

**THE
DEJECTED
SOUL'S
CURE**



CHRISTOPHER LOVE

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Christopher Love

Monergism Books

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by Christopher Love

Published by Monergism Books

P.O. Box 491

West Linn Oregon 97068

www.monergism.com

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Editor's Note – During the EEBO-TCP Transcription Process, all the text was hand transcribed according to visual representation; and as such, sometimes the letters s, l, f & t are misconstrued with each other, these letters regularly being almost illegibly similar in the original facsimile script. Though it is rare for these errors to remain post-edit, unfortunately they may remain if uncaught. My sincere apologies in advance where such errors occur. As the Puritan Edward Leigh once said "If thou findest faults and Errata in the book, let love cover them, for to err (as the Satirist saith) is the sad privilege of mortality, and he (of all men) erreth most, who challengeth a privilege from error." Also, the symbol , when included, signifies omitted Hebrew & Greek. Lastly, some archaic words may be updated to more contemporary terminology; but changes have been kept to a bare minimum.

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To the Reader

Christian Reader,

Thou art desired to take notice that the end of this our Epistolary Preface, is not to strew the flowers of our praises upon our deceased brother, *whose praise is in all the Churches of Christ; Nay, his works praise him in the gates.* To say no more of him then Christ doth of *Lazarus*, Luke 16:22, *the poor man died, and was carried by Angels into Abraham's bosom*, but there is this double end in it;

1. To assure thee, that these seventeen sermons on *Psalms 42*, and the four following on *Heb. 1*, ultimately are, though a posthumous, yet a legitimate issue; they all having been diligently compared, and revised by *Mr. Loves* own Notes, except the two last on *Psalms 42*, the Notes of which could not be found; yet the very contexture of them shows they are a thread of the same spinning. This we thought good to inform thee of, because forged and supposititious pieces have in all ages, in all sciences, been obtruded upon

the world, under the name of persons of any worth, or eminency. Nay, *Jerome* tells us that various Apocryphal books were vented under the names of the Apostles themselves: The same principles of pride and avarice are busy in such impostures at this day. These Sermons we publish, and justify for his. They were calculated by him for the pulpit, for the press; had he lived to publish them, question but they had been more polite. But because we would publish nothing but what was purely his, we have therefore sent them abroad for they were left by him, without the addition of any considerable sentence more then what was in his own notes; That thou mayst conclude, thou hast him speaking in these Treatises, and nobody else. Whatever mistakes, or literal faults thou mayst find, impute that either to oversight of the corrector, or the printer; and if thou hast not a measure of knowledge to amend them, exercise so much charity as to cover them: *For censorious critics, we care not at all to satisfy them.*

2. The next thing we aim at in this Epistle, is to mind thee of that which (if thou hast any savor of the knowledge of the Gospel) thou thyself wilt discern; and that is, the spiritualness, usefulness, seasonableness of this discourse: Which is to raise and elevate the spirits of the saints, under the faintings and despondencies of spirit, to pluck out the sick feathers out of the wings of faith and prayer; to hold out some spiritual pullies to a weak Christian to raise up himself by. To buoy up those radical graces of faith and hope, in the waters of affliction, temptation, and desertions. This our beloved brother had been himself long in the school of temptation and desertions, under the nurture of God's rod: So that no question in these sermons but that he felt what he spoke, and spoke what he felt, being enabled by God to *comfort others with the comforts wherewith he himself was comforted of God.* Thou wilt find several common, useful practical

cases of conscience distinctly propounded, and judiciously resolved, for satisfying the scrupulous, resolving the doubting, comforting the dejected Christian. In this Treatise are three things very considerable.

1. Thou wilt see a singular dexterity in comforting troubled dejected souls, which is certainly one main work of a Gospel ministry. God would have his people comforted, and the Gospel is a dispensation chequered with God's glory, and his people's comfort; the whole chain of salvation is enameled with these two, that our hearts might be ravished with it: God hath inseparably linked these together, and so they are to be held out in the dispensation of the Gospel, which is called *glad tidings of great joy*, Luke 2:10. *The Gospel of salvation*, Eph. 1:13. *Glad tidings of peace, of good things*, Rom. 10:15. But who is sufficient for these things? It is a piece of singular skill, not learned in the school of philosophers, no nor yet at the feet of *Gamaliel*, but under the pedagogy of the Spirit himself, who is ¹ the *Comforter*. To be able to *speak a word in season to him that is weary*; Such a one is *an interpreter, a messenger one of a thousand*. And the prophet *Isaiah*, Isa. 51:4, speaks of it as a special gift. Though *Jerome* and other ancient expositors understand the words of Christ, who is indeed commissioned, and fitted by God for this work of *binding up the broken in heart*, Isa. 61:1, (being that true Samaritan that pours his cleansing Wine and suppling oil into wounded spirits) yet the words by the Jews, *Calvin* and *Aquinas* are interpreted of the Prophet; and no question but this gift God doth in a more than ordinary manner furnish some of his ministers with, according as his Church hath need of them. Though there be many good surgeons in *London*, yet all are not masters of the hospital, and many good physicians in *England*, yet all are not public professors. So, though God hath given to all his ministers *a charge to seek that which is lost, and*

to heal that which is sick, and bind up that which is broken: yet everyone is not in a like measure able and fit for these works. How much is here spoken to satisfy and settle a doubting Christian, we had rather thou shouldst find by thy own experience, then our report.

2. Thou wilt find here a sweet mixture of law and gospel², a bitter sweet, at the same time purging out thy corruptions, and yet deliciously affecting thy spiritual taste: Which if any be offended at, we shall only say this, *Dat finis amabilitatem mediis*, look to the end, and that will put a luster upon the means. If the Word wounds, it is to heal; if it cast down, it is to raise up; thou mayst thank thy own corruptions, that call for corrosives, before lenitives can be applied. It is the proper work of a surgeon to heal; that he lances, and bloods, and scarrifies, is by accident, because of the malignant distemper of the patient. It is the proper work of a carpenter to build; that he doth sometimes pull down, this is by accident. So, if the ministers of the Gospel do sometimes wound, and trouble you, is the fault theirs, or yours? If a prince sends a messenger to a condemned man with a pardon, on terms of confessing his crime, and humbling himself, and engaging to become a new man, and all this while the messenger cannot get him to acknowledge himself guilty, or desire pardon, but he stands out till another warrant is sealed for his execution, who is in fault, the messenger, or the condemned man? The parallel lies plain. O how glad would the servants of Christ be that they might be always pouring out the precious ointment of the Gospel! Oh, how sweet a theme is the grace of God, the love of Jesus Christ! How sweet and delightful would our ministry be, if we might always walk among these sweet perfumes? Do ye think ministers are delighted to hear the screech and groans of souls? When they are put to pain by sound and clear convictions? Nay, are they not rather astonished to converse every day with

so many carcasses, that prick them, cut them, wound them, burn them, threaten, do what you will, feel just nothing? Verily were it not out of faithfulness to God, and souls, they would not insist so much on such subjects. Certainly, as it is the glory of a surgeon not to make wounds, but heal them: so it is the glory of ministers to heal wounded consciences.

3. A third thing observable, is the sweet directions that here are scattered up and down, how a Christian should behave himself in the vicissitudes of providence. You are taught here your spiritual postures, how to rise in thankfulness, how to fall in humility; when you must to your close, when to your open order: here is a straight rule, by which you may measure your excesses, and defects; when you are too much, when too little cast down; (for we are very prone either to over, or to underdo; it is so hard to hit upon the middle.) Here you may learn when you are active, when you are passive in your own dejections. It may be you may meet with some particulars twice, but remember, he that shoots the same arrow twice, and both times hits the mark, hath well shot.

Now concerning the other Treatise, the *Ministry of Angels*; as also that other of *God's Omnipresence*: they were not intended for a Philosophical, but for a *Christian auditory*; the former subject is high, and there is room enough for speculation. Too many in these days have been wantonly busy to converse with angels, out of pride and curiosity, but the good angels will not be spoken with upon those terms; or if they do speak, to be sure it will be no comfort to those persons: for the Apostle by laying down a supposition, hath given us a certainty, that the angels will speak no other doctrine than he did. Therefore such spirits as are intruders into things not seen, are vainly *puffed in their fleshly mind*, *Col. 2:18*, how spiritual soever they seem to be. As for that opinion, that every man hath his particular

angel. If any think it not sufficiently answered in this treatise, we shall add only this, that when the maintainers of it are agreed among themselves about it, whether every man have not two angels, a good, and a bad; or if every man have but one, whether that be a good one, or a bad one. If it be a bad one, what comfort is there in that doctrine? If every man have a good one, how can this stand with the text, that limits their ministry to the heirs of salvation? When these riddles are unfolded, no question but a further answer will be given. This author doth practically handle that subject, and with great sobriety. To draw towards an end: As God hath always in His family, some sick and weak children, so He doth provide comforts and attendance for them; *for He will not leave them comfortless*; and certainly He will not leave them *helpless*. Be of good comfort then, there *are more with us then against us*. While we have visible enemies warring against us, we have invisible angels taking our part; and therefore the Psalmist after he had spoken of the protection of angels in *Psalm 34 ver. 7*, he adds in v. 8, "*O taste and see how good the Lord is.*" Go therefore, and chide thyself for thy unbelief, for thy despondency of spirit; say to thy heart, as *David*, "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*" And as God to *Jonah* in another case, *Dost thou well in it?* Is it for *kings sons, for God's children, for those that have angels to guard and serve them*, that have *hidden manna*, to walk so sadly and dejectedly? It is enough for those poor low spirits that dwell in the lower region of sense and reason to be dejected. If these treatises tend to thy comfort, give God the glory. Grace be with all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, *Amen*.

So pray

The servants of thy soul
and thy faith in the work

of the Gospel.

Edm. Calamy.

William Whitaker.

Simeon Ash.

Mat. Poole.

William Taylor.

Jos. Church.

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1. In the original text there is two Greek words inserted here.
 2. In the original text there is a Greek word inserted. It presumably is the Greek word for bitter sweet.

Sermon I

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him—The health of my Countenance, and my God."

Psalm 42:11

Although the book of Psalms is compiled into one volume, and called, *Acts 1:20*, the book of Psalms; in the Hebrew, there are five books of Psalms (they are divided into five books.)

The first book of Psalms according to the Hebrew, is from the first *Psalm*, to the end of *Psalm 41*. And it is concluded with *Amen*, and *Amen*.

Secondly, The Hebrews do account the second book of Psalms to begin at *Psalm 42*, unto *Psalm 72*. And that you find also to conclude with *Amen*, and *Amen*. And the end of *David's* prayers.

The third book of Psalms doth begin at the end of *Psalm 72*, to *Psalm 89*: and there you find it doth conclude with *Amen*, and *Amen*.

The fourth book of Psalms, you have its beginning from *Psalms* 89, unto *Psalms* 106, and there also it is concluded with *Amen*, Halelu-jah, or praise the Lord.

The fifth, or Last book of Psalms, is from the 106, to *Psalms* 150, the last Psalm in the book of Psalms, and this also ended with Halelu-jah.

My text it falleth under that Psalm that begins the second book, and Interpreters do differ much about the occasion this Psalm was penned on. Generally interpreters agree in this, that it was penned by *David*, either when he was fleeing before *Saul*, (for then *David* was sore troubled, and driven from his house and habitation, and was by reason of his enemies driven from the worship of God. from the place of God's public worship,) and was forced to hide himself in dens and caves of the earth: now in that sad condition that he was then in, it may be supposed that he made this Psalm: Or else it was made in that time when he was fain to flee for his life before his son *Absalom*¹, when he was in danger of his life at one of these times do interpreters conceive it was when *David* made this Psalm: and most do agree that it was made when *David* was deprived of the public worship of God.

But I now come to the words themselves (*Why art thou cast down O my soul? etc.*) My text contains in it a pathetic soliloquy that this Psalmist useth unto his own soul, as it were two friends, when he doth reason and confer with himself; and that is when the more supernatural part of man, the more excellent and more noble part of man, doth confer and reason with the more inferior part of man, or the outward part of man (*Why art thou cast down and disquieted within me?*) As a man that should direct his speech to one that he desireth to reason withal. So here *David* to commune with his own heart, doth use such like reasonings as he should under all his

afflictions, and under all his troubles, why he should be troubled, and why his soul should be troubled and cast down, and disquieted within him; *Why art thou disquieted? etc.* These words (I say) they are a soliloquy whereby he doth labor for to cheer him under all that trouble of soul that he found to be within himself; these are exceeding useful to your souls. This course you find that *David* took in other places at other times, *Psalms* 103:1. *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name.* See here how the Psalmist doth call to his soul to bless the name of God; and at another time when he would check his own soul for his negligence, and for his miscarriage before the Lord, he saith, *I was as a beast before him:* and the Scripture tells us, that the people of God have, and do check their own hearts before God for any one sin; when they find the least miscarriage in themselves, they then do check themselves for it; *“Why art thou cast down O my soul? etc.”*

Now in general, I shall lay down these five particulars to be considered about the words.

First, why or what may be the reason that this text is three times used in this Psalm, and in the next? Whereas you do not find two verses of the same length used in all the book of Psalms, besides in the 5th verse of this 42. *Psalm*, and in the text the 11th verse, and in the 5th verse of *Psalms* 43, there are the same words, *“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? etc.”* there is no Psalm that makes such a repetition of words (but only *Psalms* 107.) besides this in the whole book of Psalms, and there is often repeated, *O that men would praise the Lord, etc.*

Now what may this teach us, that *David* doth so often make mention of his own soul why it should not be cast down and disquieted and troubled. Now surely, the frequent mention of this text and words doth argue and note

unto us the weightiness of the matter? Now things of less moment are less spoken of, and are but touched on: but things of greater moment are more thought and spoke of, and oftener repeated with the more eagerness and earnestness; as in these words, "*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me?*"

2. When and on what occasion were these words spoken? Was it at that time when *David* was persecuted by the hands of *Saul*, when he was banished from his own house, and from the public and set-assemblies of the worship of God, verse 2, and for this cause was it that his soul was cast down and disquieted within him, when he had holy breathings after God in his public worship: *O when shall I appear before God? And when I remember those things, my soul is troubled:* this surely was one thing that troubled his soul.

Then *David* he was in affliction and trouble when affliction did come upon the Church of God; some deep and great calamity, one after another, one deep of affliction comes after another; "*Deep calleth to deep at the noise of the water-spouts,*" ver. 7, one after another, trouble after trouble, sorrow after sorrow, affliction after affliction: this was that which troubled his soul. *Tribulatio tribulationem parit, Musculus*, as one Wave in the Sea follows another, so did one trouble follow another, as v. 7.

Again, when he made this Psalm, it was at that time when deep sorrows and troubles of the Church lay upon him, and that by reason of great enemies that he met withal, as is recorded v. 9. "*Why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?*" And yet even then in this great and sad condition of trouble that was upon him, did he breath out this sweet ejaculation or soliloquy, "*Why art thou troubled, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me?*" Therefore (observe by

the way) that the people of God have many times to their great comfort, cause, in the midst of their greatest troubles and sorrows, to have these divine meditations in their minds, that their souls be not cast down too much under trouble: Why said *David*, (notwithstanding he was in great trouble) yet, “*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*” So you read that *Paul*, that he did write most of his Epistles when he was under bonds, in prison, and trouble; and yet even then was his heart filled with joy to his great comfort. So *David*, his heart was better within him at that time when he was in a cave, then at that time when he was in a palace; and though troubles were upon him, yet he could then call to his soul not to be troubled within him.

Thirdly, *David's* troubles were from the Devil, and from wicked men that did oppress him. Wicked men oppressed him, and the Devil tempted him: yet *David* chides his own heart and nothing else. *David* did not chide at *Saul*, nor chide at *Absalom*; but he checks and chides his own heart, “*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*” Though the Devil and wicked men, the one do tempt, the other do oppress as instruments of punishment for sin: yet we with *David* are to chide our own hearts. *David* had cause to chide at *Absalom*, and to chide at *Saul*; yet he doth not so, but chiefly checks his own heart, *Why art thou east down, O my soul? etc.*

Fourthly, Consider, what though in our translations the words are translated and rendered positively, “*Why, art thou cast down?*” Yet in the Original, they are rendered actively; we read it, “*Why art thou cast down, etc.*” But in the Original it is read², *Why bowest (or pressest) thou down thyself, my soul? And why tumults thou against me? As Arias Montanus, Cur humiliasti te? Cur deprimes te anima mea? So Lorinus, Pro. 12:25. And the words so read, they do intimate thus much, that God's own people*

may be cast down too much for the sense of sin; and they are most active in their own defection. It is not God, nor the Devil that cast thee down; but *Why dost thou cast down thyself?* To Create more trouble on thyself, then either God doth inflict, or the Devil tempt thee too.

In the words themselves there are three particulars to be considered.

First, here is a twofold distress complained of, differing gradually from each other, disquiet being more then cast down; *cur tumultuaberis?*

Secondly, here is a twofold duty to be performed, *hope in God, and praise of God.*

Thirdly, here is a twofold encouragement in these distresses, *he is the health of my countenance, and my God.*

Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Or if you read it in the active voice³ What dost thou cast down thyself, my soul? Believers are agents in their own sorrow and trouble: neither God by inflicting, nor the Devil in tempting, doth so much trouble us, as we ourselves: In *Prov. 12:25.* "*Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop, etc.*" the sense of sin casteth him down in God's presence.

First, casting down it is sometimes in a good sense, that is, when the soul is duly humbled before God for sin and for judgment; as in 2 Cor. 7:6. "*God that comforteth those that are cast down, etc.*" that is, that are cast down in humiliation for sin, under the sense of sin and misery: and in this sense *David* did never, nor doth not here check his heart; for he never checked his heart for the exercise of grace and doing his duty.

Secondly, it is also sometimes taken in a bad sense, where sorrow for sin is inordinate and more than is required and enjoined: where this is found, it is not to be cherished but checked: and so for this it was that *David* did

check himself, as in the text, *“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me?”*

These words in the explaining thereof and treating on them will be of singular use to the people of God; therefore I intend to spend some time upon them. I shall at this time make entrance into the first part of the text, *“Why art thou cast down, or (“why dost thou cast down thyself”) my soul?”*

The doctrine that I shall draw from these words, is this.

That the children of God though they cannot be cast off, yet they may be cast down, (*“Why art thou cast down O my soul?”*) There are five particulars why *David's* soul was cast down, in this Psalm.

As first, he mourneth because of his enforced absence from God's public worship, that they could not gather together in the place where God was to be worshipped. See the breathing of this good man in verse 2, of *Psalm 42*, *“my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before him?”* So in the 4th verse, *“When I remember these things I pour out my soul in me; for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holy-day.”* *David* was deprived of the public worship of God, and this made him mourn.

Secondly, his soul was cast down under the sense of sin that he had committed against God, and the evil effects of sin, to remember what he had done against God; and he felt the sense of the wrath of God in the remembrance of sin.

Thirdly, he lay under the eclipse and sad suspension of divine favor, in the ninth verse, *“I will say unto God, My rock, why hast thou forgotten me?”* The apprehensions of the suspensions of God's favor made *David's* soul to

be cast down within him, because he lay under the loss of God's love and favor, and he wanted the light of God's countenance; this made him mourn.

Fourthly, because of the oppression and prevailing of the enemies over the people of God, verse 4.

Fifthly, he was grieved more for sin than personal afflictions; because of the reproach, blasphemies and dishonor that was cast upon the name of God by other men: which made him say, "*As with a sword (or with killing) in my bones, my enemies reproach me, while they say daily to me, where is thy God?*" So likewise in the 3, verse, "*My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, where is thy God?*" All this showeth, that he was more troubled about spiritual troubles than outward afflictions of the body: blasphemy against God is as a sword in his bones; when troubles on himself, was but as a scratch in the flesh. And this should teach you all, that if you be at any time troubled and cast down, be sure, that you be with *David* cast down and troubled more for spiritual things, than for outward personal sufferings: The dishonor that was done to the name of God, was as a sword in *David's* bones.

In the handling of this doctrine. I shall show you for what it is that the souls of the children of God that are not cast off, may be cast down. And that I shall lay down more generally, and it shall be as the foundation of the following discourse, and that is in these four particulars.

First, though they may not be cast off, yet they may be cast down for the greatness and grievousness of sin: that is the great cause why the souls of the people of God are cast down.

Secondly, because of the want of the love of God, and the assurance of pardoning grace.

Thirdly, because of the afflictions and calamitous condition of the Church and people of God.

Fourthly, because of those outward and personal afflictions of the body: these I shall only name, because they are as the foundation of the following discourse.

First, the souls of the children of God they may be cast down, though they cannot be cast off under the sight and sense of sin: the great reason why I treat upon this subject, is, that it may be as an appendix to that subject concerning the pardon of sin.

In the handling of this doctrine concerning the casting down of the soul for the sight and sense of the greatness and grievousness of his sin, there are many particulars to be considered.

First, I shall show you what this casting down for sin is.

Secondly, what sort of men they are that God doth cast down and humble in the sight and sense of sin.

Thirdly, when may God's people be said for to be too much cast down in the sight and sense of sin.

Fourthly, how may we discern between the casting down for sin of the godly, and the casting down for sin of wicked and reprobate men; seeing that God's people are cast down for sin, and wicked men not cast down for sin at all.

Fifthly, what reasons may be given that the souls of God's people that shall not be cast off, yet they may be cast down under the sight and sense of sin.

Sixthly, what rules may be laid down unto the people of God that they may not be cast down too much under the burden, and sight, and sense of sin, and so to run into dejection of mind by reason of sin.

I shall begin with the first of these, namely, what this casting down for sin is. I told you in the beginning that there is a casting down

For sin, first, when God casts down the soul by way of humiliation for sin. And this I told you is a casting down for sin in a good sense, when sorrow of sin is mixed with faith.

Then secondly, there is a casting down for sin in a bad sense; and that is, when the soul is cast down so for sin, as that it cannot at that time look towards Jesus Christ with an eye of faith for pardon of sin, and to be fully persuaded of taking the forgiveness of sin by Jesus Christ; and this sort of humiliation is that you are to check your hearts for.

Secondly, what sort of men they are that God doth most cast down for sin: and this I shall lay down by nine or ten particulars. There are nine or ten sorts of men, which God doth most humble and cast down for sin.

First, those that have been most notorious for sin, and most infamous for sin, and who have been most scandalous in their lives before conversion: God doth usually bring them home, with tempestuous alarms in their consciences. Thus *Manasseh* he was high in sin and great in iniquity and abomination; but low in the sight of his own sins, and God useth more harsh and more rough means by bringing in gross and notorious ill livers, those that will set their faces against heaven, enraged persecutors, and exposers of God and his truth, that go on resolutely, and stubbornly and frowardly in the ways of sin: God when he calls such home he layeth them low and humbleth them deeply under the sight and sense of past provocations.

So *Paul* he was a high, and a great, and a notorious sinner before his conversion; he was a great persecutor of the Church and people of God; he was an injurious person, and he was a blasphemer; he did not care what wrong, and what havoc he made of the Church of God: he persecuted his

people from one city to another, and cast them into prison, and labored to put both Christians and Religion out of remembrance.

Now *Paul* he being such a notorious sinner, and so abounding in sin, when he is brought home by conversion. God must use him more severely and deal more sharply with him and humble him greatly, and lay him low in the sight and sense of his own vileness, and under the greatness of his own sinfulness: God must unhorse *Paul* in meeting him in the way he was riding to accomplish his evil designs, and as he was going to vex the people of God. I say God must cast him down to the ground, and lay him upon his face, and make him cry, “*Lord what wilt thou have me to do,*” as you may read the story at large in *Acts 9*. And the great reason is this, because, as his cruelty was manifest; so God would make his repentance and humiliation to be manifest as his sin was: not only as his sins was against a great God, so his humiliation and repentance should be manifested to be great; but also as his sins was so great an offense to men that feared God; so his humiliation and repentance should be great and manifested before them that were so offended by him, at his course: this humiliation, and horror is his spiritual penance to the world and makes repentance more visible. And if I now speak to any of you here, that have been or still are notorious in sin and wickedness that have sinned greatly: if ever God bring you home by effectual calling and conversion, he will lay you low by humiliation, and cast you down greatly under the sight, and sense, and sorrow for sin: that as your sins have been great, so your sorrow shall be great. That instance spoken concerning *Lydia*, is worthy your observation, in *Acts 16*, v. 14-29 etc. there you read of two persons that were converted, yet in a different way one from the other. You read of *Lydia* in the 14th verse, “*A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which*

worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended to the things that were spoken of Paul.” This woman she was Converted in a very easy way and manner in coming to hear *Paul* preach, and at this time the Lord opened her heart. Here was conversion without any mention made of terror and trouble of conscience, and casting down for sin, or deep humiliation under the sense and sight of sin; no mention made of casting down in the sense and apprehension of her former life: but she was brought home to God in a very mild and gentle way.

But now in the same chapter, you read of the story of the Jailor, how “*he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling to Paul, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said unto them, Sirs, what must I do to be saved*”⁴.” This was one who a little before dealt cruelly with *Paul* and *Silas*, and “*put them into the inward prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks,*” and was a man of a wicked rugged temper against the people of God, as you may read in verse 24.

Therefore when God would bring him home by conversion, he would make him to fear, and to quake, and to make his conscience to tremble, and to make his heart ache, and to spring in, and to fall down on his face, and to make a great enquiry what he must do to be saved; and all because of the wickedness of his doings: and this is the way that God takes to bring in stubborn and stout sinners unto himself.

I may allude to that passage that *Solomon* said, in *Eccles.* 10:8. “*He that diggeth a pit, shall fall therein, and whose breaketh a hedge, a serpent shall bite him.*” I know that this place refers chiefly to this, that those that tread down, and break the hedge of government, kingdoms, or the church, they shall be broke down themselves sooner or later: But I may allude to this in hand: Therefore thou O man that hath broken down the hedge of God's

commands, even every command of God thou hast broken by thy sinful life, be thou sure that a serpent shall bite thee, thou shalt be laid low in the sense and sight of thy sins, and thou shalt be stung and bitten with the sense of God's wrath: and when God brings thee home to himself, he will lay thee more lower in humiliation and repentance than other men shall be. Therefore remember O man, that if thou dost allow thyself in sin, in the committing of great and gross enormities, thou must look that God will deal thus with thee, to lay thee low in the sight and sense of it whenever he brings thee to himself.

But then secondly, those God doth cast down most for sin that fall into the same sins again after they are converted, they do wound religion, and God will wound their hearts, and break their peace, and God will surely bring it upon their own heads, and God will lay it on their hearts, and trouble their consciences, and God will punish them more for that than ordinary. Before the conversion of *David*, sins they were but as a little pain in his flesh to him; but now after conversion, sin was to him as a sword in his bones, he had no quietness in him by reason of his sin. When he speaks of his sin after his conversion, as in the matter of *Bathsheba* and *Uriah* in *Psalms* 51:12. Sin was to him as “*the breaking of his bones,*” verse 8, and he prays to God to “*restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, etc.*” Before sin *might not break his sleep*, but sins now *break his heart*. *Tertullian* calls his *Peccata devorataria*, scandalous sins, swallowing gulfs, and he that falls foully shall walk heavily, and recover hardly. In *Psalms* 30:9. (Lord said *David*) “*What profit is there in my blood; when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? Shall it declare thy truth?*” He thought that he was near to the grave, and yet he thought that his soul should not be safe: therefore take heed of falling into great sins after God hath done great things for thy soul.

But then thirdly, the third sort of men that are cast down for sin, it is those that are of a melancholy disposition: the devil doth more prevail against men of this temper, then any sort of men in the world; to plunge them into sadder fears, deeper desertions, and greater astonishments then those that are of a more lively, lightsome and pleasant temper.

Fourthly, those God doth cast down for sin most, that are of a rugged and of a harsh disposition: now if God converts them, he doth more than ordinarily cast them down under the sight and sense of their sins, more than those that are of a soft temper and disposition which do not need so much humbling as the others do. You know that the hearts of men are compared to stones: now you know that some stones are more easily broken then others are; so some hearts they are more soft and more tender then others are; some hearts are like free stone that require so many heavy, and great, and strong blows to break them: whereas other hearts are like smaller and lesser stones, that may be broken with a hammer with lesser blows. When God sees stout hearted sinners that walk on in a course of sin, if he brings them home, he must use many blows to break their hearts, to humble them and lay them low before him. It is with sinners as it is with wood, some may be easily hewed and cut, others it is more knotty and needs more blows to cut it and square it fit for use: so some men's tempers are more rugged and knotty, and need a greater degree and measure of humiliation then others do.

Fifthly, God doth cast such men low for sin who are not converted until old age, and such when they are converted, God lays them low, and keeps them long under the sense of sin, and this is exceeding just and righteous with God so to do; that as they have continued long under the actings of sin; so God will keep them long under the apprehensions, and the feeling of the

guilt and burden of sin. You know that if you come to a tree, you may cut off a twig with a pen knife; but if you come to cut the stock of the tree, you must take the axe to it: Now all the sons and daughters of men they are of the old stock of old *Adam*, and grafts of one natural stocks, and we are all as chips of that old block: and old sinners are, that have spent the most part of their days in sin. God will lay more blows upon you to cut you off from your old root, from your vain conversation; God will use much means, and keep thee long under the sense of thy sin to bring down thy proud heart: whereas a young twig, one that God it may be converts from the youth; God doth not use to cast such down so much for sin, as he doth those that are not converted till their old age.

But now sixthly, God doth cast these down much for sin, who do harbor and indulge in themselves many known sins in their hearts, which may not be known unto the world, and which none in the world can take cognizance of but themselves alone: and such God doth lay them low when he doth convert them; God will raise a storm and a tempestuous trouble in their consciences for sin. As it is with the wind, all the while it is dispersed in the air it doth no hurt: but when it is gathered together into the bowels of the earth, then it doth overturn hills and houses, and all things with it. So it is with sin, all the while, that sin (although it be within thee) yet if it be (as wind in the air) dispersed and scattered by repentance and humiliation, it doth thee not much hurt: but when sin is indulged and hugged in thy bosom, in thy heart, and allowed of by thee, and concealed by thee in thy soul; this will be to thy soul as wind in the earth, to make heart-quakes, and conscience-quakes, and cause great trouble of mind unto thee: Therefore O man whosoever thou art, that doth go on in a way of sinning against God, and to allow thyself in known sins which none can accuse thee of, but God

and thy own conscience; know this, that whatsoever thy professions are, God will make thee lie low before him under the sense and sight of thy sins, if ever he doth convert thee to himself.

Seventhly, God doth most cast down those for sin, that do backslide and apostatize from religion; those who did profess religion, and then afterward backslide and apostatize from that profession and turn apostates: these men if ever God bring them back he will humble them to the dust, and lay them very low in the sight and sense of their sins, according to that expression of *Solomon, Prov. 14:14*. “*The backsliders in heart shall be filled with their own ways: but a good man shall be satisfied from himself.*” The backslider, that as he hath been filled with the pleasures of sin in times past; so the backslider shall be filled with his own ways, that is, he shall be filled with horror of conscience, and filled with anguish of spirit and trouble of mind, and his own backsliding shall be vexation to him; God will lay such a man very low if ever he brings him back again. In *Jeremiah 2:19*. “*Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see, what an evil thing, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, etc.*” It may be thou hast backslidden from religion: now God will make thy own wickedness to reprove thee. I shall instance that known story of *Francis Spira*, he did profess religion, and afterwards turned apostate, and though his conscience told him he sinned, yet he sinned so high, that he sinned against conscience, and the spirit of God, and wished himself to be in God's place: But read the story, and you shall see what fretting, terror and horror of conscience this wrought upon him: it laid him under the terrors and sense and divine vengeance, and how his soul lay under horror for his apostasy. Now all you whatever you be, if you fall from the profession of the Gospel, and turn apostates from religion; God will meet with you and

fill you with terror, and your backslidings shall fill you, and your own wickedness shall reprove you.

Then eighthly, God doth lay these low under the sense and burden of their sins whose natures (which by reason of the strength of natural parts) are most apt to be lifted up with spiritual pride; God doth use to bring such as these are very low: when he doth bring them to himself, he will lay them low under the sight of their sins: what the Psalmist said concerning evil and ungodly men, that *“They stand in slippery places, and their ways are like ice,”* who appear in high places they shall not stand long: and what is spoken of outward pride, is true of spiritual pride. God brings the proud one to the depth of hell, as you may read in *Isa. 14*, from verse 11, to 16. In verse 11, *“Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.”* v. 12, *“How art thou brought down, O Lucifer, son of the morning, how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weary nations? For thou hast said in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the North,”* ver. 13, *“I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the most high,”* v. 14, *“Yet thou shalt be brought down to bell, to the sides of the pit, etc⁵.”* All this is spoken of the king of *Babylon*, to bring down his outward pride: They who do imagine and think to set their nests on high, God will bring them down to the dust. Now O man dost thou grow spiritually proud by reason of the strength of thy natural gifts: know that if God hath a purpose thee to bring to himself, he will lay thee low before him in the sense of thy own sin: they who are listed up in the conceit of their own excellency, God will lay them low in the sight of their own sinfulness.

Ninthly, God doth cast those down low in the sense and sight of their sins, whom he doth intend to make instrumental in his church, to the building up, and stablishing, and comforting of souls and perplexed and troubled consciences: now those God doth plunge under the sight and sense of their own sins. As the vessels of the sanctuary, there were more filling of them, and more labor bestowed about them, then any ordinary vessels besides for any ordinary use. Now if God doth intend to make a man a vessel in his church, God will take more pains (if I may so say) to fit him for that use: he shall be exposed to more trials, to be exposed to more temptations, and be laid very low; that so he may be the more able and the more fit for to comfort, and to quiet others that are perplexed and troubled in mind. Astronomers that lie low in pits or valleys have the clearest sight of the stars: So those that have been under God's discipline, are most fit to comfort others.

It is observable of *Luther*, there was no man in his age that was so troubled, so tempted, so pestered with temptations from the devil, and so troubled with the sight of sin, as he and the devil would appear to him in a bodily shape that he saw it himself, and he was fain to fight with him hand in hand; and yet for all this, by this means, *Luther* he became the more beneficial to the church of God, to administer comforts to those that were afflicted: and thus much for the second Question.

1. 2 Samuel 15:4

2. The Hebrew text for this Scripture was inserted here in the original.

3. The Hebrew text for this scripture was inserted here in the original.

4. Acts 16:29-30

5. Isaiah 14:15

Sermon II

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him—The health of my Countenance, and my God." Psalm 42:11

The third question is this. But when may God's people be said to be cast down too much for sin. Indeed casting down for sin and humiliation for sin, is good and necessary: but when may it be said, that a child of God is too much cast down for sin? *David* doth check himself, not that he is humbled for sins, but that he is too much cast down for sin.

A child of God may be said to be cast down too much for sin in these nine particulars.

First, a man is cast down too much for sin, when his humiliation maketh him to cast off all hopes of pardon: when he shall so lie under the burden of his sins, as that he shall not have any hopes to have it taken off. Then in this case it is too much when humiliation for sin shall make you to say, *Jer.*

2:25, that “*There is no hope,*” and that you are cut off: this is too much, too great a degree and measure, of humiliation. When good men shall say doubtingly, which wicked men will say scoffingly, that their sins are so great, and their case is so desperate, that there is no hope; no help for them in God; no salvation for them to be had; no way for them to get out and escape: this is too much casting down for sin: this is the way to cut off hopes. The saints in heaven their hopes are cut off, but it is far different from this way. Their hopes are turned to full enjoyment of what they before hoped for: they have no hope because they are above hope. But saints on earth they are to carry their hopes still above all discouragements, and to hope strongly for pardon of sin: better have the thread of our lives cut off, then the anchor cord of our hope: Despair is the cutting off of hope. But to be so cast down under sin as to have despairing thoughts without hope of mercy, is excessive.

But secondly, that man is cast down for sin too much when is so cast down for sin that he doth cast off duty: when a man shall thus reason against himself, what need I pray? And what need I perform holy duties, I know God will not hear me? He will not hear my prayers let me pray as long as I can, and as often as I will. And so for confession of sin, what need I confess sin, I know God will not pardon my sin? And what need I beg grace, I know God will not give me grace? And what need I hear sermons, I know God will not hear me, nor accept of my duties, and I shall not get good by all I do, and by all hear? These reasonings O man are very sinful, and it argues a great degree of too much humiliation for sin: As despair in any man cuts off hope; so also such a sinful frame cuts off endeavors. Fools *go on* (saith *Solomon*) *and are confident*¹; but sometimes fools go on and are careless: and for a man to be so cast down for sin as to be careless in

discharge of duties, it argues too much dejection of spirit: Despair is the total eclipse of the mind with the blackest fumes arising from the burning lake of fearful terrors.

Thirdly, thy casting down for sin is too much when thou art so dejected and cast down for sin that it doth indispose thee for holy duties: good men have been so, and good men may be so overtaken. You have an instance in *Asaph Psalm 77:4* “*Thou holdst mine eyes waking: I am so sore troubled that I cannot speak.*” *Asaph* prayed and his soul was so sore troubled and overwhelmed that he could not speak; as if he had said. I would pray but I cannot pray, he was so troubled by reason of his sin. Then indeed is thy humiliation too much when the sight of thy sins shall unfit thee for the doing of thy duty: this is not necessary but sinful.

Composedness of spirit aright for humiliation for sin, it is so far from unfitting the soul for duty and prayer, that it doth dispose and fit the soul for prayer to God, *Hos. 12:4*, *Jer. 3:21*, *Neh. 9:1-4*. Therefore it is said, that the people of *Israel* did weep and make supplication, and they offered sacrifice, *Judges 2:4-5*. When thy sight of sin and the sense of sin and humiliation for sin, doth fill thy heart with matter fit for prayer, that is necessary and good: but when by this the soul is unfitted for prayer and supplication, then it is sinful: In *Exodus 6:9*, it is said there, “*that they hearkened not unto Moses, when he spake unto them, for the anguish of their spirits:*” or as it is in the Hebrew² from the straightness of spirit (or shortness of spirit) they were so troubled in mind that they could not hear God's word, *Psalm 77:4*. *Homan* said, this is my infirmity: if it hinder, it is no sacrifice that God commands.

Fourthly, then a man is too much cast down for sin where there is an unaptness, unwillingness in the mind to receive and apply comfortable counsels that are laid down in the Word, and which do appertain to him in

that condition; if there be great aptness in thee to entertain such terrible threatenings and denunciations of judgments against sin, rather than to receive any good proofs laid down in the Gospel, and clear promises to quiet and comfort thy troubled spirit: when you are more apt to trouble yourselves for sin, then to comfort yourselves against this disquietness of mind upon and under the sight of sin; in this case you are cast down too much for sin. In *Psalm 47*, it is spoken of *Asaph*, that “*he refused to be comforted;*” as bad stomachs in children had rather feed on chalk and dirt, then wholesome food. So, if so be that when comforts are propounded and laid before you by the ministers of the Gospel, and comforts shall be suited to thy condition, and you not apply them but lay them all aside; be confident that thou art too much cast down for sin. In *Pro. 12:25*. “*Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad.*” Now when heaviness for sin shall so oppress thee, that all the good words that can be given thee out of the Gospel will do thee no good, administer thee no comfort: then is thy casting down for sin too much. In *Mark 9:50*. Have “*salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.*” Maintain good doctrine; therefore said Christ, “*ye are the salt of the earth.*” If you see a pot boiling, and if it boils too fast, if you take salt and cast into it, it will alay the boiling so fast. So if your passions do grow so fast that all the doctrines of the Gospel, precious comforts that are therein, cannot allay this passion, and pacify the conscience, and comfort the soul, and support the spirit; then is thy casting down for sin too much, because there is no spiritual disease so dark to the soul, but there is comfort enough in the Gospel to support the soul under it. When God shall call to thee and say, “*Come to me all ye that are weary, and heavy laden, and I will ease you,*”

Mat. 11:28. And you refuse to come to Jesus Christ, and refuse, and put off comfort from you; you are then too much cast down for sin.

Fifthly, then is a man cast down too much for sin under the weight, and sense, and sight of sin, when that sorrow for sin shall be an occasion to wrong, and hurt, and to disturb the body by diseases: and thus melancholy men are subjected too much to this distemper, and herein they are too much to blame: Many there are who make their tears their meat and drink; so filled with tears that they cannot eat their bread with comfort. There are many godly souls so troubled with sorrow for sin, that they have no comfort and joy of heart: in *Job* 20:25. *“It is drawn, and cometh out of the body: the glistening sword cometh cut of his gall, terrors are upon him.”* Many men *“lie in the bitterness of their souls,”* that they *“cannot eat one morsel of bread with joy,”* *Job* 21:25. Now God doth not require so much sorrow for sin as to eat out the comforts of a man's life, and to disturb the comforts of thy days as to be so troubled and disquieted that they cannot sleep by night, and not to take comfort in the day. As it is said concerning *Asaph*, *Psalms* 77:4. *“Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled I cannot speak.”* When it is thus with you that you are so sore troubled so over much cast down it is excessive. The Lord hath bid thee mourn not to wrack and crucify thy body, but thy lusts: he calls thee to weep out thy sin's strength and life, not thy bodies strength and life; God doth never require nor expect that any man should kill his body to save his soul through humiliation and sorrow for sin.

Sixthly, men are then cast down for sin too much when a man is so far and so much cast down under the sight, and sense of sin, that he hath no mind at all to follow his particular calling: now this is a sinful sorrow. Sorrow for sin is not only sinful when it taketh you off from duties of godliness and

religion; but when it taketh you off from your calling in the world: and the reason is this, as all divines say, that God doth never require any duty which belongs to our general calling as christians, to be inconsistent with our particular callings as men: Therefore if so be that your trouble of mind for sin hath been such as that it doth make you not to regard your particular calling as men in the world: this is not accounted in Scripture a sorrow of sin necessary; but immoderate and too much casting down for sin.

