heavy yoke to Sinners, and such which they are in no wise able to bear, but he makes it easy to his Saints. A yoke may be made easy three ways,

1. By making the burden of it lighter,
2. By making the neck stronger,
3. By accustoming the neck to the yoke.

1. By making the burden of it lighter; by paring it, or taking off something of it; a great yoke may be pared, and pared, till at length it come to be a little on. Thus Christ's yoke, will not be made easier; he will pare nothing off, he will not abate anything of his work; there's the same Law for Saints and for Sinners, there's the same duty imposed on the weak as the strong, Matth. 5.17, 18. Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets, till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled: The same Law which was from the beginning, shall be Law to the end. Christ will never make that to be no sin, which once was sin, nor that to be no duty which once was a duty, nor will he ever dispense with duty or sin; he says not to any, less shall serve for thee, than for others, he requires all of everyone. But here, by way of caution, take notice of two things,

1. Christ's yoke, is in this sense, easier than Moses' s yoke, there is an abatement of the burden of Ceremonies, and legal Rites; that Law of the carnal Commandment, as 'tis called, Heb. 7.16. is vanished, and taken out of the way; no more of that chargeable service, of Sacrifices, no more Bulls, or Goats, or Lambs out of our flocks or herds; the service of Christians, is in this respect, cheaper Service, than that of the Jews of old, 'tis only our Morals, whereof nothing will be abated.

2. Though Christ requires the same duty of all, and imposes the same things, and as much upon the weak as upon the strong, yet he will accept that of the weak, which he will not from the strong. Nothing less than perfection, is due from the weakest, but sincerity will be accepted, whatever imperfection there be. God will take those weak and maimed Services from the weak, which he will not from the strong. He that hath a Male in his flock, and Sacrificeth a corrupt thing, Cursed be that deceiver, Mal. 1.14.

2. By making the neck stronger. That's an easy yoke to a man, which a Child is not able to wag. A laboring man that's weak and sickly, will find his ordinary work, to be too hard for him; when he recovers his strength, he can go through it with ease. Weak Christians, will ever find Christianity to be hard Service; as they grow up to be stronger, they will find it grow more easy, day by day.

3. By accustoming the neck to the yoke. The yoke at first putting on wrings and galls, and wearies; those that are unaccustomed to the yoke, are impatient of the yoke, 'tis use that makes it easy. An Apprentice to a Trade, though at his first entrance, he do not half so much work as afterward; yet 'tis with twice so much pains. The first hour is ordinarily with him the burden and heat of the day, his morning is hotter than his noon.

The tediousness of Religion meets us at the threshold, our hardest task is to begin well; nature will make the strongest opposition against grace, at the very birth of the new creature; our first charge against lust, is usually the hottest charge; the travail of the birth hath more pain in it, than all the after care of bringing up the child.

A Christian at his first setting out after Christ, feels all his motions heavenward to be as swimming against the stream, but by how much the more, grace hath over-poured nature, by so much the more, he

hath now gotten the stream with him; his following God is now become as swimming down the stream of that new nature, which hath now gotten so much the better in him.

One of the hardest works of a Christian, is Self-denial; to lay down our own wills, to curb our appetites, to go cross to our own dispositions, interests, and humors; this goes near at first, and will hardly be born; but after we have used ourselves a while to it, and by degrees inured our wills to submission to the will of Christ, and holding the bridle strait upon lust, and appetite, have made our hearts to feel themselves to be under authority; a cheerful and contented subjection will in time become habitual to us; the more self-denial we have exercised, the less will there be afterwards needed. He that hath been given to intemperance, to gluttony, or drunkenness, at his first laying a restraint upon himself, what a bondage is sobriety and temperance to him? But after he hath used himself to a temperate life, he finds it more sweet and easy to him, and is better pleased with it than ever he was with his former excess, and scarcely knows now, what 'tis to lust after his old licentiousness.

Now Brethren, that which I would persuade you to is, Make your Religion pleasant, by making it easy to you; make your Religion easy, not by halving your work, or remitting your care, but by increasing your strength and your diligence; get your hearts strengthened, and get them habituated to Religion; this will make it easy, and ease will make it pleasant.

