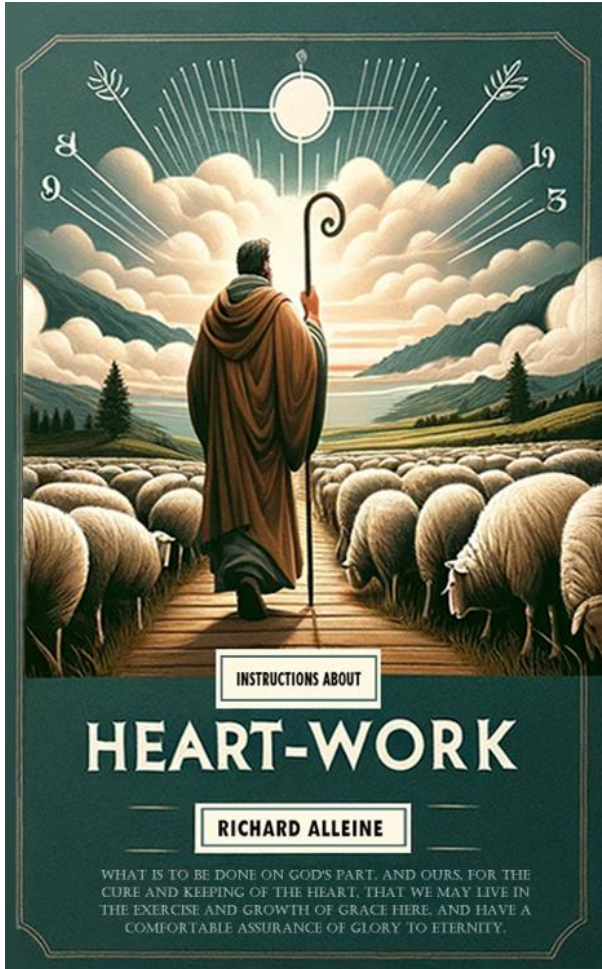


INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT

HEART-WORK

RICHARD ALLEINE

WHAT IS TO BE DONE ON GOD'S PART, AND OURS, FOR THE CURE AND KEEPING OF THE HEART, THAT WE MAY LIVE IN THE EXERCISE AND GROWTH OF GRACE HERE, AND HAVE A COMFORTABLE ASSURANCE OF GLORY TO ETERNITY.



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INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT HEART- WORK.

What is to be done on God's part, and ours, for the cure and keeping of the Heart, that we may live in the Exercise and Growth of Grace here, and have a comfortable Assurance of Glory to Eternity.

By Mr. RICHARD ALLEINE

That eminent Gospel-Minister & Author of *Vindicioe Pietatis*.

Zec. 1:5,6.

The Prophets, do they live forever? But my words— did they not take hold of your fathers? &c.

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TO THE READER.

This was the last Work of this blessed Author, and I wish the improvement of the scope of it, may be the first and last work of every Reader. That his Works have done good, very few have so many Heart-epistles of Commendation. O let nothing be wanting on your part, but that this may do more good. Were all our Swords of Contention beaten into Plough-shares and Pruning-hooks, for ploughing up the fallow ground of the Heart, for pulling up the weeds, and cutting off the luxuriance's of the Heart; were this the only Contention, who should most promote gracious heart-work both in themselves and others: this work would afford comfort both living and dying. We are everyone readier to find fault with others than to mend ourselves; but were heart-work more minded, we should have no time to spare for such excursions. This Treatise will instruct you in downright Christianity, which, would all those heartily mind that wear the name of Christian, we need not fear what Men or Devils could do against us. Let me assure you, it is more than a probable opinion, that unless we heartily mind plain practical godliness, it is presumption, not faith, to expect Deliverance. God holds us hovering upon our good behavior; our most infallible Prognostics, what God will do with us, are within us. It is not what we seem, but what we are; God looks at the heart: When the bent and frame of the heart is right, this cannot but influence the life; and when heart and life please God, nothing can come amiss to us; God's severest strokes will be blessings to us, but where the heart is neglected those Providences that are most grateful to flesh and blood will be curses to us. Christians, you know it is granted on all hands, that God looks most at the heart; therefore brutish Sinners, when they would evade conviction, boast of their hearts to excuse their ignorance and sottish profaneness, they will tell you their hearts are good; and thus the Father of Lies flatters them, and ruins them, with a good conceit of their hearts. On the other hand, the most serious Christians are always complaining of their hearts, that they are dead, fickle, false, unspiritual; and thus the Father of Lies discomforts them, by souring their very graces, their mortification, humility, holy jealousy, their hatred of sin, and sense of its encroachments, are warped by Satan to their discouragement. But now a clear and

practical understanding of the way of Grace, the way of Temptation, and the way of Duty about the Heart, will steer us right through all the difficulties and dangers we shall meet with on this side Glory. That this Book may be blessed to this end, is the hearty desire of a willing Servant of Christ and Christians,

SAMUEL ANNESLEY.

CHAP. I

Prov. 4:23-27

V. 23. Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.

V. 24. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.

V. 25. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee.

V. 26. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.

V. 27. Turn not to the right hand, nor to the left, remove thy foot from evil.

In these words you have observable, 1. A great Office that every man is set in, with respect to Himself; he is a Keeper. 2. The great Trust

that is committed to his care and keeping: that is, in general Himself; in particular, 1. His Heart, Keep thy heart. 2. His Lips, v. 24. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Keep thy mouth and thy Lips in order, keep them from speaking frowardness and from uttering perverse things. 3. His eyes v. 25. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee. Keep thine eyes open, look with thine eyes, and keep thine eyes from wandering, look right on. 4. His feet, v. 26,27. Ponder the path of thy feet, remove thy feet from evil. Let thine eye look right on, and let thy foot walk right on. Let thine eye see thy way before thee, and let thy foot walk in it, not turning out to the right hand or to the left.

Doctrine 1. Every man is appointed by the Lord to be his own Keeper. Where there is a depositum, there is a custos, he is a Trustee to whom there is a trust committed. Here take notice, 1. Every man hath other Keepers besides himself. God is his keeper. Psalm. 121:5. The Lord is thy keeper. Our Governors and our Teachers are our Keepers, every man is, or should be his brothers keeper. Magistrates are the Keepers of their Countries. Ministers are the Keepers of their Flocks and Congregations. Parents are the Keepers of their Children and Families. We should have but ill looking to, had we no other Keepers than ourselves; and all our other Keepers, Magistrates, Ministers, and Parents could do little towards the keeping of us, if the Lord also were not our keeper, Psalm 127:1. Except the Lord keep the City, the watchman watcheth but in vain. Magistrates will but govern us in vain, Ministers will but guide us in vain, Parents will but rule us in vain, unless the Keeper of Israel be our keeper. Oh bless the Lord, who though he hath put the care of us upon ourselves, yet hath not cast off the care of us himself. Let us bless the Lord for his care and custody, and let us both take care of ourselves, and also commit the care of ourselves to him. To both we are exhorted in one word, 1 Pet. 4:19. Commit the keeping of yourselves to him, in a way of well-doing. Take all the care you can of yourselves, and your own ways, and then cast yourselves upon God's care. Commit the keeping of yourselves to him, as unto a faithful Creator. Let us commit the keeping of ourselves to the Lord, and let us comfort ourselves in this,

that the Lord will take us into his custody, there we are in sure hands. He is faithful, and will keep what is thus committed to him. Beware you abuse not this comfort. Dare not say thus, God will look to me, and therefore I need not look to myself. He that will not keep himself, God will be no keeper of him. He that will not take care of his own soul, says in vain, I have committed that care to the Lord. If thou wilt not take care of thine own soul, thou leavest it to the custody of the Devil; and if thou dost, God will leave thee to him also. To say I commit the keeping of myself to God, and will not take care of myself, is the same in effect, as to say, I commit my soul to the custody of Satan. If thou take not care of thyself, God will not take care of thee; and if thou be kept neither by thyself, nor by the Lord, into whose hands art thou like to fall, but into the hands of the Devil? The Devil is a Keeper, yet not a Protector, but a Goaler, the Keeper of the Prison. All the Sinners of the Earth are Prisoners to this Goaler: and there is no man that escapes this Keeper, till he will faithfully keep and look to himself, and so commit himself to the Keeper of Israel.

2. Every man hath others to keep besides himself. Not only Magistrates, who are to keep their People; or Ministers, who are to keep their Flocks; or Parents, who are to keep their Children; but every man is to look to his Brethren. It was the Question of a wicked one, and it was a wicked Question, Am I my Brothers keeper? Yes thou art so, thou art to watch thy Brother, and to warn thy Brother, to prevent his falling into evil, and to restore and recover him when fallen, Gal. 6:1. If a man be overtaken with a fault, ye which are spiritual restore, &c. Thus every man hath other Keepers, and every man hath others to keep besides himself: But

3. In special, every man is his own Keeper; Deut. 4:9. Keep thine own soul diligently. And so in the Text, Keep thy heart with all diligence.

Reason 1. If thou wilt not keep thyself, all the World is not able to keep thee. Ministers will but preach to thee in vain, instruct thee in vain, warn and watch over thee in vain; Magistrates will but govern

thee in vain; Parents will look to thee in vain; if thou wilt not look to thyself. God himself will not keep thee, if thou wilt not keep thyself. Men cannot, and God will not; he will be no keeper of the careless ones.

2. If thou wilt not keep thyself, the Devil will be thy keeper. He will keep thee to thy wickedness, if thou wilt not keep thyself from it. This is every man's especial charge, to keep himself out of the hands of the Devil. The Devil will have thee, man, if thou look not to thyself; nay the Devil hath thee already, if thou be careless of thyself. God will keep none but those, that under him, will keep themselves. Those that will not keep themselves, the Devil may come and take them into his custody The Devil goes up and down the World, to see if he can find any Sheep without a Shepherd; and he that is not his own Shepherd, God will be none of his Shepherd. If thou wilt not keep thyself, God will not keep thee, thou art a Sheep without a Shepherd. Here's a man for me, saith the Devil, he hath none to look to him, nor will he look to himself. This is a man for me, I will be his keeper. He will not keep himself for God, I will keep him for Hell. He is none of God's Sheep, I will take him for one of my Goats. He is left out for me, he hath left out himself, and therefore God hath left him out, and I will take him into custody.

3. If thou wilt not keep thyself, then thou wilt never keep those others that are committed to thy keeping. What a Parent, what a Neighbor art thou like to be, who art careless of thyself? How are thy poor Children like to be looked too? How is thy Family like to be governed by thee, if thou keep not thine own soul? He that will not keep his own Vineyard, how will he keep another man's? He that neglecteth himself and his own soul, how will he mind the souls that are committed to him?

Use 1. Then no man must be a Sleeper or a Loiterer. Keepers must watch, yea and must work too; he that is set to keep himself, is as the Keeper of a Garden, or the Keeper of a Vineyard, and so it is expressed, Cant. 1:6. Mine own vineyard have I not kept. The Garden

hath a Wall to be kept up, hath Weeds to be kept under; the Vineyard may have wild Vines springing up and exuberant branches that must be pruned and lopped off. Thou hast thy hands full of work who hast such a Vineyard as thyself committed to thy keeping. What, standest thou all day idle? Work in thy Vineyard we live most of us, as if we wanted work and had nothing to do. We find something to do for this World, and our outward man, and therefore here we are busy; but we see not, we consider not how much we have to do for our souls, and therefore here we are idle, as if we had nothing to do; and those that have the greatest work lying upon them, whose work lies most behind hand, who have let all within them run to ruin, and lie all out of order, these are usually the men, that live as if they had nothing to do. Thou art a Keeper, man, a keeper of thine own soul and life; Is all in safety? Is all in good order? Look into thyself, and see to what a miserable case, for want of good looking to, thou art grown Conscience which is thy Wall or thy Fence is broken down, that little good that was in thee, thy Flowers are withered and plucked up, and how doth Weeds abound in thee, Pride and Lust and Covetousness? And those Thorns, the Cares of this life, how have they over-run thy ground? And dost thou yet loiter, as one that hath nothing to do? Thou hast work for every day, thou hast work for every hour. The Foxes are waiting, the wild Beasts (Satan with his temptations) are breaking in, the weeds are growing up every hour, behold thy case is growing worse and worse, thine eyes more blind, thy heart more hard, and senseless daily, up and be doing, look to thyself, keep thyself with all diligence, lest thou let all run to ruin so long, that it be past recovery.

2. Then every man must give an account of himself. Whoever hath a trust committed to him must be brought to a reckoning, how he hath discharged his trust. Rom. 14:12. Every one of us must give an account of himself to God. God that now says, keep thine heart, look to thyself, will then say, how hast thou kept thyself, What care or what pains hast thou taken? And oh, what account will the most of us be able to give!

Sinner, thou art a careless heedless soul, thou takest no thought about thyself; thou takest thought for thy Sheep and Oxen, thou takest care of thy House and thy Ground, but what thought dost thou take about thyself, thy miserable, sick soul, thy blind and dead soul; thy proud and earthly mind, thy envy and thy frowardness and thy malice and enmity against God and his holiness, those cursed weeds that thou art overgrown withal, that miserable plight that thy poor soul is in, do sufficiently evidence what a miserable keeper thou hast been of thyself. But man, what a reckoning dost thou think thou shalt give! Dost never think of being brought to a reckoning? Dost think that God will ever let thee alone? Dost think thou shalt never hear of thine idleness and this carelessness of thyself. Thy Parents must give an account how they have done their duty, how they have kept thee whilst under their power, whether they have taught, whether they have governed thee and educated thee in the Lord, and thou must give the same account how thou keepest, and teachest and governest thy child. Ministers also must give an account of thee, how they have instructed thee, warned thee, and watched over thee, Heb. 13:17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give an account. Think not much that we deal so plainly, and so closely with you, that we are so instant, in exhorting, in reprovng, in warning, and watching over you; We must give an account how we discharge our duty towards you. Parents must keep their Children, Ministers must look to their Flocks, and must give an account hereof to God; but besides this every man must give an account of [himself] to God. Rom. 14:12. How he hath obeyed them, that were set over him in the Lord, how far he hath hearkened to their counsels, whether he hath received instructions and submitted to their exhortations and reproofs whether their discharge of their work towards him, hath set him faithfully to his own work concerning himself. And, oh, what account will you give of yourselves to God? What have many of you done more than others, that have never had Ministers to take care of them? How little have many of you lived, better than those that never have been taught. Sinners, look into your hearts, look upon your lives, and understand, if you have so much understanding in you, in

what a miserable case you are to this day. Is it not a miserable thing there should be so much ignorance, after so much teaching? Are not those hard hearts, those barren and unsavory lives, much more, those lewd and wicked lives that some of you live, that Lying, and that Drunkenness, and that Sabbath-breaking, and that Covetousness that some of you still live in, are not these sufficient evidences, that whatever Ministers have been to thee, thou hast been a miserable keeper of thyself? And what a reckoning must you be brought to for this? Dost not think that God will reckon with thee for all? Reckon with thee for thy Lying, reckon with thee for thy Drunkenness, reckon with thee for all thy carelessness and negligence? What wilt thou say for thyself, when God shall demand of thee, How hast thou kept that Vineyard committed to thee? How hast thou kept that soul of thine? How hast thou ordered thy Life? How wilt thou stand speechless in that day, and receive the sentence of an unfaithful Steward, and an unprofitable Servant!

From V. 24. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Note two things:

1. The unruly evil must be ruled. The Tongue is an unruly evil, James 3:8. It is one of the hardest works that some Christians have to rule their Tongues: but yet it must be done.

Object. It is said it cannot be done, the tongue can no man tame. What, doth Religion put us upon impossibilities, to tame that member which cannot be tamed?

Sol. The meaning there is, that no man can tame another's tongue. Thou mayest rule thine own tongue, but if thou wilt not do it thyself, it is more than all the World can do to tame it for thee. Who can stop uncircumcised lips, who can silence the tongue of the froward? Neither Laws nor Penalties will do it, neither softest nor hardest answers will do it; when the tongue is set on fire, there is no water will quench it, and yet it must be done.

2. That which cannot be ruled, must be put away. Put away your froward mouth, put away perverse lips. Put away frowardness and perverseness from thee; frowardness cannot be ruled, perverseness cannot be kept in order. When we have done all we can, frowardness will be froward, perverseness will be perverse; and therefore that is the way to rule the tongue, to put away that frowardness which will not be ruled.

1. What frowardness is. I need not say much to answer that; most men know it too well in their own experiences of the froward ones they dwell, or have to deal withal. There are few men but know what frowardness is, unless it be those that are froward; the eye that sees others, yet cannot see itself. He that is of a froward mouth is hardly brought to understand that he is froward. He that hath a froward wife, she that hath a froward husband, they that have a froward neighbor, need not be told what frowardness is: but he that hath a froward heart, it is he that hath most need to be told it.

1. He is froward that is hard to be pleased, apt to be provoked, that is ever finding fault, who is like Tinder, apt to catch on fire by every spark, and that fire is quickly kindled, but hardly quenched; no arguments, no patience, no forbearance will do; but there it burns and will not be quenched, Eccl. 7:9. Anger rests in the bosom of Fools: of these froward Fools we are speaking of. Frowardness is folly. That fire which is intended as a revenge upon others, doth burn, and vex, and fret out their own hearts.

2. He is of froward mouth, that gives vent by his lips to the frowardness of his heart, in virulent and bitter and provoking language.

2. The necessity of putting it away. 1. The Lord commands us to put away froward mouths. What if thy Friend or thy Neighbor cannot pacify or silence thee, shall not God pacify thee neither? If thou wilt not hear Man pleading for peace and quiet, wilt thou not hear the Lord God neither? God commands thee silence, God commands thee

to hold thy peace, and to utter not a word more of thy furious folly: what a perverse spirit art thou of, on whom the authority of the Almighty will not prevail. What dost thou say in effect, but I will speak my mind whether God like it or not? 2. It is a sign whilst it prevails, that men's Religion is in vain, James 1:26. If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's Religion is in vain.

1. There are some professors of Religion, whose Religion is but an outside and pretense; they do but seem to be religious, they seem so to themselves, and seem so to others, but they are deceived, there is no such thing as Religion in them.

2. Some seem to be religious but bridle not their tongues, they pretend to be of circumcised hearts, but are of uncircumcised lips.

3. The unbridleness of their tongues, is an evidence that their Religion is in vain. When is Religion in vain? Why, when it cannot reach its end, when it cannot save the soul; and sure that Religion which cannot bridle the tongue cannot save the soul. Man, in what a case art thou? Thou professest Religion, and hopest for salvation; but if thou art of an unbridled froward tongue, thy Religion is vain, and cannot save thee.

3. Frowardness hinders all that little Religion that such men have in the exercise of it; it puts them besides Prayer, or Reading, or Meditation, or spending one serious thought upon Eternity, all Religion is thrust behind the doors when the froward fit is up.

Friends, pray do not make light of this grievous evil, turn every one of your eyes homeward, and reflect upon your own spirits and carriages; do not presently say, I am not guilty, or I am not much guilty this way, it may be it is for want of observing thyself. Look again, and again, how thou carriedst it at such a time, how to such or such persons; and you that are guilty, do not make light of it, do not count it a little fault. Is that but a small evil which proves thee a

hypocrite? Where this evil reigns and is not checked nor controlled by thee, is not mourned over, nor art thou ashamed of it, nor wilt resist it; when this evil reigns, it is a sign thou art but an hypocrite, and thy religion is in vain.

Christians, our Lord Jesus, whose Disciples we profess ourselves to be, and to learn of him, was meek and lowly, in heart, Mat. 11:29, and art thou his Disciple, who art of a proud and furious spirit? The Apostle tells us, that a meek and quiet spirit is an ornament to the Gospel, and of great price in the sight of God, 1 Pet. 3:4. If meekness be an ornament, then frowardness is a blot and a blemish, and a stain upon our Profession. If meekness be precious, then frowardness is odious in the sight of God. Wouldst thou make thyself a disgrace to the Gospel, an odium and an abomination unto the Lord? If thou wouldst not, then cease from thy frowardness, and study, and follow after that gentleness, that sweetness, and candor, and meekness of heart and behavior, which is so grateful both with God and men.

Friends, though I would not say much, yet finding it lie in my way, I would not pass by this evil without saying something, though but thus briefly to it. But though I have said but little, yet pray let not this little be forgotten, especially by any such among you, whose Consciences may tell you, God hath sent this Word as an Item to me.

CHAP. II

Doctr. from V. 26.

Every foot hath his path. There are two paths, in one of which everyone is walking. There is the good path, or way; and there is the evil path. These two are distinguished by their ends or term to which they lead; that is, the good path that leads to Good, called the path of

life, Psalm 16:11, that is the evil path that leads to Evil, the way of death and destruction, Mat. 7.

2. By their Adjuncts or Qualities. The good way is general, the way of Holiness; in particular, the way of Humility, Meekness, Temperance, Patience, &c. the way of Faith, and Love, and Prayer. The evil way is the way of Sin in general; and in particular, it is either the way of Lying, or the way of Covetousness, or the way of Pride, or Envy, &c.

But here note that the good way is made up of all these good Qualities, or else it cannot be the good way; but any one of the evil Qualities makes the way evil.

He that is humble and is not temperate, he that is temperate and is not patient, he that is patient and is not merciful, he whose life is not led in universal holiness, that hath any one grace wanting, is not in the good way, one Fly spoils the whole Box. Christians must stand complete in all the wills of God, Col. 4:12. But for the evil way, he that walks in any one particular branch of that, his way is evil. He that is not a Liar, if he be a Swearer; he that is not a Swearer, if he be a Drunkard; he that is not a Drunkard, if he be Covetous; he that is none of all these, if he be carnal, and walks after the flesh, or any one particular Lust thereof, he is in the evil way; the path of sin, if it be but any one sin, that is our path, or our way wherein we use and allow ourselves to walk; the path of sin is the way of death.

Now everyone in the World hath his path, is either in the good way, the way of Holiness; or the evil way, the way of Sin. And of those that are in the way of Sin, some are in the way of the Proud, others in the way of the Scornful, others in the way of Lying, others in the way of Covetousness, everyone hath his way.

Doctr. 2. Every path must be pondered. To ponder our ways, is to weigh and consider them; the same which is charged, Hag. 1:5. Consider your ways, spend some deep and serious thoughts upon them. Now there is,

1. A consideration of the ways that we have hitherto gone on in. A bethinking ourselves, a reviewing our course; this is that which the Psalmist did, Psal. 119:59. I thought on my ways that I had hitherto been walking in. I thought and repented of what I had done, I thought and turned. And this is that for which Israel was reprov'd, No man said, what have I done? No man said in his heart, no man thought with himself, what have I done?

For the Objects of these thoughts must be,

1. The matters that we have done, the particular actions of our lives. Carnal men never observe, or mark what they do; they never review or reflect upon their actions. How many words do men speak, how many works are men engaged in, that they never observe, or mark, or bestow one thought upon, they cannot remember their ways, because they do not observe their ways. Think what you have been doing all your life long; think what you have neglected to do, and think what you have done, and are doing to this day; let your eye be upon the particular actions of your lives.

2. The Quality of our ways, whether they are good or evil, whether they are holy or sinful. Thy way hath been the way of Lying, the way of Covetousness, the way of Pride, a carnal, careless, fleshly way; think with thyself, Is this a good way, or an evil way, do these my ways please God, or are they contrary to God?

3. The end of our ways, or whither they tend, and to what issue they will come at last. Is this my way to God? Is this the way of the everlasting Kingdom? Is this the path of life? Have I been all this while in the straight and narrow way that leads to life, or have I not hitherto been travelling in the broad way that leads to destruction? This worldly way, this fleshly way, it is that which hath pleased me at present; but whether will it bring me at last?

Sinners, bethink yourselves thus, Whither is it that I am going? What is like to be the end of this course I am taking? Either to God or the

Devil, either to Heaven or Hell, every one of you have been going, and which of the two have you been making towards? Is lying the way to God? Is Drunkenness and carnal mirth and pleasure, is this the way to Heaven? Is hardness of heart in your way? Is impenitence in your sin, is this the way to blessedness? Do not your own hearts tell you, I must turn out of these evil paths, I must take a new course ere ever I can be saved?

Be so wise as to spend some such thoughts. This is sinners great folly and their great misery, that they run on in their ways and we cannot persuade them to think whither they are going. But what is it of so little weight with you whether you are saved or damned, that it is not worth a few serious thoughts. Sure you could never go on at that senseless rate you do, if you did think whither you were going. We come and preach Christ and righteousness and holiness to you, as the only way of life; you have been often told that Christ is the way, and that no man cometh to the Father but by him, Jo. 14:6. And you have been told that there is no coming to God by Christ, to Heaven by Christ, unless there be a coming to Christ, a joining yourselves to him as his disciples and followers. Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out, Jo. 6:37, but will bring him to Life. You have been often told that without holiness no man shall see God, Heb. 12:14. That this way of Faith in Christ and this way of holiness is the only way of life, this hath been told you, this hath been preached to you over and over again and yet we cannot persuade you into this way. The reason is because you will not consider what we preach, you will not consider what it is to be damned and perish forever; you will not consider whether you can think of any other way by which it is possible to escape damnation but this way of faith and holiness. If you did consider and understand what a Hell it is whither your neglect of Christ and running on in your ways is leading you, how hot that furnace is into which you are like to fall within a few days, how dreadful it will be when you are in once, and shall feel the scorching of those flames. What think you, would not such scalding and burning thoughts make you weary of your sins, and willing of Christ.

Would they not awaken you, would they not affright you out of this secure and vain course that you are now going on in.

Where do you think your fellow-Swearers, and fellow-Drunkards and fellow-Worldlings that have been cut off in their sins and carried away into the other world in their impenitence, that were laughing with you, and mocking and scoffing with you a few years ago; where do you think they are now? What do ye think they are doing at this hour? O, it would make a heart of stone to tremble and quake to think what their companions that are dead in their sins do now see and feel. Think with thyself man, those that were a while ago drinking with me and laughing with me making a mock of Christ and of sin as I do, O where are they now? It would make thine eyes stare, and thine hair stand on end, and thy bones shiver to think where they are. O consider this ye that forget God lest he tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver you from that place of the dead, that place of Pitch and burning Brimstone, where you have reason to fear your companions in sin are frying at this hour. Whilst Christ is preaching to you, whilst God is yet a warning you to fly from the wrath to come! Oh how are they tearing their hair, and biting their tongue and wringing their hands to consider, that preaching of Christ to them shall be no more, that all their warnings are over, that they must forever feel and faint, and perish under that wrath which is now too late for them to fly from, or escape. Bestow some thoughts upon your companions that are dead and gone, and then consider yourself, whether if you keep on the ways you are walking in, you must not shortly be with them, in the same condemnation, and if yet you will not consider it presently as Jer. 23:20 in your latter end you shall consider it perfectly. Therefore yet again I say to you, and charge you from the Lord, consider your present evil ways and to what a fearful end they will certainly bring you, if you speedily turn not out of them.

2. Considering the ways that are before us, that we should for the future go on in. God hath given sinners their choice whether to continue as they are in the same way, or to take up a new and a better way of life. Think what you have done and how you have lived, and

think what you have now to do for the future, let thine eyes look straight on, &c. What course do you think it is best for you to take for the future? Dost thou think it is best to continue as at present, to hold on your worldliness, in your drunkenness, in your lying, in your carnal careless course; or is it not best for you to hearken to Christ, and to turn from your sins, and to betake yourself to a serious, godly and holy life? Which of the two is best? May be, it never came into your thoughts to put the question to yourself, but you have run on from one day to another, without asking, What were I best to do? Why, now here is that I would persuade you to; to look before you, and consider, What is best for you from henceforth to resolve upon; What would a wise man do in this case; what choice would a wise man make? Sure methinks, a little consideration should bring you to this, If I be wise I should turn and knock off from my wonted ways, I shall be a fool and a mad man if I go on thus. What doth God offer to pardon my neglects of Christ, my neglects of my soul, and all my sins, if I will yet but turn to him? What, doth Christ yet offer to bring me to God, and to save me from the Eternal Dungeon, if I will yet come unto him, and become a new creature? What will my going on as I have hitherto done, my spending the remainder of my life, as I have spent that which is past in sin and vanity, will this a running on upon mine own death, and a shutting up the door of mercy forever against me, and yet shall I continue as I am? Is there a way of life yet before me, is there a door of mercy, yet open to me, and shall I not get into the Way and be making towards the door? Consider sinners what is the best, the wisest and the only safe course to take from henceforth, and do accordingly.

2. Why must we ponder our paths?

1. God pondereth them. Is. 26:7. Thou weighest the path of the just.
2. The devil pondereth them, Luke. 22:31. That he may sift you as wheat.
3. Wicked men our enemies ponder them.

4. Our way may be right in our own eyes for want of consideration, when yet upon consideration it may appear to be the way of death. Prov. 14:12. There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

1. There is a way of some men that is not so much as right in their own eyes, who, as little as they do consider it, do see their way to be the way of death, and not of life; the way of the openly Profane, the way of the Drunkard, and Adulterer, the way of the Swearer, and Blasphemer. Profaneness doth not pretend to be the way of life, Drunkards and Adulterers know they are out of the way, their consciences tell them this is not the way of God, this is not the way to heaven; their conscience tells them I must turn I must repent, and take up a better way ere I die, I must not die a Drunkard I must not die a Blasphemer, or a Scoffer, I must repent or I am lost; and hopes they have that they shall repent, and this their hope hardens them, The consideration that such men should take up, is not to convince them that they are out of this way of life, that they know already; but to convince them of the necessity of a present turning and changing their way. Darest thou not to die a Drunkard, or a Libertine, or a Licentious Liver, how then darest thou to live so a day longer? Art thou sure but that death may meet thee before thy turning day comes? And how if it should? Thou knowest that then there is no hope of thee, but Everlasting wrath must be thy portion. Thou countest upon turning and repenting, but consider what is the reason thou dost not repent at present, that thou dost not this day give a divorce to all thy wickedness, shake hands with all thy companions, and forthwith become a new man. Why not now? O I cannot bring mine heart to it. And dost thou in good earnest think that it will be easier hereafter? Hath the Lord been persuading thee to a change all thy life long, and thou seest his word cannot prevail, thou seest it doth not after all thy convictions, and fears, and threatening's of the Word and checks of thy conscience, hitherto thou goest on, thy lust is too hard for thy conscience, or convictions, and dost thou think in thy heart that this is the way to make it easy to repent, to continue longer in thy sin? A course of sin hardens thee, sinner. Thine heart is

not so hardened against repentance this year, but look for it, thou art like to find it harder the next year. The farther thou goest on in sin the farther off art thou from repentance.

2. There are others whose ways are right in their own eyes, which consideration would make appear to be the way of death and not of Life. I shall instance in two sorts.

1. The ways of moral unbelievers. These are they that are sober and temperate, and harmless, and just in their dealings with men, and courteous and good natured, this is their way and this way seems right unto them, in this way they hope to come to heaven, though whatsoever they have of morality they have nothing of Christianity in them. Conversion or Regeneration are as strange things to them as they were to Nicodemus. Jo. 3:3, who when Christ told him, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God, he answered, how can these things be? And they have need to ask as Pilate did, what is truth? So they, what is this new birth? What is this new creature? What is this conversion? Consider man, what dost thou think of this plea at last when this is all thou canst say, I am an honest man, but God help me, no good Christian, I am no drunkard, but yet an unbeliever: I am no Liar nor Swearer, but yet no convert to Christ. Consider those scriptures. Jo. 3:3, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God: And Mat. 18:3. Except a man be converted he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. And dost thou bless thyself in thy harmless and less vicious way, when thou hast never felt any such thing as Regeneration upon thee? This thy way is thy folly, and though it be right in thine own eyes yet it is, and thou will find it to be the way of death.

2. The way of hypocritical professors. Some hypocrites know themselves hypocrites, and the way seems not right to them; others are hypocrites, and yet take themselves to be sincere and the deceit of their hearts may be so deep that there is need of deep consideration to discover it. They pray and they hear, and have some face of Religion upon their ways; they will speak of God, and the

things of God with some affection and live in the visible communion of the church with good approbation, they are it may be, well reputed and well reported among all men, and yet for all that, the root of the matter may not be in them, they may be unsound and rotten at heart, and neither themselves know it, and others suspect it, there may be some secret reigning lust in their hearts, they may be lovers of the world, lovers of their ease or their pleasures more than lovers of God, Whatever they have, there may be one thing lacking, as it was the case of the young man, Mar. 10:21, whose life was commendable in many things, yet says Christ, one thing lackest thou, and that one lack was loss of heaven. And have we not all need to consider ourselves, and to consider deeply how it is with us. A sincere Christian is an entire Christian. Psal. 119:1. Blessed are the undefiled that is the entire in their way; that labor to be entire lacking nothing; and sure we had need consider whether we are or no.

Some Professors are so lame and halting in their way that they lack many things almost all things of serious Christianity. Thou hast the profession of Christianity, but is not the power of it lacking? Thou dost some of the works of righteousness, but may not the Lord complain of thee as of Sardis. Rev. 3:2. I have not found thy works perfect before me; thou dost some of the works of Christians, but are not the inward graces lacking? Some of the inward graces thou seemest to have, but art thou not wanting in others? Thou seemest to have faith, but is not love lacking? Art thou not a malicious, revengeful, quarrelsome Professor? Thou seemest to have love, but is not humility lacking? Art thou not proud and haughty, and high minded? Thou seemest to be humble, but is not meekness lacking? Art thou not fierce and froward, and peevish in thy way? Thou seemest to be meek, but is not patience lacking? How canst thou bear affliction, dost thou not murmur and repine and vex thyself in the day of adversity? Thou seemest all this; but art thou true in thy sayings, righteous and exact in thy dealings, merciful and compassionate, and bountiful to those that are in necessity? Thou seemest to have all these inward graces; but is not a bold profession of Christ lacking? Thou art bold to own Christ and hear his Word,

even to come in hazard; but whatever thou canst say of thy hearing, is not Prayer lacking? If thou pray in secret, is not prayer in thy Family lacking? If thou pray in thy family, is not secret prayer lacking? If Prayer be both in secret, and in thy Family, is not Family-instruction, the teaching thy family, the care of their souls, lacking? If there be some care of others in thee, is not the communing with thine own heart lacking? Is not self-examination lacking? Dost thou search thy heart, and try thy ways as thou oughtest? Dost thou make a diligent search, a narrow search in fear lest thou shouldst be mistaken? If there be self-converse, and self-acquaintance, dost thou maintain a converse with God, is not holy Meditation lacking? How often dost thou look heaven-wards, what time dost thou spend daily in serious meditation of God and the things above? If there be such acts exercised, the actings of Faith, the actings of Love, the actings of holy Prayer, the actings of holy Meditation, What life is there in these actings? Are they not all as dead things, Sacrifices without a heart, Images without life? If thou thinkest there be the presence of every Grace, a will to every Duty, an enmity against every Sin, what power is there accompanying them? What power in duty, what power against every sin? Doth not the corruption of thy heart bear down that grace thou thinkest thou hast, and carry thee down the stream of an evil and vain life? If there be some good will to a godly life, is not power lacking?

It is true, the best of Christians have much lacking in degree, their faith is weak, their love is imperfect, but is there nothing lacking of the essential parts of a Christian? Thou not only lackest strength of Faith, but it may be thou lackest Faith, thou not only lackest strong love, but thou lackest love. A child, though he hath not the understanding of a man, or strength of a man yet may be a true child, but if he want the soul of a man, or the head, or the heart of a man, he is a monster and no human child. Is not the soul, or the life of Christianity, the head and the heart of a Christian, the life of a Christian lacking in thee? If so, thou art but a Monster and no Christian. Is there not the conscience of a Christian lacking in thee? Is not thy Christian covenant lame and imperfect? Hast thou

covenanted universally for all the parts of Christianity, for every duty, against every sin without any reserve, of the least liberty from our duty to any sin? And is thy conversation entire according to thy covenant? Is there nothing allowedly lacking in thy conversation of all that thou hast covenanted with the Lord? Or whatever thou dost, Is there not life, and soul, and heart lacking, in all that thou dost? Thou prayest, but dost thou not pray without a heart? Thou hearest, but dost thou not hear without a soul? Thou seemest a follower of Christ, and livest in the practice of his precepts, but is there not life lacking in all thy duties?

O consider over all these particulars, and consider how many things are lacking in you. 1. Consider, and fear, lest when you come to be weighed in the balance, you should then any of you be found wanting; lest when you come to die and expect entrance into the Everlasting Kingdom, Christ should then say to you, no, you cannot come in, one thing is lacking in thee, one thing that is necessary to thy entrance, one thing lacking in thee of the essence of a Christian, all would be lost, thy soul lost, the everlasting kingdom lost. Consider therefore and fear.

2. Consider and be humbled, and be ashamed, that after all the time you have had, and all the helps and means you have had, and all the tenders and offers the Lord hath made to supply all your lacks; be humbled and be ashamed, that yet there is so much lacking, and all this for want of an heart to accept and improve what hath been offered; let us be humbled and ashamed, friends, that if we have anything of the faith of God's elect in us, yet We are so weak in the Faith, that if we have anything of the love of Christ in us, yet that our love is so cold, and imperfect, that if we are found walking in the way of the Lord, it is so slowly, and so haltingly. This is our shame and matter of great humiliation, that we have gotten no more grace, that we live no better lives. But what shall I say to you that want not only the strength of Faith, zeal of Love, a more even and steady, and fruitful life, but want Faith, and want Love, and are not yet come into the ways of the Lord. I say to you, as I said before, fear and tremble;

think what it will be to be found thus in the day of the Lord. But to you that have Faith, and have no more, that do in some degree live by Faith, and yet live no better, consider, and be ashamed; consider, and be confounded in yourselves; consider, and be humbled under all your wants and halting's.

3. Consider, and make up what is lacking. Get those poor weak souls to be strengthened; pray the Apostles Prayer, Eph. 3:16. That the Lord would grant unto you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might in the inner man, and your hearts may be filled with all the fullness of God. Get those poor weak souls to be strengthened, and get those halting and barren lives to be established, and filled with the fruits of righteousness. Take the counsel of the Apostle, 2 Pet. 1:6. 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 charity, that these things may be in you and abound, that ye be no longer barren, and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Brethren, whilst heedless and inconsiderate ones are upon the losing, oh, consider how you may be upon the getting hand; whilst they are abating, be you for abounding, let there be an adding daily to you, be not satisfied with the grace you have, with the duties you do; but let your eye be upon adding daily to your store, whilst others add sin to sin, guilt to guilt, let it be in your hearts to add grace to grace, fruit to fruit. Consider what is lacking in you, and follow after a supply; follow after it by your earnest desires, follow after it by diligent labor, and endeavors, and follow after it by incessant and importunate prayer unto the God of all grace, that he would cause all grace to abound towards you, and in you, that having all-sufficiency in all things, you may abound to every good work.

Brethren, it will be a mercy if these words may have such fruit upon you, as to set your hearts upon getting and adding daily to your grace, and good fruits, and then a considering how you may most

effectually improve accordingly. I pray receive the Exhortation in the name of the Lord, I beseech you forget it not, ponder your paths, consider what is lacking, what is lacking within, to set your outward man a going, what is lacking without, in your goings that need a supply. Consider what you would have God do more for you than yet is done; consider what you would do more for God than you have done; in what particulars you fail, and wherein you would be especially helped forward. Consider and desire, desire and labor, labor and pray that the Lord would fill up whatever is wanting in you, and then I shall be bold to assure you in the words of the Apostle, Phil. 4:19. My God shall supply all your needs, according to his riches in glory by Jesus Christ, to whom be praise forever. Amen.

CHAP. III

Keeping the Heart

Doctr. The great care that lies upon every man in the World, is to keep his heart. There are many cares that lie daily upon us, we have our Estates, and our Names, and our Families, and our Bodies to take care of; but our great care must be of our Hearts

1. What is meant by Heart. This is sometimes taken for the principal part of the body of man, sometimes for the soul of man; so Jer. 17:9. The heart is deceitful and wicked: that is, the soul is deceitful. Sometimes for the will and affections of the soul, so, 1 Chron. 28:9, here it is taken for the whole soul, and this command, keep thy heart, is the same with that in Deut. 4:9, keep thy soul diligently.

What is the Soul? Most men know not what, and none of us know perfectly what a Soul is. It is our inward and invisible substance which gives life to our bodies; it is an essential and the most excellent part of us, That hath most of the nature and image of God in it. It is

our immortal part, that hath life in it, and gives life to the body, and never dies. Our Reasons and Wills, whereby we differ from Brutes, these are the essential faculties of our souls. The Soul is that, in which our capacity lies, of the highest blessedness, and the extremity of misery. The blessedness of the Soul is the highest blessedness. The Body as such, is capable of no greater happiness than a Beast is capable of; only the pleasures of sense: the Soul is capable of spiritual and eternal pleasures; the torments of the Soul are most exquisite and intolerable torments: the burning of the Body is nothing in comparison of the wrath of God burning in the Soul.

The excellency of the Soul above the body, you may guess at, by considering what the Body is when the Soul is departed. What a ghastly thing, what a stinking and rotten Carcass doth the most beautiful Body become when it is dead, and the Soul is departed. It was this, the Soul of Man that was the great prize that Christ had in his eye, when he died to redeem us, he died to redeem souls, especially to recover that blessed immortality that our Souls had lost; the natural immortality they had not lost. That is a great part of our misery, that sin left us immortal Creatures, such, of whose misery there shall never be an end. It was not our natural immortality, that Christ died to recover, that was not lost, but our blessed immortality. This invisible, immortal, most excellent part of Man, his Soul; this is it which we are to understand by Heart. Keep thy heart, that is, keep thy soul.

2. What it is to keep the heart.

1. There is somewhat that is supposed to the keeping of our souls, and that is, the recovering them out of their lost state. The Devil hath the keeping of Sinners souls, whilst they are sinners, and the first work they are to do in order to the keeping their souls, is to get them back out of the Devils hands. That they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil, 1 Tim. 2:26.

Here I shall show you these three things:

1. The Souls of all men naturally are lost.
2. Men's souls are not so lost here, but that they are recoverable
3. This must be man's first care, to recover their lost souls.

1. The souls of all men naturally are lost souls. It may be said of every sinner, as the father of the prodigal said of him, Luke. 15:32. This my son was lost, Fathers, you may say of every child you have, whilst they are in their natural state, this my son is lost, this my child is a lost child, yea and you may say the same of yourselves, whilst in your sins, mine own soul is a lost soul; and whether you will say it or no, we must say to every one of you, fathers and children, that are yet in your sins, you are lost souls. As Christ came himself, so he hath sent us in his name, to seek and to save them that are lost. Luke 16:10. What is it to be lost? Why, it is the same as to be damned; to be damned persons, signifies to be lost, and to be lost, in this spiritual sense is to be damned: So that word, 2. Cor. 4:3. If the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, to them that be damned, that is, in a state of damnation, and in the way to actual and everlasting damnation. O tremble sinners, tremble all you that are yet in your sins; what will you tremble at, if not at being damned; the word calls every man of you, that are not in Christ, Reprobates from God. 2 Cor. 13:5. Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? Is Christ in thee? Art thou a convert to Christ? No? Then thou art a reprobate from God, thou art a damned, lost soul; live and die in this estate thou art in at present, and thou art eternally lost. What mean you sinners, that you are so much at ease so much at rest in your state of sin? Is it nothing to be damned? Is it nothing to be Reprobates? O think what it will be, to be found Reprobates at Judgment, and then to have the sentence of reprobation pronounced upon you why sure sinners, the very next misery to that, is to be in a state of reprobation. O take this home to you, as your portion from the Lord, every unconverted one, take this word home to you; take it into your own mouths, O what shall I do! I am a lost child, I am a lost soul; woe is me I am undone, a son of perdition and an heir of

damnation. What is it to me, that I have kept my body in good case, that I am in health? What is it to me, that I have kept my estate, and have not been such a prodigal of that? That I have my house, and my lands, and my money, what is it that I have kept my credit, and my friends? O my soul, my poor soul is lost, and what good shall my estate, or my health, or my credit, or my friends, or my life do to me.

2. Men's souls are not so lost here, but that they are recoverable. In a little time, if they look not to it, they will be past recovery forever. Yet a little while and the Gospel will be a sealed Book to you, never again to be opened, yet a little while, and the door of mercy and grace will be shut against you, never again to be unlocked. When death hath once sealed up sinners eyes, when the grave hath shut her mouth upon them, then everyone of you that is found in his sins, the Gospel is sealed up, the door of mercy is shut up, and thou wilt be lost forever, irrecoverably lost. But yet sinners, these lost souls may be recovered. There is great hazard at present, that thou mayest not be recovered, but yet there is hope.

1. There's great hazard at present that thou mayest not be recovered. Do not make light of the hazard that is, do not make sure, say not such a word, I doubt not but by the grace of God I shall have mercy, and be saved, Ther's great hazard that that soul of thine which is a lost soul this day, may be lost forever, and never be converted and saved.

How great that hazard is, I have formerly told you out of the Pulpit, and now you may read the same things from the Press, namely in my discourse on Prov. 28:14, read that book carefully once especially from p, 171, to page 198, where you may understand how great hazard there is, that lost souls may not be recovered.

2. Yet there is hope thou mayst be recovered. For;

1. Your souls are yet every one of them, within the reach of the blood of Christ. You are come to that blood of sprinkling, Heb. 12:24.

Which speaks better things than the blood of Abel. There is not one Sinner among you, but at present the blood of Christ speaks for you; and what doth it speak? Father, if this Sinner turn and repent, let him not be rejected; let him be pardoned and be saved. For Believers, it speaks thus, Father these my Friends have believed, and have repented, and therefore I pray thee, let them not fail of having the benefit of my blood, let them not fail of their pardon and salvation. Thus for Saints, and even for every unconverted Sinner it speaks conditionally, *ut supra*, if they will believe, if they will yet turn, let them also have the benefit of my blood. Hitherto every one of you are thus far within the reach of the blood of Christ; it pleads thus with the Father for you, and if you will come in, will make an atonement for, and redeem and recover you from all your sins.

When once Death hath closed your eyes, in your unconverted estate, you are gone forever out of the reach of the blood of Christ, it can now no longer profit you, nor plead for you. There is not one drop of that precious blood shall ever fall into the Pit, nothing of the blood of Christ shall come into Hell, and find you out there, but only the guilt of his blood, that shall fall upon Sinners in Hell, the guilt of despising his blood, the guilt of trampling on his blood. This is all that shall be said to sinners there, in the Pit, these are they that would none of me: I would have washed them with my blood, but they would not be washed; I would have saved them by my blood, but they would not be saved: I called upon them to turn from their sins, and come unto me, but they would not turn, they would not come: I offered to purge them from their sins, to pardon and make, reconciliation for their iniquities, but they would not be pardoned nor purged; they loved their sins, and hardened their hearts, and threw back my blood in my face, they would none of me; and now let the guilt of my blood, be upon them, to heighten their flames, and burn in their bowels forever.

The guilt of his blood shall reach to Hell, but the expiation and atonement of his blood shall never come there. After Death, there is

nothing but Hell, and out of Hell there is no recovery, those Sons of Perdition are lost forever.

O thank God, Sinner, that thou art not yet fallen in thither; thank God that that soul of thine is not in Hell. How many younger sinners than thou are there already, roaring under the sense of their madness, in neglecting Christ and his Redemption. O thank God, that thou art here, thank God that thou art yet alive, that Christ yet calls to thee to come to him, that Christ yet offers thee, that if thou wilt but turn and repent, his blood shall cleanse thee from all unrighteousness, and save thee from coming into condemnation.

Sinner, there is yet hope of thee, that thou mayest be saved, though there be hazard, great hazard, that thou wilt yet harden thy heart to thy destruction, that thou wilt never be converted and be saved; there is great hazard that though thou be yet out of Hell, thou wilt be there shortly, though thou art yet within the reach of the blood of Christ, thou wilt in a little time be without its reach; but though there be such great hazard that thou mayest die forever, and be irrecoverably lost, yet there is at present hope concerning thee, that thou mayest be recovered; and there is this hope concerning thee, that thou art yet within the reach of the blood of Christ. O thank God for it, and do not go on to harden thy heart, till thou art past recovery. I say again, thank God that thou art here, but yet I must add, thank God and repent, thank God and be converted, or else it were even as good that thou wert in Hell this hour, as to be here in thy sins: nay, it were better for thee that that body of thine were now rotting in the Grave, and that soul of thine were now roaring in Hell, this would be better for thee than to be here hearing the Gospel, if after all thou shouldst live and die unconverted, and so go to Hell at last. These very warnings that now thou hast, if they should not work upon thee to turn thee from thy sins, and bring thee to Christ; if the Gospel should leave thee in the case thou art this day, thou wilt to Hell as sure as if thou wert there already; and then all that thou now hearest, or shalt ever hear whilst thou livest will but heat thy Furnace seven times the hotter against thou comest down. But because there

is yet hope, thou mayest be converted, thank God thou art here, for there is hope as from this first ground, because thou art within the reach of the blood of Christ; so

2. There is hope from this, that sinners are yet under the ministry of reconciliation: as the Apostle, 2 Cor. 5:19. To us is committed the word of reconciliation, So we may say to sinners, to you it is given to hear the word of reconciliation; it is for your sakes that this word of reconciliation is committed to us, that we might preach it unto you. God hath not only continued you within the reach of the blood of Christ, but under the teachings of his Ministers, whose work it is to tell you how you may have the benefit of his blood, to make a tender and offer of this blood of Christ to you, and to persuade and make you willing to accept it; we are sent to preach Christ unto you, and to make known unto you what help there is in Christ for you, and what freedom you have given you to lay hold on Christ; and also to persuade and bring you into Christ, that you may have the benefits of his blood. It is a strange word we have given us, Luke 14:28. Compel them to come in. Go and call poor sinners to me, and if they be not willing to come, compel them in; not force them in whether they will or no: Christ will not have any sinner against his will, but compel them, that is, use all the importunity you can, to make their unwilling souls willing; use such arguments, as if it be possible, they may not be able to resist; and though they do resist, yet do not give them over so, but do your best by your importunity to overcome their resistance.

Go, says Christ to his servants, fetch in all the sinners in the Country to me, here is room for them all, as many as there are come already, yet there is room for more, v. 22. Let my house be filled with guests, filled with Converts; go find out these poor wretches where they lie rotting and perishing in their sins, and bring them in. Christ doth not say to his Ministers concerning sinners, as once he did to his Disciples concerning little children, Mat. 9:14. [Suffer] little children to come to me, suffer poor sinners to come to me, do not put them back, or discourage them when they would come, but persuade them

in, help them in, press them to come in, beseech them to come and be reconciled to God, I am not willing that any of them should perish, but that all should be brought to repentance, and obtain everlasting life, 2 Pet. 3:9. This is the business of our Ministry, and this Ministry of reconciliation, thou poor sinner art under to this day.

Now does not all this give sinners hope that yet they may be recovered? Why, hath God let thee live to hear this word? Why hath God brought thee hither this day to hear it? What, canst thou not say, I hope it is that I may be converted, I hope it is that I may be recovered? The Lord yet comes among you to tell you what you must do to be saved, what you must do to get Christ to be yours, to preach repentance to you, that you may recover yourselves out of the snare of the Devil, who are held captive by him at his will, 2 Tim. 2:26.

Sinners, You are all Prisoners and Captives, but yet you are Prisoners of hope? You are dead souls, but there is hope you may be made alive; you are lost souls, but there is hopes you may be found. There is hazard that you may be quickly irrecoverably lost, but some hopes there is you may be recovered.