Seventhly, they are too much cast down for sin when the amiable, and admirable and comforting attributes of God are formidable and terrible to such men, when we so think of sin as not to think on the divine attributes of God, of the mercy of God, of the goodness of God, of the patience of God, of the longsuffering of God, of the faithfulness of God: when men shall think so of God as if he were all justice, all wrath without mercy: good men have been overtaken with this fault, *Job* was so, *Job* 23:15. “*Therefore am I troubled at his presence: when I consider, I am afraid of him.*” Here *Job* tells you of the trouble of mind that he lay under, that it made him afraid of God, and to be troubled at his presence, and when he thought of him, he was troubled at him: One would think that to think on God is a comfort; for a man to think that God is merciful to pardon my sin: faithful to keep covenant with his people, bountiful in God to supply his people, strength in power to defend his people; he is able to save them to the utmost: one would think it should comfort one to think so on God. But that presence that *Moses* could not endure to be without, that presence *Job* could not endure to see; and the reason was, because of his guilt, and his fears and doubting within him which cast him down too much: And this was *Asaph* his case, “*I remembered God, and I was troubled.*” *Psalms* 77:3. What the thoughts of God to trouble *Asaph*? Yes, “*I remembered God, and I was troubled: I*

complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.” He might reason thus with himself, *I think that this God is a glorious and a terrible God, a sin-revenging God, and he seeth me, and he marketh all my steps, and he knoweth all my ways, and he will reward all my doings: therefore when I thought on God, I was troubled at him.*

O but the thoughts of God comforted *David's* soul: when I thought on thy name, I was comforted (said holy *David*) *Psalms* 94:19. But said *Asaph*, when I thought on God, I was troubled; and *Job*, when I thought on God, on the Almighty, I was afraid of him. When the attributes of God shall trouble men to think of them, and not encourage them and comfort them; then is this sorrow too much casting down for sin.

But then eighthly, when under this sorrow for sin thou canst not look to God, and bless God for common mercies, or special grace: God gives thee mercies, great mercies that thou mayest be rich; and follows thee with mercies and blessings, and loving kindnesses daily, and his faithfulness is towards thee every moment, and gives thee the world at will; and yet for all this, God not to have glory from thee, shows thou art too much cast down for sin.

Whereas trouble and humiliation for sin if it be moderate and right, it administers occasions to serve God, and it doth occasion thee to bless God, and to give him glory for common mercies and special grace, it doth occasion thee to glorify God, and draweth out the heart to serve God, and to bless him for the receipt of mercies: and when mercies have not this effect upon thee, and when sorrow for sin worketh not this way, it is immoderate sorrow, and too much casting down for sin. When God gives thee grace to assist thee against manifold temptations, and to keep thee from the committing of manifold sins, and to help thee against thy corruptions, and

to give thee grace to establish thy heart; and yet not to bring up thy heart under thy sorrow to bless God: this is a sinful sorrow. If a man be upon his knees he may see heaven above, and the earth beneath: but for a man to lie flat upon his face, he cannot see neither the heaven above nor any creature, but only the earth below him. So when God brings thee to thy knees for sin, then you can see a gracious God, a faithful God, a merciful God, a pitiful Father; and then you can see those blessings that God bestoweth upon you, and bless and glorify God: but when you throw yourselves on the ground by a faithful sorrow, and lie on your faces for sin, to be too much humbled under the sight and sense of it; in this case, God hath neither glory, nor you have no comfort.

But ninthly, when your sins do discourage your souls from laying hold on Jesus Christ, then art thou cast down too much for sin: that man surely is sick to death when his disease will not let him send for a physician. Troubled ones often say doubtingly what the wicked say scoffingly, *there is no help for me in God*: this is sinful sorrow.

Whereas true sorrow and Gospel humiliation for sin, it is such a measure and degree of sorrow, that instead of discouraging the soul to go away from Christ, it doth encourage the soul to come to Christ, and to lay hold on Christ, and to prize Jesus Christ above all the world. But that is a sinful sorrow when it drives the soul off from Christ, and discourageth the soul from coming to him, and from setting a high estimation and price upon him; nor can the soul in such a condition venture itself upon him. As we must not with the *antinomist* so fix our eyes upon free grace and mercy, that we have no eye to look upon sin; so should we not with doubting, and despairing Christians so look upon sin, as never to cast an eye upon Jesus Christ. And

thus I have laid down in these nine particulars when it may be said that a man may be too much cast down for sin.

First, what sort of men God doth cast down for sin.

And then secondly, when God's people may be said to be cast down for sin too much.

I now come to the use, and that is 1. For comfort, and 2. For caution.

First of all it may be for comfort, if it be so that God's people may be cast down too much for sin, under the sense and sight of sin, then the first comfortable observation to the people of God is this, that God will never cast off his people, although he doth and may many times cast down his people: though thou be cast down, yet comfort thyself. Thou shalt never be cast off, *Psalm 94:14* “*The Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.*” Cast down he will his people for sin, but cast off his people he will not. This made the Apostle come with a “*God forbid, hath God cast off his people? God forbid.*” God hath not cast off his people, “*whom he foreknew,*” *Rom. 11:1-2.*

Secondly, it is true, God's people may be cast off seemingly, when they are not cast off really: it is with them as it was with Christ when he met the two disciples, in the last of *Luke* he seemed to go away from them, “*as though he would have gone further*³:” but Jesus Christ did not intend to go from them. So may God do to thy soul, he may seem to go from thy soul, but God will never leave thy soul; he may seem to withdraw his face, but he will never really withdraw from thy soul. So in *Psalm 74:1.* “*O God, why hast thou cast us off forever? Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?*” So *Psalm 7:7.* “*Will the Lord cast us off forever?*” *Psalm 89:38. Lev. 26:44.* Now this was not really so, but it was only seemingly so; God did not cast his people off, though he cast them down: the church

apprehended that God had cast them off, but God did not so really. *Augustine* hath a good observation on *Job* 14:45 “*Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know: But Thomas said, we know not whither thou goest: and how can we know the way?*” Here is a seeming contradiction between Christ, and *Thomas*. Now *Augustine* hath a good note on these words, they said, they did not know, and Christ said, they did know: Now how shall this be reconciled? Now the meaning is this, the disciples and *Thomas*, did not know their own knowledge, and they had more grace and knowledge then they knew of themselves. It may be so with thee, God may cast thee off seemingly, when thou mayest think it really: but God doth not really cast off his people; therefore let this comfort thee.

Thirdly, it is not the measure of humiliations for sin, but the truth of humiliation for sin, to which grace is annexed: the promises are made to grace, not as strong grace, but as true grace; not to humiliation as to the measure of it, and the length of it; but to the truth of it: the Scripture doth not entail a promise to faith as strong faith; but to weak faith, to little faith, to faith that is small (if true) though it be but as a grain of mustard seed; and the greatest promises is entailed to the least measure of faith: It may be O Christian, thou hast not a great measure of faith, but hast thou little faith, not strong faith? Hast thou weak faith? O comfort thyself, all the promises are entailed to that beginnings of faith: it may be thou hast not faith like to an ear of wheat but is it like to a grain of mustard seed? There is promises for that. It may be thou hast not rivers of tears, but hast thou any tears for sin? Any sorrow for sin, God accepts of that: God doth hold open his bottle to those whose eyes distil a few drops of tears, as well as to those that make their heads fountains of water, and their eyes rivers of tears. Though that be false of *libertines*, and *antinomist* that say, promises are made to sinners, as

sinner: so it is false too, to hold that they are made only to sinners just so far; and thus deeply troubled. For total want of grace many a soul hath perished but never was any man damned for want of degrees. Promises are made to grace, to its truth; and not to such a degree of grace: grace true, though it be weak, is looked upon by God as having interest in the promises; therefore this should comfort thee.

Fourthly, let this comfort thee, that God hath made promises not only to humiliation, but also for humiliation: hast thou a hard heart? God hath made promises that he will break thy hard heart: *“God hath promised to take away thy heart of stone, and give thee a heart of flesh: God hath promised to take away thy old heart, and give thee a new heart;”* both these you have laid down, *Ezek. 11:19. “I will give them one heart, and I will put a new Spirit within you: and I will take their stony heart out of their flesh, and I will give them a heart of flesh;”* and thus much for comfort. I now come to the use of caution.

In the treating on this doctrine that God's people may be cast down under the sight and sense of sin, I would not so treat on this doctrine as many *libertines* do, to lay aside all manner of humiliation for sin; because some men are cast down too much, they will not be cast-down at all for sin: Not to prosecute such a principle, it is the way for to run into all manner of licentious liberty, and to be all upon the extremes.

Secondly, labor to order the affections and passions of thy mind so, that whensoever you are humbled and in sorrow for sin, you take heed that you do not cast off sorrow for sin: be sure that you have such a degree of humiliation for sin, that it may make thee to lie at Christ's feet, and no lower: Christ would have you to be so humble as to lie at his feet in the sight and sense of sin: but the Devil would have you to be so low in your

humiliations for sin as to lie in hell: Jesus Christ would have thee to be sorrowful for sin. that thou mightest recover out of sin: but the Devil would have thee to lie so low in thy humiliations for sin, that thou mightest never recover. O take heed of such a sinful sorrow for sin; do not be humbled so much as the Devil and thy own evil heart would have thee: and thus much for the third Question.

1. Proverbs 14:16
2. The Hebrew text for this Scripture was inserted here in the original.
3. Luke 24:28

Sermon III

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him—The health of my Countenance, and my God.” Psalm 42:11

The fourth question in order to be considered, is this, *that seeing that God's people may be cast down too much for sin, and too much humbled under the sight and sense of corruptions, then what may be the reason that wicked and ungodly men are not cast down at all for sin? And seeing that Godly men may be cast down for sin here too much, and not cast off for sin hereafter; and wicked men that shall be cast into hell for sin when they die, yet are not all cast down for sin while they live? What reasons may be given for this?*

Now for the resolution of this question, I shall lay down these six particulars by way of answer.

The first reason why wicked men though they shall be cast off, yet they are not at all cast down for sin: It ariseth from their ignorance of the dangerous and damnable nature of sin; they have a blind mind, and a dumb conscience, they see not such evil in sin as godly men do. Although wicked men know what sin is in general; yet it is but a general notion of sin in the head, and they have no particular and experimental and distinct notion of the evil and dangerous nature of sin upon their hearts and consciences: and therefore it comes to pass, that they are not cast down for sin. But this general notion of sin casts them off, and doth not cast them down; and this is the reason that they do not see sin to become exceeding sinful, and they do not take notice of the evil of sin, the damning nature of sin, according to that expression in *Jer. 2:23*. "*How canst thou say I am not polluted, I have not gone after Baalim? See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done: thou art a swift dromedary traversing her ways.*" Here the Jews they were great in sin, and did abound in wickedness; yet they were ready to say, that they were not sinful, at least they did not know that they were so: it is for want of the knowledge of their ways, and the sinfulness of their doings that they are not cast down for sin. Should a man meet a lion in the wilderness, he would be afraid of that; and the reason is, because he knows that the lion is hurtful: but if a man sees a lion painted on the wall, he is not afraid of that; because he knows that cannot hurt him. So when men shall look upon sin, but not look upon it as a lion in the wilderness that will certainly destroy him if he avoid it not: but to look upon sin as a lion painted on the wall that hath no power to do them hurt; they see sin, but it is generally and notionally, and not particularly and experimentally.

The second reason is this, it ariseth from a principle of presumption of pardoning grace and mercy; when wicked men hear the thunderings and

curses of the law denounced against sin and sinners delivered by the ministers of the Gospel to awaken them from the sleep of sin and security; when they hear of the severity of God's justice, and that he is a sin revenging God, and that he will by no means clear the guilty, "*but will render to everyone according to his ways and works;*" Now what doth a wicked man do in this case? Doth this awaken his conscience to see the evil of sin? (no) but he doth the quite contrary: he then from a principle of presumption of pardoning grace and mercy in God, *blesseth himself in his own ways*, and he saith, *I shall have peace, though I walk after the imaginations of my own evil heart*: as if they should say, let sin trouble them that will, let it cast down them that will be cast down, it shall never cast down me, it shall never trouble me; what shall sin trouble my conscience or disquiet my peace for? Or why shall I mourn and trouble myself about that which I need not? That which others seem to break their hearts for, it shall never break my sleep; for I hope that it shall never damn my soul; but I hope though I do commit sin, yet I hope God will pardon sin; and though I am sinful, yet I know God is merciful: and thus they do from a principle of presumption go on in a way of sin without any trouble for it, or casting down under the sight and sense of sin at all.

But then thirdly, the third reason why wicked men are not cast down for sin at all, it ariseth from that obdurateness, from that hardness that is in their hearts, and from that searedness in their consciences: there are a generation of men, that it may be said of them as concerning sin, they are *past feeling*, according to that expression of the Apostle *Eph. 4:19*. "*Who being past feeling, having given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.*" And as *St. Paul* said, *1 Timothy 4:2*. "*They have their consciences seared with a hot Iron.*" When men have so

accustomed themselves to sin, that sin shall harden the heart, and sear the conscience, and then no marvel if they are not at all cast down for sin.

Then fourthly, wicked men they are not cast down for sin at all, it ariseth from this, because that they do stifle the rebukes of conscience, when it doth rebuke them and check their sin, and cast them down for sin: when men shall resolve that though they shall be cast off for sin, though they be cast into hell for sin, yet they will not at all be cast down for sin: and rather then they will cast off their sins by the dictates and the rebukes and checks of their consciences, they will aggravate their sins, and greaten their sins by stifling their consciences that it shall not do its office. And thus did *Cain*, when he begins to be troubled for sin, and conscience begins to rebuke him for the evils he had done, what doth *Cain* do now? Doth he let his conscience do his office? No, he both heightens and greatens his sin and stifles his conscience, *Gen. 4:13*. “*My punishment is greater than I can bear:*” or as it is in the Hebrew, “*my iniquity is greater*” than may be forgiven, and then he goeth to stifle his conscience, ver. 16. And *Cain* went out from “*the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the Land of Nod:*” he went out from God's presence, and stifled his conscience by building of cities. And hence it comes to pass that men are not cast down for sin, because they do stifle the rebukes and checks of conscience: and so divines do interpret that place in the 11th Verse of the Epistle of *Jude*, “*Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of Cain:*” and that was when conscience did rebuke and trouble him for killing his brother and spilling of his blood; and after to stifle and still his conscience, he went to building of cities.

And thus O man, thou that walkest in ways of wickedness, and thy conscience shall rebuke thee for thy evil course in telling thee that thy conversation is not good nor upright, and shall tell thee that thy ways are

unjust and sinful; and yet thou through thy accustoming thyself in an evil course shalt stifle the checks and rebukes of thy conscience, and delight to go on in a way of wickedness, this is another great reason why wicked men are not cast down in this world for sin.

Fifthly, A fifth reason why wicked men are not cast down for sin in this world, it is this, because of the abuse of the longsuffering and patience of God: you have a notable place for this, in *Eccles. 8:11*. “*Because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*” Because God doth not punish wicked men for their wickedness speedily: because a drunkard is not speedily punished for his drunkenness, and because a swearer is not speedily punished for his swearing; and because the adulterer is not speedily punished for his uncleanness, etc. therefore do they fully set themselves to work wickedness. When wicked men shall abuse the patience and longsuffering of God, to presume the more to sin against him, hence it comes to pass that they are not cast down for sin at all.

Sixthly, A sixth reason is this, because of the slight thoughts that wicked men have of the *omniscieny* of God: though wicked men be not doctrinal atheists to deny that God seeth all things, they do but hold it as an opinion: Yet most men are practical atheists to live so loosely, and wickedly and vainly, as if God did not behold all things, and know and see them in their sinful course. You have an expression in *Job 22:13-14*. And thou sayest, “*How doth God know?*” Or ¹ what knows God? “*Can he judge through the dark clouds? Thick clouds are a covering to him that he seeth not.*” It is as much as if they had said, God doth not know, and God doth not see their wicked and sinful ways, as though the clouds were a covering between God and them, that he could not see their evil ways: and this was the cause why

their sins troubled them not. And thus I have done with the fourth question why wicked men are not cast down for sin at all.

The fifth question is this, *now seeing wicked men are not cast down for sin at all, and yet shall be cast down into hell, and that for these reasons laid down: Then what may be the reason that Godly men who shall never be cast off, never be cast down into hell, yet they may be cast down for sin, in the sight and sense of it.*

Now in the answering of this question, I shall lay down these seven reasons.

The first is drawn from the nature of sin and the justice of God, considering of them together. Now what is the nature of sin? Now this is the nature of sin: Sin it is in its own nature a resting, and a striving and contending against God, and striving to cast God down, and to set itself up. It is the nature of sin to pull God out of heaven from his throne, and to place itself there. Now God will in justice strive and contend against sin, and show himself to be too strong for sin and sinners, and to cast them down: you may see that this is the nature of sin, in *Job 15:25-26*. "*For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty. He runneth upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his bucklers:*" Here *Eliphaz* describes a sinner in his wicked ways as a soldier comes against his enemy, he strengtheneth himself against him, and he runs upon him with all his might, so that he might overcome. So doth a wicked man, he strengthens himself and runneth against God, as it were with all his might if it were possible to overcome, and cast him from his throne where he is: and therefore it is just with God to condemn sin, and to humble the sinner. The sinner would cast God's law behind his back: but it

is the nature of sin to cast God behind his back: now God will in justice cast away a sinner by condemnation, or lay the sinner low by humiliation.

Secondly, God doth cast down sinners under the sight and sense of sin, that so the children of God might cast away sin with the more indignation: and therefore God doth cast him down the more by the way of humiliation. When a man shall take a knife in his hand, and he fall with his knife in his hand, and thereby cut himself with it, away he presently flings the knife from him. Now it is so in the ways of sin and wickedness, when you take sin into your hands, when you go into any unwarrantable course; when you fall into sin, you take knives into your hands, and in falling so into sin you cut yourselves. God makes that knife of sin to cut your heart, to cut your conscience, and you wound your souls; and seeing sin doth as knives wound you in your falling therein, you should with the more indignation cast it from you. You read in *Isa. 30:19, 22*, of sorrow for sin, "*The people shall dwell in Zion, they shall weep no more: he will be very gracious unto thee, at the voice of thy cry; he will hear it, he will answer thee.*" Here is God's promise upon their humiliation: then in ver. 22. "*Ye shall defile also the covering of the graven Images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten Images of gold: thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.*" God maketh his people to mourn for sin, and to cast them down for sin, and to humble them under the sight and sense of sin, and to make them to have indignation against sin, and then to cast sin from them as a menstruous cloth: And as it is with nurses when they would wean their children, they will put some bitter thing upon the breast, as wormwood or gall, thereby to make the child to forsake the breast: So God he puts bitter things upon those things which we account sweet; he puts bitter potions upon the breast of our sinful delights, so that he might wean

his people from sucking anymore at those poisonous breasts which we so highly esteem in our corrupt nature. You read of the prodigal son in *Luk. 15:16*, when he was brought to those great straights and trouble, that he desired “*to feed of the husks with the swine,*” after he came to himself, he desired to eat bread and be “*as one of the hired servants in his father’s house.*” When God doth make his people smart for sin, as the prodigal did in his absence from his father’s house; when they are laid low for sin, under the sense and sight of their sins, as the prodigal was; when they come to themselves again, then they would be glad with the prodigal to prize their father’s house. So the soul, when he comes to be brought very low for sin, then they come to set a high esteem on Jesus Christ. It is very observable, where humiliation for sin is mentioned, there it is joined with a detestation and segregation from sin, *Jam. 4:8, Joel 2:12*.

Thirdly, God puts sinners under the sight and sense of sin, because it puts the soul to cast themselves and to rely upon Jesus Christ: it is our necessity that puts us first upon the pursuit after and relying upon Jesus Christ, because we see that we are undone without Jesus Christ: It is with us as it was with the leprous persons that we read of in *2 Kings 7:3*. “*And there were four Leprous persons at the entering in of the gate: and they said one to another, Why sit we here until we die? If we say, We will enter into the City, then the famine is in the City, and we shall die there: and if we sit still here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us fall into the host of the Syrians: if they save us alive, we shall live, and if they kill us, we can but die.*” I apply this here to this case; here is the case, if I die in a Christless state, I am gone forever, and undone to eternity: and if I rest in confidence in the world, that can afford no safety. I will therefore run to Jesus Christ

that there I may have relief, and that there I may ease me of my burden by resting upon Jesus Christ in his promise.

Fourthly, God doth cast his people down under the sense of sin, so that he might suppress the lifting up the pride of our own hearts in the sight and apprehension of our own gifts: when the Lord doth see a man to be lifted up within himself with pride, with his gifts, then God will hide his gifts and show him his sin, and lay him low, and make him humble. So was it with *Paul*; he was a man of exceeding great parts, and great gifts above other men; even above all other men, but only Jesus Christ: and yet for all that "*he was apt to be proud, and to be too much lifted up*" within himself in the apprehension of his own gifts; and for this he had a "*thorn in his flesh to keep him humble, lest he should be exalted above measure,*" 2 Cor. 12:7. So you read likewise in *Psalm* 9:20. "*Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations may know themselves to be but men.*" Men of the greatest gifts have the greatest fears to keep down pride. The swan that hath white feathers hath black feet. So those that have the greatest excellency shall have some manifest infirmity to keep them down; as *Heman* was a man of excellent gifts, 1 *Kings* 4:31, yet see how God humbled him, *Psalm* 88:7, 15, Now God to cure his people of this distemper of spiritual pride, he layeth them low, and casteth them down under the sight and sense of sin.

Fifthly, that thereby he might bring the hearts of his people to a more clear sight, and sensible and lively feeling of pardoning grace and mercy: the deeper God is pleased to cast his people under the sense and sight of sin, and the lower he layeth them under humiliation; the higher will they exalt God in his pardoning grace and mercy. After men are tossed at sea in a tempest, they prize the harbor. God doth take that course with his people as the reported *astronomers* do take: they do not lie on the tops of high

mountains when they would take a view of the sky; but they lie in the lowest valleys; not in places which are nearest the heavens, but in low places most remote from the heavens. So God he doth not lift up his people at all times as upon mountains; but layeth them low in the valley of humiliation, and casts them low under the sight and sense of sin, that thereby their hearts by faith might take a more clear view of, and sensibly and lively feel the free mercy and pardoning grace of God. God doth cast you into low pits of humiliation, that by that you may see the more clearly God's mercy and grace. God plungeth his people under humiliation, as you may read in *Psalms* 44:25. "*Our soul is bowed down to the dust; our belly cleaveth to the earth.*" And in verse 26. "*Arise O Lord for our help, and redeem us for thy mercies sake.*" Here you see the church complains of the deepness of her sorrow, the greatness of her humiliation; their soul was bowed down even to the dust: a great degree of casting down. But what was God's end in this greatly humbling of them? It was to put them upon a more sensible feeling of God's pardoning mercy and grace; as it appears in these words, "*Redeem us for thy mercies sake.*" Mercy was precious, and pardoning grace was precious when that they lay low under affliction and were deeply humbled; sense and sight of sin and misery under which they lay, made them to prize and highly esteem pardoning grace and mercy: and this is another reason why God doth lay his people low under the sight and sense of sin, that they might esteem pardoning grace.

Sixthly, to make them confess that there is more evil in sin than ever there was seeming pleasure in the committing of sin. It is a notable instance that you read of in *Eccles.* 7:25-26. "*I applied my heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness. And I find more bitter*

than death the woman whose heart is snares and nets, and her hands as bands: whoso pleaseth God, (or who so is good before God) shall espape from her, but the sinner shall be taken by her." Here *Solomon* applied his heart to find out the deceits of sin, as if he had said, I have studied to know the secret snares, and the private nets that sin lays to catch sinners; and in a special manner I laboured to know the secret mischief of that sin of adultery. For you read that he had "*seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines,*" 1 *Kings* 11:3. And when God made him see the evil of that sin, and cast him down under the sense of that sin, then he could say, that I find "*a thing more bitter than death,*" a harlot whose heart is "*snares and nets:*" and then he could say that it was folly and wickedness and madness. Now when God doth cast down his people under the sight and sense of sin, he doth bring them to see and to make them to confess with *Solomon*, that sin is more bitter then death; and to confess that there is more evil in the least sin then there can be seeming pleasure and profit, and contentment in the commission of it; the hearts of the people of God have never tasted of the bitterness of sin, until God doth lay them low, and cast them down under the weight and sense of sin, and by this means he makes them to see how bitter a thing sin is.

Seventhly, God doth this to make wicked men afraid to commit sin; and this is done in mercy to them, did they but consider of it; may not wicked men reason thus to themselves? Why? If God doth use his own people so for sin, what may I expect at God's hands? If God doth cast down his own people under the sense and under the sight of sin, what may I expect from his hands, who do so delight in sin, which his own people suffer so for? Surely if God casteth down his own people under the sight and under the apprehension of sin, then surely I may expect to be cast off for sin; if they

be cast down to the ground for sin, I shall be cast into hell for sin; doth he cast them down in the apprehension of hell? Surely he may cast me down to the possession of hell: and have not I cause to be cast down for sin, that shall be cast off for sin? If his own people do shed tears for sin, then surely I should shed blood for sin; and if they be cast down for sin that shall never be wholly rejected; shall not I be cast down for sin, whose sins shall make me be rejected? So that I say God in his casting down his own people, he doth it out of mercy to wicked men, that they thereby may beware, and not venture to commit sin against God. And thus I have in those seven particulars answered this fifth question, why the people of God, those who shall never be cast off, may yet be cast down under the sight and sense of sin.

The sixth and last question I am to handle is this, What theological rules may be laid down to the people of God, that they may not be too much cast down for sin, under the sight and sense, and burden of it, nor be too much dejected under it?

Now in answer to this query, consider these particulars.

First rule is this, do not expect so much sorrow and casting down for sin as some other men have had; and the reason why I give you this rule is this, because that some of the people of God will thus reason; I must be thus and thus cast down for sin; and I must have such a degree, and such a measure of humiliation, because I see other men have so; and I must have such a sight of sin, and lie so low for sin, because other men do so; and what, shall not I do so? Shall not I lie so low? Shall not I be so humbled for sin as I see others are? I have as many sins as they, and I have as great sins as they, and my sins are accompanied with as heinous circumstances as theirs are, and therefore why should not I be humbled as they are?

Now consider, what and if others have been cast down more than thou hast been? What is this to thy humiliation for sin? For other men's degree, and other men's manner and measure of humiliation is not to be a rule for thee to humble thyself by; for it may be others that have had such a degree of humiliation and casting down for sin, they have been more notorious in sin; and they it may be have more rugged natures, and are of a more stubborn temper than thou art of; it may be thy temper is more flexible, and more pliable, and more yielding, and more easily wrought upon than others have been; therefore there is not required such a degree and measure of humiliation as they require; it may be thou canst not bear that which others can; that ballast will but serve a ship, would overload a little boat; therefore do not reason thus with thyself, to compare thy casting down for sin with others, lest thou dost cast thyself too low for sin; other men it may be do contract more sin than thou dost, and it may be thou hast not so stifled thy conscience as they have done, and it may be thou hast not committed those sins that they have committed, and it may be thou hast not laid waste thy conscience as they have done, and thou it may be hast not been so ill a liver as they have been; therefore thou dost not need so great a measure of humiliation for sin as they have had need of. You have an expression therefore 1 *Pet.* 1:6, if need be, "*ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.*" God in his wisdom sees some men that they stand in need, (yea) in more need of a greater measure of affliction, and casting down for sin than others have need of: It may be some men have more spiritual pride of parts and gifts, and graces; and more guilt lying upon them than thou hast.

The second rule is this by way of direction; rest satisfied in thy conscience, though thou mayest not find the measure of thy humiliation; yet

if thou find the end of thy humiliation, rest satisfied in that; if in thy humiliation thou dost desire to be truly humbled for sin; and if thou dost desire to lay thyself low in the presence of God; if thou dost desire to abhor thyself in regard of the sinfulness of thy nature and life; and if thou dost desire to amend thy ways, and thy doings that have not been good, and to walk more close to God: if so, though thou hast not the measure of humiliation and casting down for sin as others have, yet thou hast the end of humiliation, and thou mayest rest satisfied in thy conscience. If that humiliation doth embitter sin, and endear Jesus Christ to thy soul; I tell thee O poor soul, though thou hast not this degree of humiliation, thou mayest be dear to Jesus Christ, and thou mayest go to heaven for all that; and I tell thee further for thy comfort, there was never yet any went to hell and lost heaven for want of degrees of grace: but many go to hell and lose heaven for want of truth of grace. So none ever went to hell for want of such and such a degree of casting down for sin, and for want of such and such a degree of humiliation: but many go to hell for want of humiliation in the least measure and truth of it. If there be faith in thee, grace in thy soul, though it be but as a grain of mustard-seed; a little grace sprung in the soul, shall spring up in thy soul to a harvest of glory as thy reward. Yea God rewards the soul with no less a reward then glory, for a little grace; heaven is not entailed to the soul upon such and such degrees of grace, to have so much faith, and so much repentance, and so much humiliation, and so much casting down for sin, and so much love to Christ; (though this is to be strived after, as a strong faith in God, much love to God, etc.) yet heaven is entailed to weak faith, a little love, etc. so it be true. Therefore if thou findest the ends of humiliation, thou mayest satisfy thyself though thou wantest the degrees; this is the Second rule.

The third rule, why the souls of the people of God should not be too much cast down for sin, is this.

Be sure to cast thyself upon Jesus Christ for life and salvation, and then whatever comes, be sure thou wilt not be too much cast down for sin, nor too much dejected under it. What is the great reason that so many poor souls are so much cast down for sin, too much dejected under the sight and sense of it? It is this, because they are afraid to cast themselves wholly upon Jesus Christ, and to roll themselves upon him for salvation. Though more sin requires more tears for sin upon the thoughts of it; yet Jesus Christ need not shed more blood for sin; Jesus Christ needs no more to die for satisfaction for sin; Christ hath paid a full and complete, and sufficient ransom for sin, and needs die no more: but thou hast not shed all the tears thou must do for sin, for the body of sin, and the remainders of corruption that are within thee. It is the nature of wicked men, yea, and good men too, to run into extremes about and concerning sin: and therefore observe this rule, for it will be a means to keep you that you do not cast yourselves down too much for sin.

First, it is natural for wicked men, that they will be so far from being cast down for sin too much, that they will not be troubled, nor cast down for sin at all, but to go on from sin to sin, for to pass from one degree to another, till they perish everlastingly, and this they do without fear.

Secondly, but now on the right hand, good men are very apt to run into a right-hand error, while wicked men will not be cast down for sin at all; these will labor to cast themselves too low for sin under the sight and sense of it. The Scripture makes mention of wicked men, they are not at all troubled for sin, as you may read in *Job*. 21:14-15, nothing troubles their consciences when they come to die: see verse 13. "*They spend their days in*

wealth, (or as the Hebrew word is, they spend their days in *mirth*) *and in a moment go down to the grave.*” But are they at all humbled before God? Read the 14 and 15 verses, “*Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us: for we do not desire the knowledge of thy ways. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? And what profit should we have, if we pray unto him? (Therefore depart from us)*” Wherefore? Because they lived in mirth and pleasure, and at hearts ease, and they never so much as thought of sin, and much less to be humbled under the sense of it; and therefore they neither cared for God nor for his ways: so that you see wicked men are not cast down for sin at all.

But now good men are on the other side very apt to embitter their own condition by being too much cast down for sin; this is possible; and good men are very apt to do it. 2 Cor. 2:7, “*ye ought to comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.*” When a child of God shall out of bitterness of soul cast himself down too much for sin; as he was subject too, that was by the Church excommunicated for his sin; when he under this censure suffered for his sin, it was the Apostle’s fear lest he should be born down with overmuch sorrow: Therefore though wicked men make light of sin, and are not humbled under the sight and sense of it at all; take heed that in your mourning for sin you do not cast yourselves down too much for sin: and thus I have resolved these six questions.

I shall now close up this doctrine with a word of use.

If it be so that the children of God may be cast down for sin, though they may not be cast off for sin; and may a godly man be so cast down for sin that he may cry out with the Psalmist, “*Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me?*” Although wicked men may live in

pleasure all their days and never be troubled, and cast down under the sight and sense of sin: I shall direct my speech a little to wicked men.

First, O you that live in a course of ungodliness, in ways of wickedness, delighting yourselves to live after the imaginations of your own evil hearts, consider and reason thus with your own souls; what are good men cast down that shall never be cast off? And are they dejected who shall never be rejected? What will you do that heap sin upon sin and add iniquity to iniquity, to multiply your abominations, and never have your hearts to be troubled, and never have your consciences smite you for the evil of your doings? O consider, that many may be cast into hell for sin, that never have been cast down for sin; and if you go on and continue in this way of sinning, what will become of you?

But you may say, what may be done, or what means may be used to get the soul into such a frame, to be cast down for sin, and to have the soul humbled under the sight and sense of it?

Now there are three ways that the Lord doth use to cast down the souls of sinners, and to humble them under the sight and sense of sin.

The first is this, God doth let in a light into the understanding, and sets on work that great officer of God in man, his conscience, which doth so smite the heart, and convince the whole soul of the evil of his doings, and makes the man to single out sin, yea to single his master sin, his beloved *Delilah*, his bosom lust, that hath made him most guilty of the breach of the righteous law, and laid him most liable to the wrath of God; he singles out that sin that hath been his companion all his days: God doth not only make him to look upon sin in general, (because a general view of sin in the soul, doth work in the soul a general repentance for sin) but God doth by the light that he puts in the understanding and conscience, single out thy sin, thy

dearly beloved sin, and as it were bring it to thy understanding that it may understand the guilt and weight of it. Therefore you read of some in their first conversion, *Acts 2:37*, they were guilty of many sins that they had committed; but God by setting their consciences on work, did single out one sin in a special manner, the sin, the iniquity that they were most guilty of; and that was the crucifying of the Lord of life. You have it laid down in the 36, verse, “*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Whom ye have crucified;*” there was the sin that came home to them to their hearts, as you may read in the 37 verse², “*Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts:*” here they were taken in the sin that they were most guilty of; God made their consciences to bring that in a most special manner, and this troubled and pricked them at the very heart: though they stood guilty of many great sins; yet God laid that one great sin to their hearts, that they might be humbled for that most of all. So when the woman of *Samaria* came to Jesus Christ when he was at the well speaking concerning her husbands, he told her what was her sin; “*he whom thou hast now, is not thy husband*³.” Christ told her what her sin was in plain terms; he told her she was a harlot, and she went and told it, that he told her all things that ever she had done; Christ did not tell her she was a sinner in general; but he did single out what her great sin was for which she was most guilty, and that worked upon her heart and conscience: her conscience told her, and she understood the truth of it, and this made her to be cast down for it. So now if God gives thee grace to be cast down for sin under the sight and sense of it, he will put a light into thy understanding, and set conscience on work to single out thy beloved sin; the greatest sins thou standst guilty of, thy master corruption; so that thou mayest be humbled for it.

The second way that God takes to cast a man down under the sight and sense of sin, is this; God doth stir up the affections of the soul in the remembrance of those aggravations and heinous circumstances, with which that sin is clothed withal. You read *Job 36:9*. He “*showeth unto men their works, and their transgressions that they have exceeded: He showeth unto men their iniquities, (and what follows) and their transgressions which have been exceeding great.*” God doth not only show men their sins, that their sins are great; but also he showeth to men the aggravations of their sins; and it is not a transient view of the greatness of their iniquities and transgressions; but he causeth them to know it; he causeth them to know that their sins are clothed with heinous circumstances, as that they have sinned against means, and sinned against mercies, and sinned against love, and sinned against light, and sinned against the checks of conscience; for thy sins; and all this to make thee to be cast down and humbled for thy sins.

The third and last way that God takes to cast a man down for sin, is this; God doth put conscience into office in men, not only to single out one particular master sin; but also to bring to remembrance those sins that thou standst guilty of before God, and to set them in thy sight, and in especial manner that master sin, this beloved sin, and to humble thee for it, and abase thee before God, until that sin be mortified in thee: sin must not only be seen, and the affections stirred up in remembrance of those heinous circumstances of it with which it is clothed, and that they are exceedingly great; but also conscience must keep them in remembrance until they are mortified in thee, until that sin is subdued and mortified: and these are the three steps that God doth take to cast men down in the sight and sense of sin. And now all you that are strangers to this work that never yet knew what this casting down for sin meant in any measure, labor to find these

three particulars wrought upon thy soul, so that thou mayest be cast down under the sight and sense of sin; and so I have done with this doctrine concerning casting down for sin.

1. The Hebrew text for this Scripture was inserted here in the original.
2. The Greek text for this Scripture was inserted here in the original.
3. John 4:18

Sermon IV

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him—The health of my Countenance, and my God.” Psalm 42:11

Now before I come to the second branch of the words, I shall consider the text in the dialect, or form of speech which the Psalmist here useth; and then draw out some doctrine that the words will afford. You see that the form of speech here is by way of a soliloquy, which is a form of speech to himself as between two friends; *“Why art thou cast down, O my soul?”* From which expression or form of speech, take this observation.

That such self-conferences, or soliloquies that the Psalmist here useth, are duties that believers ought to be much conversant about, and ought to busy themselves much in. The Psalms are full fraught with these divine soliloquies, as you may read, *Psalm 103*, verse 1 and the last, *“Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name;”* and verse

22. “*Bless the Lord, O my soul;*” and *Psalm* 104:1. “*Bless the Lord, O my soul;*” so *Psalm* 34, v. 1. “*I will bless the Lord at all times;*” so likewise *Psalm* 146, v. 6. “*Praise the Lord, O my soul;*” and many places in the *Psalms* of his praising God. All those do intimate to us, those divine soliloquies that the people, and saints, and servants of God have had in themselves to bless God; see not only the divine soliloquies here mentioned, but also the works of *Augustine*, and *Bernard*, *Gerrard*, *Dr. Hall* and others that have had divine soliloquies between God and their own souls, in secret; therefore let this be your care; yea, make conscience to be much in these divine soliloquies, to have much conference between God and your own souls in secret: it is a duty that Christians are bound to, to confer with others; and this God takes notice of. So also it is a duty to confer with your own souls, between God and your own souls: *David* sometimes blesseth God, and sometime he checketh himself; sometimes he calls to his soul to bless God, and raiseth up his soul to praise God; and sometimes he chideth his soul for being cast down, “*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*” Are you at any time troubled in mind? Then use this holy reasoning of this holy man, “*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*” Are you at any time sluggish in duty? Then say to thyself, it is better to be the servant of God then to be the Devils drudge, and so draw up thy soul again to a frame suitable to the duty thou goest about, and the God thou servest; it is better to live in peace with God, and a good conscience, then to live in the service of the Devil, which will bring trouble of mind and horror of conscience to thee; and say by conferring with thyself with thy soul, What am I? What is my condition? Am I an elected person? Or am I a reprobate? Am I an heir of glory? Or an heir of hell? Am I a child of God? Or a child of wrath? Am I in the state of grace, or in the bonds of iniquity?

Such conferences as these with thy own heart, will be a means to awaken thy heart from the sleep of security, to consider of its own estate, this is thy duty; let this be your practice to enter into a discourse with your own hearts as *David* did; But I shall not follow this particular.

There is something more in the words to be considered, and that is the manner how *David* doth speak to his own soul, and how he reasoneth with his own heart and saith, “*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*” From this manner of speech consider this doctrine.

That a child of God should check his soul for, and use holy reasonings against excessive castings down for sin; and this I draw from the manner of the Psalmists speech; he checks his own heart, and reasons with his own soul concerning this particular, “*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*”

In the handling of this doctrine there are two particulars to be considered.

First, a child of God should check his heart for, and use holy reasonings against excessive sorrow and casting down for sin.

Secondly, to show you in what manner you are to use these holy reasonings against your excessive casting down for sin.

First, why a child of God should check his heart for, and use holy reasonings against inordinate and excessive casting down for sin. Because first he is the chief actor, and principal agent of his own dejections; and he being the chief agent of his sorrow, he is to lay the fault and blame on his own self. I told you though the words lie to be read passively, “*Why art thou cast down, O my soul?*” Yet they are to be read actively according to the original text. Arias Montanus, cur humiliasti te? Lormus, cur deprimes te anima mea? Why or what dost thou cast down thyself, O my soul? Therefore if thou art cast down, thou art the actor and agent of thy own dejection, thou dost cast down thyself; therefore check thy own heart for,

and use holy reasonings against immoderate and excessive dejections for sin. God enjoins his people to believe in him, to keep up their souls, to lift up their souls to God: and yet sometimes they are subject to cast down themselves, and cast down their souls by immoderate and excessive casting down for sin. When the Devil by his temptations doth not cast them down, yet will they cast down themselves; *“Why dost thou cast down thyself, O my soul?”*

Secondly, this is the ready and most effectual way to recover himself out of that dejected condition by checking his own heart for being excessively cast down; holy and religious arguments with a man's own soul, are prevalent arguments to work the soul out from his dejected estate; which if he should let himself alone in this dejected estate, he would soon plunge himself into such a condition, and excessive, and immoderate casting down for sin, into such a gulf of misery as that he would not be able to get out again. As it is good for a man to reason with his heart when he is assured of salvation; so why he doubts of it. There is a why am I cast down in sorrow, as well as why am I raised up in comfort?

Then Secondly, after what manner are the people of God to use these holy reasonings against immoderate and excessive casting down of their souls for sin?

Answer. There are seven ways how the children of God are to check their hearts for, and to use holy reasonings against excessive sorrow, and casting down for sin.

First, the children of God should reason thus with themselves after this manner; O my soul, I am not cast off by God everlastingly by lying low before God; therefore why should I be cast down excessively for sin? In *Psalm 94:14*. *“For the Lord will not cast off his people, neither will he*

forsake his inheritance.” Although God doth not say I will not cast down my people; yet he doth say I will not cast them off. So *Romans 11:1*, the Apostle he repeats the words again, “*God hath not cast off his people,*” and he puts a “*God forbid*” upon it in the 1 verse, “*Hath God cast off his people? God forbid.*” The Apostle brings it in as a strong negation, “*God hath not cast off his people whom he foreknew.*” Therefore seeing that God doth not cast off his people, why should I be too much cast down? Let wicked men, let reprobates that shall be eternally cast off, let them be excessively cast down; but let not me be cast excessively down for sin, seeing I shall never be cast off, though I may be cast down for a little moment, according to that expression in *Isa. 54:7-8*. “*For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but in great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath have I hid my face from thee, in a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy upon thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.*” This casting down for sin, is but momentary, a small time, a little season; but he will not cast off forever.