What's the reason that we see some Sinners go on with so much pleasure, in their wicked ways? The service of sin is laborious enough, and in some respects much more toilsome and expensive, than the Service of Christ; They have many Masters to serve, and every one of them will be calling them to work; they have the Devil to

serve, and the World to serve, and divers lusts to serve; they are like a servant of men, who is at the command of more Masters than one; one calls him this way, another that way, one hath this to be done, another that to be done; so that for one and another, the poor Servant can never be at rest; such is the case of Sinners, their pride calls them one way, their covetousness another, their sensuality another; their Souls are made mere Hackneys of, though they change their rider, yet one or other is still upon their backs. And yet we see how roundly, and merrily they go on their way, without ever complaining of their Masters, or their work. When do you ever hear any such complaints among them, O this Devil is an hard Master, O this flesh of mine, what a Tyrant is it? O this feasting and sporting, this drinking and rioting, what an irksome Trade is it? O this getting of Money, this laying house to house, and field to field, I am quite weary of it. When do you hear any such groanings, or complaining's amongst them? No, no, they are strong Sinners, they are accustomed to do wickedly, and thereupon, as very a drudgery as the service of Sin is, they can go through it with ease, and pleasure. Friends, get you to be strong in the Lord, and you will run your race of duty with much more pleasure, than sinners run their course of iniquity, hold you close to your work a while, and you will get to Heaven with as much ease, as Sinners go to Hell.

O what fools are loitering, trifling Christians! Who think to make their life easy, by idleness? What's the reason that thou haltest thus after the Lord, and art so slothful in thy way? Why dost thou not set thine heart, and thy shoulders to the work of the Lord, and give thyself in good earnest, and wholly to it? O I cannot endure all labor, all difficulty, I must have a little ease; 'tis too tedious and painful to me, to hold to such close and constant service. But dost thou think to make thy work easy, by trifling at it? Foolish Soul, thou takest the ready way, to create thee the more difficulty; once the work must be

done, or thou art undone, and there's no such way to do it easily, as by doing it diligently; the life of a trifler, is the hardest life of all that profess themselves Christians; doubtless Christ's yoke, will sit easiest upon those necks, upon which it sits the closest.

4. The pleasure of Love. He that hath not felt pleasures in love, hath not felt what 'tis to love. This is one of the great pleasures of Heaven, to love and to be beloved; to receive the over-flowing's of the divine love, and to feel our hearts emptying themselves and flowing forth in returns of love to God. Look how much you have of love, so much of Heaven, of the joy that is above, 1 Pet. 1.8. Whom having not seen, ye love; what follows? Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, 1 Joh. 4.16. God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God; and he that dwelleth in God, dwelleth in joy, Psal. 37.4. Delight thyself in the Lord, to love God and to delight in God, are much the same, love is the bud, and delight is the blossom, that grows out of it.

Love hath a pleasure in it, and the love of God, will put a pleasure into all Religion. How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts, Psal. 84.1. It is good for me to draw near to God, Psal. 73.28, I delight to do thy will, O my God, Psal. 40.8. Sing praises to his name, for it is pleasant, Psal. 135.3. It is a pleasant thing for him that loves, to please and praise the Lord; It is good before the Saints, Psal. 52.9.

Fear often brings us upon Service, but 'tis love that sweetens it, fear brings us on, especially in the days of our minority, and it should do so, as I have already showed, if love will not, fear must. We often pray, and read, and hear, and search our hearts, and look to our ways, because we dare do no other; we strive, and wrestle, and watch, against sin, and its lusts, against the world and its temptations, because we are afraid what would become of us, if we should not. 'It is well that anything will do, either love or hope, or

fear; whatever it be, that will bring us upon our duty, that will keep us from iniquity, 'tis well that something will do it: 'It is better to pray, because we are afraid to neglect it, than not to pray at all; 'tis better to keep a good Conscience, because we are afraid of an evil Conscience, than to be licentious; whatever it be that brings us upon a conscientious life, better so, than to be let alone to carnality and looseness.