O will you come to Christ, will you come to the means grace, as men of hope! Hear the Word, in hope that it may work savingly upon you; pray for such a work, in hope that God may hear, though all the sinners among you, in one sense are men of hope, yet in another sense the most of sinners are men of no hope; in this sense you are all men of hope, that there is a door of hope yet open to you; but in this sense you are men of no hope, that is, if you continue as you are, there is no hope but you must perish. A wild and groundless hope too many sinners have; they hope against hope, they hope for recovery without using the means of recovery, they hope for salvation without reconciliation, they hope for remission without repentance, they hope to be redeemed from death without being redeemed from iniquity; this is to hope against hope, this is to hope for that of which there is no hope. There is no hope of salvation without repentance,

no hope of escaping without returning. Ministers of the Gospel are to break down such false and deceitful hopes, not to build them up.

That which, from what hath been said, I would persuade you to, is to hope for salvation, and in that hope to look after conversion; to hope for conversion, and in that hope to hear the converting word; to hope for a new heart and life, and in that hope to pray that God will give you this new heart. Dare not to sleep in hope, to sin in hope, to harden yourselves in your sins, in hopes of forgiveness; pray in hope, hear in hope, humble yourselves in hope, turn in hope, that God will accept and be merciful to you. When you come to hear, do not come as most sinners do, not knowing or considering wherefore they come together: but when thou goest to hear and to pray, go with this hope in thine heart, I am going to hear the word of Faith, the word of Repentance, and I hope God will bless it to me, that it may work Faith and Repentance in me. I am going to hear the heart-breaking and the heart-humbling word, the converting word, and I hope the Lord will humble, and break, and convert me by it. I have often heard, and have been never the better; hitherto I have not been humbled, and broken by it: this wretched heart is as dead and as hard as if it had never been preached to. Well but doth the Lord yet again call me forth to hear this word? O I will go in hope, that yet at last it may work upon me.

Hope hath two things in it, Desire and Expectation. This is the hope I would persuade you to come to the word in, to come with desire to be wrought upon, and expecting and looking for such a gracious work. We may say concerning this first coming of Christ into the heart, as is said concerning his coming to Judgment. Heb. 9:28. To them that look for him shall he appear without sin unto salvation. So to those that look for him, shall he appear to their sanctification. Look to meet with Christ this day in his word, look for Christ's coming down to meet with you this day, desire that he would, pray that he would, and expect and look for his coming down, and appearing to you. This is the hope, wherein I would exhort you to attend on the means of grace, with desires and expectations of the gracious success of them

upon you. And if you would thus come to hear in hope it would much encourage us, to preach in hope to you, and to pray in hope for you.

Well to conclude this, let every sinner of you know that whilst the word of reconciliation is continued to be preached to you, so long there is hope concerning you, that you may be recovered. There is hazard, great hazard, a great doubt whether you may be saved, a great fear that many of you may never be converted and saved, but though there be hazard yet there is hope.

CHAP. IV

The Greatest Care

3. The great care that lies upon every sinner in the world, should be that he get to be recovered out of his lost state, 2 Tim. 2:25:26. Instructing those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance that they may recover themselves, out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

Here observe. 1. That lost sinners are in the hands of the Devil, taken captive by the Devil, held in the snares of the Devil. That is a lost soldier, that is fallen into the hands of his enemies; That is a lost sheep that is fallen into the paw of the Wolf; That is a lost soul that is fallen into the snares of the Devil, and in those hands are every lost soul. How art thou so secure sinner, how so merry, how so much at ease? Dost thou know where thou art? Thou art in the hands of the Devil, that soul of thine is taken captive by the Devil, and lies bound in his snares; the Devil hath taken thee, and the Devil hath bound thee that thou canst not get loose. O it were well if sinners understood their case and in whose hands they lie. There is never a one of all the sinners among you, but the Devil hath him in custody. Whither ever thou goest, the Devil goes with thee, to watch thee that

thou mayst not escape him. If thou goest to read, the Devil goes with thee to thy Bible, to hinder it from working upon thee, if thou goest to pray, the Devil goes with thee to hinder thy praying; and now thou comest hither to hear, the Devil comes to Church with thee, to harden thine heart against the Word.

Thou dost not see the Devil here, and thou dost not think he is here, but thou mayest know by the effect, that he hath been here with thee, every day and at every Sermon, thou mayst know it by this, that the Devil hath been here with thee, that the Word hath prospered no more with thee, to the rescuing thee from his snares, and he that hath been here is now come again, and he is now watching thee that thou hearken not to the recovering Word.

2. That lost sinners oppose themselves against their own recovery. [Instructing those that oppose themselves] that is, that resist the word of grace, that Deafen their ears and harden their hearts against it. Acts 7:51. Ye have always resisted the holy ghost. The word of God comes, and the spirit of God comes to convert sinners, but they resist their own mercy. The enmity that is in their hearts, opposes itself against the Word and spirit. Mat. 23:37. How often would I have gathered you, but you would not!

3. The end of preaching the gospel to sinners, is to recover their lost souls; Instructing them &c. that they may recover themselves out of the snares of the Devil. To open the blind eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, Acts. 26:18. We are sent as Christ was, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the opening the prison to them that are bound; and not only so, to preach upon the prison doors, but to persuade the prisoners to come out of prison. Is. 46:9. That thou mayst say to the prisoners, come forth. God hath sent us with this word to you, that are imprisoned under Satan, come forth poor prisoners, come forth out of prison. Sinners give no better entertainment to us, than if our word to them were, come into prison, come into bondage; they take that word, come into Christ, as if it were the same, with come into prison, come

into bondage; that Christianity which we persuade sinners to, they look upon it as mere bondage: but whatever sinners think, our business is to persuade them out of their house of bondage. Come shake off your chains, knock off your fetters, break that yoke of the Devil which is upon your necks, get you loose from those sins and those lusts, wherewith the Devil hath held you, and come unto Christ; it is no bondage to be a Christian, Christ's servants are all free-men; you are all bond-men already, in the bond of Iniquity. Acts. 8:23. But who among you would be set at liberty? What do you mean sinners, will ye die Bondmen? We may say concerning you as Christ concerning the woman, Luk. 31:16. Whom Satan hath bound these 18 years. You are the men whom Satan hath bound; not only these 18 years but some of you these 38 years, nay some it may be those 60 years or more. Have you been bound so long bound by the Devil, and are you not willing to be loosed? Will you go prisoners to the Grave? From this upper prison, shall the Devil carry you down into the eternal prison? O sinners, that is our business from God to you to persuade you to make an escape, and to be recovered, out of the snares of the Devil.

4. Sinners recovery begins in their repentance. If God give them repentance that they may recover. They are only the penitent, that are recovered souls, As long as thou art an impenitent sinner thou, art a lost soul. Acts. 28:27. Lest they should be converted and be healed; a converted sinner, is a healed, a recovered sinner.

5. It is God that recovers lost souls. If peradventure God may give them repentance that they may be recovered. It is the Devil that takes sinners captives, but it is God that rescues the prey from his teeth. It is the Devil that leads men to sin and holds them under sin, but it is God that gives them repentance. Is thine heart hardened in thy sin? Is thy heart hardened against repentance? Canst thou not turn? Canst thou not repent? Go to God, poor sinner, it is he that must give thee repentance. Go to Christ, it is he that God hath exalted, and set upon purpose, that he may give repentance and remission of sins. Acts. 5:31. Ministers are to preach repentance, but

they cannot give repentance we must every one of us say, it is not ours to give. We can tell you to whose door you must go for repentance, we can tell you in what way you are to go to God for it, and we would persuade you to God, but when we have said all we can, it is he alone that can give repentance to you and work it in you.

6. Whatever God does to the recovery of lost souls there is something lies upon themselves to do towards it. That they may recover [themselves] No that they may be recovered, but may recover themselves. Now here I shall show you more particularly.

1. What the recovery of lost souls means, or wherein it stands.

2. What sinners may do towards their own recovery.

3. How men may know whether they are recovered or no.

1. What the recovery of lost souls means, or wherein it stands. Now it stands,

1. In their coming to themselves.

2. In their coming to God.

1. In their coming to themselves, and recovering their senses and understanding. The first step of the prodigal's recovery that we read of, Luke 15:17. Was this, that he came to himself, when he came to himself, he said &c. He was besides himself before. Sinners are besides themselves, they have lost their wits and the free use of their reasons; they are so drunken in sensuality, that like Drunken men or mad men, they have lost their understandings. Therefore the Prophet exhorts those foolish Idolaters, that worshiped stocks the God's of their own making, Isa. 46:8. Remember this, and [show yourselves men] what, are you so brutish as to think those to be God's, which are made with hands? Where are your reasons? Show yourselves men, and no longer such brutes. Sinners recovering from their sins, is as Nebuchadnezzar returning from among the beasts. Then says

he. Dan. 4:34. Mine understanding returned into me. When the Prodigal forementioned came to himself, then we find him, presently fall a reasoning with himself, How many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough and to spare and I perish with hunger; What do I here! Why dwell I among these strangers! I see I am like to starve for want; in my Fathers house there is bread enough, were I not better to go to my Father? I will arise and go to him.

Sinners, whilst they are besotted with lust and sensuality, cannot reason thus, their senses have drowned their understandings. If they had but their understandings and their wits about them they might reason thus with themselves, what a miserable case is this that I live in? This poor soul of mine is ready to starve and die. I live amongst Swine, and I am fit for no better company, whilst I am thus, for I am even one of the Swine, and if I live like a Beast, I am like to die like a Beast. Is there no way for recovery out of this brutish state? May not this mad soul of mine be recovered into his wits again? I have lived a mad life hitherto, else I should never have fed upon husks, these pleasures of sin, whilst bread, the bread of God might be had. I have not the understanding of a man in me, or sure I should get me out of this miserable estate.

Sinners, who hath bewitched you? What is it that hath so unmanned you, that neglecting and running away from God, you should run thus after the Devil, and live among his Herd of Swine, and feed upon trash and dross; the best of your sinful pleasures are no other, nor better. You have your feeding among the Swine, and your lodging with them, wallowing with them in the mud and mire. You may know what your feeding is, by the starveling case your souls are in; and we may see what your lodging is, by the filth and dirt that is upon you. Behold the mud and the mire cleaving to thee, thy filthy lusts and vile affections, and spiritual uncleanness's, wherewith thou art polluted. When wilt thou come to thyself, sinner, and bethink thyself of returning from the Husks to Bread, from thy Trough to the Table, from the Stie of Swine to thy Fathers house? Is it not better to be a servant of God, than a drudge to the Devil? Is it not better to be of

God's holy ones, than of the Devils bemired and mudded ones? Is it not better to return into favor with God, than to live in exile and banishment from God? Doest thou not think, that those that love God, and fear God, and walk with God, that those that know Christ, and are washed with his blood, and walk in his steps, and have laid hold on his righteousness, and shall be partakers of his salvation; Dost not thou think in thy heart, that these Saints are in better case than thou art? Is it as well with thee now thou art such an ignorant, sensual, swinish, carnal, stupid soul? Is it as well with thee now, as if thou wert changed into the image, and made partaker of the holiness, and entitled to the salvation of God? Doest thou bless thyself that thou art none such? Is it well for thee that thou art no Believer, or sincere Convert to God? When wilt thou come to thyself? Show yourselves men, Sinners, let your understandings once return into you. You will never come to be Christians, till you come to yourselves. Show yourselves men, and that you have the understanding of a man in you; recover your reasons, and then make use of your reasons, and fall a reasoning with yourselves, What shall I do? Shall I continue as I am? A Drunkard as I am, a Worldling as I am, a Sensualist as I am, a servant of my Flesh and of the Devil, as I am, or shall I arise and go to my Father? Which do I really judge to be better for me, to go on as I have done, or to make out after a sudden and saving change? To go on after my cups, and my companions, after my pleasures, and my worldly profits, or to return to the Lord? Hast thou recovered so much of thy reason, as to judge it to be better for thee to turn, and become a new man, hast thou so? Then from a man of reason, become a man of resolution. Judge what is best, and choose what is best, Hos. 2:7. Then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me then now. Sinner, Wilt thou take up such a resolution? Wilt thou take up such words? Well, I see now what I have been doing all my life hitherto, I see to what a sad pass my foolish and carnal ways have brought me; I see the poverty and the misery, and the straits, and the dangers, that by running away from God, by running after this World and the lusts thereof, I have run myself into. Well, I have done with

this vain and foolish life, I will go and return unto the Lord, and then it will be better with me than now.

2. The next step to this recovery is coming to God; the first is coming to yourselves, and the use and exercise of your reason and understanding. And who among poor sinners shall these words preach into your right senses? You have been foolish, senseless souls, is there any of you that are yet come to yourselves? Do you judge it better for you to come back from your vain ways, and to come about to the Lord? Is this voice heard in your hearts, Oh, if I could break off from my sins, and become a real Convert to Christ, then would it be better with me than now. It would be a happy change, this day would be a happy day, this Sermon would be to me a happy Sermon, if the Lord would bless it so to me, as to bring me off from my sins and bring me to God, O how wonderfully better would it be for me than it is now.

If any of you are come so far to yourselves as to judge and to say, it would be better for me, let me go on with you and ask you further; What will you resolve upon? Will you say on with the Prodigal, well, I will arise and go to my Father. It is better for me so to do, and I will do it, through the help of God I will return. Now for Repentance, now for Religion and Righteousness, now for a new heart, and a new life, I have done with my old heart, Satan I have done with my old life, sin and vanity I have done with, henceforth through the grace of God, I will be for God and godliness.

Do you say so? Are you resolved so? Come on but one step further; if you say the word, come on, and do likewise; the Prodigal when he said, I will go to my Father, he arose and went accordingly. Be not like the Son in the Parable, who said, I go Sir, but went not; but say, and do, come and join yourselves to the Lord, come into his house, come into his ways, give yourselves to him for his servants, and go on and serve him, then were your souls recovered. Then should it be said to you, as concerning him, These my children were dead and are alive, were lost and are found; and we should say over you, as the

Father did, It is meet we should make merry, that this day should be a glad day, a joyful day; it is meet that we should rejoice, for this our Brother is recovered, he was dead and is alive. O let the Lord God thus rejoice over you; O let all his Saints rejoice with you: Come sinner, make a joyful day of it, come unto the Lord, come to your Father, and he will be ready to meet you, and with open heart and open arms would receive and embrace you.

2. What men may do to recover. They cannot recover themselves of themselves, it is God that must do it, but they may and must do something towards it.

1. Men can pray for their recovery. Even carnal men may pray, and though there be no full promise that God will hear, yet God hath both required them to pray, and hath appointed this as a means of their recovery. Acts. 8:22. The Apostle bids Simon Magus pray that the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven him. It is a hopeful sign that God has a purpose to give grace, when he sets sinners a praying for grace; at least, if they cannot pray themselves they can speak to others that can, and desire them to pray for them. This that Simon Magus did, he begged the Apostles to pray for him, O what a wretched case are those in, that will neither pray for themselves, nor so much as beg Christians to pray for them! Sinner, when didst thou ever do such a thing? When didst thou ever go, either to a Minister, or a Christian with such a word in thy mouth, pray for me. It may be when thou hast been sick, thou hast sent to the Congregation to pray for thy bodily recovery, but when didst thou send or speak to them to pray for thy souls recovery? Is not thy soul more precious than thy body? Is it not thy soul more desperately sick, than ever thy body hath been? Is not prayer for sick souls as needful, and as much prevailing, as prayer for sick bodies? And yet how many bills have we sent in, to pray for recovery from bodily diseases, to one sent in, to pray for the conversion of a soul? But whether thou do it or not, this thou canst not deny, but thou canst do this towards thy conversion, thou canst pray for it, and desire others to pray for thee.

2. Men can hear the Word. This is another means of mans recovery. Is. 55:3. Incline your ear and come unto me, hear, and your soul shall live. And this means also they can use. The same feet that will carry them to an Alehouse, can as well carry them to Church; The same ear that can hear a Song, or foolish and idle talk, can well hear a Sermon. Thou wilt say, this I do, and yet am not recovered. Therefore,

3. Men can give heed to what they hear. They can mark and observe what the Word speaks, Luke. 8:18. Take heed how ye hear; Give heed to what you hear, and do not sleep under the sound of the Word, or fit heedlessly or carelessly, without minding what the Lord speaks. And herein is the great neglect; Sinners will come to a Sermon, but mind as little what is preached to them as those that never come here This is a wretched neglect, and the common case of many hearers. Mat. 13:13. Hearing they hear and do not understand. Our words could not have such poor success if people would mind more the things that we speak. O sinners bethink yourselves, how often have you been here, and not heeded one word that hath been spoken?

4. Men can think. What is easier than thoughts; we use to say good words are cheap, but good thoughts are cheaper than good words: the exercising of men's thoughts is noted to be the first step to repentance. 1 Kings. 8:47. If they shall bethink themselves, and repent, and so, Ps. 119:59. I thought on my ways and turned &c. Thou sayst thou canst not recover thyself. I but canst thou not bethink thyself neither, what a case thou art in? Thou hearest sometimes from the Ministry of the Word, that thou art a lost man, a lost soul; But when thou hearest it preached to thee, canst thou not think upon it? Thou dost not think upon it, it is too true, no longer than the Word is a speaking, nay it may be nor then neither. What thoughts have you had of it, since you were told that naturally you are lost, and what a miserable case it is to be a lost soul. Have you since thought such a thought, Woe is me I am a lost soul, oh what a poor wretch am I, while my soul is lost? You have been told how these lost souls may be recovered, but What thought hath there been in thine heart since about taking the course for thy recovery? Thou

[dost] not think of these things, it is true, but [canst] thou not think of them? Thou knowest thou canst.

5. Men can stop, and make a stand in their evil ways, from going on further in them, from making their condition worse than it is and their recovery more difficult. Canst thou not lay thine Hand upon thy mouth, when thou art about to lie, or to swear or to scoff, and bite in those evil words, that are coming out? Canst thou not keep thee from thy Companions, and thine old drunkenness and riot? Canst thou not keep thee out of the Alehouse or the Tavern? Thou canst do it, such outward acts are in the power of the will to restrain. Men may be true if they will, and sober if they will; If thou wilt be a Drunkard or a Swearer, or a Liar, who can help thee? But if thou wilt thou mayst help it thyself. It is true thy case is miserable enough and thy cure hard enough, by thy continuing in thine evil way hitherto; but as bad as it is with thee, it is growing worse and worse; every sin thou goest on to commit, is a new gash wherewith thou givest a deeper and more deadly wound to thy poor perishing soul. If thou stop thy course, that is something towards a recovery. Well these things thou canst do towards thine own recovery. Thou canst pray, thou canst hear, thou canst give heed to what thou hearest, thou canst think, and thou canst stop and make a stand in thy evil ways. And if thou wilt but do what thou canst, thou mayst have hope that God will do that for thee which thou canst not.

CHAP. V

How to Know if We are Recovered

3. How we may know whether we are recovered or no. This I shall show, 1. Negatively.

1. Those whose understandings are not recovered, their souls are not recovered. Those whose understandings are still lost, their souls are lost. Those that are not come to themselves, are not come to Christ. Every ignorant soul is a lost soul. 2. Cor. 4:3,4. If our Gospel be hid it is hid to them that are lost. From whom is the Gospel hid? See v. 4. From those whom the God of this world hath blinded their minds lest the light of the glorious Gospel should shine unto them. Art thou an ignorant soul, ignorant of the Gospel? Doth not the light of the glorious Gospel shine into thee, (i.e.) dost thou not understand the Gospel? So long is the Gospel hid from thee, and if the Gospel still be hid to thee, thou art a lost soul.

What multitudes are there, to whom the Gospel is preached, that yet understand nothing of it? Thou hast been a hearer of the Gospel these many years, but what dost thou understand of it. As Philip said to the Eunuch, Acts. 8:30. Understandest thou what thou readest? So it may be said to thee, understandest thou what thou hearest? No, thou dost not understand, though the light shines round about thee, yet not a beam of it hath shined into thy heart. It is all dark within thee, whatever light be shining round about thee. Though the light hath shined into thy darkness, yet thy darkness comprehendeth it not. John. 1:5. Poor ignorant ones, in what a case are you? You are every one of you lost souls. And what is like to become of you? We bring the light among you, but we cannot open your eyes; we preach Christ to you, we instruct you in the knowledge of God, we cry unto you, get knowledge, seek understanding, seek for it as silver, search for it as for hid treasures, But say what we can, you will not be persuaded, you will not receive instruction. The God of this world hath blinded your minds, and we cannot heal your blindness. There bosom of you that know you are ignorant, that will confess it, (yet not to bemoan yourselves but to excuse yourselves) I am but ignorant, I am not book learned; What not learned in the book of God? What not acquainted with the book of life? No, God help me, I am not, what then? Why therefore I hope it is not so bad with me, as with others that know. I hope God will forgive me, because I am ignorant This is a wretched principle that is gotten into the hearts of the

ignorant, that because they are so, God will not be extreme to mark what is done amiss by them. O tremble in pleading your ignorance, you therein confess that which will prove you to be lost souls. You may as well say I am a damned soul as say I am an ignorant soul.

2. These whose consciences are lost. Who though they may be recovered to be men of understanding, yet are not recovered to be men of conscience. We trust we have a good conscience willing to live honestly in all things. Heb. 13:18. Thus it is with recovered souls, they are men of a good conscience. Where conscience is laid waste, the soul still lies open to the government and dominion of the Devil. Conscience is a bar and a bulwark against his assaults and temptations. Where conscience is not, the soul is as a City that hath neither Gates nor Bars, but is left open to the Devil, to rule it at his pleasure. God hath not recovered the rule of any soul, till Conscience be awakened and hath recovered its authority.

Art thou an unconscionable man or woman? Dost thou make no conscience of thy ways? Hast thou slighted conscience, hast thou wounded conscience so long, that now it lets thee alone to thy will and thy lust? Or if it checks thee sometimes, for thy evils, yet thou bearest it down, and goest on thy way against its reproofs and contradictions? Art thou a man of no conscience? Is it not against thy conscience to lie, or to defraud, or to drink to drunkenness, to live without praying or minding God or thy soul? Does conscience let thee alone to live thus? Or if it doth smite thee, yet goest thou still on against it? Art thou a man of no more conscience than this, what dost thou think of thyself? Whatever thou thinkest thou art a lost soul, while conscience is lost, thy soul is lost. Till conscience be recovered thy soul is not recovered and conscience is never recovered, till it hath recovered its authority, and hath gotten the rule and the Government of thee.

3. Those who make light of their disease and their misery. Men are never recovered till they are first made sensible of their disease. Sin is thy disease, and thy death, and thou art never recovered from that

death, till thou art brought to a sense of thy disease. Where there is life there will be sense. They were dead souls, alienated from the life of God who were past feeling, Eph. 4:18,19. Those that make light of sin, it is a sign they are not recovered. Sin is felt as a heavy thing, by those souls that have the life of Christ begotten in them.

O what multitudes of lost souls are there among us, if every soul be lost that makes light of sin! What account dost thou make of it? Thou sinnest daily, thou livest an idle and a careless and a sinful life, thou art proud or covetous, or a sensual flesh-pleaser, and is not all this this sin? Thou art a Liar, a Promise-breaker, a defrauder, and is not this thy sin? Thou art perverse and peevish and of a froward heart, and is not this thy wickedness? But what account dost thou make of all this? Is it a heavy thing to thee, to be thus sinful? No, not at all, thou makest light of thy pride, and light of thy covetousness, and light of thy frowardness, thou makest just nothing of them, or at least but small matters. Thou dost not feel them to be such a weight and burden to thee, but thou canst bear them and go out with them well enough. Or if thou dost sometimes feel some smart or pain by them, yet it is but such a light touch, that whatever thou thinkest at present thou wilt quickly after them again, at thy lying again, at thy swearing again, at thy froppish and froward carriages again.

It is such a deep sense of sin, as will make us beware of it for the future, that will prove our recovery. What shall we then think of them that make a mock of sin, that make a sport of sin, that take pleasure in iniquity? Without all controversy these are lost souls, and those that make but little reckoning of it, that pass by their sins as small matters, that are either not touched at all, or but lightly touched for them, so lightly, that their sin hath still the power and dominion over them; thou that art but such a one, thou art a lost soul, thy soul is lost and not recovered.

4. Those that make light of Christ their recoverer. Christ that is sent down as the Physician of souls, to seek and to save them that are lost, hath ordinarily the same entertainment as the King in the Parable

had amongst the Guests that he invited to his Feast, Mat. 22:5, but they made light of it. Here,

1. There are some sinners that do make light of Christ. Jesus Christ is worthy of all acceptation. What is Jesus Christ? He is the Son of God, full of grace and truth, Joh. 1. God equal with the Father, the brightness of his Fathers glory, the express image of his person, and upholdeth all things by the word of his power, Heb. 1:3. He is the Head of all Principalities and Powers, the Prince of the Kings of the earth, Rev. 1:5. What is Jesus Christ to sinners? He is the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, Is. 9:6, his name shall be wonderful. What comes this Jesus into the world for? To reconcile them to God, to save them from their sins, to die for the sins of the World, and to wash them in his own blood. And to what end comes he to particular sinners? Wherefore is he preached to them, wherefore is he offered to them? To what end is it that sinners are so importunately invited to entertain and accept of him, to be willing that he that was the Savior might become their Savior; that he that was the Reconciler, might become their Recoverer to recover them from the snare, of the Devil, and to bring them into the everlasting Kingdom. This is that Jesus that by the Gospel is preached unto you.

Who could imagine that such a great, and mighty, and glorious one, who is the everlasting King, the God of all the earth, who would think but he should be revered where-ever he come? They will reverence my son, said the King in the Parable, Mat. 22:37. It might be well presumed they would, however it proved in the issue. Who could imagine that one that came upon such a gracious design, to reconcile poor Rebels unto God, to redeem poor Prisoners out of Prison, to recover and raise the dead to life, and ransom them from the Pit, and give them an entrance into the everlasting kingdom: who would think but Christ coming upon such a gracious and glorious design, should have wonderful cheerful entertainment? Who would think but that the whole World should ring with acclamations of joy, and praise, at his appearing amongst them? Who would think but when Christ comes to particular sinners, and makes a free offer of

himself to them, to be theirs, their Redeemer, their Savior, but such an offer should be greedily caught at, and readily embraced? Doth the King of Glory come unto me? Hast thou shed thy blood, and poured forth thy soul, and laid down thy life, and purchased pardon and an interest in Heaven for me? And dost thou now come to give thyself, and all that thou hast purchased to be mine? What answer would anyone think would be given by lost souls to such questions? Wilt thou be mine? Shall I be thine? Art thou willing to be redeemed, to be washed from thy sins, to be healed of thy diseases? Shall my blood, which is shed for the salvation of sinners, shall my blood be thine, and the peace and reconciliation it hath made be thine? Shall I come into that miserable soul of thine, and dwell there, and rule there, and cast that Devil out that hath been thy destroyer and murderer? Shall I love thee, and delight in thee, and bless thee with my salvation? What answer would anyone think that undone lost sinners should give to such questions? What, wilt thou come unto me, love and bless me? With all my soul, Lord, come in thou blessed Lord, all that is within me shall rejoice that thou wilt thus enter upon me, and take me for thy possession and habitation. This one would think should be the answer that sinners would give. But behold, such miserably foolish souls are sinners become, that they make light of all this. A cup of drink, a carnal companion, a lust, a sensual pleasure, is made more reckoning of than Christ and all his love. As it is said of those Builders, the Scribes and Pharisees, Acts 4:11. It is true of all sinners, this stone, this precious stone, this corner stone, this foundation stone, upon which alone their hopes of salvation might be built, this stone is set at naught by them, Is. 53:3. He was despised and rejected of men, they made no account or reckoning of him, but even tread underfoot the Son of God. And this is the general entertainment that Christ hath among the sinners of the earth, so light do they make of him; he comes to them, but they will not receive him. How often, says he, would I have gathered you, Mat. 23:37, but you would not.

And what is the common case of sinners, is it not [thy] case? Art not thou one that makest light of Christ? He hath been preached unto

thee, he hath come and tendered himself to thy soul. That vile heart of thine, sinner, that dark hole, where the Devil and Lust, and every abomination dwells, Christ hath come and called to thee, open to me, let me come and dwell there, and cast the Devil out. How many knocks hath he given at thy door? How many Messengers hath he sent to thee with this word, Open those wretched hearts, open the everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in? And hast not thou slighted all this, and put a contempt and a scorn upon an offered Jesus? Who, I? God forbid; I adore and honor that worthy name, I acknowledge him to be the Son of the living God, and the Savior of the World, and worthy of all acceptation. I, but hast thou accepted? Hast thou opened unto him? Hast thou received Christ Jesus the Lord? Is Christ within thee? Is the light of Christ, the love of Christ, the holiness of Christ in thee? Hast thou resigned up the throne and dominion of thy soul to him, and given him hearty leave to put all that is within thee in subjection to himself, and to cast out whatever is an offense to him? To cast the World out, to cut the flesh down, and the lusts thereof? Hath he new made thee, and new molded thee.

Is there another Spirit begotten in thee? A new heart bestowed upon thee? Hath he made a Christian of thee, a sincere inward Christian, not in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth? Art thou become his hearty Disciple, and his follower in holiness? Hath he given thee the understanding of a Christian? Dost thou know God, and art thou now acquainted with the mystery of the kingdom of God? Dost thou know Christ, and the mystery of Christ crucified? Hath he given thee the heart and affections of a Christian? Hath the World lost thine heart, have thy companions lost thee, thy carnal pleasures lost thine heart? Is thine heart set upon Christ, and upon all his holy ways? Art thou now brought about from sinful pleasing of men, or affecting to live in their good repute and good will, to be all for pleasing God? Is thy soul that was bent upon earth and the vanities thereof, now bent for God, and for heaven, and for holiness the way to the Kingdom of heaven.

Sinner, If thou hast received Christ into thy soul, there are all these works begun, there is such a change as this wrought upon thee, 2 Cor. 5:17. He that is in Christ is a new Creature, and if there be no such change, if thine old ignorance, thine old worldliness, thine old delights in the lusts, or friendship or fellowship of the World remain, if thou hast not the inwards of a Christian, an holy heart, an heavenly mind; yea, and something of the outwards of a Christian, an holy conversation, an heavenly life: If there be not such a change wrought in thee, but thou art of the same life and the same spirit thou wert of, thou hast not received Christ: he hath been offered thee, but thou wouldst none of him; he hath come unto thee, but thou hast refused him. And whatever honor thou hast in thy mouth for Christ, if thou hast refused to receive him, thou art one of those that hast made light of Christ, yea and set him at naught. That which is rendered refusing, Psal. 118:22. The stone which was refused by the builders, is expressed, Acts 4:11, to be setting at naught. This is the stone which was set at naught. Sinners, every one of you that have not received Christ into your hearts, you have set Christ at naught, you have despised and trampled him under your foot; and if you go away from his word today, as you have used to do other days, and return home without accepting of him, you go on to set Christ at naught. You that hear Christ preached, and will not receive him, if you should be asked when you come home, what you have done at Church today? You must answer, I have put a slight, and contempt upon Christ; he was preached to me, and I was told of his wonderful excellencies, and his worthiness, but I have despised and neglected it all; I have been at Church, but to mock Christ, and to set him at naught. This do every one of you, to whom Christ is preached, and yet you will not receive him.

2. Those that make light of Christ are not recovered by him. This is so evident from what hath been said, that I shall add no more concerning it but this, if Christ be the only recoverer of lost souls, then those that refuse him are not recovered. He is our Redeemer, and there is no other savior. He is our Physician. and there is no other helper, neither is there salvation in any other. Act: 4:12. If

there be no other Savior but Christ Jesus the Lord, if there be none recovered by Christ, but those that prize and put such a high value on Christ, as to embrace and accept of him, then those that make light of Christ and refuse him are lost souls to this day. These are the negative marks which evidence souls still lost. If you are not grossly ignorant, but have understood something of the doctrine of Christ, If you have something of conscience, If some prizing of Christ, yet you may not be recovered; but if not, thou art a grossly ignorant soul, and of no conscience, to be sure thou art a lost soul to this day.

2. Affirmatively:

1. The man whose eyes are opened: that is, who hath recovered his understanding, and the saving knowledge of God. The first step towards the conversion of a sinner, is the recovery of his sight, Acts 26:18. To open blind eyes &c. And it is not every little opening the eyes, and the getting in a little knowledge, that is a sure sign of conversion; There are knowing sinners, knowing hypocrites, It is an enlightening of the mind, and a renewing of the mind. Rom. 12:2. Be ye transformed, by the renewing of your minds. The mind of the Convert, doth not only see other things, than it saw before, but looks upon them with another eye, as he hath another heart, so he hath another eye, a renewed mind, a sanctified understanding, that perceives the beauty and excellency of God and his ways, of Christ and his graces, that sees wisdom and goodness, and an excellency and desirableness in them; the carnal mind, whatever it perceives of the things of God, yet they are foolishness to him. 1. Cor, 2:14. The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them.

Where see, 1. What account carnal men have of spiritual things, they look on them as foolish things, poor and weak and contemptible things, and look upon them all as a company of fools, and giddy brain-sick folks, that will have anything to do with them.

2. That whilst he looks on the things of God as foolishness, as such contemptible and unworthy things, he doth not know them, nor can he know them whilst he continues to be such a foolish soul. Thou takest upon thee to censure those that fear God as fools, and to charge Religion, with folly! Proud Fool! Get thee a little more understanding, and then thou wilt see what an ignorant, poor mistaken soul thou art. The convert looks upon the Gospel, and the goodness of God, and the grace of Christ, and the holiness of the Spirit, as marvelous things, excellent things; he sees an excellency in Religion, a beauty and desirableness in all the ways of God; he sees the folly of Sin, and the wisdom of Religion, the baseness and unworthiness and the filthiness of Sin, and the worth and the purity of Religion; he sees himself to have been a very beast and a fool, whilst he continued and went on in his sins, and can never have a good thought of himself, but as far forth as he is changed from his sins, he looks upon that little change that is begun as a blessed change and a comfortable change. Now I have something of the understanding of a man returned into me, Now I thank God I begin to live and stand up from among the dead; O I thank God for this little wisdom that is begotten in me. I was a very fool till now, I have been told I was a fool, I have been told I was a beast many a time, but I could never see it till now, until the Lord hath thus opened mine eyes; this is some degree of the sinners recovery, such an opening of his eyes, though it is possible he may be very much recovered in this respect and yet be a sinner still.

2. The man whose heart is opened. Thus Lydia's conversion is expressed, Acts. 16:14. Whose heart the Lord opened. There is a double opening of the heart.

1. An opening of the heart to the Lord, so as to receive and embrace him when offered. The hearts of natural men are shut against the Lord, they are not only void of grace, and without Christ, but bolted and barred up against Christ and his grace, they are unwilling of conversion, unwilling of sanctification. Jer. 13:27. O Jerusalem wilt thou not be made clean? No, they will not. O sinner wilt thou not

have the Lord to be thy God, wilt thou not have Jesus to be thy Lord? Wilt thou not that he should come into that soul of thine, and wash thee with his blood, and govern thee by his spirit, make thee a new soul and of another spirit than thou hast been? No, thou wilt not, thine heart is shut against Christ. To the Devil thou wilt open, to the world and its lusts and its pleasures thou wilt open thine heart, nay, it stands open night and day to these, but it is shut against Christ and his grace; thou art not willing that Christ should come in. Sinners, if your hearts would but open, Christ would come in this very hour and bring in his salvation to thee. There is not one man amongst you all, that shall go home this day, without Christ, without the sanctifying grace of Christ, that is but unfeignedly willing to give entertainment to him. Art thou willing of Christ, willing to have grace? Wilt thou so receive Christ as to resign up thyself to his guidance and government, art thou really willing? This is the very opening of thine heart to the Lord wherein thy conversion stands. Thou art the man whose heart the Lord hath opened.

2. An opening the heart to godliness or Christianity. The former opening notes a readiness of the heart to receive Christ in, and his Grace in. This opening of the heart notes the souls letting itself out after Christ and his holy ways, a letting its self out in holy desires. in love and holy affections, in resolutions and holy purposes to serve and cleave to the Lord. When the heart is open to Christ, it is open to Christianity. When it hath received Christ Jesus the Lord, it will be for walking in him. The heart of the Hypocrite, though it professeth to be open to Christ, yet it is shut against Christianity.

Hypocrites are willing of a part in Christ, in the privileges, and hopes, and comforts of the Gospel, and so will trust in Christ, and boast of Christ, and glory and rejoice in Christ Jesus; but as to the exercise of Christianity, especially in those harder and severer parts of it, the mortifying the flesh, the denying themselves, the being crucified to the World, the close, and downright and industrious following the Lord in holiness; of this they are not willing, their hearts are shut against it. That heart that is sincerely opened to the

Lord, and hath indeed taken Christ in, doth freely open itself to all the ways of the Lord, and hath a propension and disposition, and resolution for powerful and practical Christianity. He is a resolved Disciple of Christ, a resolved follower of Christ. Now this is the recovered soul, the man whose eyes are opened, who hath the knowledge of God, of the beauty, and excellency, and goodness of all the ways of God; and the man whose heart is opened, who hath both received Christ Jesus the Lord, and who is resolved to walk in him, this is the soul that was dead and is alive.

Use. Are sinners lost souls, then let us take up a lamentation over them. What a lamentation did the Prophet take up over the sinful Jews, Jer. 9:1. O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughters of my people. O what a slaughter hath sin made amongst us, our Houses our Streets, our Congregations, how full are they of the dead, dead souls whom sin hath slain! Behold the dead that are in every place; so many sinners, so many dead and lost souls. Here be the dead, but where are the mourners? Verse 17. Consider ye and call for the mourning women, that they may come, and send for cunning women, skillful at mourning, and let them make hast and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eye-lids gush out with water. Women are more pitiful than men, and more apt to mourn, Call says he, for the pitiful among women, let them take up a wailing for us, and let them set us a mourning, let the women set the men a mourning, that [our] eyes may run down with tears: and v. 20, let the Mothers teach the daughters wailing, and everyone her neighbor lamentation. Why what is the matter? v. 21. O Death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces; our houses are houses of the dead. It is not only with us as with Egypt, when their first-born were slain, when there was not an house in the Land wherein was not one dead; there are but few houses in our Land where there is one alive; they are almost all dead, dead Fathers, dead Children, dead Husbands, dead Wives, dead in trespasses and sins. Death hath not only entered in at our windows, and slain here and there one, but the doors have been set open to it,

whole Families are destroyed. Our houses are become Sepulchers, places of the dead.

CHAP. VI

But why should we mourn over lost souls?

1. Because there are such multitudes of them. Come where you will, into what Country, into what Family, into what Congregation you will, and you may see almost as many dead men as you may see men. It is but here and there one living soul is to be found; such a great slaughter as sin hath made, calls for great lamentation.

2. Because they are in such a pitiful and lamentable case. What is it to be a dead and lost soul? Where shall we have them a little while hence? Those that are under the power of death, are under the power of the Devil, and those that are under the power of the Devil, you may look to find them shortly in the place of the Devil. At present they seem to be in a paradise, they live at ease, and in plenty, and in peace; there are none seem to be so much alive, as the sinners of the earth, as Mal. 3:15. We call the proud happy, and the profane and flesh-pleasers, and the covetous, these are counted happy ones. They are far, they shine, they glitter, who but sinners! These are the only men, the only happy men, as the world counts them; but whatever there be upon their backs or in their bellies, their poor hearts are dead, and where shall we find these flourishing and prospering ones a few days hence? It would pity one's heart to think where; What if you should see all these dead buried, buried in Flames, cast into the Pit of everlasting darkness, and everlasting burning? You cannot but foresee, that there they will be shortly, thither they are travelling; their way is the way of death, and their steps lead down to hell, and how suddenly may they be swallowed up of the Pit? O pity these lost souls! Have you any bowels? Parents, have you any bowels for your

sinning children? Friends have you any bowels for your sinning Friends? Draw forth your bowels in sighs and lamentations, pour forth your hearts at your eyes, and fall a weeping over them, look upon the ignorant and sottish ones, look upon the loose and profane ones, the lying children, the swearing and cursing and drinking and unruly children among you, and let your eye affect your heart. Yea, weep not for them only, but as. Luke. 23:28. Weep for [yourselves] and for your children.

3. Because they will not mourn for themselves. They are not sensible of their own misery, nor will lay it to heart. These lost souls are men besides themselves, distracted ones, out of their wits ut supra. The prodigal was out of his wits whilst he was running his wild course, he was not himself. What sense have mad men of their misery? They count themselves to be wise and happy men, and all others to be fools but themselves. How shall we hear distracted souls talking of their lands and inheritances, boasting some of them that they are Kings, and Lord's, and Gentlemen, though they be even stark naked, half starved, bound with Thongs and chains, yet still they have high thoughts, and make great boastings of themselves. Such mad souls are the miserable souls of sinners. Job 11:12. Vain man would be wise though he be as a wild Asses colt. These wild men that run a wild course, that have lost their reasons in their lusts, they would be taken for wise men, and they will not be persuaded out of their vain conceits of themselves. Bray a fool in a mortar. Prov. 27:22. Yet will not his foolishness depart from him. Now this is cause of great lamentation, that these lost souls are such stupid and senseless souls that will not mourn for themselves, nor be brought to understand that they are objects of pity and lamentation; they think they are wiser than their teachers, that they have more wit than to become sober and serious Christians, that they have no need of the Physician, no need of counsel and instruction, and thereupon are ready to fall a laughing at those that mourn over them, and mock at repentance and conversion. Surely those that are in such a miserable case, and have not the heart to mourn for themselves, or to count themselves

mournful and pitiful spectacles, there is the more reason we should take up a lamentation over them.

Let us lament therefore, that there are such multitudes of miserable souls, that there are so few amongst those multitudes of lost ones, that we ever see to be recovered. O how few are the Converts to Christ? How seldom do we hear of any lost sheep brought into the Fold? You that are brought in, pity those that are left without, mourn for them, let fall a tear over them, lift up a prayer for them, that though they have gone astray like lost sheep, yet at length they may return to the Shepherd and B shop of their souls.

And you that are these lost souls, how is it that you are not yet come so far to yourselves, as to see what pitiful case you are in? Sinners, will you yet go away conceited that it is well enough with you? Is it better with you than if you were Converts? Are the Brick-kilns of Egypt, as long as you can eat of the Leeks, and Onions, and Melons, better than the freedom of Canaan. Do the pleasures of sin make your chains pleasant to you? Is it better to go on to serve the Devil and your Lusts, than to come about and be the servants of the Lord? Or whether it be better or worse, wisdom or folly, discretion or madness, are you resolved however, to continue as you are? Have you not the sense in you as to be able to say, it is a sorry case I am in? Or do you see it is bad enough with you, and yet have not the power to make out after a recovery? Hast thou not pity upon that poor soul of thine, but thou wilt give it up to be racked, and torn, and burned forever, rather than for its sake thou wilt deny thy will, or thy lust, or thine appetite? Art thou still so mad, as to say live or die, heaven or hell, whatever be the issue, I will not turn out of my course, I will not come unto God and be his servant? If there be a God, I will venture his wrath; if there be a Hell, I will venture on its flames, rather than not enjoy my will, or mine ease, or my pleasure? Is this thy case? Judge then if thou be not a pitiful and lamentable thing, and an object of mourning; and if thou canst get so much of a man in thee, so much of the reason and understanding of a man, so much of the heart and compassion of a man, O pity thyself, pity thy poor soul;

pity and mourn over it, mourn and repent, repent and pray, that if it be possible thou mayest recover thyself out of the snare of the Devil, who art thus held captive by him at his will.

2. Let us take up a rejoicing over the recovered souls. Our great joy should be every man over the recovery of his own soul. With what joy should this word be spoken, this [my] soul was dead, and is alive: and we should rejoice over any other recovered souls; It is matter of rejoicing when we can say, this my Child, or this my Brother, or this my Neighbor, was dead and is alive. What joy is it to a travailing woman, when she is safely delivered of a living child. Joh. 16:21. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow because her hour is come, but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish for joy that a man child is born into the World. Sinners, your deliverance may cost you pain and travel, but when you are once delivered, and recovered, you will forget all this pain; then you will, and then you ought to rejoice. What joy is the day of victory to the triumphing Soldier? What joy was the year of Jubilee to the indebted, or the servants, when they were to go out free from their debts and service? What joy to the Mariner, who hath been tossed with tempests, to have gotten safe to shore? Hast thou shot the gulf, and gotten safe to land? Hast thou gotten death and hell under thy feet? Is death destroyed, and is life and immortality brought to light in thy soul? Art thou passed from death to life? O what a day of joy, what a day of praise should this be to thee. Rejoice in the Lord O ye righteous, and again, I say Rejoice. Phil 4:4. Stand Christian, stand and look back on that death that was lately feeding on thy soul; stand and look down into the hole of the pit from whence thou art delivered. Remember how it was with thee, not long since, when thou wert without Christ, and without hope, and without God in the World; when thou wert a slave to every lust in thy heart, to every vile companion, when thou wert by led by the Destroyer, and posting on to destruction; When thou Wert without fear and without sense of that danger, and misery which was running upon thee like a flood. Remember how it was with thee when God first opened thine eyes and thy fears came upon thee. How did thy soul cry out, I am lost, I

am undone, when thou sawest what a gulf there was fixed between thy natural estate and the state of grace? When thou sawest a necessity of conversion, and yet wert astonished at the difficulty of obtaining it? When thy proud heart would not stoop, thine hard heart would not break, nor yield unto the Lord? When thou wert afraid that thou shouldst have perished in the birth, and never have seen life; remember how it hath been with thee, and how it is now. What, hath the Lord delivered thee from thy fears, conquered to thee thy difficulties? Is thine heart broken and brought about to the Lord? Is the day broken, and the day star risen in thine heart, art thou passed from death to life? What sayst thou now? Is it not meet thou shouldst rejoice? Is not this birth day, the day of thy new birth, a day of joy and praise? Dost thou not bless thyself, that it is not with thee as it hath been? Does not thine heart shake to think, what if I had been let alone, let to go on in the way that I was going? I went with the Drunkards, I was among the Liars, and Swearers, and Covetous, and the Scoffers, I was one of them; As much against a new heart, and new life as any of them, as true a drudge to my flesh, and this world, as the worst of them; How is it that the Lord God singled my soul out of that wicked crowd and brought me up out of that state of the dead and brought me into the light of life, and hath written me amongst the living in Jerusalem! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Magnify the Lord, O my soul, and let my spirit rejoice in God my Savior. He that is mighty hath done for me great things, and holy is his name.

3. Let us again take up a lamentation over the imperfection of our recovery. Rejoice in the Lord, but rejoice with trembling, Psal. 2:11. Rejoice that the work is begun, that thou art come to the morning of the day of redemption; that the day is dawned, that the Sun is risen upon thee, yet lament that there are still such clouds; yea, so much of the darkness of the night remaining upon thee. Rejoice that thou art born again, but yet lament that thou art but as a new born Infant, so imperfectly washed from thy pollution in thy blood, and that so much of the shame of thy nakedness is yet appearing: that though thou art made a child of light, yet there is so much of thine old

darkness, of thine old ignorance and unbelief abiding upon thee; that though thou art born from above, yet thine heart should be so much below; that though thou art risen with Christ, thy affections should be so little set on things above; that though thou art born of the Spirit, the Flesh should still have such power in thee. Lament and bewail it, that thou art no more perfectly recovered, that it can yet hardly be discerned whether thou be alive or dead, or if it appear thou art alive, lament that thou art such a dwarf still, or such a sickly and unthriving child, that thou art such a froward and unruly child.

Lament that thy recovery is so imperfect and be growing up towards perfection be working out those remains of thine old corrupt state, be working out this carnality and this earthliness and working [up] thine heart to more spirituality and heavenliness, and let both thine heart and thy life be as the path of the just which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. Prov. 4:18.

Christians, whilst I have hope of many of you that you are passed from death to life, and in this hope do rejoice over you, yet I have sorrow in mine heart for you, that you that have life, have it no more abundantly, that you are yet so imperfectly recovered from among the dead, and that you are not (which I doubt is the case of too many among you) contending and reaching forwards towards perfection. How many living Christians soever there be of you, yet I can see but few growing Christians among you. Pray Friends look inwards, what sensible improvement have any of you made of late years? Yea how many of us are there that do not lay it to heart, that do not lament it that they are improved no more? Who of you can say, that you are breathing and thirsting after an increase? Or if you thirst for more grace, how very few are reaching forth, and laboring, and that in so good earnest that they are impatient in their spirits, and restless, till it may be better with them. O what might I do to whet your appetites after an increase, to set you a running and striving and fighting against all that hinders? Oh what might be said to get those creeping souls upon the wing, to quicken your motions heavenward? O how might I help you off with those weights that hang on, those weights

of earth, and flesh, of cares, and lusts, and sins, that you might run with patience, and run with alacrity and joyfulness the race that is set before you. O consider the imperfect state you are in, consider and lament it, lament and make on, forgetting the things that are behind, reach forth unto those things which are before.

2. Are sinners yet recoverable? Oh lose not the present season but seek your recovery. as Is. 55:6. Seek the Lord whilst he may be found, So seek your souls whilst they may be found, seek recovery while it may be had. But what shall I do to recover? 1. Get you to be heart-sick of the misery that is upon you. If ever God recover you, he will first smite you, he will wound you that he may heal you. Micah. 6:13. I will make thee sick in smiting thee, said God in another case. The Devil smites with a deadly wound, but God's wounds are healing wounds. Hos. 6:1. Come let us return to the Lord, for he hath smitten and he will heal us. The Devil smites with blindness, the Devil smites with hardness, and insensibleness of heart. What is the reason thou art such a blind and hardened and senseless soul? O the Devil hath smitten thee into this blindness and hardness. God's smiting of the heart is like Moses his smiting of the rock. Exod. 17:6. He smote the rock and water issued out. God will so smite these rocks as to fetch a stream of tears, and sighs and groans, out of the hard heart, he will make those stones to feel The Devils work is, to put sinners past feeling, and O how successful hath he been at this work? Poor sinners, the Devil hath been at work with you smiting you into insensibleness, and what senseless souls hath he made you. Though the word of the Lord which is sharper than a two-edged sword and pierceth to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow, hath been driven home upon you, yet you feel it not. The Devil hath made thee such a stupid senseless soul, that thou canst feel nothing, but God smites to recover your feeling, he will make you sick in smiting you; He will do so if ever he means to heal you.