Secondly, reason thus with thy own soul against thy dejections, and say, Jesus Christ he laid down his life for me voluntarily and meritoriously, and laid himself down very low to be my Savior; therefore why, O my soul, shouldst thou be cast down excessively for sin? It is true, O my soul, if thou hadst been to die, and to have purchased thy own redemption, to have been thy own savior, and if the weight and the extreme burden of thy sins had been to be laid upon thy own shoulders, and if thou hadst been to have made perfect satisfaction to divine justice in thy own person, if thou hadst been obliged to have kept the whole law perfectly and if thou hadst been to make a full recompense for the wrong and evil that thou hast done, and thou wast to offer the fruit of thy body for the sin of thy soul; yet this would not

do, nor procure the least satisfaction, nor make the least compensation and recompense for the evil thou hast done. Now if this were thy case to be thy own mediator, and thy own intercessor, and to have thy blood spilled for thy sins, if this was thy case, thou hadst cause to be excessively cast down for sin. A finite creature can never make satisfaction to infinite justice. *Could I give a thousand Rams, ten thousand Rivers of Oil, yet I could not make an atonement, or give a sufficient ransom for my redemption.* But it is far otherwise, the quite contrary is thy portion, not thy case. Here O my soul, is thy case which may abundantly administer thee comfort; the blood, the precious blood of Jesus Christ is laid down for sin, that thou mayest not excessively be cast down for sin, and thou mayest draw abundance of comfort and satisfaction from this consideration.

First, consider with thyself, O my soul, Jesus Christ did not shed his precious blood for himself, but for me: he did like a good shepherd lay down his life for his sheep, *John 10:15.*

Secondly, consider that God the Father did accept of the laying down of his life in this behalf, *John 10:17. "The Father loves him, because he laid down his life."*

Thirdly, consider and reason with thyself, O my soul, though there are great arguments to greaten sin, and to heighten sin; so there are many great arguments to greaten the mercy of God in Christ. Are thy sins great? The mercies of God are greater. Do thy sins deserve great punishments, even eternal death? The death of Jesus Christ, and the merit of Christ are of infinite value to merit life, even eternal life. Are thy sins the sins of a man? But the satisfactions of Jesus Christ, are the satisfactions of a God; do thy sins merit the frowns of God? O but Christ's death doth merit and purchase the favor of God. In a word, as Christ's person doth excel thy person: so

doth his obedience infinitely exceed thy disobedience; therefore said the Apostle *Paul*, *Rom.* 5:16, etc. But the “*free gift is of many offenses unto justification.*” Here the Apostle intimates, that though there is great guilt in sin, yet there is greater mercy and merits in Christ; for as by *Adam* there came sin and death: so by Jesus Christ there came righteousness and life; for “*as the wages of sin is death: so the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,*” *Rom.* 6:23. There is not so much guilt in sin, as there is merit in Christ; there is not so much guilt in sin to condemn, as there is merit in Jesus Christ to save. Therefore why shouldest thou be cast down, O my soul? Jesus Christ hath laid down his life for me; and in laying down his life, he hath made full satisfaction for sin unto his Father; and though there are required more tears for sin by way of humiliation: yet there wanteth no more blood for sin by way of satisfaction; therefore be not thou excessively cast down for sin.

Thirdly, reason thus with thy own soul, that thou mayest not be too excessively cast down for sin, O my soul; consider; excessive casting down may hinder thy soul from holy endeavors in suppressing and mortifying of sin. It is the policy and subtlety of the Devil, to draw men to run into extremes; sometimes the Devil draweth men to possess them so with the reigning power of sin, as that they shall never so much as think of the guilt of sin; and sometimes to possess them so with the power of sin, as not to be able so much as to look at the pardon of sin. I may say to thee, as God to *Joshua*, chap. 7:10. “*Get thee up, why liest thou on thy face?*” It was fit *Joshua* should be cast down at the disaster, but not be taken off from pursuing the enemy. Therefore reason and say, O my soul, it doth not become thee to be cast down excessively under the guilt of sin, but to lift up thyself against it, by resting upon God.

Fourthly, reason thus with thy soul; O my soul consider, are not these dejections of mind, are not these excessive castings down for sin, exceeding great disparagement to God's free grace and mercy, and to Christ's merits? If a man that is thirsty shall come to the sea the mighty ocean to seek water, and when he comes there, to be cast down with the thoughts that all the water in the sea cannot quench his thirst; this would render the sea to be but an empty thing: so thou to be troubled, and to be exceedingly and excessively cast down for sin, and to think that the mercy in God and the merits of Christ cannot comfort and bear up thy dejected soul; this doth exceedingly disparage the mighty ocean of God's mercies and Christ's merits, for thee to think that thy sins do out-vie mercy, and out-strip free grace. In the time of the law, the mercy-seat did wholly cover the ark where the law was kept; to show that if a man doth violate not only one command, but every command of the law, yet all that might be covered over with mercy; and notwithstanding the violation of the law, they had a mercy-seat to go to; though we do violate all the law, all the commands of God, yet this law is covered all over with mercy, the mercy of God is far above thy dejections. The Red Sea did drown *Pharaoh* and all his host, with as much ease as it could drown one man; so can the Red Sea of Christ's blood drown every sin, though they were mountains of transgressions, as well as the least sin. In *Psalms* 25:11. "*For thy Name sake, O Lord, pardon my iniquity, for it is great;*" it is a word in the Hebrew emphatical; we read it, "*for it is great;*" but it may be read, "*though it be great; for the sake of thy Name, O Lord, pardon thou my iniquities, because they (or, although) they are multiplied;*" or, "*therefore thou wilt pardon them, because they are great.*"

Fifthly, reason thus with thy soul; why wilt thou cast thyself down, O my soul, especially considering that the casting down of the soul doth cast

down the body also? Here is such a sympathy between the body and the soul that the one cannot be troubled and cast down, but the other is so also; for when the body of Christ was troubled, his soul was troubled also; when the people of God have melancholy and troubled thoughts, it doth trouble and disturb the body as well as the mind; it weakeneth the body, and lesseneth that joy that they should have in God, and puts the whole man out of order; and therefore it is very observable what *David* speaketh; and I shall lay it down to those that are troubled under the dejections of mind for sin, for those very men that cast down themselves for sin excessively, this also doth disturb and trouble the body. In *Psalms* 32:4. "*I kept silence, and my moisture is turned into the drought of summer.*" And it is more fully set forth in *Psalms* 38:3-5. "*There is no soundness in my flesh, by reason of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, by reason of my sin; for mine iniquities are gone over my head as a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me; and I go mourning all the day.*" Here for too much dejection followeth a bodily disease and distemper; as in ver. 7. "*My loins are filled with a loathsome disease, and there is no soundness in my flesh.*" And many interpreters do hold, that his trouble in mind, his being cast down so much under his sin, was the cause of his bodily disease. So again in *Psalms* 39:8-9. "*Deliver me from my transgressions;*" there was his inward dejection, his trouble for sin. And in ver. 10. "*Remove thy stroke away from me, I am consumed by the blow (or, conflict) of thy hand.*" When God with rebukes for sin, makes him see his wrath in the sight of sin, that by this means he may not continue in sin: and thou to cast down thyself excessively under the apprehensions of sin, this doth not only disturb the mind, but also destroy the body. I mention this, not that I would that any should cast off godly sorrow for sin, provided that it be kept within its due bounds; for

sorrow for sin in a due measure, it neither troubleth the mind, nor distempereth nor afflicteth the body; but it is excessive sorrow for sin, that casteth down the soul, and causeth distempers to arise in the body; therefore reason with thy soul against it.

Sixthly, reason thus with thy own soul; consider, O my soul, opposition against sin, rather than excessive casting down for sin, is what God accepteth, and is more pleased withal. Christians are very apt to think and believe, that if they be thus and thus cast down for sin, and so much humbled and cast down for sin, they do great matters; and yet in the mean time they do not conflict and contest with and against their lusts, and constantly oppose their sin; to be so far humbled, to be so far dejected for sin, as may encourage the soul to fight against sin, this is that which is well-pleasing to God. When the men of *Israel* did flee before the men of *Ai*, in the seventh Chap. of *Joshua*, *Joshua* fell upon his face, and rent his clothes; now said God to *Joshua*, “*Get thee up, wherefore fallest thou upon thy face?*” Ver. 10, so saith God to you, to thy soul that is dejected and excessively cast down for sin, wherefore fall ye down upon your faces on the ground in a dejected condition for sin? Get you up; so say to thy soul, why dost thou fall upon thy face? Why dost thou deject thyself? Why dost thou mourn excessively for sin? Get thee up. God had rather see the soul to be up, and to be fighting against corruption, then to be down on thy face in too low a dejection for sin. It is with thy soul as with a soldier, a general had rather see his soldiers up and fighting against their common enemy, then to lie upon the ground wounded and cast down, crying by reason of their wounds: so God had rather see the souls of his people to be up, and to be fighting against their corruptions and lusts, their common enemies to

their salvation, then to be down upon their faces on the ground, under an excessive casting down for sin.

Seventhly, reason thus with thyself, O my soul, why art thou dejected under the sight and sense of sin? Consider it is not the measure of humiliation, nor the degrees of it, but the truth of humiliation, that God accepts of, and maketh promise of acceptance to. Therefore do not lie so low under so sad a dejection; the Lord doth make the greatest promises to the least measure and degree of faith; though thy faith be little, and thy graces small, yet the least and the weakest measure and degree of grace God accepts. Though there are many that go to hell for want of truth of grace in the habit: yet never any go to hell for want of degrees of grace in the act; if there be but the least beginnings of grace, God accepts of that; if it be but faith as a grain of mustard-seed, that is faith; so a little tree may be as truly called a tree as the greatest, though it wants that degree of greatness, yet it is a tree for all that: so a little grace, a little seed of faith as a grain of mustard-seed, may as truly and as properly be called true faith, as the strongest faith, though it want the degrees of it; God hath his bottle for them that shed few tears, as well as for them that make their heads a fountain of water; though thy grace be but as a bruised reed, and as smoking flax, yet that bruised reed and that smoking flax shall not be quenched, nor the bruised reed broken; in *Isa. 42:3*, “*a bruised reed he shall not break, and the smoking flax he shall not quench;*” though grace be very weak, and very little and small, as a bruised reed and as smoking flax, (or dimly burning) for so the word signifieth, yet God will strengthen the one, and kindle the other; and will not reject these small beginnings of grace, though they appear to be so dim as scarcely to be discerned. Though God doth not make promises to sinners as in that state, yet God doth make promises to

sinner as they have grace, though never so weak and small; therefore why shouldst thou give way to too much trouble of mind?

The use that I shall make is this, to let you know that the Scripture doth in join you not only to check your hearts for, and to use holy reasonings against your excessive dejection and casting down for sin, but also you must reason yourselves into a way of believing; many Christians will reason why they should believe, and why they should be comforted, and why they should be cast down; but why they are excessively cast down, they have no reason at all but this, because they must be so, and that you must have the one as well as the other. Now what reason can those Christians give, that make conscience of all their ways, and labor to live useful in all their relations, and to live in the use of ordinances, and to walk close with God in all their ways, what reason have they to be too much cast down for sin? Therefore as you will reason for believing and comfort, so also you must reason against excessive casting down for sin; for to do this you have no reason; you must show reasons of your dejections as well as of your assurance and persuasions. Wicked men, come and ask them concerning heaven, they will tell you, that they are sure of heaven; and then ask their reason wherefore they think so: they can give you no reason at all; therefore that is presumption. So good men are apt under too much dejection of spirit, to say that they shall go to hell, and be cast off from heaven: but ask them a good reason, they can give none at all. And this is a sin on the other side. I would ask such doubting Christians upon serious thoughts, because you are apt to think you shall go to hell, can you say, that you have no more reason in you then wicked reprobates have? And can you say that you are guilty of those actual sins that are impossible to stand with a principle of true grace, and that there is that in you reigning that no child of God can have? These

are indeed some reasons but if these be not found, you have no cause to be cast down. Though you must check your own hearts for too much casting down for sin; yet you must not cast off all dejection for sin: for to be cast down for sin, is a duty: but to be overmuch, and excessively cast down for sin, that is a sin. There is such duties that you are to put your hearts upon; but not to deject your hearts excessively under. And if you ask me how I shall know that these are duties; I answer in these four particulars.

First, you are not to check your hearts for dejection under sin, when the measure of your dejection is subservient to the ends of dejection. Now the end of dejection it is twofold. First, it is to embitter sin. And secondly, to endear Jesus Christ. And when thy dejection hath these two ends, namely, to make sin to be bitter to thy soul, and to make Jesus Christ to be precious to thy soul; then is thy dejection right, and thou not to check thy heart for it, but to cherish it and embrace it. But when thy dejection doth not make sin bitter, nor make Christ to be precious, but trouble thy mind, and cast down thy soul, and drive thee away from Christ, this is excessive, and not subservient to those two ends, and so becomes sinful.

Secondly, you are to cherish this dejection when with this humiliation and dejection for sin you do join with it the sense of God's love and favor; when thy heart is brought into this frame as to see sin with one eye, and God's love and free grace and pardoning mercy with another: but those that do so pore upon their corruptions, and sinful miscarriages, as never to be able to see God's love and free grace, and pardoning mercy in the promises of the Gospel, this is a sin; and this you should check your hearts for.

Thirdly, thy dejections are not excessive when thy dejections are more for the evil of fact than for the danger of punishment; when your dejection is more for sin committed than thy state thou hast endangered, that is not

excessive. But when thy dejections are more in mourning for the state you have endangered than the sin you have committed, that is excessive. When a man shall commit a sin, and he shall be dejected, and say; I shall go to hell, and lose my happy estate in heaven, and fear hell as punishment more than to mourn for sin as a sin; this is excessive sorrow for sin. When thou shalt mourn more for the fear of punishment of sin, than for sin as it is a dishonor to God, and that thou hast committed and aggravated evil, it is excessive. But when thy sorrow shall be more for sin, and God's dishonor than for fear of punishment, if this be the trouble of thy soul, thou art not to check thy heart for it.

Fourthly, those dejections and castings down for sin are to be entertained when they have this effect to make thee to justify God, and to condemn thyself, to justify God in all his proceedings. But when under dejections of mind thou shalt entertain hard thoughts of God, to murmur and to repine, and to be disquieted; these thoughts are not to be cherished, but thou art to check thy heart for them. But when thou canst justify God in all his dispensations towards thee; these workings of spirit are not to be checked but cherished. *Job 40:4-5. "Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth."* And verse 5. *"Once have I spoken, but I will not answer: yea twice, but I will proceed no further."* As if *Job* had said, in my trouble of mind I have spoken often against God, once and a second time against God: but I will lay my hand upon my mouth, and justify God and condemn myself, and acknowledge myself vile in my own eyes; thus did *Job* learn to do. And so when you can under your casting down for sin, justify God, and condemn yourselves, and acknowledge God to be just in all his dispensations, and to acknowledge yourselves vile in your own eyes; then is your casting down for sin not excessive, and you are

to cherish it, and not to check your hearts for it. And thus I have finished the first ground why God's people are cast down for sin.

Sermon V

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him—The health of my Countenance, and my God.” Psalm 42:11

The second question is, *for what are the people of God cast down? And that is for the want of the apprehension of God's love and favor: and in the handling of this case, I shall take this way.*

First, to show you why God doth suffer his people to be cast down under the apprehensions of the want of God's love and favor.

Secondly, to show you, that though this be your condition; yet there is no great cause of your dejection and trouble, and casting down of soul under this condition.

Thirdly, to lay down some theological rules what a Christian is to do, what course to take, so that he may gain the love and favor of God.

And fourthly, I shall lay down the use and application.

First then I shall show you why God doth suffer his people to be cast down under the apprehensions of the want of God's love and favor; that though God may love them, yet they may not know that love and favor that God doth bear to them. I shall reduce the reasons into these four heads.

First, it ariseth from a man's own self.

Secondly, it cometh from God.

Thirdly, from the Devil.

Fourthly, it cometh from other men: These may be the four general causes why God's people are cast down under the want of God's love and favor to their souls.

First, it ariseth from a man's own self; and that in these six regards.

First, from the prevalency of natural melancholy in a man's body. The prevalency of melancholy in a man doth darken the understanding, and it troubles the fancy, and it doth disturb the reason, and sadden the soul, and clothes it in mourning weeds; and when these meet together, it must needs cast the man down, and suspend the sense of God's favor from him. Melancholy, it is the mother of discomfort and discontent; and it is the nurse of doubts. Think of that story which you read of, *Daniel 4*, concerning "*Nebuchadnezzar; He did eat grass like an Ox, he knew not whether he was a beast or a man.*" But his fancy was troubled, and his understanding was darkened, and his reason was gone: and thus natural melancholy maketh a child of God to think that he is a child of the Devil when he is a child of God; and it makes him to think he is a brat of *Babylon* when indeed he is a son of *Zion*. It is no more wonder saith *Baxter*, for a melancholy man to doubt, and fear, and despair, then it is to see a sick man groan, and a child cry when he is beaten: the best way to cure this, belongs rather to a physician then to a divine. There is a natural distemper in the body is the

cause of melancholy; yet trouble of conscience, doubtings, distress of spirit are the companions of it. You may silence a melancholy man, when you cannot comfort him. If you abate his sadness by convincing arguments, yet when he retires alone through the prevalency of this humor all is forgotten; his comforts are but a day or two old.

2. The second cause of the suspension of the favor of God it is this, spiritual security, and indulging and harboring in the heart any known sin; there is nothing in the world that will so much hinder him of, and keep the soul from the assurance of the favor of God, as the harbouring in the soul any known sin; for all the while *David* did harbor in his heart, and indulge and hide his sin from God, he did lose the light of God's countenance, and he lost the shining of God's face upon his soul, insomuch that he prayeth to God to restore unto him the joy of his salvation. It is true, the salvation of *David* was not lost, but the joys of his salvation; the comforts and consolation that he formerly enjoyed, that was lost; and for this he begs of God to restore unto him, *Psalms* 51:12, "*restore unto me the joys of thy salvation.*" Although that sin cannot make a child of God to lose salvation itself, yet sin may cause God to suspend the comforts, and the wonted joys of his salvation. I may say concerning this case, as philosophers say of earthquakes, when the wind is in the air, spread abroad and diffused in the Air, then it doth not throw down either hill or mountain; but when the wind is gathered together, and lies in the caverns of the earth, then it causeth earthquakes, and over-turns all that is about it; so while that sin is not kept close in the soul, and while it is not indulged there, and while it is not hid and concealed, but confessed and repented of, and prayed against, it doth not much hurt; but when that sin is indulged and kept close, and not repented of, nor prayed against, but indulged in the soul, this will make a

heart-quake, and a conscience-quake, and will fill thy heart with horror and amazement: *Psalm 32:3. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day."* When a man doth conceal his sin, it troubles his soul, and woundeth his heart, and breaketh his peace: if you will break God's law, it is but just and righteous with God to break your peace. God will not encourage any of his people, by giving them peace, and comforts, and mercies in any sinful course; and however, the *antinomians* hold us in hand, and would make us believe that our comforts have no dependence on our sinful actions, whereas God teacheth us no such thing; saith the Prophet *Isaiah*, "*The work of Righteousness that is peace, and the end thereof is quietness, and assurance forever.*" Here you see that comfort, and consolation, and joy, and peace, and assurance, is annexed to the works of righteousness; when as discomforts and discouragements are annexed unto sin; if you break God's law, God will break your peace, God will break your heart; the same promises of peace cannot be made to the godly and wicked; for they have promises of divine peace, the other have not, *Ezek. 14:4. "Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Every man of the house of Israel, that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling block of his iniquities before his face, and cometh to the Prophet, I the Lord will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols."* When a man shall come to the prophets, to the ministers of God, and shall make great complaint of his inward trouble in his soul, and much cast down within himself; and yet in the mean time keep and harbor known sins upon his own heart; God hath said he shall not answer that man that he might give him comfort; but saith God in the 5, v. "*Thus saith the Lord, repent and turn (yourselves) from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations.*" and then God will answer

him; but those that will not turn from their evil ways, God will answer such a man with rebuke, and God will set his face against that man, and make him a sign and a proverb, and cut him off; he that keeps sin in his heart, and indulges sin there, there shall be no peace in his conscience, nor serenity, nor quietness of soul; he shall not enjoy the smiles of God's face, the light of God's countenance, but the sense of his wrath, much anguish, and sorrow, and perplexity of mind for his sin.

The third cause of the soul's suspension and want of God's favor; it is the defectiveness of the people of God in the exercising of their graces; little grace shall have but little evidence: and if you are not abundant in the exercise of grace, you will not have the comfort of grace but in a weak measure. *John 14:21. "He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him."* You know that all the stars in the firmament have light, but you cannot see the light of the little stars so clearly as the light of the greatest; so though there is truth of grace in the weak as well as the strongest acts; yet if thy graces be weak in the exercise of them, thy comforts and evidences will be also weak, and hardly discerned and hardly seen. *Peace be multiplied to you* said the Apostle; if you do not multiply your graces, God will not multiply your peace; if you do withdraw the exercise of your grace, God will withdraw the comforts of your grace. You cannot see small things so easily as you see great things; he that will see a small needle, a hair, a mote, had need have good eyes: so ye cannot see small weak grace so easily as ye may see strong and great acts of grace; therefore their comforts are small many; men cannot see their graces, and their evidences, because they are like motes and hairs; if you do not abound in the exercise of grace, you will not be able to

see the evidence of grace, and enjoy the comforts of your grace. You know when a man is in a sound, you do not know whether the man is dead or alive, because his breath is not perceived, and his pulse not beating; so when your graces are weak, and your graces little, when you do not live in the exercise of grace, you cannot see the evidences of grace.

Fourthly, the suspension of his love and favor, it ariseth from the laziness, and carelessness, and heedlessness in the performance of holy duties: There is nothing in the world that is a greater bane of your graces and comforts then this is; if you do deny God in your obedience, God in justice will deny you in your peace and comforts; he that will not work shall not eat. As it is true in worldly things, so it is also true in spiritual things; if you do not your duties towards God, God will suspend the comforts of your graces from you; if you do your duty toward God, you shall eat of the promised land: if you will not let the Spirit of God work and operate in you in its sanctifying work, God will not let you enjoy in your souls the comforting work of his Spirit. You know what *Solomon* saith, that the “*slugard shall have poverty enough;*” so you that are spiritual slugards not to do your duties towards God, you shall be sure to have spiritual poverty enough in your soul, for want of comfort. Remember that expression of Christ, in that parable in the Gospel, that it's the faithful servant that must enter into the joy of his Lord; if thou wilt not be faithful in thy duty, thou canst not expect to be filled with inward joy. Grace saith *Baxter*, is never apparent and sensible in the soul, but when it is in action; the want of action must needs cause want of assurance: though duties merit not comfort, yet they usually rise and fall with our diligence in duty. I may illustrate this by a familiar comparison; there is you know fire in the flint, but the fire is not seen in the flint: but strike the flint and the steel together, and then you may see the fire; so there

may be grace in the soul of a man, as fire in the flint; but until the spirit of God comes and strikes upon the soul as a flint to the steel, until the spirit of God worketh with the spirit of man in duty, there is no grace seen; and so the soul comes to lie under the dismal workings of soul, under the sense and want of the assurance of God's love.

Fifthly, it ariseth from this, because that they do look more after comfort than they do after grace; and this is the cause why they want more comfort than they need to want; they look more after marks and signs that may tell them what they are, then after precepts, which tell them what they should do. When Christians shall be more enquiring after privileges, more than to inquire after their duty, it is just with God to keep their comfort from them. When Christians shall labor more to know that they are justified, then to know and use the means to be justified; to labor more to know that they are in a state of grace, rather than to use those means that are prescribed to get grace; this may be a means why God keepeth them from the comforts of the Spirit.

And thus I have given you the first cause, why God's people are cast down under the apprehensions of the suspensions of the favor of God to the soul.

The second cause, why the people of God are cast down under the want of the favor of God, it may be from God himself; God may keep thee from the enjoying of his love and favor; and that, 1. From an act of his Sovereignty. Assurance is given out of the goodness of his will, and withdrawn to show the absoluteness and liberty of his will. For, may not God do what he will with his own people? God he hath by his power made the day, and made the night; for God doth not only give days of comfort and consolation to his people, but also he gives nights of desertion, as they are acts of God's power and sovereignty over his people, to show that if it be the will and pleasure

of God, he can take away the day of comfort, and withdraw and suspend his love and favor from the souls of his people; so also if he will, he can by act of his sovereignty give us assurance, and give comfort to the souls of his people; God may do what he please, and none may say, Wherefore dost thou so?

2. So God doth it to manifest his wisdom and goodness to his people; for by his withdrawing and suspending comfort, and hiding his face, 1, he hereby doth by this means keep his people from being glutted with comforts, and joy, and delights; should God continue the light of his countenance always to them; should God fill their hearts with full assurance of grace, and full assurance of faith always, to let forth the beams of his glorious love into their souls, they would be subject to be glutted, and subject to slight comfort, and to take little notice of those loving kindnesses of God, and of those divine favors bestowed upon them: therefore God in wisdom seeth it fitting sometimes to suspend those favors, and sometimes to withdraw that love, and favor, and comforts, and joys from them, that they may prize it more, and retain it better when they enjoy it.

2. God may withdraw his love and favor from the souls of his people, out of an act of wisdom, that thereby he may let his people see and consider that there is more evil really in sin, then ever there did appear seeming good in the commission of sin; a man will commit sin, that thereby he may obtain some seeming good, as to please the lust of the eye, or to the obtaining of some other desirable seeming good; but God he lets them see and find, by the with-holding of his love and favor, and the light of his countenance, that there is more real evil in the loss of God's countenance, then ever there did appear seeming good in the committing of sin, and in the pleasure of it.

3 God may suspend his favor as an act of wisdom, to hide pride from men, and self-conceitedness, that they may not be proud of their own gifts and graces, of the strength and degrees of their graces, *Job. 33:17* “*He doth withhold from man his purpose* (or as in the margent, his works) *and hide pride from man;*” why so? Because a man may be proud in the works that he doth, and be full of high and vain conceits of himself, therefore God doth hide his works that he may hide pride from him; and this is an act of wisdom and goodness in God.

4. God doth it, that thereby he might make his people to be more afraid of sinning against him, lest the comforts be again eclipsed; for I must reason thus, before I commit any sin, that if I do this, I break the righteous law of God, and if I do break his law, God will break my heart, and break my peace; and shall I make no care of committing a sin against God, seeing by the committing thereof, I must lie under the sense of God's wrath.

5. Then God doth it to let a man know, and find that assurance is not essential to holiness, although the people of God have grace, and do believe, and have sins pardoned, yet the sense of this pardon, and the sense of this faith, and the assurance of this grace is not essential; though there cannot be peace, but there must be grace; yet it may be where there is not peace; there may be a root where there is no faith, yet there cannot be fruit but there must be root. God will have men know the sense of faith and repentance is a gift of mere liberality.

6. God doth it to let men see the difference between heaven and earth; God reserves the best to the last: God doth not think it fit that men should have constant joy in this inconstant world, nor full joy in this empty earth, nor lasting joy in this transitory world, but he doth reserve that until his people come to heaven; should the people of God, while they live in this

world, have the fullness of joy and constant comfort, they would be ready to slight, and never look after that place where is fullness of joy, they would never desire to be in heaven; but therefore God is pleased to mix sorrow with comfort, and suspend, and hide his face, to that end that his people might look after heaven; and to let them see the difference between heaven and earth: and thus you see that second reason, why God doth suspend his favor from his people, which is drawn from the wisdom of God.

The third reason, as God may suspend his love and favor from his own sovereignty, and from his own wisdom; so thirdly, he may do it from an act of his justice, and lay them under the apprehensions of his wrath; God will punish his own people for sin, with the suspension of his love and favor. Although he will not punish them with hell, and in hell, yet he will and may punish them with the sense of hell, and lay them under the sense of wrath. And I shall lay down some particulars, how God by an act of justice doth punish his own people for sin, with the sense of the want of assurance.

First, God doth punish his people for the sin of grieving his Spirit; if you do trouble and grieve God's Spirit, he will grieve and trouble your spirits; if you send God's Spirit sad to heaven, God will put sadness into your spirits upon earth; and if you be comforted, how can you expect to receive any comfort, when you send him away sad should that rejoice your souls? Therefore when God hath withdrawn his countenance, then conclude thou hast grieved his spirit.

Secondly, God may withdraw his love, and punish his people for the sin, for the carelessness and slightness that his people have of God, and of his fear; as children are apt to grow saucy, and presumptuously malapert and irreverent, till the father frown, and majestic austerity takes down their sauciness; so God's people are like wanton children, apt to slight God and

his fear, and therefore he sees it fitting that we should see his frowns as well as his smiles; he will punish his people with the loss of his favor, for their sin, as well as smile upon them in the light of his countenance; God will sometimes brow-beat his own children, that they may see the wrinkles of his brows (to speak after the manner of men) Too much familiarity breeds contempt: the *Persian* kings shunned familiarity, and were seldom seen, that they might be more honored.

Thirdly, God doth it to punish that rigidness, unmercifulness, and uncharitableness that men have towards others that are troubled in their minds; there are many Christians that have obtained the assurance of God's favor, the assurance of their salvation; they do look upon others that are filled with fear and trouble of mind, and that lie under temptation, they look upon them at a great distance, and carry no more love and bowels towards them then they do to those that have no grace at all; now God to cure this distemper, he doth suspend his favor, and withdraw the light of his countenance, and let them to lie under doubts and fears, that they may learn to pity those that are cast down, and not to be so uncharitable to them, not to censure them, not to break those bruised reeds.

I now come to the third reason, why God's people are dejected and lie under the apprehensions of the want of God's love and favor to their souls; it ariseth from the devil; it may arise from him, and that both from his malice and his subtlety; the devil, because he cannot make the children of God to dash their souls in pieces upon the rocks of presumption, therefore he labors to make them to drown their souls in the gulf of desperation, because he cannot hinder a child of God from going into his masters joy in another world, he labors to hinder their masters joy from coming into them in this world; the devil, he will rather play at small game then at no game at

all; seeing he cannot keep them from going into heaven itself, he will keep heaven from entering into them; because he cannot keep you from the having of grace, he will keep you as long as he can from having the sense of grace. And this is the third reason, why God's people may lie under the want of the light of God's countenance.

The fourth sort of reasons, why God may withdraw the light of his countenance, it is this; it ariseth from other men, and that partly from good men, and partly from bad men.

1. It ariseth partly from good men, (1) good men may slight the society and company of doubting and weak Christians; when they shall consider thus with themselves, I am a trouble to the company and society of good men; and when good men shall stand at a distance and not care for the company of weak Christians, it makes them say, surely God will not have good thoughts of me, and surely God will not think well of me, and will Christ have fellowship with me, and not condemn me? These reasonings arise in the hearts and spirits of good men, weak Christians occasioned, by that strangeness and slightness of spirit in good men, towards those that are weak; it is hard to pity much, till we have felt much; women that never was in travel, cannot pity them so much that are in travel; for Christians that never was tempted, cannot pity those so much that lie under great and strong temptations; those that have not been under strong doubts and fears, cannot pity those that are under doubting and fears.

2. It is to make them more experienced to comfort tempted souls, 2 *Cor.* 4-6, there the Apostle layeth down one end of their affliction; “*whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer, or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation, who comforteth us in all*

our trihulation, that we may be able to comfort those that are in trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” This was it, that they who are under spiritual afflictions, they may comfort them with the same comforts that they themselves have been comforted of God; a scholar may read much of sufferings, yea, he may read whole volumes of sufferings, and of spiritual sufferings, of doubts and fears that other Christians have lain under: but yet for all that reading, he may not be so able to pity distressed souls, because he wanteth experience of it himself. A scholar may read books of the art of navigation, and yet he may not be a good mariner, but it is experience that makes them to be good mariners; so a man may read books of sufferings, yet not be able so kindly to pity those that are in sufferings, because he wants that experience that others have, that have been in the same case; those that have been tempted, those whose consciences have been troubled, those are the fittest men to succor those that are in that condition; God chooses broken vessels to pour comfort into, that they may diffuse it unto others.

2. It may arise from bad men, bad men may occasion the trouble of soul to dejected souls; though the Lord doth leave and suffer his people to be dejected and cast down, yet the Lord doth it,

1. To make wicked men to fear their eternal condition; may not wicked men justly reason thus with themselves? Do I see such a man that doth follow the ordinances of God, and live, and walk in the ways of God with care, and making conscience how he liveth in his calling, and labors to keep his heart close to God, and to maintain communion with him, and will not, nor dares not commit any known sin, and prays in his family, and labors to mortify sin, and to keep under his body, and to abound and grow fruitful in the ways of God, and in goodness? And do I see such a man to lie under

fears, and under doubts, and under troubles of mind, and so cast down, and even ready to fear all is in vain, that he shall lose heaven at last? O what then will become of me? What may I think with myself, whose ways are nothing like his ways? He hath followed ordinances, but I have not; he hath labored to walk in God's way with care and conscience, whereas I never made conscience of any such thing; he hath labored to live conscientious in his calling, which I never did; he dares not commit known sins, whereas alas I indulge sin, and hug sin in my bosom; he labors to mortify sin, whereas sin reigns over me as a Lord; he labors to grow fruitful, but I am unfruitful; and I never watch my heart, and do my duty, and I never make conscience to walk holy and humbly with God as he doth; and yet behold, he is in trouble and cast down for want of God's favor: what then may I think of myself? Doth this man lie under the sense of wrath, and may not I fear that I shall lie under the weight of God's wrath? Doth he fear hell, and shall not I surely feel hell? And when they see this, it is only for this end, to awaken them out of the sleep of security, and to rouse him from those false presumptions and persuasions of his own salvation; and in some sense it is a mercy to wicked men, that good men are cast down and troubled, that they may look into their own hearts and ways, to amend and repent.

2. God doth it in a way of judgment to wicked men, that the Lord lets his own people be cast down, under the absence of his divine favor in judgment to the world, that it may be a stumbling-block to the world in their way to heaven; when they shall say of themselves I and my company, there is no such merry men in the world as we are; we can be merry, and we can over-reach and deceive in our trade, and we can do this and that, and yet not at all troubled in conscience all the year long: and yet behold, those that follow ministers, and go to ordinances, and hear sermons, and love the

Bible, yet see how they hang down their heads and are troubled in mind, and cast down, and scarce have any comfort all their lives. Now what may be the reason, that they should go so after their own evil ways, and not be troubled, and the people of God in their exact walking be so much cast down? It was so in *Calvin's* days, *Spiritus Calvinianus est Spiritus melancholicus*, Christians spirits were sad spirits; and this was a stumbling-block to many papists, who would not follow a sad religion.

Sermon VI

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him—The health of my Countenance, and my God.” Psalm 42:11

I now come to show you, why the people of God should not be too much cast down, when they have a comfortable assurance of God's love.

Now in the resolution of this question, consider these nine particulars.

1. Consider that God's withdrawing the sense of his love and favor from the soul, is not always an act of justice to punish them for sin, but sometimes an act of sovereignty, when it is for sin, as when thou dost grieve God's Spirit. This may make the soul sad, it is neither comfortable, nor thank-worthy; but when you suffer from God, as by an act of his power, there is no such trouble, nor cause of being cast down, but you may take comfort under that state; that God may sometimes withdraw and suspend his love and favor, merely upon an act of his power. In peace-offerings there

was oil mixed, not so in sin offerings, because there is no peace nor comfort in suffering for our faults: as God to show the goodness of his will, sometimes gives assurance, so to show the absoluteness and liberty of his will, he sometimes withdraws it. You read of the desertion of the Church in *Song. 5:5-6*. *“I rose up to open to my beloved, but my beloved was gone, he had withdrawn himself, my soul failed when he spake; I sought him, but I could not find him, I called him, but he gave me no answer.”* Now this was an act of justice in Christ to withdraw himself; Jesus Christ he knocked, until his head was filled with the dew, and his locks with the drops of the night, and yet she would not open to him; therefore Christ as an act of justice might withdraw himself to punish them for sin, because the spouse would not let Christ come in when he knocked; and then you read of the desertion of the Church, not as an act of justice for the punishment of sin, but as an act of his mere power, *Song. 3:1*. *“By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loved; I sought him, but I could not find him.”* Now if thy conscience can tell thee that thou art careful in thy duties towards God, and thy heart is upright, and to labor to walk exactly, and yet thou canst not see thy comforts appearing; now thou mayest say peradventure, yea, thou mayest say, without all peradventure it is not an act of justice, but an act of power, that he withdraweth his favor, and the light of his countenance from thy soul.

2. God may withdraw his love and favor from the soul, not for any displeasure that he hath to them, but out of an act of love to try his own people's love to him; as a mother, a tender-hearted mother, many times runs behind the door from her child in a corner, and hides herself, but it is not because she is angry with her child, but to try the strength of her child's love, in seeking after the mother; so God, he may withdraw his love from

the souls of his people, but it is not from any anger, but from love to his people, to try the strength of his people's graces, and to try their love in seeking of him. God tries your graces strength in going after Christ, and your graces love in looking after Jesus Christ; it was so in *Joseph*, unto which I may allude, *Gen. 42:7*, it is said, that "*Joseph, he spake roughly to them*" (or hard things with them) that is, to his brethren, "*and he cast them into prison for three days,*" ver. 17. Now all this his dealing with his brethren, was not for want of love to them, but it was to try the affections of his brethren, and to cause them to call to mind their former unkindness. Thus God deals many times with his own people; he doth withdraw his love, and suspend his favor, and with-hold the light of his countenance, to try the strength of his people's graces, and the strength of his people's love to him, see *Luke 24:28*, when the two disciples were going to a village, and Christ came and walked with them, and when they came nigh unto the village whether they were going, Christ seemed as though he would have gone further; but this action of Christ, it was to try the love of his two disciples, whether they would press him to make him stay with them: so God may withdraw the beams of his love, he may suspend his divine favor to this end, to try the love of his people, how they will long after him, and much desire his love to their souls.

3. God may suspend his favor, because there may be more of God's fatherly love in withdrawing his love, then in manifesting his love (in some cases) unto the souls of his people, and that in these two particulars.

1. When a man doth enjoy the sense of God's love, and that enjoyment makes him to be spiritually proud, then it is in mercy to with-hold his love and favor; when he cannot enjoy the sense of God's love, without the sense of spiritual pride, it is in this case great love. *Job. 33:17*. "*That he may*

withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from man;” it is in the Hebrew, “*That he removeth his works from man, etc.*” lest men should be proud of God's grace, and proud of comforts, God will keep him from the comforts of his grace; and in this case it is great mercy to have the love of God withdrawn, when to have it continued, God's people would grow proud: a little boat cannot bear a great sail without sinking, nor a weak vessel strong liquor without breaking; some of God's people are like little vessels; you know that little boats are like weak vessels. Weak Christians, they are not able to bear strong comforts; to put strong liquor in weak bottles, is the way to break them; so to put strong manifestations, strong comforts into weak souls, would soon break them: God sees, that sometimes his people are not able to bear, nor able to use comforts and divine manifestations well; and in this case it is great mercy when you cannot bear them, then to be without them; for then the want of comfort doth make you more eager after Jesus Christ then when you do enjoy it; many times the enjoyment of comfort makes you to grow secure, and to grow careless, whereas the want of comfort maketh you the more eager to look after it: *Non-deserit ut deseratur; deserit potius ne deseratur; ideo videtur deserere quia non vult deseri*: God doth sometimes forsake, so that he might not be forsaken; and he doth seemingly forsake, that his people might not forsake him. As it is *credulis misericordia*, cruel mercy for a wicked man to have hopes and presumption of heaven, and yet go to hell; so 'tis *misericors crudelitas*, merciful cruelty, that a godly man should lie under fear of hell, and yet go to heaven.

2. The suspension of God's love and favor is in love, when it doth make thee to prize Jesus Christ more in the want of him, then thou didst in the enjoyment of him: the Lord doth many times bring his own people into

great wants, and expose them to great exigencies and straits, that they might the more prize mercy, and be the more eager in the pursuit after it, and not to grow proud when they have it; you read, *Deut. 32:13*. “*He made them to ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the fruits of the field; and he made him to suck honey out of the rocks, and oil out of the flinty rock.*”

God did not give them water, but God gave them honey; it had been a mercy, had God given them water to drink when they were ready to die for thirst; but when *Moses* comes to speak of this, he makes mention, that *God gave them honey to suck*; because they saw the want of a lesser mercy, God gave them a greater mercy; so it is in spiritual things, when we in our straits see the want of mercy, a spiritual want of mercy to the soul, O then the soul would be glad of a little mercy, the least crumb of comfort then would refresh the soul; the want of spiritual mercies, makes us to see the spiritual worth of mercies; the want of God's favor, the want of the light of God's countenance, makes the soul to prize the enjoyment of it; the want of the love of Jesus Christ shining on the soul, makes the soul to see, and feel, and know, that the love of God in Christ is exceeding precious. Now when the withdrawments of the light of God's countenance from the soul works these gracious effects, it is in great love and mercy to the soul.

4. That you may not be too much cast down, consider, that the people of God, they have always ground of comfort in their souls, though they have not always the sense of comfort, though the souls of the children of God may be sometimes without the present sense of comfort, yet the people of God are never without the cause of comfort in their souls; as a man hath right to an inheritance, though he cannot read the evidences for it, so they have a real right to an inheritance with them that are sanctified by faith in

Jesus Christ, though you may not sensibly enjoy your inheritance; as it was with *Hagar*, so it is with many doubting Christians, about *Gen. 21*. “*She flying into the wilderness of Bersheba, her water was spent in the bottle, she casts her child under one of the shrubs, and sat down over against it and wept; and there was a well of water by her (the well was there before) and she knew it not; but when God opened her eyes, then she saw the well of water that was by her:*” So it may be with many a poor soul; salvation may be near thee, very nigh thy soul, and yet the soul may not have a sensible knowledge of it, but may be ready to think that he shall perish for want of salvation, and for want of comfort and consolation from God in Christ: it is very observable what is spoken concerning *Joseph’s* brethren; they had so much love from their brother, that they had a testimony of his love along with them, they had the money in their sacks, and yet they never knew it, nor never knew him to be their brother. So a poor soul may have the testimony of God's love in the soul, and the sure pledge of God's everlasting and eternal love to the soul, and yet thou mayst not know this testimony, and thou mayest not know and sensibly feel the loving kindness of thy God, to thy soul.

5. Remember this for thy support, that none of God's people do retain always the like sense and manifestation of God's love to their souls, but it fares with the souls of God's people, in reference to comfort as it is with, the sea sometimes ebbing, and sometimes flowing, and as with the air sometimes cloudy, and sometimes clear, and so like the season of the year, sometimes winter, and sometimes summer; as it is in nature, so it is in grace; nothing in nature doth always retain and keep the same likeness at all times, to keep the like perfection, so it is in grace; no child of God under heaven doth always, at all times retain and keep the same measure of

comforts in his own spirit. As *Samson* had not the same strength at all times, so a Christian hath not always the same comforts.