But yet still, 'tis love that sweetens, and thereby strikes the great and most kindly stroke in all Religion. Fear brings us to Religion, as to our Physic; the sick man hath no love to Physic, but yet he will take it, rather than die; Love brings us to it as to our food, 'tis our meat and drink to do the will of God; eating and drinking, to the hungry and thirsty, are some of the great pleasures of life. Duties are the meat of Holy Souls, and they come unto them, with as great desire, and are conversant in them, with as great delight as hungry bodies come to, and sit at their meals, Cant. 2.3. I sat down under his shadow, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

Weak believers are like sickly men, neither Physic, nor food will relish with them; they must eat for necessity, they cannot live without something of Religion; but were it not for necessity, they could almost as well let it all alone. 'It is well that necessity will prevail, but whilst they are thus forced on, how heavily do they drive, and how little must suffice them? Too often, they come on to their duties like bears to the stake, and go off from them, as the Ox from under the yoke.

But when thou lovest, thy soul will enlarge, and reach forth with desire, even after the highest pitch of Godliness; and thou wilt go freely and cheerfully on, in all the exercises of it. Thou wilt not then say, may not less serve? Thou wilt not say, may not less duty serve,

because thou canst not say, may not less pleasure serve? Everyone would have as much pleasure as he can, and therefore wouldest thou have, as much holiness as thou canst; the more holy, the more pleasure.

If thou lovest, thou wilt not be for short Duties, short Prayers, short Sermons, little snatches at Religion, thou wilt not be so soon weary at thy work; when are men weary of pleasure? When do they use to say, I have pleasant hours enough, sunshine days enough, O that my good days were over once! O that my days of darkness would come, and the years draw nigh, wherein I might say, I have no pleasure in them! Everyone is willing to live in delights, as much and as long as he can; when once we can say, the Lord is my delight, the next word will be, Let me dwell in the presence of God forever.

Christians, let our Souls take the wing, and mount up towards this blessed state; O how short do the most of us fall, we have much ground to go, e're we shall get up to it. How is it with us in our secret converses with God? Are we glad when our retiring hours draw near? When we enter into our Closets, to meet with our beloved, do we there use to solace ourselves with love? Is praying and praising our pleasure? Is communing with God, and with our own hearts, a delight? Do our hearts use to say, It's good for me to be here?

And how is it with us in our ordinary course? What is the joy of our life? Is this it, that our life is a walking with God? Have we no good days, but our holy-days? Are we never well, but when we can see and serve the Lord, and never amiss, while we are so doing? Do we not only judge, but feel that intimacy and familiarity in Heaven, is our only Heaven on earth? Lord how seldom, Lord how little is it thus with us?

But may we not obtain? Is not such a blessed state, worth our putting in for it? Are you willing, friends, to keep you always at this distance from your delight? Is it enough, that you have some hopes for hereafter, are you content that your souls should never taste of your joys here? Shall they still dwell in exile, while they dwell on earth? Shall they never put off the garments of their widowhood, till they put off their clothing of flesh? Are you content to take up yet longer, with this dark and disconsolate state? Is the drudgery of Religion, this sighing, and mourning, and striving against the stream, and going on so poor, and hungry, and hard bestead; Is this Religion enough for you? Would you be glad to be more cheery, and lively in your way? Would you taste the milk and the honey, the marrow and the fatness? Would you ride on, with free spirits, and full sails, triumphing over difficulties, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God? Would you that these rough ways were become a plain, and these dark shades were all sun-shine? Would you feed in the green pastures, and be led by the still waters, and be made to drink of that River, that makes glad the City of God? Then put you on, be no longer smatterers and piddlers, dwell no longer on the shore or surface of Religion, but hoist up all your sails, and launch forth into the deep; get you into the heart and inside of Christianity, where the Lord will show you his loves. Be not satisfied with some few glances, or little touches; but get you possessed and swallowed up of the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord; and this will be to you, both the wine, that will make glad your hearts; and the oil, that will make all your wheels to run: then shall you run the way of God's Commandments, when the pleasure of Love shall enlarge your hearts.

FINIS.

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