O sinner, do not resist, bur help forward this work of God upon you. Do what you can, to recover your own sense, do not harden your

hearts against the word, do not harden your hearts in your sins, pray that God would make you sick at the heart, under all your misery. It would be some encouragement to Ministers to bring a healing word unto you, if we could once find you to be sick. If we could but recover your sense, we should have hope to save your lives; but here it is that our work sticks, we cannot by all that we can say, recover you to sense, to a sense of your lost estate. Woe is me for I am undone, said the Prophet, in another case. Is. 6:5. O might we hear such a word from sinners mouths! Woe is me, for I am undone, I am an undone soul, I am a lost soul. You are undone, you are lost souls, and before ever you be soundly recovered, you will by the sense and sickness of your hearts, be forced to acknowledge it. Woe is me for I am undone! Sinner, dost thou think thyself well? Art thou whole and ailest nothing? This is thy senselessness and this senselessness is the most deadly part of thy disease, a sick man that is grown senseless is the next step to a dead man; if his sense be recovered there is more hope of his life. What a word of hope would it be, might we hear this word running through all the company of hardened sinners here, woe is me for I am undone, what shall I do, what will become of me? I am a lost soul dead in trespasses and sins, held under the power of the Devil, & dragging on to destruction. I am well enough as to my body and my outward condition, but O my poor soul, my poor blind soul, my poor hardened soul, my poor guilty soul, in what a woeful case is it? Could we perceive such a sense of your case, could we hear such bemoaning's and complaining's of your misery, this were hopeful, we should then hope you were upon recovery, if we could by any means work you to such a sense of your estates. But how is it with you sinners? Is there any such good token to be found upon you? Sinners here be (God knows) enough of you, but where be the smitten sinners? Where be the sensible sinners, the broken sinners, the fearing sinners, where be the men that the word of God, hath made them sick in smiting? As it is with some Physic for the body, so it is with God's Physic for souls, it never worketh kindly, but it makes men sick in the working. Where be the sick sinners? In one sense, you are all deadly sick; but were be the sinners, whom God's Physic hath made sick? Whom the word hath made sick? Whom conscience

hath made sick, that is, hath made them feel their sickness? No, no, the Lord be merciful to you, your Soul-physic will not work, it leaves you at your ease, under the hardness and senselessness of your hearts, as if you were indeed sound men and needed nothing. But sinners know that till you are wrought to a sense of the misery you are in, there is no hope of your recovery. Do but venture on a while longer in this stupid hardened state, and you will be past recovery; You are at present without feeling, but if you once be past feeling, you are past recovery forever. O get you broken hearts; O cry unto the Lord, that he would smite you and make you sick in smiting you; That he would set you a trembling, that he would affright you and afflict you for your sins. O stir up and awaken those sleepy souls! O study and consider, and get a little understanding what a woeful case you are in! Believe God; he tells sinners that they are sons of death, sons of perdition, under condemnation; Behave God before the Devil, and your own hearts; these have agreed together to tell you a lie, to tell you your case is not so bad, you shall do well enough you shall escape well enough; believe not the Devil, believe not your deceitful hearts; believe God, believe the scriptures, read over that word, and see how dreadfully it speaks of the case of sinners, and know that all this it speaks to thee; all the plagues and terrors of the Lord, which you read or hear out of the Scriptures, these words belong to you who are yet in your sins.

Sinners, I would fain preach you to Christ, and preach you to life. I would do mine utmost to save and recover your lost souls: and, O, let me help you to Christ! let me be a means of your recovery! But that I have no hope of, unless you will so far heed and believe the word that I preach, and lay it so close and so home upon your hearts, that you may no longer be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. O that it might be said concerning you, upon hearing of these words, as concerning others, "And when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts 2:37.

Sinner, may it be said so concerning thee? Hath this word pricked thee to the heart? Dost thou feel thy heart ache? Dost thou tremble? Art thou afraid, and in that fear dost thou cry out, Men and Brethren what shall I do? Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? Hath it made thee so sick, that thou art calling after the physician? Is there such a cry in thy soul, Help Lord, save Lord or I perish? Woe is me I am undone, what must I do to be saved? If the Lord hath made thee thus sick in smiting thee, sick of thy covetousness sick of thy wickedness and of that bondage thou art hitherto held under; If the word of the Lord hath pricked thee to the heart, and put thee to pain, so that nothing but a deliverance from thy wretched state can ease thee, or satisfy thee, if it be thus with thee, if thou art thus sick, thus pricked at the heart, then be of good comfort, it is an hopeful sign, that thou art upon recovery there is now good hopes concerning thee that though thou art dead thou mayest be made alive

2. Understand what Christ hath done, and must do for your recovery. Christ is our only Redeemer and Reconciler, and Christ redeems,

1. By price.

2. By power.

1. Christ redeemeth by price. 1. Cor. 6:20. Ye are bought with a price. Christ himself was that price, and he laid down his life, as a price for us. In this respect he is called our ransom. Mat. 20:28. He gave his life a ransom for many, And his redeemed ones are called his ransomed ones. Is. 35:10. We by sin are become prisoners and captives; Prisoners to the justice of God, to whom by sin we had forfeited our lives; and Justice took hold of us as a company of Traitors and Malefactors, whom it condemned to death. Now Christ paid, himself, to divine justice, gave himself to die, that he might ransom us from death. Let me stand in these Sinners stead, let thine hand be upon me, and let them escape; death is the wages of sin, let my death, says Christ, pay that wages.

2. Christ redeemeth by power. Sinners were prisoners to divine justice, and captives to the Devil, 2 Tim. 2:26. By price he redeems them from the revenging justice of God, and by power he redeems them from the Devil. In the former sense he redeemed us as a purchaser, he bought our lives; in the latter sense he redeemeth as a Conqueror, the Devil held us, and Death held us too; death reigned over all: Christ conquereth both Death and the Devil; He overcame death, and him that hath the power of death, that is the Devil, Heb. 2:14. Having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in himself, Col. 2:15. He brake the Serpents head, as it was promised he should, Gen. 3, that he could no longer hold his captives. The Devil tempted him to sin, but he overcame the temptation and sinned not. The Devil set the Jews to slay him, but he overcame death by his resurrection from the dead. The Devil got him among the dead, but he could not hold him, he rose from the dead, by which it was impossible for him to be holden beyond the time appointed. And as Christ conquered the Devil, and conquered Death, so he conquereth Sin too. He conquered the Devil as our Captain, so called Heb. 2:10. The Captain of our Salvation, he broke the power of the Devil, and led out his captives, as a Captain doth his recovered prisoners. He conquers sin as a Physician, healing all those wounds and diseases which the Devil had brought us under; he is therefore called a Physician, Mat. 9:12. The whole have no need of a Physician. This now is that which Christ hath done, and hath to do for our recovery, to give himself a price or ransom to the justice of God, by laying down his life for sinners, to break the power of the Devil, and rescue us from his captivity, and to heal us of our sins, and thereby destroy the works of the Devil.

CHAP. VII

What Sinners Need to Do

2. Understand what sinners have to do towards their own recovery: that they may obtain the benefit of what Christ hath done and performed. This I shall sum up in this one word; To perform the conditions of their recovery. What are those conditions?

1. To accept of Christ as your ransom; to give off all other hopes of recovery, and to take him as our only Redeemer. Some sinners reject Christ, and will none of him; they care not for a ransom, nor will mind any such thing as their recovery, but are content to be slaves to Sin and the Devil forever; like those slaves under the Law, who when they might, would not go out from their Masters, but would have their ears bored to the threshold, that they might not depart forever. How many such desperate wretches are there among sinners? Sinners they are, and sinners they will be; slaves to the Devil they are, and they will not accept of deliverance. Christ is preached to them a Redeemer, and tendered to them as their ransom, and liberty is offered to these captives, but they will not accept him: they say in their hearts as that servant, I love my old Master, I love my sins, I love my lusts, those very chains by which the Devil holds them, and reject Christ who comes to ransom them.

How is it sinner, that thou art yet a captive to the Devil, and a slave to thy sins? How is it that thou art left out from among the redeemed ones of the Lord? There is a ransom paid, there is a price laid down, to buy out that soul of thine from the wrath of God; and this ransom hath been offered thee, and thou hast been persuaded to come out of the prison, but yet there thou art, yet thou art a bond-slave to the Devil and thy sin. Why is it thus with thee? Why? Only because thou wilt not accept of thy ransom, thou wilt not accept of Christ who would redeem and recover thee. Thou art such a stupid, senseless soul, that thou dost not mind any such thing as thy recovery or redemption: thou mindest thine ease or thy pleasure, thou mindest thy trade and thy gains, and thy business in the World, but thou never mindest the redemption of thy soul; never hast such a thought,

how shall I escape out of the hands of the Devil? How shall my soul be delivered from sin and everlasting wrath? When dost thou use to mind seriously any such thing? Not being sensible of thy misery, thou mindest not thy recovery; and not minding thy recovery, hence it is that thou mindest not thy ransom or Redeemer, but makest light of Christ and his redemption, and makest so light of him, that thou wilt not accept and embrace him when offered to thee. Well, but whatever thou hast done, take heed thou do so no more. Hast thou yet this price in thine hand, is there yet a ransom to be had for that miserable soul of thine? Doth Christ yet stand over thee, offering thee his blood, offering thee himself to be thy redemption? Take heed how thou goest away again, neglecting to accept and make him thine own. This is one condition upon which redemption may be yours, if you will accept of Christ as your ransom.

2. To accept of Christ as your Captain: To list yourself under him as his Soldier, to give up yourself to be commanded, and ordered and governed by him; to follow your great Leader, when he hath broken the bars, and opened the Prison doors and knocked the Goaler in the head, and commands you out of Prison, and calls to you all, Follow me. This is another condition of your recovery, Follow your Captain.

There is no man that shall have the benefit of Christ's ransom, that will voluntarily stay behind in prison. Art thou resolved to serve the Devil still, to follow thy lust still? Dost thou refuse to follow Christ, and to be commanded and governed by him? Then thou canst have no benefit by his ransom. Heb. 5:9. He became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him. Well, would you be recovered by Christ, then list yourselves under him as your Captain, be commanded and governed by him.

3. To accept of Christ as your Physician. This accepting of Christ as your Physician, notes three things.

1. A willingness to be healed by Christ. Some sinners, though they will say, I accept of Christ for my Physician, yet they are not willing

to be healed by him: they love their disease, and do not love their health. Sin is their disease, and holiness is the health of their souls. Sin is their disease, and yet they love their sin: Drunkards love to be Drunkards, the Voluptuous love their pleasures, the Covetous love their covetousness, and the carnal their carnality. Swine do not more love the mud and the mire, and to be wallowing in it, than swinish sinners do the mire of their lusts and sins. Sometimes they pray for recovery, pray for repentance, pray for new heart and life, but they would be loath that God should hear their prayers; Sin, which is their disease, is that they love; and holiness, which is their health, they loath and hate. If Christ call to them, come to me, and I will make a Saint of thee, I will fetch thee off from thy drunken Companions, I will cure thee of thy Covetousness, I will wash thee from thy filthy lusts, and make thee one of mine holy ones; what would they answer? No, I desire no such cure; I love my pleasures, and my company, and my covetousness, and carnality; and for holiness, let them hearken to thee that have a mind to it, I have no list to be of those holy ones. When Christ came to cure bodily diseases, the blind and the lame, and the lunatic, and the possessed of Devils, how glad were they to be cured? But blind souls, and lame and lunatic souls, sick and diseased souls, are not willing of Christ's cure. The carnal mind is at enmity against God, Rom. 8:7, Psal. 50:17. Thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee. Sinners had rather that Christ would let them all alone as they are; they would that he should save them from Hell, but they would not that he should turn them from their sins.

Christ will never save men from wrath, who will not be healed of their sins; and Christ will not heal, till men be willing to be healed.

1. Christ will never save men from wrath, who will not be healed of their sins. Unless he wash thee, he will not bless thee, Joh. 13:8. If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Whilest thou art a Sinner thou art a Swine thou art a Viper, thou art a Leper; thy very nature is swinish, viperous and tainted with a hereditary leprosy. Christ will make another manner of creature of thee than thou art, ere ever thou

shalt see his salvation. Dost thou think that Christ will drive over these herds of Swine, into the Land of Promise? Will he people Heaven, with a generation of Vipers? Or with such an unclean leprous brood, as the unconverted sinners are? Be not deceived, nothing that is unclean shall enter in thither. That heart of thine must be changed, that corrupt nature of thine must be purged; of a Swine thou must be made a man, and the old man must become a new man, or thou wilt never be made a blessed man. If Christ do not heal thee he will never save thee.

2. Christ will heal none but those that are willing to be healed. His first question to those he comes to cure, is the same as that which was put to the impotent man, Joh. 5:6. Wilt thou be made whole? This question Christ is daily putting to you, You that are blind, will you that I should open your eyes? You that are possessed of a Devil, of an unclean Devil, of a proud Devil, of a covetous Devil, will you that I should cast this Devil out? You whom Satan hath bound these many years, bound under a sensual, sinful, hardened heart, will you be loosed from these bonds? You whom the Devil hath been leading on after your pleasures, or your carnal liberties, by the chain of your evil natures, will you that I should cut the chain, and put a stop to the Devil, and turn you back from your course, and never suffer you to be Drunkards any longer, or Flesh-pleasers any longer, or Covetous any longer? Is it thy disease, that thou hast been such a vile liver so long, wilt thou that I should put a stop to thee, that thou be never such anymore? Christ doth ask such questions of you, will you that I should thus cure you of all this? And what do your hearts answer? Some, if they speak their hearts, must answer, O this curing me would be the killing of me, I cannot endure to think of such a change, it vexes my heart to think of parting with my beloved sins, which are as dear as my life to me. But what sayest [thou] sinner, for thy part? Art thou one of these unwilling souls, or art thou willing that Christ should cure thee, and cleanse thee from all thy sins? O get a willing heart; what art thou such a sick soul, and not willing of the Physician? Such a blind soul, and not willing to have thine eyes opened? Such a senseless hardened soul, and not willing that Christ

should humble thee, and break thee? Such a vile and polluted soul, and not willing that Christ should wash thee? Art thou not willing that Christ should come and make a Saint of thee? Hath Sin made a very Devil of thee, and art not thou willing that Christ should make thee a Saint? What wouldst thou do in Heaven, if thou wilt not be made a Saint? Or dost thou think thou mayest continue a Devil, whilst thou livest on the earth, and yet at last be a Saint in Heaven.

What say you sinners? There be some, it may be, of you, that have made a mock at holiness, that have despised the saints that are on earth, and made them the objects of your scorn rather than your desire, but speaks man, art thou yet willing that Christ should come this day and make [thee] a saint? Wilt thou that he should humble thee, and bring thee to repentance? Wilt thou that he should wash thee and bring thee to holiness? Wouldst thou, who camest hither an ignorant sinner, a hardened sinner, an impenitent sinner, be glad at thine heart, if thou mayst r turn an enlightened, a convinced, yea a converted sinner, a believer, a sincere, Christian? Wouldst thou carry home another heart than thou broughtest hither, a new heart transformed and changed into the image of him that created thee, or art thou content to go home as thou camest such an ignorant hardened polluted creature, as thou camest hither? If thou be heartily willing of such a change as this, that is a great part of thy cure. Art thou willing to be cured, willing to be cleansed? Then bring forth that leprous soul of thine, lay it at the feet of Christ, and speak to him as the leper did. Mat. 8:2. Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean. As vile a state as this soul of mine is in, as deadly as my diseases are, as very a Leper as my soul is become, yet Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. Let Christ hear such a word from thee, Lord help me, Lord heal me, if thou wilt thou canst; And then there is hope, that thou mayest hear the same words from Christ, as that poor Leper did, I will, be thou clean; And immediately his Leprosy was cleansed.

2. Take Christ's medicines. To what purpose is it that the physician comes to a sick man, and prescribes to him, and adviseth him to

what will recover him, if he will not take what he prescribeth. Christ hath medicines to recover sick souls, but his medicines must be taken or they will not recover them. Christ's medicines are,

1. His blood. His blood is purging and cleansing blood. Heb. 9:14, 1 Joh. 1:7. Therefore he is said to wash us in his blood. By the blood of Christ is meant the same with the death of Christ. There is virtue in the death of Christ to destroy the life of sin. Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, Rom. 6:6. It is the body of sin that must be first laid at; The inward pravity of our natures, our original corruption. Christ's physic must be firstly applied to the root and fountain of our disease; those sinful natures, those depraved habits and sinful dispositions within you, must be changed; The inward enmity must be slain, and there is nothing will do that, but the blood of a crucified Jesus. That is the sovereign medicine that must help and heal you. But how must this medicine the blood of Christ be taken.

1. Christ himself must be taken. Christ offers himself to you to be yours, and you must accept of him for your own. Your hearts must by faith consent unto Christ, to put yourselves into his hands, to put your life into his hands, expecting and depending upon him, trusting yourselves with him for your recovery. It is Christ alone, with whom I lay up all mine hopes, upon whose sufficiency and faithfulness I will venture my soul: If I die, I will die under his hand, and if I live I look for life only from him. Put yourselves thus into the hands of Christ, and take Christ into your hearts; Take him as your own, he gives himself to you to be your own, Christ offers to every sinner among you, I will be thine own, thine own Jesus, thine own Savior, if thou be willing to have me. Take him at his word; Since he says to thee I will be thine own, if thou wilt, let thy heart lay hold on this blessed word, and say, content Lord, since thou wilt, thou shalt be mine own, I accept thee with all my heart. Now if Christ be once yours, his blood shall be yours, his death shall be yours, and all the benefits of his death. Whereas nothing of Christ can be yours, nor any fruit of his death, if he be not first yours. Let Christ be once embraced by you,

and if there be any purging or cleansing, or sin-killing virtue in his blood, your sins shall be purged away. If all that the blood of Christ can do for thee, will recover thee, thou shalt be recovered.

2. You must have frequent recourse to the blood of Christ, by renewed acts of faith. Look up to this crucified Jesus, Cast thy polluted soul into the fountain of his blood. Zach. 13:1. He is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness. His blood is the fountain, cast thy soul into it. You are come into the blood of sprinkling, Heb. 12:24. Christians are so, and they may freely lay hold on it for their cleansing. 1. Believe that there is such virtue in him to cleanse thy soul: Say with the woman. Mat. 9:21. If I may but touch him I shall be made whole. 2. Believe that it is free for thee. Thou mayst come with boldness to him; Christ would have thee to be bold with him, and to lay thine help upon him. Believe that it is free for thee to lay hold on the blood of Christ; and 3. Come and lay hold upon it. Lean upon him for his help, and trust him for it. 4. Lift up a prayer to him. Lord here is a polluted dying soul, that is even lost and choked up in the mud and mire of my sins, there is no help for me, but I must die and perish in them, if thou wilt not look upon me and save me. In thy bowels I have hope, in thy blood I have hope, and that is all the hope I have. O sprinkle me with thy blood, wash me in thy blood, and my soul shall live; Wherefore Lord didst thou die? Wherefore didst thou shed that precious blood? Was it not for the recovery of lost souls, for the cleansing of polluted souls? Is not my poor soul one of the number of those for whom Christ died? Have not I as great need of thee as any? Is it not thou thyself that hast brought this my soul to thy door, crying for thine help? Lord Jesus hear, let some drops of that blood, some of the virtue of thy death be shed abroad upon my sinful heart and it shall live. My sins must die Lord, or my soul will never recover; I must get this lust destroyed, this enmity slain, this proud and hard and stubborn heart broken, and nothing but the blood of Christ the lamb will ever melt this hardness, or wash me from this uncleanness. This will do it, and therefore here I am come before the throne of thy grace, and here I

will stand, and look, and beg, and hope till thou hear and answer me, Help Lord for in thee I trust, and look for thy salvation only.

2. His word. The word of God as it is food for souls, so it is medicine or physic for souls; And it hath in it a remedy for every disease.

1. It is an awakening word to sleepy souls. On these it thunders; that it may awaken them. Ministers must be as Barnabas, sons of consolation, so also as Boanerges sons of thunder; And all their thunder bolts they are to have out of the word of God. O how many trumpets have been sounded in your ears, how many thunder claps have you heard, how many thundering Sermons hast thou heard in thy time? What, and yet art thou asleep still? Man, what is that heart of thine made of? What a dead sleep art thou in, that art not yet awakened? This world is all asleep, asleep in their sins, and therefore the Ministers of the word are to do as the Prophet was to do, Is. 58:1. Cry aloud, spare not, lift thy voice like a trumpet and tell my people of their sins.

Our first work is to call unto them as the mariners to Jonah, Arise sleeper, carest thou not that you perish! Awake thou that sleepest, stand up from the dead. This thunder is the voice of the Lord. Psal. 29:6, &c. The God of glory thundereth; the voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is full of majesty, it breaketh Cedars, it maketh the wilderness shake; This word of the Lord which is his voice is a thundering voice: It breaketh the Cedars, the tall and mighty sinners, and it shakes the wilderness, shakes up those Beasts of the earth out of sleep. This sleepy evil is the disease of sinners, and it binds them up under a senselessness of all their other diseases, till the voice of the Lord doth shake them up out of sleep.

2. It is an enlightening word that giveth sight to the blind. In this word is that eye salve. Rev. 1:18. Wherewith sinners eyes are to be anointed, that they may see. This eye salve are the instructions of God.

3. It is for the breaking and mollifying hard hearts. In the word is revealed,

1. The righteousness and severity of God. Herein is the wrath of God revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. Rom. 1:18. And thus it is God's Hammer, whereby he breaks the rocks, and God's Axe, Whereby he hews the blocks in pieces.

2. The goodness and kindness of God. And thus it is, God's oil, whereby he supples and dissolves, and melts them into a pliability to his will.

4. It is for the changing the tempers and inward dispositions of sinners. It is a transforming word, we are changed into the same image. 2. Cor. 3:18, a sanctifying word. Joh. 17:17. Sanctify them by thy truth, thy word is truth.

This is one of Christ's medicines, and this medicine is to be taken. But what is it to take this medicine? Why, it is to hear the awakening word and to suffer it to work upon you, to be awakened by it, to receive the instructions of the word, and so to be enlightened by it, to be broken and mollified, to be transformed and changed by it.

CHAP. VIII

Let the Word of God Do its Work Upon You

Now this is that which I exhort you to, if you would recover, let the word of God come, let it have a free passage into your hearts, and let it do its work upon you. Be awakened, when you hear an awakening word, let it shake you up out of your sleep. Awake sinners, awake you that sleep, hear the voice of the Lord, and rouse you up out of that

secure and senseless state. Where is it that thou sleepest? At the very mouth of the Lions Den, on the top of a Mast. I have heard of a drunken man riding in the night on full speed, he knew not whither, rode to the top of St. Vincents Rocks near Bristol, and the horse and man tumbled down; the horse was crushed in pieces, the man caught by the boughs of a Tree, and there fell asleep till morning. It was a strange place to sleep in, none but a drunken man could have ever slept in such a place. In such a desperate sleep art thou, as upon the brow of a Rock, on the bough of a Tree, whence thou art every moment in danger of dropping down into the deep. Sleeping sinners, this is the case of every one of you; it is a wonder you have not broken your necks, that you have not fallen into the deep before this day, and yet here thou art asleep still. Awake you that sleep, and understand the danger you are in. 2. Get those blind eyes of yours to be opened, and receive the instructions of the Word. Here we bring you eye-salve, be anointed with it, that you may see. 3. Get those hard hearts to be broken and melted. God's hammer is lifted up, lay that stony, that hard heart of thine under it, that it may be broken. God's Ax is a hewing, come bring that knotty piece under it, that it may be cut & cloven asunder. Consider the severity and kindness of God: his severity, if thou still continue in thine hardness; if his Hammer do not break thee, his Mill-stones, his wrath and indignation will shortly grind thee to powder. Consider his severity, and consider his goodness and kindness; what a wonder is it that after thou hast so long abused the goodness of God, and hardened thyself against mercy, that mercy should not have given thee off, and let thee alone to perish without remedy. It is a mercy of God, that he is yet preaching to thee of his severity: it is the mercy of God that he is yet hammering and hewing at that hard heart of thine: God is so good and so kind to thee, that he hath sent his Word once more, to try if any good may be done upon thee: he is loath thou shouldst perish, he would fain thou shouldst recover and live: he hath pity upon thee, he hath compassion upon that wretched soul of thine, and thence is it that he continues to be dealing with thee for thy recovery. O wonder, wonder that such mercy should not melt thee, that such goodness and kindness should not wound thee to the soul, that thou

shouldst abuse such strange grace; that thou should yet resist and stand it out against such a God of compassion. Wonder at thyself and be ashamed, wonder and be confounded, and blush, and weep, and fall down now at last, and yield unto God. What, art thou hardened still? A stone or a stock still? Wilt thou go away as far from remorse, as far from repentance as thou camest hither? God forbid, man; God forbid, that yet thou shouldst provoke the Lord farther against thee. Thou hast gone away hardened from many a Sabbath, thou hast gone away hardened from many a Sermon, and must this Day and this Word leave thee as all the rest have done? When dost thou hope to be recovered, if thou wilt not be broken? Wilt thou say, it is no matter though I never be recovered, though I perish and die in this hardened state? Wouldst thou fear to be let alone till thou be past recovery, to be lost forever? Then yield to the stroke of the Word, and let thine heart be humbled and broken, and brought to repentance.

4. Get the temper of your hearts to be changed. Let the Word work to the mollifying you, and to the changing of you; to the renewing you after the image of God in righteousness and holiness. And whatever awakenings there have been of your sleepy consciences, whatever light or understanding there may be conveyed into your minds, yea, and whatever wounds and breaches there have been made upon your hard hearts, yet till you be renewed in the very frame, and temper, and dispositions of your hearts, never count yourselves to be recovered. Thou art a lost soul till thou art a sanctified soul: that is, till thine heart be broken off, and brought back from the love, and lusts, and ways of this World, and brought about unto God and his holy ways, till godliness be gotten into thine [heart] and formed into thy nature, and thou hast a love of it, and hearty good liking of it, and the very bent of thine heart, which was formerly towards sin and vanity, be now towards holiness and heaven. When thou art brought to this, this new frame of heart, then thou art recovered.

Now Sinners, let this be that you have in your eye, and upon your hearts, let this be your endeavor, let this be your prayer, that God would so bless his Word to you, that it may awaken your sleepy

consciences, enlighten your blinded minds, soften and break your hardened hearts, that you may be changed and renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, that you may be wrought into a new temper, changed into another spirit, loving, and savoring, and delighting in the holy ways of God; that Religion may become sweet and pleasant to you, that your spirits may be made suitable to God and his holy ways, that the food of God may relish with you, and the work of God may be more easy to you. Sick men can neither relish their food, nor endure their work. Dost thou find no relish in Religion, Does the work of holiness seem contrary to thee? Dost thou groan under it, as that thou canst not bear? Dost thou groan under this praying, and repenting, and watching, and striving against sin, and denying thyself, and mortifying thy flesh? Canst thou not endure to be held to such work? It is a sign that thy sickness is still upon thee, and thou art not recovered. O get your hearts to be so changed and renewed by the Word and Spirit of the Lord, that both the food of God may relish with you, and his work may be pleasant.

3. His Rod. Sinners are fools, and the Rod is Physic for Fools. The rod is for the Fools back, Prov. 26:3. Psal. 119:67. Before I was afflicted I went astray, but the Rod reduced me, now have I kept thy word. Sinner, thou hearest the awakening word, but it doth not awaken thee, thou sleepest on: Thou hearest the mollifying and breaking word, but it does not break nor mollify thee, thou art still a willful, stubborn soul, and thine heart is so obstinately set upon thine own loose and wild ways, that thou wilt not be broken off thy will, nor broken off from thy course; but God may bring some affliction upon thee, bring thee into poverty, cast thee on thy sick bed, set death at thy beds foot to stare thee in the face, and this will tame thee: then thou mayest be spoken to, then the Word, there is hope, will enter into thee, and work upon thee. Indeed some sinners are so desperately hardened that neither word nor rod will do. What afflictions come, they rather stupefy than awaken them; They continue as very stocks under the smiting's of God, as they are under his teachings, and therefore take heed, the longer thou goest on to

harden thine heart against the word, there is the less hope that thou wilt be humbled by afflictions. Dare not to encourage yourselves and harden your hearts against repentance, by hopes and purposes that when sickness comes, and death looks thee in the face, then thou wilt repent, no no, the longer thou hardnest thyself against the word, the less hope there is that thine heart will be broken by afflictions. But some hope there is, that when the word awakens not, the rod may. But if that do not neither, then God be merciful unto thee, there is but one thing more and that will certainly do it, the unquenchable flames will awaken thee, Hell will do that which all the means under Heaven cannot do; But that fire will not be thy physic to cure thee, but thy plague to kill thy soul forever.

The afflictions of this life are God's physic for the recovering thy soul;
O take this cup at the hand of the Lord, take this physic for thy soul;
But what is it to take this medicine so as it may be recovering physic?

1. Submit to afflictions when God lays them on. Be patient and contented that the Lord should afflict thee. Do not fret nor murmur at the afflicting hand of God. Some froward patients, if their Physician be forced to give any harder physic it will not down, but they fret and fume against the physician, as if he were cruel, and will not submit to take what he offers them. Be patient under the hand of God, and submit to whatever he lays on.

2. Consider thine afflictions. Eccl. 7:14. In the day of adversity consider. Affliction is a considering time. Sinners, you will not consider now, but you may have time enough to consider it afterwards. You will neither consider what you do. Eccles. 5:1. They consider not they do evil, Nor will you consider what the Lord speaks to you, you hear our words that we speak to you from the Lord, but we cannot persuade you to consider them. Consider what we say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things. Think over the words that you hear; It is a miserable plague that hath seized upon your hearts, this inconsideration, and that which hinders you from profiting by the word, and holds you under your senselessness and

hardness of heart. Think of what you hear, think what a wretched case the word declares you to be in. When you hear such words, He that committeth sin is of the Devil, 1. Joh. 3:8. He that liveth after the flesh shall die. Rom. 8:13. He that is not born again, cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. When you hear such words as these, then consider, then think with yourself, what a word have I heard today? Am not I concerned in it? Was not this word spoken to me? Am not I one that committeth sin? Do not I live after the flesh? Was I ever regenerated or born again? What then? Why, then think farther, Is it nothing to be of the Devil? Is everlasting death nothing? Is it nothing to be shut out of the kingdom of God? Awaken O my sleepy soul; yet break and melt and tremble; oh mine hardened heart, awaken, escape for thy Life, there is but a step betwixt thee and everlasting death. Consider this now, whilst the day of adversity comes nor, but if thou shouldst be so unwise as not to consider at present, yet at least in the day of thy distress consider; Then think how little the word hath done to the breaking and awakening of thee; What a stock, what a senseless stone hath it left thee! Then think, now God is using one means more to cure me of this sleepy hardened heart, God hath laid this sickness upon me, or this poverty upon me, to humble me and awaken me; And now I am come to my last remedy, if affliction, if distress, if sickness, if the sight of death, and the grave do not work upon me, nor cause the word which I have heard to work yet upon me, what then? Why then I am undone forever, I am within a step of the Pit, just dropping in, and then this lost soul of mine will be past recovery forever.

O sinners how does this word sit upon your hearts? Are not you greatly concerned in it? Does not thy life lie at stake, thy soul lie at stake, upon thy considering or slighting thy warning? O consider, let present consideration prevent the great necessity of sickness consideration, of death-bed consideration. At least when any of you shall come to be in distress, when pains shall come upon you or poverty come upon you, or death make its approach to you, then remember the warning of this day. In the day of adversity consider.

3. Take your physicians counsel and follow his rules. Physicians besides their medicines do usually give rules to their Patients for their well ordering themselves, and these rules they must observe, or they are never like to recover and there are these three rules, which ordinarily Physicians give, which our great Physician of souls, gives also to them that will be recovered by him.

1. Keep a good diet. 2. Use good exercise. 3. Take heed of taking cold.

1. Keep a good diet. Abstain from all such things as will nourish and feed your diseases. What is it that hath brought thee to this wretched pass? That hath made thee this sick and miserable soul. Thou hast been with the prodigal, Luk. 15. Feeding upon husks. Thou hast been with Israel, Is. 44:20. Feeding upon ashes. Thou hast been with Ephraim. Hos. 12:1. Feeding upon wind. These husks, and these ashes, and this wind have been all thy poor soul hath been feeding upon, the vanities of this world, the lust and the pleasures, the carnal delights and the profits of this world, these are but windy food for thy soul, these are the very ashes and husks, that have filled thee with such sore diseases, thou hast fed thine heart so long with these carnal things, thy soul hath been eating these ashes, and drinking this wind so long, that it is even turned into ashes and wind, it is become an earthly soul, a fleshly soul, a vain frothy soul, and never think to be recovered to a better case, till thou feed upon better food. Wouldest thou be recovered, and get thee a new heart, and a new soul? Then abstain from thy old feeding, Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul. 1. Pet. 2:11. Make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof. Rom. 13, ult. Deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts. Tit. 2:12. My meaning plainly is this; If ever you would recover, allow not your fleshly appetites the liberty as formerly; Come off from your carnal pleasures, which have been such a band to you; Come off from your carnal companions, drink no more with the drunken, run not with them to their excess of Riot, No more such vain sporting's and revelings; Not in chambering and wantonness, not in Riot and Drunkenness. Come off from this greedy worldly life, feed not your souls upon your lands, or your monies, or your trades;

Though you must have something of these for your bodies, yet feed not your hearts with them. Set not your hearts upon them, that is the advice of the Psalmist, Psal. 62:10. If riches increase, or whether they do increase or no, set not your hearts upon them. Let not your souls be drudges to your flesh, to gather in provision for it, nor let them feed with your flesh at the same trough.

You have better things for your souls to feed upon, you have God to feed on, you have the blood of Christ, the Covenant of grace, the hope of Salvation, the joys of the spirit, the pleasures of Eternity, the bread that comes down from Heaven, the wine that makes glad the city of God; Let these be the food of your souls, feed your thoughts upon them; Think often of God, of his infinite goodness and grace, of his eternal treasures, and everlasting pleasures; Think of Christ, what he hath done for you, what he hath purchased for you, how he hath loved you, and washed you in his blood, and saved you by his death. Feed your affections on God, and his Glory to come, feed your desires upon him, let this be your voice. Is. 26:8,9, The desire of my soul is to thy name. Enlarge your desires here you cannot be too greedy and of too eager an appetite. Delight yourselves in the Lord; get the savor and relish of things spiritual, taste the pleasures of religion, taste the sweetness of Christianity. Do not only spend now and then a sudden thought upon God, and the things above, but live in such frequent and serious meditation, that you may get down something of the sweetness and fatness of heaven, and digest holy meditations into holy affections. Never count you have thought of God to any purpose, till you can love, and taste, and get out good nourishment for your souls, by which you may thrive and flourish, and with which you may be so delighted, as to wean you from the Love and Lusts of this world.

Believe it friends, as loath as you are to let go your pleasant morsels, the stolen waters of your own Cisterns, as hard as you find it to diet your souls, so as to deny yourselves the pleasures and contentment's of a worldly fleshly life, as strongly as your hearts lust after ease, and lust after the world and the contentment's thereof, get but once to be

so inwardly acquainted with religion, as to taste the pleasure thereof, and you will be able to despise this carnal life, and all its advantages, and wonder at yourselves, that ever you should find out contentment in such a life as you have lived.

And now your souls are like to flourish again, when you are come to this once, to disrelish your old delights, and to feed your thoughts and feed your affections on things above, and to forbear, and come off from the love and lusts and companions and pleasures of this world, then you will live and thrive and flourish in the House of the Lord, and grow up before him as his peculiar children whom the Lord hath saved.

The sum of this direction I shall give you in short, in these three particulars. If ever you would recover, 1. Abstain from that carnal worldly life in which hitherto you have lived. 2. Abstain from those carnal companions in whose converse you have delighted. 3. Delight yourselves in God, feed your thoughts and affections upon things above.

2. Use good exercise. Stir yourselves out of your lazy humors, and keep doing. Idleness breeds diseases, exercise will help to the cure. Particularly exercise yourselves,

1. To prayer.

2. To repentance.

3. To the keeping a good conscience.

1. Exercise yourselves to prayer. The prayer of the faithful shall save the sick. Jam. 5:15. The sick soul as well as the sick body. Prayer is a stirring exercise, that (if performed as it ought) sets all the powers of the soul on work; it is a striving with God, it is a wrestling with God, it is the lifting up of the heart, and the pouring out the soul to God. When thou settest thyself to praying, it is both a sign that thy recovery is begun, and a hope it will be perfected. Set yourselves to

praying, Sinners, stir up yourselves to prayer; There is none that stirreth up himself to take hold on thee, Is. 64:7. Pray and stir up yourselves in prayer. It is not sleepy, lazy, cold, formal praying, but stirring prayer that must do the cure. Stir up your desires in prayer, be passionate and affectionate seekers, stir up your fears in prayer, consider, what if I should not prevail? What if the cry of my sins should be louder than the cry of my prayers? I come for the pardon of my sins, I come for power against sin, I am begging my life, and the saving my soul from going down into the Pit; my very life, my soul lies at stake, if God should not hear me, I am lost forever. Awaken, oh my soul, and pour forth strong cries, bow thyself with thy might before the Lord.

Plead with God, poor sinner, for that poor miserable soul of thine, plead with him upon his mercies, upon his bowels, upon his promises, upon the blood of Christ. Take unto thee words, Lord I am a miserable sinful soul, I am a lost creature, I am sick unto death, I am bound in the chains of my sins, and cannot get loose, I am a blind, hardened, defiled creature; these eyes must be opened, this heart must be broken, this filth and pollution must be washed away, or I shall be swallowed up of the pit. Where are thy bowels, O Lord? Art thou a God of pity, and hast thou no pity for me? Where is thy promise, Lord? Thou hast said, Ask and you shall have, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. To whom hast thou spoken this word? Is it not to me as well as to others? Where is the blood of Christ, doth it not speak for sinners? Doth it not make intercession for transgressors? It doth Lord, thou hast said it doth. And what doth this blood speak? Lord forgive this poor sinner that comes to thee for pardon; Lord purge him with thy blood, Lord heal him with thy blood, Lord give him that new heart and life which he comes for. O, doth this precious blood speak thus for me, and wilt thou not hear?

Sinners, if ever you would be recovered, set upon this exercise, and keep you to it. Go to God this night, be with him again tomorrow morning, and again in the evening, and every day as duly as the day

comes, go alone and retire yourselves into the presence of God, fall upon your knees, and pour forth your souls in your requests to him. Beware you neither neglect it, and beware you do not trifle at it: do not deceive yourselves with the shadow or image of Prayer instead of Prayer. Consider, thou art upon a matter of life and death when thou goest to prayer; and let that awaken and stir up all thy powers in it.

Friends, I doubt either that you do not pray, or that it is but mock-praying, that too many of you satisfy yourselves withal. O what pitiful, hasty, short, dead praying is it, that thou satisfiest thyself with? Trace thyself into thy praying corners, consider how seldom thou art there, how quickly thou hast done, how miserably thou shufflest over thy duties, without life or affection; what is this but mock-prayer, will such praying recover thy lost soul? No, thou seest it will not: thou art the same man, of the same spirit, running the same course, from one week to another, from one year to another, without any change for the better. It may be said of such praying, as it was said of the false Prophets preaching, Jer. 6:14. They heal the hurt of my people slightly. Slight praying is attended but with slight healing: something it seems to do, it skins over the wound that it smart not for the time, it keeps people quiet for the time, but it will never work a thorough cure. Your wound is deeper, your disease is eaten into your flesh and your bone, to your heart and your soul, and your medicine must go as deep as your disease. There must be deep sighs and groans, and deep desires that must come up from the bottom of your hearts, or they will never reach the bottom of your disease. Be ashamed of your slightness, be ashamed of your folly, that you should ever think that God would help you the sooner for such trifling and mocking prayers.

Oh pray, and exercise yourselves in prayer. Stir up all within you to this work; look to yourselves, I am afraid that this duty, which is a means of recovery, may prove the loss of your souls: I am afraid lest the Lord, the jealous God that will not be mocked, I am afraid that he may damn you for your prayers, your trifling mocking prayers. Dare not to trifle any longer; dare not for thy life, that the Lord ever again

meet thee in thy closet, meet thee on thy knees with nothing but the sacrifice of Fools, a few heartless words upon thy lips. Beloved I can hardly pass over this word thus, there being so much weight lying upon it, and yet there being so much hardness of heart under this soul-deceiving and soul-damning practice shuffling in prayer. What say you? Have I said enough yet? Are you yet made sensible how much you are, many of you, concerned in this word? Are you yet sensible how greatly guilty you are of this miserable hypocrisy? Will all that I have said yet do, to bring you to be serious and in good earnest in every prayer you make? Are you come to this, well, I hope I shall mock God no more, I hope I shall trifle in prayer no more? Are you resolved to put your hearts to it, and to try what you can do, and never leave trying till you are come to it, to make every prayer, one of the most serious and hearty exercises of your life? Then would there be hope of recovery out of all your diseases.

2. Exercise yourselves to repentance. Repentance signifies a change, a change of the mind originally; so those two words by which it is expressed in Scripture, signify post factum sapere, after we have plaid the fools by sin, to come to be wise, so wise as to see our folly, so to see our folly as to grieve for it, and so to grieve, ut corrigere, to amend and do so no more. This change is ordinarily brought on by convulsions and troublesome commotions in the heart; there is a sorrow that works this repentance, 2 Cor. 7:10. Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation. This Repentance is not dispatched all at once, but is carried on and perfected by degrees. Repentance is a grace, and it is an exercise. A grace it is, as it is given us of God through Jesus Christ, Acts 5:31. To give repentance unto Israel, &c. An exercise as it respects our own acts, which this grace causeth us to put forth, 2 Cor. 7:10. This self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly manner, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what desire, what zeal, what revenge?

Get the grace of repentance, and live in the daily exercise of repentance.

1. Keep your minds working, to maintain that change that is begun. Have you seen the folly of sin, and the misery of sin, and how much better it is to turn and come about from it to holiness? Are you come to be of this judgment, that you were mad to follow the Devil, and your lusts; that you could never have lived in such a state, and gone on in such a course as you have, unless you had been mad men? Are you gotten into so good a mind? Keep you in it. Exercise your thoughts, cast an eye back upon your former evils, and that which God hath made known to you of the misery of them. Think often what it is to be a lost soul, a captive to the Devil; think what a Fool, what a Beast thou wert whilst thou livedst such a proud, and covetous, and carnal, sensual, lascivious, and sottish life: and by such thoughts make thyself as odious to thyself as thou canst; get to a loathing and abominating of thy evil ways. This is that which is promised Ezek. 6:9. They shall loath themselves, for the evils they have committed.

Get this self-loathing by studying and remembering what thou wast, and ripping up all thine old sores, that foolish filthy heart and life of thine; hereby work thyself to this loathing, and maintain a constant disgust and dislike of thy former state. Art thou now in so good a mind, as to hate thyself for thy sin? Be never reconciled to it, so as ever to think good thoughts of thy evil ways as long as thou livest.

2. Exercise your affections: Your sorrow for sin, your fear of sin, your indignation or anger against sin your desire after power and victory over it. Keep these penitent affections working, maintain that godly sorrow, and fear, and indignation: Keep your sorrow alive, keep your fears working, and your indignation burning against your iniquities. Let these zealous passions and affections against sin, be so raised, as never to be allayed; let the fire of your holy jealousy be so kindled, as never to be quenched; let the thoughts of the evil and odiousness of sin, be the fuel to keep that holy fire burning, and the Bellows to blow it up into a greater flame.

3. Exercise your care and consideration how you may complete and confirm your recovery. The word it may be, is but yet begun with you; You do but begin to be wise, begin to be sober and serious; there is many a good and hopeful beginning goes back, and comes to nothing; live in a daily care of reforming and amending farther what hath been amiss. The top of repentance standeth in amendment, if you should see your sins to be foolish, and odious never so much, if you should be grieved and ashamed of yourselves for them, if the thoughts of the course you have lived, should make you afraid, and set you a trembling over your old wonted state and way, if you do not amend that is no repentance. If you should say, I hate sin, and hate myself for it, I hate myself for this pride, I hate myself for this covetousness, I hate myself for this frowardness, and yet you have not the power to resist it, and come off from it, you sorrow and sin, you fear and sin, you are angry with yourself for sin, and yet go on; this is no repentance. Is. 55:7. Let the wicked forsake his wickedness &c.

The top of repentance stands in amendment, and the amendment of repentance, must be completing every day. Jer. 7:5. If ye thoroughly amend your ways, if ye thoroughly execute Judgment &c. Then will I cause you to dwell in the Land. It is not a half recovery, a partial amendment, but a perfect recovery that must be in your eye. There is a great difference betwixt these two, being upon recovery, and being recovered. Are you upon recovery? It is well you are, it is more than the most of sinners are; there is not the least sign of recovery, there is not the least sign of amendment, there are nothing but death tokens upon them. Sinners I doubt this may be many of your cases, you are not so much as beginning to recover; your disease is still in its strength, and growing upon you; you are not amending, but you are hardening daily in your sins, going on to have less sense, and so less hope of a cure. But art thou O sinner, art thou upon recovery? It is well thou art; but let not that satisfy thee, that thou art upon the recovering hand, but get thee to be recovered. And this is that you are to be exercising yourself in, to get you to be on the mending hand every day; labor to grow better and better, not only to get a deeper

sense of sin, but to get more power over sin, more victory over your evil hearts, more contempt of the world and its temptations, more scorn of your carnal companions, and more indignation against a carnal sensual life, and more firmness and resolvedness of heart, to have done with every evil and vain way, and the temptations to it. I say, the temptations to it, for whatever opposition there seems to be of the heart against sin, yet if there be a venturing upon temptations, if thou thinkest thou hatest drunkenness or a jolly vain life, and yet wilt be thrusting in amongst those that are such, if thou sayst thou hatest this worldly mindedness, and yet art never well but when thou art greedily heaping up what should feed thy worldly disease, never talk of hating the sin; if thou fear not, if thou shun not the temptation, thou still lovest the sin.

Well sinners, set your hearts upon a perfect amendment, and keep yourselves in such a constant exercise of repentance, that you may amend more and more every day. Consider, is it better with thee today than it was yesterday? Or at least, is it better with thee this year than it was last year, or some years ago? Is it better or is it worse? Or art thou in the same case? What hope hast thou to be recovered, if there be no amendment all this while?

CHAP. IX

Questions to Provoke You to Repentance

To provoke you to the present and constant exercising yourselves to repentance. I will propose some questions to you.

Q. 1, What do you think of your former state, and your ways hitherto? Is it well with you? Are you not lost souls, and your carnal ways are they not the ways of perdition? Have ye lived like wise

understanding men? Do ye think ye have? Will you say, I have done wisely in following the wine and strong drink, in following my companions and my pleasures? I have dealt wisely to live such a covetous and worldly life, I should have been a fool to have been a Christian, or a convert, to have left all and have followed Christ, from my first time! You have lived a fleshly and worldly life you cannot deny that, but let me ask you as the Apostle did the Romans. Rom. 6:21. What fruit had ye of those things whereof ye are now ashamed. Are you come so far towards repentance as to be ashamed of your former folly? What fruit have you? What is there now remaining to you, as the fruit of your former ways? O I have some good fruit, I hope I have lived a worldly life I have got the world about me, I have got me an estate, and am become a rich man, I should have been poor enough, if I had hearkened to Christ and come back from the world sooner, this house is the fruit, this money is the fruit, these lands are the fruits of my labors. Would praying and repenting and forsaking the world, have ever brought me to such an estate as now I have? And do you yet ask me what fruit have ye of your worldliness!

Answer. 1. But are these the fruits you can satisfy yourselves in? Are these the fruits you can bless yourselves in? Will these estates answer for you to your Judge? And make way for you into the everlasting Kingdom? Will this be a good plea for entrance into Heaven, set open the door for here comes a rich man, a monied man, a landed man, let him have entrance into the Everlasting Kingdom? Friends, what you have thus gotten, will sink you, and drown you in perdition, and destruction, but never he p you to glory, and this is the good fruit you boast of, that you have gotten such weights about your necks, as will drown you in the Pit.

But 2. What fruit have [you] of your ways that have lived at ease, and lived in pleasure, in idleness or wantonness, or excess of riot, in sporting and laughing, and carnal jollity? What is become of all the pleasures of your life? What fruit is there remaining of all thy crackling thorns? Are they not all burnt to ashes and vanished away as a dream?

3. Have all your former ways done anything to the recovering of your lost souls? Have not they left you sons of perdition, nay, are you not become seven times more the children of Hell by these practices than you were by nature? Thou wert naturally a child of wrath, Ephes. 2:3, and you have by practice been children of disobedience, as verse 2, and hath your disobedience delivered you from wrath?

I say therefore again, What do you think of yourselves, and your ways. The Judgment of God, you see what it is, you are a child of disobedience, and a child of wrath, and what is your Judgment? What are your own thoughts of yourselves? Does not your Judgment, and your conscience tell you, sure it is an evil case that I am in? No wise man would ever stay a minute longer in such a state or way. Have you come so far towards repentance as to change your mind? Are there any of you of better minds than you have been? Is this now your mind and your settled judgment, It would be good for me to repent, and come about to God? Have you any mind to Christ, any mind to godliness, and serious Christianity?

Q. 2. Will you continue in your former state and way, or will you endeavor for recovery? If you say you have a mind to be a Convert and become a new man, will you set your hearts to it, will you exercise your thoughts about it? Will you set to praying for repentance, to resisting and striving against your old sins? Will you go on as before, or will you come back? Who is there among you that hath yet the heart to say, O I have done with my old ways, I have done with my old companions, I have done with this World, I have done with this fleshly life, I am ashamed, I am afraid, I repent that I have lived such a life hitherto: the Lord change my heart, the Lord help me to change my way. What say you Christians, it is an important question to answer, the Lord God puts you this day to it, to be plain and downright, and in good earnest to resolve what you will do. What say you? Who of you are for repenting, and who for going on in your sins? God puts you to it, and in the name of God put yourselves to it, to give in your answer. What do you mean to do, will you hearken to the Lord, or will you yet go on to harden your hearts?

Have these words so far prevailed upon you, as to bring you into a good mind? Have you a mind and purpose to return.

Q. 3. Shall it suffice you to take up with the beginnings of repentance, or will you make thorough-work. Shall it suffice you to set your faces towards God, or will you come home to him? Jer. 4:1. O Israel, if thou wilt return, return unto [me.] Come not towards me, and then stay at half way; but come home to me, come thorough to me. Repentance is dispatched by degrees; first those that were running away are brought about to be looking, and making towards God; then those that are afar off, are coming near to God; then those that are come near, do come in to God; and then those that are come in, do by degrees fix and confirm their hearts upon God, that they may never go back to the way of sin.

What is it that will satisfy you? Shall it suffice you to be looking towards God, or coming half way towards Heaven? Or are you for coming home, for coming in to the Lord? For making sure work, for making thorough work? If you are so, for being thorough-Converts, this will require time, this will require pains, and constant exercising yourselves to repentance as long as you live. You must continue repenting, as long as you continue sinning; you must confirm and establish your hearts against all returns to the old state and course, as long as there is danger of relapsing. What if you should begin well, and then give off or make a stand? What if you should lay by your sorrow for sin, lay down your fear of sin, and run into temptations to sin without fear, if you should give off your watch and your warring's against sin? What do you think would become of you if you should? How would you tumble back into the Pit, from which you seemed to be delivered? Do what you can Friends, to make sure work; Have you gotten any sense of sin, and of the necessity of turning? Exercise your thoughts and your hearts upon this thing while you live. You will never whilst you live here, see to the bottom of the evil that is in sin. Hast thou by thinking, and searching, found out something of the evil of sin? Think again, search again, and thou shalt yet see greater abominations, greater malignity in it. You may as easily see to the

height of heaven, or to the depth of hell, as to the bottom of sin. Sin can never be thoroughly known till God be thoroughly known. It is an abuse of God, an abuse of infinite grace, and goodness, and holiness: as often as thou sinnest, thou affrontest and abusest the God of heaven and earth. Thou thinkest it a small matter to tell a lie, or to pilfer and purloin, if it be but trifles thou stealest; but is it a small matter to abuse the Almighty God? To tread upon his authority, who hath said, lie not, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not covet? Is it a small matter to spit in his face, to slight his bowels, to tread upon his mercy, and to throw it back upon him, and refuse it when he offers it? Such and much more malignity is there in sin than all this, and therefore be thinking and searching out the evil of sin more and more, as long as you live. Study much the evil of sin, and the preciousness of Christ, and give not over till you can no longer either make light of sin, or make light of Christ; and when sin is become grievous, and Christ is become precious; when sin is so grievous that you cannot bear it, when Christ is so precious that you cannot want him, that is a sign of a recovered soul, 1 Pet. 2:7. To them which believe he is precious. And where Christ is precious, it is sure, there sin is odious. O if Christ hath once recovered you, how dear will he be to you? You will prize him in your very hearts, you will love him while you live, you will be afraid how you grieve or offend him. And when you are recovered from sin, how will you look back upon it? Will you love, will you lust after your old ways again? Will you wish yourselves Worldlings again, Sensualists again? Will you bethink the ease you have lost, the pleasures you have lost, the companions you have lost? Will you not thank God that you are come out from among them, and have escaped that misery that is coming upon the World? The more you live in the constant exercise of repentance, the more you will admire the recovering grace of God, and the more you will abhor to return to folly.