6. If at any time God doth suspend his love and favor, and the light of his countenance, yet consider, that God never doth this, but he seeth great reason need and for it: you read, 1 *Pet.* 1:6. “*Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:*” there it referreth to the sufferings for the Gospel; so I may say to you, If need be, you shall be in heaviness for want of the enjoyment of God's love in Christ; if you need heaviness, you shall have heaviness; if no need of sorrow, you shall have no sorrow. Philosophers say there is great need of wind and thunder, as well as of shining of the sun, for thereby the air is kept clear; so when God doth thunder into thy soul, and sometimes bluster like wind into thy soul, God doth see some need of that dealing with thee, to sweep thy soul from sin, and the love of the world, and to quell thy pride, and to subdue thy lusts, and to purge away that slightness of spirit wherein thou art apt to slight others; God many times doth suspend the light of his countenance, and hold from thy soul the comforts of thy graces for this end, that thou mightest not be proud of thy measure of grace; and sometimes God may do it to stir up in thee a compassionate spirit towards others in affliction, and that thou mightest exercise thy grace; and God may let thee want the comforting work of the spirit, that thou mightest have more of the sanctifying work of the spirit; therefore comfort thyself; for if God did not see need of this afflicting of thee, he would never let thee lie under this sad condition.

7. Consider this for thy comfort, That Jesus Christ himself was under spiritual desertion as well as thou; Christ himself cried, “*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” *Mat.* 27:46. Here was *substractio visionis*,

though not *unionis*; and thou dost no more but cry my God, my God, under the absence of the favor of God: Jesus Christ did it to sanctify thy death, was buried to make thy grave a bed of roses to thee, and was tempted to sanctify thy temptations, and deserted to sanctify thy desertions; he drank deep of the cup, thou dost but sip of it. Now he himself was under troubles and desertions and temptations, that he might be able to succor them that are tempted; he was able to succor them before; but now he is made experimentally able to succor his people in the like case.

8. Consider this, that the seeming loss of God's favor, it is not simply prejudicial to the state of grace; for it doth not hinder thy having access to, and having success at the throne of grace, neither can it hinder thee of glory; thou mayest trust and wait upon God in the way of thy duties, and though thou dost not enjoy the light of his countenance, yet this will not hinder thee of success at the throne of grace. It is the want of Christ, not of comfort, that makes the throne of grace a throne of justice and wrath; for thou mayest want God's face to comfort thee, but thou shalt not want God's hand to help thee; God may lend thee his ear to thy prayers, when he may deny thee the shines of his face; it is the truth of grace, and not the sense and sight of grace that brings the soul to heaven; it is not the measure of grace, nor the sense and sight of grace, but the truth of grace, that entitles the soul to glory; though while you live you may be without your masters joy, yet you shall be sure to come to your masters joy when you die; though thou never hadst a heaven in thy soul while thou livest. yet thy soul may come to heaven when thou diest.

9. Consider, and be not so cast down for want of comfort; for when you come to heaven you shall have comfort enough; God doth reserve the fullness of thy comfort until the fullness of thy glory: This is the time of thy

travelling in this world, and you must not expect your reward till you come to your journeys end. Here you have joy and comfort for a time, but there in heaven you shall have joy and comfort for evermore; here in this world joy and comfort entereth into you, but in the world to come you shall enter into joy, and that is transcendently and infinitely more then to have joy to enter into you; here in this world you have but the beginnings of comfort, but there you shall have enduring lasting comforts; here you have comforts by drops, but there you shall come to enjoy and see an ocean of comfort, and that forever.

There is one objection to be answered, which is this, and it is a practical case of conscience.

Me thinks I hear some poor souls say, it is true, if I thought that God in his hiding his face from my soul, in his withdrawing the comforts of his spirit from me, if the absence of the light of his countenance, were merely an act of his sovereignty and power, and to try my love, to try the confidence of my heart in trusting in him, and the strength of my love to him, and the more to put me forward to look after Jesus Christ (if this was so) I should not be much troubled; but alas, what shall I do? My conscience tells me, that it is for sin that God doth withdraw the light of his countenance, and the comforts of his Spirit, and for this cause he deals with me, and my conscience tells me, that I have grieved the Spirit of God, and sent that sad to heaven, and therefore it is just with God to let me live sadly upon earth, and to live in a comfortless condition; and I have committed great sins to take away my comforts, and for the guilt of sin it is for which God doth hide his face; and this is the sad objection and reasonings of many a poor soul.

Now there are four particulars, why a child of God should not be thus dejected, although he may be cast down under sin.

1. If thou canst not retain the sense of God's love, yet if you retain the sense of your own sins, for which thou hast lost the sense of God's love, to be much in the latter, though thou hast little of the former, to grow downward in humiliation, thou dost grow but little upward in consolation, it is a great mercy. *Hosea 14:5. "I will be as a dew unto Israel, he shall grow as a lilly (or blossom, or flourish) and cast forth (or strike forth) his root as Lebanon;"* you that do blossom like the lilies, though you may not so much blossom in the enjoyment of comfort, yet if you do grow downward, strike your roots downward, by the sense and sight of sin, and grow downward in humiliation, it is a great mercy; it is better and safer to strike thy roots of grace downward in growing in the sap of humiliation, then to grow upward and flourish in the sense of pardoning-grace; and the reason is this; because the one is of absolute necessity, and necessary to the saving of the soul, but the other is necessary towards the comforts of the soul, and therefore the one is more needful then the other; if I were put to my choice, I had rather want the sense of the pardon of sin, then to want the sense of my own sinfulness; the Lord had rather to see his people to be in mourning weeds, then to be in garments of pleasantness; if God doth not see thy face full of smiles, yet if he sees thy eyes full of tears, that is more acceptable to him; though you may want the light of God's countenance, yet if you have the sense of your own sinfulness, that doth eclipse the light of God's favor to thy soul, thou hast no cause to be too much cast down under sin.

2. In case thou art cast down for sin, yet if you can love Jesus Christ really, you need not be discouraged when you do not know seriously that Jesus Christ doth love you; yet though thou dost not know thou art beloved,

yet to love Christ in this time, thou needest not to trouble thyself; and though thou hast not seen Jesus Christ, yet to believe in him, and by faith to apply Jesus Christ to thy soul, if this hath been thy work, and thou canst say so, you may be confident that Christ loves you truly, though it may not be apparently; and the reason is strong, because we can never love Jesus Christ until he first loveth us; a man being in trouble of mind, wanting the assurance of God's love, he said that he never knew what the testimony of the Spirit of God meant, and what it was to his soul, but yet he could say that he did rest and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; and though he knew not that Christ loved him, yet he did desire to love Christ; so I say to you, although you cannot sensibly feel the love of Christ to thy soul, yet if thou canst dearly love Jesus Christ, be confident that Christ loveth thee.

3. In case you want the quieting and comforting work of the Spirit, yet if you have the quickening work of the Spirit, be not too much cast down; thou that canst act grace, although thou dost want comfort, and although thou hast not the sight of thy graces, sensibly to feel and find the comforts of them, yet if thou canst live in the exercise of grace in this case thou needest not to be troubled and cast down; if it be with thy soul as with a well that hath two buckets, while one is down, the other is still up; so if one bucket of thy soul be down, and thou be dejected for want of the sense of God's favor and gracious love to thy soul, yet if the other bucket be up in thy living and exercising of grace, though thou wantest sensible comforts, yet this is matter of joy and comfort to thy spirit; if you are dejected for want of comfort, yet if you abound in grace, it is matter of joy. Do I speak to any this day, that are clouded with sin in the want of the sense of the comforting work of the Spirit, and cannot see, and cannot feel the sense and manifestations of God's love as others do? Go and pray, and mourn, and be

humbled for thy sin, and act thy grace, and though you do go without the manifestation of God's love, yet in this case thou art not to be too much cast down; God had rather see and hear your graces, then that you should see them yourselves, *Song. 8:13.*

4. Though thou art cast down for sin, yet be not troubled in case it hath this gracious effect upon thee, as to make thee to be more watchful against sin for the time to come, more than thou wast before; so when thou shalt be afraid of sin, and to hate sin in this case, thou hast cause to bless God; said the *Psalmist*, “*my heart is not turned back, neither have we slipped again from thy ways; all this is come upon us, and yet have we not forgotten thee, nor deals falsely against thy Covenant; our hearts have not turned backward, neither have our steppings swerved from thy path.*” So when you can say, although God hath covered me with the shadow of death, and though there is a cloud between God and my soul, yet I am afraid of sinning against him; and I am afraid of offending him, and I have not gone out of his paths for all this; in this case you may be comforted, though you do apprehend that Christ hath turned his back upon you, and yet to say I will not for all the world leave living upon and to Jesus Christ in a way of love and obedience.

If it be so, that many souls may be cast down for sin, and yet you say that it is their sin to be so much cast down, but they are to labor against this trouble and casting down for sin: Doth not this nourish a principle of presumption in many a man's breast for to presume of his salvation, and to make him bold in sinning against God, seeing you say they are not to be troubled?

It is true, if this doctrine be not well used, and wisely handled, it may; for as it may comfort one soul, it would cause a hundred to run into a

presumptuous condition; for in some cases, God doth suspend his favor, and hide his face from the soul, it being for sin: you have cause of mourning in this particular, and that in these five cases.

1. Thou hast cause to hang down thy head with sorrow; thou that wantest the sense and manifestations of God's love in Christ to thy soul, and yet at that time thou dost want the sense and sight of sin; thou hast a troubled spirit, and yet at that time thou hast not a troubled conscience; thou wantest the sense of Christ's love to thy soul, and yet at that time thou wantest the sight and sense of thy sins against Jesus Christ. Many men are in this case; there are many men that will say, that they do not know whether they shall go to heaven or hell, whether they are the children of God, or the children of wrath; whether Christ loveth them or not, and yet no sin troubleth them, and no guilt disquieteth them, but they presume of grace, and presume of pardon, when for anything thou knowest, there is but a step between thee and hell; and in this case thy condition is very sad.

2. You that say that you want the sense of God's love, and yet not at that time want the sense of the loss and absence of that love; you say you once had that man's sad spectacle that grieves for the loss of an estate, but not for the loss of God; when a man shall not know whether God loveth him or not, and yet at that time for all this, to take no care, though his state be a lost state, to lose grace, and to lose heaven, this case is sad, to be in such danger, and yet not to be sensible of that danger.

3. Your case is sad, in case when you want a sense of Christ's love to your souls, and yet at that time you want acts of love; and to express your love to Jesus Christ, you would fain know whether Jesus Christ loveth you or not, yet never labor to know and examine whether you love Jesus Christ or not, in drawing out your souls in a way of love to him; but instead of loving

Jesus Christ, you do draw forth repinings against God, against Jesus Christ, when you shall be so far from trusting in him, as you shall repine against him, and not say with *Job*, “*Though he kill me, yet will I trust in him, and though I perish, yet I will perish in trusting in him;*” if under the sense of God's love, you also want love to Jesus Christ, your case is sad.

4. At that time when you want the comforting work of the Spirit, and yet at that time you want the quickening work of the Spirit, thy case is sad; when you shall not only want comfort, but want grace too, this maketh thy condition to be sad, to be disquieted for want of comfort, and to be disquieted for want of grace. O look into your own hearts! You that want comfort, do you want grace too? Have you no tenderness of conscience? No remorse of spirit? No love to duties? No zeal for God? No faith to live by? No hopes in Christ to hang upon? No love to Christ in thy soul? No repentance for sin? In this case thy condition is very sad.

5. When thou hast been a long time under the loss of comfort and in trouble of mind and perplexity of spirit, and yet so to live without any enquiries how thou mayest get out of this sad condition, and to get the comforts you want when it may be your comforting-work, and the quickening-work is gone too; to want comfort, and to want grace, and yet to live and not to look after it, but to do as *Cain* did, to pursue the world, to pursue the profits and pleasures of this world, and all for this end, to stifle his conscience, to take no pains to stir up grace in thy soul, and to quicken thy heart, that thou mightest have the joys of heaven, and the comforts of grace, the love of God, the shines of Christ's face, the manifestations of his love, and assurance of thy salvation; when you shall not look after any means either of grace or comfort, this renders thy case to be very sad.

And thus I have done with this question, *“That the people of God have no cause to doubt, though they may be cast down for sin, or for the absence of the favor of God to their souls.”*

Sermon VII

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him—The health of my Countenance, and my God.” Psalm 42:11

I am now to lay down some Scripture rules, to help a child of God that is cast down under the want of assurance of God's love, how to recover the sense of God's love again.

Now for your help in this matter, I shall proceed in two general directions.

1. You are to remove those things which cause a suspension of God's favor and love within you which did cast you down.

2. You must labor to practice those things that may further you in the attainment of this comfortable sense, and certain assurance of God's love.

For the first, here are eight things which are to be removed, which happily hath occasioned this suspicion of God's love.

1. Labor to remove natural melancholy; there is such a natural sympathy between the soul and the body, that a distemper in the one, causeth trouble in the other. It is no more wonder for a conscientious man overcome with melancholy, to fear, doubt, etc. then for a sick man to groan or a child to cry when it is beaten; if there be melancholy on the body, there will be trouble on the soul, that is, under desertion and trouble of mind; in Christians it doth sometimes begin from a natural melancholy. Now this must be removed in case you would recover a comfortable sense and assurance of the love of God. Saith the physician, *natural melancholy hath sad effects that do attend it, as fear, subject to frets, terrible dreams, sad apprehensions*: why now, the devil can tell when thy apprehension is disturbed, and he can tell how to turn this, and to make you fear your salvation: the devil is a powerful spirit and when the natural temper is thus exorbitant, he can make this that was a natural, to become spiritual evil.

2. You must remove spiritual pride, *Job. 33:17*, “*that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and bide pride from man.*” If those swelling humors of pride be in thy spirit, God will send a messenger of Satan to buffet thee; men of proud spirits, saith *Preston*, “*They are exposed to sad desertions, and darkened eclipses of their comforts;*” it is usual with God, when he seeth men proud and high-conceited of the measure and degree of their graces, to pull down their pride; he keeps from them the comfort of their own graces.

Pride is not only a bane of grace, but of comfort too; God resists the proud: the Greek word signifies, That God puts himself in battle array against him. Beloved, God doth put himself in battle array against a proud man; therefore if ever you would regain the certainty and assurance of God's love, remove pride.

3. If you would regain this comfortable assurance, remove dullness and deadness of heart in holy duties: when the vigor and liveliness of our spirits are abated in duty, the comforts of God's Spirit shall be detained; little duty, and less comfort shall go hand in hand together; when the affections are dead, and the heart straitened in duties, evidences will be darkened, and comfort will be eclipsed; careless performances are recompensed by God with frowns, not with smiles.

4. Sensual joys and delights in the creature, in the things of this world, they do enervate spiritual joy; the sun, when it shines on the fire, doth hinder the burning of the fire. When thou hast a sun shine of comforts in this world, it is a hundred to one, but that thy affections have neither light nor heat; comforts are heated by grace; the more heat is in thy affections, the more strength is in thy comforts and consolations. Now sensual delights, they take away the heart, and when the heart is gone, comfort is gone, *Hosea 4:11. "Whoredom, and wine, and new wine, take away the heart."* To be swilling and guzzling at the cup, and to be following of wantons, this takes away the heart. Sensual joys, they are very contrary to godly joys; a man will never have joy in the Holy Ghost, that is overwhelmed with sensual and vain delights in the things of this world.

5. Take heed of grieving the spirit, if ever you would retain the comfortable assurance of God's love, *Isaiah 63:10. "But they rebelled, and vexed his holy spirit, therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and fought against them."*

If thou dost grieve his Spirit in heaven, he will sadden thy spirit on earth; *Res delicata est spiritus sanctus; ita nos tractat sicut à nobis tractatur*, saith *Tertullian*, The Spirit of God will handle us as we handle it; if you grieve God's Spirit, he will grieve yours; he will not pour joy into your

spirits, when you but grieve his; if you vex God's Spirit by resisting the holy motions of the Spirit, he will vex your spirits, by retaining the comfortable motions of the spirit. It is observable, the Spirit of God in Scripture, it is not only called a comforter, but the Holy Ghost; therefore it is in vain to believe that the Spirit shall be a comforter to you, if you withstand the office of the Spirit, as he is the Holy Ghost; therefore, O you that grieve the Spirit, by resisting the holy motions of it, you shall never regain the comforting work of the Spirit.

6. Remove all unmercifulness, and uncompassionateness of spirit to others that are troubled in mind. Many Christians are like a herd of deer; it is their manner, that when one of the herd is wounded by the forrester, all the rest leave him and forsake him, and put him away from them, and let the wounded deer shift for itself alone; there are many such uncompassionate souls, that if a man be in trouble of mind, and have the arrows of God's wrath sticking in the soul, they run away from them, and leave them; many men are thus wanting tenderness, and wanting bowels of compassion towards tempted and troubled souls, full of censures, contempt, rough dealing; now for this rigidness and uncompassionateness, God doth oftentimes cause eclipses in their own souls. If ever you would regain comfort, pity tempted soul, pity and compassionate disquieted souls, and that is the way to regain your comfort.

7. Remove a wantonness, and a fearlessness of the majesty and greatness of God; if the parents dandle a child on the knee, their child wanting discretion, is apt to grow wanton; therefore the parents are forced sometimes by an austere carriage, to prevent this wantonness. If God should always manifest smiles, it would breed a contempt to God, therefore God doth with a majestic sovereignty carry himself with a seeming displeasure,

with frowns in his brow, and all to correct that spirit of wantonness that is in his people. The *Persian* Kings shunned familiarity with their subjects, and would be but twice a year seen by them, lest their subjects should contemn them, if they should often see them; so God doth hide himself from them, lest there should be a spirit of wantonness growing in his people.

Lastly, if you would not be cast down under these desertions, then remove from you all worldly-mindedness, to be gluttoned with the creature, to have your hearts filled with the world; if you be thus, you will never enjoy a comfortable certainty of God's love. A man that is a worldly-minded man, he can never be strong in assurance; if you keep your eye at a due distance from the earth, you can see far; but if you put your eye to the ground, you can see but little: Beloved, keep your hearts at a due distance from the world, you may see far into the sense of God's favor; but let your eye, I mean the soul, be too near the world, you see nothing; you will not perceive the sense of God's love if you have worldly mindedness predominant in you: Put a candle above the ground, and it will burn clear and bright, but put the same candle under the ground, and it burns but dim; the damp of the ground hinders the light thereof. Beloved, keep you hearts above the ground, and here your candle may burn bright; but if you are buried in the world, I mean your hearts, your candle will burn dim; you will not have so clear a light and sense of God's love. Philosophers say the reason the sun is eclipsed, is by the interposition or putting between of the moon; I may aptly apply it, the Scripture makes the moon to be an emblem of the world, *Rev. 12:1*. “*And there appeared a great wonder in Heaven; a woman clothed with the Sun, and the Moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve Stars.*”

This moon, it doth eclipse the sun: Beloved, if the world be at full between you and spiritual things, that they are nearer to your hearts than Christ is, then grace is, then heaven is, this moon of the world will eclipse the shining beams of the sun of righteousness.

These are the eight particulars that must be removed, in case you do expect to regain a comfortable certainty and assurance of the love of God.

The next thing, is something to be done.

2. There are eight or nine rules, what must be done by a Christian, in case he would not be cast down under a continued suspension of God's love.

1. The first is this, if so be you would regain a comfortable assurance of God's love, take this rule; keep a holy, and a conscientious care to act grace throughout the course of your lives; let it be the chiefest of your care to act grace, and my soul for yours, it will not be long before that you have comfort, *2 Pet. 1:5*, etc. And *“besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness and charity; for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; but he that lacketh these things is behind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins: wherefore the rather Brethren, give all diligence, to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, you shall never fall.”* All the verses tell you how to get assurance of election; add grace to grace, and that is the way to come to your assurance of calling and election; let it be your care to act grace, and it shall be God's work to give you comfort; God will multiply thy peace if thou dost increase thy grace; you

have God's promise for it, *Isa. 32:17. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance, forever."*

Here is the way to gain comfort; do thou the work of righteousness, and comfort shall follow after, *Psalm 119:165. "Great peace have they that love thy Law, and nothing shall offend them (or) they shall have no stumbling block."*

A notable clause which is worthy your notice, *Job 13:18. "Behold now I have ordered my cause, I know that I shall be justified."*

"I have ordered my cause" (that is) I have taken care to my life, I have made conscience of my ways, I have labored to act grace in all my whole cause; what follows? *"Now I know I shall be justified,"* I have now an evidence, and a sense of justification. O beloved, the actings of grace, are the in-lets to inward peace; many men say, that we know we shall be justified, but never make conscience of their ways, never order their cause: some are as confident as confidence itself, yet as ignorant as ignorance itself, as profane as profaneness itself, as proud as pride itself. O beloved, if you will have a due sense of the knowledge of Justification, order your cause well, order your lives well; *"To him that orders his Conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God;" Psalm 50:23.*

Beloved, if God doth but incline your hearts to order your cause aright, and your course aright, then you may, and you shall be justified. It is a great fault of Christians, that when they want assurance, they spend more time in complaining they want comfort, then they spend time in acting of grace.

2. Keep conscience pure and clear, and that is the way to keep conscience pacified; guilt on the conscience concealed and indulged, it contracts a horror, and doth cause a hell to arise here; this rule the Scripture gives, if you would labor to have assurance. *Job 11:15. "If iniquity be in thy hand,*

put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy Tabernacle; for then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot, then you shall be steadfast and not fear.” That is, if sin be on thy conscience, put it far away; what follows? Thou shalt not then be under fear, and under suspension of God's love, but shalt lift up thy face and be steadfast; therefore if ever thou wouldst regain a comfortable certainty of God's love, keep thy conscience pure and clean, that thou dost not indulge the guilt of any allowed sin within thee.

3. Call to mind the former experiences in the days of old, that thou hast had of God's love; the remembrance of past goodness is very helpful for present encouragement; this rule *David* took, *Psalms* 42:6. “*O my God, my soul is cast down within me, wherefore will I remember thee from the Land of Jordan, etc.*”

It is remarkable what course the Psalmist took to regain comfort; he would remember three experiments of his goodness; the land of *Jordan*, the land of the *Hermonites*, and the hill *Missar*. First, I will remember the land *Jordan*; that is, I will remember the great goodness of God in drying up the river *Jordan*, that so the tribes of *Israel* might pass over to the promised land. Why, God that hath been good, will be good. Then, I will remember the land of the *Hermonites*; in that land was *Sihon* king of the *Amorites*, and *Og* king of *Bashan* defeated; that you read of in *Joshua* 12:1-2. “*Now these are the Kings of the Land, which the children of Israel smote, and passed the Land on the other side Jordan, toward the rising of the Sun toward the River Arnon, unto Mount Hermon.*” *Missar* some think to be a little hill near *Mount Sinai*, where the law was given. I will remember God's goodnesses, in giving a law to his people; here *David* would call to remembrance the goodness of God of old, to regain to him comfort and quietness in in his mind.

Thus likewise, *Psalm 77:10-11*. “*And I said, this is my infirmity, but I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High, I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember thy wonders:*” Think of old mercies, and old privileges of loving kindnesses, and that is the way to bear up the heart with present encouragement.

4. Use arguments of faith against present sense and feeling: *Abraham* had never believed God's promise, if he had not used arguments of faith against present sense and feeling. Divines make that applicable of *Isaac*, unto the case of desertion: how came *Isaac* to mistake *Jacob* for *Esau*? Divines apply, that by sense and feeling, God's people think that they are *Esau's*, and are rejected and hated by God, when they are the beloved of the Lord; though sense and feeling may tell thee my infirmities be many, my corruptions are strong, my heart is hard, my affections are dead, that God knows, I cannot believe, and I cannot have comfort; why yet believe, God is free, God is gracious, God accepts of will for work, accepts imputed righteousness as if it were inherent righteousness: use arguments of faith against present feelings. If you play the logicians, the devil he will non-plus you; though I have not the faith of evidence, yet I will labor for the act of adherence, relying upon Jesus Christ, use arguments thus.

5. Follow this rule, let your comforts be grounded upon an immutable covenant, rather than upon thy own feeling and fading affections; this is a rule of great use. Beloved, should Christians build their eternal comforts on their feeling affections, their comforts would be up and down, ebbing and flowing; their affections are feeling, sometimes hot as fire, anon as cold as air; the pulses of the body sometimes beat strongly, and sometimes faintly, so doth the affections. Now if thou shouldst build thy comfort on thy affections, thou wouldst never have stable comfort, but still up and down;

but rather ground thy comforts upon a lasting and unchangeable covenant, on such a covenant that accepts of will for works, desires for deeds, endeavors for performances. Why now, building thy comforts on an unchangeable covenant, rather than on fleeting affections, it is a way to regain and attain everlasting comforts.

6. Take this rule, In some cases, especially of desertions and temptations, it is more safe for thee to submit thyself to the judgment of other men about thy condition, then to thine own judgment. Am I deserted? Am I tempted? Am I troubled in mind? Why, it is better for me if mine own judgment cannot suggest comfort to me, it is my wisest course to submit myself to other men, to those that are experienced Christians, if they by observing my walking and manner of living, do instill comfort into me; this I am bound to submit to, in case of desertion and temptation. It was reported of a minister of this kingdom, that he was for a long time troubled in mind, and could not be comforted till he had the judgments of godly ministers, and by their testimony he got comfort. Mr. *Bradford*, he could not be comforted but by the testimony of another martyr; *John Carelesse* assuring Mr. *Bradford* he must be a holy man, and a good man; the testimony of *John Careless* did mightily pacify and quiet the conscience of Mr. *Bradford*. Thus *Nathan's* testimony did comfort *David*; and *Ananias* testimony did comfort *Paul*. Passions of grief and fear blind the judgment, and makes it unable to judge, *2 Kings* 5:12-13. When *Naaman* was under a prejudice and passion, his servants could tell what was best for him to do. Sometimes in cases of desertion or temptation it is a good and a safe rule, rather to trust other men's judgments then our own.

7. Take this rule, never go to wrong means and ways to allay and pacify the troubles of thy mind. *Cain*, when he was in trouble of mind for his sin,

and in horror of conscience, why *Cain* went to allay this trouble by buildings; therefore some divines interpret that clause in the Epistle of *Jude*, “*They followed the way of Cain,*” that is, to allay and stifle the trouble of conscience by sensual delights and worldly affairs; same with *Saul* playing upon music, do not take this course to use sinful wrong means to allay trouble of mind; as a man in fever lets down cold drink, it cools a little for the present, but after increases the more heat; so when men are heated with God's wrath, why they run to sin, which doth increase the heat; just as if men were stung with a bee, and they will run to a bunch of nettles, and rub themselves therewith to allay the sting of the bee; beloved, when men are stung by God's wrath, and then shall run to sin to heal them, it is but like a man rubbing of himself with nettles to allay the sting of a bee; like a man that hath his house a falling, and will take a firebrand to uphold his building. O beloved, when you are under trouble of mind, to run to merry meetings, to music, to building, to buying, and bargaining, and not run to God on thy knees, this is not the way to regain comfort, it is the way to increase thy sorrow, and to cause more anger and anguish on thy conscience. I may exemplify it further by a disease which some women have in their breasts, which they call the wolf; the disease they say, it is fed by flesh, and if flesh be put upon the woman's breast, it feeds on that flesh, and if that be consumed, the woman's breast is the more tortured and torn. A merry meeting may allay trouble of mind for a while, but it will recoil on thee with the more terror then ever it did; therefore take heed of sinful means to regain quietness and peace of spirit.

8. Be more industrious in doing duty, then in getting comfort; it is the fault of many Christians, they spend more time in fruitless complaints, that they want comfort, then in holy endeavors to perform duties. Now if the

people of God would take but this rule, to be more industrious, and spend more time in performing duties than in gaining comfort, their comforts might be sooner got, and their duties better performed. When a house is on fire, it is not our work to inquire how the fire came, but to labor to put out the fire; so when men shall suspect their condition, and complain of wanting comforts, their work is not to rest in fruitless complaints, but to put upon holy endeavors after comforts, *Psalms 30:7*. “*Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled;*” it follows, v. 8. “*I cried to thee O Lord, etc.*” David doth not spend so much time in fruitless complaints, as he doth in holy endeavors after duties.

Lastly, spend more time to strengthen evidences, than to weaken evidences; many men spend more time in questioning their evidences, than in strengthening them: as in trouble of mind, a man will give himself to read dreadful threatenings, to read such places of Scripture, and such good books that carry most dread and terror, and will spurn at promises and at comforts; this is to strengthen the devils hands, and to weaken thine own. Indeed when thou findest thy heart to presume and delude itself, then it is good to make application of dread and terror to awaken thee; but when a man is in trouble of mind, then to shun promises, and only to pore on threatenings of the Scripture, I say this is a course rather to weaken thy comforts than strengthen them; if thou canst not find thy affections up, why run to thine inclinations; why it may be thou sayest thou canst not mourn, but thou wouldst mourn; I cannot pray, but I would pray; I cannot hear profitably, but I would hear better; it is a rule that divines give, That when a believer cannot have comforts from the actings of grace, he is bound then to look for comforts from his general inclination; it may be thou canst not pray well, but for what end thou dost pray? Is not thine end to get more communion

with God, and to get more power against sin? When thou canst not find evidences strengthened by the actings of grace, thou mayest find evidences by thy intention in duty. Thus I have done with these two great causes of a believers dejection or casting down; to wit, the greatness of sin; then secondly, the desertion or divine suspension of God's love.

Sermon VIII

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him—The health of my Countenance, and my God.” Psalm 42:11

I am now come to the second part of the Psalmists distress; *“Why art thou disquieted within me?”* Arius Montanus, whom Ainsworth follows in his translation, reads the words thus: *Cur tumultuaberis*, “Why art thou all in a tumult?” A metaphor drawn from the sea, to the tumults that are in a good man. The manner of the Psalmists dialect, it is in a way of expostulation; from thence I shall draw this observation.

That godly men, they ought to check their hearts for, and to use holy reasoning against all inordinate disquietings of soul.

In the handling of which point in the general, I shall show you what those things are, for which the soul of a child of God is disquieted.

That which disquiets the soul of a child of God, either

First, it is the prosperity of the wicked, or else,

Secondly, the calamities of the Church. 3. Outward afflictions on their bodies. 4. Inward corruption in their hearts.

I shall spend this sermon on the first of these, to wit, That godly men, they should check their souls, for all disquietings touching the prosperity of wicked men.

I do not know any one outward thing in the world that doth more disquiet the souls of good men, then the prosperity of the wicked.

Touching this particular, I shall handle it to you in this method.

First, I shall show you that godly men are apt to be disquieted in soul for the wicked's prosperity.

2. Show you reasons why you should reason against and check the soul for all disquietings because of their prosperity.

Thirdly and lastly, lay down some considerations, whereby you may reason against disquietings of the soul, because of the prosperity of wicked men.

First, godly men have had their souls greatly disquieted, because of the prosperity of wicked men.

There are four or five instances of good men in this kind; In *David* the father, and *Solomon* the son, you have a discovery of great disquietings of soul.

First, in *David* the father, *Psalms* 73:3, and in the 12-13, v. "*For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked; Behold these are the ungodly which prosper in the world, they increase in riches; verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocence:*" as if he should say, it is in vain for me to be godly, because I see wicked men do so prosper in the world. It is a great stumbling block in

good men's ways to heaven, to see wicked men prosper; good men have been overtaken with this, discouraged and disquieted in soul to see wicked men prosper in the world.

Secondly, *Solomon* was troubled for the very same thing, *Eccles.* 10:6-7. *“Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich sit in the low place; I have seen servants on horses, and Princes as servants, walking upon the earth.”*

To see servants ride on horse-back, etc. that is, to see wicked men advanced, prosperous and successful, and to see the godly in an object, despicable and low estate, this disquieted *Solomon*.

Thirdly, look further into the Prophet *Jeremiah*, he was greatly disquieted because of this, *Jer.* 12:1. *“Righteous art thou O Lord, when I talk with thee; let me talk with thee of judgments; wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper?”* etc. He would reason with God; what did he say to God? Let me talk with thee of thy judgments, wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? *Jeremiah* would fain know a reason of God, wherefore the way of wicked men should prosper.

Fourthly, and thus likewise a fourth instance you have of *Job*, ch. 21, v. 7. *“Wherefore do the wicked live, become old and mighty in power?”* etc.

Thus you see four instances in four of the best men, *David*, *Solomon*, *Jeremiah* and *Job*.

Fifthly, I might give you in a holy Prophet, *Habakkuk*, chap. 1, v. 13. *“Thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, or canst not look on grievance; wherefore lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when he devoureth him that is more righteous than he?”*

Here the Prophet doth reason with God, why God would do this; that he that was of pure eyes would behold a wicked man prosper in his wicked way.

And thus you see briefly the first part, that good men, they are apt to be disquieted in soul, in seeing the prosperity of wicked men.

2. The next thing is to show you the reasons why good men should not be disquieted and troubled in soul, when they do see the wicked prosper in the world.

The reasons are four.

First, do not be disquieted because of the prosperity of wicked men, because God doth give them prosperity to be a snare to them, *Prov. 1:32*. “*For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.*”

It makes them secure, it proves fuel to their lust. *Hosea 13:6*. “*According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their hearts were exalted, therefore they have forgotten me;*” Their gold, and silver, and wool, and flax did but clothe, enrich, and strengthen sins. Now beloved, wilt thou envy the prosperity of a wicked man? Wouldst thou envy a man to see him have silken halters, and those to hang himself withal? God doth give prosperity to wicked men, to be as silken halters to hang them everlastingly; therefore do not be disquieted, though they prosper in the world.

Secondly, be not disquieted, because wicked men have the curse of God with their prosperity; this reason *Job* gives, chap. 5, v. 2-3, he calls those men silly men, that envy wicked men's prospering in the world; for saith *Job*, “*Certainly I saw God cursing their habitation:*” Beloved, it is better to have poverty with a blessing, then to have increase with a curse; wicked men have the curse of God with all their prosperity; and this reason *Solomon* gives you, why you should not be disquieted, *Prov. 2:31-33*. “*Envy thou not the Oppressor, and choose none of his ways; for the froward is an abomination to the Lord, but his secret is with the righteous; the curse*

of the Lord is in the house of the wicked, but he blesseth the habitation of the just.”

Though thou seest a wicked man by oppression and grinding the face of the poor become wealthy. O do not envy him; why? Because the curse of the Lord is in his house. This should be a strong reason not to be troubled at the prosperity of wicked men; it is observable of *Esau*, *Gen. 27:28*. “*I will give thee the fatness of the earth, and the dews of heaven;*” a large promise; yet you read, “*Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated;*” *Jacob* had but a poor staff, and *Esau* had the fatness of the earth: why thou mayest be poor as *Jacob*, with a staff and scrip, and thou mayest be loved with *Jacob*. And wicked men may have the fatness of the earth with *Esau*, and yet God hate them; therefore be not disquieted at the prosperity of wicked men; it was spoken of the *Chaldeans*, *Zech. 1:15*, they were a wealthy nation; God may give you ease in the world, and abound with wealth; yet saith God, “*I am sore displeased with them;*” he doth mingle his wrath and curse with the abundance of wicked men; therefore be not disquieted because wicked men prosper.

Thirdly, their prosperity doth cost them very dear; they lose a soul to get a world; they lose heavens glory, for earths prosperity; it is a dear purchase. Wouldst thou envy a man that to purchase his house should lose his life? Why wicked men to purchase wealth lose their souls. I have read of a soldier, that when there was a law made by the general That none should rob the country, the soldier robbed a vineyard, took away a bunch of grapes, and for example sake, was to be hanged, and some did envy the man for the grapes; saith he, envy me not, I pay dear for my grapes. I apply this; you may see wicked men about you to eat the fat and drink the sweet of the

land; thou eatest the bread of affliction, and drinkest thy tears: O do not envy him, his wealth is the price of blood, it hath cost him dear.

Fourthly, do not be disquieted because the wicked prosper; for this will put thee in danger to be wicked as the wicked are; that man that is troubled because the wicked prosper, he is likely to be tempted to become wicked, that he might prosper as they do. Observe, that where the Scripture speaks that good men should not be troubled because the wicked prosper, it gives that caution, lest you should be wicked as the wicked are; observe, *Prov. 3:31. "Envy not the Oppressor, nor choose none of his ways."*

Intimating, that if you do envy wicked men that gain by oppression, you will become oppressors, and will become wealthy as they are, *Prov. 24:11. "Be not envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them."*

A notable text that *David* telleth you, of what danger he was in because he was disquieted when wicked men did prosper, *Psalms 73:2. "My feet had almost slipped."*

David saw this, he did envy them, and he had almost fallen into the same sin that they fell into. You have a notable passage in the 10, v. *"Yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt consider his place, and it shall not be."*

He tells you of their prosperity in the foregoing verses; *"They are not plagued like other men, they have more than heart can wish;"* and what follows in the 10, verse? *"It is but a little while, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be at an end;"* that is, because they see wicked men prosper, God's own people return their way, and do many times wickedly as they do. Beloved, to see men that shall break covenants, and deal treacherously, to see them successful, and carry all before them, if thou dost envy them thou

art in great danger to sin as they do, and do wickedly as they do, that thou mightest prosper as they do.

Third question is, *what Consideration should a man use to reason against these disquietings of soul, because of the prosperity of wicked men?*

Beloved I will name to you six considerations to allay those disquietings, seeing wicked men prosper in the world.

First, consider with yourselves, it is a harder matter for godly men to use prosperity well, then adversity well; you know it is a harder matter to carry a cup of wine that is brim full, without shedding, then to carry a cup that is half filled: It is harder to carry a prosperous condition well without sin, then it is to carry a state of adversity; therefore in Scripture, those that have been good in adversity, have been bad in prosperity. The men of *Israel* were good in *Egypt*, but they were bad in *Canaan*, *Deuteronomy* 32, even when God had delivered them, and given them the land of *Canaan*, *even then they rebelled against God*. When they waxed fat and plentiful in the promised land, then they spurned against God. When *David* was in a private condition, when he was hunted by *Saul* like a partridge over the mountains, *David* was a good man; but when *David* came to the throne, then he became adulterous, then he became murderous; whereas before he was a man of a marvelous strict life; therefore the Scripture speaks of *Jehoshaphat*, *2 Chron.* 17:3, that he followed *David's first ways*, intimating that *David's first ways* were his best ways. I have read in *Bernard's* works, chap. 12. B. 2, *of considerations*, all that Chapter treats on this theme, *Majus periculum à prosperis quam ab adversis*, that it is more dangerous for a good man to be in prosperity, then to be in adversity. It is a note *Cornelius A Lapide* hath on *Pro.* 1:32, that the same word¹ *scalvat* that signifies prosperity in the Hebrew, is rendered by the Arabic, *investigatio*, and by the Septuagint²,

inquisition or examination, to make a search or to examine; and the reason is this, prosperity makes known a man's disposition, as we say of magistracy, *Magistratus indicat verum*, when a man comes to be a magistrate it will show what a man is; so I may say, prosperity will show what a man is, it will find a man out: therefore saith *Anselm*, in his *Sentences*, *Tribulatio probat unam patientiam, prosperitas verô omnes virtutes examinat*, adversity and trouble it tries but one grace, that is, your patience; but prosperity it will try all your graces, it will try your love whether you love God or the world, it will try your zeal, whether you will venter Christ or your estates: O beloved, wilt thou envy a man that doth prosper in the world, when it is so hard a matter for a good man to use well a prosperous condition. It is said of *Pius Quintus*, he was called pious, because in their account when he was a mean man he was thought a good man; but when he came to be cardinal he doubted of his salvation; but when he became a pope he despaired of salvation. Beloved when you are in a mean condition, you live holy, and pray better then now you do; God had more service from you then now he hath when you have gotten your great livings and much of the world. It is a note that *Bernard* hath on *Psalm 91:7*. "*A thousand shall fall at thy fide, and ten thousand on thy right hand: but it shall not come nigh thee.*" The genuine sense of that place is, the godly should not fall in that time by the plague; but saith *Bernard*, I may apply this to prosperity: on the left hand there shall be ten thousand fall by prosperity, when it may be not a thousand fall by adversity. Beloved, if so be adversity slays his thousands, prosperity slays his ten thousands.

Secondly, consider, that the prosperity of wicked men hastens their end and their ruin. Wilt thou envy a man's prosperity when thou seest prosperity hastens his ruin; *Psalm 37:1-2*. "*Fret not thyself because of evil doers,*

neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity: For they shall soon be cut down like the grass: and wither as a green herb.” The more a flower is blossomed the nearer it is to its withering time. When wicked men do flourish and blossom broadest they are then nearest to be cut down; therefore fret not thyself against evil doers, for they shall soon be cut off; *Prov. 24:19-20. “Fret not thyself because of evil men, neither be thou envious at the wicked: For there shall be no reward to the evil man, the candle of the wicked shall be put out.”* Their prosperity shall hasten their ruin but not their reward; there shall be no reward to evil men. Would not you account it folly in a man that is heir to so many thousand pounds per annum, to envy a stage-player in a cloth of gold in the habit of a king, and yet not heir to one foot of land; why, though he hath the form and respect and apparel of a king or nobleman upon the stage, yet he is heir to nothing. Thus wicked men though they are arrayed gorgeously, and fare deliciously with dives everyday, wanting nothing, having more than heart can wish, they are only possessors: thou godly man art the heir. The ox that is the laboring ox is longer lived then the ox that is put into fatted pastures, putting him there doth hasten the slaughter of the ox: when the Lord puts wicked men into fat pastures he doth it to hasten their ruin.

Thirdly, consider that another man's prosperity is not a hurt to thee, nor a prejudice to thee; therefore do not envy their prosperity. Suppose a wicked man hath much, by his muchness thou hast never the less, thy portion is not impaired because another's is increased: *Leah's* fruitfulness was no cause of *Rachel's* barrenness, yet she envied her. Why dost thou envy a wicked man when thou seest him grow rich and prosper? This is an act of folly; because his prosperity it is no hurt to thee, nor no prejudice to thee.