Repentance is your recovery, if God give you repentance, you may recover, and your continuing in the exercise of repentance is your maintaining, and perfecting, and confirming your recovery. You are not gotten so far off from the state of sin, but your continued exercise

of repentance will get you farther off daily. Your repentance is your getting upon sure ground, and your continued repentance is your standing your ground; your giving off at your repenting work will be your relapse, and it may be into a worse case than before, Joh. 5:14. Behold thou art made whole, sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. Behold thou art made whole, O what a word is that? How do you think that poor impotent man, that had been so 38 years, was ravished at that word? What if the Lord should now speak the word to any sinner among you that had been even astonished with the sense of his sin and his guilt; that had lien as long at the Ordinances as the poor man at the Pool, expecting and hoping for a saving change, and could find none. If Christ should come to thee this day, and say, Behold thou art made-whole, thy sins are forgiven, and thy soul is cleansed from them; If that word should be spoken to thee this day, how would thine heart leap for joy? What should we hear from thee but praises and thanksgiving? Well, but yet consider the words that follow, sin no more, stand thy ground, lest a worse thing come to thee: thy case hath been very sad formerly, but as sad as it hath been, look to find it worse, if thou return to folly, Psal. 85:8. God will speak peace, but let them not return to folly: at their peril let them look to it, that they do not return. But of this more in the next.

Now Sinners, will you yet at last be persuaded to set upon this work of repenting? Will you say you cannot? Why then you must die of your disease, die eternally. But why, can you not? O it is a painful life, it is contrary to me, I have found such ease and such pleasure, and such gain in mine old ways, that I cannot part with them: what, not for the saving of thy life? Is thine ease better than Christ? Are thy gains more worth than thy soul? Wilt thou to hell rather than turn? As sure as thou livest thither thou must, if thou repent not, Luke 13:3. Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish. God hath said, the soul that sinneth shall die, Ezek. 18, and God will never repent of that word as to thee unless thou repent of thy sins. What, art thou resolved for hell? Art thou resolved to sacrifice that flesh and those bones of thine to the fury of the Devil? Art thou a captive to the Devil, and wilt thou never recover out of his snares? Shall he carry thee

with him to his home? Shall he that hath had the leading of thee, have the burning of thee? O why will ye die? Turn and live, count upon it, there is but one way with you, every one of you, either turn or die.

CHAP. X

Keep a Good Conscience

3. Exercise yourselves to the keeping a good conscience. Acts 24:26. Herein do I exercise myself.

This is a hard exercise and will hold us in continual work. There are many things required to the keeping a good conscience, all which must be well looked to. Amongst others,

1. Get a good conscience; or get conscience recovered from those evils it labors under. There are two special evils in and upon conscience.

Guilt.

Guile.

1. Guilt, there is guilt upon the conscience, every sin leaves guilt behind it, The whole world is become guilty before God. Rom. 3:15. Because the whole world are sinners, or subject to the Judgment of God. But then there is guilt upon the man, and guilt upon the conscience. There are some sins, that leave guilt upon the man, but do not, immediately leave guilt upon the conscience as sins of ignorance, these leave guilt upon the man, but not always upon the conscience, because such sins conscience does not, nor can take

notice of, and so they cannot be called sins against conscience. Guilt there is upon conscience: 1. When conscience through remissness or neglect does not take notice of them, nor charge the soul to take heed of them. 2. When though conscience does know sin to be sin, and those particular acts, that I am tempted to, to be sinful acts, yet lust prevails to bring us on upon the commission of them against conscience. Thou knowest that lying is a sin, thy conscience tells thee so and yet thou wilt lie; Thou knowest that drunkenness, that defrauding, that profaning the Sabbath, that neglect to pray, and to hear, are sins; And thy conscience tells thee they are, and yet thou wilt lie, or be drunk, or work, or travel upon the Lord's Day, neglect to pray, &c. This leaves a guilt upon thy conscience. O how great, O how dreadful guilt is there upon the consciences of many of us? How many bills of indictment will thy conscience have, to bring forth against thee before thy Judge? The guilt of neglecting Christ, the guilt of hardening thy heart against mercy, besides all the guilt of thine oaths, and of thy drunkenness, and of thy covetousness, and of thy lying, and stealing and scoffing, all this guilt lies upon thee, and this is one thing that conscience must be recovered from, ere it can be a good conscience.

2. Guile, or falsehood, or treachery of conscience. Conscience will juggle and deal deceitfully, it will dispense with, or give allowance of sin, it will connive and wink at iniquity. Some sins which can be better spared, it resists, others, such as interest or inclination lead more strongly to, it lets them pass, and will not see them to be sin, and therefore dares not examine whether they be sin or no. This is a guileful conscience, it is true of Christians what is said of Nathaniel. Joh. 1:47. An Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile. Psal. 32:2. Blessed is the man in whose spirit there is no guile. This is a good conscience, that is plain and honest and faithful. Heb. 13:18. We trust ye have a good conscience in all things willing to live honestly.

Now these being the diseases in conscience, guilt and guile, from these we must get them recovered, and their recovery must be wrought, by blood and water. By the blood of Christ, Heb. 5:14. How

much more shall the loud of Christ purge your consciences? And by water also, by the water of sanctification, and by the water of repentance. Penitent tears have their use to the washing of conscience. Sinners take heed, have no guilt upon your consciences, have you no guile in your consciences. O how dreadfully guilty, O how miserably guileful hath that conscience of thine been! Get your consciences purged, get the blood of Christ to be sprinkled upon them. Draw water, so the pouring forth penitent tears is expressed. 1. Sam. 7:6. They drew water and poured it forth before the Lord and fasted that day. Draw water sinners, weep before the Lord for your sins, and this will be the washing your consciences from the guilt and guile that is upon them.

2. Keep conscience working? Though method would require that I speak to this, of keeping conscience under the next general, the keeping of the heart yet I choose rather to speak to it here. Keep conscience working. A lazy sleeping conscience is good for nothing, it is a stirring working conscience that does its office, that must industriously be maintained. Conscience hath

1. An eye.
2. A Book.
3. A Tongue.
4. A Scepter.

1. An eye. And the eye of conscience must be kept open. The eye of conscience is even as the eye of God, it may be said of conscience in its measure, as of God, Psal. 139:2,3. Thou knowest my down sitting and uprising, thou understandest my thoughts, and art acquainted with all my ways. The eye of conscience beholds our very inwards, all things are naked and open, even before that conscience with which we have to do, and this is something you have to keep you doing, to keep the eye of conscience open. Let not conscience wink at your follies, let it see and observe whatever you do.

2. A Book. A Register or book of records, where it writes down what it sees. Jer. 17:1. The sin of Judah is written — It is graven upon the tables of the hearts, the meaning there is, it hath entered into their hearts, it hath corrupted and eaten into their hearts, there are the scars and impressions of it upon them; Their iniquities have marked them, and marked them in their very hearts for vile and ungodly ones. This graving of sin upon the heart, notes the hearts defilement; the corrupting of the heart; But then there is a writing for remembrance, a writing of scores, or books of account; and thus men's sins are written in the book of conscience. Now this also must be looked to, that conscience be faithful, and book down all our sins, that they may be remembered by us and repented of.

The book of conscience will be written, whether men will or no, if conscience will be negligent, and will not write down its own faults, God will do it and will write down all our sins, if conscience will not; If we mark not, God will mark them. Jer. 2:22. Thine iniquity is marked before [me]. If we record not, God will record them. What conscience writes conscience may read and remember, but what God writes (upon the neglect of conscience) sinners cannot read, or remember now, but there it shall all be to be seen at the great day of accounts, when the book shall be opened, and read before Angels and men.

Sinners, what is there written in those books within you? Are your sins written there? Hath conscience kept a record of them? It is well if it have; look into that book, read over and remember all your ways; go and ask thy conscience, if thou hast not been a Liar, if thou hast not been a swearer, a Drunkard, a covetous liver, a flesh pleaser, ask thy conscience if it hath not been so. How many have been thy lies, how many have been thine oaths, how many drunken bouts, how many rioting days how many greedy and covetous practices, hast thou been guilty of? Look into that book in thy bosom; if conscience hath been faithful there thou mayest read and remember, and so come to be humbled for them. But if conscience hath not noted these things, but hath been asleep, and let thee alone to run thy course,

without its keeping an account, yet God hath written down all. Though thou hast forgotten what thou hast been, though thou hast forgotten or taken no notice of what thou hast done, yet God hath his book of remembrance against thee, thine iniquities are all marked before him These things thou hast done and I kept silence, but I will reprove thee, and set thy sins in order before thee, Psal. 50:21— The Lord stood by and saw thee, when thou wert in thy cups, the Lord hearkened and heard all thine oaths, & thy lies, and though he kept silence, and let thee alone for the time, and said little to reprove or affright thee, yet thou shalt see, and know, that he saw thee where ever thou were, and marked whatever thou hast done, thou shalt know it by this, that he will hereafter reprove thee and set all thy sins in order before thee. And O what a fearful sight will that be, when thou shalt have the black roll of all the wickedness that thou hast done in thy life, at once presented to thy view. Now you would be ready to say, I know nothing by myself, or no great matters at least, thou hast but a few things against thyself, and those few thou countest small matters; But when God shall bring forth the whole roll, and force thee to read every line, and to see every sin in its colors, then shalt thou see everyone of thy sins, as so many Devils to torment thee forever. Sinner how dost thou think thou shalt look in that day? How will thy face grow pale, and thy countenance be changed, and thy bones tremble at such an horrid sight of all thy sins at once? O prevent this misery by getting Conscience to be faithful; let Conscience keep its Book open, and write down all thy ways, that there thou mayest read them at present, and remember them in order to thy repentance, and their being blotted out by the blood of the Lamb.

3. A Tongue. Conscience is called by a Proverb, the Preacher in the bosom: How shall this Preacher preach if he hath not a tongue to speak? God be merciful to those Congregations which have dumb Priests, and to those sinners that have dumb Consciences. How long may poor Congregations sit under a dumb Priest, ere they hear anything to purpose, either of their duty or their faults? They may be blind and ignorant souls, and never hear one word of instruction, or

of the danger of their ignorance; they may be without Christ, and without God in the World, and so may continue to their dying day, and never hear one word to bring them to Christ, or turn them to God. They may be Liars, Drunkards, Swearers, Sabbath-breakers, or what they will; and whatever they be, they never hear a word to bring them to repentance. They may live without prayer, reading, or so much as thinking of God, or their everlasting state, and not a word spoken to bring them to these necessary duties. And just thus sadly it fares, with people that are under dumb consciences. They may do what they will, be as wicked as they will, and conscience lets them alone. Sinner, dost thou not find this to be true, in thy case? Thou canst go all thy days without serious prayer, no prayer in secret, no prayer in the family, thou canst live in this respect, like a very heathen, and thou canst lie, and swear, and drink, and scoff, and be covetous, and what says conscience to all this? Not a word. Thy conscience may say in its wickedness, as God said in his righteousness, These things thou hast done and I kept silence. Such men's consciences, it may be said of them as concerning David towards his son Adonijah. 1. Kings. 1:6. His father had not displeased him at any time, in saying why hast thou done so. Men's consciences will not displease them, will not displease their lusts, but will let them alone, and say nothing to them, good nor bad. How often dost thou hear of thy conscience? When did it check thee, or reprove thee, or warn thee? When dost thou hear such a word within thee, How shall I do this wickedness and sin against God? With what conscience can I be thus false or fraudulent, or froward? With what conscience can I keep such vain or lewd company? With what conscience can I live without prayer, or anything of the worship of God in my house? Is there any conscience in this lying, or promise-breaking, or deceitful dealing? Is there any conscience in this idle careless life, to live thus in the neglect of God and my soul? When dost thou hear such a word within thee? Thou hast a conscience such as it is, but it hath lost its tongue, and will not reprove thee, or warn thee, but let thee alone to follow thy lust and humor, without control; and in what a woeful case art thou, that art under such a dumb conscience? We read that Christ, in great wrath said to his Disciples, concerning the

Pharisees, Mat. 15:14. Let them alone, they be blind leaders of the blind, let them alone, say nothing to them. Hath Christ said thus to conscience, concerning thee? Let him alone, say not a word to him, let him be blind while he will, let him be hardened while he will, speak no more to him to awaken him? Is not this a dreadful case?

O Friends, pray for a faithful conscience, that will not cease to warn you from day today. Do not muzzle the mouth of conscience, encourage your consciences to speak to you, by giving them free leave to speak; yea, by asking and enquiring of conscience, Conscience what sayest thou to this course I am going on in? If I ask my will or my affections, or my lusts concerning these vain ways, these all are pleased, and like it that I go on thus: But what sayest thou, O my conscience? Is it good that I be a Worldling, or a Sensualist, or a Liar, or unjust or unmerciful? Is this as God would have it? Is this the life that God is well pleased with? Ask conscience such questions, and put conscience to it, to give in its answer, and there is hope it will speak: And then hear what conscience speaks. If conscience speak and speak, and men will not hear, this is the next way to stop its mouth; a deaf ear will make a dumb conscience. If conscience speaks and it cannot be heard, if the warnings and items of conscience be born down by lust and appetite, this is the next way to put conscience to silence, that it speaks no more.

Sinners, you have been hitherto consulting with flesh and blood, taking counsel of sense and appetite, and carnal interest; and whilst conscience hath kept silence, you see in what away you have gone on. Would you have conscience speak, or have it hold its peace? Will you henceforth inquire of conscience, what it does in earnest judge of your present life? What it does judge best for you from henceforth to do? Will you hear conscience when it speaks? Will you be guided and governed by conscience? I will not henceforth please myself, but will endeavor to please God and conscience, to live a conscientious life: that is the best way to recover thy conscience, to recover its speech. Thy conscience is ready to die, if it become speechless. When sick men are come to be speechless, we count them dying. That

conscience of thine that hath so long lien speechless, it will die if thou take not some sudden course to recover its speech. O get you a stirring lively conscience that will not hold its peace.

4. A Scepter. Conscience is to be the Governor in the soul; God hath said to Conscience as he said to Christ, Psal. 110:2. Be thou ruler in the midst of thine enemies. Thou livest in the midst of enemies; all within, the carnal mind, the carnal will, the carnal affections, every lust of the heart, these are all enemies to conscience; but yet God says to it, conscience be thou ruler in the midst of thine enemies. Those that are under the government of God he puts them all under the government of Conscience; as Isaac said to Esau, when he came for a blessing after Jacob had been blessed before him, I have, says he, made him thy Lord, and thou shalt be his servant; though thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck. So God says to the heart and all within it, I have made conscience your Lord, you will break its yoke from off your necks, you will all conspire to rebel and to resist conscience, to blind, and to muzzle, and destroy conscience, [Lust is Consciences deadly enemy] but yet I have said to conscience, be thou ruler in the midst of thine enemies.

All the World are governed by God or the Devil, and both these Governors have their Viceroy; Conscience is the Viceroy of God, and Lust is the Viceroy of the Devil. Now these two Viceroyes contend who shall have the dominion, who shall have the government in the soul. Lust cannot endure that Conscience should bear any sway. Carnal earthly minded men will rather mock at conscience than be governed by it. Lust will not endure that Conscience should bear the sway, and Conscience can never be safe or successful in its government, till lust be trodden underfoot.

Whilist Conscience is kept as an underling, and is checked and controlled and put to silence by Lust, so long it is in an evil case. Conscience is never recovered, till it hath recovered its authority and dominion.

God that hath given the dominion to Conscience, and under Christ, laid the government upon its shoulder, hath also put a Scepter into its hand, to execute its government withal; and hath given to Conscience a twofold Scepter:

1. An Iron Scepter, and he hath said to it concerning Sinners, obstinate sinners, as he said concerning his enemies, Rev. 2:27. Thou shalt rule them with a rod of iron. This iron Scepter put into the hand of Conscience, hath teeth in it; hence do sinners, who will not hear the commands, sometimes feel the biting's of Conscience, and the teeth of a provoked Conscience will bite worse than the teeth of a Lion or a Bear. Thou that rebellest against Conscience, that abusest and wrongest Conscience, take heed of the biting's of Conscience; thy conscience is a Lion, and though now it be a sleeping Lion, and thou darest play with it, or use it at thy pleasure, yet look to it, when this sleeping conscience is awakened, then thou wilt feel the teeth of this Lion. As it is said of Wine, Prov. 23:32. In the end it biteth like a Serpent, and stingeth like an Adder. So it is true of every sin, every sin will bite: those carnal pleasures, those worldly gains that look upon you with a pleasant fawning face, all your sins and sinful pleasures will bite, bite like a Serpent, with a poisonous deadly biting; sin will thus bite, and sin bites with the teeth of Conscience. O the gripes that some sinners feel, the deadly gripes, when they fall under the teeth or talons of a sin-provoked Conscience. Sinners I warn you to take heed of ever slighting Conscience again. Come under the dominion of Conscience, let Conscience govern thee, let Conscience rule thee, or look for the Iron Scepter to fall upon thee, the teeth whereof will bite thee as a Serpent and sting thee as an Adder.

2. A Golden Scepter. Conscience doth not only enforce its authority, and our submission to it, by the terrors of its iron Scepter, but encourages submission, by the comfort of holding to us its Golden Scepter. King Ahasuerus his holding out the golden Scepter to Esther, was in token of his favor and her acceptance with the King, Esth. 5:2. She found favor in his sight, and the King held out to her

the golden Scepter. Those that find favor with Conscience (as all those that observe, and obey, and live under the government of Conscience do) those that find favor with Conscience, Conscience will hold out the golden Scepter to them; will speak peace, will speak comfortably to them; and to have Conscience speak peace (an upright Conscience) is the same as to have God speak peace: to be able to stand comfortably before Conscience, is the same, as to be able to stand with comfort and boldness before the face of God. 1 Joh. 3:20,21. If our hearts condemn us — If our hearts, our consciences condemn us for falsehood and unfaithfulness, God will condemn us; but if our hearts condemn us not, if conscience acquit us, and say to us, well done good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful; if our upright consciences acquit us, then have we confidence and boldness before God. The comfort and the rejoicing that flows into the heart from the testimony of a good conscience, see in the 2 Cor. 1:12.

Friends, how would you have your Conscience to deal with you? Would you that it hold out the golden Scepter? Would you that Conscience speak peace, that Conscience should say, well done, thou hast been faithful, would you have this testimony from conscience, that you have had your conversation in simplicity and godly sincerity? Is the peace of conscience, the joy of that peace, the sweetness, and calmness, and serenity of heart, which is the fruits of consciences speaking peace, Is this peace, is this rejoicing of any value with you? Whilst others are under the checks and rebukes, under the terrors; and the sting of an abused conscience, whilst conscience bites them and worries them, with the teeth of its iron Scepter, whilst conscience affrights and terrifies them, whilst conscience judges them, and condemns them for their following their lusts; whilst it is so dreadful with men of an abused griping conscience, if you would prize and desire, and rejoice in the peace and the comforts of conscience, then hearken to conscience, and be governed by conscience in all your ways. And if conscience may but govern you, it will certainly comfort you.

Therefore, 3. Live under the government of conscience: that is, live a conscientious life, make conscience of your duties, and perform them, make conscience of sin, and avoid it. Approve your hearts to your consciences in all things; be conscientious livers, and be universally conscientious. Be able to say with the Apostle, Acts 23:1. I have lived in [all] good conscience: and as Heb. 13:18. I have a good conscience willing in all things to live honestly. To obey conscience in some things, and to rebel against it in other things, is not to live a conscientious life; be universally conscientious of every duty, of every sin.

O Friends, how many are there of us even among Professors, that do halt after conscience, are very lame and deceitful in our ways; some things we do, and other things we neglect; some sins we forbear, and other sins we venture upon.

You that are Professors, and seem in a fair way of recovery, consider how you come off here, it may be, you are afraid of gross sins, you dare not be drunk, or swear, and curse, and blaspheme, but are you afraid also of taking the name of God in vain? Mingling O Lord, O God, O Christ, with your common and ordinary discourses? It may be you are afraid to be found in an alehouse, companions and partakers with the drunken, and the riotous but are you afraid to be found unnecessarily among the vain ones, and to become vain with those that are vain? It may be you are afraid to cozen and cheat, your consciences will not suffer you to do that, but yet do you not covet, or be inordinately eager and greedy after the world? It may be you dare not work, or travel on the Lord's day (though some among us will venture to do that also, the conveniences for their markets or their fairs, and the shortening their expenses, whatever conscience says to the contrary, will put them upon this Sabbath profanation.) One word by the way to such; I remember a story told me by a reverend man that a professor of his flock, being about to travel upon the Lord's Day to a Fair that was next day, being reprov'd of it by his minister, and asked if he thought it not a sin, yes I do says he, but I

have repented of it. His meaning was, he meant to travel the next Lord's Day, but he had repented of it already.

It is a strange kind of repentance, for a man that is going to an alehouse or to a whore, first to do something that he could call repenting and then to go and commit the fact. You that are guilty (if there be any such among you) let me ask you, have you repented of your former Sabbath profanations, or have you not? If you have not repented, there is the guilt of all your former journeys of this kind still lying upon you, you are guilty to this day, guilt is never taken away without repentance.

If you say you have repented of your former practice, then I hope you mean, never while you live to be guilty again. You have not repented of any sin, till you are resolved through the grace of God, to forsake it forever. Remember this unless you resolve to have done with all such journeyings hereafter, you have not repented of what is past, and if you have not repented of what is past, there is the guilt of all still lying upon you, and your souls liable to answer for it before the Judgment of God.

But thou that allowest not thyself such a liberty of working, or journeying upon the Lord's Day, yet dost thou make conscience of sleeping, or loitering, or idling out a great part of the day? It may be thou wilt not be then found in the fields, or at thy sports, for conscience sake, but mayest thou not be found walking about the streets, or idly visiting, or vainly spending thy time with a neighbor? Though thou wilt not be abroad when thou shouldst be in the Congregation, yet wilt thou not be out of doors when thou shouldst be teaching, or instructing, or praying with thy family? It hath often troubled me to think how little help some poor families have from their governors, even on the day of the Lord.

It may be you will not be unjust or deceitful in your dealings, but are you not unmerciful or uncharitable? It may be you bear no rooted malice or grudge in your hearts, God forbid you should, that is for a

Devil, rather than a Christian, but suppose you do not, yet it may be you do; Whatever you think you may have routed malice from resting in your hearts; But if you do not, yet you will be fretful and furious, and sour, and sullen, and can express it in bitter looks, in strangeness and keeping your distance, in biting words, and backbiting stories, and this conscience lets you alone in.

It may be you are not of a vicious conversation, but are you of a gracious conversation? It may be there may be no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouths, your breath doth not stink of ribaldry, and obscene discourses, but yet are you not frothy and unsavory in your communication If your speech be not rotten and corrupt, yet is it seasoned with salt, that it may administer grace to the hearers?

It may be you dare not neglect praying, but yet will not your consciences suffer you to trifle and shuffle in prayer? It may be you pray and are serious in prayer, and feel some workings of conscience, and melting's of heart, and enlargement of affection, and some sense of God and religion, whilst you are upon your knees but when you have done, and go out of your closet, do you not then leave your consciences behind you, your religion behind you? Do you carry conscience into your shops, & into your fields, & unto the markets? You pray as a man of conscience, and hear as a man of conscience, but do you buy & sell, eat and drink, and converse in the world as a man of conscience. Take you out of duties, and may we not take you out of your religion? What are you at other times, but even as other men? Is this to be universally conscientious? Can you be sincerely conscientious, if you be not universally so? He that is not conscientious in everything, is truly conscientious in nothing. Brethren take heed you do not give conscience a kiss and a kick. Kiss it, and comply with it, in the things you like, and kick at conscience when it presses too hard upon you in the things you like not. If in anything you give conscience a kick, conscience may remember you and give you a gripe for it another day.

O if you would recover the authority of conscience, if you would have conscience hold out the golden Scepter to you, if you would have conscience smile upon you, if you would have true peace of conscience, and live indeed under the power of conscience, be universally conscientious; exercise yourselves to it, to live holily in all things, honestly in all things, and at all times. This exercise of keeping to conscience is a painful exercise, you can never live a conscientious life, unless you will be content to live a painful life, to take pains with your hearts, to take pains with your thoughts and affections, to take pains with your tongues and all your members, to hold them close to the rule of conscience: this painful exercise will get you a heat, will beget warmth in those cold and careless hearts. The most conscientious Christians are the most warm and lively Christians, and according as you get and keep your hearts warm, so will your diseases waste, & the health of your souls return into you. Remember what I have said, if ever you would recover your lost souls, recover conscience; if ever you would recover conscience, get the guilt & the guile of conscience purged away by the blood of Christ, and water of repentance; keep the eye of conscience open, let conscience be the Supervisor of all your ways; let the book of conscience be kept clear from blots and blurs, and let there be a faithful record kept there, of all your ways; let the tongue of Conscience have leave to speak and warn you from day today, and submit to its Scepter and government; be no longer governed by Will or by appetite, or by lust, or by the fashions and customs or examples of men, but be governed by Conscience. Do not give Conscience a Kiss and a Stab, hearken to it in some things and wound it in other things, but study to live in (all) good Conscience; on your Sabbath-days, on your working-days, in the House of the Lord, in your own houses, in the houses of your Friends, in the Field, in the Market, in the matters of God, in the matters of the World, when you are alone, when in company, when you are in good company, when you are fallen into evil company, wherever you are, whatever you are a doing, still have an eye upon Conscience, an ear open to Conscience, and let Conscience prescribe to you, what you should do, and how you should carry it in every affair.

3. Beware of taking cold. That's a special rule Physicians use to give to the recovering Patient; when Persons are upon recovery of their bodily diseases, how ordinary is it, that upon a little cold, they relapse, and sometimes die of their disease. Is thy Soul upon recovery? Take heed of Colds. Soul, such there are, who when they begin to be wrought upon, and brought to any sense of Religion, there appears a great heat and fervor of spirit upon them; 'tis with them as with the Prophet, Jer. 20:9. Thy Word was in me like fire; their love and desire, and zeal for God seem all in a flame: O what warm affections have they! How warm in their Duties! How warm in their converses! They seem to be all Life and Soul; and then after a time they grow stark cold, and little life is left in them, and some of them never recover again while they live. Hath thy Spirit gotten a heat? Hath the Word heated thee, and those Exercises of Prayer, Repentance and keeping Conscience, gotten thee into a heat? Then take heed of growing cold; keep you constant to those Exercises that have begotten a heat in you. Keep you in the Sun-shine, all your heart-warmth is begotten, and must be maintained from above; live in the beholding the face of God, live under the Sun-beams of the Sun of righteousness; keep you close to God, keep you near to Christ, live in intimate communion with God. Take heed of those clouds, your sins, that will obscure the Sun. Isa. 59:1. Take heed of an Eclipse, see that this Earth do not interpose betwixt your Souls and Heaven; take heed of the damp Influences of the dead that you live amongst. We live in a cold World, a cold Age: that Age has overtaken us, which Christ Prophesied of, Mat. 24:20. Wherein the love many of should wax cold. Those that are grown cold themselves, will serve for nothing, but to chill, and damp the Spirits of others. Be not unnecessarily conversant with this cold World, trust not yourselves in their Company; have you never found, how much your Souls have lost by carnal Correspondences? Professors, how is it with you? Do you still retain your first, vigor, as when you began to be recovered? May not the Lord complain over some of us, as of Israel, Jer. 2:2. I remember the kindness of thy Youth, and the love of thine Espousals; I remember it as a thing that is past, that now is not, or as Ephesus, Rev. 2:4. Thou hast lost thy first Love; and what follows

from this decay? Hence is it that we are become a Company of sickly Professors, of Carnal Professors, of Earthly Professors; the World hath returned upon us, the Flesh hath gotten head again in us; the things that are Eternal, and the influences of them upon us, are even lost and swallowed up of things Temporal; our Stocks, and our Businesses, and our Trades, how have they even choked up our Religion?

Friends, it's matter of astonishment to consider, how very few lively Christians there are to be found amongst us. Thus we everyone talk, what a General decay of Religion there is among us; has not thine own Mouth complained of the coldness of this Age? But whilst thou complainest of the Age, how is it with thee? Art not thou sick of the same Disease? Look homeward, look inward into thine own House, into thine own Heart, what Spirit of Religion is there going in thine own Family? Hast thou not by thy negligence, let all run to decay there? What Life of Religion is there maintained in thine own Heart? Friends, feel you every man his own Pulse, lay your hand every Man upon his own Heart, and feel how faintly it beats Heaven-wards. Sure Friends, if we should examine our own Cases, we should find enough to set us all a Weeping over our own decays, and she should hear that voice within us, Weep not for others, but weep for thyself and thine own Children. O take heed, lest such of you as are fallen back among the Sick, do not also return among the Dead, and make your recovery again more hopeless at last than 'twas at first. You that stand, be warned by those that are fallen; stand with your Loins girded, and your Lights burning; and you that are fallen, fallen to decay, fallen to a dead and flat and lifeless State, you that are fallen, remember whence you are fallen; remember and repent, remember and recover, strengthen the things that remain; if there be any sparks left, blow off your Ashes, blow up the Coals. Let the Life of God, and the love of Christ, and a Zeal for Holiness, be again kindled in you; and if ever the Lord should recover you again, (there's great hazard whether he may, thou mayest die of the Cold thou hast taken, the Consumption that hath Eaten up so much of thy Vitals, may be unto Death, Eternal Death) but if ever God should recover thee again, and

revive his work, and enliven that almost Dead Carcass; then at last learn from thine own miserable experience, to take heed of taking Cold again, as long as thou livest.

CHAP. XI

Recovering the Heart

Thus much for the recovering the Heart, which is pre-supposed to the keeping of the Heart.

The Heart thus recovered out of its lost State, must be kept and well looked to, that it fall not back again; and here,

2. Now I shall show you, what it is to keep the heart, or how it must be kept; and so,

1. It must be kept under Government.

2. It must be kept under Guard.

1. It must be kept under Government; here I shall show,

1. The necessity of keeping the Heart under Government.

2. How the Heart must be Governed.

1. The necessity of keeping the Heart under Government; that will appear by considering what an Heart it is; and because the Heart is recovered in part, and there is much of its Old and Original pravity remaining in it, which will be apt to boil up, and break forth again, I shall a little open the wretched temper and disposition of it, which

will evidence how great a necessity there is to keep it under Government.

1. It is a wicked mischievous heart, Jer. 17:9. Desperately wicked, Psalm 5:9. Very wickedness, Rom. 8:7. Enmity against God. It is the Fountain, whence all the filthy streams, that pollute and defile our lives, do flow and are cast forth. It is the Furnace, whence all the stinking fumes and smokes, that annoy the World, are sent forth. It is the Nest, where all the Cockatrices Eggs are Hatched. It is the Sink that gathers in all manner of filth into it, and then sendeth it abroad, to do mischief, Psal. 41:6. His Heart gathereth iniquity to itself, as the Sinks gather in all the filth of the Town, and when he goeth abroad he telleth it; only there is this difference between this and other Sinks; other Sinks gather in the filth, but 'tis in order to the conveying it and carrying it away: Into this evil Sink of the Heart, all the filth is gathered, and there it stops, and stinks, and casts itself back in its annoying streams; Out of the Heart comes evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, &c. Mat. 15:19. All this Filth and Mud, all this Wickedness and Malignity, as it Naturally dwells in every Heart, so there's much of it remaining even in renewed Hearts, and will, if there be not constant care to keep down, and by degrees to cast it out, will rise and swell and work up again in them. Christians, you may thank God, that there is Salt cast into these filthy Fountains, for the healing these muddy waters; that there is a Spring of Living Waters broken in your Hearts, by degrees to drain out your Dirt, that there is Grace begotten in you, to resist and repel the contagion of Lust; but this little Grace will be choked up again, if Lust be not kept under.

And as it is a Wicked, so 'tis a Mischievous Heart, it's set upon mischief; Wickedness will be doing wickedly; as 'tis said of the Workers of Iniquity, so 'tis true of all as far forth as they are unrenewed; Mischief is in their Hearts, Psal. 28:3. There's the same Reason of keeping our Hearts under restraint, as of keeping Madmen in; they will be doing mischief if they have their liberty. Besides the mischief that our evil Hearts will be doing to others, they will be

mischieving themselves; Mad Men will tear their own Flesh, will cut and wound themselves, if they be let alone; and there is no such danger of evil Hearts, as in regard of that mischief they do themselves.

1. Our evil Hearts will hinder us from doing good to our Selves, or of receiving or laying up good for our Selves, Rom. 7:19. The good that I would, I do not; why what hinders? See Vers. 21. I find a Law, the Law of Sin in the Heart, When I would do good, evil is present with me, Gal. 5:17. The Flesh lusteth against the Spirit—so that we cannot do the things that we would. Sometimes good Counsel is given us from the Lord, but we do not take it. How many good Counsels have you heard from the Ministry of the Word, that are lost and forgotten and come to nothing. Sometimes a good motion comes into the Heart, to repent and amend our ways; to pray or to Meditate, or to search out Hearts; to cease from this Earth and Flesh, from serving our Sense, and minding only the present, and to lay up Treasure in Heaven, and provide for the time to come; have you never such motions? Do you never hear such a voice within you, Get you Baggs that wax not Old, a Treasure in Heaven that faileth not? Choose the good part, lay hold on Eternal Life, give yourself to Praying, keep a good Conscience, take heed and beware of Covetousness, use more diligence, live with more heedfulness, have your Conversation in Heaven, and keep yourself unspotted of the World, keep yourself in the love of God, set the Lord always before your Eyes, behold his Face in Righteousness, study to show thyself approved of God, and to walk so in all things, that thou mayest be accepted of God; are there not such motions as these, come into your hearts? You that are Christians, sure you have many such good motions; But how do they take? What do they bring forth? If you had obeyed all the good motions that you have sometimes felt within you, O what manner of Christians would you have been! What mortified, what circumspect, what raised and Heavenly minded Christians had you been? But how do your good motions take; What success are they attended with? Do not you see, that they are often strangled in the Birth, and die away and come to just nothing? Or at least do you not merely halt and

trifle in the pursuance of them? If you Pray, or hear, or set your Hearts to humble yourselves before the Lord; how are you Distracted, and Diverted, and Deadened and all your duties spoiled in the doing; so that you can have little comfort, or real advantage by what you do. Do you not often mourn over your Prayers, and Sermons, and Sabbaths, as merely lost to you? When you would work up your Hearts Heaven ward, and fix above, when you would love and delight yourselves in the Lord, and Solace yourselves in the contemplation of the Divine Love and Goodness, when you would fain set your Hearts to live such a Godly, Conscientious, Circumspect, Self-denying Life, and comfort yourselves with such thoughts; I hope I shall never live such a Careless, Carnal, Useless, Unsavory, Earthly Life again; I hope you have many such Thoughts, Desires, Hopes, and Aims, you are lamentable Christians if you have not, but how do they succeed? What do they bring forth? Do they not often prove Abortive and bring forth nothing? May it not be said of you as of those, Job 15:35. They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, or a lie. May it not be said of you, I have conceived Truth, conceived good, I have had many hopeful conceptions, and yet at last I bring forth a lie, I am utterly frustrated and disappointed of all my good Hopes, Desires, and Aims? But how comes this to pass, that you are thus disappointed, that your desires succeed not, that your labors prosper not, that you are brought to no better a pass? O this is your evil hearts that hinder you; when you would do good, evil is present with you, so that you cannot do the good that you would; 'tis that evil Law in your Members, that evil heart that does you all this mischief, that spoils all your Prayers, that distracts all your holy Meditations, that breaks all your holy Purposes, that defeats and frustrates all your good designs for a more holy and fruitful life; this heart is that which hinders you, that you cannot do as you would, you cannot pray as you would, nor hear as you would, nor live as you would; and thus it will serve you as long as you live, if you do not get those evil hearts into, and keep them in better order.

2. It tempts and turns us aside after that which is Evil. As our hearts hinder us in that which is good, so they betray us, and entice and

tempt us to that which is naught. Jam. 1:14. Every man when he is tempted, is drawn aside by his own lust, (his hearts lust) and enticed. You that have given up your Names to Christ, and count yourselves the People of God, sometimes turn aside after the Lusts and ways of the World; and instead of having your Conversation in Heaven, live as men that are written in the Earth, mind earthly things, live a worldly greedy life, and like those 2 Pet. 2:20, who after they seem to have escaped the pollutions of the World, through the Knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, are again entangled therein and overcome. Are there none of you Professors, with whom 'tis thus? Hath not the world returned upon you? The love of the World, and the cares of the World, and the inordinate minding and following of the World? Are you none of you again entangled by the World, encumbered by the world, and even overcome of those encumbrances? 'Twould make a tender heart to shake and bleed, to consider how sadly this worldly mind and Life hath grown upon Professors, and hath eaten out the very heart and life of their Religion. O how many Demas 's are there amongst the followers of Christ, that have forsaken him, and embraced this present World! Christians, in the name of the Lord I warn you, I charge you before God, and his holy Angels, to consider if it be thus with none of you. Is it thus with thee? How comes this to pass? This is a mischief that thine own heart hath done thee, Ezek. 33:31,32. Their hearts go after their Covetousness. They hear the Word, thou art to them as a lovely Song, of one that hath a pleasant voice; they will hear a good Minister, they seem to love a good Sermon, the Doctrines of God, and his Gospel, the Doctrines of Christ, and his Redemption, and the most enlivening and affectionate discourses of the Righteousness, Holiness, Kindness, Compassion of God in Christ, and of the hopes and joys of his Saints, these have a pleasant sound to them, they are taken and pleased at the hearing of them; but for all this, they are gone; they have embraced this present World; their hearts are gone after their Covetousness. And as some men's hearts carry them after their Covetousness, so others hearts carry them after their vain company, others after their slothfulness, others after their carnal Pleasures; their hearts have tempted them, and by their hearts lusts

they are thus drawn aside, and enticed. Consider these two sorts of mischiefs men's hearts do them, their heart hinders them from what's good, and tempts and carries them away after that which is evil, and then you will understand what a necessity there is, that such mischievous hearts should be carefully kept under government.

2. It is an unruly heart. It's said concerning the Tongue, Jam. 3:8. It is an unruly evil; but whence is the unruliness of the Tongue, but from the unruliness of the heart? 'It is the heart that is the Lord of misrule, Prov. 16:32. He that ruleth his own Spirit is better than he that taketh a City. There's need of more Wisdom, of more Watchfulness, of more care and skill, to rule the heart, than to rule a whole City or Country. Governors of Kingdoms do not find it so hard to rule their numerous People, as to govern their own hearts. To show the unruliness of the heart, I shall instance,

1. In the Thoughts of the heart. Who can rule his own Thoughts? Who is there that hath such command of his Thoughts, that can think of nothing but what he should think of? What roving's, and straggling's, and wanderings are there of the Thoughts? Prov. 17:24. The eyes of fools, or his Thoughts, are in the ends of the Earth; running about everywhere, to sin, to vanity, to impertinencies. Consider yourselves in your praying, or hearing, or any of the most serious and important Exercises of Religion; your thoughts then, most especially should be composed and fixed; should be fixed upon God, should be all giving their attendance upon the work of God. Those most weighty things, the eternal things that you are dealing about, should take up all your thoughts. But how do we find it at such times? What distractions, and wanderings, and running's off of our thoughts do we then find? We cannot hold ourselves in, to think what we pray for, to attend on what we hear; and this is the great reason of the deadness of heart in Prayer, of the inefficacy and unfruitfulness of our hearing; we that preach to you, should have more hope of Success upon you, if we could but fix your hearts, and get you to think more intently on what we speak, but when the

thoughts are gadding, we may to as good purpose speak to Stones, as to Souls.

How is it with you now? And how does it use to be with you, when you come to the Worship of God? Where have your thoughts been, since you came here? How many things have you been thinking of, that you should not? It may be thy thoughts have been at home all this while, or abroad in the Fields, upon thy Business, or upon thy Pleasures, or thou knowest not where. Who are there of us that do use to gird up the loins of our minds, and to keep them close to the work we are upon? And whether do your thoughts run at other times? How little room is there left for the thoughts of God, or of our Souls, or of the things Eternal, amongst those crowds and swarms of worldly thoughts, of wicked and vile thoughts, of vain and impertinent thoughts, which are still thronging in upon us? These evil thoughts are not only from the suggestion of the Devil, or from that variety of Objects that we have before us, from what we see, or hear, but are also the streaming's up of a corrupt heart; as out of a boiling Pot of filthy Liquor, or out of a reeking Dunghill, there arise stinking and noisesome steams, and smells, so naturally doth a corrupt heart steam up into the head, and fill it with vile thoughts and imaginations; and therefore the cure that is prescribed for these evil thoughts is, the cleansing of the heart from wickedness. Jer. 4:14. O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee? Get thine heart washed from its wickedness, and that's the best way to free thyself of wicked thoughts. We have many complaints of vain thoughts, of disturbing and distracting Imaginations, and we hear People asking often, How shall I be rid of these evil thoughts? Woe is me, what wandering, roving, distracted Thoughts have I, so that I can never have comfort in anything I do! But man, consider thou art under a worse Disease, the unmortified Lusts of thine Heart, from whence these Thoughts arise.

Canst thou bear the Lusts of thine Heart? The Pride and frowardness and worldliness of thy Heart? Canst thou complain of thy Thoughts,

and not complain of thy Lusts? One unmortified Lust hath more mischief in it than a hundred evil Thoughts. Thy Duty is to complain more of thy naughty Heart, thy naughty disposition and inclination, and to get these to be changed, and that's the best way to cure thee of evil Thoughts. I say, this is the best cure, get you better Hearts, wash your Hearts from those evil Lusts that dwell in them; If you would get rid of worldly Thoughts, purge out worldly Lusts; if you would be rid of Proud Thoughts, get the Pride of your Hearts slain, get you an humble Heart, and that's the best cure of proud imaginations; if you would be free from vain Thoughts, light and impertinent and useless Thoughts, get you cured of the Vanity of your Spirits, get you to be serious, get an Heart more intent upon serious things, and that will discharge you of such runagate and vagabond Thoughts. It is seldom that People complain of distracting or vain Thoughts, but there is a worse Disease whence they arise, that they take no notice of: Thou hast a vain trifling Heart, thou art not in good earnest in thy Religion, thou art not sensible of the weight and importance of thine everlasting concerns; thou hast an unmortified Heart, unmortified Lusts in thine Heart, thou lovest the World, and lovest thy pleasures, and lustest after thine ease or thy carnal delights, thine Heart sits too loose from God and the things of God; thou art not powerfully and resolutely bent for the Blessedness to come; thine Heart is not yet fixed upon Christ and Christianity; this is a worse Disease than evil Thoughts, though that be bad enough and the very root from whence they arise. Do not therefore inquire barely, how shall I be freed from evil Thoughts? But chiefly, how may I get my Lusts subdued? How may I purge out those evil Dispositions and Desires, how may I get my Heart more intently fixed on God, and things above? Get that done once, and thy evil Thoughts will quickly fall.

2. In the Passions of our Hearts; we have unruly Thoughts and unruly passions; there is an unruliness in all our Affections; who can love, and fear, and desire, and grieve for nothing but what he should, what he should fear and desire. What we should not fear, we fear, and what we should fear, we cannot: What we should love, we cannot, and what we should not love we set our Hearts upon. We

cannot raise up good desires in our Hearts, nor keep down evil; there is an unruliness in all our affections, but especially the passion of Anger and Wrath, when this breaks forth, what Rude and brutish and wild Creatures do men become? Like a roaring Lion, or a ranging Bear, like a Bear robbed of her Whelps, such is a man in his rage to those that stand in his way: The breaking forth of rage, is as the breaking forth of fire in an House, how much water must there be to quench it? This unruliness of Spirit the whole World abounds with proofs of; every Country, every City, nay, but few Families are there, whom their experiences do not teach them, what an unruly thing the rage of the Heart of man is.

And is there not a necessity of keeping such a Heart under Government? Of governing the Thoughts, and governing the Passions and unruly Affections? The necessity of Government upon the account of the unruliness of our Thoughts and Passions, will appear if we consider; that our Eternal State is highly concerned in our Thoughts and Passions. For,

1. These are the Instruments, by which men work out their own Salvation or Damnation.

2. These are Evidences of what we are in respect of our Eternal State.

1. These are instruments by which men work out their own Salvation or Damnation. Holy Thoughts, holy Affections, set us a working out our Salvation; the exercising of our Thoughts upon God, upon Eternity, upon the Blessedness to come, and upon the Wrath to come; the exercising of our Affections, the keeping our Selves in hope of the Salvation of God, the keeping ourselves in fear of the Reprobation of God, the maintaining desires after God and his Salvation, these all, will be as so many Cords to hold us in, as so many Springs to put us on in the way of Salvation: Thinking Christians, and Hoping Christians, and Fearing Christians, and Desiring Christians, will be Working Christians. I thought on my ways, and turned my Feet unto thy Testimonies, Psal. 119:59. He that

hath this Hope, purifieth himself, as God is pure, 1 Joh. 3:3. Work out your Salvation with Fear and Trembling. Fear a Miscarriage, fear falling short, fear to be Damned, and this will set you a working out your Salvation. Men will not work because they do not desire, because they do not Fear; men do not desire or fear, because they will not think; think more of God, think oftener, what 'tis to be Saved, what 'tis to be Damned, think much thus, and this will stir up your desires and fears; desire more the Salvation of God, fear more his indignation and Wrath, and this will set you to work out your Salvation, and to secure yourselves from falling into Condemnation.

And as good Thoughts and well-ordered Affections, will set us a working out our Salvation, so by evil Thoughts, and unruly Affections men work out their Damnation. Unruly Thoughts, disorderly affections in the Soul, are as cross Winds, or as Storms or Tempests upon the Sea. How can the Mariner ever get to the Haven, when the wind is contrary? And what kindness do Tempests do him, but to dash him against the Rocks, and drown him in the Deep? Ungoverned Thoughts and Passions in the Heart are like Mutineers in an Army; what would an Enemy desire more than to have the Army he was to fight against, to be in a Mutiny amongst themselves? The Devil will not doubt his Conquest, whilst he can but keep all within you in disorder. Men's Damnation does frequently begin in Thoughts; evil Thoughts corrupt the Affections, evil Affections corrupt the Manners and practice, and evil works have their end in Destruction. Never again make a light thing of Thoughts; how many men are there, who by giving themselves leave to be thinking of their Pleasures, and thinking of their Gains, and thinking of their Lascivious, lustful Objects, do think themselves into very Beasts first, and then into Devils? Job 31:1. I made a Covenant with mine eyes, why then should I think upon a Maid? The next to looking is thinking, the eyes let in Fuel for the Thoughts; the next to thinking is lusting, the Thoughts provide Fuel for Lust; the next to Lusting is Whoring, and the next to Whoring is Death; and the like in other Cases: For the World, the next to thinking is loving, the next to loving is lusting, and inordinate desiring; the next to lusting is

seeking and propping; the next to seeking is getting and heaping up, and loading ourselves with thick Clay; and the next to this is sinking and drowning ourselves in Perdition and Destruction.

2. These are the Evidences of what we are, in respect to our Eternal State. Men may judge themselves, and come to know themselves, by the Thoughts and Affections, Rom. 8:7. To be carnally minded is Death, but to be Spiritually minded is Life and Peace. Those that are after the Flesh do mind the things of the Flesh, and those that are after the Spirit do mind the things of the Spirit. Where art thou Friend? Art thou in the way of Life, or the way of Death? Why how may I tell that? Why where are your minds? What are they running upon? Where are your Thoughts, your most serious and delightful Thoughts? Are they in Heaven or on Earth, on things Spiritual or on things Carnal? Where are your Affections? Working upwards or downwards? Such as thy Thoughts and Affections are, such is the State of thy Soul: To be Carnally minded is Death, but to be Spiritually minded is Life and Peace. It's true, many serious Christians have too many Carnal Thoughts; Vain and Wandering Thoughts, but 'tis their Affliction, and 'tis their care and endeavor to give check to such Thoughts; but when the allowed Stream runs towards Earth and sin, 'tis a sign thou art an Earthly Fleshly Man, and in the State of the Dead.

3. There are Idols set up in the Heart, after which, if it be not well looked to, it's apt to go a Whoring. It is true, more or less of all men, what is said of the Elders of Israel, Ezek. 14:3. These men have set up their Idols in their Heart. Whatsoever the Heart loves more than God, whatever the Heart serves or seeks more than God, yea, whatever the Heart loves or serves or seeks ultimately for itself, without respect to any higher end, this is an Idol set up in the Heart; those very men that abhor those Idols that are set up in the House or the Church, that detest Saint-Worship or Image-Worship, the Worshipping of Stocks, or Stones, or Pictures, the work of men's hands, yea that call that an Idol or Idolatry, which God never called so, that cry out Idolatry, Idolatry, against everything that is not

according to their own Minds, even these very men, may have set up their Idols in their Hearts. The Heart hath multitudes of Idols set up in it; there are in the Heart as the Apostle said, 1 Cor. 5:8, there are in the world, God's many, and Lord's many. The World is an Idol; some men make their Lands and their Money their God's; though Job would not, chap. 31:24, yet some men's Hearts will say to their Gold, Thou art my God. Others there are who make their Belly their God, Whose God is their Belly, Phil. 3:19. Others make their Honors and their Pleasures their God, and these may be said to be as those, 2 Tim. 3:4. Lovers of Pleasures more than Lovers of God. The Heart hath many Idols set up in it, but the great Heart-Idol to which all the rest must stoop and serve is Self; the World is served, Honors are sought, Pleasures are loved, but all for the sake of Self: Whatever Idol there be, the great Idol is Self, which is set up in the room of God.

Mans original Apostasy was his falling from God to Self; and man's recovery to Christ, is his bringing back from Self to God. Therefore he tells the World, that whoso will come along with him, and be his disciple, must deny himself, Mat. 16:24. If any man— Christ suffered that he might bring us to God, 1 Pet. 3:18. And that he cannot do unless he come back from Self; he departed from God when he declined to himself, and he must deny himself, that will return to the Lord. God and Self divide the whole world: The most are for Self, and there is not a man of all these for God; some few are for God, and every one of these have denied and departed from Self.

Men's recovery by Christ, is their returning from Self unto God; but this Recovery is but imperfect, this Self, (carnal Self I mean) hath a Seat, higher or lower in the best hearts. There is a sinful Selfishness, wherewith we still remain infected, and there is still a danger, even after our recovery, of Apostasy to this Self again. The great Idol set up in the heart is self, and the great Idolatry or going a whoring after this Idol, the great heart Idolatry stands in these three things.

1. Self-conceit,

2. Self-will,

3. Self-love.

CHAP. XII

Self-Conceit, Self-Will & Self-Love

1. Self-conceit. The magnifying our own Opinions, the Idolizing our own apprehensions, the growing wise in our own eyes, and the resigning up ourselves to the conduct and government of our own carnal Reasons or Understandings. This Solomon intimates, is an encroaching upon God, yea denying of God; he sets these two as Opposites one to another; the acknowledging of God, and the leaning to our own understandings, Prov. 3:5,6. Lean not to thine own understanding; in all thy ways acknowledge him. Intimating, that whilst we lean to our own understandings, we deny and do not acknowledge God.

It belongs to God as God, to be the Supreme Guide and Dictator to us; but when men take upon them to be so wise, as that their own Opinions and Conceits must be their Guide, they therein deny the God that is above.