Fourthly, consider, that thou in this life hast a prosperity which wicked men have not, and in the life to come thou shalt have prosperity that they shall never have,

Here are two parts in this consideration the one is this,

1. That in this life thou hast a prosperity that wicked men have not. 3 ep. *John* 3:2. "*Beloved, I wish as (I pray) above all things that thou mayest prosper, and be in health, as thy soul prospers.*" When thy body doth not prosper that it is diseased, when thy estate doth not prosper that thou art behind hand, the labor of thy hand cannot fill thy belly nor clothe thy back, even then thy soul may prosper; In the Psalmist language thy soul may flourish like a green herb, *Psalm* 92, v. 13. "*Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God.*" They shall be fat and flourishing, etc.

The graces of the Spirit may thrive in thee, when nothing prospers nor goeth well with thee in the world: now wicked men though they do prosper in their bodies, they prosper not in their souls; they prosper and thrive in wealth and goods, not in grace: It is a remarkable text in *Psalm* 106, v. 15. "*And he gave them their request, but sent leanness into their souls.*" He gave them their request, but what follows; he sent leanness into their souls; the quails were dainty food, it did fat their bodies, but their souls starved, their souls thrived not, their graces grew not, their souls starved. Suppose thy estate doth not increase, yet does thy graces thrive? This should comfort thee and free thee from all disquietings in thy inward man.

2. For the life to come, thou shalt then have prosperity that no wicked man shall have; this consideration should allay all disquietness: thus the Psalmist doth, *Psalm* 17:2 last Verses, *David* speaks of men that have their portion in this life, children enough, and money enough for all their

children to give them large portions: What doth *David* do to prevent repining and disquietings of soul? Mark the next words, "*As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness.*" His meaning is, I see them prosper here, they have many children, and they have enough for them all; but as for me, this satisfies me, I shall behold thy face; that is, when my body shall be raised at the resurrection day, and I shall come to heaven, this will satisfy me; and this did quiet the spirit of *David*.

Fifthly, consider, that prosperity makes wicked men worse, and adversity makes good men better; there are two parts in this likewise. 1. Prosperity makes wicked men worse. In the chapter I read this afternoon, God did exalt *Pharaoh* to a magnificent state; it was to make him worse; all *Pharaoh*'s wealth did the more harden his heart; "*The prosperity of the wicked slays them,*" *Pro.* 1:32. And in the prophecy of *Hosea* 13:6. "*As was their pasture, so were they filled: and their heart was exalted, therefore have they forgotten me:*" Prosperity doth make a wicked man worse, it is a spur to licentiousness, it is fuel to his haste, and a pull back to his graces. 2. But now adversity makes good men better; it weans them from the world; it makes them look after heaven, it imbitters sin to them; it makes them spend more time in duty; it makes good men better. As *Themisticles* said of himself, that he had perished, if he had not perished; many a good man might say so, if such a disaster had not befallen me, I had been drowned in comforts, and glutted in the world. O beloved, this consideration should greatly allay your disquietings; prosperity makes wicked men worse, and adversity makes good men better.

Sixthly, consider that wicked men have not always comfort and contentment in their abundance and prosperity in the world; wicked men, though they do prosper and abound, yet they have mixture of discontents

and vexations, and unsatisfiability with their abundance. Would you envy a man to see him have a silken stocking, but a gouty leg? Alas beloved, wicked men may be clad in silk, but you do not know the pain that may be under a silken garment: It may be a poor leathern coat, a poor russet coat hath more inward contentation of mind, that gets but his 12, d. *per diem*, then that man that gets his hundreds in the week. I have seen many times people wear a neat shoe, yet confess themselves the shoe pinched them. Beloved, wicked men may be more neatly clad then other men may be, and have more of the world then other men; yet God may pinch them with a gauled conscience, that they have gotten their estates by oppression, and by unjust gain. O wilt thou envy a wicked man! If godly men knew that vexation and horror of conscience that accompanies a wicked man's abundance, they would not have their abundance for all the world; they had rather die beggars, then live rich men. You read of *Haman*, *Esther* 5:13. "*Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai sitting at the Kings gate.*" He was the kings favorite, he had more favor at court with *Ahasuerus* then all the court besides; yet a trifle did eat out all *Haman's* comfort and contentment, and made him lie down on his bed with sorrow, and would not be comforted, because he could not get a bow of the knee from *Mordecai*. Why a little thing will discontent a wicked man, and will make him off the hooks. We read of *Ahab*, he had the best kingdom of the world, the kingdom of *Israel*; yet he could not be contented, because he could not have *Naboth's* vineyard, he was sick for it. Ye have a notable passage in *Eccles.* 5:10-12. "*He that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance, with increase: This is also vanity.*" Dost thou love money? Money shall never satisfy thee; dost thou love abundance? Thou shalt have abundance, but thou shalt not be satisfied for

all that. *“The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich shall not suffer him to sleep.”* A poor day-laboring man, whether he eats little or much, can have a sweet nights sleep; but a wicked man many times hath abundance, and that makes him that he cannot take his rest; what care in the keeping, what fear in the losing, and what thought in the getting more, these do cruciate and torment the thoughts of many wicked men. So true is that saying of Jesus Christ, *Luke 12:15. “And he said, Take heed and beware of covetousness; for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance which he possesseth.”* Thou mayst have abundance, and yet the comfort of thy life not consist in all thy abundance. But now good men they have more comfort, inward quiet and contentation of mind with a little, then the wicked have with all their abundance. *Psalm 37:16. “A little that a righteous man hath, is better then the riches of many wicked.”* *Prov. 15:16. “Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, then great treasures and trouble therewith.”* There may be great treasures, and great trouble; there may be little of the world, and yet great peace therewith. Therefore be not disquieted because wicked men prosper in the world.

I now come to give you a word of application.

If it be so that the people of God must check their hearts for, and use reasoning against disquietings of soul, because wicked men prosper. Then by way of inference,

First of all, do not so much admire the prosperity of wicked men in the world; do not think prosperity to be so happy a state for men to be in: it is not worthy envy it is not fit it should give one troubled thought into a good man's mind; the admiration of a natural thing another man hath should not disquiet another man that hath not the same.

Secondly, if I must not be disquieted because wicked men prosper, then I would infer hence, that I must be far from envying and being disquieted at the graces of good men: if I must not envy a wicked man's growing rich, I must not envy a good man's growing good: this is the greatest wickedness in the world for thee to envy another man's graces; it is a diabolical sin, it transforms a man into a Devil, it makes a man to be a Devil incarnate, because other men's graces outstrips them, another man preacheth better than thee; therefore thou enviest him: *Augustine* calls it, *vitium Diabolicum*, a devilish sin, on *Psalms* 139. Because it is properly the sin of the devils in hell.

The Devil out of pure spite and pure envy doth envy man's good. Beloved many men are of this temper that they envy and are troubled that other men are good, this is the Devils sin; just as the *Philistines* did envy the good of God's people, so do they: Gen. 26:15-16. "*For all the wells which his fathers servants had digged, the Philistines had stopped, and filled them with earth.*"

It is a strange passage, the *Philistines* would do themselves hurt, because that God's children should not get benefit; what did they? They stopped up all the wells in the country and hindered themselves from having benefit by the water, because God's people should have no water: Why beloved, wicked men do thus, they envy that other men should get good, they envy God's people not only for getting wealth by them, but their very graces likewise: *Cain* envied *Abel* because his brother's works were righteous and his own were wicked.

Thirdly, is it so that we must check all envying and disquietings because wicked men prosper; Then I infer hence, that it is just with God to suffer wicked men to envy the prosperity of good men; because the godly do

sometimes envy the prosperity of the wicked; here you see *David* did envy to see *Saul* prosper; and God to recompense *David's* sin, he would suffer *Saul* to envy *David*; therefore *Saul* did hunt and pursue *David* like a partridge over the mountains. O beloved, God doth but pay us in our own coin; *Isaac* did envy the prosperity of the *Philistines*, and the *Philistines* were suffered by God to envy *Isaac*, and they stopped up their wells and would give them no water; the reason was merely out of envy; for say they, you have more people then we, and you are more wealthy then we; therefore they denied them water. This is just with God to suffer wicked men to hate the prosperity of the godly, because they sin sometimes in envying the prosperity of wicked men.

Fourthly, is it so, that we must not be disquieted at the prosperity of wicked men? Then I infer that prosperity it is no sign either of a good cause, or of good men; I must not envy them; you read in the 73. *Psalms*, the wicked prosper, their houses are safe from fear, they do not come in trouble like other men, yet their cause may not be good, nor themselves neither. Indeed it is a great vanity when men shall make use of success and prosperity to be a symptom and an infallible sign from heaven that the cause is good. What did we condemn the papists for? If I thought that prosperity were the sign of a good cause and good men, I would concur with papists to make prosperity a sign of the visible Church. Beloved, we are even turned papists in our days; they make it a sign of a true Church; and some men among us make it a sign that God approves of what they do, because they prosper. All our divines have written against popery in that point, and affirm that rather adversity and persecution is a badge of God's Church, then prosperity.

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1. A Hebrew word found in this passage of Scripture was inserted here in the original.
 2. A Greek word found in the Septuagint translation of this passage was inserted here in the original.

Sermon IX

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him—The health of my Countenance, and my God.” Psalm 42:11

I proceed to a second use by way of exhortation, to persuade you all to labor to check your own hearts for being troubled for the outward prosperity of wicked men; and that I may prevail with you herein, I shall leave with you these three considerations

First, you have no cause at all to be troubled, if you consider this; what God's ends are in suffering wicked men to prosper in this world.

Secondly, if you do but consider the ends themselves that wicked men have that do prosper in the world.

Thirdly, if you do but consider God's ends why he would not have the godly to be troubled and disquieted at the prosperity of the wicked, and what God's ends are in not suffering his people so to prosper in this world:

and if these three considerations were seriously considered by the people of God, it would take away and allay all murmurings and troubles and disquietness from the hearts and minds of God's people in seeing wicked men to prosper in the world.

First, if thou wouldst allay trouble of mind in seeing the wicked to prosper, do but consider God's ends in suffering them to prosper in the world. Now there are seven ends which God hath, all of which might allay the troubles of mind in the hearts of God's people in seeing wicked men to prosper.

The first is this, God doth suffer wicked men to prosper in the world so that they might have the more opportunity to act their sin and wickedness, whereas if they were in a poor and in a low and in an afflicted condition, they could not have such opportunities to draw forth those acts of sin and wickedness that lie hid in their own hearts: if these vines of *Sodom*, and if those fruits of *Gomorrah* were not warmed with the sun of prosperity, we should not see those grapes of God, and clusters of bitterness are in them: Now God is pleased for ends best known to himself to heap the prosperity of the world upon them, to draw out that sin and wickedness that lieth hid in the heart, and to make it to come to public view; have we not a pregnant instance of this in *Hazael* when he was in power, and when he was in prosperity? That was an opportunity to discover and draw forth that wickedness that lay hidden in his heart: well said the Prophet, "*Thou shalt rip up women with child, thou wilt burn their strong holds with fire, and slay the young men with the sword, and dash their children in the streets:*" But now what said *Hazael* to the Prophet, "*Am I a Dog that I should do such things as these are?*" But said the Prophet, thou shalt be king, and then thou shalt do it: even all these things; when he was poor and in a low

condition, he was not in a capacity to do this villainy; but when the world favored him, and he did begin to prosper and become great in power and great in the world, then was the opportunity to draw out this wickedness: the story you may read in 2 *Kings* 8:12-13. As we see in our days, if there had not been this licentious liberty, and this general toleration amongst us, we had not heard of such wickedness. And wicked men would have wanted opportunity to have vented such wickedness, which now is made manifest to the face of the world; and the people of God gain good by all this; for by this means they come to see what is in men's hearts. *Dan.* 8:24-25. 'tis said of *Auliacus*, “*that his power shall be mighty, and shall prosper and practice, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people, (or according to the Chaldee, the people of the holy one,) and through his policy he shall cause violence to prosper in his hands, and he shall magnify in his heart, and by peace (or prosperity) shall destroy many, etc.*” If this man had not come to be a king, a great man in power and prosperity, the wickedness of his heart had not been discovered, but his being in prosperity, thereby he had an opportunity to draw out that mischief that was in his heart, to be made manifest to the view of the world. There is in *Job* 12:6, mention made of a tabernacle of robbers that prospers: God lets them prosper so that they might see the evil that is in their evil hearts: a shower of rain falling on the ground, it doth cause the weeds to appear, which otherwise would not appear. The snake, in the fable, when it was frozen, it could not sting; but when it was in the bosom, in the warm, then it could sting. The moral is, when men are in a low condition, in a poor condition, then they cannot hurt, because they have not power in their hand; but when they come to be warm with the prosperity of the world, then they will hurt and do mischief.

Secondly, God doth let wicked men prosper, so that their mouths might be stopped, and they may have nothing to say when God shall proceed in judgment against them, when God shall say to them, I gave you mercies and you never performed your duty towards me; I gave you prosperity and you returned me no glory; and God shall say that such a man that had no riches, no prosperity in the world which you had, and yet he did his duty, and had more grace, and brought me more glory then ever you have done; I have been bountiful towards you, but you have not been humble before me; you have had much from me, and yet returned little to me: this prosperity will be an argument to stop their mouths that they shall not be able to speak a word against God.

Thirdly, God doth let wicked men prosper, to this end, so that he might see whether his people will love God for himself, love Christ for his own sake, whether they can love a naked God, a naked Christ, and a naked truth; for their own sakes God doth it to try his people whether they will love holiness, and love grace, and love the ways of God, when they are paved with thorns, as well as when they are strewed with roses; and to see if his people will love religion, when it is a persecuted religion; and to love holiness and exact walking when it is scorned, and the professors thereof reproached; and love religion when it shall have neither power nor success on its side, rather than to love sin and the ways of vanity when prosperity and profit, and pleasure, and success, and all on that side: and this is one and whereby he doth try his own servants, by letting the men of the world prosper, to see if they will love God for himself.

Fourthly, that thereby it may hasten and aggravate the ruin of wicked men; what is the main end of putting oxen into fat pastures, but to fatten them up against the day of slaughter? So the Lord doth put wicked men into

fat pastures of prosperity and riches in this world; but it is for this end, to fatten them up against the day of slaughter, and to make them be a sweeter morsel, not only for worms in the grave, but devils in hell; God lets wicked men to prosper, and to let them have the world at will; but it is that it might carry them with the more speed into the place of darkness, *Psalm 92*. When the wicked spring up as grass, and all the workers of iniquity do flourish, that they might (saith he) be destroyed forever.

Fifthly, that the prosperity of wicked men might be a shelter and defense to his own people: What was the reason that *Cyrus* a wicked man should so prosper in strength and power in the world and to destroy the *Chaldees* and *Babylonians*? He was a heathen, and God did make use of him for his own people's safety; it was by the hand of *Cyrus* that deliverance came to the poor *Jews* out of captivity. It was a question what might be the reason that *Egypt* must be the fruitful place in the seven years of famine, when all the nations round about them had famine in them: now God's end was this, that they might have provision to maintain his own people, and *Jacob* and his sons: So the *Canaanites*, the land of *Canaan*, was never so fruitful as it was that very year that the *Jews* were to inherit it; now what was the reason? God did not love the *Canaanites*: But they build houses, and God's people come and live in them; they shall plant vineyards, and God's people come and eat the fruit of them; it was for their sakes that he suffered them to do this; God did not love *Pharaoh*, and God did not love the *Canaanites*; but God did love his own people, and for their sakes he did all this, to let them prosper and thrive, and grow great in the world, that his own people might enjoy the lands for their possession. Now you shall find that there are three texts more particularly that do intimate and set forth this more clearly; the one is in *Prov. 13:22*. "*A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's*

children, but the wealth of the sinner is laid up for the just.” It may be a wicked man will sell his conscience and engage the soul and all to the Devil, and all to get a little wealth in the world; and God may suffer him to prosper in his ways, and to get wealth by this sinful way; but what then? Then the end will be, it shall be laid up for the just, they shall have it: God so orders it many times that that which wicked men do get, godly men enjoy. So likewise in *Job 27:16-17*. “*Though they heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay.*” v. 16. “*He may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.*” This is the portion of wicked men, to heap up silver as dust, and to prepare raiment as clay, etc. But this he may do, but the just shall divide it, and the innocent put it on; God will not let good men be so far tempted to get the world, but he lets wicked men embrace that temptation; but after they have done, his own people shall enjoy it. The third and last place for this purpose is in *Prov. 28 8*. “*He that by usury and unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him that will pity the poor.*” Therefore we see how that many men it may be go to hell for getting riches, and leave it to them that are godly and liberal to enjoy that substance; and shall this trouble godly men? It may be thou seest wicked men get riches; he doth run the hazard of losing a soul to get it, and thou enjoy the benefit after him; the child that shall see his father’s shepherd to have many sheep, shall the child envy him? He doth but keep them till his father dies. So do wicked men get the world, and run the hazard of a soul, and do not know who shall enjoy what they have gotten; for godly men have a right to that which God suffers wicked men to enjoy. I do not say they have a civil right, for that they have not; but they have a religious right, and a spiritual right to that and to all the

world; for all the world is given unto you for your good; and though wicked men are suffered to prosper in the world, be not disquieted at them.

Sixthly, God doth it for the spiritual good of his own people; when God's people shall see that the wicked do prosper in the world, and they themselves do not prosper in the world, this doth administer an occasion to them to live the life of faith. If God should leave marks of displeasure upon everyone that provokes him, and marks of favor on everyone that pleases him, then we would live by sight and not by faith; but now in that time that they shall see themselves to be persecuted, and holiness to be derided and scorned at, and the professors thereof to live low in the world, and to see wicked men to flourish and thrive, and grow great in prosperity of the world, and not afflicted as other men, but to live in all kind of pleasure that the world can afford, and to have more than heart can wish; now this doth administer an occasion for the people of God to live by faith.

Seventhly, God doth suffer wicked men to flourish in prosperity in the world for this end, because they living in such power and prosperity, they are ordered by God to do God some service in the world: So you read that *Jehu* did God some service in the world, he living in prosperity; and God did reward him for it, for he and his posterity should have the kingdom for the space of four generations; and for this temporal service, God gave him a temporal reward.

Secondly, then as you are to consider God's ends in suffering wicked men to prosper; so you are to consider the wicked's end in living in prosperity, and in the consideration thereof you will not be troubled at their prosperity: and that appears in these particulars.

First, if you consider, that outward prosperity it is all the portion that God hath allotted that wicked men shall enjoy forever; they have no other, nor

shall never have any other portion and happiness but in this world: therefore do not envy their prosperity. In *Job 9:24*. “*The earth is given into the hands of the wicked: he covereth the faces of the Judges: if not, where, and who is he?*” A wicked man he enjoys the earth, but he doth enjoy no more; this is all his heaven, all his happiness, all his portion, all his comfort, he shall have no heaven to reward and receive him, no God, no Christ to smile upon him, no grace to be crowned with glory; nothing is given to them but only the prosperity of this world. So *Psalms 17:14*. *David* there prays to God to be delivered from men “*who have their part in this life, and portion in this life, whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure.*” God gives them their treasure in this world; but God giveth them none of the treasure of heaven, They shall never see his face, they shall never have the light of his countenance; no communion with the Father, and with the Son, no joys and comforts of the Holy Ghost, no true peace of conscience, neither shall they ever enjoy any part amongst those that are sanctified by faith in Christ: they have the earth in their hands, but nothing of heaven in their hearts, they bear sway in the world who are slaves to the world, they rule others at their will who are slaves to the will of Satan: they may have the treasure of the world the portion of slaves; but they shall never have the inheritance of sons: therefore do not envy them.

Secondly, do not envy their prosperity on this ground, because that they have the curse of God that doth go along with all that they do enjoy in the world. In *Prov. 3:31*. “*Envy not thou the Oppressor, (or the man of violence) nor choose none of his ways:*” Why? What is the reason? “*Because the Lord's curse is in the house of the wicked,*” ver. 33. So likewise *Job 5:3*. “*I have seen the foolish taking root: but suddenly I cursed his habitation: God's curse goeth along with the prosperity of the wicked.*”

Do not thou envy that which God curseth, although they may have good things from God, yet they have never a good thought from God; nothing from him but his curse and anger.

Thirdly, God's end with the godly why he withholdeth prosperity from them.

1. God's end is that he might give his people better things than outward prosperity in the world; he gives good things to them that are evil, but better things, spiritual and heavenly riches to them that are godly: he denieth evil things to his people, but he gives them good things: God keeps thee empty from the world, so that he might fill thy heart with grace, and with Jesus Christ; God lets thee enjoy less of the world, so that he might give thee more of himself. God would not give *Moses* the land of *Canaan*, a temporal good; but God gave *Moses* heaven, a spiritual and an eternal good: so God denieth thee outward prosperity to give thee inward grace, to have an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Christ; this he will give thee, but he will deny outward inheritances in this world: he doth cloth thee but meanly with the world, so that he might richly cloth thee with the righteousness of his Son; he hath a *Benjamin's* mess, a rich portion for his children; a portion that lies not in dust, and rubbish, but in spiritual blessings, in heavenly places; God doth not fill thy house with lumber, but he will fill thy heart with himself; he giveth thee little in this world, that he might give thee pardon of sin, the love of Christ, and to give thee heaven and glory, and whatsoever may tend to make thee to be eternally glorious in heaven.

2. God doth deny his people prosperity in this world, because he sees that they can hardly use prosperity well. *David* he was exceeding good when he lay under a low condition, and under persecution; but when *David* came to the throne, and when he grew great, and rich, and in power, then he did

heap up more sin than he did before: so *Solomon*, what abundance of sin did *Solomon* heap up not being able to use prosperity so well as he should; his wealth did him more hurt than his wisdom did him good. When God gives you prosperity in the world, it is a hundred to one if you use it well; should God give you full gales of prosperity and fill you with the world, it would over-turn your little vessel; therefore God doth deny you that which he will suffer wicked men to have to their own ruin. Prosperity in the world doth destroy more than troubles, and bonds, and persecution doth; more are slain by prosperity in their chamber, then by the sword in the field: therefore it is a mercy for God to deny his people that which would do them so much hurt.

The Use is this, if it be so that God's people are denied of the prosperity of the world: O then do not censure God's people because they are but mean in the world: there is an aptness in men to run into two extremes.

1. To justify men who do prosper in an evil course; and
2. To condemn those who do not prosper in the world in a good way.

First, do not censure those who do not prosper in a good way: It is possible that the Church of God, that hath God, and Christ, and the truth, and all on their sides, and yet not to have victory; for to censure men by this, you may by the same reason censure Christ, and the Church of old, and by the same reason you might justify the Turk and Pope, and condemn Christ, if you should pass your censure by the victory and prevailing party; for enemies have much prevailed against the Church: do not censure because of success, and that you may free yourselves from this unjust censure, take this consideration. It is a metaphor drawn from the trees, the one applied to Christ, the other to *Nebuchadnezzar* king of *Babylon* in *Daniel* 4:22, from verse 4, to 12, mention is made of this vision where the

king saw a tree, *“It was in the midst of the Earth, and the height thereof was great,”* ver. 10. *“The tree grew and was strong, and the height thereof reached to Heaven, and the sight thereof unto the end of all the Earth, the leaves thereof fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the Heaven did dwell in the shadow of it, and all flesh was fed of it.”* This is to be understood of *Nebuchadnezzar* king of *Babylon*, of his kingdom: which did spread over all the earth. Now again it is spoken of Christ, in *Isa. 53:2-3*, *“For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness in him: and when we shall see him, no beauty that we should desire him.”* This is the Testimony of this tree, this is meant of Jesus Christ; and yet this tree, there is no form or beauty that we should desire it: this tree was nothing comparable to the kingdom of *Nebuchadnezzar* for power and greatness, and riches in the world, and yet Jesus Christ must be a despised plant. So likewise when you see the men of the world to prosper, and to live in prosperity in the world, do not censure them, that are as low plants in the world, poor and low: if you do, you must condemn Jesus Christ, and the Church of God, and the generation of the just.

Secondly, do not justify the wicked though they do prosper in the world: you must not therefore judge their cause good, because they prosper. The papists make their prosperity and successes to be an argument of the truth of their Church, and their prosperity to be an argument of their being in the right way. Many men make this to be a standing mark, and upon all occasions will be ready to justify evil actions with this, do you not see them prosper? All breach of covenant, and all wickedness and sinful actions, they are ready to justify them, because they prosper, and none to lift up a hand

against them; and because they carry all before them: this is as bad an action as the papists, they make prosperity to be an argument of the goodness of the cause, and the truth of their Church. When *Dionysius* had robbed the Church and carried all away that they had, he could then say, (to justify his action) Behold, how the gods favor us! He made his prosperity to be an argument to justify his sacrilege. When men have full gales of wind in the prosperity of the world, and when they do prosper in an evil course and none to disturb them, and all is well with them and the world at will, then can they laugh in their sleeve, and think that the God of heaven doth justify them in all their actions; they have armies on their side, and strength and powers of the world on their side; but we have truth on our side, and God on our side; and though the Church and people of God may be in the dust, may be trampled underfoot by wicked men; yet the time shall come that the Church and people of God shall prevail: therefore do not justify the wicked in an evil way.

Thirdly, labor to abound in grace, as you do in blessings. We read of an Altar made by *Moses*, and also we read of an altar made by *Solomon*, and that which he made, was four times bigger than that which *Moses* made, because *Solomon* had more riches than *Moses* had, and more peace: *Moses's* was made in the wilderness, *Solomon's* in *Canaan*. I may allude to this, you that God hath bestowed much riches, and caused you to prosper in the world, whose estates in the world are four times bigger than others are; now God doth require four times more service from you then he doth from others. You whose estates are great and come upon you yearly without pains and labor, God doth expect that you should employ yourselves to his glory, to bring God glory answerable to what is required of you, more then he doth expect from handy-craft tradesmen in the world, though they must serve

God in the performance of those duties which God requires of them; they must sequester so much time from their callings, and rob their back to serve God, and pinch their bellies to do their duties: but this is a good exchange to rob their bodies to save their souls. It was said of the *Athenians*, the best land and the best laws, *frumentis uterentur, legibus nequaquam*, they made use of their land, but neglected their laws; take heed your mercies do not make you forget your duties.

Fourthly, admire not the prosperity of wicked men. *Hac bona ne putentur mala, dantur bonis, & rursus ne putentur summa bona dantur & malis*, Aug, Epist. 70, these good things that they might not be accounted evil, are given to good men, and lest they should be thought the only good, are given to wicked men: If there be anything better than other, the worst men shall never have them. Now grace is the best good in all the world; therefore the best men shall have it. Now the riches of the world, is the worst riches; therefore wicked men shall prosper therein. Prosperity is not the best good, because it is that which God usually doth deny his beloved people, and his dear children, and bestoweth it on them that are the worst men. Now when he shall deny it to his sons, and bestow it on slaves, it is an argument it is not the best good: and thus much for the first head for which God's people are apt to be cast down.

Sermon X

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him—The health of my Countenance, and my God.” Psalm 42:11

I now come to the second particular for which the people of God are cast down, and that is because of the calamitous condition of the Church, and people of God here in the world. However some would hold us in hand that the Church of God was never in a more glorious condition then it is at this day: Yet whatsoever they say, he that doth but rightly look at things and make but a diligent scrutiny into the Churches condition, may easily see and behold the Church of God to be very low, that the glory and the face of the Church of God was never so blurred as at this day, and in these times wherein we live; and we may say, where is our glory become? We may see our glory even standing on the threshold, and ready to take her wings and fly away as a bird, and our eyes may behold it if God prevent it not; for do

we not see a cloud of troubles and sore afflictions hanging over our heads ready to fall upon us in these parts of the world, and will certainly fall, if God out of his infinite mercy do not prevent it? Do we not behold profaneness and wickedness, yea great wickedness to abound among us, and that to appear also in the Church? And that doth appear so much the more when the government of the Church which should keep out heresy and profaneness, is cried down, and a toleration of all religions cried up as if that were the true Church where most profaneness and errors abound? Where ever these sins abound, there we may judge that it is the Churches swooning, if not the Churches dying time, The erroneous doctrines, doctrines of Devils which do so much abound in our days, who do cast off the assemblies of the true Church, and seduce the people to sinful practices, laboring to corrupt their judgments by unbottoming them from the truth, and new principling them with false opinions, these are the things do most hurt us: This was that which troubled the Church of God of old, in *Rev.* 2:15, this is called *Satan's seat* where such opinions are propagated, in verse 13, and these principles are those which God hateth, and for which God hath a controversy with the people where ever they are tolerated: these opinions, errors and heresies are they that disturb the peace, and trouble the patience of the Church of God, not only when wicked men are in power and place in the state, but when wicked and profane erroneous, heretical and heterodox opinions trouble the Church; and the Lord knows how soon this land may be overspread with them, that may make us to say, that the glory of the Church is departed and flown away; for these are the Churches reproach, and not her glory: For if things do go on as we see they begin, the Church of God may say they were never in a worse condition.

But in the handling of this particular that the people of God may not be too much cast down for seeing the calamity of the Church, I shall first lay down some cautions.

2. I shall show you that the people of God have been afflicted for the calamities of the Church.

3. To show you the difference between the sympathizing with the Church in her troubles, and sinful troubles of mind.

4. To lay down some rules that notwithstanding the troubles of the Church and people of God be many and great, yet it is the duty of the people of God not to be too much cast down.

First, when I say that the people of God are not to be too much troubled for the calamities of the Church, I do not intend by that to press you to a stoical insensibility, and sottish stupidity of the Churches miseries; as you are not to be like *Stoics*, not to be troubled for the calamities of the Church at all, not to have any fellow-feeling in your brothers miseries: you must not be of an indifferent *Gallio* like spirit, not to be cast down, nor affected with the troubles of the Church; but I would have you to be affected with the afflicted for the troubles of the Church, in measure in a holy sense, and a holy humbleness of heart for the troubles of the Church.

Secondly, when you do find such a sympathizing and sensible fellow-feeling of the Churches miseries, you are to cherish and to stir up that in you, and that you are not to check your hearts for it; for this is your duty and not your sin, 1 *Cor.* 12:26, as it is with the body corporal and natural, so it is with the body mystical and spiritual; as in the body, if the head be in pain, all the body, every member of the body is sensible of it: so it is with the mystical body, if one member be in pain and suffer, the rest of the members are in trouble for it.

Thirdly, you are to check those castings down and those troubles of soul that do disanimate and discourage you, and lay you under such sorrow of spirit, and under such trouble of mind as to lay you under a hopeless condition, and that in your sorrow you cannot retain any future hopes concerning the Churches future welfare: and thus having laid down the cautions;

2. I shall now lay down the second particular to show you that the people of God of old have been greatly sensible of and afflicted for the troubles of the Church of God; and under this Head there are two sorts of persons to be considered.

1. Those that did foresee the troubles of the Church, and they did fear it and were troubled for it.

2. Those that did feel the troubles of the Church when it did come, and these were troubled also.

First, those that did foresee when the troubles of the Church would come, and they were troubled: the one was *Elisha*, he did foresee the troubles of the Church, and he fell a weeping; and when he was with *Hazael*, he asked, What doth trouble thee my Lord? And he answered and said, "*Because of the evil and the wickedness that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel, to dash them against the stones; and the strong holds thou wilt set on fire, and then women thou wilt rip up with child:*" the story you may read in *2 Kings* 8:12-13. For saith he, thou shalt come to be king, and thou shalt do this great wickedness; and the consideration of what this man would do to the Church of God made this good man so to weep. And so likewise we read of the Prophet *Isaiah*, "*Therefore said I, Look away from me, I will weep bitterly, (or I will be bitter in weeping) labor not to comfort me:*" Why? What is the matter that this good man will be thus heavy and weep?

Because of the spoiling of the daughters of my people. What should the prophet weep so for? There was nothing in his days but quietness, and peace, and plenty; and yet in these days the prophet wept bitterly and would not be comforted; the trouble was not now really come; for it came not a hundred years after his death: but the prophet did foresee that it would come certainly upon the people of God, and this consideration made him to weep; and for this his heart was sore troubled. Then you read of *Daniel*, *Daniel* 8:27. “*And I Daniel fainted, and was sick certain days.*” Now what was the matter that this good prophet should be sick and faint for many days? It was trouble of mind only for this, that he by his prophetic spirit did foresee the troubles that were coming upon the Church and people of God, and that the Church and people of God would deeply and sadly suffer under the reign of *Antiochus*; and for this cause he was sick many days: which trouble fell not upon the Church of God until many years after his death. And in *Dan.* 8:11-12. “*He magnified himself even to the Prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down: And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground, and it practiced and prospered:*” And this trouble and sorrow he did foresee should come upon the Church two hundred years after, which made him sick and faint, and was sore troubled for many days. and thus you have instances of good men that have been troubled for the Churches calamities before it came.

Then secondly, you have instances of good men how they have been troubled for the Churches calamities when it was come upon them, to see gray hairs upon the head of the Church, sorrows and trouble to overtake them: this did trouble their spirits. You read in *2 Sam.* 1:11-12, when *David* had heard that the *Philistines* had given the people of God a defeat and

overthrow, It is said that *David rent his cloths*; and *David* “took hold of his cloths and rent them, and likewise all the men that were with him: and they mourned and wept; and fasted until Even, for Saul and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel, because they were fallen by the sword.” So likewise a full text to this purpose you have in *Nehemiah* 1:2-4, when the sad condition of the people of God was brought and told to good *Nehemiah* he wept. “*Hanani one of my brethren came, he and certain men of Judah, and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were lest of the Captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said unto me, The remnant that are lest of the captivity there in the Province, are in great affliction and reproach: the Wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire. And it came to pass when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned many days, and fasted and prayed before the God of Heaven, etc.*” Here you see how good men have mourned and been exceedingly cast down with sorrow when they have heard of the calamities that have fallen upon the Church and people of God.

The third particular, is to show you the difference between a gracious sympathizing with the troubles of the Church, and sinful disquiet because of the calamities of the Church; for one is a duty, the other is a sin.

First, gracious sympathizing with the Church in trouble quickens prayer and supplication for the Churches good. You read of the Psalmist when the people of God was in great trouble, he was in sorrow; but his sorrow did drive him to the throne of grace, to pray for them, *Psalm* 137:1-5. “*If I forget thee, O Jerusalem: then let my right hand forget her cunning.*” Though the Churches sufferings may make thee sad in spirit, yet they must not make thee dead in prayer: As they had pity towards God's Church in

affliction; so they had also prayer in their hearts for them when they were in trouble, that they might have them to be removed; whereas they that have excessive sorrow of mind for the troubles and calamities of the Church, they are apt to complain to men and to make mone to men of their sorrows; but their sorrow doth indispose their hearts to go to God by prayer and supplication to have their sorrow removed. And those that are so pressed down with sorrow as to complain to men, and not to God, it is an argument that that sorrow is inordinate and sinful, because moderate sorrow doth put the soul to seek God at the throne of grace, so that sorrows and troubles might be taken off and removed from the Church.

Secondly, those men that mourn ordinally and moderately for the calamities of the Church, does retain within themselves some good hopes of the Churches recovery. Therefore you read in *Lam. 3:31-33*. “*The Lord will not cast off forever. For though he causeth grief, yet he will have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly, (or from his heart, for so 'tis in the Original) nor grieve the children of men.*” Here you see that though the Church was in great affliction; yet behold they could sympathize with them, and mourn for them, yet so as to have hope in God for all this: they could see and know God's heart towards them, though his hand was seemingly against them: he doth not afflict from his heart: As if they had said, God doth not afflict indeed, but it is not willingly; it is for sin which he hates in his own people, and he is as it were constrained to strike his children; it is not his wonted work, it is a strange work; it comes not from his heart, but from his hand: therefore they could sorrow in hope of deliverance out of trouble. But now sinful dejections cut off hope; as you may read in *2 Kings 7:18-19*. *Elisha* told the people when there was famine in *Samaria*, and he told them of

great evil that should come upon them; and afterwards he told them that by tomorrow this time there should be sold two measures of barley for a shekel in the gate of *Samaria*. Here was great plenty spoken of: And a lord answered the man of God, and said, “*Now Behold, if the Lord should make windows in Heaven, might such a thing be?*” As if he had said, we that are in so deep sorrow, so great trouble today, is it possible that we can have so great plenty tomorrow? But he said, “*Thou shalt see it with thy eyes, but thou shalt not eat thereof.*” So many men are like this man, so cast down with excessive sorrow for the sufferings of the Church; and when the Church of God is low, and the enemies of the Church strong, they are ready to think that they are so low, and their wounds are so great, and their enemies so strong, that it is impossible to be restored: somewhat like the reasonings of the Church at another time, *Lam. 3:18-19*. “*And I said, my strength and my hope is perished from the Lord: Remembering my affliction, the Wormwood and the Gall.*” When their sorrow and suffering was so long in *Babylon*, and they did not see any likelihood to be delivered, no visible means for their restoration, and to be brought out of captivity, they were then over pressed with sorrow; they said our hopes are cut off from God. *Ezek. 37:11*. When they were as dry bones in the valley, and they thought that it was impossible for dry bones to have flesh and sinews to be brought upon them: Again, they thought they were utterly lost, and they thought that they should never be brought out of troubles: and this caused bitter complaints to arise from their spirits.

Thirdly, moderate sorrow it doth differ from immoderate sorrow in this; true sorrow it doth stir up holy endeavors to act in thy place and calling for the deliverance of the Church. Thus you read in *Jeremiah 51:50*. “*You that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still: remember the Lord a far*

off: and let Jerusalem come into your minds;” As if the prophet had said, *Jerusalem* is in trouble, and under great and sore afflictions; do what you can for her, stand not still, but improve all your interests you can in all places and conditions that it may be for her benefit.

Whereas a man that is possessed with a sinful care, and a sinful sorrow, he is so far from improving all his interest for God's people in trouble, that he is ready to sit down, and say, will do no more for religion and for the cause of God, and he is ready to think he hath done too much already, and repenteth of all he hath done: this is sinful trouble, and sinful sorrow. When they shall be ready to resolve to do no more, lend no more, venture no more: but if it shall go well with the Church, then they will own the Church and people of God; but if the Church is brought into troubles, and if it lieth under sorrows, then they will desert it, and will not improve any interest for it; neither will they do anything for God, and his Church, and people; but give all over as lost and gone without any endeavors to relieve them.

Fourthly, those that do thus mourn graciously, they do mourn more for the Churches troubles, and the people of God's sorrows, then they do for their own particular sorrows and troubles: *David's* sorrows and troubles that were to his own particular person, they were no more to him then a little prick in his flesh; but the sorrows, and troubles, and sufferings of the Church, they were to him as a sword in his bones, *Psalm 42*. “*As with a sword in my bones the enemies reproach me, while they say unto me daily Where is thy God?*” So likewise you read of *Elijah* in *1 Kings 19:4, 10*, it is spoken concerning *Elijah* when he was sitting under the Juniper tree, and he said, “*O Lord, I beseech thee, now I pray thee take away my life; for I am not better then my fathers. And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: For the children of Israel have forsaken thy Covenant, thrown*

down thine Altars, and slain thy Prophets with the sword: and I even I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away.” Here you see that good man did mourn for God's Church, they have slain thy prophets, etc. and this doth punish him, and this doth greatly disquiet him, and trouble his spirit. But immoderate sorrow is more let out after particular crosses, and troubles, and personal losses; the loss of relations, the loss of thy estate or any personal affliction upon thy body, this doth more trouble thee than the great troubles that the Church of God are under; now this is a sinful sorrow. Now to allay this distemper that you may not sinfully and immoderately mourn for the calamities of the Church and people of God, I shall name to you these five considerations, which is the fourth thing propounded, as helps against dejected disquietings and discouragements.

First, do not immoderately grieve and mourn for the calamities of the Church of God, on this ground, because the Church of God doth grow more numerous by troubles and persecutions. The saints blood that is shed by persecution, is the seed of the Church, and many increase and grow from that seed. *Cyprian* suffered martyrdom, many were converted by his martyrdom, and by his sufferings as well as by his preaching. Souls persecutors that do by the casting one into prison, and by the putting of another to death, and by banishment of another, they do there by think within themselves to root out all the rest, both professors and religion too: but God by an over-ruling hand doth so order it, that it is a means to increase multitudes of the people of God. If a child comes into a forest and in there he sees a man cutting off, of the top of a tree, the child thereby thinks the man doth spoil the tree: but it is otherwise; for by that loping and pruning, the tree doth grow more. So wicked men may cut here one tree and there another, and lop off the branches; but God by this means doth make

the Church of God to grow more in number, and to grow better than before, and the number of the people of God are more increased as it was with the Church of the *Jews*, they went down into *Egypt* but a small number; but their being in bonds and captivity, they did grow very great in number, and grew more in number and multiplied more in *Egypt* then ever they did in their own land: For so you read in *Exodus* 1:7, the *Hebrews*, that is the *Jews*, “*tis said they filled the whole land of Egypt. And the children of Israel were fruitful; and multiplied, and increased abundantly, and waxed exceeding mighty, and the land was filled with them.*” If you would find the number that went down into *Egypt* they were seventy souls; but there came out 600 thousand. O how is the goodness of God in the way of his providence appearing for the good and benefit of his own people! That even in the times of persecution he should order it, that then it should turn to the good of his own people to increase and multiply them. The *Jews* had the good land of *Canaan* given to them; and afterward for their sins and misdoings, they were carried captive into *Babylon*, as you read in *2 Kings* 24:16, there you read of seven thousand that were carried away captive. And in *Zedekiah* reign, there were four thousand six hundred, and in all not above two thousand, and all these were carried away captive into *Babylon*: and one would think that in their captivity they should not increase, but decrease. But it was so ordered by the Lord's over-ruling power, that they did exceedingly increase, to four times their number, and they did return out of captivity forty two thousand three hundred and sixty; thus they increased in seventy years: this is the great providence of God to make the persecutions of his people to increase their number. And not only in those former times, but in these latter ages the persecutions of the people of God have been so great, and so hot and violent, that they thought not to leave the

name of a Christian on the earth but he should be persecuted; and yet the more that persecution did arise, the more the people of God did increase: therefore why shouldst thou be overmuch cast down seeing that God doth make the sufferings of his people to be for their increase and advantage.

Secondly, consider, if that the number of God's people do not increase; yet consider (and be sure of it) that the graces of God's people shall increase by persecution. The children of *Israel* were better in the land of *Egypt* than they were in their own land; and better in a wilderness than in the land of *Canaan*: as it is said of the Church of Rome in the primitive times, although they had wooden chalices they had golden priests; but now they have golden chalices and wooden priests. So when the Church of God is highest, and most in outward prosperity, when they have golden times in the world, yet even then are they most apt to be lowest in their graces, and most apt to grow secure and sleepy in the ways of God: In *Song*. 4:16. "*Awake, thou North wind, and come thou South wind, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out, etc.*" Now you know that the north and the south winds are one against another, and yet these two opposites make the fruit of the garden to grow. This north and south wind are compared, and signify the troubles and the prosperity of the Church: the north wind of affliction, and the south wind of prosperity. But it is the north wind, the cold and the sharp persecutions, and fiery trials that make the graces of the Church to grow most. The Church of God was better as to the growth of their graces under the pagan emperors then under *Constantine* the Christian Emperor, because though *Constantine* was a Christian Emperor and it was much for the comfort of the Church, and for the good of religion; yet their security made them run into error and heresy: when their bodies prospered, their souls did not prosper. Whereas when they were under the pagan

emperors, when they were under great and strong persecutions, though their bodies were in trouble, yet their graces did exceedingly prosper. So likewise when popery did so prevail, though the people of God were exposed to great trials, yet their graces did thrive, and grow green and fresh: As *Moulin* saith, men were burnt for reading the Bible; but we, speaking of the *French* protestants, burn with zeal to be reading. But now Bibles are like old almanacs moulding in corners, while play-books the Devil's catechisms are worn out with often perusal.

Thirdly, consider this, that the persecutions and troubles and trials of the Church of God at one time, and in one place, doth but make way for settlement and establishment of God's Church and people in another time, and another place; this should comfort you, *Unius Ecclesiae destructio multarum suit edificatio*, the destruction of one Church is but the building up of many Churches. You may read for this purpose in *Acts* 8:1, of great troubles and persecutions of the Church which was at *Jerusalem*, and they were all scattered abroad: now what fruit was by all the troubles, and by all the persecutions that fell upon the Church of *Jerusalem*? This was the fruit and benefit, it set up a Church in *Samaria*; that persecution caused the Gospel to go into those parts of the world, and *Samaria* received the Gospel, as in verse 4. "*They went abroad everywhere preaching the Gospel.*" Many places which never before heard of the Gospel, came to have it preached in their parts by reason of the hot persecution that was at *Jerusalem*. So likewise some kingdoms of the world. The troubles and persecutions of God's people here by the prelates, it was the great occasion of the transplanting the Gospel into other parts of the world; as into *New-England* and *America*, which places never heard of it before: so the seven *Asian* Churches were destroyed by the pagan persecution; but by the

destroying of them, it was transplanted into *Africa* and all *Europe*, and now since in *America*; so that if God shall let the Church to be persecuted in one place, it still doth gain by all troubles in going into another place; and though it be persecuted in one kingdom, yet it doth by its transplantation settle and gain in another. As Christ speaketh in *Matthew* 21:43. I will take the Gospel from you, and give it to a people and nation that shall bring forth better fruit; that is, Christ would take it from the *Jews*, and give it to the *Gentiles*; and therefore said the Apostle, when they would not receive the Gospel among them, *Lo we turn to the Gentiles*: this is the great wisdom of God that the Churches troubles and persecutions in one place shall by him be an occasion to get good in another.

Fourthly, consider that there are such infallible promises made to the Church of God for its preservation that it shall never be destroyed by all the rage and fury, and persecution, of wicked and ungodly men: *They may be persecuted as the Apostle speaketh, but they cannot be destroyed; they may be cast down but not forsaken; they may be perplexed, but not in despair; the Church may be in sorrow, but they cannot be annihilated.* The Church of God shall never be so persecuted as to be cast off, and utterly forsaken; and destroyed by wicked men; but the Church of God shall continue to the end of the world: therefore you read what Christ speaketh of *Peter*, Thou art "*Peter, and on this rock will I build my Church;*" (that is on Christ) and then observe what follows, "*The gates of hell shall not prevail against it;*" the powers of hell, and the policies of all the devils in hell, shall not prevail against the Church of God: then if hell cannot prevail against the Church, then the earth and men by persecution shall not prevail to pull it down, and to destroy it, and to shake it off from the rock on which it is built. It is reported that in the year 1620, when the wars began in *Germany*, that a

great brass image of the Apostle *Peter* (which had that pretended claim by which *Rome* would hold their keys) fairly embossed upon a roll that hang down upon the image in these words, [*Jews Petrus & super hanc Petram edificabo Ecclesiam, & tibi dabo claves, etc.*] Standing in St. *Peter's* Church at Rome, there was a great massy stone fell upon it, and so shattered it to pieces, that not a letter of all that sentence saving only these three words *Aedificabo Ecclesiam* meant, I will build my Church, which was left fair and entire. God hath not made any promises to any kingdom or nation of the world, nor to any commonwealth that they shall abide and remain forever, but they may be broken, and shall be broken; none can say that they stand so sure, as to say that this monarchy shall stand forever, and this or that commonwealth shall abide forever: yet said God concerning this kingdom of Jesus Christ, mauger the malice of all the Devils in hell, and power and policy of all men on earth it shall stand, and that because it is the Word of God, and the promise of God to preserve his Church and people, That on this rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: therefore be not overmuch troubled for the calamities of the Church.

Fifthly, consider the end and the issues of the Church of God's sufferings: if we should look to the beginning and not to the end of the people of God's sufferings we might be cast down for it; but, do but look to the end of sufferings, and see what the issue will be, and then tell me if thou hast need to be too much cast down. When we see a father and a mother beat their child, the reason is, because they would make him better; so when we see God a beating of his Church by a rod of correction as sweet spices in a mortar, the end of God herein is not to destroy his Church, but to make them to smell the more sweet, and to send forth the more fragrant smell.

God is doing a great work in the world, but God's ends are to make his people to be the more sweet, and to make them as conserves, and preserve them for longer times, and to make them to be more lasting in the world; therefore be not so overmuch troubled at the calamities of the Church. *Non est judicandum de operibus Dei ante quintum actum*, we must not judge of the works of God before the fifth act; that is, before all the work be done. Had we been alive at the first creation, and had seen nothing but a chaos, we could see no beauty; but what will you judge of the world, and of *Adam* at the last when we see all the world in beauty as it is now? And when all was finished and done, what a glorious fabric was there? So if you look to the beginnings of the Churches troubles when they set first into persecutions, you cannot judge of them; but if you look to the Church in the ends of their persecution when their troubles are done, then you may see it full of glory, and full of beauty. In *Jeremiah 31:16*. “*Thus said the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy works shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and they shall come again from the land of the enemy; but there is hope in the end, saith the Lord.*” The beginning is bad for the people of God by reason of troubles and persecution. But the end is good: As the martyrs said when they were going to suffer, come said they, we shall have a bad break-fast, but we shall have a good supper; for our end will be good, and our reward great, for we shall go to Jesus Christ: as *Joseph* said to his brethren, You did intend me hurt, but God did intend me good. So I may say concerning wicked and ungodly men who do persecute the Church of God, you do intend evil against the Church and people of God; but God doth intend his people good; you intend to persecute, and to destroy, and to root out the Church and people of God from under heaven: but God doth intend to preserve, and to keep, and to

continue his Church on the earth (notwithstanding all persecutors) to the end of the world; though wicked men may plow upon your backs, and make long furrows upon you, yet God's ends are grace, and mercy, and peace, to do you good in your latter end. God's ends and wicked men's ends do never fall out alike; for God's ends are one thing, and wicked men's are another. A physician lets a man bleed and taketh blood from him, and the leech sucketh blood from him; but the physicians ends are one thing, and the leeches ends are another: the leech draweth blood from the man only to satisfy itself, but the physician letteth the man bleed to cure his distemper; so it is between God's ends and wicked men's ends in persecuting his own people; God by suffering his own Church and people to be persecuted, it is to purge away their evil distempers of sin and security, or whatever it is that may offend, that thereby God may make his people better by their afflictions: but wicked men, and ungodly men by troubling the Church, it is to destroy them, and root them out, and to satisfy their rage and malice upon them in their ruin, and to accomplish their own wicked designs; but though this be their ends, yet God hath other ends, namely, to do them good in their latter end; and therefore you have no cause to be too much troubled for the calamities of the Church.

Sermon XI

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him—The health of my Countenance, and my God.” Psalm 42:11

If it be so, that Godly men are disquieted for the calamities of God's Church; there are three sorts of men that the arrow of my reproof shall be fastened into.

First, it reproves those that are of a quite contrary temper, that lay nothing of the Churches calamities to heart, let religion sink or swim, the Gospel stand or fall, the Church of God prosper or not, they care for none of these things; these are the infamy of a Church, the brands and blemishes of a Church, that do enjoy Church-privileges, and yet cannot be troubled at the Churches calamities: It is worth your notice, when the Holy Ghost doth reckon up the tribes of *Israel* for their renown, (you have the enumeration of the tribes of *Israel*, *Rev. 7*, from verse 4, to 9. “*And I heard the number*

of them that were sealed: and there were sealed a hundred forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Asher twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Naphtali twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasseh twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zebulun twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand.” Such and such tribes were sealed twelve thousand; mark the enumeration,) and you shall find one tribe left out, and that is the tribe of *Dan*. Divines made much ado about finding out the reason of the Spirit of God's omission of that tribe: the truest account of the omission was in a way of disgrace, first because the tribe of *Dan* make a defection from the true worship of God and ran to idolatry, *Judges 18:30*, “*the children of Dan set up the graven image, etc.*”

Another reason is because the tribe of *Dan* did not lay to heart the calamities of God's Church; when the other tribes were jeopardizing their lives in the highest places of the field, the tribe of *Dan* it is said remained in ships, they would let the rest of the tribes shift for themselves, they would follow their trade, their merchandizing; now divines give that to be the reason because God would put a brand on that tribe; the spirit of God would not reckon that tribe among the other tribes. This is blame-worthy, when the calamities of God's Church shall be hastening towards, and thou leavest that Church and art no way tributary to its help; but like *Dan* remainest in thy ship at thy trade; God hates neuters.

A second sort that deserves reproof are those that are so far from being excessively troubled and disquieted to see things go ill with the Church, that

they do rather rejoice than are grieved and troubled at it. Thus we read of *Haman* that monster among men, *Esther* 3:15. “*Then went up the posts being hastened by the Kings commandment, and the decree was given, etc.*” There while *Esther* and *Mordecai*, and her handmaids, and the poor *Jews*, were fasting, praying and mourning for their lives, in this extremity the poor Church of God was then in, the King and *Haman* must sit down to drink; they would be merry and jovial when God's Church was in great extremity. Now the Scripture puts this as a brand to *Haman* and *Ahasuerus*, “*They sat down to eat and drink, but the city Shushan was perplexed.*” Thus you read of sensual Epicures, *Amos* 6:7. “*Therefore shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed.*”

Now by the afflictions of *Joseph*, is meant here, not the man *Joseph*; but by *Joseph* here, is meant the tribe of *Manasseh*, and the tribe is called *Joseph* because *Manasseh* was the son of *Joseph*: Now the afflictions of *Manasseh* did not trouble the wicked men of the other tribes; the wicked among them were jovial and merry, they were not sensible of God's hand.

Thirdly, a third sort that are so far from being disquieted at the Churches calamities, that they are grieved and disquieted that the Church is in no worse a condition, that are troubled that it is no worse with religion, and no worse with the Church of God; there are many such men now a days, *Psalms* 37:12. “*The wicked plots against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth.*” Gnashing the teeth it is a gesture of revenge, because they cannot have their will in their plots, they gnash their teeth and fume and fret at good ministers; disquieted they are that it is no worse with good men, and no worse with religion: this is vexation of heart to them. A notable text, *Nehemiah* 2:10. “*When Sanballet the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant the*

Ammorite heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly, that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.” See what venom and rage is in these men's hearts that were but mungrel *Jews*; they were exceedingly grieved that there was a man come that should seek the welfare of the children of *Israel*. Many men gnash their teeth, and grieve exceedingly to think that there should be any interest rising up for religion, and for the Church of God; nothing in the world doth more grieve them.

I now come to the third thing for which God's people are often disquieted, and that is for outward afflictions: Outward afflictions are oftentimes a great cause of disquiet and discontent in the people of God, and that is the third grand cause of disquiet.

Now herein when I say afflictions are the great causes of disquiet, I shall distinguish of the outward sufferings of God's people into two sorts. First, there are privative sufferings, that is, some outward good things that the people of God do want, and this greatly troubles them. It may be they are poor and want estates, it may be want friends, it may be sick and want help, and more pinched then other men are, and this greatly disquiets them: Or else secondly, there are some positive evils of sufferings they lie under. I shall speak to the first, that God's people should not be disquieted though they do want outward good things to keep them that they might not be disquieted for outward wants. I will leave six considerations with you.

First, consider, thou mayest be sure thou shalt want no outward thing the having of which God doth see good for thee: If God saw that thing thou wantest should be good for thee to have, thou mayest be sure thou shouldst not want it; art thou poor and wantest a livelihood? Thou mayest be certain God doth see the want of wealth best for thee, *Psalms* 84:11. “*No good thing will he withhold from, etc.*” If it be good for thee; he will withhold nothing

from thee; for that God that doth not grudge to give thee his Son, he will not grudge to give thee a little pelf of the world, if he saw it good for thee.

Secondly, consider, that God doth let his own people want some outward good things, that he might give them better things in the room of them. I will give you but a few instances, in seeing *Job* when he was scraping himself on the dunghill, and condoling the great loss he sustained or wants he was in, you would have thought *Job* to have been a very wretched man: read the catalogue in the first Chapter of *Job*, how God stripped him naked of all his substance, which was “*Seven thousand Sheep, three thousand Camels, five hundred yoke of Oxen, and five hundred she-Asses, and a very great household, and his sons and his daughters slain, and he himself sorely afflicted and troubled in the want of all outward comforts and accommodations that might make his life comfortable in this world;*” now this was an exceeding great loss to him: And yet for all that *Job* wanted and lost, it was made up double to him; *Job* lost a thousand sheep, and God gave him fourteen thousand sheep; he lost of his camels three thousand, and God gave him six thousand camels; he lost five hundred yoke of oxen, and God gave him a thousand yoke of oxen; God gave him double of his substance, but not children double, but for outward things God gave him double for what he lost: If God doth take away a mercy from a man, take away an estate, God may make it double to that man before he dies. Thus beloved, doth God do us wrong? Surely no. Thus we see it in *David*, when likely to lose his son begotten of *Bathsheba*, he was a sad man for the loss of his son; but God gave him a better mercy in the room of that bastard, God gave him a *Solomon*, that was a greater mercy to give him *Solomon* in the room of an illegitimate child. *Psalm* 171, v. 21. “*Thou hast showed me great and sore troubles, but thou shalt bring me again, etc.*” As *David*

telleth you here, thou wilt increase my greatness; he means, the troubles under *Saul. David* that was to be a king on the throne, was to lie like a hermit in a cave; but though thou hast brought me to great and sore troubles, it is but to increase my greatness in a way of mercy. O then if God doth let thee come to great wants of any outward mercies thou standest in need of, think that God doth let it be thus so that thou mightest have greater mercies in the room of them; this consideration did greatly quiet the heart of *Isaac*: You read of the death of *Sarah* that was his mother, you read that God gave to him to wife *Rebecca*, and he loved *Rebecca* and was comforted after his mother's death: *Isaac* had his mother taken from him, but he had a wife of God's giving to him in the room of his mother. If God doth let thee want a mother, want thy children, want thy estate, why God will bring in some other mercy to comfort thee in the want and absence of them; let this allay all disquiet and discontent of heart in thee.

Thirdly, consider, that though thou dost want outward mercies that are desirable, yet thou dost not want better mercies, to wit, spiritual mercies; thou wantest crumbs, yet thou dost not want a Christ; thou wantest food it may be for thy belly, thou dost not feed on such dainties and delicates as many Epicures of the world do, yet thou mayest feed by faith on Jesus Christ the bread of life; it may be thou hast not such sumptuous apparel as some men have, yet thou dost not want the long robe of Christ's righteousness; thou wantest an inheritance in this world, but thou dost not want an inheritance among them that are sanctified in the world to come; it may be thou wantest health, but thou hast a healthy soul, thy soul prospers as *John* said to *Gaius*, 3 John 3. You read in *Pro. 14:14*. "*The back-sliders in heart shall be filled with their own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.*" It may be from without, nothing can content thee;

thou dost take pains in the world, thou dost rise early, eat the bread of carefulness, yet canst not get enough to feed thy belly and clothe thy back yet if thou be a gracious man, reflect thus on thyself, Though I want these outward things, yet blessed be God he is my portion; though I have no portion in this life, I am heir to the kingdom of heaven though I am not heir to one foot of land; this would allay these disquiets that might arise in your minds.

Fourthly, consider, that if God should give thee these outward good things thou wantest, the giving of them would be a great snare and a curse to thee then the want of them would be: it may be thou wantest wealth, it may be thou hast a barren womb and wantest issue; if God should give thee the mercy thou wantest, the giving of it would be a greater snare to thee than the want of it. Two or three plain instances; the one is of a woman, *Rachel*, *Genesis 30:5*, who was exceeding impatient for the want of children, “*Give me children or else I die.*” This passionate desire of hers, God did gratify; but mark how God did punish her for it, she must die in childbed: her soul departed from her when she was in labor, *Genesis 35:18*. “*And it came to pass that as her soul was departing that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin.*” Her children were the instruments of death to kill her; her child was *Benoni*, was the son of her sorrows. Beloved, it should teach you to take heed of being passionately discontented and disquieted when you want a mercy. Another instance you read in *David*, he was passionately eager for the life of the child begotten by *Bathsheba*, and he wept, mourned and tasted that the child might not die: now if the child had lived, the life of that child had been a greater snare to *David* than the death of it could be; for it would have been a lasting monument of *David's* shame, for everyone could have pointed and said, yonder goeth *David's*

bastard: we see even harlots account uncleanness a reproach, and commit a greater wickedness to murder their children because they would not have their wickedness known. Thus in the case of *Absalom*, he rose in rebellion against his father, and drew away by his courteous carriage, and crying up the people's liberty; by which means he had almost took the kingdom from his father: they rose in arms one against another; but saith *David*, "*Deal gently with my son Absalom.*" But if *David* had had his request that *Absalom* should not have been killed, why *Absalom* would have been a continual enemy to his father, for he had almost thrown him out of his throne; it was a greater mercy to *David* that *Absalom* was killed, then if he had lived. Herein see the wisdom of God that the having of a mercy might not become a snare to us; therefore God doth deny us it.

The children of *Israel* could not be contented with manna that was called angels food for commendation, they loathed the manna, and they must have quails from heaven; but it had been a thousand times better for them to have wanted it; "*For whilst the meat was in their mouths the wrath of God went down with it;*" that which they thought the want of to be their misery, God made the having of to be their misery.

Fifthly, lay in thy scales thy mercies, and thy afflictions, and thy wants, and see whether thy receipts be not more than thy wants. Suppose thou wantest a thousand things, yet thou hast one thing that is of more worth then all the things thou wantest; and that is thy life: if thou shouldest want thy skin and be flayed, and have thy life, it is a greater mercy to thee though God should strip thee of thy skin; yet thou hast possessed more mercies than thou hast afflictions that thou art on this side hell and the grave. O beloved, dost thou want any mercy? Why think thy receipts are more than thy wants, and that will in some measure quiet thy discontents.

Lastly, if thou wouldst allay disquiet of mind for thy wants, then labor to make up all thy wants and losses in God: consider that the having of one God is enough to make up all thy wants that thou hast in the world. Thus the Church of God did, *Psalm 73:26*. “*My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart.*” He was likely to want a kingdom, but he did not want God; God was his portion, and that comforted him. O look on this, the interest in one God makes a compensation for a hundred wants; you have a notable passage in *Psalm 142*, ver. 6:7. “*Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low, deliver me from my persecutors: for they are stronger then I. Bring my soul out of trouble, that I may praise thy Name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.*” As if he should have said, I have no friends, I have no strength, but am full of troubles, I cried unto God and said, thou art my portion; this should allay a thousand discontents in thee, if thy soul can plead an interest in God, though thou wantest all: It was no wonder for *Esau* to say when *Jacob* would have given him an offering, saith *Esau* I have enough; but *Jacob* could say I have all; for he made all things up in his God: he hath all things that hath God that hath all things; Dost thou want health? There is health in God; dost thou want wealth? There is riches in God; dost thou want satisfaction? There is abundance of contentation in God; there is all things in God.

And thus I have done with the first part to allay disquietings of soul for all privative afflictions; that is, for the want of outward good things in the World.

I now come to give you some considerations to allay all positive discontent and disquiet; which are five.

First of all to allay disquiet for worldly crosses in the world, Consider, there is nothing befalls thee, no cross nor disaster in all thy life time but it is the will of a good and wise gracious God that that cross should befall thee; if this were thought on and laid to heart, it would allay all bubblings of discontent. *Psalm 39:9*. "I was dumb and opened not my mouth because thou didst it." *1 Sam. 3:18*. "*And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing. And he said, It is the Lord: Let him do what seemeth good unto him.*" Instead of all reasons it is the Lord. Beloved, it will exasperate and provoke to passion to look only on instruments; but if thou seest it is the will of God, it will allay discontents: Observe one thing; you shall find a strange and different carriage in *David*; one while you shall find him a quiet-spirited man, he could bear any injury without any disquiet at all, another time you see him in a marvelous fury that he could not bear a small injury. What was the reason that *David* was so passionate for *Nabal's* injury, and so patient for *Shimei's* cursing? In *Shimei's* cursing he called to mind God's hand in it; therefore that allayed and quieted him. And this did allay discontents in *Job*, "*The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not.*" The messenger told *Job*, The *Sabaeans* have stolen thy oxen, and the *Chaldeans* have taken thy camels, and the Devil hath consumed thy Children; but *Job* saith, the Lord hath taken them away, the Lord gave me them, and the Lord took them away; therefore "*blessed be the Name of the Lord.*" *Gen. 45:5*. "*Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that you sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life.*" When *Joseph* did discover himself to his brethren that had done him wrong, I am *Joseph* that you sold to the *Ishmalites*, I am he; and when his brethren heard this, they were all troubled and amazed; but saith *Joseph*, be not troubled, for it was not you

but it was God brought me here: he saw God's hand in it, therefore was not angry with them. O beloved, if you saw all afflictions as stones in God's hand, you would never snarl, nor never be disquieted, nor never be troubled: but you see the stone in a man's hand, therefore you are troubled.

Secondly, to allay disquietings in thee, consider, that through the course of thy life thou hast had as many if not more mercies from God then thou hast had afflictions from God; let that quiet thee: This did quiet *Job*, chap. 2, v. 10. "*But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women: shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*" *Eccles.* 7:14. "*In the day of prosperity be joyful, but in the day of adversity consider: for God hath set one against the other.*" Suppose thou be in adversity, hath not God set prosperity over against it? Cannot I call to mind mercies as well as afflictions? It may be I have many crosses in the world, why I have many mercies in the world too; this would allay disquiet, but here is the misery of it, we look upon our afflictions, but never look on our mercies; we remember the wormwood and the gall, but never remember the milk and the honey. Consider, thy mercies they will over-balance, and weigh down thy afflictions.

Thirdly, consider, that afflictions that befall thee in this world, they are never without cause, and never above cause, never without a cause; God might afflict any of us as an act of his sovereignty. But beloved, God doth not afflict any man in the world but there is a provocation, a cause in man why he afflicts him, *Lam.* 3:39. "*Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?*" Beloved, couldst thou stand on terms with God, and say I am just before thee, I have not sinned against thee, it were something: but thou art a sinner before God, and God never afflicts thee but there is cause for it, it should stop all complaints and repinings

against God. Again, it is never above cause neither, not so much as the causes which thy sins deserves here; we may justify God as *Ezra* doth, chap. 9:13. “*And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespasses, seeing that thou art our God, thou hast punished us less then our sins deserve:*” And in *Psalm* 103, v. 10. “*He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*”

Fourthly, consider, that impatiency and disquiet of soul under sufferings and afflictions provokes God to afflict us more; when a child is corrected by the father, if the child kisseth the rod, accepts the punishment, acknowledgeth the fault, he hath the less blows because the father seeth the end of his correction; but it is the stout and stubborn-hearted child which hath most blows from the fathers hands: but if God shall hear and see men fret and fume under a cross, this doth not lighten your burdens, but rather makes them heavier, and lengthens them out longer in time, and makes them heavier in weight, and our bands stronger.

Fifthly, consider, that discontent and disquiet of soul under outward crosses and afflictions, it doth embitter to thee the enjoyment of your present mercies: an impatient man that is apt to be impatient for one cross, he loseth the enjoyment of a hundred comforts: an impatient man may have a good wife, amiable children, a rich estate; but if this man be apt to be impatient under one cross, it makes him he can take no comfort in anything in the world he hath; what a mischievous temper is this, the impatiency of one cross shall eat out the comforts of a hundred mercies. An impatient and disquieted spirited man he may fitly be compared to a hedgehog, and some writers make the hedgehog an emblem of an impatient man: now the hedgehog, they say, it is of this prosperity, that the way she hath to bring provision into her hole, is to go after a windy day into an orchard when the

fruit is fallen, and turns itself round like a ball, and on its bristles and prickles fills itself full of apples, and carries them to her hole: but if in the carrying of them to the hole one doth but fall off, she throws all the rest down. So an impatient man God may load him with many mercies, heavy laden with mercies; yet if God doth but take away one blessing from him, he throws down the comfort of all the rest of the mercies the Lord bestows on him: this is the mischievous effect of those disquiets of soul under outward crosses.

Sermon XII

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him—The health of my Countenance, and my God.” Psalm 42:11

I am now to finish this third cause of disquiet.

There are two things by way of application.

The first use shall be by way of instruction.

The second by way of trial.

By way of instruction, it shall be to instruct you in several theological rules that may be laid down to allay all excessive disquiet and discontent of soul under outward afflictions of whatever kind they be, whether privative or positive.

I shall lay down ten rules.

First rule is, live in the continual meditation of the joys and glories of heaven. It is observable of *Paul*, though his life was a whole course of

affliction, yet when he was taken up into the third heaven, “*but whether I was in the body I cannot tell,*” *Paul* tells you he had many infirmities in his body, in hunger and nakedness, in perils by sea and land, and great troubles in the body; yet when he was taken up in a vision, he forgot all the infirmities, sufferings, and sorrows that he met withal in the body, *2 Cor.* 12:1. So likewise when *Peter* saw the transfiguration of Christ, *Mat.* 17:4. “*Then answered Peter, Lord, it is good to be here, and build three Tabernacles.*” A divine observes, *Peter* begged no tabernacle for himself, but said it was good to be there; and yet only upon a barren mountain where there was no meat to eat nor house to lodge in: why he forgot that there was no house here, nor no food here; having a view of heaven, he said it was good to be here on a barren mountain. It is observed by one touching those birds of the lowest flight, they are the most mournful; but those birds of the highest flight, are the most noble birds: the dove mourns, the crane chatters, the raven croaks; but the eagle never makes a lamentable noise which is a bird of the highest flight; divines make this use of it, that those that are low-spirited men, they will croak like ravens, and mourn like doves when they are afflicted; but to be as the eagle flying aloft in the joys of heaven in your meditations, this will keep you from that despondency and that mournfulness of spirit: If things go ill with you in the world, there is no better way under heaven to be gotten to allay disquiet of soul under bodily afflictions then to have thy soul transported with the joys of heaven. It was the counsel of *Jerome* which he gave to a hermit, *Paradisum mente deambula, & tamdiu in Eremo non eris*, take but a walk or two in heaven, and then thou wilt not think thou art in a wilderness: could you but take a turn or two in heaven, then you would not be troubled for the afflictions here upon earth. The Apostle hath an expression in *2 Cor.* 4:17. “*For our*

light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” The weight of glory made the Apostle to look on heavy afflictions to be but light; therefore he called them light afflictions: An eternal glory made the Apostle look on long afflictions to be but short afflictions. If you would not then account afflictions burdensome, think what a weight there is in glory; and if you would not think afflictions long, why think what eternity there is in glory.

A second rule is this; if you would not be inordinately disquieted for afflictions in the world, labor to get your hearts more troubled and disquieted for sin: when a man bleeds too much at nose or any one part of the body, physicians open a vein in another part to make a diversion of the blood. Beloved, when you grieve too much for worldly crosses, do as physicians do with the blood, make a diversion; make a diversion of your sorrows, open the sluices of your tears for sin, pour them out for sin, and then you will grieve less for the world; that is the reason men are troubled too much for afflictions, because they are troubled too little for sin and corruption. It is a true rule, religious fear, it doth banish out a slavish fear, and spiritual joy, eternal joy; so spiritual trouble expels worldly trouble: they that are much troubled for sin, are not much troubled for anything in the world besides sin.

Thirdly, be sure you do not place an excessive love on any comforts in the world you do enjoy: if you would keep your trouble but regular, keep your love but ordinate. It is observable what we read of *Jacob, Genesis 37:34-35*. *“And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons, and all his daughters rose up to comfort him: but he refused to be comforted; and he said, I will go down into the grave unto my son, mourning.”* What was the reason that the good

old man was so excessively grieved for his son? Verse 3. It is said, “*That Israel he loved Joseph more then all his brethren, because he was the son of his old age.*” Now *Jacob* loving *Joseph* more then all his children, made him grieve more for *Joseph* then all his children; if he had not loved *Joseph* too much when he had him, he had not grieved too much for him when he thought he had lost him. O labor to keep an ordinate love to worldly comforts. A man that can part with the pairing of his nail cannot part with his finger, why? Because he looks on the nail as superfluity; could you look on the world as the pairing of the nail, it is but a superfluity; you can go to heaven without the abundant comforts of it; you would not grieve so much if God doth take away some comforts from you. Men do use the world as the skin to their hands and not as gloves that they can easily pull off; therefore when God tears it from them, it is irksome and tedious to them. As it is with a picture, if a picture be in a frame you may hang it on a wall, and take it down again, and not hurt the picture; but if it be pasted to the wall, you cannot take it down but it you will tear the picture. If your hearts be in frame, God may take you from the world and not disquiet you; but if you be glued to the world, and pasted to the world, why it will cause an inordinate disquiet in you when the world is taken from you.

Fourthly, look on the comforts of the world as unnecessaries, and at best as uncertainties. *Luke 10:42.* “*One thing is needful.*” Christ tells you, that that one thing grace, is the only thing necessary: grace is necessary for a Christian, other things are but inconveniences. If God takes away inconveniences from you, and doth not take away necessaries from you, leaves you grace, leaves you Christ, and leaves you heaven; why, you should not be disquieted; you must look on the comforts of this world as mutable; not as the anchor at the bottom of the sea, but as the vane on the

top of the mast of a ship which turns with every blast of wind. *Socrates* did not mourn when his child was dead, *Scio me genuisse mortalem*, I know he was mortal. That is the reason men are troubled for worldly crosses and losses, because they do not look on the world as mutable.

A fifth rule is this, consider with yourselves that disquiet under afflictions, it can do you no good, but it may do you much hurt; it can do you no good, as Christ tells you, thou canst not add one cubit to thy stature; by all thy thoughts, thou addest no comfort to thy life; by all thy troubles, they do not ease thee, but rather makes thy affliction more heavy; thou mayest get much hurt by disquiet: and beloved, the hurt of disquiet under afflictions, is twofold.

First, it makes afflictions heavier, and

Secondly, it makes them longer for time then they would be.

First, it makes them heavier for weight, and more for number then else they would be. A child that is patient under his father's correction, hath the fewest and gentlest strokes, but the stubborn child hath most. When God seeth men fume and fret, and disquieted under afflictions, they do cause more blows to themselves. In *Pro. 27:3*. "*A stone is heavier, and the sand weighty; but a fools wrath is heavier then them both.*" It is not meant wrath only to another man, that a man shall fear my anger and wrath when I am passionate; but the meaning is, that it is heavy to himself: afflictions shall be laid more heavy on him then a heap of stones or sand; a bundle of folly causeth a bundle of rods. A man under a burden, if he goeth gently, he may carry his burden with some ease; but the more the man doth stir and struggle under his burden, the more he tires himself. When God lays burdens on us, we strive, fume and fret, and are impatient; this doth make the burden heavier.

Secondly, we make our afflictions longer for time by our being disquieted under them; the father is longer whipping of the child that he cannot make to kiss the rod, and confess the fault, then another child. Beloved, we lengthen out the day of our calamity by impatience and disquiet under the afflicting hand of God.

The sixth rule is this, compare the present mercies you enjoy with the present sufferings you endure. *Eccles. 7:14. "In the day of prosperity be joyful; but in the day of adversity consider."* When thou art prosperous, think thus. God hath set adversity over against prosperity that I might not be sensual, then in adversity be not discouraged, because God hath set prosperity over against adversity; it may be thou hast lost one child, hast thou not another? It may be thou hast lost thine estate, hast not thou health in body, comfort in thy relations? Thus upon any cross in the world that befalls thee, presently reflect upon thy mercies.

The seventh rule is this, see God's hand in all the afflictions that befall you in this world. *Psalms 39:9. "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth because thou didst it."* Remember God's ear will hear all the murmurings of thy tongue, and thou wilt not complain in thy disquiet against God, this is an effectual remedy: see God's hand in all that befalls you here in the world.

The eighth rule is this, if you would not be disquieted because of afflictions, do nothing that may renew your grief or call to remembrance your afflictions; there are many people that do aggravate their own sorrow, and cause their wound to bleed afresh, putting themselves in mind of their own crosses and losses. It is observable of *Rachel* and *Jacob*; it is said of *Rachel*, *Genesis 35:17-18. "That when she was in hard labor, the midwife said unto her, Fear not: thou shall have this son also. And it came to pass as her soul was in departing that she called his name Benoni, the sort of my*

sorrow.” But observe *Jacob* he would not have the child called *Benoni*, but he would have his name *Benjamin*, the son of my righthand, and of my joy, and of my strength: why would not *Jacob* have it *Benoni*? If he had the child's name would have put him in remembrance that his wife died in childbed; therefore from the mother's naming of him *Benoni*, the son of my sorrow, *Jacob* called him *Benjamin* the son of my righthand; therefore it is fondness in those that look on the pictures of dead friends, and on the clothes of dead friends; all these are but the provocations to more sorrows and more griefs.

Ninthly, consider the end that God aims at why you are afflicted as well as the measure, and the degree how much you are afflicted; this is the great ground of impatency, that people do consider the measure how much, and the time how long they are afflicted, but they do not call to mind why they are afflicted: I may exemplify this rule by this. A physician and an enemy may do the same act to a man; yet you know a man will bear with a physician to let him bleed, but he will not endure an enemy to let him bleed; the reason is this, because he knoweth the physicians end is to cure him, but the enemy doth it to kill him; yet both let bleed. Why beloved, dost thou consider that God's end to thy soul in sending afflictions upon thee, is to cure thee, to purge thee of sinful maladies in thy soul? Why let the end countervail the measure; the how much, and the time how long thou art afflicted, and this will allay all unquietness, and inordinate trouble in thy mind.

Tenthly and lastly, consider that God in his wisdom will proportion all afflictions that befall thee in this world according to thy strength that thou art able to bear them. 1 *Cor.* 10:13. “*There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: But God is faithful who will not suffer you to*

be tempted above what you are able.” If the Lord lays heavy burdens on thee, he will give thee strong shoulders. *Seneca* saith, *Si gravis brevis, si longa levis*, if afflictions be heavy they shall be short, but if afflictions be long they shall be light; heavy afflictions they shall be short afflictions, and long afflictions shall be light afflictions, God will proportion them, *Job* 14:1. “*Man that is born of a woman, is but of few days, and full of trouble:*” troublesome days are made short days. Why now if they be full of trouble they are but few; how sad would it be of perpetuity and misery, a multitude of troubles and a multitude of days met. God will proportion thy afflictions according to thy strength; *Isa.* 28:27. “*For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin, but the fitches beaten with a staff and the cummin with rod.*” The meaning is, that God will not exercise weak people with great afflictions, there shall be afflictions proportionable to their strength, this God hath promised, *Isa.* 27:8. “*In measure when it shooteth forth, thou will debate with it: he stayeth his rough winds in the day of his East wind.*” If men be not able to bear a boisterous storm, he will stay his rough wind, he will abate the measure of his afflictions; let this quiet thy soul, that God doth proportion all his dealings with thee, according to thy strength: thus you have laid down ten rules how to bear afflictions without inordinate disquiet of soul.

Qu. *But since we must not be stocks to be insensible of God's afflicting hand: and seeing some kind of trouble, and sorrow for afflictions is allowed by God; How shall we know whether we be inordinately disquiet for outward afflictions.*

Answer. First, when outward afflictions doth swallow up the comforts and enjoyments of present mercies, then you are excessive; thus we see in *Ahab*,

Ahab had a flourishing kingdom and stately palaces, yet could take no comfort in them all, because he could not get poor *Naboth's* vineyard from him; that argued too much disquiet in him. And thus we read of *Rebecca*, *Genesis 27:46*. “*And Rebecca said to Isaac, I am weary of my life, because of the daughters of Heth.*” A very impatient speech, that when a present affliction shall make thee say, I have no joy in my life; as many people when they are once crossed of their wills, will say they, I have no joy in my life; though they have many mercies; such speeches as these, are but the issues of disquiet; let not one cross make thee flee off from all thy comforts in the world. Thus we read of *Jacob* likewise, he was too much disquieted in that one loss, which made him he could not take joy in all his comfort, in all his mercies. Read the story, in *Genesis 37:35*. “*And all his sons and his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he would not be comforted.*” *Jacob* had eleven sons living that he knew, and many daughters, and all came about him to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. Why beloved, men are so over-born, and over-whelmed with troubles upon a cross, that if they lose one child, all the other children shall not affect them; certainly this kind of sorrow is an excessive sorrow.

Secondly, then disquiet of soul for worldly afflictions are inordinate, when afflictions in the world doth so disquiet a man's mind that it makes a man weary of life, and makes him wish for death merely because of afflictions. This was the failing of *Jonah* chap. 4, v. 8. “*It is better for me to die than to live,*” because God took away the gourd. The like you read of in *Job*, chap. 7:15. “*So that my soul chooseth strangling; and death rather than life.*”

Job was in a distemper and he wished death rather than life; this was a sin in him: for afflictions so to disquiet a man's mind that to wish, would to God I were out of the world, all these are but the flowings and impatience

of a disturbed heart. And so again, chap. 10, v. 1. "*My soul is weary of my life, I will leave my complaint upon myself; this was his trouble.*" You that have drank deep of a bitter cup, either by crosses in children or in estates, or reproach in your names, and all this makes you inordinate, and crieth out, I am weary of my life; you are sinfully disquieted: You have a passage in *Isa. 32:2*. "*And a man shall be as a hiding place from the wind; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land:*" Speaking of Christ, the land cannot be weary; but it refers to the inhabitants of the land; here is a rock, a weary land; the inhabitants of the land were weary to live in the land, because they were so scorched with the heat of afflictions: when affliction shall oppress so hard upon you that it shall make you unwilling to live; this argues that disquiet of soul is very inordinate.

Thirdly, when a man is disquieted for afflictions that lie upon him, yet he is no whit troubled for all the afflictions that befall the Church of God, and never lays them near his heart; when disquiet for personal sufferings shall justle out all compassion for the sufferings of God's Church; this argues thy trouble is excessive.

Fourthly, when a man is disquieted for outward afflictions that it doth indispose a man to duty, then a man is too much disquieted. Thus in *Exodus* chap. 6:9. The poor *Israelites* they were so in anguish and trouble, because they were held such vassals in *Egypt*, that it is said, they could not hearken to God's word because of the grief and anguish of their spirits. When afflictions make you unfit to hear sermons, and make you unfit to pray, as in *Psalms 77:3*. "*I remembered God, and I was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed;*" This is a sinful disquiet.

Fifthly, disquiet under afflictions is then inordinate, when a man dares venter on any sinful shifts or means to get rid of his afflictions. Suppose

thou be poor, and darest venture on cozenage and deceit to get an estate; suppose thou be in a low place, and thou darest sin against conscience to get a place of preferment here in this world; this is sinful disquiet. Thus we read of *Saul*, an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him: the *Philistines* were upon him, he was in distress in his spirit. 1 *Samuel* 28:7-8. “*And Saul said unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may inquire of her. And his servants said unto him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor, etc.*” What doth he do in his afflictions? Why he goeth to a witch, and useth sinful means, and all to try what he might do to prevent the prevailing of the *Philistines* over him. O thou that darest venture on any sinful shift to avoid any affliction, why this is an argument that thou art inordinately disquieted under afflictions.

Lastly, a man is then excessively disquieted under afflictions when he is so troubled for bodily afflictions, that he doth distemper his own body. You shall read this of *Job*, he was so “*troubled that his spirits were dried up, and his bones they were consumed, and his strength was wasted.*” And thus you read in the 38. *Psalms* of David, “*Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thine hand presseth me sore.*” What follows? “*There is no soundness in my flesh.*” Here the Psalmist did so grieve for God's hand upon him, as to weaken his own body, and consume his strength; this then is an argument that sorrow is too inordinate when disquiet and trouble of mind for afflictions doth distemper the body. Thus I have done with the third cause of soul-disquieting; that is, for outward afflictions.

Sermon XIII

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him—The health of my Countenance, and my God.” Psalm 42:11

I am on the second part of *David's* trouble. In general I showed you what are these causes, for which the souls of God's people are troubled and disquieted. 1. For the prosperity of the wicked. 2. For the calamities of the Church. 3. For the want of the assurance of God's love. 4. For the personal afflictions of the body. I now come to the fourth.

Fourthly, godly men are disquieted in their souls, because of guilt of sin on the conscience; the guilt and the power of sin on the conscience, of all things in the world doth trouble the soul of a godly man. For the handling of this particular, there are several particulars to be considered.

First, I shall show you how it appears God's people are disquieted in conscience for sin.

Secondly, in what seasons and cases the people of God may be most troubled and cast down for sin.

Thirdly, the difference between that sorrow and disquietness of soul of those that are godly, and the disquietness of soul of those that are ungodly and reprobate men.

Fourthly, how it comes to pass they are so much disquieted for sins.

Fifthly, when may God's people be said to be too much disquieted for sin?

Sixthly, if the godly be disquieted so much, what is the reason the wicked are not disquieted at all?