Take heed of being self-conceited. The worst of Sinners, as blind as they are, yet they are wise in their own eyes; they think their Way is good, and their State is good; they have a conceit that their own way is best; they have taken up conceits against the ways of God; this strictness of Religion, this Preciseness of Holiness, they have a conceit 'tis all but Nicety, and Hypocrisy, and that they are the wisest men who meddle least with it; at least, they have a strong conceit they shall to Heaven without so much troubling themselves about it. Let the Lord God speak never so clearly, and never so closely, of the danger of the way they are in, of the damnableness of their state, of the necessity of a Change of their State and Life, of their becoming new men, and giving themselves to a new Life; yet their self-conceit carries it against all the Convictions and Demonstrations of the Lord; They will not be beaten out of their own Conceits; they will believe

their own blind and sottish mind, before they will believe God. Sinners, is not this true? How many times hath the Lord God preached to you, of the necessity of Regeneration, and your being born again, of the necessity of Sanctification, your being made his holy ones, pure and undefiled ones? How much hath he spoken, to convince you, that you are the Sons of death, and that your ways are the ways of death; that you can never see the Kingdom of God, but must undoubtedly perish, and be destroyed forever, without such a great and effectual change as may bring you in amongst his holy ones? How often hath this been preached? How plainly hath this been proved? And yet after all, how is it with you? Why behold you have a conceit you shall do well enough, and get to Heaven at last; and upon this conceit you will adventure your Souls: What do you herein but Idolize your own Understandings, and deny the God that is above? Thus saith the Lord, is nothing with you, nor will persuade you to anything, if your own hearts do but tell you, 'tis well enough already.

Sinners, if you will not be beaten out of this conceit, if we cannot break down your carnal Confidence, if we cannot deliver your Souls out of the hands of these Lies and Delusions; if you will not be brought to see, that these yourself-conceits are yourself-deceiving's, (I have thought foolishly, I have thought falsely, in thinking well of my case) if we cannot save you from your vain Conceits and Confidence, we shall never set up the Authority of God in you, nor ever bring you to God or to Heaven.

O to hear such words as these from you, I have been deceived, mine Heart hath deceived me, the Devil hath deceived me, I could never have had a good Thought of my present state, I could never have good hope of my future state, if I had not been deceived into it; I have been merely gull'd and cheated into this good Opinion; I am lost, I perish, I die forever, if I escape not suddenly out of this case; I can be confident no more, I can have a good conceit of myself no longer, I am an undone Wretch; God tells me so, the Word tells me so, and if ever mine Heart tell me yet again, 'It is well enough, I will

never believe it again: might we see such a sense upon you, might we hear such words from you, then there were hope that you were coming back from Self to God.

For you that are Professors, have not you also something of this self-conceitedness upon you? Some are conceited of their own Opinions; whatever Opinion they take up in the matters of God, it must be right, because it's right in their own eyes; and many of their Brethren that are contrary minded, they are in the wrong and in the dark, and so become the objects of their censure and reproach. Lean not to your own understandings; be so humble, and so modest, as to think that others may see more than you see; suspect yourselves when you differ from other Christians, that you may be in the mistake. Others are conceited of their Gifts and Attainments, though they yet be but among the young ones, and the weak ones of the Flock, yet through that pernicious Pride of their Hearts, they are apt to be puffed up with high Conceits of any little that they have. Christians must be lowly like their Master, Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart; They must think soberly of themselves. Others are Conceited of their Conditions, and the State of their Souls, who though they have little acquaintance with their own Hearts, little understanding and experience of Religion, and have spent as little time in the examining their States, yet are grown to a confidence, that their Hearts are right in the sight of God; when this Confidence may be nothing else but Conceit; they do but conceit themselves to be Converts, conceit themselves to be Believers, and this conceit must carry it against all Convictions to the contrary. Examine the grounds upon which your good Opinion of yourself is built; Search the Scriptures, where are certain Evidences of Conversion; search your Hearts, whether the marks of real Believers be found in you; suspect your selves, whether you be not in a mistake; a mistake here, to have a strong conceit that you are Believers, when you are but Hypocrites, that you are come to Christ, when it may be, not come half way, such mistakes may be your damnation, your Everlasting loss and undoing. Let the fear of Self-deceiving, be the cure of Self-conceitedness.

2. Self-will. That Brand which is put upon false Teachers and their followers, 2 Pet. 2:10, is upon the Heart of every Sinner, they are Self-willed; and this brand is more or less remaining upon the Heart of every Saint: There's too much of Self-willedness in the best Hearts. Here I shall show you,

1. That the great Controversy betwixt God and Self is, whose Will shall stand.

2. That in the Conversion of a Sinner, the Power of Self-will is broken.

3. But yet the Will is not so broken, but Self hath still a root remaining, which will be putting forth again.

4. That therefore there is a necessity of keeping the Heart under constant Government.

1. The great controversy betwixt God and Self is, whose Will shall stand: God will have his Will, Isa. 45:23. I have Sworn by my Self, the Word is gone forth of my Mouth, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow; In one way or other, first or last, I will make them all to stoop. God will have his Will, but Self also will have its Will; what is said concerning the Wisdom of the Flesh, Rom. 8:7, is true of the Will of the Flesh; The Wisdom of the Flesh is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be; the Will of the Flesh is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed will be. What is the Will of God? This is the Will of God, even your Sanctification, 1 Thes. 4:3. He hath said, Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy, 1 Pet. 1:16. This is the Will of God to sinners, their Salvation. 1 Tim. 2:4. He will have all men to be saved, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth. The reason why so many are damned, is not because God will have them damned, but because they will not be saved. Though they will the end, their Salvation, yet they will not the means, their Sanctification. This is the Will of God, in order to the Salvation of Sinners, their Humiliation, their Repentance, their Obedience to the

Gospel; but these Self-willed Sinners will not be humbled, will not repent, though their lives lie upon it, they will not; though their Salvation lies upon their Humiliation and Repentance, yet they will not be humbled, they will not repent. The Will of God is, that men set their affections on things above, not on Earth, Col. 3:2. The will of Sinners is, to set their affections on the earth, and not on things above. The Will of God to Sinners is, their submission to his Government, to his disposal; but the Will of the Flesh is, to be their own Lord's, to be at their own disposal. Sinners are for living as they will, for having what they will; they would be let alone to take their own course, to walk in the way of their own Hearts, and the sight of their own eyes. Now this is the great controversy between God and sinners, whose Will shall carry it. But you will say, How can man have a controversy with God? How can the Will of man stand it out against the Will of God? So the Apostle, Rom. 9:19. Who hath resisted his Will? Answ. There is the Will of God concerning events or matters of Fact, and there is the Will of God concerning matters of Duty. As to the Will of God concerning Events, what God hath Decreed and determined to be done, shall be done, thus there's no resisting his Will: But then there is the Will of God concerning matters of Duty; God wills that it shall be every man's Duty to Repent and be Sanctified, and be obedient to the Gospel, and accordingly commands them. And though there can be no such resistance here, but what God Wills to be men's Duty, shall be their Duty, yet such resistance there is, that what God Wills to be men's Duty to do, they will not do.

God governs the world, and orders everything to come to pass in the World, according to his Will; but then there is his natural and physical Government, which he carries on by his absolute Power, and there is his moral Government, by Laws, his Governing men as rational Creatures, by Laws and by Rewards and Punishments. This is God's governing Will, that men make use of their reasons, that they consider what 'tis that he requires, and what 'tis that he forbids; that to the drawing them to obedience, and the deterring them from disobedience, they consider and improve God's arguments, the great

and Eternal rewards of obedience, and the dreadful and eternal penalties of disobedience; and so to order their course, that they may attain those blessed rewards, and escape those eternal punishments: And here he does not impose an invincible necessity upon men's Wills, but leaves men to their choice; he commands them to obey, that is his governing Will, but if they will disobey, let them at their own peril; and this commanding Will of God is that which Self doth resist; God wills and requires men to repent, but they will not repent; God requires men to be holy, but they will not be holy; God requires men to seek, and to work out their own Salvation, but they will not, but set to Damning their own Souls; God requires men to submit, not only to his Precepts, but to his disposal, whether to be rich or poor, whether to be in Honor or Contempt, whether to be in health or in sickness, but they will do neither; they will be, as far as they are able, their own Lord's and their own Carvers; they will obey themselves, and will shift for themselves; they will not be content it be with them as God will have it; God would have them in all Estates to be content, this they will not be, but would have everything, and to their own minds, whatever the Will of God be.

There is in this Self-will,

Wickedness and Mischief.

Stiffness.

1. Wickedness. The things willed, and the willing of them, are either materially or circumstantially wicked, and eventually they are pernicious and mischievous. What is it Sinner that thou wouldst have? Why, I would have mine Ease, I would have my Pleasure, I would have my Liberty, I would have mine own way. Why man, all this is naught for thee; thy Ease, and thy Pleasure, and thy carnal liberty, they are all naught for thee; but who shall be judge whether they be naught or no? If Self and Sense may be judge, these will say, 'tis all very good that I would have. Is not ease good? Is not Pleasure and Liberty good? Is Pain and Bondage good? 'tis good that I have

my liberty and my way. But if God may be Judge, if Reason and Conscience may be Judge, these will tell thee, thy ease, and thy carnal liberty, and carnal Pleasures are all naught for thee; they are like to be thy bane, and thy ruin, and everlasting undoing; but yet these are the things that their Wills are for.

2. Stiffness or stubbornness; that's counted a self-willed man, that's stiff and stubborn, and will not be persuaded out of his own way; his heart is set in him to do evil, Eccles. 8:11. His will is set upon evil, and he is set upon his own will. You say 'tis naught to live in ease and idleness; you say, this Carnal Liberty, these carnal Pleasures, these sinful Gains, are all naught for me; well however, saith the self-willed-heart, be it good or evil, be it right or wrong, 'tis that which I like and is grateful to me, and therefore come what will, I must have it; I am for my Pleasures, and Carnal contentment's, however; I am for my Liberty, however; I am for growing Rich in this World, for a Thriving prosperous State, however; Be content to be poor and in disgrace who will for me, be content to come under the restraint and severe government of Conscience who will for me, I am for my Freedom to do and live as I list.

This now is the great Controversy betwixt God and Self; whose will shall stand. God will have his will, and Self would have its will, and the Heart is ever apt to side with Self against God. Sinners, learn to understand yourselves, by what hath been spoken. Art not thou this self-willed Creature? What is it that carries the great stroke in thy Life? What is it that thou contendest for, but to have thine own will? What is the Law or the Rule thou wouldst live by, but thine own unruly Will? This would please the sinful World, if everyone might be left to live as he will; to do what he will, and to have what he will. What is the Rule that Sinners do actually live by, but their own wills? What is it that hath kept you from Christ, so many of you all this while? That hath kept you from Repentance? This is your own willfulness; you have been persuaded to Christ, but you will not come, you have been persuaded back from your sins, but ye will not come back; you have been instructed in the way of Life, but you will

not learn; you have been taught and called upon to become New Men, to become serious Christians, but you will not hearken; you have been pressed to give yourselves to Prayer, to studying the Scriptures, to studying your own Hearts, to the ordering your Conversations according to the Gospel, but you will not yield unto it; you will walk after the flesh, you will be proud, you will be covetous and Carnal livers, and thus you spend out your days.

Sinners consider, who is it fit should have the Government of you? The will of God, or your own wills? What would be best for you in the end, to be subject to the Law of God or this Law of sin? What is it that God would have with you? This is the will of God, your Salvation; he would have you to Heaven, he would that these poor Souls of yours, whom the Devil hath made Drudges to your Flesh, and Slaves to his Lust, and Sacrifices to his Malice; God would have you to be Vessels of Honor, to bear his Image, to shine forth in his Glory, to live in his likeness, and to rejoice in his everlasting Joy. Man, this is that which God would have, that thou mayest live in everlasting Blessedness, he would have thee to Heaven, and he would have thee by a Holy Life to be fitted for that Blessed Life, to be made meet to be a partaker of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light. Therefore 'tis that he commands you to Repent, therefore 'tis that he with so much importunity persuades you to Christ, that he might wash you with his Blood, and guide you by his Word, and sanctify you by his Spirit, and present you blameless and faultless before the presence of his Glory with exceeding Joy, as Jude 24. This is the will of God, that you should be thus Governed and thus Ordered; that these Earthen Vessels, these dirty Souls might be made Vessels of Honor, and of his everlasting praise.

And what is it that your own wills are for; but to live so, that you may be fit for nothing, but to be Vessels of contempt, to be Fuel for the everlasting Fire? The Devil and your own Hearts are conspired, so to sully, and to black you with your ways, that you may be fit for no other place, but to live in the Smoak and the Fire of the everlasting Furnace.

God's will is to bring you to that Inheritance which is reserved in Heaven; he would have you to have all the Hell you shall have on this side the Grave, and your Heaven in that Eternity which comes after: Your sorrows all here, and your troubles here, and hereafter your rest from them all; but your will is, to have your Heaven here, your good things here, your Mirth and your Pleasure here, and so leave nothing but your Hell for hereafter.

Now which of these two wills, God's will, or your own will, is it the best for you to be Governed by? If you say, God's will is better for me to follow, than mine own will; 'twill end best, whatever it seems to be at present; then one would think you should see so much Reason against this self-willedness, against this willfulness, and hardness, and obstinacy in your own ways, as to tremble to think of being left any longer under the Government of your own wills.

Sinners, let me do you a kindness this day; let me break the Yoak of Bondage, the will of your Flesh from off your Necks, and unhorse your Riders; the Devil Rides your wills, and your will rides your Souls, come off from this drudgery. Let me do the Lord this Honor this day, to persuade you under the Government of his will; what God would have me to do, that will I do, as God would have me to live, so will I live; will you say the word once? God would have me be a Penitent, and through his grace a Penitent I will be. God would have me to be a Christian, a sincere Christian, and through his help a Christian I will be. God would have me to walk humbly, to live honestly, to live a blameless Conscientious Heavenly Life, and O this is the Life that I will give myself to. What if you should say this word, and say it heartily? What if this word should prevail to fetch you off from your Willfulness, and the hardness of your hearts, and lay your Souls at the Feet, and under the Government of the Almighty? What if such a change should now be wrought upon you, that your hearts should now be brought about from Will towards God; from Lust to Conscience, from this thy Carnal and Sensual and vain Life, to a Spiritual and Heavenly Life? Would you not bless God for such a change? Would you not say, This is an happy Day for me, a Blessed

change the Lord hath wrought upon me? Then hearken to the word you have heard, and say the word once, I will be the Lord's, and from henceforth he alone shall have the Government of me. You that will not, but will be self-willed still, will be hardened in your way still, go home and chew upon this thought, Whether will this willful hardened Heart lead me at last?

2. In the conversion of a Sinner, the power of self-will is broken, the Controversy betwixt God and the Sinner is determined. The Controversy is, whose will shall stand, the will of God, or the will of the Flesh; in Conversion, the Sinner yields that God's will shall be thenceforth his Law. It was foretold of Christ, Gen. 3. That he should break the Serpents Head; the Serpents Head is his Power over Man, and his Head-quarters is the will of Man, this is his Strong-hold, and in the Conversion of a Sinner, the Devil is beaten out of, and hath lost his Strong-hold, 2 Cor. 10:4. The Weapons of our Warfare are mighty through God, to the pulling down the Strong-holds; the will of Man, which is the great Fort or Strong-hold, is so broken and pulled down, that

1. He is heartily willing to resign up to God, to his Will and Government; he that before said, Not God's will, but mine own, can now say, Not my will, but the will of the Lord be done. He that before said, I will not that this Man, that Christ should Reign over me, now says, I will not that this Flesh shall Rule over me, Psal. 110:3. Thy People shall be willing in the Day of thy Power; the Day of Conversion, is the Day of God's Power, wherein the Power of God's Grace is revealed upon Sinners Hearts; in the Day of this Power, Sinners shall be willing. When the Power of Grace hath conquered the Power of Nature, the Sinner shall yield and resign up to God, and be heartily contented to be thenceforth under his Rule and Government. This is the Voice of Converts, which was the Voice of the Church, Isa. 26:13. Other Lord's have had Dominion over us, but now by thee only will we make mention of thy Name; they are Dead, they shall not live; they are Deceased they shall not rise; the old Lord is dead, it is Deceased, and shall never rise; sin shall no longer have

Dominion over us, the Devil shall no longer, Will shall no longer have the Dominion over us; to thee, Lord, to thee only do we resign up ourselves. I resign to the Lord, I subscribe to the Lord, I give the Hand to the Almighty, and put my Neck under his Yoke forever; his I am, and him alone will I serve. This is Conversion, this breaking off from under the Dominion of your own wills, and resigning up to the will of the Lord.

2. He doth actually submit to, and obey the will of God.

A Convert doth not only say, I will submit, I will obey, but he doth submit, he doth obey. The old Will, will be contending still for the Government, but the Heart now answers, as the Men of Sodom to Lot, Gen. 19:9. Stand back, this Fellow came in to sojourn, and now he will be Lord. Stand back O my Carnal Will, stand back, this Stranger shall no longer be Lord over me; I have resigned up myself to the Lord, and him will I obey. Yea, and his will it doth obey; this is the will of God that he repent, and the Convert doth repent, this is the will of God that he be Holy, and harmless, that he walk in all the Commands of God blameless, and this he sets his Heart to do, Psal. 119:3. They do no iniquity, they walk in his ways.

3. Yet the will is not so broken, but that this Self and Flesh hath a Root remaining in it; and this Root will be Springing and growing up again; like that Root of Bitterness mentioned by the Apostle, Heb. 12:15. That Root of Malice, that Root bearing Gall and Wormwood; the Apostle warns them to look to it, that it spring not up again to trouble and defile them: this Root, that Self hath even in the will of Converts, how often doth it actually spring up, and trouble and defile them? There's scarcely any business, but self will have a stroke in doing of it; there's scarcely any Duty but Self strikes in, and spoils it in the performance. O how much of this self-willedness is there to be found even amongst Christians? How often is it, that their wills are set upon vanity? And how strongly are they often set upon their own wills? How heady and willful are they in their way? What stiffness and tenaciousness is there of their own purposes? They will not be

advised, nor persuaded out of their course: though as to the main, they have resigned themselves up to the will of God; yet in many particular Cases, either upon mistakes in their Opinions, or being over-swayed by corruption, they are head-strong in their way, and will not be turned back. When they come to themselves, it is their shame and affliction it should be so, yet too often so it is, that this self-willedness carries them on, even against Counsel and Conscience.

It's true, where this self-will does carry the main stroke in the Life, where the ordinary course and way of the Life is Governed by will, there's no Conversion, but there's no Convert but more or less does groan under the Usurpation and Tyranny of this Self and Flesh. You that are Christians would never have lived as sometimes you have done, would never have carried it as sometimes you have, so much against Judgment and Counsel, and the most serious advices, if Will had not had too much power over you. We should be even all of us more considerate and deliberate in our goings, we should be more easily entreated, and persuaded back from running headlong on in some of those ways which cost us sorrow afterwards, if this self-willedness had not prevailed in us.

4. Therefore there is a necessity, that the Heart be kept under Government. The Government of the Heart, is to the same end and of the same necessity, as the Government of a Kingdom. The Government of a Kingdom, is to be for the encouraging of the good, and for the terror and suppression of the evil, Rom. 13:3. And to the same end is the Government of the Heart; to foster, and cherish, and maintain, and keep alive the good that is in it; and to crush, and keep under the evil that is in it. If self-will hath an evil Root in the Heart, if this evil Root be apt to spring up, then is there necessity of governing the Heart, to keep it under.

To the governing the Heart, is necessary a double instrument, a Spur and a Curb; a Spur to the good that is in us, to quicken Grace, and keep it in action; a Curb to that which is evil in us, to curb and hold

under corruption; these two instruments of Government, are the reward and punishment; the blessed reward will be a Spur to Grace, the punishment to come will be a Curb to Lust and Flesh; the eying these two great recompenses of reward, Glory and Wrath, the holding the sense of that Life and Death upon the Heart, is a great part of our exercising this Government upon us: thyself-will is such an obstinate Enemy, as nothing but Fire and Sword, the Fire of Divine Indignation, and the Sword of Divine vengeance, will conquer and subdue it. There must be Government, and there must be severe penalties kept in sight, or there's no good to be done.

Friends, If ever you would Conquer this self-willedness, show it the Fire, the Racks, the Gridirons, the Gibbets, the everlasting Prison, that it's rushing and hurrying you upon.

Self-willedness is not only a kicking against the Pricks, but a running upon the Pikes of Divine Vengeance; thou art heady, and willful in thy way, thou art set upon thine own will; whatever thou likest, and art pleased with, thou art so set upon it, that there's no persuading thee back; but be advised, take heed: if thou wilt be willful, at thy Peril be it; look before thee, to the precipice, by which this self-willedness is tumbling thee headlong down into the Everlasting Pit; whenever you feel Will begin to rise, and work, work against Reason, work against Conscience, work towards iniquity and vanity, when you feel this self-will getting up, lay hold on the Bridle, put on the Curb, give check to it with all your might; look towards the land of Darkness, whither it's carrying thee; when the fit is up, the willful fit (for though there be an abiding habit of willfulness in the Heart, yet it comes forth but by fits) when the willful fit is up, think, Lord what now? Whither is this willful will driving me? What will be its Fruits and Wages? What end am I like to come to, if this be my way? Stop, Oh my wretched Heart, strike sail, Oh my obstinate will, take Counsel, be well advised, and run not thus headlong upon thine own ruin.

O hold up such Government in your Spirits, that your Hearts may be tractable, and flexible, pliable Hearts; let them be stiff, and fast to the concernments of God, but loose and easily withdrawn from the interest of Self. Stiff against sin, stiff against Temptation, resolute for Holiness. Is thy will brought about for God, for Religion, for Conscience? Stand to it to the Death; never be persuaded out of your Religion, never be persuaded out of your Consciences, or Conscientious walking; let your Hearts be resolved for the greatest strictness of Religion, and be strict and stiff in such Holy resolutions; but never again be so set upon your own wills, your Carnal wills; here get a pliable Heart, never to be persuaded off from God, easily to be persuaded back from Self and Flesh. It's Propheesied, Isa. 11:6. There shall be such a change wrought upon the rough and furious and ravenous Spirits of Sinners, by the power of Christ, that the Wolf and the Leopard and the Lyon shall be so tamed, that a little Child may lead them. They shall be so flexible and pliable, that they may be easily lead; that the least Items or Intimations from God, or from Conscience, may bring them to anything; that when Lust puts hardest upon them for sin, when Self presses most impetuously upon them for minding or pursuing its Interest, or will, a Word from God, an Item from Conscience, may bring them about after the Lord, that Self may never be able to fortify them against Conscience, but that Conscience may with ease break the Bands, and loose the Cords of Self, and command them after their God. It was said of Caesar 's Soldiers, that where his Interest was concerned, they were more than Men, in their own concernments they were less than Women. Let the Servants of Christ learn so much of the Soldiers of Caesar; let them be so true, so fast to the Interest of Christ, and Religion, of Holiness, that they may be above the Spirit of a Man; and so the Spirit of a Christian is, above the Spirit of a Man; but let them sit so loose from the Interest or the Commands of Self, that a Woman, or a little Child may bring them back from the pursuance of it; that such a word from whatever Mouth it comes, what is this Self or this Flesh to thee, that thou so hearkenest to it, or insistest so upon it? Wilt thou obey thine adversary? Wilt thou cleave to thy Mortal Enemy? Self is no better; 'tis the worst Enemy thou hast, and wilt thou feed thine Enemy,

Strengthen thine Enemy, Fight for thy Enemy? That such a word may be enough to countermand the will of the Flesh, and to bring the Heart back from obeying its strongest motions and Lusts. This will be the blessed Fruit of a due Heart-government the defeating and subduing of Self-will, and the sweet and easy compliance of the Heart with, and its complacency in the will of God; and it will be no hard thing for such a Soul to say, Not my will, but the will of the Lord be done.

3. Self-love.

1. There is a Self-love which is our Duty; there is an innate Principle of Love, planted by God himself in the Nature of Man, in his State of Innocency. God hath made all Men living lovers of themselves, and he would have them so. That word, Thou shalt love thy Neighbor as thy Self, evidenceth that we must love ourselves. The fruits of this Self-love are,

1. Self-preservation.

2. Self-blessing.

1. Self-preservation, the securing ourselves from Mischief, the saving ourselves from danger, Acts 2:40. Save yourselves this generation. He that said, Save yourselves from this evil generation, hath therein said much more; save yourselves from Condemnation: To save ourselves from sin, to save ourselves from Wrath, to save our Souls, this is a great Duty lying on every man in this World; and this Self-saving, or Self-preservation, our Self-love will prompt and press us to. He that loveth himself will save himself, he that duly loveth his Soul, will do what he can to save his Soul. That men destroy and Damn themselves, that men neglect Christ the Author of Salvation, that men neglect Religion and Godliness, the way of Salvation, is for want of a true love to themselves. Sinners, Christ is Preached unto you, and tendered to you, and if you loved yourselves better, you would love Christ and accept of him. You are exhorted to

Repentance, to Godliness, and if you loved your own Souls, you would repent and be holy. Thou art a hater of thy Self, an Enemy, a Murderer of thine own Soul, who art not a lover of Christ, and of Religion and godliness. What a Brute art thou, O sinner? Yea, worse than a Brute; thou canst love thy Friends, thou canst love thy Wife and thy Child, thou canst love thy Companions, yea thou canst love thy sins and thy lusts, only thou hast no love to thy Soul. 'It is laid down as a mark of wicked Persons, among many others, 2 Tim. 3:3. Without natural Affection: For a Child to be without natural Affection to the Parents, for Parents to be without natural affection to the Child, for men to be strangers to their own flesh, without natural Affection to their Friends or Relations, this is a mark of a wicked man. What is it then for men to be without natural affection to their own Souls? Wilt thou say thou lovest thy Soul, when thou so sadly neglectest thy Soul? When thou takest no care for thy Soul, when for the love of thy Lusts, and thy Pleasures, and thy Companions, thou wilt Damn thy Soul?

Sinners, what have you done for your Souls ever since you were born? You have done something for your Flesh; you have fed it, and clothed it, and wrought hard for it, to get a provision and maintenance for it; but what have you done for your Souls? What pains didst thou ever take that it might be well with thy Soul? What knowledge hast thou gotten? What Grace hast thou gotten? What Peace for thy Soul? Hast thou gotten Peace with God? Hast thou done anything toward the reconciling thy Soul to God? Thou knowest how little thou hast done; thou hast loaden sin upon thy Soul, thou hast loaded guilt upon thy Soul, thou hast left it like the Soul of a Laodicean, Rev. 3:17. Poor, and miserable, and Blind, and Naked; that Soul within thee is a miserable Soul, a guilty Soul, a blinded hardened Soul, a polluted naked Soul; it would make your hearts ache if you considered it, in what woeful wretched case you have left your Souls to this day. If you have so much sense in you, think of it, and lay it sadly to Heart, what a miserable case you have left your Souls in; the reason of this is, because you are without love to your

Souls, hence is it that you have had so little care of your Self-preservation.

2. Self-blessing, Isa. 65:16. There is a Self-blessing, that is our Duty; Let him that Blesseth himself in the Earth, bless himself in the God of Truth: He that loveth himself will bless himself. There's a double Self-blessing. 1. A seeking our own blessedness. Self-love will prompt us to seek a happiness for ourselves; not only to save ourselves from Misery, but to bring ourselves to Blessedness. The blessedness which true Self-love wisheth and seeketh for Self, is in God, in the God of Truth. He that truly loveth his own Soul, can be content with nothing less than God, for the blessedness of it. No State, no Inheritance, no Treasure can satisfy him below Heaven and everlasting glory. There's not a man of you that loves his Soul, but he is seeking Glory, and Honor, and Immortality for it; he is taking care, and taking pains, to get a place in Heaven for his Soul, to lay up Treasure in Heaven for it. Dost thou love thyself, who dost not bless thy Self, or seek a Blessing in God for thy Self? Dost thou bless thy Self in God, who slightest God, who carest not for God, and who refuseth the blessing of God, and this for the sake of thy Lusts and Pleasures? Sinner, lovest thou thy Self? Lovest thou thine own Soul? O seek a Blessing for it, a blessing in God, a blessing in Heaven for it.

2. An enjoying and rejoicing in your own Blessedness: Loving ourselves aright, is part of the fruition and enjoying ourselves, as loving God is of the fruition of God. No man that loves himself, but he would enjoy himself, and bless himself in the reflection on his own Happiness. And this is the self-blessing mentioned, let him bless himself in the God of Truth; that is, let him satisfy himself, let him comfort himself, let him enjoy and rejoice over himself upon this account, that the God of Truth is his God, and his Happiness: Let him not bless himself in the Earth, that Riches are his, that Pleasures and Honors are his, that he hath the World at will, but that the Lord God is his; let him not cheer himself with the Rich Man's Song, Luke 12. Soul take thine ease, thou mayest enjoy thy Self, for thou hast goods laid up for many Years; but let him take up the Psalmist's

Song, Psal. 116:7. Return unto thy rest O my Soul; herein thou mayest bless thy Self, herein thou mayest comfort thy Self, the Lord hath dealt graciously with thee.

Friends, you whose God is the Lord, you are the Men that may bless your Selves, you are the Men that may enjoy your Selves; you may look into your Hearts with comfort, you may look upon your States with Joy; you may bless your Selves that God hath given you such an Heart; you may bless your Selves that God hath given you such a Portion. You that have an Interest in God, and this witnessed by the Image of God upon your Hearts, you may enjoy your Selves and take comfort, as often as you look inward, and see the Marks and the Prints of Divine Grace stamped upon you; your very love to your Selves will make you to rejoice over your Selves, as often as you view the blessed Frame into which the Goodness and Grace of God hath brought you: Well this Self-love with its Fruits, Self-preservation, and Self-blessing, is our Duty; and the Lord hath planted it in our Hearts, on purpose to bring us on upon all our other Duties.

God makes great use of this innocent Self-love, in his Government of the World. God Governs by Laws, and Laws Govern by their Rewards and Punishments, and Rewards and Punishments have their Efficacy by virtue of this love of ourselves; what would Laws signify, were there no Rewards to the Obedient, nor Penalties to the Disobedient? These are the Sinews and Strength of Laws; and what would Rewards and Penalties signify to us, were we not lovers of our Selves? Our Self-love prompts us to seek our good, and to prevent our misery. As far as we love our Selves, we desire our own Happiness. 'Twas Self-love, that made those many, Psal. 4:6, to say, Who will show us any good? 'Twas the Psalmist 's Love to the Church, Psal. 122:9, that made him say, I will seek thy good; and hence 'tis that we endeavor the prevention of our ruin; Self-preservation is the Fruit of Self-love. Self-love is the first spring and motive to Religion; 'tis true, when we come to be Religious indeed, there are higher motives; the love of God, the Love of Christ is the great Argument to carry us on in sound Religion, when we come to be Christians, then the main Motive to

Christianity is, that which Christ used to Peter, John, 21:15, to faithfulness in his Ministry, Lovest thou [me?] Feed my Sheep. Lovest thou me? Feed my Lambs. If ye love me, keep my Commandments, Joh. 14:15. But the first Motive to bring us to be Christians, is this Self-love. Lovest thou thy Self? Then give thy Self to Christ. Lovest thou thy Soul? Then be a Christian. Christ is the only way to blessedness; He that hath the Son, hath Life, 1 Joh. 5:12. And he that not the Son, hath not Life. Christ is the only way to blessedness, and the only security against misery, against Everlasting misery. There is no Condemnation to those that are in Christ, Rom. 8:1. There is no Name under Heaven, by which we must be saved; saved from Death, from Eternal Death, but by the Name of Jesus, Acts 4:12. Now when Christ says, Come unto me, and ye shall have rest, Mat. 11. Follow, me and ye shall have Treasure in Heaven, Mark. 10. He that is ashamed of me, of him will I be ashamed before my Father that is in Heaven; the intent and meaning of all this is, if you love your Selves, come to me; if you love your Souls, keep my Commandments; if ever you would, that those Souls of yours should be happy Souls, if you would not that they should be Lost, and Burned and Drowned in everlasting Destruction, if you love your Souls, and wish their good and happiness, if you would not be your Destroyers and Murderers, if you have so much love to your Souls, that you would they should be Saved, and would not that they be Damned, then come unto Christ, then be followers of Christ; then believe, then repent, and obey the Gospel. If you love your Selves be Holy, if you love your Selves be Heavenly minded, if you love your Selves be humble, be painful, be circumspect, and walk in all things as becometh the Gospel. By the way, I exhort you to improve and maintain your true Self-love: I say not to you only, Husbands love your Wives, Parents love your Children, Christians love one another; but every one of you, love your Selves. If you love your Selves, you will love God, if you love your Selves, you will love Christ; if you love your Selves, you will love Godliness; if you love your Selves, you will be the followers of God, the Disciples of Christ, and will give yourselves to live godly in Christ Jesus. See therefore that you love your Selves, that your poor Souls may grow more dear to you. Be

more Zealous for the Salvation of your own Souls, be more fearful of their Damnation, be more tender of wounding and wronging your Souls. Take heed of sin, Prov. 8:36. He that sinneth wrongeth his own Soul; all they that hate me, love Death. You that sin against God, ye wrong your own Souls. Love your Souls better, and you will never be such proud Livers, or such Worldlings, or such Drunkards, or Rioters; you would be sober, and serious, and circumspect: If you loved your Selves better, you would take heed of this Lying, and these Oaths, and this unrighteous Dealing, of this hardness of Heart in your sins; you would fall upon your Knees, you would fall upon your Faces, and be ashamed, and bewail and repent of your sins, and return to the Lord from them all, had you more of this true Self-love within you.

Sinners, why come you not in to Christ? Why will you not yet be persuaded to repent? Why Man, hast thou no love to thy Self? The Apostle tells us, Eph. 5:29. No Man ever yet hated his own Flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it. He useth that word, to press Husbands to love their Wives, who, says he, are their own Flesh. Dost thou not love thy Self? What wouldst thou say of a Man, that doth not love his Wife, but would play the Tyrant and Tiger, brawling and snarling, yea fighting and beating her? You would say, This were a Monster among Men, rather than a Christian; worse than the very Brutes, amongst whom it's seldom seen, that the Male snarleth, or biteth, or pusheth at the Female. What then is he that loveth not his own Soul? Lovest thou thy Self? Lovest thou thine own Soul? Then take heed of going on in thy Sins; then take heed of standing it out against Christ. You hear what a reward there is for the Righteous, you hear what an Inheritance Christ hath laid up for his Saints; an Inheritance in Light, Life, Love, Joy, everlasting Pleasure, and everlasting Glory; Christ would make those poor Souls, blessed Souls, joyful Souls, glorious Souls, partakers of the everlasting Riches of his Glory and Joy: But what, wilt thou say, My Soul shall have no part in it? My Soul shall never come there; my Lot shall never be with the Saints, but shall be without, amongst Unbelievers, Impenitents, amongst Dogs, and Sorcerers, and Idolaters? In refusing to come to Christ, to

Repent, and be made Holy, thou sayest in effect, my Soul shall never come to Heaven? Let it to Hell, amongst Dogs, and Devils, and that vile and wicked Generation of the Damned. But Sinner, hast thou forgot that thou art a Man? Art thou a Monster of Men? Hast thou lost all love to thy Self, to thine own Soul? Doest thou neither love nor pity thine own Soul? Wouldst thou that Christ should ever love thee, when thou wilt not love thy Self? Wouldst thou that Christ should ever pity thee, when thou wilt not pity thyself?

O Sinners, love your own Souls, pity your own Souls, be not so cruel and hard-hearted to yourselves. Will you for the love of your Lusts, for the love of the World, sell your Souls to the Devil, sell them to Hell, to make Faggots for the everlasting Burnings? Where are your Bowels? O pity, pity that poor blind and miserable Soul of thine, and bring it to Christ for pity's sake; go on in thy evil ways no longer, be a Drunkard no longer, a Worldling no longer, a Liar, a Scoffer no longer, be no longer hardened in your sins, but come away to Christ, and escape for your Lives; if you love your Selves, come, if you have any pity for your Selves, come; let the dread of the Cruelties of the Devil, bring you back from following him, and come you in, and cast your Selves upon the Blood, upon the Bowels, and Compassions of Christ, who is such an High Priest, as can have compassion upon the Ignorant, and those that are out of the way, and even on the worst of Sinners, that will return to him. What shall I say more to you? I will speak but the same words, let everyone of you see that he so love [himself] as Christ loved the Church, washing it and saving it by his Blood. Love your Selves, and save your Selves; love your Selves, and bless your Selves in the God of Truth. Don't bless yourselves in the Earth, in your Money, in your Lands, in your carnal Pleasures, in your carnal Friends; these things are not, nor ever think they will be, your Blessedness; but bless your Selves in the God of Truth; bless your Selves in Jesus, whom God hath sent to bless you, in turning you from your Iniquities, Act. 3:26. Turn to Christ, and you shall be blessed; be Believers and you shall be Blessed; come in this day, and let your Names be written among the blessed of the Lord; come every one of you, and put in your Names among the Disciples of Christ; Let

me be one, Lord, let me be another, write down my Name for one among thy Disciples; I am willing to be thine, and do solemnly covenant, and this very day give my Self to Thee. Who of you are there that will thus come in? Will you be persuaded to it, or must I lose my labor? Are there any of you? Is there any one of all the Sinners in this Company, that will thus come in? Come then in the Name of the Lord; come get your Names to be thus written in the Lamb's Book, and he will write it in Heaven, there it will be found in the last Day, written in the Book of Life; this do, and then you that have been hitherto the Haters, and Wrongers, and Cruel, will henceforth appear to be Lovers of your own Souls.

CHAP. XIII

Sinful Self-Love

2. There is a sinful Self-love; this is the great Heart Idolatry, and the Root of all Rebellion and Disobedience to God.

Here I shall show you,

1. What this sinful Self-love is;

1. It is a Love of mistaken Self; of Carnal-self, a love of the Flesh, and its Affections and Lusts; a love of that Flesh which Christ would have us to hate and deny, Mat. 16:24. [Himself] that is his Flesh, or Carnal-self; Men are mistaken in themselves, and count that their Self which is not their Self; as Christ said to the Woman of Samaria, John 4, concerning her Husband, He that thou hast for an Husband, is not thine Husband; so may it be said to Sinners, That which thou takest for thy Self, is not thy Self; this Flesh which thou takest for thy Self, and lovest as thy Self, is not thy Self. You that love your Flesh,

you love your Enemy; you that please your Flesh, you are pleasing your Enemy; you that are working for your Flesh, and providing for your Flesh, and pampering your Flesh, you are working for, and feeding your Enemy; you count you are seeking of, and working for your Self; no, 'tis for your Enemy; this Flesh is your Mortal Enemy. Now this is one sort of sinful Self-love, when we love our Flesh, or our corruptions; when we love our Selves, as Fleshly-minded Men; when we love to please, and provide for, and satisfy our fleshly minds, when we foster and cherish this Flesh.

2. An inordinate love of our Selves Natural; when we love that which is our Selves, more or otherwise than we ought to love it. Our Natural Selves, our Bodies and our Souls are to be loved, ut supra. We ought to love ourselves, not our Souls only, but our Bodies also, and so to love them as to seek the good and well-being of ourselves; not only our Eternal but our Temporal well-being; we may love our ease, and our freedom from Pain; we may love our Credit, and our freedom from Reproach and Disgrace; we may love our maintenance and freedom from want; yea, we may love our beauty and comeliness, and freedom from Deformity; and we may so love as to maintain and provide for ourselves in all these respects; to maintain ourselves in Health, to preserve ourselves from temporal misery, to provide for our temporal necessities; but now our sinful Self-love is, when we love our Selves more or otherwise than we should.

1. When we love ourselves more than God: When we love ourselves to the neglect of God; as Christ said, Mat. 10:37. He that loveth Father or Mother more than me, he that loveth Son or Daughter more than me, so may it be said, he that loveth himself, his own flesh, his own life, more than me, is not worthy of me. Much more, when our Self-love makes an abatement of our love to God, when Self is loved so much, that God is loved the less, when the more Self is minded or cared for, by so much the less God is regarded.

2. When we love Self as separated from God, or otherwise than in subordination to God, when our love determines in Self, and rises no

higher; every man should love himself, but it must be for the sake of God, whose servant he is, and whose Image he bears.

3. When we love ourselves to the prejudice of the love of our Neighbor: The word is, Thou shalt love thy Neighbor as thyself; thou shalt love thyself, but so, as it may not hinder thee from loving thy Neighbor. When self Monopolizes our love, when our Love which should be a Common, is an Enclosure, and is impropriated and confined to ourselves; when we so intensely love ourselves, that we love nobody else, or care for nobody else, or at least love not others so much as we should; when we care not whom we displease, so we may but please ourselves; when we care not whom we neglect, so we may provide for ourselves; when we care not how it be with others, let them be in sickness, let them be in want, let them starve, let them die, we care not how it be with them, so it be but well with ourselves, when our Self-love is only for the advancing of Self-Interest, and will invade and encroach upon, and wrong the Interest of others, when we can thereby advance our own. Lay these things together, and therein you may see, what sinful Self-love is, a love of mistaken Self, or an inordinate love of our natural Self.

2. That sinful Self-love is the great Heart-Idolatry, and the root of all Rebellion and Disobedience to God.

1. It is the great Heart-Idolatry. Whatever we love more than God, we make it a God; yea, when we love anything equal with God, or in separation from God, and not in subordination to God. If we love our Selves only for our Selves, we therein deny the God which is above: As he that loves Riches only for Riches sake, as he that loves his meat and drink, only for the Pleasure he hath in eating and drinking, so he that loves himself, only for self's sake, is an Idolater. Whatever we make our last end, we make our God: Therefore as the Apostle, 1 Cor. 10:31. Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, so whatever ye love, or regard, or desire, let it be all, let it be only for the glory of God. Rom. 11:36. To him are all things; by him they were made, and to him they must be directed. O Beloved, what an Idolatrous piece is

the Heart of man become! O what an Idolatrous Heart is there then in every one of us! Is Self-love Idolatry? Then who of us can be free from this charge of Idolatry? We have every one of us more or less set up this Idol Self in our Hearts. Do we not love mistaken Self, our sinful flesh? Do not our Hearts go after our Covetousness, our carnal Ease, our carnal Pleasures? Do we not love that carnal Self which should be denied, which should be Mortified and Crucified? Do none of us so love, as to cherish our flesh, and make provision for the flesh? Thou hast a Proud Heart, and dost thou not maintain and keep up that Self-esteem? Thou hast a covetous Heart, and dost not thou nourish and feed thy covetousness? Thou hast a Lust after thy carnal Pleasure and Liberty, and thou Indulgest it all thou canst; thou lovest to be high, thou lovest to be Rich, thou lovest thy Pleasure and thy Liberty; these things thou lovest, and dost thou not love them more than God? The more thou lustest after these things, and the more thou hast of them, is not God so much less loved and regarded? Dost thou not know, that if thou hadst checked and crossed that proud mind, if thou hadst denied that covetous Heart, the Lord God should have had more of thy regard, more of thy Love than now he hath had? Do you not think you should have loved God better if you had loved the World less, or your Ease, or your Appetites less? Behold these things have broken in and encroached upon God's right, have carried away God's due; this Self, for whose sake all these are loved, this Self hath stolen into the Heart, and carried it away after it.

O what a woeful thing is it, that it should be said of any Professor of Religion, that this should be said of them, it were well for these men, or at least better than 'tis with them, if they loved God but as well as they love their flesh, if they served God as heartily as they serve their Covetousness, if they were set upon the Pleasing of God but as much as they are set upon pleasing their Appetites, if they were delighted in God as much as they are delighted in the World, if they could find as much Pleasure in the meditation of God and Exercises of Religion, as in the businesses of this life! Thou knowest it is not thus with thee, thou dost not Love and Delight thy Self in God, as thou lovest and delightest thy Self in this earth and flesh. Is Communion with God, is

communing with thy own Heart about the things of God, is conversing with God in Prayer, in holy Contemplation and Meditation; is the exercising thy Faith on God, thy Hope on God, and thy looking into the Gospel of God, and searching out and feeding upon the Blood and Bowels and unsearchable Treasures laid up in Christ; is the exercising thyself in these things as great a Pleasure to thee, and dost thou find as great a delight in them, as thou findest in eating and drinking, in buying and selling and getting gain? Dost thou love to be Praying or to be Praising the Lord, as thou lovest to be getting Money? Dost thou love to be sending thine Heart to Heaven, and there to solace it in the thoughts and joys of the Lord, as thou lovest to be thinking of thy Corn, or thy Cattle, or thy Income by thy Trade? Thou knowest thou dost not. Canst thou say with the Psalmist, Psal. 84:1, 2. How amiable are thy Tabernacles, Oh Lord, my Soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for thy Courts, mine Heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God: A day in thy Courts is better than a thousand; a door in thine House, is better than all the dwellings of the World; Lord, lift up thy Countenance upon me, and that shall put more gladness into mine Heart than when their Corn and Wine increased? Let the Corn and the Wine be whose it will, so that the Lord God will be mine, let this World go cross and frown upon me as it will, so that the Face and Countenance of God do but shine upon me; let me be poor rather than a Stranger from God; let me want an House, or want Money, or want bread, rather than want the presence of God: canst thou say so, heartily say so? Thou knowest that thou canst not; the good things of the earth, the Riches and the Pleasures of the Earth are the Riches thou lovest, and the Pleasures thou lovest, and thou couldst be content to be straitened in the Lord, so that thou mightest abound in these carnal things: Is it so with thee? O what a Heart hast thou? What dost thou think of thy Self? Art not thou an Idolater, a lover of Money more than a Lover of God, a lover of Pleasures more than a lover of God, a lover of thy Self and flesh more than a lover of God? And yet, art thou not an Idolater? Doth thine Heart go a Whoring after thine Idols, run away from God after thy Money, run away from God after thy Pleasures, run away from God after thy Self and flesh, and yet not an Idolater? Art thou

an Idolater then, an Idolatrous Christian, an Idolatrous Professor? O! How is it that such a thought does not fill thy Face with shame, and set thy Soul a weeping, and cause trembling and astonishment to take hold upon thee? What Friends, is it nothing with you to be Idolaters, to have Idolatrous Hearts, whoring Hearts, whoring from God, and whoring after your flesh and the Lusts thereof? Sure Friends it would make the best of our Hearts to ache, if we were sensible, what degrees of this Idolatry there were to be found in every one of us; and many of us I fear, it would convince that they are Idolaters to so high degree, that there is nothing of true and real love to God in them.

2. It's the root of all Rebellion and Disobedience. Self-love, 2 Tim. 3:2, is put in the Head of a black-troop of Lusts and Wickedness's; Men shall be lovers of themselves; there's the ring-leader, and what follows? Behold a troop cometh; covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to Parents, unthankful, unholy, without Natural affection, Truce-breakers, false Accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, Heady, High-minded, lovers of Pleasure more than lovers of God; what a Regiment of sins is here, led on by Self-love! And observe it, lovers of themselves lead on the Van, and lovers of Pleasures bring up the Rear.

Heart-sins, are Root-sins, and Self-love is the Root of these Roots; Pride is the Root of Contention, Malice is the Root of Revenge, Covetousness is the Root of Oppression, and self-love is the Root of them all The Apostle says, 1 Tim. 6:10. The love of Money is the Root of all Evil; and Self-love is the Root of the love of Money; particularly, that you may know what a mischievous evil this Heart-sin of Self-love is, and how pregnant of all other wickedness, consider that it is

1. The Rot of all Religion.

2. The Root of all Unrighteousness and Unmercifulness.

3. The Root of all sinful Brawls and Quarrels.

4. The Root of sinful Self-seeking.

1. It is the Rot of all Religion; that is, where it is predominant, and carries the main stroke in our Religion. It is the rottenness of the Heart, under all its most specious Religious pretenses or performances. All sincere Religion is animated by the love of God; the love of God is the Soul of Religion. If there be no love to God in our profession of Religion, if no love to God in our practices of Piety, if no love to God in our Prayers, no love to God in our Fasting's and Alms, all our Religion is rotten at Heart; Self-love, which is it's only Root, is it's rottenness; Self-love will

1. Limit our Religion. 'Twill limit it by self-Interest; no more, nor, no other Religion will it allow, than will serve our Carnal turns; no farther may we go in it than will consist with this love of ourselves; whatever part or exercise of Religion will pinch upon the Flesh, the self-denying part, the self-abasing part, the Flesh-mortifying part of Religion, unless it be to some further Ends, Self-love will never bear it. So much professing, so much Praying and Hearing, as will consist with our Ease and our safety, as will not put us to too much pains, or expose us to too much danger and reproach; so much Religion, as will not hold us in too strictly and severely, and closely, Self-love will bear it; but where the Yoak of Christ wrings and galls, there it must be thrown off.

2. It will corrupt our Religion, and turn it into Hypocrisy. Selfish Professors are Hypocrites, and all their Religion is Hypocrisy, and Hypocrisy is the rottenness of the Heart. You that are Professors, see to it, that ye be not self-loving Professors; if ye be, whatever there be in your Tongues, or your Looks, or your Religious performances, you are rotten at the Core, rotten in your Hearts. It is love to God, wherein our sincerity lies; Self-love is our Hypocrisy; and where this rotten Self-love hath tainted your Hearts, your Hearts will taint and corrupt all your Duties, it will pervert and corrupt all that ever you

do, and turn it into quite another thing; your Religion is no Religion, your Christianity is no Christianity, your Praying is no Praying, your Spirituality is but fleshliness, your Heavenly-mindedness is but Earthiness, your seeming fruitfulness is but Emptiness and barrenness: Israel is an empty Vine, he bringeth forth his Fruits to himself, Hos. 10:1. Israel seemed to be a fruitful Vine, that had her Clusters upon it; there were Clusters of Prayers, and Clusters of Sacrifices, and Clusters of Alms; Israel had their Fruits, and yet they were but a Barren and empty Vine; how so? Why whatever Fruits they had, they were all brought forth to Self; Self brought them forth, and Self eat them up; there was nothing for God, Israel was an empty Vine to him, her Fruits were to themselves.

Friends, would you not be rejected for Barren empty Vines; for false-hearted and rotten Professors? Would you not be found rotten at the Core? See that it be the Love of God, and not this Self-love, lying at the Bottom, at the Root of your Religion.

2. It is the Root of all Unrighteousness and Unmercifulness to Men. Self-love will never learn that Lesson, to do to others as it would be done by; it will catch all it can; and keep all it has; Self must be advanced, Self must be enriched, whoever be ruined by it; all manner of Frauds and Deceits, all manner of Oppressions and Wrongs, all Men's undermining's, all Men's over-reaching's of their Neighbors, all Men's falsehoods in their Words, their Promise-breakings, their Lying's, all their falsehood in their Dealings, in their Trading's, in their deceitful Words, in their deceitful Weights and Measures, all this Unrighteousness, 'tis their Self-love that puts them upon it; so they may get for themselves, and enrich themselves, how wicked soever the means or ways be to it, they care not who be impoverished or ruined. And where Self will not suffer Men to be Righteous, it will less suffer them to be Merciful; what they are so much for getting, they will be but little for giving: the Hunger and Nakedness, the pinching and Pining, and even Starving of so many poor amongst us, the short Alms they can get, and that little, that it's so hardly come by, the failing of Compassions, the shutting up of Bowels against

those that are in need, this is all from Self-love. I shall need it for myself, I need it for mine own, I cannot spare it, that's often the Word, that must go instead of an Alms.