First, how it doth appear that the souls of God's people are apt to be disquiet in their souls under the guilt of sin. And first I shall instance it in *David, Psalm 38:3*. "*There is no peace in my bones by reason of my sins;*" that is, I am exceeding troubled. *Psalm 6:2*. "*Have mercy on me, for my bones are vexed.*" Now the Scripture by a trouble in his bones, means an exceeding great measure of trouble; that is, I am in so great and sore troubles, that it doth even vex my soul and trouble my body. So likewise again, in *Lam. 1:13*. "*From above he hath sent fire into my bones, etc.*" Now when a man is in so great trouble of spirit, and so afflicted in body, by reason of sin, that there is no quietness in his bones, when he is in so great affliction for sin to disturb soul and body; this is immoderate sorrow, and too much disquietness. So the Psalmist cries out, in *Psalm 51:8*. "*Make me to hear the voice of joy and gladness, that so the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice;*" that is as if he said, I have lost by reason of my sin, the light of thy face, and I have broken my peace. Now let the light of thy countenance come into my soul, and let the peace of conscience come to my soul which I have lost, let this come to me again. So again, the Psalmist saith, "*I go mourning all the day, by reason of my sin; and I am sorely*

troubled; for I roar, because of the troubles of my heart,” *Psalm 38:6, 8.* So again, in *Psalm 77:3.* “*When I remembered God, I was troubled: I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Thou holdest mine eyes waking: I am so troubled that I cannot speak.*” So in *Psalm 88:3.* It is spoken of *Heman,* “*My soul is full of troubles, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave.*” And in verse 7 “*Thy wrath lieth hard upon me: thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.*” And so in verse 16. “*Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off.*” See how this man doth multiply his complaints, by reason of his sore troubles, and his great afflictions that lay upon his body and spirit. So likewise you read of *Job's* troubles, how he was sorely disquieted by reason of his personal troubles. *Job 23.* “*Job was troubled, and afraid of God, and his presence was terrible to him:*” And he complaineth, “*that the Almighty troubled him.*” All which doth make it to appear, that the people of God are apt to be disquieted for their troubles and sins.

Secondly, in what seasons is it that the people of God are most apt to be troubled and disquieted for sin. A man is not always disquieted and troubled for the guilt of sin, but there are some special seasons; wherein God doth let their consciences to be more troubled and disquieted for sin then ordinary.

Now there are seven special seasons wherein conscience is most troubled and disquieted for sin.

First case is, upon the consideration of the threatening and denunciation of some great judgment. The apprehending of some great judgment doth bring the guilt of sin to remembrance, and then conscience is sorely troubled. And thus we read of wicked men that they are troubled in conscience, in *1 Kings 21:27-28* when it was told *Ahab* that he should be destroyed, then guilt of sin came to mind, and conscience was troubled, and

his mind perplexed; *“and then he went and humbled himself. And it came to pass when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. When he heard of the denunciation of judgment threatened by the Prophet, then he went and humbled himself before the Lord.”* So likewise *Jehoshaphat* and *Hezekiah's* hearts and consciences were troubled at such a time as this was.

Secondly, a second case is, when the Lord doth lay them under some great affliction; when it is not nigh them, but when it is already upon them. An instance you have of *Manasseh*, *2 Chron. 33:10-12*. *“And the Lord spake to Manasseh and to his people: but they would not answer nor hearken. Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the Captains of the Host, which were the Kings of Assyria, and took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with chains, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, then he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the Lord God of his fathers.”* When *Manasseh* was in his prosperity, then God called to him, and he hearkened not: but when the Lord brought him into the thorns, into troubles and afflictions, when he was in captivity, then he besought the Lord, and then he be thought himself and sought God. So likewise you read of *Joseph's* brethren, they did endeavor for to destroy their brother; and for this sin all the time of their prosperity their consciences did never trouble them, and did never check them for it; I, but when they went down into *Egypt* for corn, and were put in prison, then they remembered their sin concerning their brother, and then they did begin to say, (conscience being in perplexity and trouble) *“That verily we are guilty of our brothers blood,” Gen. 42:21*. So likewise it may be some men may live seven, or ten, or twenty years under the guilt of sin, and not repent of it: but when they come to lie under some great affliction, and under some sore

trouble, then conscience is awakened, and they exceedingly troubled for sin; and now this is the season that God taketh for to trouble the soul and conscience for sin. So you read in *Judges 1:7*, of *Adoni-bezek*, what cruelty he did use to threescore and ten kings in cutting off their thumbs; now this did not trouble his conscience in his prosperity; but when he was in trouble and taken captive, then he remembered his sin, and then he could say, as I have done, so God hath requited me.

The third season is in that time when a man is under a reprovng and sin-searching ministry, and hath his particular sins reprov'd in the ministry of the Word; that is a time when God doth trouble the conscience for sin against God. When a man shall come to a sermon, and there let the Word take hold of him, and meet with his beloved sin, this is a time when God doth stir up conscience to trouble the soul; And thus you read of the unconverted Gentiles, in *1 Cor. 14:25*, of one that may come into the Church, and hear the Word, and after he is come in, "*he falling down on his face, will worship God, and the secrets of his heart shall be made known;*" that is, he shall confess his faults and acknowledge his guilt. So likewise you read in the *Acts* of the Apostles, of *Paul* when he was preaching of temperance, and righteousness, and judgment to come, *Felix* trembled; it seems *Felix* his sin was intemperance, and drunkenness, and unrighteousness; now by the ministry of the Word *Paul* he touched his sin, that sin he met withal which he was most guilty of, and made his heart to tremble. So likewise when *Peter* preached the Gospel to the *Jews*, and told them that they were the men that did crucify the Lord of life; you read what follows in *Acts 2:37*. "*And when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts,*" (or cut to their hearts) this was a fit season for conscience to work. and tell them that they were guilty of such a sin.

A fourth season is, when God doth awaken conscience to rebuke and to check them for some great and indulged and bosom sin, which it may be he hath indulged and let lie in his heart for many years together unrepented of: now whenever God comes to awaken this man's conscience, this is the nick of time when he will be most apt to be disquieted for sin. You read in *Judges* 16:10. *Delilah* told *Samson* the *Philistines* are upon him; he lay asleep in *Delilah's* lap, and he lost his strength, God was departed from him. So when thou art lulled asleep, and enticed to yield to a sin, and allow thyself in some known lust; when thou art secure and asleep in this pleasant sin, time will come, as *Delilah* told *Samson*, the *Philistines* are upon thee; so conscience will tell thee, Arise O man, for the Devil is upon thee, and hell is near thee, and destruction approacheth thee; and thus conscience will terrify thee, and disquiet thee for the sin thou hast committed. As *Eliphaz* said to *Job*, chap. 22:9-10. "*Thou hast sent widows away empty, etc. Therefore snares are round about thee, and sudden fear troubleth thee.*" It was true in the doctrine, though false in the application to *Job*.

A fifth season is, when a man for fear of loss, and in hopes of any gain shall be drawn to do anything against the dictates of his own conscience: now if men do belong to God, he will disquiet them for this great evil; We have many instances for this. It is observable of *Bilney* in King *Henry* the eight's days, being condemned to die, to save his life, he did subscribe to popish articles: but the story relateth, that for that sin he was troubled in conscience two years together, and never did enjoy one comfortable merry day in peace and quietness, until he renounced his subscription, and preached the truth, and was burnt. So likewise Dr. *Cranmer*, he through fear to save his life, subscribed to a recantation; but he did soon break his promise, and recanted of what he had formerly done, and could never be

quiet in his conscience, until he had made a recantation for his recantation; and when he came to suffer, he did first burn that hand which did for fear subscribe to save his life against his conscience. So *Baynham* a lawyer, subscribed to popish articles, but had no peace in his conscience, til he owned the truth. (O beloved) take heed that you do not do anything to engage to anything, to subscribe in any case against thy conscience to save thy life or estate.

Sixthly, a sixth season, when a man shall fall from the true principles of religion to apostatize to any evil way, and conscience shall trouble and rebuke him for his backsliding, *Pro. 14:14.* “*The back-slider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: but a good man shall be satisfied from himself.*” As a good man shall be satisfied within, with peace of conscience and quietness of mind by his upright-walking; so on the contrary, the backslider shall be filled with trouble of conscience and disquietness of soul for the evil of his ways. Likewise in *Jeremiah 2:19.* “*Thy own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; know therefore and consider, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast departed from the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord of Hosts.*”

The back-slider, and the sin of backsliding of all sins shall rebuke the sinner, and trouble his conscience, and break his peace, and disquiet his soul; and if God ever bring thee back, he will make conscience to be like a mastiff dog to fly in thy face for thy backsliding from God; and conscience shall tell thee what thou hast done in thy wicked departure from God, and then thy own conscience will be worse than the snarling of a dog to thee; then shall conscience use this season to tell thee of thy sins against God.

Seventhly, a seventh season is this, when a man comes to lie on a sick bed or on his death bed, that is the last season that God taketh to rouse the

sleepy sinner, and to let conscience awake, and disquiet him for the sin he hath done. It may be you can be living drunkards and living adulterers, and not be troubled; but can you when you lie upon a sick bed or your death-bed, when conscience shall be awakened, canst thou then be a dying drunkard, and a dying adulterer and not be troubled? Take heed of these sins. There is a caution in *Pro. 5:8*. "*Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house.*" Here is a caution for young men laid down by *Solomon* to take heed of a whorish woman, lest you become mourners at last; this is the season for conscience to disquiet thee for sin; and if you belong to God, he will make thee to mourn at last for the evils thou hast done. In *Job 21:25*. "*Another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure.*" O the bitter pangs that are in many a man's soul when he dieth, and another may think he goeth away in peace: and thus you have the second question, what those seasons are that God doth take to trouble men's consciences, and disquiet them for sin.

I now come to the third question to show you what difference is between the disquiet for sin that is in the godly, and the disquiet that is in the wicked and reprobate men; for 'tis possible that wicked and ungodly men may have trouble in conscience for the sins they have done, because God hath put natural conscience in wicked men for to rebuke and check, and trouble and disquiet them for some sins sometimes.

Now in the resolving of this question, there are thirteen or fourteen differences between the one and the other.

First, wicked and ungodly men are troubled for sins; but their trouble and their disquietness, it is only for great and gross sins, and not for small and secret sins. Before conversion, *Paul* was never troubled and disquieted for concupiscence, for secret corruption and heart lusts; therefore saith *Paul*, "*I*

had not known lust if the law had not said, Thou shalt not covet," Rom. 7:7. That is, he had not known the inward part of lust, that the inward and secret desires of the heart were sin, he was alive then without the law, and he thought himself to be in a very good condition, and kept himself from great and gross enormities, but never made any reckoning and account of smaller and less enormities and lesser evils. Unconverted men see sins as we see stars in the night; we may see the stars of the first magnitude only, but we cannot see the lesser stars. So wicked men by the light of natural conscience they can see sins of the first magnitude, gross sins, and infamous sins, but they never take notice of lesser crimes, smaller sins, secret sinful lustings and desires, to check their hearts for them; these the light of nature (as it was with *Paul*) never takes notice of. But now look upon a godly man, and there you find a great difference; their disquietness of conscience doth much differ; for their conscience doth disquiet them not only for sins as big as camels, but for sins as small as gnats; not for mountains of sins, but for mole-hills of corruption; small and little sins are the trouble and disquieting of good men's spirits. *Hezekiah* he did greatly humble himself though it was but for an inward sore, "*For the lifting up of his heart in pride.*" This is an argument of true grace when the soul shall be humbled for inward secret and heart sins. So *David* his heart smote him after he had numbered the people: It is questionable what was the particular sin; because for a king to number his people, it is in itself lawful; but it was some secret evil, heart-sin, heart-pride, some other sin; for this his heart smote him. Those sins that will not trouble wicked men's sleep, will break a godly man's heart; that which may be to a wicked man as dust in the finger of his glove, not any trouble to him, to a godly man is as gravel in his kidneys greatly to trouble and disturb him.

The second difference, wicked men may be disquieted for sin, and for some outward acts of sin, but they are never troubled for the inward habit of sin; for the sinful nature, that depraved disposition of heart to sin. We read, many times wicked men have been troubled for the reigning acts of sin, but never troubled at all for the sin of their nature. *Cain* he was troubled for the murdering his brother, and *Balaam* for witchcraft, and *Ahab* was troubled for the sinful acts of idolatry, *Judas* for his treachery, and *Saul* for his cruelty; but neither these nor any wicked man in the world was troubled for original sin, for the depravity of their natures. But now godly men their disquietness for sin, doth not only reach to the acts, but also to the habits of sin, to the natural depravity which is the foundation and fountain from whence all these corrupt actions flow; this is that which doth greatly trouble them. You read of *Paul*, in *Rom. 7:24*. “*O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*” (or this body of death;) alluding to those sins wherein men were wont in a way of punishment to tie a dead body to a living body; he speaks here of his body of sinful and depraved nature, that was to him as a dead man tied to a living man, whereas before conversion, he never did complain of any inward corruption, nor once make mention of corrupt nature. Art thou troubled for sin? But can thy conscience bear thee witness thy disquietness of soul is for the sin and depravity of thy nature as well as for the sins of thy life? Art thou troubled as well for the nature of sin as well as for the acts of sin? Art thou troubled as well for the corrupt fountain as well as for the corrupt streams that flow from thence? If thou art thus troubled and disquieted for sin, all thy conflicts with sin shall end in conquest over sin another day.

The third difference, wicked men may be troubled for sin, but their disquietness for sin is more for the evil of punishment that is the effect of

sin, than it is for the evil that is in the nature of sin; they are disquieted for sin, but it is because sin doth destroy the soul, and not because sin doth defile the soul; because God pursueth sin, not because he hates sin; more because it is against God's justice that is provoked, then because it is against the holiness of God which is dishonored: wicked men are troubled and disquieted, because God threatens sin, not because God doth forbid sin; because of the hell for sin, not because of the hell in sin.

But now godly men do hate sin, and loath sin more because it is against the nature of God, and because God loathes it and hateth it, more because it is against God's commands, than because God doth punish sin; as it is with a child that forbears to touch a coal because it will black his hand; now the child will not touch the coal because it is a fire-coal, because it will burn his fingers; so it is with godly men, they will not touch sin, because it is of a smutting and defiling nature; but wicked men are like the child that will not touch sin, but it is only because it will burn. Now if you can say, that you hate sin, because God hateth it, and you do hate sin not because of the punishment of sin, but because of the evil of sin; not because of the damning power of sin, but because of the defiling power of sin; in this case thy disquietness for sin shall never hurt thee.

The fourth difference, although wicked men may be troubled and disquieted for sin; yet that disquietness doth not make them to leave sin, but when their pangs of sorrow is over them, they will run to their sin again; they may be disquieted for sin sometimes, but it is only for the time that the trouble doth last and no longer. You read *Jer. 18:12*. "*They said there is no hope, but we will walk after the imaginations of our own hearts.*" Their consciences did a little smite them for sin, but they would follow sin for all that.

But godly men doth reason with themselves thus: Do such sins trouble my soul, and disturb my conscience, and hinder my communion with God, and break my peace, and shall I yet touch them? No, I will cast them away as a menstruous cloth, and break off from them; and I will say to them, get you hence: this is another difference godly men do break off from sin; but wicked men though they may be disquieted, yet they continue still in the same sin as soon as the trouble is over.

Fifthly, wicked men may be troubled for sin at the present; yet this doth but lay a bare cessation on the act of sin, but not to put the soul in a way of detestation of sin: it is possible that there may (by reason of natural conscience) be such a cessation of sin, that for a long time he may not commit the same sin again; but yet this doth not breed in the soul a detestation of sin; but when the trouble is over, the cessation is ended, and then he goeth to the same way of sinning again. You have an instance of this in *Pharaoh, Exodus 8:15*. "*When Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them, as the Lord had said.*" When he had a pang upon him, and in great trouble, then his sin was abated and a cessation of it; but when the trouble was gone, then his heart hardened again. So when conscience shall fly into the face of ungodly men and wicked livers, and shall tell them that thus and thus they have done: O then they will labor to stifle conscience, and say they will break off from their wicked ways, and will do so no more; and when trouble of conscience is over, then they will to their old sinful ways again: and this is the condition of wicked and ungodly men. In *2 Pet. 2:22*. It is said there, "*It is happened to them according to the true Proverb: The dog is turned to his own vomit again, and the sow that is washed, to the wallowing in the mire.*" Wicked men are like dogs, while they have a pang over their stomach they are

troubled and vomit it up; but when the pang is over, they return to the vomit again; so do wicked men when conscience shall gripe them, and trouble them, and punish them, then they will vomit up their sins, and will say, they will do so no more; but when pain and trouble is gone, they go to their sin again. Trouble of soul to a wicked man, is like a prison to a thief; a prison to a thief doth restrain his practice to keep him from doing those parts of robbery which he would be apt to do, were he at liberty; but it doth not change his thievish disposition and inclination from that sin. Just so it is with a wicked man's conscience, it may check and control, and restrain him from those exorbitant practices, and keep him from gross acts of sin; but it cannot change his sinful inclination, and take away that wicked habit of sin that is within him, and to stir up indignation against sin. It is observable of *Balaam*, You read in *2 Pet. 2:15*. "*Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness.*" He loved profit, and the pangs of natural conscience were so great upon him that it did restrain him from the receiving of this sinful gain and profit; but when *Peter* came to take cognizance of the sin of *Balaam*, you find that he saith, that he loved the wages of unrighteousness, though he did not receive them; his love and desire went out after it, though he did not (by reason of his trouble of his natural conscience) receive it; he would saine have had it. It is no thanks to thee O wicked man, if thou dost not commit sin; (thou it may be canst not do it, because of the checks of conscience,) but hast not thou a love to it, and a desire to commit it? It is charged upon thee as if thou hadst done it. Hast thou a desire to commit adultery? And though thou hast not opportunity, yet if thou lovest it, and delightest to contemplate upon it, this is looked upon by God, as thy sin. And so if thou hast a desire to be drunk,

and lovest strong drink, and hast not opportunity to do it, no thanks to thee; yet thy love to the sin, renders thee guilty: and God will judge thee according to that.

But godly men, they are disquieted for sin, and they do desire not only to take away the act, but the habit of sin. *Psalm 119:104.* “*Through thy precepts I get understanding; therefore I hate every false way.*” The Psalmist, he by considering the sweet precepts of God, came to understand the nature of sin, and the evil of sin; and therefore he hated sin, and every false way; not only false ways in the outward acts of sin, but false ways in regard of the secret actings of sin in his own heart, and sin in the habit and nature of it.

Sixthly, when a wicked man is disquieted for sin, he doth not go to God's Word for comfort and consolation, and to allay the sorrow and trouble of mind he lieth under; but he hath recourse to sinful, and sensual pastimes and delights in the world, to allay the troubles of his soul and conscience. So you read in *Genesis 4*, from v. 15 to 18. There you read that *Cain* he lay under sore troubles of mind for his sin; even to despair: insomuch that he said, “*his sins were greater then can be forgiven;*” but under this disquieted condition, what did he do? What course did he take? Did he take to God for satisfaction, and to allay his troubles? No, he took a wrong course, for 'tis said, “*And Cain went out from the presence of Jehovah; and then after he was gone from God, then he went to build Cities.*” His going out from the presence of the Lord, is meant, he went out from the ordinances of God, and from the Church of God, to sensual delights in the world: not as though *Cain* could go out from the essential presence of God, that no man can: So *Ainsworth* intimateth on this verse, that it is meant, his going from the place of God's Word, and public worship. And so to come into God's presence, it

is the greatest joy for a godly man in this life; to come into God's presence in his ordinances in his Church, which joy *Cain* now was deprived off, whereas he should have had recourse to these, to allay his trouble of mind; and not to have gone to build cities in the world to stifle his conscience.

But godly men know when they are disquieted for sin; for them to have recourse to pleasures, and profits, and pastimes, and sensual delights in the world, it cannot administer no true comfort, no true joy, no true peace of conscience, no more than a silken stocking will administer comfort to a broken leg: and what can this do? It may cover the broken leg, but it cannot cure it; so delights may cover the wound of conscience for a time, but it cannot give any real comfort. But they know they must hear, and pray, and seek God public and private in his own way, according to his own will, in ways which he hath sanctified, to that end to ease troubled consciences. You read of *Jonah*, he was troubled for sin in going from God's presence in not obeying his voice; but under his trouble for sin, his soul fainted within him: but did *Jonah* go to worldly, and sinful, and sensual delights, to allay his troubled soul? No, the text saith, "*I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in unto thee, in thine holy Temple.*" He saw no other way was available to ease his spirit and pacify conscience, but only in God's ways which he hath sanctified for that very end. Godly men will present their supplications to God, and address themselves to him, in the way of his worship to cure their distempered souls, and to labor to find God's love in Christ in his promise. Godly men may see that sin in their hearts, and guilt upon their spirits may make them sad; but they labor to find a smile from the face of God to make their souls glad, and to speak their sins dead, and to speak peace to their consciences, and joy to their heart, and satisfaction to

the soul, and delight in the spirit, which makes the soul to rejoice and be glad in God's presence.

Sermon XIV

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him—The health of my Countenance, and my God.” Psalm 42:11

I have laid down six differences already of that disquiet that doth arise from a natural conscience in wicked men under the guilt of conscience for sin, and between that holy disquiet of soul for sin found in the godly.

The seventh difference in orders is this, wicked men are disquieted for sin, but it is as causing outward afflictions rather than as causing inward and spiritual withdrawings of God's face, I may allude to that in *Job 41:25*. “*When he raiseth up himself, the mighty are afraid: by reason of breakings they purify themselves.*” When God breaks them by outward afflictions, then they bethink themselves what evil they have done, and how they must amend and better their days; but it is more because of danger of death than out of love of purity; this makes men say, I must purify myself not because

sin is impure, but because it breaks my body, and breaks my outward comforts from me: if sin did not afflict the body, it should never afflict the soul of a wicked man by his will. Wicked men are like that man that was in a deep consumption of his lungs, and complained to a physician of a whitloe upon his finger. Men are troubled at afflictions that are but trivial and toys; but when they do consume in their graces, and near unto an eternal death, (sin and the consumption of grace) that doth not trouble them; men that are thus disquieted more because of affliction than the inward withdrawings of God's face from them, they are fitly set out by ducks in a pond of water; let a little pebble stone be cast into the water and the ducks will dive; but let it thunder in the heavens, the ducks are not afraid. I may make this use of it, wicked men are like ducks; let God but give them a blow on their outward man, afflict their bodies, this will make them dive, crouch, tremble and make them afraid; but let the heavens be lowering, let God's face be eclipsed, if sin did not trouble the body, it should never trouble the conscience: A godly man is troubled at affliction for sin-sake, but a wicked man is troubled at sin for affliction-sake; it is affliction makes him troubled at sin. But now a godly man is of a far different temper, he is disquieted at sin more because of the inward withdrawings of God's face, than because of the outward afflictions of the body. *Psalm 30:7. "Lord by thy favor thou hast made my mountain to stand strong; Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled."* *David* had trouble in the kingdom at that time, had troubles on his person; but all this did not go so near his heart as the hiding of God's face; the heaviest stroke of God's hand did not so much disquiet *David* as the eclipse of God's countenance: Outward troubles they were to *David* but as the scratch with a pin in the flesh; but the

withdrawings of God's face did trouble him as a sword in his bones; this is a seventh difference between the one and the other.

The eighth difference is this, wicked men under disquiet for sin, they do more complain of God than they do complain to God; but good men more complain to God than of God, when they are disquieted for sin; wicked men more complain of God than to God. It is the usual behavior of the wicked to complain wretchedly against God, but not humbly to God, when they are in horror of conscience under the disquiet of sin, *Rev. 16:9. "And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the Name of God."* It is said of the followers of Antichrist, they were scorched with heat, and blasphemed the name of God. When God doth let the fire of his wrath scorch the consciences of men with rage against the Church, this doth but make them blaspheme God; as thus in *Isa. 8:21. "It shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their King, and their God, and look upward."* They cursed their God, and their king. Wicked men complain of God, that he is a hard master, that he loves to inflict cruel and severe judgments upon his creatures: the horror of conscience makes them to expostulate with the most high as if he were unrighteous; they complain of him, that his decrees are partial, that his mercy is defective, that his justice is severe; but they never humbly complain to God under the disquiet and trouble of the soul. A notable text to characterize a wicked man, in *Job 15:24-26, "Trouble and anguish shall make him afraid, they shall prevail against him as a King ready to battle. For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengthens himself against the Almighty. He runneth upon him, even upon his neck, upon the thick bosses of his buckler."* It is spoken by *Eliphaz*, in a warlike phrase. When a man is angry, he will run at another man to do him a mischief; a wicked man in the horror

and trouble of his soul will arm himself against God, even in complaints; this is the temper of wicked men, even in horror of conscience to think ill of God, to complain of him, but not to him: but a godly man, when God lets him be troubled for sin, his temper is to complain to God, *Lam. 1:18*. “*The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled against him: hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow: my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity.*” There is a complaining to God but not of him; thou art righteous, but I have sinned; *Psalm 51:4*. “*Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.*” As if he should have said, I will blame myself, and I will judge myself now my conscience flies in my face, but I will clear God, and will not judge God; this is the temper of a gracious man under trouble of mind for sin, he complains to God but never of him.

The ninth difference is this, wicked men in disquiet of soul for sin, they are more apt to complain to men of their trouble than to God; thus *Judas* when he had betrayed Jesus Christ his master, it is said, that “*Judas came to the high priest, and the Scribes and Pharisees, and said unto them, I have sinned in betraying innocent blood.*” But we never read that *Judas* went to the Lord and said, I have betrayed thy Son, I have sinned in betraying the innocent blood. Thus *Haman* was troubled when he could not get *Mordecai's* knee, why, “*he told his wife and friends what had befallen him, but never went to God.*” Thus *Saul* when he was troubled, and vexed in spirit, it is said, *Saul* told his servants an evil spirit troubled him; but we never read that *Saul* went to God to allay the trouble and disquiet of his heart; this is the Character of a wicked man, sin dogs him, conscience flies in his face; thus to men he can complain but never goeth to God, to complain to him; my soul is troubled, my conscience is gauled, he can

never go to God pouring out his complaints. But godly men do more complain to God than to men, it may be in some immergent cases to satisfy doubts; but God shall hear their moans and complaints in private. The Psalmist doth express this notably, *Psalm 61:2*. “*From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher then I.*” *Jonah 2:7*. “*When my soul fainted within me, then I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy Temple.*” There was *Jonah's* trouble for his sin, my soul fainted within me; but I remember the Lord and my prayer came to him. When *Jonah* was under soul-trouble, why saith he, I remembered the Lord; he would complain more to God than to men when he was under trouble.

Tenthly, the wicked are disquieted for sin, but it doth not put them upon conscientious and effectual endeavors for the effectually mortifying of those sins they are troubled for; they are more troubled about the guilt of sin, then about the power of sin; if they can remove the guilt, they never care for the power and dominion of sin: this is the character of a wicked man. Thus *Pharaoh*, the guilt might trouble him that God did punish him, but the power of his hard heart never troubled him. Thus it is in wicked men, their disquiet of sin never makes them put upon effectual endeavors for the subduing and mortifying of sin. But godly men are of a different temper, they work more to mortify sin, then to pacify conscience; more to subdue the power of sin, then to remove the guilt of sin; he knows he must either kill or be killed; if he kills not sin, sin will kill him; therefore his work is to purify the conscience, as well as pacify the conscience; to remove the power thence as well as the guilt.

Eleventhly, wicked men in disquiet of soul for sin, they are prodigal and free in promising to leave sin whilst trouble is upon them, but when trouble

is over, they run into those sins for which they were troubled with more vehement eagerness and desire: This is expressed unto you in *Deut. 5:27-28*, “*Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, and speak thou unto us, and all that the Lord our God shall say unto thee, we will hear, and do it. And the Lord heard the voice of your words, and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, they have well said of which they have spoken.*” When the people heard the terrible manner of God's delivering of the law, in thunderings and lightnings, they made *Moses* a large promise, “*Whatever God commands us by thee, we will observe to do it.*” But saith God in v. 29. “*O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and their Children forever.*” And it is observable that when his trouble was a little over, the people were worse than ever they were before, they fell to murmuring after, and murmured ten times against the God that had delivered them. This is the character of wicked men, that when trouble of conscience disquiets them, their sins remain on them, O how they will promise, what men they will be! They will turn a new life, and they will never be as they have been; and yet let their trouble be allayed, and you shall see that this restraint of their consciences, shall put them on more eagerness to commit sin, then ever they did in all their life time before: Men's sins are compared to an oven, *Hosea 7*. Fire dispersed into the air doth not burn so fierce, but in an oven it burns fierce. Wicked men, when sin is kept in their hearts, through disquiet of soul for sin, when this fire hath vent it will burn with more fierceness and more rage; when conscience shall dam up a sin, that trouble is over, and conscience is gotten over the dam, sin doth prevail on the soul with more eagerness and more prevalency. In a godly man it is otherwise; when

disquiet of soul is over for sin, a godly man detains an awe of running into that sin again; though trouble be over, yet he remembers how he was troubled; I confess I do remember what it is to lie under the weight and burden, and guilt of sin; therefore this puts an awe upon conscience, that he dares not venture on sin (to wit) as in former time.

Twelfthly, the wicked under disquiet of soul for sin, they are more apt to apply the comforting part of the Word, then to apply the threatening and commanding part of the Word; when they were troubled by the ministry of the Word, *Deut. 29:19.* “*And it come to pass when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless himself in his heart, saying, I shall have peace though I walk after the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst.*” Say they, we shall have peace, though we do walk according to the imaginations of our own hearts, to add drunkenness to thirst; they could apply peace, but they would not apply threatenings, though they did walk in the imaginations of their own hearts. Wicked men under horror of conscience, they are more apt to apply comforts, though groundless, then to apply threatenings, though their portion. *Jer. 3:4-5.* “*Will thou not for this cry unto my Father, thou art the guide of my youth? Will he reserve his anger forever, will he keep it unto the end? Behold, thou hast spoken and done evil things as thou couldst.*” They did evil as much as they could, yet they would presume to say, God was their father; they claimed interest in God: This is the character of a wicked man, to apply the comforting part of the Word, not the threatening part of the Word: But good men are more apt to apply the threatening part of the Word, then the promising part of the Word, *Psalms 77:2.* “*In the day of my trouble, I sought the Lord; my soul refused to be comforted.*” Asaph could apply terror, but he would refuse comfort: Thus by daily experience look

upon a conscientious man under the disquiet of soul for sin, you shall see that man, all the threatenings, all the terrible parts of the Scripture that may work against him, he will remember them all; but apply no promise that may allay disquiet of soul for sin.

Thirteenthly, wicked men under trouble of mind for sin, they go to sinful shifts and means to allay and pacify the disquiet of their souls for conscience; therefore they use four sinful shifts which godly men dare not do.

First of all, they do shun a soul-searching, and a sin reproofing ministry; this you see in *Felix*, *Acts* 24:25. “*And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled and answered, Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will send for thee.*” *Paul* told him of two sins that he was most guilty of, (to wit) drunkenness, and injustice; when he had thus dealt with him roundly, made his conscience tremble, and his heart troubled: *Felix* said, get thee gone, I will hear thee some other time; *Paul* had gauled him and troubled him, why *Felix* shuns the continuance of the rebuke and reproof of the Word: But a godly man dares not do thus; a godly man loves that word that most ransacks his conscience; and loves that man that shall awaken a secure conscience; observe that difference between *Felix* in the *Acts*, and between the converts in the *Acts*; *Felix* bids *Paul* go from him, shuns the reproof of the Word when it gauled his conscience; but when the converts were troubled for sin, and were pricked in the heart for killing Jesus Christ; they loved the apostles and clave to them, and laid their possessions at the apostles feet: the apostles might command all they had they loved them so well; good men dare not do as wicked men do in that particular.

Secondly, wicked men to allay disquiet of conscience, they allay it by running into a crowd of secular employments; thus you read of *Cain*, *Gen. 4:17*. “*After Cain was gone out from the presence of the Lord by reason of his sin, he to stifle his conscience went and built a City.*” God's people dare not do thus, they dare not go to the world to allay disquiet of conscience; but they go to God's Word, they retire into a corner, and they search the Word to see what God's Word speaks to them in the day of their trouble, *Prov. 12:25*. “*Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop; but a good word maketh it glad.*” I stoop under heaviness and trouble, but a good word only from God can comfort me.

Thirdly, wicked men under trouble use this sinful shift, to go to carnal pleasure and sensuality to allay disquiet of mind; *Saul* called for instruments of music, *1 Sam. 16:14*, to allay the troubles of his spirit, as the *Israelites* that offered their children to *Moloch* drowned the cry of their children with a noise of drums and tabrets; so wicked men do with their consciences. God's people dare not do this; they know that sensual pleasures can no more pacify a disquieted conscience then a silken stocking can cure a gouty leg; they dare not wallow and swim in sinful pleasures, but they go to the promise, and in that they take their delight.

Fourthly wicked men they go to bad company, to merry company to see if that can make them forget their troubles; thus *Herod* did, *Mark 6:18*. “*For John said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brothers wife.*”

Immediately after *John* had troubled his conscience for having his brother *Philip's* wife, then to allay this trouble of *John's* reproof; *Herod* then calls for his merry company, his nobles and his soldiers about him, so that he might forget the disquiet of spirit; but godly men go to good men and to God in a corner, *Psalms 61*, ver. 2. “*From the end of the Earth will I cry unto*

thee, when my heart is over whelmed: lead me unto the rock that is higher than I.” This is the carriage and behavior of ungodly men.

Again, wicked men look more after comfort than after duty, if God give them ease and peace they never care for grace; but God's people look after duty more than comfort in disquiet of conscience; when the converts were troubled in mind they cried not after comfort, but after duty; they cried men and brethren what shall we do? What shall we do to be saved?

Thus I have dispatched to you the third query, the differences in these fourteen particulars between the disquiet of soul for sin that may be found in wicked men, and that evangelical holy trouble of soul for sin which is found in the godly?

The fourth query is, *But why are God's people so much disquieted for sin, that they are more troubled for sin then they are comforted in the sight of their graces? Sin shall damn their souls, why then doth sin so much disquiet their consciences.*

There are five reasons.

1. It ariseth partly from that softness of heart, and that tenderness of conscience that is implanted in God's people by God; the eye it is troubled at a mote when the hand is not troubled at a greater thing; the eye is the tenderest part of the body. Why beloved, God's people they have tender consciences; sin on their consciences is as a mote in their eye that greatly troubles them. It is worth your notice that as God doth make a promise that he will keep his people as the apple of his eye, Deut. 32:10. *“He found him in the desert land, and in a waste howling wilderness: he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the Apple of his eye.”* So God's people are said to keep his law as the apple of their eye; Prov. 7:2. *“Keep my Commandments and live, and my Law as the apple of thy eye.”* Beloved, a

blow on the eye offends the eye; you must keep the law as the apple of the eye; the apple of the eye is the tenderest part of the eye: one breach of the law by sin will as much disquiet thee as a blow on thine eye if thou keepest the law as the apple of thine eye.

A second cause or reason is this, God's people are troubled for sin, because God's people seeing themselves that they are more in sinning against God than they are in obeying God; therefore sin troubles them and disquiets them more: grace is as the gleaning of the vintage, and sin is as the full harvest; *Job 15:16. "How much more abominable and filthy is man which drinketh iniquity like water."* God's people see their sins like mountains, and their graces like mole-hills; my lusts burn like a flame, but my graces like a glowing coal; my sins at full tide, but my graces at a low ebb; that makes God's people to be so much troubled for sin: disquiet of soul is more incident to the godly as the moth is ordinarily in the finest cloth, and the worm in the rose sooner than the briar.

A third reason is this, because sin is more visible and manifest to the soul than their graces are; therefore they are more troubled for sin. You read in *Galatians 5:19. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, etc."* But when the Apostle gives you the list of the graces of the Spirit, he doth not say that the fruits of the Spirit are manifest, but the fruits of the flesh are manifest: to show as one observes well, that a man may more easily discern and have a sight of his sin, than a godly man can have in the sight of his grace.

A fourth reason is drawn from a consideration, that Christ's soul was troubled for sin; Christ's soul was troubled for sin as imputed to him, though he had no sin inherent in him; *"Now is my soul troubled saith*

Christ:” Christ did not only suffer in his body upon the cross, but likewise in his soul in the garden, *John 12:9*.

His soul was not troubled for his own sin, for there was no guile found in his mouth; but it was for our sins he was troubled. Now beloved, Christ was troubled for thy wounds, for thy sins; and this makes a godly man reflect, shall Christ's soul be troubled for my sin that was imputed to him? And shall not I be troubled for sin that is inherent in me?

A fifth reason is this, that the people of God might taste and see the evil and the bitterness of sin the more in the course of their lives, and may be more put in awe to commit sin for time to come; this is a reason that *Solomon* gives, why godly men are troubled in mind for sin, *Eccles. 7:25-26*. “*I applied mine heart to know, and to search, and to seek out wisdom, and the reason of things, and to know the wickedness of folly, even of foolishness and madness. And I find more bitter then death, the woman whose heart is snares and nets.*” That is, to know the evil of sin, folly and madness, is meant sin in *Solomon's* dialect; and saith he, I find it to be more bitter than death; *Solomon* by experience speaks this, I find sin to be worse to me than death. Beloved, this is God's end why he will make a man to find out the wickedness of sin; to be troubled in conscience for sin, is that thou mightest find sin to be more bitter to thee then death, so that thou mightest avoid those sins, and shun them for which thou hast smarted so much. And thus I have finished the fourth query.

Sermon XV

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him—The health of my Countenance, and my God.”

Psalm 42:11

A fifth query in order is this, when may God's people be said to be excessively or too much disquieted in soul for sin?

There are seven particulars to resolve this; four of them I shall gather from one Psalm; *Psalm 77:2-4*. “*In the day of my trouble, I sought the Lord; my sore ran in the night, and ceased not; my soul refused to be comforted. I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed. Thou holdest my eyes waking; I am so troubled that I cannot speak.*”

Here are four discoveries laid down when a man's disquiet and trouble of soul for sin is immoderate and excessive.

First, when a man is so disquieted under the guilt of sin, that he is not only unable to receive comfort, but he is unwilling to receive that comfort that belongs to him, v. 2, *“my soul refused to be comforted.”* This was his sin, I prove it by the 10, v. *“And I said, This is mine infirmity.”* It was an infirmity in *Asaph*, when he was under trouble of mind, to refuse comfort: God intends trouble for sin to be an exercise of grace, not to obliterate the evidence of our graces; when trouble for sin proves an eclipse of grace, not a spur to grace, it is excessive.

Secondly, when the amiable and glorious attributes of God are represented unto the soul of a godly man, under a formidable and a dreadful notion; this is laid down in v. 3. *“I remembered God, and was troubled; I complained, and my spirit was overwhelmed.”* The thoughts of God should comfort a soul in trouble of mind; but when a man in trouble of mind, shall make the attributes of God to trouble him, then it is excessive; *Job 23:15. “Therefore am I troubled at his presence; when I consider, I am afraid of him.”*

Adam after he fell, What doth he do? He went and hid himself from the presence of God, *Gen. 3:8, 10. “And they heard the voice of the Lord walking in the garden, in the cool of the day; and they hid themselves, for they were afraid.”* Beloved, when thou canst not think of a God, but the thoughts of a God troubles thee; this is excessive trouble in a godly man.

Thirdly, when a man is so disquieted in soul for sin, that a man doth abridge himself in the use of those natural comforts that God doth allow him to enjoy; when he cannot eat, nor drink, nor sleep; this is laid down in the 4, v. of this Psalm, *“Thou holdest mine eyes waking; I am so troubled that I cannot sleep.”* His meaning is, I am so troubled in conscience under the guilt of my sin, that I cannot sleep at night when I lie down in my bed; I cannot eat, nor sleep; I cannot enjoy those natural comforts and sleep;

which the Lord allows me to enjoy; as worldly care is described in covetous men, *Eccles. 5:12. "The sleep of a laboring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep."* That is an argument of excessive worldly care and trouble in a man for the world, when he is so puzzled and glutted with the world, that he cannot take his rest at night.

A fourth discovery in this Psalm is, when disquiet of soul under the guilt of sin doth either discourage a man, or unfit a man for religious duties, then they are excessive and inordinate; this is laid down in the 4, v. *"I am so troubled, I cannot speak."* He was so overwhelmed with fears and troubles in his spirit, that it did either discourage him from praying, or unfit him for the use of prayer; now to make it appear, put them together, v. 10. *"I said this is mine infirmity:"* It follows, that all those troubles that be so inordinate, to make him refuse comfort, and troubled at the thoughts of God, and to make him likewise that he could not sleep, and he could not pray, all this was his infirmity: These are the four discoveries taken from that one Psalm.

Fifthly, it is then inordinate, when a man is so disquieted under the sight of sin, that he hath no mind to follow his particular calling where in God hath set him in, in the world, that he can take no comfort in wife or children, estate or comforts; when a man shall be so perplexed, that he cannot follow his trade; then it is sinful, there is his reason for it, because God enjoins no duty belonging to our general calling, as Christians, that should clash with, or justle out our particular callings, as men: and herein the Devil's policy lies, that if he in trouble of mind can keep a man out of his calling, he hath the better way to work upon an idle man.

Sixthly, when trouble and disquiet of soul for sin is prejudicial to the health of our bodies; I hate robbery for a burnt offering; so that's not God's sacrifice, that is prejudicial to bodily health; God hates us not for a burnt offering; this was an infirmity in *Heman*, one troubled deeply in mind, *Psalm 88:3*. "*My soul is full of troubles; and my life draweth nigh to the grave.*" *Heman's* trouble of soul was so great, that it did weaken his body, and bring him to nothing but skin and bones: So you read of trouble, *Psalm 31:9-10*. "*Have mercy upon me, Lord, for I am in trouble; my eyes is consumed, with grief, etc. For my life is spent, with grief, and my years with sighing; my strength faileth because of my iniquity.*" Here was a mixture of weakness in this, though it was for sin; yet, to consume the bones, and to spend the strength, God doth not require that.

Lastly, when a man shall be so disquieted under the guilt of sin, that he shall be utterly discouraged from venturing to lay hold on Jesus Christ; when they say doubtingly, what the enemies say scoffingly, there is no help for him in God; when the kind or degree of trouble of mind is so much, that it shall impugn the end of it, it is then excessive; what is the end of trouble of mind for sin? The end is, to embitter sin, and to provoke a soul to look out after Jesus Christ: And thus I have given you but the heads of this particular.

Sixth query, you will ask me, if it be so that godly men are so much disquieted in soul under the guilt of sin, then what is the reason that wicked men can live so joyfully under such heavy loads of guilt, yet never have a troubled thought, nor disquieted heart all their days? That they do not come into trouble as other men? What is the reason of all this? It is a very fruitful question, and well to be considered.

There are 10 general causes.

First, it proceeds partly from the malice and subtlety of the Devil, that those souls that he hopes to damn when they die, he will not disquiet them for sin whilst they are alive; this is hinted to you, *Luke 11:21*. “*When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace.*” The strong man is meant the Devil; the palace, is meant the heart of a wicked man, the goods, to be at peace is meant, that the thoughts of a wicked man is at peace; and nothing troubles him, when the Devil doth possess a wicked man's heart, he labors to keep all his thoughts quiet and calm, and at peace with him: *Steila*, although a popish author, yet hath a good note, *Unum est hic observandum*: we are to observe this one thing here, the great cunning of the Devil, that soul that he hath a possession of, he would not have him trouble his conscience; it is his labor (saith he) *ut ne ullum conscientiae stimulum patiat*; that he should not endure one prick of conscience; the Devil doth with wicked men, as the *Babylonians* did with the *Jews* in captivity, they would make them sing songs; when the Devil hath got wicked men captive, the Devil would fain have them sing songs, and be secure, and to have nothing to trouble them all their days.

A second reason is this, it proceeds from that gross ignorance that is in a wicked man's mind or understanding, whereby he doth not see the evil nature of sin, and the aggravation of it; a blind mind, and a dumb conscience, they both go hand in hand together; if the understanding of a man wants an eye to see the evil of a sin distinctly, the conscience will want a hand to smite for sin effectually; if sin were more in men's eyes, sorrow for sin would be more in men's hearts: It is worth your notice, the comparing of two Scriptures together, *Psalm 51:3*. “*I acknowledged my transgression, and my sin is ever before me.*” And *Psalm 38:17*. “*For I am ready to halt, and my sorrow is ever before me.*” How came the Psalmist to

have sorrow for sin continually, but by having the sight of sin continually? He had the sight of sin continually before him, he had then the sorrow of sin before him; it is the sight of sin that is an inlet to sorrow and trouble of mind for sin: What is the reason that a man that seeth a lion in the wilderness, it maketh him afraid? But if that man seeth a lion painted on the wall, he is not troubled? The reason is because he knows the lion in the wilderness is of a fierce and cruel nature; therefore fears that; but he knows no such evil in a painted lion; therefore he is not troubled at that. Beloved, if wicked men could look upon sin as a loose lion in the wilderness, that would fly in their faces, why the sight of sin would make them afraid then; but they look upon sin as a painted lion, they do not see sin to be so odious and aggravated; this is the great cause why men are so little disquieted in soul under the guilt of sin.

Thirdly, it proceeds from a judicial hardness in the heart, and from a cauterizedness to scarredness in the conscience, *Rom. 2:5*. “*But after thy hard and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgments of God.*” To let you know that it is from hardness of heart, and scarredness of conscience, that a man cannot repent, cannot confess and be troubled for the evils he hath done, and the guilt he lies under; scarred flesh is sensible of no touch with a pin, it is your raw flesh that is sensible; men's consciences are cauterized and scarred, that makes that sin is not as a sword in the flesh.

Fourthly, it proceeds from a continued custom in a course of sin; custom in sin doth harden the heart, and doth sear the conscience; it is in this case as with a man when he first comes to be an apprentice to an artificer or handy-crafts-man; he comes with a tender hand to the work, and when he begins to work with hard instruments he cannot work but he gauls his hand

and blisters his hand; but when he hath been many years at work, by continual labor at the work, his hand doth then harden, so that he can use it and never blister his hand. It is just thus with a sinner, before a man be accustomed to an evil way, conscience is tender and full of remorse; but a continued custom and making a trade of sin, it doth make the conscience to be hard and brawny, and to feel nothing; as in a smith's house, a dog that comes newly in, cannot endure the fiery sparks to fly about his ears; but when the dog is used to it, he sleeps quietly. Let wicked men be long used to sin, to the Devil's work-house, to be slaves and vassals to sin, the sparks of hell fire may fly about their ears, and this never troubles them; and all this ariseth from a continued custom in a course of evil.

The fifth cause is, that a wicked man is not disquieted for sin, it ariseth from this, from a wicked man's stifling the checks and rebukes of his own conscience; as quenching the Spirit in its holy motions to do good, doth cause God to withdraw the holy motions of his Spirit: So stifling the conscience, it provokes God that conscience shall not trouble thee more, but shall be given up to a sottish stupidity, and to a senseless stupidity of conscience.

Sixthly, it ariseth from a mistake and a misapprehension that wicked men maintain that trouble of conscience for sin it is an utter enemy to all worldly joy, and if a man comes once to be troubled in conscience for sin, he shall never have a merry day more, but must hang down his head in pensiveness, and lead a melancholy sad life. Beloved, wicked men's vailing holy disquiet with these prejudices, is a special reason why they are no more troubled for sin then they are; this is hinted to us in the saying of *Solomon, Eccles. 7:4.* "*The heart of the wise, is in the house of mourning: but the heart of fools in the house of mirth.*" The wicked are afraid to be in the house of mourning,

to mourn and grieve for evils they have done, lest they should never have glad and comfortable days in the world: Thus the papists did entertain this prejudice against the protestant religion, that *spiritus Calvinianus est spiritus melancholicus*. Beloved, the way to have a well composed and ordered joy and comfort in the world, is, to have a gracious sorrow and an evangelical grief for the evils thou hast done in the world.

Seventhly, it proceeds from a groundless and a presumptuous persuasion that wicked men have of pardoning grace; thus, saith a wicked man, if I have hopes of heaven when I die, what need sin trouble me; I hope it shall not damn my soul; and therefore it shall not disquiet me, I will not lay sin to my heart; for God will not lay sin to my charge. I shall go to heaven when I die; what need I break my peace while I live? This was the great reason of those that were no more troubled for sin: *Deut. 29:19*. “*And it come to pass when he heard the words of this curse, that he blessed himself in his heart, and said, I shall have peace though I walk in the imaginations of my heart.*” God doth not bless them, but they will bless themselves; they presume of mercy, and they presume of heaven, they will presume of blessing; why, this makes them that they are not troubled for adding drunkenness to thirst; they can add sin to sin, but not add sorrow to sorrow for sin.

The eight cause is this, men contenting themselves under a daubing and a flattering ministry: Men that under pretense of preaching free grace, the love of God, and the merits of Christ, all their sermons are comfortable strains, when indeed they are but the making the way to heaven wider than God makes it; this reason is given by God himself, *Isa. 8:11*. “*For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me, that I should not walk in the way of this people.*” They speak peace when indeed they were in trouble, *Jer. 23:13-14*, “*And I have seen folly in the Prophets of Samaria,*

they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people to err. I have seen also in the prophets of Jerusalem an horrible thing, they have committed adultery, and walk in lies; they strengthen also the hands of evil doers, that none doth return from his wickedness; they are all of them unto me as Sodom, and the inhabitants thereof as Gomorrah.”

The ninth general cause, they have a fullness of outward prosperity and blessing in the world; it may be referred to soul trouble, as well as to bodily trouble; that prosperity in the world, doth mightily keep off a man from having his soul trouble him under the guilt of sin; *Hos. 12:8. “And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me put substance; in all my labors they shall find none iniquity in me, that were sin.”* They were a wicked people, and yet their prosperity in an evil way did harden their hearts in a way of sin. The instance of *Pharaoh*, there was nothing in the world did more harden his heart, then his prosperity; God lifting him up to be a king, did harden his heart; when men are gluttoned with prosperity, that they have not an open ear to the screams of conscience; *2 Chron. 33:10. “And the Lord spake to Manasseh, and to his people; but they would not hearken.”* In prosperity he would not hearken to the checks of conscience, till God laid him in fetters, then he hearkened.

Lastly, men are not disquieted in soul for sin; why so? Because of an inconsiderateness of the omnipotency and all-seeing eye of God; though men be not doctrinal atheists, to hold this opinion, that God doth not see all things; yet men are practical atheists, to live and continue so in an evil way, as if God did not see them; we read in *Job 28:13-14. “And thou sayst, How can the Lord know? Can he judge through the dark clouds? Thick clouds are a covering to him that he seeth not, and he walketh in the circuit of Heaven.”* The Lord doth not see, nor doth the holy one regard; is there not a

cloud between him and us? The Psalmist hath a passage, the wicked doth make a tush of sin; tush, *say they, the Lord regards it not*: What is the reason men make but a tush of sin? Why, they do not think that God regards sin; sin doth not trouble them, and doth not disquiet them, because they think God doth not behold them; they are inconsiderate of the omnipotency of God.

I shall now only give you a short use of what you have heard, touching godly men's disquiet under the guilt of sin; only this use.

It shall be by way of trial or examination; you have heard much concerning that trouble and disquiet of soul that may be found in reprobates.

Now the use shall be to put you upon trial how you may be satisfied in conscience, that that disquiet of soul that is in you under the guilt of sin, is an evangelical and a gracious trouble for sin, and not such a trouble that doth arise from a natural conscience in wicked men; and to satisfy you herein, I shall name six particulars.

First, dost thou find this within thee, that thy trouble of soul is more for the evil of the fact thou hast done, then for the danger thou mayst incur? My meaning is this, when thou art troubled more for the sin, then thou art troubled for the penalty of that sin thou hast incurred by the commission of it; when thou art troubled for sin more because it robs God of his glory, then because it will keep thee from glory; this is an evangelical grace.

Secondly, when thou art more troubled for the sin of nature, then for the sins that break out in thy life; when the sin of nature doth disquiet thee, as well as the sins of thy practice: We never find in all the Scripture, that a wicked man hath any remorse of spirit at all for the sin of nature; thou that canst say, sins of nature trouble thee as well as sins of practice, this is an

argument of evangelical trouble of soul for sin. *David* discovered grace herein, when he made that penitential *Psalm* 51, for the sin of adultery with *Bathsheba*, *David* doth not only bewail the unclean act, but he bewails also the unclean nature.

Thirdly, thou mayst be satisfied, if thou art as much disquieted in soul in the sight and apprehension of the power of sin, as of the guilt of sin; I am troubled not only that sin is so dangerous, but also that sin is so strong within me.

Fourthly, the disquiet for sin is evangelical, when the measure and degree of thy trouble of mind for sin is subservient to and promoting of the end of trouble of mind; the end of trouble of mind, I told you, was to embitter sin, and endear Christ; when thou hast so much of the measure and degree of trouble of mind, as to embitter sin to thee, and to endear Jesus Christ to thee, this is the true evangelical humiliation that the Gospel calls for.

Fifthly, thou mayst be sure that it is an evangelical trouble of mind, when thou art troubled for sin as well because it is against a good God, as well as because it is against a just God; a wicked man may be troubled for sin against a just God, because justice will be avenged on sin, and on the sinner; but now a godly man saith, God loads me with mercies; thou that canst grieve and be troubled for sin, this is evangelical; "*they shall fear the Lord, and his goodness in the latter days,*" *Hos.* 3:5. I may apply that fable that *Plutarch* hath in his *Morals*, of the sun and the wind, contending which should make a traveler put off his cloak: O beloved, storms and blustering tempests of God's wrath may make a wicked man leave sin, and be troubled for sin; but when the Son of God's love shall melt the heart, and sweetly insinuate into thy soul, and that make thee uncliothe thyself of the rags of sin, that is an argument of evangelical trouble.

Lastly, it is an evangelical sorrow and trouble of soul for sin, when thou canst be as truly troubled for sin committed, when thou knowest it is pardoned, as if thou hadst not known thy sin to be pardoned; to be a troubled and a pardoned Christian, it is evangelical trouble; a pardoned sin shall fill thy heart with trouble, when thou art of this temper, that thou wilt bathe that sin in thy tears, in a way of contrition, which thou knowest to be bathed in Christ's blood in a way of remission, thou hast a gracious temper of heart engraven upon thee.

Sermon XVI

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him—The health of my Countenance, and my God.” Psalm 42:11

I now come to give you some practical instructions by way of rules.

My work for this morning shall be to prescribe some theological rules to those who are greatly troubled and disquieted in soul under the guilt of sin: rules of two sorts; there are directory rules and consolatory rules; rules by way of direction, and rules by way of consolation.

I begin with the first directory rules; there are eight rules what they might do to allay trouble and disquiet of conscience when it is excessive and inordinate.

First, when thou art excessively troubled under the guilt of sin take this rule, what troubled thoughts thou hast about the guilt of sin, spend them upon the power of sin within thee; this is a holy diversion, to be always

conversant about the power of sin; it is an evangelical and a gracious temper; if Christians were more troubled about the power of sin, they would be less troubled about the guilt of sin; the Devil doth not care if professors of religion be terrified Christians, so they be not mortified Christians.

Secondly, keep conscience clear, that thou do not add guilt to guilt; adding guilt to guilt, is the way to add horror to horror, and terror to terror upon the conscience; guilt in the conscience doth contract dismal fear, amazement and consternation of soul; if conscience doth not shut sin out of doors, why sin will shut peace of conscience out of doors: It is a rule that *Bernard* gives, conscience is to be comforted, but first it is to be purified and made clean; this rule is laid down by *Eliphaz*, if I mistake not, *Job* 11:14. “*If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away; and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles.*” Beloved, that is the way to keep out fear, to keep out guilt; if conscience be not a swept and a cleansed room, it will gaul, disquiet and vex thy soul; to have conscience pacified, when it is not purified, is but to skin over an old sore, which before it be healed, will break out again; peace saith *Bernard*, in many men is worse than a spiritual conflict; such a peace for a man to have peace in his conscience, when he indulgeth guilt in his conscience; expect not trouble of conscience to be allayed, if thy conscience be not purified; *Prov.* 29:6. “*In the transgression of an evil man, there is a snare; but the righteous doth sing and rejoice.*” By snare, *Solomon* there means horror of conscience, it appears by the opposition; interpreters give this rule, that in the *Proverbs* of *Solomon*, that one opposition doth explain the other; why here the righteous shall sing and rejoice in his grace; but the wicked shall have a snare in his sin; he shall have horror and dread of conscience in the sight of sin; *Prov.* 15:15. A good and a clear conscience doth keep holy day every day of his life, though he

hath hardly anything else to feed upon; guilt on the conscience, is the way to cause a resurrection of thy fears and doubts, and to bring all thy spiritual hopes to the grave.

A third rule is this, take heed thou dost not go about to allay the disquiet of thy soul for sin, by sin, that is a third rule; to run to vain pleasures, and to sensual delights to stop and quell the voice of conscience, what is this but to go to the Devil for a plaster to heal the wounds of thy soul: Beloved, these men that go to allay trouble of mind for sin, by sin, they go the way to make conscience recoil and turn upon them with more fierceness, and more savage cruelty: It is just as a man that is a thirst, he will drink a draught of poison to quench his thirst; O! When thou art scorched with God's wrath, and to allay this, dost drink a draught of sin? What dost thou but drink so much poison? Many men when they are under trouble of mind, they will go to sin for a shelter, and there a serpent puts them to more pain.

A fourth rule is this, fix your thoughts on the evidences of your graces, when your hearts are overmuch disquieted in the sight of sin; as trouble of conscience in the sight of sin, will keep a man that he shall not be proud in the sight of his grace; so the evidence or sight of grace, will keep a man that he shall not be excessively troubled in the sight of sin.

Fifthly, ponder in your meditations the comfortable promises of the Gospel, rather than the threats of the Law; if I were to speak to a secure sinner, I would give him a quite contrary rule, that he should rather ponder on the threats of the Law, then the promises of the Gospel; but to a sinner greatly pressed under the weight of God's wrath, he must take this word rather to ponder on, the promising part of the word, then on the threatening part of the word, *Prov. 25:12. "As an ear-ring of gold, and as an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprovener to an obedient ear."* The good word of a

promise, makes glad a poor soul that stoops in heaviness under the guilt of sin: A pot when it boils over the fire, and boils too fast, cast a handful of salt, and it will allay the boiling of the pot; when thy soul boils, and is restless in disquiet for trouble of sin, and boiling too fast, cast in a handful of salt, a handful of the promises of the Gospel, this will allay the excessive trouble and disquiet of thy soul. The promises are called by one, the instruments of a Christian's peace; they are called God's proclamations of pardon to a poor creature; they are the character wherein he may read all his privileges: O study them well.

A sixth rule, compare the guilt of you sins, with the merits of Christ's righteousness, and you will find that there is more in Christ's righteousness to save, then is in sin to damn; Christ's righteousness is imputed to a believer, that the guilt of sin might not be charged on him; as Christ's person is above thy person, so Christ's righteousness is above thy righteousness; this the Apostle layeth down, *Rom. 5:15*. "*The gift by grace hath abounded to many.*" The gift doth exceed the sin exceed the offense; compare but them in thy thoughts, and that will be a means to allay the trouble of thy heart.

Seventhly, disclose and reveal that sin, the guilt whereof doth so much disquiet thy soul, unto some judicious compassionate and experienced Christian; giving vent to your own sorrows by complaints, is a great way to ease the mind. If in innocency God thought fit that *Adam* should not be alone, but should have a helper; much more now in a state of defection since the fall, do we need others help as well as our own; if Jesus Christ when in an agony, God thought fit to send an angel to comfort him; O then do not believers need much more, when they are in their spiritual agony and conflicts, and temptations, do they need some to comfort them: The Apostle

on this ground bids Christians to comfort one another, 1 *Thes.* 4, last v. “*Comfort you one another, etc.*” 1 *Epistle* 5:14. “*Comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.*” God doth enjoin Christians this mutual act of love, comfort ye one another: As it is in an arch, it is so artificially built, that though the stones of the arch do all hang downwards, yet one stone doth support another that they do not fall. O beloved Christians, that are lively stones in Christ's spiritual building, you should be as the stones of an arch, that though one stone doth hang downward, yet the stones next it should bear it up; this makes *Solomon* say, two is better than one, for if one fall, the other should help him up.

In this there are three cautions to be observed:

First, you are not to reveal that sin for which your conscience troubles you to every man, but to a man that is experienced: *Judas*, when he was troubled in conscience for betraying Jesus Christ, it is said that he went to the high priest, and to the Pharisees, and confessed to them, I have sinned in betraying innocent blood; why, they did not compassionate him: So shouldst thou go to some men and complain to them, they would jeer at thee, and send thee away with a flout and a scoff; go to those that are more compassionate, most judicious, most acquainted with the spiritual state of a Christian. Beloved, in our bodily infirmities, when a man is sick, he doth not tell every neighbor he is sick, and reveal his infirmity to all, but to a doctor; a man in trouble of mind, it is not for him to go to everyone, to men that wants bowels and experience, and wants wisdom to speak a word in due season to a wearied heart; many men are like a company of deer, when one deer is shot, all the rest of the head of deer runs away from the wounded deer, and leaves it to shift for its life; when a man is wounded in conscience, the arrows of the Almighty sticking in him, they think it is a

melancholy wound in him, and they are shy of him, they run away from him; O go to those that can show most bowels of compassion towards you.

Secondly, thou must not disclose thy particular sin on every slight trouble, unless thy trouble be very urgent and vexatious in the soul: Beloved, you do not go to the surgeon for every aching finger, and for every slight wound; it is not for every slight trouble of mind to disclose thy particular sins; concession to another man should never be, but when all means thou hast used thyself nothing can comfort thee, when thy spirit is troubled with great bitterness; only in a case of urgent necessity must you open yourselves to another man.

Thirdly, following this rule, take heed when thou revealest thy mind to any, do not deal doubly with that man. Men will come sometimes to a minister, and tell him they are troubled in mind, but they will not tell what it is that puts a sting into conscience, but will open some other thing that is slight and trivial, but not open the real thing that doth trouble them: the lapwing will not cry near her nest, but afar off: Many men carry themselves so that you shall not find out their nests; their beloved sins they will not reveal and disclose them.

The eight rule is this, when thou art disquieted for sin, then go to God through Christ in prayer to pacify thy conscience and speak peace to thy soul when thou art troubled; we can speak peace, but it is God that gives peace: this is one prerogative ascribed to God that he is a God that comforts them that are cast down, *2 Cor. 7:6. "Nevertheless, God that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus."* He is a God that creates peace out of nothing. It is very observable in *Isa. 8:11. "For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not work in the way of this people."* That when God would comfort the

prophets against the accusations and combinations of the enemies against the Church of God, he spoke to them with a strong hand; the tongue is the instrument of speech, not the hand; we speak with our tongues, we can speak to a man comfortable words, but we cannot make you believe them; but the Scripture saith, God speaks with his hand, because he can do what he speaks; his Word is like Christ's Word in the 9, chap. of *Mark*, Christ spake to the Winds, *and so they were still* and there was a great calm. Beloved, God's word it hath a hand in it, it can do what it speaks: O then go to God through Christ in prayer and in having recourse to God; there are two things you are to beg of God in prayer if you would have the trouble of soul allayed.

First, beg of God to have a share in the blood of Christ that merits thy peace, and to have a share in the Spirit of Christ that works thy peace; These are the two main things in prayer to allay the trouble of soul for the guilt of sin.

First, beg a share in the blood of Christ that merits thy peace, *Col. 1:20*. "*And (having made peace through the blood of his Cross) by him to reconcile all things to himself, whether things in Earth or things in Heaven.*" There is peace with God and a peace in thy conscience; peace with God and peace in thy conscience, it is the certain issue of Christ's personal treaty with God the Father in heaven. As it was typed under the Law, *Exod. 12:23*. "*For the Lord will pass through to spoil the Egyptians: and when he seeth the blood upon the lintell, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and not suffer the destroyer to smite you.*" The blood of the paschal lamb that did besprinkle the posts of the door of any house, it was a pledge that there was peace and safety in that house: If thou hast the blood of this Paschal Lamb Jesus Christ sprinkled on the door posts

of thy conscience, this will be a sign that there shall be peace and safety in thy house; the destroying angel shall pass over.

Secondly, next to this beg a share in the Spirit of Christ that works thy peace; therefore it is that the Spirit is called the comforter as well as the Holy Ghost: He is called the Holy Ghost, to show, that it is one part of his office to work holiness in us; and called the comforter, to show, that it is one part of his office to comfort his people; and thus I have run hastily over the directory rules to allay excessive disquiet of soul under the guilt of sin.

2. I now come to lay down some consolatory rules, what rules may be given to comfort a godly man that is grievously vexed and disquieted under the guilt of sin; I beseech you follow me a while; there are six consolatory rules to be laid down for to comfort a godly man that is disquieted in soul under the guilt of sin.

First, take this rule to comfort thee; if the power of thy sin do not prevail over thee, thou mayest be sure the guilt of thy sin shall never damn thee; why then think if sin hath not a domineering power in the filth of, it shall never have a damning power in the guilt of it. O thou mortified Christian, it may be thou art troubled at what thou hast done when thou was a child; but hast thou mortified those sins? Then my soul for thine those sins thou hast destroyed shall never damn thee: it may be thou art troubled about the guilt when thou hast destroyed the power. O lift up thy head the guilt shall never damn thee when the power doth not prevail over thee.

Secondly, it is better for a Christian to have a soul troubled too much for sin than too little or nothing at all for sin; it is better to have a troubled and a terrified conscience than to have a stupefied conscience; better to have a sore than a seared conscience, better to have the conscience raw and gauled than to have it be numbed and no way sensible of the evil of sin. Why

beloved, there is more hope of a soul in a spiritual fever, that is in disquiet, that is raging by reason of the accusation of conscience, that is lying under trouble and disquietness of his own apprehension, then of him that lies under a spiritual lethargy, sleeping and snorting in his sins, which doth never trouble him; a wound that hath raw and quick flesh in it, it will easier be healed then a wound that hath proud and dead flesh in it: if thy conscience be dead flesh, thou art not so near healing as when thy conscience is raw and gauled flesh; it was one mark of leprosy that was unclean, if there was dead flesh in the sore; noting a benumbed and a stupefied conscience argues an unclean leper, one in a state of nature; it is better to have God's officer conscience to be over busy, to be too much checking and curbing thee, then to have no office of conscience stirring in thee: This is another consideration for the comforting of an afflicted soul.

Thirdly, observe this rule for the comforting of thy soul under trouble of mind, consider that God's mercy and Christ's merits in the pardoning the guilt of thy sin thou hast committed, is far greater than the greatness of thine own guilt; *Rom. 5:15.* “*But not as the offense, so is the free gift; for if through the offense of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, by one man Jesus Christ, hath abounded to many.*” The meaning is, that the gift Jesus Christ, the value and worth of man, did far exceed the guilt and evil of sin; it is expressed in *Psalm 32,* “*he that trusteth on the Lord, mercy shall compass him round about.*” My own fault is very great, but God's grace and mercy is far greater; God when he is said to pardon sin, in *Micah 7:18.* “*Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgressions of his people? He retaineth not anger, because he delighteth in mercy.*” He is said to throw them into the bottom of the sea; the red Sea could as easily drown *Pharaoh* and his host,

as well as one single man: Beloved, the red Sea of Christ's blood can as well cover an army, a host of sins, as well as one single sin; the sea can as well cover the whale, as lesser fishes; the sea of Christ's blood can cover great sins as well as small; *David* makes it an argument, *Psalms* 25:11. "*For thy name sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity, for it is great.*" Pardon my sin, for it is great: That is, although it is great, and so you have often the particle used in Scripture, the Lord would not punish man, for the imaginations of his heart is evil; that is, though his heart be evil. It is observed that the ark wherein the moral law was kept, the mercy seat covered the whole ark wherein the law was kept; to note beloved, that Jesus Christ, the mercy of God and merits of Christ, it provides a propitiation, a covering of all the breach of the law, the mercy seat is broad, and large enough to cover all; therefore let this be of great comfort.

Fourthly, observe this, that the more trouble of mind thou dost lie under for the present in the sense of sin, the less trouble thou shalt have in the future: God doth with his people, as land-lord's do with their tenants; if a land-lord take a great fine at the first coming into the house, he doth take the less yearly rent for the future: God takes of you a great fine at the first; he maketh sin cost thee many a tear, many a nights trouble, many a days disquiet; the greater dine God taketh of thee, the less yearly rent he expects of thee; the more thou art troubled for the present, the less fear and torment shall be thy portion hereafter; am I troubled now? It is that I might have more peace when I come to die, that in the residue of my days I might have joy and peace in believing: O think then if God upon thy first coming into Christ, maketh thee pay dear for thy sin, and maketh thee smart for it, why there is less sorrow and trouble for thee in the time to come.

Fifthly, art thou troubled in soul for sin? Take this comfort, that the more thou art troubled for sin, why thou art the nearer getting out from the Devil, when the Devil maketh conscience howl, it is an argument the Devil is thrown out, and sin is thrown out. When the Devil had a long continuance in the child, the Devil did not trouble the child so much; *Mark 9:26*. “*And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him, and he was as one dead, insomuch that many said, He is dead.*” It is said that when the Devil came out of the child, then the Devil rent him sore, and laid him down for dead. O beloved, when the Devil is in a man, when the strong man hath a full possession of a man, the Devil doth not trouble him then: As *Stella* saith, The Devil would not have him suffer one touch of conscience then; but when the Devil is going out, and sin is thrown out, then the Devil rends a man, and lays a man for dead; this is the property of the Devil. *Gregory* in his comment upon the book of *Job*, hath a notable saying, saith he, Therefore the Devil doth more vehemently stir up fears and doubts in the heart, because sin is thrown out of the heart. O let this comfort thee, doth the Devil trouble thee more than ordinarily? Doth thy conscience terrify thee, that thou art a burden to thyself? Beloved, it is an argument that the Devil is a casting off, and sin is casting out; O comfort thyself, I hear the noise of conscience every day; I hear my conscience suggest this guilt to me, and that to me; O blessed be God I hear my conscience to roar and howl; why the more hopes I have that the Devil is throwing out, and sin is casting out; that is a fifth consideration.

Sixthly and lastly, take this for thy comfort, that there are more promises of the Gospel made to men in this condition, then to any other sort of men in the world; I could give you multitudes of promises to men in this case, *Matt. 11:28*. “*Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I*

will give you rest.” So in *Isa.* 54:10-11, ch. 35:4, ch. 57:15. Many other texts I could give you where God maketh abundant promises to men under disquiet of soul, under the guilt of sin; when children are well, they shall have it may be but pebble stones to play withal; but if there be one sick child in the house, the mother goeth to the cabinet, and looketh out fine things to quiet the child: O beloved, it may be healthful Christians shall go on comfortably, and shall have now and then smiles of God's face towards them, but God's rich cabinet of promises are open to them when they are sick, when a poor sinner suspects that he is not pardoned, then God comes with a promise to comfort him that he is pardoned. The well children in the house are beloved by the parents, but the sick child is dandled on the knees; the well child may have bread and butter, but the sick child hath the comfortable things to comfort it. Beloved God's sick children, that are sick with sin, that are greatly troubled in conscience, God provides for them the promises to allay and pacify the troubled spirit. O let these words of comfort sink into your hearts.

Sermon XVII

“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him—The health of my Countenance, and my God.” Psalm 42:11

Now come to give you some other rules, and they are to those who complain, and say, the Lord help me, I am so far from being over disquieted, that I do not find my heart disquieted at all; I do not find my soul so much as troubled under the guilt of many evils that I am guilty of; touching this I shall proceed to give you rules directory and consolatory.

First, how a child of God that doth not find his soul sensibly touched, and evangelically disquieted under the sense of sin committed, how that soul may come to have his soul evangelically troubled under the guilt of sin.

First, rest not satisfied with a general and a confused fight of sin, but labor to single out the chiefest of thy corruptions, to have a particular and distinct view thereof; this is the course that God's people have taken, *Acts 2:37*.

“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, Men and Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter doth not tell them that they were sinners in the general; but of all sins he doth single out one, ye have *crucified the Lord of glory*; and when they heard that, they were pricked at the heart: They singled out that sin to have their hearts brought to brokenness, and to contrition. When Christ would bring the woman of *Samaria* to remorse and trouble for sin, Christ did single out one sin of all, and told her, Thou art a harlot; and the Scripture gives you this hint, that the singling out that one sin, made her see all other sins, for saith the woman, Lo! *“Behold, the Man that hath told me of all that ever I have done;”* and yet Christ told her only of her adultery. Do thou thus what is that *Dallilah* that thou playest withal in thy bosom? Single out that sin, and that is the way to have a distinct view of all the evil; general and confused apprehensions of sin, doth but bring in a general humiliation; it hath been the undoing of a great many souls, to rest satisfied with general apprehensions of their guiltiness, they have lived and died without any saving remorse on their consciences. He that writes of *Bellarmino*, saith this of him, that when he came to die, (saith he) such was the innocence of that man, that he could not tell one sin in him that he was to make confession for, it did not arise from the innocence of the man, but it arised from an indistinct sight and observation of his ways. Beloved, this makes a man hard-hearted when he comes to die, that he hath not evangelical remorse in him, because he hath but a confused and a general view of sin. You read of *Ahimaz*, that was running in post haste to bring news what was done; *David* asked him, What news? Saith *Ahimaz*, *“I saw the battle, and I heard a tumult, and a great noise, but I know not what it was,”* 2 Sam. 18:29. Thus many men do with their sins as he did with his intelligence, they are

troubled for sin, but they know nothing but in the general; they know not what the sin is; just like *Nebuchadnezzar*, he called his magicians and enchanters together, saith he, tell me the interpretation of my dream, for I have dreamed, and I know not what it is. Some men say, they have sinned; but they do not know what sin they have committed, what particular sin they have done.

The second rule is this, look upon small sins clothed with great aggravations; beloved, this is the reason why men are not troubled, they look on their small sins as small, but do not look on them as clothed with many heinous circumstances: Suppose thy sin be a small sin, invisible as to the world, yet if thou wouldst clothe this sin with aggravated circumstances; it may be a sin against conscience; a sin against much mercy; it may be it is a sin committed after many purposes and vows. This course did *Justin* take in the second book of his Confessions, chap. 4, about his robbing the orchard: I did it, saith he, compelled neither by hunger nor poverty, but even through a cloyedness of well doing, and a pamperedness of iniquity; for I steal that of which I had enough of mine own, and much better, etc. and so he goeth to aggravate his sin. Beloved, when you find your souls not troubled for sin, clothe it with many heinous circumstances; and this we read of one that he would aggravate his sin, saith he, it is true, the Devils have sinned, but they never sinned against a Savior as I have done; *Adam* sinned, but he never sinned against a Christ as I have done: Do thou thus aggravate a small sin, and this will bring humiliation.

A third rule, live in the meditation of pardoning mercy; it is true, wicked men make pardoning grace a means of presumption; but pardoning grace rightly applied, is the most genuine way for the breaking and troubling of the soul; beloved, lay thyself in the arms of Christ, on the bed of his love,

and that's the way to break thy flinty and stony heart. A child of God cannot choose but to bathe his sins in the tears of contrition, that knoweth his sins to be bathed in Christ's blood in a way of satisfaction. I now come to give you some consolatory rules, which are four: Is there comfort to a man that doth find his heart hard, that seldom or never findeth his soul disquieted under the sense of sin?

First, be comforted, if what thou wantest in godly sorrow for sin, thou makest up in holy care and watchfulness against sin; if a child of God hath not a weeping eye for sin, yet if he have a watchful heart against sin, that is pleasing to God; if tears be not in thine eye for sin, yet if weapons of defense be in thine hand to contest and conflict with corruptions, that is most pleasing to God. The captain of our salvation, Jesus Christ, he had rather see a fighting weapon against sin, then a weeping eye for sin; that is one comfort.

A second comfort is this, that the want of trouble of soul for sin doth not always arise from a stupefied conscience, but from an ignorant mind; if conscience had an eye to see sin, conscience would have a hand to smite for sin; conscience doth therefore want a hand, because man's judgment wanteth an eye to discern what is evil.

A third comfort is this, that though a good man may not for some time be troubled for sin, yet at that time and in that case there is a great difference between him and a wicked man; he is not troubled, but he would be troubled; a wicked man is not disquieted, and he would never be disquieted; a godly man doth not mourn, but he would mourn, and would love that minister that should pierce his heart; a wicked man cannot endure him; there is a great difference between the one and the other: A good man dares not stifle the checks of conscience; a wicked man when conscience begins

to trouble him, he doth what he can to still the cries of conscience; when conscience doth arrest a wicked man for debt they run not unto God, they make conscience drunk with sensual pleasures and vain delights, that so they may run away from consciences arrest; but godly men dare not do thus, but they cry to conscience, excuse me when I do well, and accuse me when I do ill; this is the behavior of a godly man.

Lastly, take this for comfort, though thou hast not so much trouble for sin as thou dost desire, yet thou hast so much as God doth accept; this is a true rule in divinity, that the desire of any grace is the grace itself; for to believe, is faith; and true desire to repent, is repentance; and true desire to mourn for sin, is a mourning for sin; if thou dost desire a troubled heart, that is a holy trouble; this is a great mercy, that in Scripture account the desire of any grace is the grace itself: It is worthy your observation you read of *Nehemiah*, ch. 1:11. "*O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy Name; and prosper, etc.*" Compare that place with ch. 5:15. "*But the former Governors that were before me, were chargable unto the people, etc. but so did not I, because of the fear of the Lord.*" To note, that a desire to fear God, is a fearing of God; a desire to repent, is a repenting; a desire to be troubled, is a holy trouble, provided it be a solemn, sincere, and an insatiable desire after any grace: this we read of *Abraham*; when God comes to deal with *Abraham*, What saith God to him? Because thou *hast done this deed*, I will do so and so to thee; why he had not done this. Divines gather that in God's account the desire and intent of doing a good thing, is the doing of it; therefore when *Paul* records *Abraham's* act, it is said, by faith he did it. Beloved, it should be a great discomfort to ungodly men, that the Scripture should say thus to us, that a desire to do a sin, is the

sin; it is all one to God; therefore Christ telleth you *Matt. 5:28*. "*He that looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery in his heart.*" The desire and the act is all one to God though not to men; God looks on the lust of the eye, to be as the uncleanness of the act; he that is angry with his brother, *1 John 3:15*. "*Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer, and no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.*" God looketh on the desire to kill a man as if thou hadst killed him; now on the other hand, it should be a great comfort to godly men, that the desire of grace, is grace itself; I mention this to you that grieve because you cannot grieve; that do not mourn, but would mourn. Thus much for the consolatory rules. I shall only give you this use, and so I shall finish this doctrine about the disquietings of the soul; and that is a use of caution, to persuade you to take heed you do not run into false mistakes touching soul-disquiet for sin; the Devil may paint that which is not grace, and which is not trouble of conscience, and disquiet of mind for sin like it; which is my caution to persuade you that you would not be mistaken in this matter.

Five mistakes I shall give you cautions to take heed of:

First, take heed you do not mistake a natural melancholy, and take that to be a godly sorrow and trouble of mind for sin; many people whose tempers are sad, heavy, and dumpish, they apprehend melancholy to be a godly sorrow; there is a great difference between natural melancholy, and between spiritual trouble. First, natural melancholy hath many apprehensions in the fancy, in the imaginations; but spiritual trouble ariseth from the conscience, upon the sense of God's wrath, and the frowns of the Almighty, and the greatness of sin, and the evil thereof. Secondly, melancholy is cured by physic, *Gallen* is a proper help for a melancholy man; but all the physic in the world cannot allay the disquiet of a godly man's soul. Thirdly,

melancholy maketh a man sad, but he cannot tell for what; but a man under spiritual trouble saith thus, It is this sin gauls my conscience, and such a failing grieves my soul; which a melancholy man cannot do, he cannot tell that it is such a corruption I am guilty of. Fourthly, melancholy is discerned by his natural complexion, a heavy eye, a grizly look; but spiritual trouble on the conscience may be in the man that is of a merry, pleasant, amiable countenance; therefore divines observe of *David*, the Scripture telleth you he was a man of a ruddy complexion; the effect thereof is to be merry and pleasant; yet he did grieve and roar under disquietness of soul for sin. Again, melancholy doth impare the health of the body; but sorrow for sin doth not so. Again, a melancholy man cannot delight in God nor in duty; whereas a man under trouble of mind, though he be troubled for sin, yet he can rejoyce in God and delight in duty; Godly sorrow and spiritual joy are no way contradictory each to other, but rather subservient each to other.

Secondly, take this caution, do not mistake that to be trouble of mind for sin, which is only a trouble for some outward disaster in the world; when a man is troubled for the loss of a child, or for the loss of an estate, many men deceive themselves, and take their worldly sorrow for spiritual trouble; which if this were true, *Ahithophel* should be a troubled man for sin; he came home sad and hanged himself. Then *Haman* should have godly sorrow, for he was troubled for crosses in the world; he came home sad, and told all his friends what had befallen him. Beloved, you must not look upon worldly trouble to be spiritual trouble: but thus do when you find the heart overwhelmed with worldly trouble; O labor to direct it into spiritual trouble, to shed tears for sin, when thou sheddest tears for the loss of an estate; why turn that flood of tears to weep for sin, to turn the mill of godly sorrow, to grind thy heart to powder in the sense of sin; it is a debasement to tears to

be shed for every trifle: Beloved, to shed tears for worldly things, it is to be prodigal of your tears.

Thirdly, take this caution, do not conceive that to be trouble for sin that causeth shame among men; many reprobates are troubled for sin, but why? It is not because God receives dishonor by sin; but because they shall receive shame for their sin; This is not evangelical trouble. Many men are like *Judah*, *Genesis 38:23*. “*And Judah said, Let her take it to her, lest we be ashamed; behold, I send this kid, and thou hast not found her.*” As if he should have said, if the woman should tell that I have committed adultery with her, I should be ashamed, let her alone: Thus do men cry out, they would have conscience let them alone, and they would let sin alone, lest they should be ashamed; If so be that the concealing of a sin, can conceal their shame, they care not; why heathens went beyond this. It is a saying of *Seneca*, if I did know saith he, that all the men of the world should be ignorant of what sin I had done, yet I would not sin, because of the filthiness of sin. *Tully* hath a notable passage, and it is to be wondered at, that a heathen should go so far; saith he, that if I thought that all my sins could be concealed from all the world, yet we must do nothing covetously, nothing incontinently, nothing un justly, we must do no evil though the world should never see us. Many men are more grieved for sin because it is a shame to them; this is not a gracious and an evangelical trouble for sin.

Fourthly, account not that to be a right trouble for sin, which is rather for the punishment of sin, then for the evil nature of sin; more because there is a hell for sin, then that there is a hell in sin. *Cain* was more troubled for the punishment, then for the sin; he cried out, my punishment is more than I can bear; but *Cain* did not cry out, my sin is greater that I have committed.

Fifthly, account not that to be a right disquiet and trouble of soul for sin, that is only for great and gross acts of sin, without having any remorse for secret and lesser evils: many men if one stares them in the face, though all their other sins never trouble them, they conclude this to be godly sorrow and evangelical remorse in them. Alas, beloved, *Judas* was troubled for one sin, but not for another sin; he was troubled for ill gotten goods: but to be troubled for one sin, and not for all sins, is no Gospel sorrow; he that is not troubled for every sin that he knoweth that he is guilty of, he is troubled for no sin. Look upon wicked men, you shall see them many times troubled for great evils, but never troubled for smaller evils; those sins that disquiet a godly man's heart, shall not break a nap of sleep from him; he can go merrily and jocundly under the guilt of those sins which troubleth the soul and breaketh the peace of a godly conscientious man all his days; those sins that are ornaments to wicked men, that they can wear them as a chain of gold about their necks; they wear their pride, and show their pride; they account sin their ornaments. But that which is one man's ornament, is another man's torment; his pride, his lust, and his complemental oaths is his delight, but it is a torment to a godly man; therefore do not account that a disquiet of soul, to be a godly disquiet.

Again, do not account that to be an evangelical trouble for sin, when it is not for original sin, as well as actual sin. Mr. *Bolton* telleth you of a *Germain* in his time, that was a great professor of religion, and he was once overtaken in drink; I went to this man to show him the evil of drunkenness, to let him see what a beast-like sin it was, what a swinish sin it was; I labored to show him what this was; I labored to make him see the evil of a drunken nature; but he would yield to me that drunkenness was a bad sin, but he would not yield to the wickedness of nature; this man did bewail the

act of drunkenness, and fell to other sins; yet at last God troubled this man again, and being perplexed he sent for the same man again, and saith he, now I believe your words; I find an unclean heart, an adulterous heart, a drunken heart; I see it is now worse than a drunken act; and afterwards he never fell to those sins again.

Thus I have in seventeen sermons gone over the distresses the Psalmist here complains of; *“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me?”*

FINIS