3. It is the Root of all Brawls and Quarrels, and Contentions in the World. Whence are there such Multitudes of troublesome Law-Suits? What are they, but the contending's of Self with Self; one says 'tis mine own, and I will have it, whatever it cost me; another says, 'tis not thine, but mine, and I will have it; this Meum and Tuum, how hath it set the World together by the Ears? Not that there is Unrighteousness in all Suits at Law, the Love of God may sometimes put Men to make use of the Law of Man; but those unjust or unreasonable contending's about trifles, or for that which is none of their own, in hope by their Might or their Money, to Rob the Poor of their Right, these are pernicious Quarrels, and 'tis Self that sets them on.

4. It's the Root of Self-seeking. Holy Self-love is the Root of Holy Self-seeking; as the love of God is the Root of seeking God, so sinful Self-love, is the Root of all sinful self-seeking; and sinful self-seeking, is contrary to the seeking of God. The love of God is the Root of our seeking God. These two, Love of God, and seeking God, are put both together in one Promise, Prov. 8:17. I love them that love me, and those that seek me Early shall find me. Isa. 26:9. With my Soul have I desired thee, there's the love, and what follows? With my Spirit within me will I seek thee Early; the love of God will set us a seeking God; ('tis in vain that thou sayst, I love God, if thou canst not say also, I seek God;) and the love of Self will put us on self-seeking; and this sinful self-seeking is ever contrary to the seeking of God, Phill. 2:31. All seek their own, not the things that are Jesus Christ 's; all seek their own things, that is, their own Carnal things; and those that thus seek their own, seek not the things of Christ; there is this difference betwixt Self-love and the Love of God; Self-love divides Interests, Self stands single, and hath a separated and divided Interest; that's the Interest of Self, which is the Interest of none else; and Self-love in seeking its own Interest, seeks the Interest of none

else, neither of Christ nor of Men; the love of God unites Interests; he that loves God, the things of God and his own things are the same; he counts nothing his own things, but those that are also the things of God; and when he is seeking God, he is then most seeking his own; God is his own, and he counts nothing his own, but what is also the Lord's; when he seeks God, he therein seeks his own, and where he seeks his own, he therein seeks God; his Soul is his own, and the Interest and Prosperity of Soul, these are the things of God; it's the Love of the Brethen unites our Interest with the Interest of the Saints; 'tis the Interest of the whole Body, that is the Interest of every Member, all the Saints have the same common Interest; so the Love of Christ unites the Interest of every Member with the Interest of the Head, the love of God makes the things of God our own things, and the love of the Saints makes the things of the Church to be all our own. It is betwixt Christ and Christians, and betwixt Christians one toward another, as 'twas betwixt the Primitive Christians, they have all things common, Acts 4:32. None said of ought that he possessed, that it was his own, but they had all things common. Not but that Christians have a real Propriety in their own Estates, by virtue of which civil Right their Estates are so their own as that they are not another's; but yet by virtue of the community of Interests, what one Man hath, should be as there is occasion, to the benefit of the Community. And whence was this? The love of God had united their Interests; and the Multitude of them that believed, were knit together by that love as one Man; they were of one Heart and of one Soul; there's no Meum and Tuum, Thine and Mine, betwixt Christ and his Saints, but all is Mine; I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine, Cant. 2:17. We are not our own, say Believers, we are thine; and I am not mine own says Christ, I am yours, and that which I have is yours, John 20:17. Tell my Brethen, I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God; my Father is yours, my God is your God, all I have is yours; I am yours, and my Blood and my Bowels are yours; my stripes, my wounds, and my Righteousness, and my Inheritance is yours, 1 Cor. 3:22,23, Whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the World, or Life, or Death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's; my

Ministers are yours, mine Ordinances are yours, my Possessions are yours, things present and things to come; if I have any right in this World, (the Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof;) if I have anything in the World to come, the everlasting Crown, the everlasting Mansions, all are yours, and ye are mine, and I am God's. Thus Christ's love to Christians, causeth him to say to them, I am yours and all that I have, so Christians love to Christ, helps them to say, Lord we are thine, and all we have are thine; not only our sins are thine, our infirmities are thine, but our Parts, and our Possessions, our Graces and our Duties, yea our Houses and our Lands, and our Possessions, all are thine.

CHAP. XIV

Tokens of Christ's Love

Christians, we have been called together this day to a Communion of Loves, and thereby to an Espousal of Interests, betwixt Christ and us; we have received the Pledges of his love, his Bread and his Wine; he hath given us to Eat and to Drink, as the tokens he hath sent us down from Heaven of his Love. I have brought you tokens every one of you, from the Lord this day; tokens of his love; we have received the Pledges of his love, and we have returned the Pledges of our love to him; our very accepting of Christ's Tokens, hath been our returning of our tokens. Your communion together to Eat of Christ's Bread, and Drink of his Cup, (provided it hath been in sincerity, a Spiritual Eating, and a Spiritual Drinking) your Eating and Drinking his Body and Blood, Christ hath accepted, as a token of your loves; and this communion of love, hath been an Espousal of Interests; Christ hath hereby told you, Because I love you, I will be yours, and all that I have in Heaven and Earth, you may henceforth call your own. I am

your own Jesus, my Father is your own Father, and my God is your own God, and mine Inheritance is your own Inheritance, and you have said (if you have sincerely accepted of Christ) we are thine own, thine own Flock, thine own Inheritance, thy Ransomed ones, thy Redeemed ones, and thy peculiar People; this hath been the up-shot of the Transaction betwixt Christ and you this day: the Sealing to this word, I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine.

And as there hath been an interchangeable communion of loves, and Espousal of Interest, betwixt Christ and Christians, so also betwixt Christians and Christians; as we have said to our Lord, I am thine, so we have therein said one to another, I am yours, and must therefore walk in that tenderness of love, in that dearness of affection one to another, in that mutual care of each others good, in that mutual Sense of each others afflictions, in that mutual delight in each others Societies, in that mutual helping and counseling and comforting one another, and hearty seeking and rejoicing in each others good, studying to please each other for his good to Edification, fearing to grieve, or offend, or wrong, or fall out with, or quarrel one with another; counting the Interest of every Christian to be the common Interest of the whole Body; that we hereby may prove, that we love one another, not in Word and in Tongue; but Indeed and in Truth.

This now is the Nature, and these are the Fruits of Divine Love; it will unite Hearts, and unite Interests; this will be the Interest of Christians, which will flow from the love of Christ, that Christ's Interest prosper in the World; that the Name of Christ be exalted, and be honorable, both in themselves and in the World; that Christ be loved, that Christ be praised; that the Word of Christ, the Worship of Christ, his Sabbaths, his Ordinances, be exalted in the World; that the Glory and Holy Image of Christ, his Humility, Meekness, Lowliness, Heavenliness, Righteousness, Mercy, may shine forth in our Faces, and in the Faces and Ways of all his Saints; that we may in our particulars, and jointly, show forth the Spirit and Life of serious and powerful Religion and Godliness, in all manner of Holy Conversation; this we should account our Interest with respect to

Christ, that he may be thus Honor'd and Obeyed; and this will be the Interest of Christians with respect to Christians, that we may see one another, the whole Vineyard flourishing in the Power of Holiness, as living and lively Instances of the Grace of God; and (as far as the Lord see it good) may see one another prospering in this World, even as our Souls do prosper.

O Christians, espouse this common Interest, and do what you can to promote this Interest in the World; Love Christ, and lift up the Name of Christ; love Christ and show forth the Image of Christ; love Christ and Consecrate your Life to Christ; determine to know nothing, to value nothing, to rejoice in nothing, but Jesus Christ and him Crucified. And then love one another, and study to please one another, to profit one another, for their good to Edification; to cast in your Lot together, to rejoice together with them that rejoice, to grieve with them that suffer, to live together in love, forbearing one another, forgiving one another, comforting one another, even as you yourselves would be Loved, forgiven, and comforted of God.

This now is the nature and the fruit of Divine Love, it unites Interests; but Self-love, sinful Self-love divides Interests, and so those that seek the things of Self, their carnal things, seek not the things of Christ.

3. Sinful Self-love hath a root remaining in the best Hearts, even of the regenerate; though in Conversion Self hath lost the Dominion, and be cast down from the Throne, yet is there a secret Tabernacle, a corner in the Heart, where it fortifies it Self, and is still aspiring to recover the Throne it hath lost; the Dominion yet it retains, in some degree; an Interest in the affection, and by this affection it hath the advantage of us, and often recovers too great a Command again.

How great a Power sinful Self-love hath still in us, the experience of Christians sadly proves; for the clearing whereof, consider yet again more distinctly, that there is, as hath been already hinted, a threefold Self-love, and accordingly a threefold Self-seeking.

1. There is a loving or seeking ourselves, in conjunction with God, and in subordination to him. This is a loving or seeking Self spiritually, a loving or seeking of Self as Christians, as the Servants of God and Members of Christ, as clothed with the Image, and devoted to the service, and aspiring to the Salvation of God. This Self-loving and Self-seeking is our duty and our excellency; the Interest of Self spiritual and the Interest of God, are a conjunct Interest, only the Interest of Self is lower, and subordinate to the Interest of God. When we thus seek ourselves, our Spiritual and Eternal good, we are therein most effectually seeking God, we cannot more effectually seek God than in seeking our own Salvation. Those that seek Glory, Honor and Immortality, for themselves, do therein seek the Glory and Honor of the Immortal God; thereby declaring that they prize and value the Lord, as their chief, nay, the only good. He that neglecting these lower things, doth seek God as his only happiness, doth therein take the Crown off the head of all his Idols, and set it where it ought to be, on the Head of the most High. By our seeking of God above all, we thereby evidently declare, that we Prize him and Honor him above all; our thus seeking of God, is trampling into dirt all those Idols, the Vanities of the World, which stood in Competition with God.

2. There is a Loving and Seeking ourselves in separation from God. This is our loving and seeking Self natural, the good of our Persons, our Bodies and Souls, without considering them as bearing a respect to God. Our seeking our well-being as mere men; our bodily well-being, our Health, and Strength, and natural Activity; the well-being or perfecting our Souls; our seeking Wisdom, and Knowledge, and Learning, &c. these things are all good, and worth our seeking in their place; our bodily health and strength are good; Wisdom, and Knowledge, and Learning are good; Health is better than Sickness, Strength than weakness; Wisdom is better than Folly, and Knowledge than Ignorance; he hath more of the excellency of a man, who is a Learned man, than he that is but an Idiot; but now the seeking these good things, as separate from God, the seeking Health and not for God, the seeking Strength and not for God, the seeking

Wisdom and Learning and not for God, this is a sinful Self-seeking: As the Lord spake, Jer. 9:23,24. Let not the wise man glory in his Wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his Might, let not the Rich man glory in his Riches, but let him that glorieth Glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me. So may it be said, Let not this Might be sought, this Wisdom be sought, but in order to the understanding, knowing and serving of me. Those that seek only Lawful things for themselves, and in Lawful and Honest ways, that seek Health, and Strength, that seek Estates, that seek Wisdom and Knowledge, and all these in Lawful and Honest ways, yet if they seek these good things, these Lawful things, only for themselves, and not with respect to God; if they seek not God in seeking their Health and Estates, if they do not seek God in their seeking Wisdom and Understanding, this is a Sinful and Idolatrous Self-seeking. It may be, thou mayest not be an Epicure, or a Drunkard, or a Glutton, in thy Eating and Drinking thou art sober and temperate, and eatest only for thy Health; It may be, thou mayest not be Unjust, or an Oppressor in seeking an Estate for thyself, yet for all this, thou mayest be an Idolater, and an Idolater thou art if thou seekest any of these things for thyself, and not God.

3. There is a loving or seeking of ourselves, in opposition to God; a seeking Self-carnal. 'It is true, seeking ourselves in Separation, is seeking ourselves in Opposition to God, but this seeking Self-carnal is in a higher and more direct Opposition to God. Self-carnal is an Enemy to God, and seeking Self thus, is the maintaining and cherishing that Enmity; he that inordinately seeks his Ease, or the satisfaction of his Appetite and Senses, does therein do what he can to feed and pamper that Enemy, his flesh, that it may wax wanton, and head-strong, and kick against God.

Now however every Convert hath decreed, and determined to seek himself, only in conjunction and subordination to God, to seek himself in the Lord and for the Lord; yet this sinful Self-love hath a Root remaining in him, which will be putting forth in sinful self-seeking. That word, Phil. 2:21. All seek their own, was spoken of

Christians; there were such declining's and such corruptions gotten into the Churches, into the very Hearts of Professors, as unhappily engaged them in this Self-seeking. [All] that is the most, 'twas a too general Disease, there were many Sick of it. And not the things of Christ; (that is,) not so heartily, not so zealously, not so Naturally, as 'twas said of Timothy, Phil. 2:20. He did Naturally care for the things and state of the Church, and of God; but says the Apostle, However it was with him, I have no Man like-minded; I find few Timothies among you; whilst he is seeking the things of Christ, most of you are seeking your own things, and not the things of Christ.

How much of this self-love, and self-seeking, is to be found amongst Christians, we have sad experiences enough to prove; we need not go to Scripture for proof, we find too evident Proofs in our own Hearts and Lives; if we have not totally gone back from Christ to Self, yet have we not suffered this Idol to divide with Christ? O let us inquire a little.

1. Do we seek ourselves and our own Interests, only in conjunction with Christ, and in subordination to Christ? Do we count nothing our own things, but what are the things of Christ? Have we heartily espoused the Interest of Christ, as our own Interest? Do we seek nothing in this World so, but that we can truly call it, seeking of Christ? Do we seek our Health's, and our Estates, and our safety, as the Servants of Christ? Can we call our laboring in our Callings, our aiming at Thriving and Prosperity in our Affairs, can we call this, and call it truly so, our Serving of Christ? If we would have Health and Strength, is it for Christ we would have it? If we would have Estates in the World and be Rich, is it for the sake of Christ that we would be Rich? That we may as Prov. 3:9. Honor the Lord with our Substance? Do we mark up all we can get, and all we have, do we mark it up for Christ? Is there Holiness to the Lord written upon all our Houses and Possessions? This House is the Lord's, and these Lands are the Lord's; 'tis for him I have gotten them, and for him I will use them.

2. Do we not rather Seek these things in separation from God? Seek them for themselves, for the love we have to them, for the sake of Self, to whose service we devote them? Do we not seek these things, with the neglect of Christ? Is not Christ sought the less, and the more grieved for that the World is sought so much? Is not Christ the less minded, the less loved, the more seldom thought on by this means? Does not our Thriftiness and good Husbandry for the World, our Eating and Feeding upon, our taking the Pleasure of what we have here, does not this make an abatement upon our Christianity? Do we not lose much of the Life and Spirit and Soul of Christianity in our Carnal things and delights? Do we not so bless ourselves in this Earth, that we so much the less bless ourselves in Christ, or in the God of Truth? Christians, pray consider it; how do ye find it? Hath not this Selfishness and Earthliness spoiled you for Christians? Of how many Men's Prospering in the World, of how many Men's laboring for the World, may it be said, This is the Fruit of these Labors, this is the Fruit of this Prosperity, it hath even spoiled a good Christian, he hath lost his Love, and lost his Life, and lost his Zeal for God, in his loving and caring and good husbandry for himself? Pray consider, if this be none of your cases; and if this be not a sad case, and whether you can take any comfort in it or no? Had not those Hearts need to be looked to, that have thus gone a Whoring, ('tis no better) that have gone a whoring from Christ, after the World? Hast thou governed that Heart of thine well, which thou hast suffered thus to play the Harlot? Hast thou not need of looking better to it? Christians, do you not see you had need to be more watchful over your Hearts, and to hold them in under a closer and severer restraint, than you have hitherto done?

Again, if you do not see how far sinful Self-love hath prevailed in you above the Love of God, consider further for conviction: 1. Do you love them that love God, as you love them that love your Selves? There's scarce any Man that is so ill natured, but will love those that love himself; Do not even the Publicans the same? Mat. 5. They love those that love them, and are beneficial to them; But do you love those that love God, as you love those that love yourselves? Those that are

loving and kind and friendly to you, you will love them, whether they love God or no; and do you find that those that love God, you can love them, whether they love you or no? If they should any of them be unkind, and unfriendly to you, yet can you love them, because they love God? If not, if you can love them that love you, though they do not love God, and cannot love them who love God, in case they do not love you, what think you? Is not this an evidence, that this Self-love hath greater power in you, than the love of God?

2. Are you angry with those that offend God, as you are with those that offend your Selves? The Psalmist could say, Psal. 139:21,22. Do not I hate them that hate thee? Am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? Yea I hate them with a perfect hatred; I count them mine Enemies: Can you say so? I am angry with them that are angry with thee: I am grieved at them, that sin against God, those that are his Enemies, I count them mine own Enemies. Those that wrong ourselves, and offend ourselves, that wrong us in our Names, by traducing, backbiting or slandering of us, that wrong us of our Right, by Fraud or Oppression, that do but speak an angry or unkind word to us, how quickly does the Fire kindle? We are too hot and touchy, when Self is concerned; but are we grieved, are we offended at those that sin against God? Yea, even though they be never so kind to ourselves? Can we not wink at sin in our Friends, can we not palliate and excuse it, and hide our eyes from the sins of them whom we love, and upon whose kindness and friendship self hath some dependence? How then canst thou say, thou lovest God as thou lovest thyself? Touch self-Interest who dare, he shall not escape thy wrath; let him kick against God, sin against Christ, and thou art never moved; Dost thou love God as thou lovest thyself? It was said of Holy Calvin, that when he heard that Luther called him Devil, that he answered, But he is the Servant of the most High God; 'tis said of Lot, 2 Pet. 2:8. That Righteous Man living among the Sodomites, vexed his Righteous Soul with the filthy Conversation of those wicked Ones. Lot had none of the best Neighbors in those wicked Sodomites; doubtless he suffered many Personal wrongs and unkindness's from them, that Righteous Man could never be

Neighbor to such wicked ones, without suffering from them himself; but yet we read not, that he ever fretted or vexed at anything they did against himself; their wickedness against God, their filthy Conversation, this was it which vexed his Righteous Soul. There was a Man that loved God indeed; silent at wrongs done to himself, only vexed at what is done against God. Is it so with thee? Is it so with us? O how quite contrary are we? Vexing, and fretting, and chafing at whatever is against ourselves, and silent and quiet, and not moved in the concerns of God? Is this our love to God? Are we lovers of God more than lovers of Self? Sure, beloved, this very thing, our being so impatient of Self-offenses, and so patient of offenses against God, this very thing, if well considered, might make the most of our Hearts to ache, and draw Tears from our Eyes, might set us all a Weeping, to think what daily Arguments we have of this kind, to prove how powerful this Self-love, and how weak the love of God is in us. Sure the more dear the Lord grows to us, the more will it go to our Hearts, that he should be offended by any, and the more Self-love were mortified, the easier should we bear Self-wrongs and Offences.

And what can we say with respect to our Brethren Neighbors? Do we not so love ourselves, but that we are heartily concerned for our Neighbors? Have we compassions towards them in their afflictions? Do we rejoice at their Prosperity? Can we grieve with those that grieve, suffer with them that suffer, and rejoice with them that rejoice and prosper? We can be glad when God prospereth ourselves, and can we be glad when he prospereth others? O how do Men rake and catch what they can, one from another? How do Men envy the prosperity of their Neighbors? O how do some Men gape after the Possessions of their Brethren, wishing even for their Death, when they are like to get anything by it? How many Landlords are glad of the death of their Tenants? How many younger Brothers are glad at the death of the Heir? Yea, how do some Children wait for the death of their Parents, that the Inheritance may fall to themselves? And whence is all this wickedness? Is not this from Self-love? O what Murderous desires and hopes doth it sometimes bring forth? Though it dare not put upon Murderous Practices, though it doth not make

Murderous hands, yet it often makes the Heart a Murderous heart, and fills it with Murderous desires and practices, Mat. 15:19. Out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries. 'It is this Self in the Heart, that is the Original Murderer and Adulterer. You that are Professors of Religion, see diligently whether there be no degree of this wickedness to be found in any of your Hearts; to hope for, to wish for, or at least to be well pleased at the death of others, when Self doth get by their Death: Therefore

4. There is a necessity of keeping the Heart under Government. Is Self such an Idol in the Heart? Is Self-love Idolatry, and the Root of so much wickedness? The Rot of Religion? The Root of Unrighteousness, Unmercifulness? Yea and of such Murderous desires and wishes? And is there something of this Root remaining even in Christians? And is it apt to put forth into such Self-exalting's, and wicked Self-seeking, and will it certainly do so, where it is not carefully looked to, and held under severe restraint; then certainly there's no Government more necessary than Heart-Government.

CHAP. XV

Where the Governement of the Heart Stands

2. Wherein the Government of the Heart stands; and it stands in these Five things:

1. In subjecting the lower Faculties, the Affections, Appetite and Senses, to Reason and Conscience.

2. In holding the Thoughts upon profitable and pertinent Objects.

3. In exercising the Passions or Affections upon their proper Objects, and within their due Limits and Bounds and Measures.

4. In suppressing and keeping under the Evil, and cherishing and encouraging the Good that is in the Heart.

5. In strengthening the Sinews of Government.

1. In subjecting the lower Faculties, the Affections, Appetite and Senses, to Reason and Conscience. Reason must be Dictator in the Heart, and must not be controlled or over-born by the inferior Faculties. Conscience is invested with the Authority of God: Subjection to Reason and Conscience, is subjection to God, and Rebellion against these, is Rebellion against God. The Reason of all the disorders in the Heart is the Usurpation of Sense and Appetite, and their rising up against Reason; when the People take Head against their Prince, what disorders follow? God that said, Prov. 3:5. Lean not to thine own understanding; that is, as corrupted and biassed by the Flesh, yet requireth us to lean to our Understandings, when they are contradicted and opposed by the Flesh. The Prophet complains, Isa. 59:8. There is no Judgment in their goings, they have made them crooked Paths; no Judgment, that is, no Understanding, no Conscience in their goings; and where there is no Understanding nor Conscience, there's nothing but crookedness.

Sinners Hearts do set up Sense and Appetite to be the Ruler; as 'twas said of Jeroboam, 1 Kings 12:31. He made the vilest of the People to be Priests; So sinners make the vilest and lowest of their Faculties to be Rulers; they will not be Ruled by Reason, they will not be governed by Conscience, but Affection and Appetite must bear the sway. How comes it to pass, that thou art such a Carnal sensual Liver? Does thy Reason tell thee, that a Carnal Worldly Life is the best Life? Does thy Conscience command thee to be Covetous, or to be a Libertine, to live at thine Ease and thy Pleasure? Does thy Conscience tell thee, that this is the Life that God would have thee to live? That God would have thee to live in the Ale-house; to follow thy

Companions, or thy Covetousness? It is not against thy Conscience, to be sober and serious and circumspect in thy goings; 'tis not against thy Conscience to forbear thy Lying, or thy Fraud, or thy Falsehood; no, it is thine Appetite, and thine Affections, to whom thou hast resigned thy Self to be governed, that lead thee on thus.

Would you have good Government to be kept within you? Set up right Government; let reason Govern, let Conscience govern; make your Senses and your Appetites to know their place, and to keep under, and to be in subjection to your Understandings and Conscience; embrace not anything merely because it pleases your Senses, seek not anything because you have an Appetite to it, let not your Affections lead you, but your Judgments and Understandings. It would be well, if we were come thus far, to live according to the best of our Understandings; and so far forth as we do so, so far forth we live under Government; the Anarchy of domineering Appetites and Senses is no Government. Do not your Understandings tell you, it is better to live in the love and fear of God, than in the Lusts of the Flesh? Do not your Judgments tell you, that an holy, sober, serious, heavenly Life, is better than Viciousness or Vanity. Do not your Consciences call upon you, Love not the World, nor the Wine, and strong Drink; follow not thy Sports and thy Pleasures, Fly youthful Lusts? Hast thou not a Conscience within thee, that calls thus upon thee? When thy Lusts call thee after thy Pleasure, when thy Covetousness calls thee after the World, when thy Sense calls upon thee, Take thine Ease, take thy Liberty, hast thou not a Conscience within thee calling thee back, and charging thee to take heed, and beware of Living thus? When thy Carnal will and thy Lusts call thee from minding Christ, and Holiness, and Righteousness, let it all alone, meddle not with such a severe Life, yet hast thou not a Conscience within thee, telling thee, it is best for thee to be a serious Christian? It would be better for thee if thou wouldst give thyself to a Holy, Humble godly Life, than to live such a Libertine? It would be better for thee to be a sincere, strict, diligent, active Christian, than to be such a trifling lazy Hypocrite and loose Professor? Does not thy

Conscience tell thee thus, and charge thee to be such a one? Why let Conscience carry it, resign up thyself to the Government of it.

2. In keeping the Thoughts exercised upon profitable and pertinent Objects. I told you before, that the unruliness of the Heart lies much in the unruliness of the Thoughts; and how much of the Heart government stands in the Government of the Thoughts; the best way to keep the Thoughts well governed, is to keep them well exercised. Those Legions of Thoughts that are in the Heart, are like the Soldiers of an Army; if Soldiers be not kept to Action, they will hardly be kept under Command; when they lie idly and lazily in their Quarters, and have nothing to do, then they use to Mutiny, and to break out into disorders; sound an Alarm, and bring them to their Arms, and that's the best way to bring them to Order.

Keep your disorderly mutinous Thoughts to exercise, and exercise them upon what they ought to be exercised upon; be thinking profitable Thoughts; be thinking upon Christ, upon the State of your Souls, upon the work of your Souls; be thinking pertinent Thoughts, such as are proper to your present cases, such as are proper to the present Season; when you are Hearing, fix your Thoughts intently upon what you hear; when you are Reading, think on what you Read; when you are Praying, think on what you Pray for; when at the Table of the Lord, think on what's before you, upon your Crucified Lord, upon the love, and kindness, and compassion of Christ to you; upon the Covenant you are Sealing, &c. Afterwards, think of what you have Heard, and Read, and prayed for, and received, and covenanted, &c. Do not divert to other good Thoughts that are not pertinent. Impertinent Thoughts though the matter of them be good, are unprofitable Thoughts. Psal. 139:18. When I awake, I am still with thee; my Thoughts are with God; as verse. 17. How precious also are thy Thoughts to me? How great is the Number of them? If I should count them, they are more in Number than the Sands of the Sea. [Thy Thoughts] that is, either God's Thoughts towards him, or his Thoughts of God, and these Observe, 1. The gratefulness or acceptableness of such Thoughts; how precious, how dear are they to

me? It was a pleasant thing to him to think of God. 2. The Multitude of his Thoughts of God; how great is the Sum of them? God hath many Thoughts of his Saints, and Saints have many Thoughts of God. 3. A special Season of his thinking of God, [when I awake] these are my Morning Thoughts, no sooner am I awake, but my Heart is in Heaven, and Psal. 119:97. O how I love thy Law, it is my Meditation all the day; where see, 1. The matter of his Thoughts, the Law of God, or those blessed matters, those wonderful things contained in this Law, to be thinking of the Word of God, is to be thinking of God, of Christ, of Holiness, of Heaven, of the way to Heaven, and the like things that are written in the Word, these are the matter of his Thoughts. 2. The Seasons of his Meditations, and these are, every Season; he is constantly thus exercised, all the day; his Morning thoughts are his continual Thoughts. 3. The Motive or Spring of his Meditations, O how I love thy Law! What we love, we shall easily be thinking of; if we love God, we shall be thinking of God, if we love our Souls, love Holiness, love the Word, and ways of God, our Thoughts will be upon them. Dost thou not think on God, and the Law of God? 'It is a sign thou lovest them not; well, this is the right governing our Thoughts, and which will prevent the wanderings and straggling's and unruliness of them, the holding them thus well exercised.

3. In holding our Affections and Passions to their proper Objects, and within their due Bounds; so as that we love only what we should love, and as much and no more than we should love it; to fear what we should fear, and as much and no more than we should fear it; to desire what we should desire, and as much and no more than we should desire it; to be angry with what we should be angry, and no more than we should. I shall instance only in these Six Passions:

Our Love.

Our Desire.

Our Joy.

Our Grief.

Our Fear.

Our Anger.

CHAP. XVI

A Well-Ordered Love

1. For our Love; this is then well Ordered, when we love only what we should love, and as much and no more than we should love it.

The Object of Love is good, and only good; nothing can be loved but that which is good, or apprehended so to be; and nothing ought to be loved, but that which [is] good. God is good, the chief and Supreme good, the Fountain of all goodness, infinitely good: Good is the Lord, Exod. 34:6. Abundant in goodness and truth. Our danger here, is not of over-loving, but of under-loving: God is to be loved, with all the Heart, and with all the Might; there is no danger here of erring in the excess; our beings are good, our Souls and Bodies; we are God's Workmanship, and of all God's works, 'tis said Gen. 1, he saw that they were good. Our well-being and prosperity and happiness is good; not only the Prosperity of our Souls, our prospering in Grace and Holiness, our growing rich unto God, but the Prosperity of our Bodies and outward man; our Health and our Estates, is good, Joh. 3. I wish that thou mayest prosper and be in Health, even as thy Soul prospereth. The Creatures are good; our Bread, and our Clothes, and our Houses, which are for the comfort of our Bodies; every Creature of God is good, being sanctified by the Word and Prayer, 1 Tim. 4:4. The Prosperity of our Neighbors, especially those of the household of Faith, this also is a good that we should love. Touching our Souls, our

danger is, that we do not love these according to the price and worth of a Soul, which is more than all the World, Mat. 16, or else, that we do not love them aright, so as to seek their good. Touching our Bodies, and the Creatures that are for the Health and prosperity of our Bodies, the great danger is of over-loving them; of loving them more than we should, and more than they are worth. This is the order that should be in well-governed Hearts, we should love the Creatures for our Bodies, we should love our Bodies for our Souls, we should love them all, and our Neighbors good also for God, and we should love God for himself. And this ought to be the Measure of our Love, we should love God with all our might; we should love our Souls as far forth as serves to the Honor of God; we should love our Bodies, our Health and bodily Prosperity, as far as they are serviceable to our Souls; and we should love the Creatures, our Houses, our Money, our Estates, as far forth as they may be useful to our Bodies, in the Service of our Souls, and to our Bodies and Souls in the Service of God; and we should love our Neighbor as ourselves.

A Heart that is set right in its love, is a well governed Heart; this is the original of the disorder that is in our lives, the disorder of our love. Why is it that these Bodies, and our Bodily Prosperity, is sought more than our Souls? Why do we seek Riches, and Pleasure, and Ease, and Money, more than we seek Grace and Holiness? O we love the Creature too much, and we love God and our Souls too little.

O, it were well with the sinful World, better than it is, if they loved God and their Souls, as well as they love their Bodies and Estates; but Sinner, for thy part, thou dost not so; thou sayest thou lovest God, thou sayest thou lovest thy Soul, thou sayest these are the great things thine Heart is upon; no, thou dost not love God as thou lovest that Carcass of thine, thou doest not love God as well as thou lovest thy Money, or thy Pleasures, or thy Health; thy very Lusts, thy Carnal Sports and Merriments, thy vile Companions, and thy Sins, thou art such a vile Brute, that thou lovest these more than thou lovest God or thy Soul; thou art better pleased, thou art better satisfied, when the Corn and the Wine increaseth, when thou Prosperest in this World,

than with any hopes thou hast towards God for thy Soul. What is the Pleasure of thine Heart? When art thou most merry, and best contented? When is it with thee as thou wouldst have it, but when thou art in Health, and Prosperest in these outward things? God is dishonored, and neglected by thee, God is angry with thee, and yet thou art well enough contented; thy Soul languisheth, it is a blind and ignorant Soul, it is a sinful and guilty Soul, it is a stupid and hardened Soul, it is a perishing and dying Soul; thy Soul is in the hands of the Devil, thy Soul is a dead Soul, even dropping into Hell; and yet for all this, thou sittest there at thine Ease, and art nothing troubled at it; thou art Rich, and hast Money enough, at least thou hast an House, and hast Bread enough; thou art in thy Health and thy Strength, and so long thou carest not, thou art not troubled about, thou wilt not so much as think, How is it with my Soul? Is not my poor Soul ready to perish, and like to be Damned for my Sins? And wilt thou yet say, thou lovest thy Soul? 'Twere well for thee, better than 'tis, if thou lovest thy Soul, as thou lovest thy Flesh, nay, as thou lovest thy dirty Pleasures, and vile Companions, thy Horses in thy Stable, thy Pigs at the Trough, thy very Dogs, thou lovest better than thou lovest thy Soul; this is the wickedness of every Sinner among you; and where the Soul is less loved, God himself is less loved than these vile things; yet thou wilt say, Thou lovest God; no, thou dost not love him as thou lovest the Dirt of thy Heels, the Lusts of thy Flesh.

O wonder, wonder, Sinners, and be astonished at your Selves, that ever there should be such a vile and wretched Heart within you, and yet you should sit here, or go up and down the World, as well pleased with yourselves, as well satisfied with yourselves, as you are. Who would think, that behold Sinners Faces, how merry they look; who would think these merry ones, should have such a vile and wicked Heart within them?

How is it with thee Sinner? What aileth thee? I am well, I thank God: Well art thou? What, and have such a Devil in thy Bosom, such a wicked Heart, as despiseth the Lord, and makes a God of thy Belly, or

thy Money, or thy Pleasure? The Lord make you deeply sensible of this wickedness, for 'tis certainly your cases; 'twere better with you than it is, if you had loved God as well as you do the Beasts that perish, if you loved your Souls as well as you do those rotting and perishing Carcasses.

And for you that are Christians, who do love your Souls more than your Bodies, and God more than all, yet it is so little that God hath the Preeminence in your Love, that you are hard put to it in your Examination, to prove whether the love of God hath the Preeminence in you or no; whether there be not something that you love more than God. It is a shame for us, Friends, that the love of God is no more perfected in us; that there is no more sensible strength of our Love to God, that we should be so often put to it, to Question which we love best, God or ourselves, God or this present World. Well, this should be the Order and Measure of your Love, as I said before, that God be first loved, next our Souls, then our Bodies, and after that the Creatures which are for the Bodily Prosperity; that the Creature be loved no farther than it is serviceable to the Health of our Bodies, and our Bodies loved in order to the service of our Souls, and all so much, and no more, than conduces to the Honor and Service of God; this should be the Order and Measure of our Love, and this would be one Fruit of the due Government of our Hearts.

That I may the more effectually persuade you to set up and keep up this Government in your Hearts, let me ask you,

Quest. 1. Can you except against this Order and Measure of your Love? Order in the Heart, is as necessary as Order in a Kingdom, Army, or Family; and a due Order in our Love, is necessary to the keeping up Order in the Heart.

1. Consider, Order in the Heart is as necessary as Order in a Kingdom, &c. What is a Kingdom, if there be no Order in it? What is an Army, what is a Family, where there is no order in it? What is there but Confusion and Ruin? All runs into confusion, all runs to

ruin where no Order is, Jam. 3:16. Where envy and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work; where envy and strife is, there is disorder; good Order would prevent strife and envying; and where no good Order is, there is confusion and every evil work; O what Tumults and Mutinies are there in our disorderly Hearts! There is no good doing, and there is every evil work.

2. Order in our Love is necessary to the keeping our whole Hearts in Order: upon the right Order and Measure of our Love, will follow the right Ordering of all our Affections; there's no one of all our Affections but will be in good Order, if our Love be in Order; if we love what we should love, we shall hate what we should hate, and fear what we should fear, and desire what we should desire, and grieve for what we should grieve, and be angry only at what we should be angry; and when there is a due Measure in our Love, where we love as much as we should, we shall hate as much as we should, and fear, and grieve, and rejoice as much as we should, and no more; the motions and workings of all our Affections do follow and flow from the working of our Love; as when we love God, we shall hate and fear and grieve for all that is contrary to God, so when we love God as much as we should, that is above all, and with all our Hearts, we shall desire him above all, and hate and grieve for sin which is contrary to God, with all our Hearts.

The Reason why we hate not sin as we should, why we fear not sin, and grieve not for sin; the Reason why we desire no more after God, why we desire Grace no more, and Holiness no more, it is because we have no more love to God and his Holiness. The Reason why we love that we should not love, and desire and fear what we should not, the Reason of our Carnal griefs and Worldly Sorrows, those Sorrows that bring Death, 2 Cor. 7, is because we duly love not God; more love to God would help and heal those inordinate Passions; you would never be lovers of this Self, of this Flesh, of this World, of these Pleasures, did you duly love God and the things of God, you complain of the unruliness of your Passions, of your fretting's, and vexing's and the unquietness of your Hearts; you complain of the hardness of your

Hearts, you cannot hate sin as you should, nor mourn for sin, nor fear it as you should; this you say is your Affliction, and you know not how to help it; why, do but get more love to God, more intense and ardent love to Him and his Holiness, and you will find all these Distempers to fall, then you will hate and fear and mourn for sin as you ought to do; there will be an end of your complaining's of hardness of Heart, that you cannot fear, nor grieve, nor mourn for sin; there will be an end of your complaining's of your over-loving the World, of your unreasonable passions, and fretting's, and anger, at what you should not, when once you have gotten duly to love the Lord.

Well, by this you see the Order in the Heart, and in special the due Order and Measure of your love that is necessary, and how necessary it is.

Can you therefore except against this Order and Measure of your Love? What should be first and chiefly loved? Wilt thou not say, That God should be he? Which should be most in our Love, our Bodies, or our Souls? Will you not everyone say, O my Soul, my Soul is of more worth than my Body, and more worthy of my Love? Which should be more loved, your Bodies, or your Estates, and the Creatures you enjoy? Surely you would all say in this, as Christ said, Mat. 6:25. The Life is more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment; what would you think of such a Man, that loves his Money more than his own Body; that would suffer his Body to Starve, and Pine, rather than spend his Money upon it? You would say, This Man is a Monster; and is not he as much a Monster who loves his Body more than his Soul, or himself more than God, as he who loves his Money more than his Body? Christians, would you not count it well with you, if your Love were thus regulated? What if you could now feel that which you have so often questioned and doubted, whether it be so or no, that you can now love God above all, that the whole stream of your Love, did run into the Ocean? If you could feel such strong, and such lively, and such passionate workings of your Hearts towards God, such dearness and such tenderness, and such strength and ardency of Affection to

the Lord; if you could feel your Hearts burning within you, with the Divine Love; if these Hearts were all flaming Hearts, and flaming upwards, and that so sensibly and so strongly, that there might be a resolving of that doubt; and you saw it true beyond question, and you could say, Now I feel who hath mine Heart; none but God, none but Christ; Whom have I in Heaven but thee? There's nothing in the Earth that I love, in comparison of thee. God is the love of my Heart, and my Portion forever; what if you could now feel it thus within you? What if from your own sense and experience, you could heartily speak out such words? Take this Heart to thee, O Lord; thine it is, thou art mine only Love, and nothing will I love or regard but in Order to thee; would you not bless yourselves in such an experience? Would it not be Marrow and Fatness to your Souls? Would you not rejoice in the Lord, and triumph in Christ, and praise his Holy Name, that had wrought you to that pass? That God should have thus gotten to be the chief in your love, and Self, and Flesh, and the whole World, were brought to stoop and stand aside, yea, and to be trampled on, in comparison of him? Sure you that are Christians, would count it happy with you if it were thus, and I dare say concerning you, this is it you pray for, and hope for, and wait, and thirst, and long after, and would count it an infinitely greater matter of joy and praise, than if the Corn, and the Wine, and the Oil, if all the Poms, and Pleasures, and Grandeur of the World were increasing unto you, and were rolling in upon you; and therefore you for your parts have nothing to except against this Order and Measure of your love.

Qu. 2. But how is it with you? If it be an excellent thing, if it be a blessed thing to have our Hearts brought into such a Frame and Order, what do ye find? Are you made partakers of this blessedness? O the Lord help me, I am far short of it; I can feel that I love this World, I need no trial whether I love this Flesh or no, whether I love my Credit or no, whether I love my Money, or my Lands, or mine Ease, or my Pleasures; I feel I love these things, but whether I love my Soul as I ought, whether I love God as I ought, there's my great doubt; and I fear I do not. Dost thou fear? Dost thou doubt whether thou lovest thy Soul, as thou lovest the World? Whether thou lovest

thy God as thou lovest thy Flesh? And is there anything but need then, that thou shouldst be brought to a better pass? Canst thou be quiet? Canst thou be comforted in anything, whilst it is thus with thee? Christians, would you ever be clearly satisfied concerning your eternal State, that you shall hereafter dwell in the eternal Love? Would you be comforted touching your present Case, that God is your God; That Christ is your Jesus; That the Covenant, and the Promises, and the Mercies of God are yours, that you are passed from Death to Life, that your Names are written in Heaven, and that you are Enrolled amongst the Saints, and shall have an Inheritance with the Saints in Light? Then put hard on for this blessed Frame of Heart; let it henceforth be the great thing in your Eye, look for it, pray for it, reach forth towards it; down with this World, tread upon this Earth, and Flesh, love nothing but what God would have you love, love nothing but in subordination to God. Dread the encroachments of the Creatures upon the Right of God; despise these carnal Pleasures, despise this Money, and these Lands, or this Credit, so far forth as they stand in competition with God; set your Foot upon the Necks of them all; give your Hearts unto the Lord, and let him be your Love and your Delight, and your Portion forever.

CHAP. XVII

The Object of our desires is the same with the Object of our Love

2. For our Desires, in this as in the former, we must desire what we should desire, and as much as, and no more than we should desire it; the Object of our desires is the same with the Object of our Love; that which is Good.

Now of all the Good which may or ought to be desired,

1. Something is to be desired Absolutely and Ultimately, and thus God only is to be desired,

2. Other good things are to be desired Absolutely but Subordinately; and thus the first Grace is to be desired, and the everlasting Happiness of our Souls, absolutely, but subordinately; we are to desire our own blessedness, but chiefly that therein God may be glorified.

3. Other good things are to be desired in subordination and with submission. And thus the higher Degrees of Grace, the best and most advantageous Means of Grace, Gifts, the gift of Prayer, gifts for Edification, &c. these all are to be desired with submission to the will of God; the first Grace, or saving Grace we are not to desire with submission (so as to be content to be denied it) no not to the will of God; for there is no such will of God for us to submit to: God would not have any Man to submit to it, to be forever left an Enemy, or a Reprobate from God. God would not have any Man content to be Damned. Indeed, the worst of Sinners must be silent to God, though he Damn them for their sins, and not charge God foolishly, but acknowledge that he is Righteous in Damning them; but they are not required to submit or be contented to be Damned. The first grace, sincerity in Grace is to be desired absolutely, but as to higher Degrees in Grace, the gifts of Grace, the means of Grace, &c. these are to be desired but only with submission.

4. Other good things must be desired with submission and Moderation; thus all Temporal good things are to be desired;

1. With submission; We may and ought to desire our Bodily Health, our Life, and our Prospering in the World, but this must be put in (if it be the will of God, and for the honor of God;) And if it be the will of God to deny us, therein we must submit.

2. With Moderation; We should not desire great things for ourselves, nor anything too earnestly; we may seek outward good things, but

with a great indifferency; we must not be greedy seekers. Greediness notes, 1. A desire after much, 'tis not a little that will satisfy the greedy mind. 2. An eager Desire, a greedy Appetite is a ravenous Appetite, which scarce anything will satisfy or quench; and such an Appetite we must not allow in ourselves after these Temporal things.

We must desire an increase of Grace, yea, and of the gifts of Grace, Earnestly, 1 Cor. 12:31. Covet earnestly the best gifts; we must not be content with a little Grace; though we must submit to God's dispensation, we must not so submit to be of little Faith, as not to seek, and seek earnestly for an increase; yet so far we must submit, as to be without murmuring, yea and to be thankful for that little we have. Reach forth to the things that are before, press hard on towards the Mark; be zealous in contending for the highest pitch of Grace and Holiness; yea and as to the gifts of Grace, the Apostle exhorts, 1 Cor. 14:12. Seek that ye may excel, to the Edifying of the Church. Those that do not press on after an increase in Grace, 'tis a sign they have no Grace in them that's True; here, he that is content with a little, 'tis an Evidence that he hath nothing. Let your eye be upon getting up to the highest form of Christians, so as to excel and shine forth most gloriously in the Grace of God; but if notwithstanding all your endeavors, you still fall short, and it continue to be low with you, murmur not at God: Blame yourselves that you have no more, there's the fault, you are not straitened in the Lord but in your own Bowels, in your own narrow Hearts; yet still, as little as you have, be thankful that there is something of the Grace of God in you; if ye be some of the lowest of the Servants of the Lord, yet bless him that you are his Servants, still contending and that earnestly to rise and increase more and more.

This increase of Grace, and of the gifts of Grace, is to be desired with submission, but yet earnestly; but in seeking after Temporal good things, there must be not only submission, but great Moderation; we must neither seek much of them, nor be over eager in our desiring of them.

From what hath been said, will follow these Three Directions for governing your desires.

1. Quicken and enlarge your desires after God and the good things above, and desire them as much as you should.
2. Curb and limit your desires after the good things below, and desire them no more than you should.
3. Crush and crucify your desires after the Evil and hurtful things below, and desire them not at all.

1. Quicken and enlarge your desires after God and the good things above, and desire them as much as you should. Fear not transgressing in the excess; you cannot desire God or his Grace too much; enlarge your desires.

1. Desire to have as much as you can. Desire as much of God, as much Grace as possible; seek great things for yourselves here; the more of God you can get, the more blessed are you; and the more Grace you have, the more of God you have. Desire to abound and excel in the Grace of God; get as much Likeness to God, as much Love to God, as much Faith in God, as much sense of the Love, and Goodness and Kindness of God, as your Hearts can hold. The Apostle prays for the Colossians, Chap. 1:9. That they might be filled with the Knowledge of God, in all Wisdom and Spiritual understanding, and Vers. 11. Strengthened with all Might, according to his glorious Power. What is his desire for them, let be your desires for yourselves; that you may be filled with the Knowledge and Grace of God, that you may be as full of God, as Sinners are full of the Devil; that you may be as full of Love, as Sinners are of Lust; that you may be as full of Holiness, as they are of Wickedness. Sinners are full of sin, Acts 13:10. O thou full of all subtlety and guile: The Devil fills their Hearts, Acts 5. Why hath Satan filled your Hearts? Get your Hearts to be emptied of the Devils fullness, and to be filled with all the fullness of God. Let this be your desire, Christians, not to have

something of God, something of the grace of God; let not a little content you; seek to have all grace to abound in you; let this be your Ambition, to get up to be the best of Christians, the chiefest of Saints, the least and lowest in your own esteems, but the highest in the grace of God; seek as much grace as possible.

2. Desire God and his Grace with as much earnestness and intention of Soul as possible. Let your desires be large desires, and let them be ardent desires; let your Hearts burn in Love, and burn in Holy desires after God; let this be the one thing you desire, Psal. 27:4. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord, and behold the beauty of the Lord; here Note, 1. God and all the things of God are but one thing, and our desire after all these, is our desiring but one thing; In desiring God, we desire the grace of God, and the means of grace, and the delights and comforts of God; and our desiring of grace and the things of God, is our desiring God; to desire God and to desire grace is one and the same thing. 2. The Saints desiring after God and his grace, are strong desires; the fixing of the desires upon one thing, notes the intention of our desires; when the whole Stream runs in one Channel, and towards one point, it runs more strongly; when the Heart is divided betwixt many things, God hath something of the desire, and the World also hath its part and share with God, its Motions are the more weakly towards him.

O stir up and quicken your desires after God, and that they may be quickened into the more strong desires, unite them, let all your desires be after this one thing, the grace and good will of the Lord.

Christians, let me ask you, What would you have? What is it you desire? O let the Lord be my God; let me have grace from the Lord; but what of God, how much of the grace of God would content you? It may be some of you would answer, O! If it were never so little; if I could have Faith, though it were but as a grain of Mustard-Seed; if I could get anything of God in my Heart, if by the grace of God in me, this Heart of mine might be but as a bruised Reed, and smoking Flax,

if I might get anything that God would not despise, this should satisfy me; 'It is true, the least degree of saving grace, the least Beam of the Divine Light, the first springing of the Life of God in us, the least Spark of his Holy Image, our desires should be so far fixed on this, that nothing short of this, nothing short of the truth of Grace, should in the least suffice us; and we should be thankful for the very first grace, if we should never have anymore, or rise no higher. But are there not some that would have this, and care for no more; that bound and limit their desires to the first and lowest degrees of grace? This desire is not the desire of the Children of God; thou mayest go to Hell with such desires after God: he that desires not to be perfectly Holy, is not sincerely Holy.

Do you desire God? Do you desire grace? Stir up and enlarge your desires; let those narrow Hearts open their Mouths wide; be covetous Christians, covet much, and covet earnestly these best of gifts; say with the Psalmist, This one thing I desire; nothing but God, nothing but grace, take Corn and Wine who will, take the Gold and the Silver who will, let the Lord God be mine, and that shall suffice me. Desire God only, and follow after God fully, as Psalm 63:8. My Soul followeth hard after thee. Friends, you have some Wishes, and some weaker desires after the Lord, O quicken up these fainty Hearts; look oftener before you, how worthy the Lord is of all your desires; what a Jewel, what a Treasure the grace of God is; look oftener Heaven-ward, get a sight of God and his glorious Treasures, live more in the Contemplation of his glory and goodness; it is the sight of the Object that must kindle and quicken desires; you that have cold Hearts Heaven-ward, 'tis a sign your Eye is little in Heaven. Believe it, some clearer views of the Love, and Goodness, and Holiness, and Kindness, and Glory of the Lord, would whet your Appetites, would put Life into those dull Desires, would make you hungry Souls, and thirsty Souls, and longing Souls; O look oftener upward; dwell in the Mountain of Spices; get some Taste and Relish of the goodness of God, by being more constantly conversant with him, and this will set abroach all your Vessels, your Souls would stream forth in the Words and Sighs of the Psalmist, Psal. 42:1. As the Hart panteth after the

Water Brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God. My Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.

2. Curb and limit your desires after the good things below, and desire them no more than you should: particularly

1. Desire not over much of them. The best Food, the best Physic, if we take too much of it, becomes hurtful and pernicious; when the Stomach is overcharged, and so when the Heart is overcharged, it surfeits, and suffereth prejudice by what it hath received. That Prayer of Agur, Prov. 30:8, should be the desire of Christians, Feed me with Food convenient; a convenient Habitation, a competent Portion of these Earthly things should be the Proportion of our desires. O, if Men knew what were enough, and when they had enough, it would prevent the extravagancy of our desires, Jer. 45:5. Seekest thou great things to thyself? Seek them not. Thou canst not bear great things; great Possessions are great Temptations. Seek no greater things than thou canst bear; a Ship that hath more than its Load, will sink and drown. The Journey or Voyage of the Heart is upwards, you are Travelling Heaven-wards; this Earth, the more you have of it, presses you down-ward, and hinders your ascending. O how much nearer Heaven might some of our Hearts have ascended, how much nearer to God and Glory might we have gotten, had we not been clogged with the things of this Earth? Some Men are too Rich, and too Prosperous in this World, to be Spiritually-minded. Great Estates bring great Cares, and encumbering Business, so that they cannot be at liberty, nor at leisure to think on God, or their Souls. Desire only so much of the World, as is best for you; and that proportion is best for you, which will help you Heaven-ward, and least hinder you; know what is a competency, and desire no more. That's not a competency which is enough to satisfy your Appetite; you will never say you have enough, if you will stay till your Appetite say, It is enough; this is like those two Daughters of the Horse-Leach, Prov. 30:15, that still cry, Give, give; Get, get, and never say, It is enough. That is not a competency which will satisfy your Appetite, but that

which will comfortably serve your necessities; know what is a competency, and desire no more.

2. Desire them not over earnestly; be not over hungry and greedy Souls; desire but a competency, and desire it but moderately; that you may not over-desire these Earthly good things, do not over-prize them. Carry it towards the good things below, as Sinners carry it towards Christ, and the good things above; how do Sinners carry it towards Christ? They make light of him, Isa. 53:2. They see no beauty in him, that they should desire him. See as little beauty in the World, as Sinners see in Christ; make as light of the good things of the Earth as they do of the good things of Heaven, and then your desires will be as cold after these things as theirs are after Christ; O if Christians did desire this Earth no more than Sinners desire Heaven, how mortified would all their Earthly desires be.

Mortify your inordinate desires after the World; quench your thirst after the good things thereof, or else these desires will mortify and quench your thirst after God.

Christians, you would fain love God more; it is your Affliction that your Affections to things above are so dull and so flat, that you have no more strong and working desires Heaven-ward; abate your desires to things below, and then they will rise more to the things above; never look to love God more than you do, till you love the World less than you do. Do ye mean to hold up at this height, in your Carnal desires? Will you not set Bounds to your Earthly Appetites? Then count upon it, God is like to have little of your Hearts; of so great consequence is the bounding and abating of your Worldly desires, that if ever you would love, or desire, or seek God more than you do, you [must] strike Sail, and drive on more moderately, and more mortifiedly towards the World.

Love this World less, and you will desire it less; desire it less, and you will seek it less; seek the World less, and you are like to be in good earnest Seekers of God.

Quench your thirst, Friends, quench your thirst after these stolen Waters: drink deep Draughts of the Water of Life, and you will no longer thirst so after these puddle Waters, Joh. 4:14. Whosoever drinketh of the Water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; that is, after these Carnal Things. You who have such thirsty Souls after the Waters of your own Cisterns, 'tis a sign that you are little at the Fountain of Living Waters. Thou hast not drank of the Rock of the Wilderness, who so lustest after the Rivers of Egypt. Christians, dwell more at the Springhead, drink of the Fountain, let out your desires more after God; Taste more of the sweetness of Christ; let down your Pitchers into the Wells of Salvation, fetch in more of that Living-Water; lie more at the Breasts, desire more the sincere Milk of the Word, and suck in that Milk. Drink more of the Wine that is prepared in the Kingdom of God; my meaning is, live more with God, feed upon Christ, delight yourselves more in God, solace and satisfy yourselves more in Communion with God, acquaint yourselves more inwardly and experimentally with the sweetness of Religion, and this will be the best way to quench your thirst, and abate your desires after these Carnal Things. Desire them still you may, and you will, as far forth as they are good for you, and as far as your Heavenly Father sees them needful for you; but there will be an end of your greedy, and ravenous, and insatiable desires; if you desire God as much as you should, you will desire the World no more than you should.

3. Crush your desires after the evil and hurtful things below, so as not to desire them at all. The Pleasures of Sin, and the Poms and Pride of this Life, and the Gains of Unrighteousness, desire them not at all. These can never be good for you, and therefore are not to be desired. It cannot be good to grow Rich by Fraud or Oppression, they are cursed Gains that come in that way; the Pompous Pride of the World, and the sinful Sports and Pleasures of the World, these are the Bane and Poison of Souls; a Cup of Poison is not more Mortal to the Body than these Cups of Fornication or sinful Pleasures are to the Soul; and therefore desires after these must not be limited or moderated, but be crushed and crucified. I told you before, of two Instruments of Government, a Spur, and a Curb: and the needfulness

and use of these in the Government of your Desires, you have seen in the two former Directions; the need of a Spur to quicken our desires after God and his Grace; of a Curb, to restrain and limit our Desires after the good things of the World; and now I shall tell you of a Third Instrument of Government, and that is a Cross or a Gibbet, to Execute and Crucify our Desires after the Evils of the World: what Government can be without Laws? And what are Laws without Penalties? And what are Penalties if there be no Execution? There must be Gallows and Gibbets set up to cut off Malefactors, or there's like to be but poor Government. The desires after these Evil things of the World, are Malefactors that must be cut off and Crucified, Gal. 6:14. I am Crucified to the World by the Cross of Christ; that is, my sinful Love of the World, my lusting after the World; those three Worldly Lusts in special, the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lusts of the Eye, and the Pride of Life, these are all Crucified by the Cross of Christ. Moderate your Desires after these good things of the World, but kill your desires after these Evil things. Dost thou desire the sinful Pleasures of the World? Art thou for a wanton or voluptuous Life? Dost thou desire the Gain of Unrighteousness that comes in by Fraud or Oppression, by shortening or detaining the Hire of thy poor Laborers? Art thou for growing Rich, by straitening, or starving, or ruining thy poor Workmen? Dost thou affect a Proud, or a Pompous Life? O Kill and Crucify all such Desires; Nail them to the Cross; hang up these Malefactors; let there not be a Lust left in thee after these wickedness's, but bring it forth to Execution; let there be no such Desires found alive in your Hearts. Leave it to the Epicures and Fornicators of the World to be Sons of Pleasure; leave it to the Horse-leaches of the Earth, to be Blood-Suckers, to thirst after such Gain as is wrung out of the Bowels of the Poor; leave it to the Butterflies, and Wantons of the World, to affect Mimical and Pompous Gaudry; let Christians know no such Desires, much less allow them, and foster them, where they feel them working and rising.

And as I hinted to you but now, know that the two last Directions, Curb and Crush, will be easiest to be Observed, if the first, quicken

Desires after God and Grace, be diligently prosecuted. And therefore here I in special exhort you to give all diligence, enlarge and whet your Appetites after God and the things above. Remember what I told you but now; acquaint yourselves with God, live more in the Contemplation of God, live more in Communion with God, get you into the inside of Religion; keep you close by God, keep you near to Christ, let your desire be to your Father, let your desire be to your Husband; be able to say with the Church, Isa. 26:8,9. The desire of my Soul is to thy Name, and to the remembrance of thee, with my Soul have I desired thee in the Night, yea, with my Spirit within me will I seek thee early; desire the Lord, till you can delight in the Lord; delight yourselves in the Lord, and then you will despise those desires of small things that take up the Hearts of Worldlings. Shall I forsake my Fatness, saith the Olive-Tree? Shall I forsake my sweetness, saith the Fig-Tree, and become King over the Trees? Judges 9:9,11. Shall I forsake the Fatness of the Olive, the sweetness of the Fig-Tree, and feed my Soul on these Brambles and wild Vines, which are the Lusts of Foolish Worldlings? He that hath drank Old Wine, will not desire the New, for he saith the Old is better. God hath better things for you to desire; better Wine, better Pleasures, better Inheritances for you; O live so with God, live so upon Christ, that you may get you a Taste of his better Wine, a Taste of his sweeter Pleasures, a Taste of the Fatness of Heaven, and then you will the more despise this Earth and the Fulness thereof.

You now that are for Government in your Hearts, for the Government of your desires, take this course for thus Governing of them; desire God and the things above as much as you should, desire the good things below no more than you should, desire the evil things below not at all; get your desires after Lawful things to be moderated, your desires after sinful things to be Crucified; put Wings to your Holy desires, put Clogs and Fetters upon your Natural desires, and up to the Cross, to the Gibbet, with these sinful desires; and herein have you set up the Lord to be the King in your Hearts, and brought your very Appetites to be subject to him.

3. For our Joys; for the due raising and limiting of these, I shall show,

CHAP. XVIII

The Object of Joy

1. The Object of Joy, is the same with the Object of Love and Desire. He that Loves, whatever it be, if he hath it not, he desireth it, if he hath it he rejoiceth; he that loves God, if he can hear such a Word from God, I am Thine, that's a joyful Word, then he can rejoice in God; he that loveth Money, or the gains of this World, if he hath it not, he desireth it, if he hath it he rejoiceth; his Money is his Joy, his Estate is his Joy, such a joy as 'tis, a poor flashy Joy, yet Joy there is to him. The Woman in the Parable, Luke 15:9, that had lost her piece of Silver, when She had found it, She calls her Neighbors together to rejoice with her; sure such a Woman loved Money well. Joy arises,

1. Originally from its Object, or the Thing loved. It is God that is the Fountain of Divine Joy; thence it springs and comes in; therefore the Apostle prays, Rom. 15:13. The God of Hope fill you with all Joy. There are Three ways by which our Joy in God is raised. 1. By Contemplation: by Contemplating of God, we come to see and find out what matter of Joy there is in God; it brings the goodness and kindness, the satisfying and ravishing Excellencies of God to our sight; those to whom the glorious Lord is as a barren Wilderness, or Land of Darkness, as the expression is Jer. 2:31, it is either from their Ignorance, or their want of Contemplating of God. It is a sign thou art a blind Soul, and knowest not God, or that thou art a Stranger to Divine Meditation: Thou lookest little Heaven-ward, thou dost not send up thy Thoughts in search for God, who yet sayest, Where is

that Joy? Where is that Blessedness? Where is that Joy? Look more diligently in the Face of God, let thy Soul dwell in the Study and Contemplation of his infinite goodness; thou hast a glass before thee, the glass of the Word, wherein his glory shineth, look more into that glass, and Meditate much upon what that Word revealeth of the Excellencies of God, and then thou shalt see his Glory, and Taste his Joy. 2. Expectation and Hope; therefore we Read of Rejoicing in Hope, Rom. 5:2. When Contemplation hath discovered the Blessedness that is in God, then Hope lays hold on it: this Blessedness may be mine, saith the Soul, and I have good Hope it may be mine, and in that Hope I joy. What Malefactor, that is in fear of Death for his Offences, that should be told there is yet hope of thy Pardon, hope that thou mayest live, but would rejoice in that Hope? What poor Man, that is in want, that should have Tidings of a Rich Inheritance that was falling to him, but his Hope would make him to Sing for Joy? Dost thou hear of the unsearchable Riches of Christ, of the Treasures of everlasting Joy, that that are in the Lord God, and hast thou Hope that these will be thy Riches, and thy Treasures? How canst thou but rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God? 3. Fruition, or the enjoying of the Object loved; and this is it which brings the fullest Joy; Fruition stands, 1. In our Actual Possession of the Object; when we have what we hoped for and there is a double Possession of God, that the Saints have in this Life: 1. A Possession by Faith, 1 Joh. 5:12. He that hath the Son, hath Life; that is, he that believeth in Christ, hath Christ; his Faith puts him into Possession, and from this, the Possession of Faith, Joy followeth, Rom. 15:13. The God of Hope fill you with all Joy and Peace in believing. 2. A Possession by Sense; when we Taste that the Lord is gracious, when we feel the comfortable refreshing's of his loving kindness; when the beams of his Light, and the Streaming's of his Love, shine upon and warm our Hearts; when his Light Shines into our Darkness, and gives us the Knowledge of the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 4:8. And when his Love is shed abroad into our Hearts by the Holy Ghost which he hath given us, Rom. 5:5. When we see how lovely the Lord is, and feel that he loveth us.

2. In the satisfaction of our Hearts with this Possession; when we are pleased, and delighted, and satisfied with his goodness. A full satisfaction of the Heart will not be, till hereafter, Psal. 17:15. When I awake I shall be satisfied; and therefore our fullness of Joy is reserved till then; but satisfaction to such a Degree there is upon our present Possession, as gives us a kind of present Fruition.

2. This Joy arises, as from the Object, so immediately from the very Act of Loving. Joy ariseth from love, 1. By way of immediate resultancy; there is a great Pleasure in Love; as there is bitterness in grief and sorrow, so there is sweetness in Love; this very Blossom of Love casteth forth such a fragrancy, as no Man knows but he that hath it. It is a Sweet and a Pleasant thing to live In the love of God. He that loves God, and feels that he loves him, and he hath him whom he loves, cannot but rejoice in him, 1 Pet. 1:8. Whom having not seen ye love, and believing ye rejoice with Joy unspeakable and full of glory: There we have, 1. A Christians love to God, whom having not seen ye love. 2. His Possession of what he loves, believing; Believing, is as I said before, getting Possession; and then 3. The Joy that followeth, ye rejoice, &c.

2. By way of Reflection; when a Christian upon his review of this his love to Christ, perceives that he loves him in sincerity, this is to him a Token of Christ's love to him. Dost thou see, dost thou feel that thou lovest Christ? This thy love to Christ is a Token that he hath sent thee into thy Heart, to tell thee that he loveth thee. And when thine Heart can say, I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine; the Lord is [my] God, [my] Savior, [my] Portion and Inheritance, canst thou say so? Then thou wilt add with the Psalmist, Psal. 16:6-9. The Lines are fallen to me in a Pleasant Place, and I have a goodly Heritage, therefore mine Heart is glad, and my Glory rejoiceth. Thou wilt show me the path of Life; in thy presence is fullness of Joy, and at thy Right hand there are Pleasures for evermore.

And as it is with Divine Joy, the Object whereof is God, so is it, in a poor and pitiful manner, with Earthly Joy, the Object whereof is the

good things below: This Joy is raised from our Contemplating of Worldly things, and those Carnal Delights they will yield, and thereby sucking out such Juice as they have, for our Carnal hearts to feed upon; by expectation and hope, that these things that we may get, get Money, get us Estates, and the comforts of them, and also by our Fruition of them, when we get them; our loving and taking the delight and contentment of them, and according to what we have of these things, and the Degree of our Love to them, such is the joy that ariseth to us from them.

2. I shall give you some Directions for the right raising and due limiting of your Joy.

1. Rejoice in the Lord, and let your joy in the Lord, 1. Bear some Proportion, as much as those narrow Hearts can reach to, to that fullness, and those Everlasting Treasures of infinite Love and Goodness which are in God for you. I could tell you something of that satisfaction and rest which your Souls shall one day enjoy in God, from the Word of God; and the Experiences of some of his Saints, will tell you much more; but when your Eyes shall come to see God, then you will say, That one half was not told me. If some drops of this Joy, let fall upon the Saints here on Earth, have sweetened all the Waters of Marah, turned their Prisons into Palaces, yea, their very Stakes and Gibbets into Triumphal Chariots; if a few drops of that Joy have been so sweet, and so powerful, what will the Rivers of his Pleasures be? As the Apostle, 1 Joh. 1:4. These things I write, so these things I speak, that your Joy may be full. Rejoice in the Lord, and let the Joy of the Lord be your Strength; let this Joy be the Strength of your Hearts, and the Strength or Top of all your Joys.

2. Let your Joy in God be raised, 1. From the Evidence of your Interest in God at present, from your sincerity in the grace of God, and your Union with Christ. You must be in Christ 'ere ever you can rejoice in Christ Jesus; what will it be to Joy in God, if God be none of yours? Satisfy not yourselves with mistaken Joys. There is the Joy of the Hypocrite; some there are, who upon some light touches of the

Word of God upon them, and some little change it makes, are all on a sudden wrapped up into Ecstasies of Joy; though still they remain short of the grace of God, yet they seem to be transported with the Joy of God; such Joy often proves to be but as a Flash of Lightning, which comes in on a sudden, and then vanisheth into greater Darkness, Job 20:5. The Joy of the Hypocrite is but for a Moment; it comes on a sudden, and in a great Flash, and on a sudden it is gone again. The Joy of the Saints is not so sudden, but it is lasting; it is not such a glorious Flash, but is solid and substantial; like a deep River, that makes no great Noise, when the shallow Brooks make a greater Bubbling.

See that the Foundation of your Joy be laid in Peace, and the Foundation of your Peace be laid in Grace. Get an Interest in Christ, soundness of Heart towards God, and sincerity of Love to Christ, see to it that you be his own, that you be not Hypocrites and Hangby's upon Christ, but his real Members and Hearty Disciples. Thou rejoicest in God, thou rejoicest in Christ Jesus, but art thou of the Circumcision? Of a Circumcised and Sanctified Heart. Dost thou worship God in the Spirit, as the Apostles expressions are, Phil. 3:3. Is thine Heart with the Lord? Dost thou love him with thine Heart, and cleave to him with thine Heart, and serve him in thy Spirit, in thine Inwards, and all the Powers of thy Soul? If thou art of the Circumcision, and thus worshippest God in the Spirit, which are the Properties of sincere Disciples, then thou mayest rejoice: Beware of trusting to the most Elevated Joys, that you seem any of you to have felt in Religion, and the Exercises thereof; you may seem to have much of the Joy of God, who have nothing of the Grace of God. Thou mayest carry such Joys with thee to the Grave, and they may drop down with thee into Hell, and be swallowed up of everlasting Sorrow; judge not of your Religion by your Joys, but judge of your Joys by your soundness in Religion. See then that thou art gotten beyond a Hypocrite, before thou meddle with the Joy of the Saints.

2. From your Hope of the Glory of God. Rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God, Rom. 5:2. Thou that art a real Christian, it may be thou hast

little sense of the sweetness of Religion; thou goest heavily under thy Burthens, the Burthen of thy Corruption and Infirmities; thou livest much in the Dark, the Light of the Lord is within the veil, and thou canst perceive but very small glimmerings of it; thou goest heavily on thy way, hungering and thirsting, and fearing and fainting, and mourning over thine uncomfortable condition; yet lift up the Hands that hang down; yea lift up your Heads, you disconsolate ones; though the Light, and the Love, and the Comforts, and the Kindnesses of God be veiled from thine Eye, yet let thine Hope enter into that within the veil, Psal 42:11. Why art thou cast down, O my Soul? Why art thou disquieted within me? Why, how can it be otherwise? Wherewithal may I be cheered and comforted? Why, Hope in God; Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him who is the Light

Let these two Directions go both together. 1. Let the Foundation of Joy be laid in sincerity of Grace; I can never bid thee rejoice, till thou be persuaded to be a Hearty Christian. 2. Let your supply of the want of Joy in Sense, be made up from the Joy of Hope: If thou art a Stranger to all present Joy, yet if thou art not a Stranger from Love, thou hast this Hope to cheer thee, that thou shalt verily see the goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living.

3. From your Increases in the Grace of God. They are ordinarily the Stronger and more grown Christians, who can sincerely rejoice in God. Younger Christians are often Mourners, and do but go on lamenting after God. It's true, there are some Young Converts, or that seem to be such, whose Joys meet them at the very entry of Christianity; who at the very first being wrought upon, seem to be all in a Flame of Love and Joy, Jer. 2:2. I remember the kindness of thy Youth, and the Love of thine Espousals; who have a bright Morning of it, and a beautiful and fair Sun-rising; 'twere well if it would hold; but after a while, Clouds gather, and it is darker with them at Noon, than it was in the Morning; their Joy sinks, and their Love sinks; Clouds of Corruption overspread both their Joys and their Hopes. However it may be with some Beginners, (and it is never so well, as

they think, if it do not hold) however it may be with some Beginners, yet ordinarily, they are only the grown Christians, who are Partakers of solid substantial Joy; for a great part of their time it is as Zech. 14:7. It is neither Light nor Dark with them, neither Night nor perfect Day, but in the Evening there shall be Light. In our first time, it must be said only, as Psal. 97:11. Light is sown for the Righteous, and joyful gladness for the upright in Heart; this Joy is sown in Sorrows, and sown in Tears, but as we grow up, what was sown in our Infancy, breaks forth and shines in our Age.

Friends, dote not too much on your Morning Infant Joys, they may vanish into Darkness. It is the solid Joy of the grown Christian, that is usually the abiding Joy; therefore if you would not be put off with some short fits of Joy, if you would have that standing Joy which no Man can take from you, set your Hearts to it, to increase in the grace of God; be thriving Christians, grow in Grace, and grow in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and then your Joy shall abound and abide: Friends, you now go on drooping, and doubting, and fearing; you have many a sad day of it, but would you see good days? Would you have your Cloudy to become clearer Days? Would you have more Sun-shine upon your Hearts? Then get the Sun of Righteousness to rise higher in you. Misty Mornings, as the Sun riseth higher, the Mists are dispelled, and the Day groweth clear at Noon, which was so Dark in the Morning.

Christians, how many Arguments have I used with you, to persuade you to press on after an Increase in Grace, after a more Spiritual and Heavenly Frame of Heart and Life? What success have former persuasions had? Are you grown? Are you improved? Or do you set your Hearts upon it? Are you reaching forward? Or do you not contentedly keep at a stand, and seem to grow backward, and lose your former Life and Vigor? What shall I say to you? What may I do for you, to Nurse you up to higher Statures? We live in a declining Age; everywhere there are sad complaints, that Religion is at a stand, and growing to decay: How is it with you? Are there any lively Souls among you? Do you get ground, does your Light break forth? Do

your ways, as the Path of the Just, Prov. 4:18. Shine more and more toward the perfect Day? Friends, pray inquire, one by one, Is it thus with me? Is it thus with me? If I might, but prevail with you, to set your Hearts to it, O what a Goshen might we be, in comparison of the Dark places of the Earth? Whilest there is such sad Darkness in most places of the Land, yet, in this Goshen there would be Light. O might we see more of the Light of Grace in you, we should surely see much of the Light of Joy. If the Soul of Hearty Christianity might gather more strength within you, and bring forth more Fruit without; if you would tread upon this Earth, blow off these Ashes, blow up the Coals, shake off this sluggish sleepiness of Heart; if we could get these cold Hearts to be warmed once, would it not be a Joy and rejoicing to us? Be persuaded, Friends, to set to sowing more joy for your Selves. Whilest Sinners are Sowing Tears for themselves, and Sorrows and Lamentations, (this they do in their Carnal Merriments:) Carnal Mirth is but the Seed of Sorrow and Misery; as Light is Sown for the Righteous Mourners, so Darkness is Sown for rejoicing Sinners, and their rejoicing is the Seed of that Darkness; and when they come to suffer everlasting Misery, they do then but Reap the Fruit of their sinful Jollity: whilst Sinners are Sowing Tears, let Christians set to Sowing Joy to themselves. Do what you can to make your last Days your best Days, and every Day brighter than other. Do not barely wish it were better, and hope for better, but work for better Days; desire more earnestly, pray more heartily, look more wishtly, and labor more painfully for a visible and sensible improving and advancing in the Power and Spirit of Religion and Godliness, and then your Hearts shall rejoice, and your Joy shall no Man take from you.

Beloved, I have but two Works to do among you all, whereunto I labor, and strive with you in the Gospel; but these two works I have to do; to fetch in those that are without, and to fetch up those that are within. Sinners, you that are yet without, without Christ, without the Covenant of God, that are yet in your Sins, in your Ignorance, in your Impenitence and hardness of Heart, Strangers from Christ, and Aliens from the Life of God, my work with you is, to Preach you into

Christ; to Preach you in by Repentance; I travail in Birth with you, that Christ may be formed in you; might I prevail in this Work, might anymore among this Company of poor Sinners of you, be brought to Repentance, and be Converted, O what Joy would there be in this, Luke 15. There's Joy in Heaven over one Sinner that repenteth, and there would be the Foundation of Joy laid in your own Hearts. Come Sinners, come to Christ, the Fountain of your Joy, and your Hopes; come and be humbled with Christ, and you shall be exalted with him; come and mourn with Christ, and you shall be comforted; come and Repent, and you shall also rejoice.

But if I should not prosper in this work, if Sinners should continue to be hardened, and refuse anymore of them to come in; if I should not fetch more in, yet let me fetch up those that are within; you that are come in, come up higher. Stand not always at the Threshold, content not yourselves with the lowest place; Friends, sit up higher, ascend, ascend; ascend in your Aims, ascend in your Desires, get to be better Christians daily, more experienced Christians, more mortified Christians, more lively and Active and fruitful Christians, and then look for it, you shall be more joyful Christians; get you to be more strong in the Lord, and the Joy of the Lord shall be your Strength.

2. Rejoice not in Iniquity. Charity doth not, and therefore Christians must not rejoice in Iniquity, 1 Cor. 13:6. Let not your sin make you Merry; if it does, that which now makes you merry, will shortly make you mad, with anguish and indignation at your own folly. Merry Sinners are all Fools, and some of these Fools will be always laughing, but we must say with Solomon, Eccles. 2:2. I said of such laughter, thou art madness.

3. Rejoice not over much in any of the good things below; we may rejoice in our outward good things, James 1:9. Let the Brother of low degree, rejoice in that he is exalted; that is, let the Poor rejoice, when he is made Rich; Poverty is an Affliction, and Riches are a Mercy, and such a Mercy as we may rejoice in. But though we may rejoice in

every outward Mercy, yet we may not rejoyce overmuch in them; particularly for the limits of this Joy, they must be such as these:

1. Joy not in any of these good things as if they were your happiness; they may be Means to our happiness, but must not be made the Matter of our happiness; to make our Estates our happiness, is to make them our God, and the way to make us miserable; he is a miserable Rich Man, who maketh his Riches his Happiness.

2. Joy not so much in them, as to rejoyce ever the less in God. You have so much need of God, in the greatest Plenty and Prosperity, as you have when you have nothing; and you should so much thirst after the Joy of God in your greatest Worldly Joy, as in your Sorrow. Take not your Worldly Joy instead of Joy in God; think not to supply your want of Joy in God, by the abounding of Worldly Joy. You may as well feed your Souls with Meat and Drink, you may as well provide for your Souls by your Money or Estates, as comfort them by that Joy that ariseth out of these Earthly things. Souls must have a God, the Comfort of God, the Joy of God to refresh them, and support them; that Soul is a Carnal Soul, that can feed upon Carnal Joys; you nevertheless need the Joy of God, for any Worldly Joy, and you must look to it, that your Worldly Joys be never to that height, as to lessen your esteem of the Joy of the Lord. The Joy of God will quench your thirst after the World; and then the Joy of the World exceedeth it's Bounds, when it quencheth your thirst after God, and the light of his Countenance. Thou art Rich, thou art full, and prosperest in the World, thy Bull gendereth and faileth not, thy Cow calveth, &c. thy Oxen are strong to labor, thy Sheep bring forth Thousands, and ten Thousands in the Streets; and now thou hast Hearts Ease, and rejoicest in thy Portion; but how standest thou now in respect to God? Is God ever the less needed? Is God ever the less loved? Is the Joy of God still thy chief Joy? Or dost thou not even forget that thou hast a God, or a Soul, and leave it to them that have nothing below to rejoyce in God that is above. What thinkest thou of thyself? Hath this Earth eaten up Heaven? Hath the Joy of this Earth swallowed up the Joy of the Lord? Sure it hath transgressed its Bounds. It may be thou

wilt say as the Prophet, Hab. 3:17,18, and it is well if thou canst say so, Although the Fig-Tree doth not Blossom; &c— Yet will I rejoice in the Lord, and Joy in the God of my Salvation. When thou art Poor and in Want, and hast nothing left thee in the World to comfort thine Heart in, then thou wilt look to the Lord, and he shall be thy Joy and thy Comfort; but how is it with thee when the Fig-Tree doth Blossom, when thou livest in the abundance of all things? Dost thou then feel thou hast as much need of a God? Dost thou then take as much Joy in God? Canst thou say of all here below, These are miserable Comforters, if God be not my Comfort; these are miserable Pleasures, if God be not my Joy? This is something, and thus it should be.

3. Rejoice with Trembling. That's the Psalmist 's Counsel, Psal. 2:11. Serve the Lord with Fear, and rejoice with Trembling; in allusion to that, let me say, Seek the World with Fear, and rejoice in the World with Trembling; let fear be a Bridle to prevent the excess of your Worldly Joy. Fear, what should we fear? Why fear, lest you should forget God; lest that which is your Joy become your Snare, and turn you aside from God; lest your Joy in the World, should prove Worldly Joy, and serve for nothing but to feed and heighten your Worldly Lusts; fear lest this Joy of the World should do the same by you, as sometimes the Sorrows of the World do, which the Apostle says, 2 Cor. 7. Worketh Death; fear lest it kill your Souls; there is nothing that does more corrupt and endanger the Soul, than Carnal Mirth, Eccle. 11:9. Rejoice O young Man in thy Youth, &c. but what followeth? Know that for all these things, God will bring thee to Judgment; that is, to Condemnation. These Joys drag the Soul to the Bar of Justice, and thence to Execution in the Fire. There is scarce anything that does Ripen Men faster for Ruin, than the Mirth of the World, Job 21:10,11. Their Bull gendereth, and faileth not, there's the matter of their Joy; their Children Dance, they take the Timbrel and the Harp, and rejoice at the sound of the Organ; there's the Measure and Expression of their Joy; they are so lifted up, that they must have the Music, and their Dancing, to heighten their Mirth; but what's the

end? In a Moment they go down to the Grave, and thence into the Bottomless Pit.

O the Madness of this Merry World! That can see nothing in God to Joy them in, and yet can rejoice in a thing of naught; that undo themselves by their own Felicity, their Joy and Mirth: Joy is the sweetest Flower that grows in that Garden, the Heart of Man; and this Flower must be the Poison to kill them, and is never sweet to them but when it grows up out of a Dung-hill, out of their Fleshly Lusts. What Multitudes have surfeited, and Died of their Carnal Mirth; and yet foolish Souls will never fear it, but this must be their only Heaven, which leads to Hell; what do these Carnal Joys serve for, but to corrupt Men first, and then to confound Men? Worldly sorrow it's said, worketh Death, but it may be said of Worldly Sorrow, and Mirth, as of David and Saul; Saul hath slain his Thousands, and David his ten Thousands: Worldly Sorrow hath slain many, but nothing so many as Carnal Mirth; whilst that Saints wade through their Temporal Sorrows to everlasting Joy, Sinners pass through their Worldly Joy to everlasting Sorrows, Isa. 50:11. Behold ye that kindle your Fires, &c. Here, 1. Sinners have their Fires; that is, to comfort and cheer and warm their Hearts; these their comforting Fires are their Joy and Jollities. 2. Sinners Fires are of their own kindling; their comforts come not from God, but they raise them up to themselves; they comfort themselves, and cheer themselves, but are not comforted of God. 3. Sinners Fires are all but Sparks; a Spark will not warm, and will not last; the Triumphant of the Wicked is short, and the Joy of the Hypocrite is but for a Moment. 4. Sinners live in their own Light; in the Light of their own Fires and Sparks. Walk in the Light of your Fire—that's all the Light you have, it is all Dark to them from above, the Sun shines not, the Candle of the Lord gives them no light; God speaks Terror and Trouble to them, but they speak Peace to themselves; their own Joy and Mirth is all they have to comfort and cheer them. 5. Sinners Light serves for nothing, but to Light them down to Darkness. Walk in your Light, this shall ye have of mine Hand, ye shall lie down in Sorrow. Sinners, how Light soever your Walk be, how Merry soever

your Lives be, yet what is your lying down like to be? He is a Wise Man, that taketh care, that how uncomfortable or weary soever his Way and his Walk be, yet he may have a comfortable lying down. Psal. 37:37. Mark the Just Man, and behold the Perfect Man, the End of that Man is Peace. But O ye Jolly and Merry Souls, what is your End like to be? Remember your lying down; when your Hearts are Merry within you, when you live such Laughing and Sporting Lives; in the midst of your Cups of Pleasure, your Music and Dancing, your Feasting and Sporting, and the Jollity of your Reveling and Rioting, think with yourselves, What doth all this lead to? When these Merry days are over, what a Night am I like to have of it? When the Candles of your Worldly Prosperity are Burnt down, in what a stinking Snuff will they go out? What a stink will they be in your Nostrils? When your Fires and your Sparks will Light you no longer, then they will burn you; your Mirth will burn you, your Pleasures will burn you, your abused Prosperity, your Riches, your Money, your Plenty, and the Joy that you now take in them, will burn you, and they will burn to the bottom of Hell. Will you yet rejoice in these Carnal things? Rejoice with Trembling; Tremble to think what the End of these things will be. Prov. 14:13. In the midst of Laughter the Heart is Sorrowful, and the End of this Mirth is heaviness; if the former of these [in the midst of Laughter the Heart is sorrowful, &c.] should not be true, if you should Laugh and rejoice, and know no Sorrow, if it should be with you as with those Merry ones, Job 21:9. Their Houses are far from Fear; and your Hearts should be as far from Sorrow, as your Houses from Fear; if you should have all Sweet, and no Bitter; all Sun-shine, and no Clouds; if the first Part should not be true upon you, if in the midst of Laughter your Hearts should not be sorrowful; yet, the latter shall certainly be true, there shall be no avoiding of that; the End of your Mirth shall be heaviness; Hold up while you will, maintain the Mirth and the Jollity of your Hearts while you can, the End of this Mirth will be heaviness; you shall lie down in Sorrow.

Sinners, what will ye choose? What would a Wise Man choose? A Merry Life, or a Joyful Death? Which do ye think in your Judgments

and Consciences is the best choice, to Die in Peace, to Die in Joy, or to Die in Sorrow? How would you have it with you when you come to Die? Would you then find, that all your Sorrow is gone, and now your Joy is come? Or would you be forced then to say, Now farewell all my Mirth, I have seen my last of it, and henceforth nothing but Sorrow and Anguish forever? Dost thou not tremble to think, What if this should be my Case? Know it for a Truth, there's no avoiding it; if you go on to live this Merry Jolly Life, this shall be thy End, thou must lie down in Sorrow.

Christians, envy not the World's Mirth, nor let your Hearts lust after it; you have other Joys than their crackling Thorns will yield; you have your Sorrows while they have their Mirth, but you have this advantage of the World: 1. You have Joy in your Sorrows; as in the midst of Laughter the Heart is sad, so in the midst of your Sorrows your Hearts may be Joyful. 2. Your Sorrows shall End in Joy; this shall you have of the Hand of your God, you shall lie down in Peace; You that Sow in Tears, shall reap in Joy, Psal. 126:6. Whilest those that Sow in Mirth, shall Reap in Tears; you that go on your Way weeping, whilst they go on their Way Laughing: yet mark the End of both; Isa. 65:13,14. Behold, however it be now, behold how it shall be hereafter; How shall it be? My Servants shall Eat, but ye shall be Hungry; my Servants shall Drink, but ye shall be Thirsty; my Servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed; my Servants shall sing for Joy of Heart, but ye shall cry for Sorrow of Heart, and shall howl for vexation of Spirit, and ye shall leave your Name for a Curse to my chosen, for the Lord God shall slay thee. Now your Enemies Eat, and some of you are a Hungry, &c. But think how it will be in the Day when the Scales be turned; when the Sinners Eating Days, and Drinking Days, and Jolly merry Days are over; and their Hungering Days, and howling Days overtake them; and you that now Hunger and are Sorrowful, shall Eat and Drink and be satisfied with the Joy of the Lord.

O envy not, and meddle not with the sinful Joys of the World; these Strangers shall not meddle with your Joy, Prov. 14:10. Meddle you as

little with theirs; let your God be your Joy; and if he give you any matters of rejoicing in this World, and allow you some Measures of Joy, even in these outward things, yet rejoice with trembling; and let your Fear so moderate your Joy in these lower things, that you do not lash out into that Carnal Mirth, the End whereof is Heaviness. Especially, when the Matters of Worldly Joy increase upon you; you that grow Rich and Prosper in the World, that find the World smiling, and come crowding in upon you, that have even what your Hearts could wish, and then feel your Hearts to be tickled, and pleased and delighted in your Prosperity; then take heed, then fear lest you forget God and your Soul, and neglect and lose the Joy of the Lord, and your care of pleasing the Lord, in your abounding Worldly Joys; and never count any such Joys lawful or safe for you, but such as make you to love the Lord the more, and serve the Lord with more cheerfulness and care. If you do not serve the Lord better and walk with God closer, and bring forth more of the Fruits of Holiness and Righteousness, in more Spirituality and Heavenliness of mind; if you be not some way the better God-wards, and Heaven-wards, in the abundance of all things, than you could be, or than others are, in the want of all things, count that Prosperity greater cause of trembling, than of rejoicing to you.

4. Rejoice not so as to forget your own Sins, or your Brethren's Afflictions.

1. So as not to forget your Sins. 1. Rejoice not so [in the Lord,] as to forget your Sins against God: Your Joy must arise from this, that God hath forgotten them; but though God hath forgotten, you must remember them; they must still stand written in your own Book, though God hath blotted them out of his.

1. Forget not in your Joy the Sins that you are guilty of, that so you may rejoice with Mourning; we are apt in our rejoicing to forget our sins; if we do not remember our sins when we are lifted up in Joy, we are too apt to be puffed up with Pride; Godly sorrow will be of the same use to us in our rejoicing, as Paul 's Thorn in the Flesh, 2 Cor.

12:7, to prevent our being exalted above Measure. That Joy which killeth Godly Sorrow, whilst we are here, what a Divine Tincture soever it seems to have, 'tis suspicious that it is not the right Joy; the more solid Joy of the Saints, hath it's Foundation in Godly Sorrow.

When we consider what great things the Lord hath done for our Souls, how he hath Regenerated, reconciled and called us by his Grace, pulled us as Brands out of the Burning, and raised us as Worms out of the Dunghill, and made us sit together with Christ in Heavenly Places, clothed with Garments of Salvation, and made us to shine forth in his Image; when we remember what the Lord is to us, our Rock, our Refuge, our Father, our All Sufficient Portion, all Love and Life, all Bowels, Compassions and everlasting Consolation; when we remember this, and therein do rejoice, we must then consider, But what have I been to him? What have I done against him, who hath done so great things for me? What an unworthy Wretch, what a sinful, Polluted and unthankful Creature am I? God hath loved me, God hath saved me, the Lord God is become my God, and herein I do and I will rejoice; but woe is me, I have sinned against the God of my Mercy, and therefore I will rejoice with Mourning; whilst I Joy in the Lord, I will weep over my sinful unworthy and guilty Soul: Whilst you say with the Psalmist, Psal. 66:16. Come unto me all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you, tell you with Joy, tell you with Praise, what he hath done for my Soul; what a gracious God, what a Compassionate Merciful God I have found him to be to me; whilst you say thus, Come, and I will tell you what God hath done for me, you must say also, Come, and I will tell you, tell you with shame, tell you with sorrow, what my Soul hath done against God; O how vile have I been? How Proud, and how false to God? How many ways guilty before him, of neglecting, of abusing, of walking unworthy of his wonderful Love? The Lord is my God, therein I will rejoice; I have sinned against God, and for these things I weep and lament.

2. Not so as to forget the sins that have been Conquered by us, that we may rejoice in Triumph; the Victories that we have gotten over sin, will be both an advance to our Joy in God, and the Evidence of

the sincerity of that Joy. Those that are still in the Chains and Fetters of Lust, in whom their Pride or their Covetousness, or their Frowardness, doth still Lord it over them, and can yet rejoice in God, it is to be doubted, that their Joy is false and foolish Joy; a Light of their own Sparks, and no Divine Sun-beam: fear that Joy and trample upon it, which will consist with a Slavery to Lust; as the Apostle says concerning Death, 1 Cor. 15:57, so should we concerning Sin, Thanks be to God that hath given us the Victory; this is Matter of Praise, this is Matter of Joy. When the Israelites saw the Egyptians Dead upon the Sea-Shore, Exod. 14:30, then they Sang a Song of Joy and Praise. Luke 10:20. Rejoice not that the Devils are subject to you; that is, that you have Power to cast the Devils out of Possessed Bodies; Rejoice not, that is, not so much in this, but rather rejoice that your Names are written in Heaven; and that's the same with this, Rejoice not that the Devils are cast out by you, but that your sins are Conquered by you. Victory over sin is an Evidence of our Title to Glory; next to the Blood of the Lamb, the Blood of our mortified sins is the best Ink to write our Names in the Book of Life.

Rev. 3:12. Him that overcometh will I make a Pillar in the House of my God, and I will write upon him the Name of my God, and the Name of the City of my God, &c.

Christians, what have you done in your War against Sin? What work have you made with those Lusts which War in your Members? Can you tell of any Conquest you have gotten? Where be the Persons among you that can say, This Heart was once a Proud Heart, but now through the Grace of God, 'tis more humble; this Heart was once a froward Heart, but now through Mercy, it's become meek, the Lion is become a Lamb; this Heart was once a Covetous Heart, an Hungry greedy Heart, all Earth and Earthy, clogged and chained to this World by its Worldly Lusts; but now through Grace the Clogs are knocked off, the Chain is broken, and my Soul is gotten loose from this Earth, and can now despise it, in comparison of God and the things above. Friends, have you any of you experiences of any such Victories? Forget them not, keep them by you; and in the day of your

rejoicing in God, let your Eye be upon these your Conquests of Sin, and this will be a means that your joy will be the more full; then will you Triumph in Christ Jesus, when with your Conquering Captain you have your Enemies in Chains.

3. Not so as to forget the Sins that we are in danger of, but to rejoice with trembling; we are still in our Warfare, and how far forth soever we have Prospered in it, we have Enemies still before us, that we are in perpetual danger of; therefore as it is said, let not him boast, so let not him rejoice that's putting on his Armor, as if he were putting it off. The Canaanite is still in the Land; sin lies at the Door, and will be upon you, if you stand not upon your guard. Christians must build up themselves in their Holy joy, as the Jews built the Wall of Jerusalem, Nehem. 4:17. They must have a Trowel in one Hand, and a Sword in the other; they must Build and Watch, Build and Fight; there is an evil Worm that is apt to grow out of our Joy, which will overthrow and devour it, and that is, Security, or secure Confidence. It was this that spoiled the Psalmist 's Joy, who was a better Man and a Wiser than any of us; Psal. 30:6,7. I said in my Prosperity, I should never be moved; thou Lord by thy favor hast made my Mountain so strong; but what follows? The very next Word is, Thou didst hide thy Face, and I was troubled. Security opens the Door to Iniquity, and Iniquity will hide us from our Joy.

It is Matter of Joy that we are at War with Sin, and have gotten any little Conquest, and have such a Captain to lead us on; woe to them that are at Peace, or in a Truce with Sin, and have nothing to comfort them but only this, that there is a present Cessation of Arms, and they feel not the buffeting of Satan against them; they will quickly feel the miserable fruits of that Truce: Stand to your Arms, stand upon your Guard; whilst you are Drinking most deeply of your Waters of Joy, fear that Wormwood that Sin will cast in, to embitter your Pleasant Waters.

That Joy which will consist with a sinful Life, is no Joy of God; the Joy of God is Holy Joy; and that Joy of God that leaves us secure and

careless, is not like to be long lived. Do you rejoice in God? As ever you would that Joy should continue, take heed of Iniquity; you go in danger while you live; it is not so clear and bright with you now, but it may be all Cloudy and Stormy tomorrow; if the Devil can but lead you out to Iniquity, he will quickly raise such Storms, as will make you forget your joy: forget not this danger; if you do once but forget your danger two to one, but it presently overtakes you and swallows you up.

Christians, if ever you would live in settled solid Joy, you must always have a tender Heart, and a tender Eye, that will quickly espy, and quickly be startled at the Invasion of sin. Be Watchful, be tender Hearted, and then your Hearts shall rejoice; and if you would abide in Peace, never live out of Fear. Never live out of Fear, till you are gotten out of Danger, and out of Danger you cannot be, till you are got to Heaven:

2. Much less not so to rejoice in the good things of [the Earth,] as to forget our Sins. Thou art a Rich Man, thou hast a Confluence of all the kindnesses that this Earth can do thee; the Sun shineth on thy Tabernacle, 'tis all fair Weather with thee; thou Prosperest in the World, and herein thou dost rejoice. But Man, thou art a Sinner all this while; Hast thou not great guilt lying upon thee? Hast thou not unconquered Lusts remaining in thee? Or dost thou not go in daily danger of being turned aside from God, and led out into Iniquity? If thine outward Prosperity make thee glad, yet let the Sin that lieth upon thy back, or at least lieth at the Door, make thee tremble, and so to tremble, as to be an allay to thy rejoicing; when with the Peacock, you spread abroad your Plumes, and lift up your Crests, look down on your Black Feet; when you glitter in your Worldly Glory, behold the stain that is upon all your Glory; whatever fair Outside you have, what an Inside have you? Is there not Poverty within, whilst there is such Plenty without? What a Poor and Wretched and Blind and Naked Soul hast thou, whilst as to thine Outward Man thou art Rich and hast need of nothing? Canst thou in the midst of thy Prosperity, forget thy sinking and sinful Soul? Canst thou

remember thy Soul, and will not this take thee a Button lower as to thy Carnal Joy? The Prosperity of the Soul, and the joy that grows up out of it, need not be abated in the least by the Poverty of the Outward Man; if thou be never so Poor, and afflicted without, yet a Holy Soul, an upright Heart, and the Joy of a good Conscience, will make amends for all that; but will thine Outward Prosperity make amends for thine Inward Poverty? You with whom all things go well in this World, yet still think on that Rust that's Eating out your Treasure, think on that Moth that's fretting out your Garments, behold the stain that appears upon all your Beauty; the stain of Pride, the stain of Covetousness and Carnality, the Moth of Envy and Contention, that's eating out your Hearts. Why shouldst thou be sad, would Carnal Comforts say? What hast thou wanting to thee? What hast thou to trouble thee? Thou hast Houses and Lands, and Money, and Health, and Friends; What wouldst thou have? Why dost thou not rejoice and make Merry? Why? Why, 'tis true all things go well with me without, I have a good Estate, and a good Trade, and a good House, and am in good Health, but O what a Soul have I? O what a Wretched Heart have I? Do you ask, What I have to trouble me? O I have Sin to trouble me, this Pride, and this Covetousness, and this Guilt that is upon me; God knows, I find enough to trouble me, and to trouble me more than I am or can be troubled. Do you ask me, What I want to make me merry? O I want God! I want Grace; I want more Faith, and more love to Christ; I want a better Heart; matters go not right between God and me; whatever I have for this World, O how little have I for the Eternal World! Can I be Merry and Jocund, whilst sin hath made such wastes upon my Inward Man? Christians, do but thus remember your Sins, and this will allay your Carnal Joys. Art thou so Merry, that thou forgettest thy Sins? Take heed, the time cometh, when thy Sins shall appear and stare thee so in the Face, as to make thee forget all thy days of Mirth and Laughter.

2. Not so to rejoice, as to forget our Brethren's Afflictions and Miseries. It's well with thee, but how is it with thy poor Neighbors and Friends? How many are there that are in Penury, whilst thou art in Plenty? How many are clothed in Rags, whilst thou shinest in thy

gorgeous Apparel? How many are ready to Starve, and Die for Hunger, whilst thou hast thy fullness of Bread and abundance of all things? Thou hast enough, and thereupon rejoicest; but is it nothing to thee, that there are so many that would be glad of thy Crumbs, of thy Leavings, and cannot have them? Thy very Dogs, it may be, have many a better Bit, and Warmer Lodging, than some of thy poor Neighbors; is this nothing to thee? When thou blessest thyself in thy Plenty, then remember those for whom nothing is provided.

Forget not in thy Joy how 'tis with thy poor Neighbors, much less how 'tis with the poor Church of God. Psal. 137:5,6. If I forget thee O Jerusalem, let my Right Hand forget her cunning; let me never touch the Harp more, or rejoice at the sound of the Organ, if I forget poor Jerusalem; if I don't remember thee, Let my Tongue cleave to the Roof of my Mouth; let me never sing Song more, no nor never speak Word more, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chiefest Joy. Friends, you that can be Merry and Jolly in these Days, remember how is it with poor Jerusalem; Is our Jerusalem in Prosperity? Doth the Church of Christ flourish? Is Religion and sincere Christianity countenanced and encouraged? Are not the Tents of Jacob smitten and fallen? And do they not look Black, and all torn and Weather-beaten? It was said once, though by an evil Tongue, Numb. 24:5. How goodly are thy Tents O Jacob, and thy Tabernacles, O Jerusalem: But where is their Goodness? Where is their Beauty? Are not the Daughters of Zion all Sun-burnt with Affliction? 'Twas said once by the Church, I am Black but Comely, Cant. 1:5. Sun-burnt with Affliction, but Beautiful through Grace; but may it not now be said, We are Black and Deformed; not only Sun-burnt, but Collied, Black as a Coal by Iniquity? Is there not only a Marring of our outward Beauty, but a failing of the very Spirit and inward Beauty of Christianity? Though it were once said, Psal. 45:13. The Kings Daughter is all glorious within, and her Clothing of wrought Gold; must it now be said, Our clothing is in Sack-cloth, and we are become Black and Pale, and all Withering within? Is not Christianity in most Places dead at the Heart? May there not an Ichabod be Named among us, The Glory, the inward Glory is departed from Jerusalem.

It's well for us, if it be not thus with us, if the Pale Horse hath not ridden into our very Inner-man, if there be not Death in our Hearts, if our Faith, and our Love, and our Holiness, and our Zeal be not dead; if we be not grown stark Cold many of us, or at least our highest pitch be not Lukewarmness. Consider how 'tis with yourselves; but if it be better with us, O that it were so, O that the Lord had not a Controversy with us, even with us, for the loss that we are at, and the fall that is to be seen among us; but if it were better with us in our Particulars than it is, yet forget not how it is abroad, with the generality of Professors amongst us. It is in every Bodies Mouth, what a general and lamentable Decay there is everywhere of the Soul of serious Christianity. And is all this nothing with you? Is this a Season to rejoice and make Merry in? Ezek. 21:9,10. A Sword, a Sword is sharpened and is also furbished, it is sharpened that it may make a sore Slaughter, it is furbished that it may glitter, should we than make Mirth? Beloved, we may Read in our Decays and Hypocrisies, that the Lord may be sharpening and furbishing an outward Sword against us, to avenge and to punish an Hypocritical Nation: But the Spiritual Sword of the Lord is sharpened already, and what a sore Slaughter hath it made? What a Slaughter of the Faith, and the Hopes, and of the Graces, and the Comforts, of the Love, of the Humility, of the Meekness, of the Self-denial; what a Slaughter hath been made of all these already? How little of them is there left alive? Is there such a Spiritual Sword, such a Javelin smitten through the Heart, such a sore Slaughter made of the very Spirit of Religion, and should we yet make Mirth? Is this a Season to be so Merry or so Jolly in? What a Woe is there denounced, Amos 6:1. & 6, against those Merry ones, and Jolly ones, upon this Account, that they are not grieved for the Afflictions of Joseph! And what should we be Merry, and so Merry, as to be without Sense of the Afflictions, and also of the Sins of Joseph? The inward Languishings and Consumptions of the People of God?

Christians, I doubt we have too much forgotten all this; we do not consider, we do not remember or lay it to Heart, how sadly it goeth with the Interest of Christianity among us; sure it would change

many of our Countenances, and abate us our Pleasant Hours, were this duly Weighed.

It is our Fault and our Sin, that it is thus with us, and 'tis a sign that thou art of the Number of those sick Souls, thou art one of them; there is a sad Slaughter made in thine own Soul, [thine] Heart languisheth, and thy Grace is withered; 'tis a Sign it is so, if thou canst be so Merry, and not to be Afflicted with the Withering's of others. O Friends, remember these things, and whatever Rejoicings you have in outward things, let these things be an allay to them; Rejoice as if ye Rejoiced not, Weep as if you Wept not; saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 7:30. I cannot say the latter word to you in such a time, Weep as if you Wept not, but Weep as if you wept, Weep in good earnest; Weep heartily, Weep abundantly; let your Eyes run down with Tears; I cannot say, Weep as if you Wept not, but yet rejoice as if you rejoiced not; abate and moderate all your Joy and Mirth.

CHAP. XIX

Regulating our Fears

4. For our Fear; this is well governed, when we fear nothing but what we should fear; and this we fear, as much, and no more than we should. For the Regulating our fears,

First, We are to keep our Hearts in a due fear of what we should fear.

1. God is to be feared. The Glory of his Excellent Majesty, of his Holiness, of his Righteousness, of his Omnipotence, and all his Glorious Attributes. The Attributes are his Glorious and Fearful Name, Deut. 28:58. That thou mayest Fear that Glorious and Fearful

Name, the Lord thy God; this fear of God, is a Fear of Reverence; to Fear God, is to stand in awe of his Glorious Majesty; but in special there must be a fear of the Indignation of God, and the Power of his Wrath. Luke 12:5. I will tell you what you should fear, fear him who is able to destroy both Soul and Body; the fear of God, is the Ground and Reason of all other Fears.

2. Sin is to be Feared, 2 Sam. 1:14. How wast thou not afraid, to stretch forth thine Hand and destroy the Lord's Anointed? It was thy Wickedness, thy great Sin to do that Act; How is it that thou wert not afraid to do it? Sin is the most formidable of Evils; if Men knew what it were to Sin against God, 'twould make them tremble; not only great sins, but little sins, not only open, but the most secret sins: there's enough in every sin to make Men afraid; that Men are so vile, and so wicked as they are, it is because they fear not sin; fear sin and you will fly from it.

3. Temptations to sin are to be feared. Therefore we are to pray, Lead us not into Temptation. It is our fear that must bring us on our Knees, to make this Hearty Prayer. If sin be to be feared, then whatever enticeth or leadeth to sin is to be feared. Some of our Temptations are to be feared and shunned; evil Companions are a Temptation, these must be shunned; the liberty of unnecessary Sports and Recreations, of sumptuous Feastings, of curious and costly Apparel, &c. are Temptations, and therefore must be shunned; others of our Temptations are to be feared and warily used: Riches and outward Prosperity is a Temptation; our Money, and our Lands, and our businesses in the World are Temptations. He that will be Rich, falleth into Temptation, &c. and therefore must so be feared, as to make us the more wary and circumspect in the seeking and using of them: follow your Trades with fear, go into your Fields and Markets with fear, Eat and Drink with fear; fear your fine Houses, fear you Plentiful and Prosperous Estates, lest by these you be led away to sin, and to forget God. You are every day among Temptations, throughout the whole time of your lives, and therefore

is the Exhortation of the Apostle, 1 Pet. 1:17. Pass the time of your Sojourning here in fear.

4. The punishments of sin are to be feared. The wrath and the curse of God, that Everlasting death which is the wages of sin, as I told you before, fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in Hell. He is able and he will do it, if thou continue in thy sin. This fear is planted in the heart, as the Sword of the Angel was placed in the way of Balaam, to keep him back from his wicked designs. This world is a wicked world; notwithstanding that God hath placed such a flaming sword in sinners ways, notwithstanding all their fears, how willfully wicked are they? But what world would this world be, if there were no fear upon men's hearts, to bridle or restrain them.

Secondly, We are to keep the heart out of fear of what it should not fear, to suppress and keep down all unreasonable and sinful fears. There are two things especially which men fear but should not fear.

1. The Yoke of Christ; the difficulties and severities of Religion; some men continue to be sinners, because they are afraid to be Saints; they continue under the power of the Devil, because they are afraid of Christ. They look on Christ as a hard Master, his service as hard service, his Yoke as a hard Yoke; some desires they have after Religion, they could wish themselves Christians, but they are afraid to venture. The difficulties and the severities of a Godly life keep them off; they are afraid of them, that they shall never bear them. As God placed a flaming sword in Eden, Gen. 3, so these fears, are a flaming sword of the devils placing, to keep the way of the tree of Life, to keep sinners back from Christ; they dare not come to Christ, for fear of him, and the heavy yoke that he would put upon their Necks.

2. The Cross of Christ; that is,

1. The sufferings of this Life. These are not to be feared. Rev. 2:10. Fear none of those things which you shall suffer. And this very

charge, not to fear them, is an Evidence that even Christians are too apt to fear Sufferings.

2. Death for Christ's sake, Luke 12:4. Fear not them that kill the body. Fear not the worst that men can do; You may not only be persecuted by evil men, imprisoned, spoiled of your Goods, but you may be slain, put to death by them; yet fear them not; and as a violent death, a being put to death for Christ, so neither is a natural death to be feared; death is the King of terrors. The Apostle tells us, Heb. 2:15. That for fear of death, men are all their life time subject to bondage. There is a natural fear of death, implanted in every man, even in Christ himself, and there is a sinful fear of death; and then 'tis sinful, when 'tis excessive; when there is so great a fear of death, as to distress, and distract us in the duties of our lives. When there is so great a fear of death, that we cannot quietly and patiently submit to its stroke; when we cannot comfort and support ourselves against the fear of death, by the hope we have in our death; the righteous hath hope in his death, Prov. 14:32. As the Apostle speaks concerning sorrow for the dead, 1 Thes. 4:13. Sorrow not as men without hope, the same may be said concerning the fear of death, fear not as men without hope. The righteous hath hope in his death, he lies down in hope, goes to his grave in hope, and this hope fortifieth his heart under all its fears.

Now friends would you keep your hearts under Government, learn these two Lessons.

1. Keep your hearts in fear, and particularly 1. keep you in the fear of God, keep up the Aw and Reverence of God in your hearts, get you trembling hearts before the Lord; behold the severe and jealous eye that is upon you, live under such a deep sense of the Greatness, Glory and Majesty of the great God, as may constantly awe you. Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and let him be your fear and your dread. Those that live not under an awe of God, lie open to the Devil and all his Temptations. It is this, the fear of God, that is the bridle, to keep us in due order.

2. Keep you in fear of sinning against God. Psal. 4:4. Tremble and sin not. Art thou a professor of faith in God, and dost thou not yet fear to sin against God? Dost thou believe that God is the observer of all ungodliness? That thine iniquities are all marked before him? Dost thou believe that God is the avenger of all ungodliness, and that all thine iniquities shall be recompensed and returned upon thine own head? How is it then that thou art no more afraid of iniquity? Art thou an hypocritical professor, and doth not thine hypocrisy make thee afraid? Art thou a proud Professor, or a worldly Professor, or a lukewarm, or froward, or carnal, or slothful Professor, how is it that thy pride, thy covetousness, that thy coldness, or frowardness, or carnality, or slothfulness doth not make thee afraid? Are these Evils, this Pride, and this Hypocrisy, this Covetousness, this frowardness rooted and reigning in thy heart? Where are thy fears all this while? Call up fear, put on fear, and let this suppress these lusts, which will else be breaking forth into practical iniquity. If you would fear a life of Covetousness, a life of Pride, fear this heart of Pride, this worldly carnal heart; if you would fear a froward look, a froward tongue, fear a froward heart; crush this Cockatrice Egg, before it hatch into practical wickedness.

3. Fear Temptation to Sin. What does use to foment or heighten the lusts of thine heart? What doth use to draw them forth into practice? Whatever it be: fear it as you would fear the Devil. Particularly,

1. Fear whatever you over love in the World;

1. When you have your pleasant dishes before you, and varieties of them; when you have your pleasant cups before you, fear your being tempted to excess; feed not yourselves without fear, especially feast not without fear; put a knife to thy throat if thou be given to appetite, when thou seest dainties before thee. Prov. 23:2. Look not on the wine when it is red in the cup and sparkles, and moves itself aright. Look besides it, be afraid to look upon it, lest it tempt thine appetite beyond its bounds.

2. Fear your fine Clothes; your Fashions and Ornaments that you delight in; hast thou not pride in thine heart, and is not thy pride even as tinder, that will catch fire of every spark; dost thou love to be fine and gallant, dost thou love thy fine Fashions and Ornaments? Let thy love make thee afraid.

3. Fear that Money that thou lovest, and thy Lands and thy Fields and the increase of thy Substance; when riches increase set not your hearts upon them, Psal. 62:10. Do you prosper, do you grow rich in this world, do ye feel the world coming in, and your substance increasing upon you? Fear this prosperity; I do not say, fear prosperity and shun it or flee from it, but fear it and look the better to yourselves, be jealous of yourselves in such a time, lest when you prosper and be full, you then forget God. Have an eye to your hearts in your prosperous estate; take heed that your Souls grow not poorer, as your outward Man grows richer; It was the joy of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 4:16. That though his outward man grew to decay, yet his inward man was renewed day by day; but friends let it be your fear, lest as your outward man flourisheth, your inward man grow to decay; lest your Riches eat up your Religion; lest you lose your love to God, lest you abate in your care for the things of Christ, lest those poor souls wither and suffer loss, lest the work of God be at a stand with you; lest praying and praising and communing with your hearts, and looking into the other World, and caring and laboring for those poor immortal Souls, be laid aside or but slightly shuffled over. Know any of you that are in a prosperous estate, that have set your hearts upon getting and find the world increasing upon you, know that you are in danger; your Souls are in danger, your Religion is in danger of sinking and withering; your Prosperity is a temptation that will endanger your neglect of God and your Souls. Look upon prosperity as a temptation, and fear it as a temptation; be jealous of your hearts in such a time.

4. Fear your vain Company, your Societies, and correspondences with your carnal Friends and acquaintance. Dost thou love vain company? I do not speak of vile company, of Drunkards, and Rioters,

of Swearers, and Scoffers at Godliness, those Sons of Debauchery that are the filth and garbage of the World, but even vain company, that are nothing but froth and folly, complement and merriment; the unsavory salt of the earth, that are good for nothing; to whom a serious and savory word put in, is as vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes; and who will thereby tempt you, to turn out all religion out of doors, for the time at least; because 'tis so unsavory to the Company. Fear to come among them, go not out after them, thrust not yourselves unnecessarily in among them; but when God brings you in among such, when necessary business brings you in, be with them in fear; think with yourselves, now I must look to mine heart, here be they that are like else to steal it away from God. Friends, settle this upon your hearts, and really believe it, and carry the sense of it upon you, that vain acquaintance and companions are a temptation. Though they do not tempt you to drunkenness, or swearing or lying or riot, yet they may tempt you to lukewarmness and indifferency in Religion; they will chill and cool your good affections, and dull and blunt the edge of your spirits heavenward. As holy and lively society, will quicken and whet our hearts, towards what is good, even as iron sharpeneth iron. Prov. 27:17. So are we like to be dulled, and blunted by vain company. Friends, would you keep your hearts in good plight? Would you keep you clear of the vanities and follies of the world? Would you keep yourselves unspotted from the world? Would you shine as lights in the world and be a rebuke to their sins, do you in good earnest design to maintain the life of God within you? Then beware of these sons of Vanity and let them henceforth be your fear, and not your desire or delight.

To this, let me farther add by the way, are vain company Temptations, and to be feared? Then you that are Christians, look to it that you be not of such a vain, earthly, frothy Conversation, that we must warn others that are better, to take heed of you, and be afraid of coming into your company. If vain company be a Temptation, then take heed that you be not such, that even your society should be feared. Such a fault there is among professors, and it is a grievous

thing to consider what a vain, and unsavory, and unprofitable conversation there usually is of Christians with Christians, of Professors with Professors. What is your discourse? How do you use to spend your time when you come together? How little of God, of Christ, of the state of your Souls, is to be heard among you? You can talk of your Trades, of your Business, of News; and sometimes that which is worse, tell evil stories of others behind their backs; You can laugh and be merry with carnal Mirth, even as others; but what do you more than others? Whose hearts do use to be warned or refreshed by your lips? Its said, Prov. 10:11. The mouth of the righteous is a well of life, And ver. 21. The lips of the righteous feed many. Is it so with us? What of the water of life is there, proceeding out of those Wells of life? If there be a Fountain in you, is it not a Fountain enclosed, a Well shut up? Who are there whose Souls are fed from your lips? If Christians did meet with no better feeding, then they have from some Professors lips, they might starve and perish; So jejune and insipid our discourses usually are, and withal so carnal and vain, that we rather pull down then build up, we rather chill and damp, then quicken and enliven those that are conversant with us. We have too often, like the Quakers, our silent meetings, as to anything of God that is going among us. Friends consider, look back and observe how it has been; have your mouths been wells of Life? Doth there not sometimes come forth mud, instead of water? Have your lips fed many? May be your hands have fed poor hungry bodies; may be they have had of your bread and of your money, but what have they had from your lips? Not a word. Their Souls may perish, for all the feeding that they have had from your lips. It is said, Mal. 3. Those that feared God spake often one to another; that is, of the things of God; but is it so with us? What shall we say to sinners, who when we charge others to take heed of their company, who will reply, why, they were even as good come amongst us as amongst some of yourselves, and as much they are like to get, and as little harm by us as by you?

Friends, I have more than once provoked you to be more Spiritual, and more Heavenly in your Converses; but what hath been the fruit?

Is it better then it hath been? O that you could tell me it was! I thank God it is a little better; I have set mine heart upon it, I have put myself to it, to bring forth something of what I have learned for others benefit. I must tell you, this unprofitableness is an ill sign as to yourselves, as well as it may be a snare to others; barren lips are a sign of barren hearts; 'tis to be feared there is not so much of Christ within you, when there is so little coming forth, that there is but little truth in your hearts, when there is so little Grace in your lips. O Friends, that you would yet check yourselves for this neglect, that you would yet charge it upon your hearts, to be more fruitful this way. To what purpose are you preached unto, to what purpose do I warn you, if you will not amend? I will tell you one way to help it, Let your own hearts be more set upon God, get more spiritual savor, more life and power of holiness in your own spirits, and it will find an easier vent; More divine Communion, will be the best help to more holy Communication. But this by the way.

CHAP. XX

The Object of our Sorrow

5. For our Grief or Sorrow. I shall show here,

1. That the Object of our Sorrow is evil. The Evils we are to grieve for are,

1. Sin.

2. Misery or Affliction.

2. What are the due degrees, and just limits of our Grief,

1. Sin; This is the great and special object of Sorrow, and sorrow for Sin is the best and most necessary of sorrows. Sin is a grievous evil, and it most calls for grief of heart. He loves neither God nor himself, that grieves not for sin; Sin is the abuse of God, and the wrong of our own Souls. How canst thou say thou lovest God, if thou canst abuse him, or see him abused without sorrow? How canst thou say, thou lovest thyself, when thou canst wrong thyself, and not be grieved? What wilt thou grieve for, if not for that, which is so provoking to God, and so destructive to thyself?

Sin seems good in the eyes of sinners, and therefore it seldom troubles them; 'tis that which pleaseth them, and suits with their tempers; 'tis that which profits them, and brings them in all their gains; Sinners, that must hereafter die for their sins, do at present live by their sins; they are beholding to their sins for their livelihood. Some men live by lying, and stealing, and defrauding; by Covetousness and oppression; 'tis that which brings them in their Estates; they had been, some of them, but poor men, if their sin had not gotten them Estates. Others live by their Pleasures, and carnal merriments; 'tis their mirth and their pleasure that keeps them alive,

Sorrow and Melancholy they think, would kill their hearts. Sinners live upon their sins, and therefore will not be grieved at them.

But though thou thinkest thou livest by thy sins, thou must die for thy sins; thy sins are making a grave for thee, and carrying thee to it; thy sins are preparing a Hell for thee, and leading thee down to the chambers of Death. Thy sin spoils thee at present of all that is good, and makes thee good for nothing, but to be fuel for the fire. Holiness prepares the Saints, and makes them meet for the inheritance of the Saints in light; Col. 1:12, and sin prepares sinners, and makes them meet for the inheritance of everlasting darkness; fit to serve none but the Devil, fit to dwell with none but the Devil. Sinners, you that go on in your sins, you are herein, but fitting and preparing you for the Devil. This Pride that you live in, these Pleasures that you live in, this Covetousness that you live in, by all these, the Devil is preparing you for Hell. There is a fire prepared for you, Mat. 25:41. Everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels; there is a Hell prepared for you, and your sin is as fast as it can, preparing you for that place of Torment. You're going on in your sin is your ripening for wrath; thou art almost ripe already, and art ripening every day; and as soon as thy sin hath but made thee fully ripe, thou droppest as ripe fruit uses to do, down thou droppest to rottenness, into the grave, and into the darkness of the pit. Thou art grown to that height in sin, that thou mayst be ripe before tomorrow, and as soon as thou art ripe, thou wilt be rotting; thy Body in the dirt, thy Soul in Hell. This is the fruit that sinners get, and shall get at last by their sins. Rom. 6:23. The wages of sin is death. But yet, because at present they live by their sins; their sins make them merry, their sins make them Rich, they get money by them, they get Estates by them, therefore they are not troubled; though they sin they will not sorrow. Thou hast smitten them but they have not grieved, Jer. 5:3. 'It is said, with respect to the punishment of sinners, and it might be said concerning them, they have smitten themselves, and yet have not grieved.

Sin seems good in the eyes of sinners, and therefore it doth not trouble them; but sin seems to be sin to Saints. Rom. 7, that is, the

greatest and worst of Evils; for so sin, when it appears to be sin, doth appear to be the worst of Evils; and therefore to them, its matter of Sorrow. When sin appears to be exceeding sinful, as the Apostles Expression is before, then the heart will be exceeding sorrowful; the degrees which by the right Government of the heart, this sorrow for sin is held up to, and the bounds and limits it is held within, are these,

1. This sorrow must be so great, as to answer the ends, and bring forth the proper fruits of it. The end of this sorrow, and the fruits it must bring forth, the Apostle tells us 2 Cor. 7:9, is Repentance. I rejoiced that ye sorrowed unto Repentance. And ver. 11. This self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly manner, what carefulness it wrought in you! Yea, what clearing of yourselves, &c. Whatever trouble for Sin, whatever sorrow any of you have in your hearts, if it doth not bring forth Repentance, a forsaking and turning from sin; if this sorrow doth not work a fear of falling back into sin, if it doth not work a care of preventing your fall, if it do not work to Indignation, and Zeal against Sin; if it leave you the Friends of sin still, the followers of sin still; if this be all you can say, I am troubled at it, but I cannot help it; it's my trouble that I am a Drunkard, it's my grief that I am a Worldling, or proud, or froward, but God be merciful to me, I cannot get rid of these evils; if your sorrow, whatever it be, doth not bring forth Fruit unto Repentance, it is not wrought up high enough; there must be more load laid on, there must be more of its Thorns, and Spears, and Stings thrust into that hard Heart of thine; thou must feel more of its Gripes, it must fetch out more Groans, and Sighs, and Tears out of thee, thou must be brought to another manner of trouble for sin, then yet thou art, e're it reach the due degree of Godly sorrow.

2. This sorrow must not be so great, as to hinder the exercise of any other Grace or Duty: 'tis seldom there is an error in the excess; we don't use to sorrow over much, no, no, we are apt to err in the defect; we do not usually come up to sufficient sorrow; our hearts have but a light hurt upon them, our wounds, ordinarily are not deep enough;

'tis this which mostly undoes us, we find our sin to be too light a burden, 'twere well if our hearts were more sick, that we could find them bleeding inwardly, and bleeding more abundantly, as 'twas said of false Teachers, Jer. 6:14. They heal the hurt of the Daughters of my People slightly. It is seldom that we can now a days, hear of such a thing as a troubled Soul, and a wounded Spirit: We are, even Professors of too whole and unbroken hearts; The Sacrifice of God is a broken heart, Psal. 51:17, but how few such Sacrifices are there anywhere found for the Lord? The work of the Ministry, God helps us, is seldom that more acceptable work, an healing work, to heal the wounded Soul, to bind up the broken heart, to comfort them that are cast down; but the main of our work lies, in making wounds, in pricking to the heart, in casting down the high and hardened hearts; Is not there much of this work lying upon our hands, to be hammering, and humbling, and piercing your hearts through with Godly sorrow? How few are there of you, who can truly say, I thank God, this work is done upon me; the breaking work, the afflicting work, the affrighting work is done upon me, my heart through Grace is brought low, and made soft, and made sick of my sins, so that I am prepared for the healing and comforting work? That sharp two-edged Sword of the word, hath pierced so deep, and made such work, such wounds in my heart, that now the Oil is more needed, and the Balm to heal my wounds. O it is matter of trouble and sadness of heart, to find no more such sad Souls, and sorrow bitten hearts, then we can either see or hear of in the World. 'It is seldom therefore I say, that there is too much of this sorrow, that trouble for sin riseth too high; but yet sometimes, and in some cases it may be so; there may be an excess of sorrow for sin; Christians may be pressed down over measure, they may be swallowed up of overmuch sorrow; as the Apostle intimates, and would have prevented, 2 Cor. 2:7. Comfort such an one, lest perhaps he should be swallowed up of overmuch sorrow. Therefore in this case, there must be Limits set to our sorrow; and it must be held within these Limits. It must be so much only, as may not hinder the exercise of other Graces and Duties; it must neither hinder our Hopes, nor hinder our Faith, nor our Love, no, nor our Joy in the Lord; It should be with Christians in this case,

as with the Apostle in another case. 2 Cor. 6:10. As sorrowing, yet always rejoicing. Sorrowing, yet believing, sorrowing yet hoping, cast down, yet comforted. It must not hinder our Duties. Some Christians have been so overwhelmed with trouble, that they have not been able to hear, nor pray, nor think with any Comfort upon God, or the things of God. this is an excess of sorrow, and must be restrained. Sorrow for sin, no more then will help you to believe, and Hope and Love and praise and serve the Lord.

2. Affliction. This is another object of sorrow. The Degrees and Limits of this are.

1. That we sorrow not so little, but that we have a due and a deep sense of the hand of the Lord upon us. Otherwise we despise the chastening of the Lord, which the Apostle forbids, Heb. 12:5. Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord. By afflictions I mean here, the sufferings of this Life; Crosses and Losses of Estates, of Friends, Husband, Wife, Children, or near Relations. Sufferings in our persons, by Sickesses, Pains, Languishing and the like, these must be grieved for. God complains, Jer. 3:5. I have smitten them, but they have not grieved: 'Twas their sin that they did not sorrow.

2. That we sorrow not so much as to sink under our sorrows. That we be not swallowed up of overmuch sorrow. As we may not slight or despise the chastening's of the Lord, so we may not faint when we are chastened. The Apostle tells us, 2 Cor. 7:10. That worldly sorrow, the sorrows of worldly-men for their worldly crosses, worketh Death. It sometimes kills their Bodies, some men die of their griefs, but it often kills their Hearts, sinks them in their Spirits, stupefies them, and makes them fit for nothing. We may not be so depressed with sorrows, but that we still keep our Hearts alive, and to be of good courage.

3. Not as men without hope. We must sorrow for all our afflictions, but as the Apostle would have Christians sorrow for the dead. 1 Thess. 4:13. Sorrow not, says he, as others, which have no hope. The

Righteous hath hope in his Heart, and his hope must moderate his sorrow. This sad state will not last always; there's hope of an end of his afflictions, and that should moderate his sorrow; The Righteous hath hope in his Death. Prov. 14:32, and hath this double hope.

1. That Death will put an end to his sorrows.
2. That the end of his Sorrows shall be the beginning of Everlasting Joys, and in this hope he must comfort himself under his sufferings, and moderate his sorrows for them.
4. Always as men that have worse matters to sorrow for. The least sin is a worse evil then the greatest affliction, and calls for more of our sorrow. Christians must take heed that they do not lose the sense of sin, in their excessive sorrowing for affliction. When affliction lies too heavy, sin usually lies too light; Jer. 30:15. Why criest thou for thine affliction—because thy sins were increased, I have done these things unto thee. Why art thou impatient under thy sufferings? Whatsoever thou sufferest, how hard soever it goes with thee in the World, there's a worse thing then all this, that should set thee a crying; thy sin, thy sin which is the root of all that which thou sufferest.
5. Let your sorrow for Affliction never be so great, as to hinder your sorrow for sin. Sorrow more for Iniquity, and that will limit and moderate your sorrow for your affliction. Why dost thou take on so for losses in thine Estate, for thy lost Friends and Relations? Thou hast greater matters then these to trouble thyself about; thy sins are the losses of thy Soul. Think when thou art mourning over thy worldly crosses, as sad as it is without, how is it with my Soul? Is there not sin upon my Soul? Is there not Guilt upon my Soul? And let out thy sorrows so much upon the sin of thy Soul, that thou mayst have none to waste upon the sufferings of thy Body. Restrain thy Tears for thy afflictions, thou wilt need them all to be spent upon thine Iniquity. O Friends, if you were concerned for your Souls, as much as you should, if you were sensible of the mischiefs and

miseries that sin is bringing upon your Souls, this would make all the sufferings of this life, to be as light and little things.

CHAP. XXI

Ruling our Spirits

6. For our anger. The Government of our anger is, that which especially is meant, by ruling our Spirits, in those two Scriptures, Prov. 16:32. He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his Spirit, then he that taketh a City. Prov. 25:28. He that hath no rule over his own Spirit, is like a City that is broken down, and without walls.

The Objects of Anger is Evil; the Limits of Anger are these,

1. Be never angry with God. Some persons are so fretful, that none can please them, are apt to be angry with everyone that hath to deal with them. There's no scaping their anger, but by shunning their Company, and having nothing to do with them. Men cannot please them, and God cannot please them; they will be angry with their Maker; when his Providences towards them are anything cross to their Humours, or their Interest, they are angry at God, angry at his Providences. So it was with Jonah, when God smote his Goard that he had given him for a shade. Jonah was in a pet, angry with God, and justified himself in his anger; I do well to be angry. Jon. 4:9. Some Foolish Persons, if it be dry Weather when they would have it Rain, if foul Weather, when they would have it fair, they are angry; they fret, their Hearts rise and murmur and repine against the Providence of God. And so when the wicked are exalted and flourish, and themselves are oppressed and brought low; Men are apt to fret and murmur at Divine Providence, that thus orders it. Thence is that

Caution, Psal. 37:7. Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way; that is, fret not against God, because of him, that he lets such wicked ones to prosper. Let God alone in his way, whatever he doth in the world, keep silence to the Lord, and fret not, murmur not against him. To be angry with the Wind, or the Rain, or the Floods, or the Sun, when we suffer prejudice by them; yea or to be angry with the irrational Creatures, that serve us; with our horses, or oxen, or dogs, when they do amiss, this is often anger against God. Some are such Fools, that if their horse stumbleth, or their Ox sluggeth, or their dog barks, or takes what he should not, they are such fools as to be angry with them, irrational Creatures are not the Objects of your anger; you may strike your Horse, or goad your Ox, or beat your Dog, but he's a fool that will be angry with them. Some are such fretful fools that they'll fret and chafe at senseless and inanimate creatures, which they use; how do Gamesters fret and chafe at their Cards, at their Dice, when they run not for them? How do some Tradesmen fret at their work, when it fadges not aright; when their yarn breaks, when their cloth shrinks, when their Scythe or Knife will not cut, or cut their fingers, or their legs, or hit upon a stone, or the like; some such there are, that will be angry with their work, will fret at their Scythe, or their Knife, or their Yarn, &c. These you may reckon amongst the first-born of Fools; and the folly of such anger is not the worst that is in it, there's Profaneness in it too, anger against these creatures is anger against God.

2. Be not soon angry with men. He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty, Prov. 16:32. Some persons are so touchy, that 'tis hard to keep them quiet, like tinder or Gunpowder, that will catch fire of every spark; a wry word or look, nay their own jealous thoughts will set them on fire; every little thing will provoke them; this is an evil and sore disease, that is hardly cured. You whose temper this is, know that it is your misery; 'tis a miserable temper, to be of such a froppish touchy Spirit, you that are such, you had need to pity the cases of those that dwell with you. Look upon thyself as a Briar or a Thorn hedge; and know that the fault lies not in them thou art angry with, but in thine own angry heart,

3. Be not angry without a cause. Mat. 5:22. He that is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the Judgment. The only just cause of Anger is sin. Eph. 4:26. Be angry and sin not; and that you may do so, be only angry against sin. We may be angry against wrongs, or abuses against ourselves, but it must be upon this account, that these wrongs against ourselves are sins against God. Be not angry without a cause, and be not angry for every little cause. Christians must be patient, and bear much; it must be a great thing that must provoke them to anger. Do not pick quarrels one against another, and make anger where there's no cause of anger; and do not quarrel for trifles, that any wise man would rather despise, than be provoked with.

4. Be not long angry. Eph. 4:26. Let not the Sun go down upon your wrath. Eccl. 7:9. Anger resteth in the bosom of fools. Of the several sorts of tempers that are among men, some are soon angry and soon pacified. This, though it be an evil, yet its a more tolerable evil; let it not justify you in your touchiness that your anger is quickly gone; to be soon angry is your sin, though not so great, because you are soon pleased. Do not allow yourselves in this temper; little sins must be carefully avoided.

Others are slow to anger and swift to pacification. Hard to be provoked, easy to be pacified. This is the best of Tempers; this is that meek and quiet Spirit, which is of great price in the sight of God. This man is a Moses; Moses could be angry and was angry to a great height, when he saw Israel become Idolaters; but yet this Moses was the meekest man upon earth. This meek temper is the most desirable of all tempers, even for our own sakes; every man that is a wise-man, would if it be possible be a meek man; none would be a fury but a Fool.

Meekness of Spirit is the way to get every man's love and good opinion, and the way to our own ease and serenity of heart. Frowardness and fretfulness is its own punishment; what vexations

and galls are such Persons to their own hearts, and what a reproach, and a by-word and an odium are they to others?

Others are easily provoked and hardly pacified; a little spark will kindle a fire, but many waters will not quench it. A soft answer, saith Solomon, Prov. 15:1, turneth away wrath. In some 'twill, but in others, neither soft nor hard words will do it; no contending, no stooping, no yielding, no loving obliging words or carriage will stop the current, till time hath a little allayed and worn it out. This is a wretched temper, and next to the worst; soon angry and long angry.

Others are soon angry and never pacified. The grudge of their hearts is a cancer in their breasts; there it corrodes and frets, but will not be cured. These are Devils incarnate; 'tis the malice of the Devil that is implacable malice. That's the 4th. limit, not long Angry.

5. Restrain the sinful effects of Anger. Such as are,

1. Angry looks, we read Prov. 25:23, of an angry countenance, an angry look is either a furious look, the fire of the heart sparkling out at the eye, or a sour, and sullen, a dogged or discontented look.

2. Angry words, as reproachful words, Mat. 5:22. Racha, or thou fool, calling names, Liar, Thief, Varlet, Knave; or railing and bitter words, words dipped in Vinegar or Gall, spoken on purpose to irritate and provoke.

3. Distances and Estrangements. Keeping aloof, refusing society with those we are angry with; I will do him no hurt, but I will never have to do with him more, there's an angry resolve. Never talk you are not angry, whilst this fruit of it, distance and estrangement continues.

4. Revenge. When the grudge lies burning within, and watching to do him an ill turn, or to be even with him, as they usually express it. Revenge is the intending, endeavoring or doing hurt, to such as offend us, to satisfy our malice and wrath. We may right ourselves upon those that abuse and wrong us; either in our Estates, or our

Names, in just and honest ways, and in such cases where God, or Conscience; or the honor of Religion does not call upon us to suffer wrong, and pass by or put up abuses; we may right ourselves in case of wrongs, but never out of Malice, to satisfy our wrathful hearts. Some wretched spirits there are, that in some trifling offenses that are offered them, could pass them by, but only for the satisfying their malice; their wrath must be satisfied. This if it be a righting of thyself, yet if that which puts thee upon it, be the malice of thy heart, this is a revengeful righting of thyself, how often do some men speak at such a rate, not so much that I do regard the thing, but I scorn to be abused.

Well, these are the limits to bound your Anger. Be not angry with God, nor any of his Providences; be not sinfully angry with men; not soon angry, not angry without a cause; not over angry where you have a cause; not long, not implacably angry; lay aside an angry look, restrain an angry tongue, and beware of meditating revenge, let not there be a secret grudge remaining which will make revenge sweet to thee.

Now because this is a great piece of the Government of the heart, and of great difficulty, I shall direct you to some means for the bringing it about.

1. Prize, seek and maintain your peace with God.

1. This will find you other work to do, then to mind every little offense that comes athwart you. The wrath of God is as the roaring of a Lion. Whilst you are in fear of that, or caring how to escape it, you will not mind the barking of a Dog, or the hissing of a Goose. What hast thou nothing else to take up thy thoughts, then these trivial things? Its an ill sign; 'tis a sign thou mindest not God as thou shouldst, nor thy soul as thou shouldst, when thou art so apt to be in a pet at every little thing.

2. Your breaking peace with men is your breaking peace with God. Art thou sinfully angry with thy brother, or with thy husband or thy Wife? Take heed, God is angry with thee: Psal. 18:26. With the froward thou wilt show thyself froward. You that are given to frowardness, study that Scripture and tremble. Canst thou stand before an angry God? Wouldst thou that God should carry it as frowardly towards thee, as thou carriest it towards others? Wouldst thou see such a frowning face, wouldst thou hear such words of fury from the Lord, against thy Soul? Thou must look for no other from him, if thou carriest it thus frowardly to thy Friends. Mind your peace with God more, be more solicitous about the taking up that deadly Controversy, that hath been betwixt him and thee; and prevent the raising of new quarrels with God, and then we should have fewer quarrels one with another. Is it peace betwixt God and thy Soul? Is all fair and friendly betwixt him and thee? Methinks thou shouldst bear anything then from men; Is it not peace betwixt God and thee? Is that great work yet to do? Is there such a weighty concern lying upon thee? Is thy Peace with God yet to make? What a foolish wretch art thou, to disturb thyself with these little matters?

2. Totally espouse the interest of God, and renounce the interest of this Self and Flesh. It is this self, that is the make-bate, and the rise of all our quarrels. If you would know no other interest but the interest of God, you would never be angry, but where you should be angry, you would only be angry with sin against God. If you had renounced your selfish and fleshly interest, you would never take its part, nor take up the Cudgels on its side; all our carnal anger it is but our taking part with carnal self; anything that's spoken or done against thyself, anger must be called up, to revenge this quarrel. Be more zealous for the interest of God, and these quarrels of self would cease.

3. Know that a pettish angry disposition (whilst it remains unconquered) will make thee a briar and a thorn, to whatever company thou art in. Yea and 'twill make everyone else, seem to be a briar and thorn to thee. What wouldst thou have people say, there

dwells a wasp or an hornet? There goes a briar or thorn? Take heed how you come near him, lest you be scratched or stung? If you would not make everyone else, to seem a briar and thorn or wasp to you, then kill this wasp in your own bosom. If people would but study more their own ease, and the calm of their own hearts, and to be freed from those troublesome boiling's and burnings of their own Spirits they would prize and pursue a more meek and quiet spirit. Never expect freedom from vexations and perturbations, till you have conquered that vexatious Spirit.

4. Know that implacable anger marks thee out, for one whom God hath excluded from pardon. If there be any one person in the world, that hath so angered thee, that thou wilt not be pacified, that anger of thine, will certainly carry thee to hell. If you will not forgive you shall never be forgiven. Mat. 6:15, that's the word, your forgiveness of others, is made the condition of God's forgiving of you; your peace with others is made the condition of your peace with God. Thou that art an implacable creature, how darest thou ever take the Lord's Prayer into thy mouth? How darest thou say, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us? There is this included in it, If I do not forgive all the World, let not God forgive me. Perhaps you will say, oh but I do forgive; I thank God I can say it with a clear Conscience, I forgive all the World; and any Person or Persons that I have had a particular quarrel against, I forgive them with all my heart. I shall never forget, but I do forgive. Oh what a folly and mere self-delusion is this! I will forgive but I cannot forget; that is, I will forgive but I cannot forgive. It is the plain English of, I cannot forget, I cannot heartily forgive. I will do them no hurt, I will chide no more with them, but you must excuse me if I carry a secret grudge in mine heart against them. Is this thy forgiveness, thou canst satisfy thyself with? Wouldst thou that God should say so to thee, I forgive thy wickedness but I will never forget it? Angry Soul, art thou resolved to venture it, to go unpardoned to thy grave? Would it not be a terrible word to thee, if God should say to thee, I will never forget thine iniquities, nor blot them out of my book? Wouldst thou have thy name blotted out of God's book? Thy sins must be blotted

out or thy name blotted out. Wouldst thou have thy sins stand upon Record against thee at the great Day? Then at thy peril look to it, that thou quench this fire of implacable, anger.

5. Know that whilst the effects of anger remain; the passion of anger will sinfully remain. Whilst there are the fruits still continuing, there the root is not cut up. Nay if there be but some of the fruit remaining; If thou forbear thy sour looks, and put off an angry countenance, yet if thy distance and strangeness continues; If thou sayest I will do them no hurt, but I will never have any more to do with them; if thou forbearst to give them provoking words to their faces, yet if thou continuest to bite them on the back; takest thy liberty to censure them, to rip up the old sores to others behind their backs, deceive not thyself, thine anger is not turned away, but thy wrath is stretched out still.

6. Spend more of your anger against yourselves, for your own sins, and then you will have the less to waste upon others. That Counsel of Christ, Mat. 7:5, is of use here; thou hypocrite first cast out the beam out of thine own eye. Cast thy first stone at thyself; yea it may be thou mayest see reason, to spend all the stones thou hast to throw, here upon thyself and thine own sins, and have none left to spare, to cast at thy brother. How have I carried it towards the Lord? O how have I provoked, and do provoke the most High? O this proud heart of mine, O this peevish heart, O this envious hypocritical heart! Lord, what can I say for it? Lord, how can I bear such a wretched deceitful provoking heart? Can I bear nothing from others? Lord, how shall I bear it, that thou hast been so oft provoked and dishonored by me? O my foolish Soul, thou hast other quarrels that are fitter for thee to be engaged in; quarrel with thyself, be angry with thyself, thou hast sinned, thou hast sinned against God, and there let thine anger shoot all its darts. This would sow up thy lips and put a bridle in thy mouth, as it did in David's. Psal. 39:2. I was dumb with silence, I held my peace. I had not a word to say, when I looked up to God. What if Michal mock, if Shimei curse, God had a quarrel with me,

and 'twas he opened their mouths against me, thou Lord didst it, and therefore I was dumb and had no more to say.

Christians remember all these things, and apply them every one of you, as far forth as your cases need it. Do not say (as sometimes some do) here such or such a one was struck at, this word was directed to such a man, or such a woman; do not put it off so, but take it to thee, its a word sent from God to thyself, as far forth as thy case is concerned in it. Let everyone of you reflect and cast an eye upon yourselves, and consider how far forth you are guilty of sinful anger; and then inquire as the Disciples did in another case, Lord is it I? Lord am not I one of them thou hast been preaching this word unto? See every one of you, how far forth it may be your own Cases, and accordingly accept of the warning, as sent from God, on purpose to you; and so use the several means prescribed, that if it be possible, you may hereby be enabled to get the Rule and the Government of your own Souls. Remembering what I told you but now, from Solomon, He that ruleth his own Spirit, is better than he that taketh a City. If you can but get the rule of your own Spirits, its unspeakably better to you, then if you had conquered all your adversaries; if you can restrain your own anger, it will be more comfortable, and more tend to the enjoying yourselves in peace, and sweetness, then if you could so charm the whole world, that there should never any one do anything, that might offend or provoke you.

And thus I have dispatched what I have to say, touching the Government of some of the Passions of the heart; to order and regulate them so, that we may love nothing but what we should love, &c. O what a blessed frame should we be in, were we brought to this! 'tis true, it is not to be expected, that we should be brought fully up to this frame, in this imperfect state; but so much might be done towards it, as might make our whole way of Religion much more even and easy than it is. All our difficulties and failings do arise, from the inward disorders and distempers of our hearts. The better order and the better temper our hearts are brought into, the more easy will our work be and the more sweetly carried on.

CHAP. XXII

Do You Love God More than you Did?

Now therefore, after these many words I have spoken, after these many days work that have been spent upon this subject, let me in the name of God ask you, what is there that hath been yet done upon you? What is there that hath been added to your holy love, to your holy desires and joys, fears and griefs? Are there any little sparks added to you? Do you love God a little more then you did? Do you desire after him a little more strongly? Are your fears of sin, your fears of temptations to sin, your grief and sorrow for sin, a little increased? Is there any abatement of your love to the World, of your worldly desires and joys? Is there any allay of your fretful angry passion? Who of you can say, I thank God, these words have not been spoken to me in vain. I thank God, I find this World taken down a little lower; I do not love it so well, nor desire it so much, nor I hope shall ever again seek it so earnestly, as I have done? Are you anything the more in fear of sin, or grieved for sin? Are you in hope that your anger shall henceforth not be without a cause, nor above or higher than its cause, nor ever last as it has used to do?

Friends, consider, in the name of God consider; What, is there nothing done? Are you as cold in your love to God, as hot in your love to the World, as much without fear and grief for sin, as if none of all this had been spoken? The Lord be merciful to us, what shall become of such hearing? What serves this Preaching for? What serves this hearing for? Doth God take pleasure, or can you take comfort in your coming together to hear, and being a little affected with the word whilst 'tis preaching, or speaking some words after of your approbation and liking what you have heard, when yet the Word

doth not work, nor leave any standing and abiding impressions upon you? Its vain to commend a Sermon in words, if the fruit it brings forth commend it not. The best commendation of your food is by your eating it, and maintaining your health, and gathering strength by it. O Friends, that's the commendation we would have of our preaching, and the only commendation that we can take comfort in, that our word reacheth its end; that there is some sign of our ministry upon your hearts, and in your lives; that we may say concerning you, as the Apostle concerning the Corinthians; 2 Cor. 3:2,3. Ye are our Epistle, and are declared to be the Epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God. Those are the best Sermon Notes, that are written not with ink and paper, but by the Spirit of the living God, in the fleshly tables of our hearts. These are the best Sermon Notes and these are the best commendation of our preaching. Now pray friends consider, I do not ask you what there is written of these Sermons in your note books, but what is there written of them in your hearts? Is there anything more of the love of God, of desires after God, of fear of sin, &c. written or begotten within you?

Had I ability and opportunity of personal converse with you, I should be willing to deal with you in private, hand to hand, and to ask you these questions man by man; but to supply that defect of speaking personally, and in private to each one of you, take what I speak in my public Ministry, as if it were spoken to thee in particular, and I were dealing with thee hand to hand. Though thou canst not give (me) thine answer, yet fail not to give answer in thine own heart; when I ask thee whether thou hast gotten anymore love to God, anymore desires after God, any abatement of thy love to the World, anymore fear of Sin, &c. Answer thine own Conscience in this particular. I must substitute thy Conscience in my room, and let Conscience take thine Answer. Speak every man of you in your Consciences, how do you find it? Is there anything done upon you by these words, or is there nothing done; what do you think of all your hearing these words, if there be nothing done; if there be as much love to the World, as little love to God, or fear of Sin; if there be the same

touchiness, the same pettishness, the some angry distemper, as if you had kept you at home all this while, and never heard any of all that has been said; Are not you ashamed, are not you afraid that these words of the Lord should have no effect upon you? Beloved, I have preached to you in hope, I have hoped for fruit; I have hoped for some change for the better upon you, in all these respects. O set your hearts unto all these words; remember what you can, and recover what you have forgotten; look up to God, look up to God, and pray this prayer to him, Lord let the things that have been spoken be written. Let them be written, not with ink and pen, but by the Spirit of the living God; not in a book or paper, but in the fleshly table of mine heart. Look up to God for his help, and determine in yourselves, to set your hearts to it, to follow after this blessed Order and Government of your hearts. Study within yourselves, how to get up your affections to things above; to get loose your hearts from the World; and things below; be not content to be thus dead in your hearts towards God, thus alive towards the World; nor be content to wish for more of the divine love, to wish you could abate towards this world, but in good earnest, make it your business and study so to do. Might we once bring you to this, that while we are laboring with you in the Word and Doctrine, you would labor with us in the Lord, to work your hearts to an affectionate compliance with our words; if you would be steadfast and immovable, and abounding in this work, then there would be hope, that neither our labor nor yours should be in vain in the Lord; then should we look to see the death of these Worldly loves and lusts, and a spring of the divine love and life and joy and glory; this earth and flesh under foot, and the Spirit of Glory and of God resting upon you.

Put on therefore in the fear of the Lord, set you close to this Heart-governing-work, quicken, strengthen, encourage your hearts herein with these words. Yet further, the Government of the heart stands,

4. In suppressing all manner of evil, and exciting and maintaining the good that is in your hearts. There are in the heart, as there are in a Kingdom, two parties; the evil party and the good party: The evil

party are the Rebellious Lusts of our hearts, the good party are the Graces of God. The Government of the Heart is to be as the Government of a Kingdom, for the suppressing the evil, and the encouraging and upholding the good.

The evil Party are the lusts of the Heart; Pride, Envy, Malice, Covetousness, &c. there's no Government of these, but by keeping under and suppressing them, they cannot be kept in order, they are not subject to the Law of God, nor can be, Rom. 8:7, but must be rooted out and Crucified. Those that are Christ's, must crucify the flesh with the Affections and Lusts. Gal. 5:24. Our business is, not barely to moderate them, but to kill them. Moderate Pride, or moderate Envy, or moderate malice, or moderate Covetousness, is not that which should be intended, in the Government of the heart, nor is there any such thing possible, the least degree of lust is immoderate. As Christ determines the case about swearing, whether it be little or greater Oaths, Mat. 5:34. 'It is not, swear but a little, or but seldom, but swear not at all; such must be the determination here, be not Proud at all, be not Envious or Malicious or Covetous at all; to allow ourselves to be moderately Proud, or Covetous, is all one, as to allow men to be moderate Drunkards, or moderate Adulterers; this may be as well allowed, as moderate lusts. Moderate Lusts will cast into intolerable fire. Possibly thy Hell may not be altogether as hot and scorching, whose Lusts are more tame, but yet it will be intolerable; It is poor comfort for anyone to think, I shall have the easiest place in Hell; He that is least in the Kingdom of God, shall have his load of Everlasting Glory; shall have as much joy and blessedness as his heart can hold, shall be full of the goodness and Glory of the Lord; and he that is least in the Kingdom of darkness, shall have more than his load of the wrath of God; his heart shall be brim full, and running over; the fury of the Lord shall break the Backs and the Bones, and tear the Bowels; inexpressible Torment shall be given to the least of the Damned Sinners. Moderate lust, if it be not mortified lust, will cast into intolerable Wrath and Vengeance; therefore these must not be suffered in the least degree, but must be crucified and mortified.

But how may I suppress these Lusts?

1. Never make your Flesh your Favorite. If a Prince take a Rebel for a Friend, and take him into his Bosom, not only his Government, but his Life is in danger. How was it with Samson, when he took in Delilah into his Bosom? She betrayed his strength from him, She betrayed him into the hands of the Philistines. If you befriend this Flesh, it will betray you, it will betray you into the hands of the Devil; little do you think what mischief you are working to yourselves, whilst you favor your Flesh. In nourishing your corrupt Flesh, you nourish a Viper, that will sting you to the Heart. Know it for your Enemy, and keep it off from you as your Enemy. Do not gratify and please and pamper your Flesh, but starve it rather, and crucify it. If we would be so wise, as to count our lusts our Enemies, and deal with them as our Enemies, deal more hardly, and more severely with them, we should rid ourselves of much of our danger, and of our disturbance in the ordering our hearts.

2. Never make the Flesh your Counselor. Gal. 1:16. When it pleased the Father, to reveal his Son in me immediately I conferred not, that is, consulted not with flesh and blood. Let Flesh and Blood be none of your Favorites, nor none of your Counselors. What Government is there like to be, when the King is compassed about with wicked Counselors? Prov. 25:5. Take away the wicked from about the King, and his Throne shall be Established by Righteousness. Then there's like to be a Holy Government within you, when you have none but Holy Counselors. Your Flesh will be just such a Counselor to you, as Rehoboams young men were to him, 1 Kings 12, their Counsel cost him the loss of the Kingdom.

Do not ask Counsel of your Flesh, nor take its Counsel. If you would know what you should eat or drink, or to what measure, do not ask your Appetites counsel; that would say, eat to the full, spare not for cost; eat what thou hast a mind to, drink whilst thou listest. Do not ask your Pride, how shall I be clothed? What Garments shall I wear, what Fashion shall I use? If you ask your Pride, what counsel do you

think 'twould give you? Do not ask your Covetousness, what alms shall I give, what good shall I do with my Estate, where shall I bestow what I have? Keep it to thyself, keep it for thine own, make thee great with what thou hast gotten; build thee a House, and build thee a Name in the Earth, for a Rich and Wealthy man; get what thou canst, and then leave thy substance for thy Babes, thy Children after thee; that's the Counsel that Covetousness would give. Do not ask thy sloth, what pains is needful to be taken for God or thy Soul; whether industry and diligence in working out thy salvation be so necessary; Sloth will counsel thee, take thine ease, do not make the way to Heaven harder or straighter than God hath made it, favor thyself, and do not expose thyself to too much hardness.

Christians, you have Multitudes of Lusts, that will be ready to give you counsel in every case, but take heed, take counsel of none of them. Take counsel of God, take counsel of the Scriptures, take counsel of Conscience; how would God have me to use my Estate? What Alms would he have me to give? What Bounty, what Liberality doth he call me to? How would God and Conscience have me to feed myself, and clothe myself? Doth God say as this Pride says? On with thy Ornaments, follow the Fashions, deck thyself with that attire that will best please thee; doth God say as thine Appetite says? Eat whatever thine heart lusteth after, drink as much, and fit at it as long as thou hast a mind to? Doth Conscience say, as this sloth saith? Favor thyself, take thine ease, be not too painful and industrious for thy Soul, be not too strict or too precise, nor expose thyself to the contempt and scorn of the World, by thy zeal in Religion? Take counsel of God Christians, take counsel of Scripture and Conscience, but do not make Flesh and Blood your Counselors: To make your Flesh your Counselor, is to take the Malefactor from the Barr to the Bench, and there set it in Judgment in its own case; your Lusts are the Malefactors, that are to be consulted against, to be condemned and crucified; to the Barr with them, let them have sentence against them, but let them not be called up to the Bench to be consulted withal.

3. Never look for any Government or safety, till you have gotten this Flesh under Foot. It will be in the Throne if it can; while it lives, it will be aspiring to the Government. Deal with your Flesh as Herod and Pilate did with Christ, when they feared he would take away the Kingdom: Let it be Crucified, or as Saul endeavored to do by David, who he feared would be King in his room. He did all he could to rid the Country of him. He persecuted him from City to City, from hold to hold, and raised Forces against him to slay David. Look with the same evil Eye at Lust, as Saul did on him; prosecute it from hold to hold, seek the Life of this Flesh, which is every day undermining your Souls, and taking the Government out of your hands.

O Friends, that you were deeply sensible what a mischievous and mortal Enemy this carnal mind, this carnal heart, these Fleshly Lusts are to you; say of these, not only as Rebekah of the Daughters of Heth, I am weary of my life, but I am in danger of my life, because of the Daughters of Heth. O it were a comfort, might one hear Christians more heartily groaning under their Tyranny; Woe is me because of this proud heart, woe is me because of this froward pettish angry impatient Spirit; O this envy, O this Earthliness, O this sluggishness; wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me? It would be comfortable to hear you groaning; I do not say complaining; complaints often come not deep, but sighing and groaning and mourning in secret, before him who seeth in secret, this hearty mourning and affliction under your Lusts, is a degree of striving against them; and hearty striving is a degree of victory over them. When you are once come heartily to say, I can never have ease, and I will never have peace with this pride, or Covetousness, or any of my Lusts; and if they abide in me, they shall never abide in peace in me; if I cannot utterly conquer them, through the help of God, I will never give over fighting against them; if they remain in me, I hope they shall never again reign in me; I will resist them, I will pray against them, I will watch against them, I hope I shall never again resign up to this Pride, or this Covetousness, but will withstand them, in the Name of the Lord will I withstand them; to him I resign up the Government of my Soul, in hope that he will make my Foes

my Foot-stool. Friends, such a resolved and effectual striving against Lust, is a fair degree of conquest, and when your Enemies are thus put under your Feet, you may then with the more ease, have the Government of yourselves upon your Shoulders. But O beware of a Flesh favoring Heart, beware of a Lust excusing heart.

The good party. Grace must be excited and upheld. Christians must hold a hard hand, and a straight hand upon Lust, upon every Lust; there's no good to be done whilst these are suffered; and they must quicken and cherish and encourage every little spark of the Grace of God. These are the good Subjects in the Kingdom, which must be countenanced and upheld. 2 Tim. 1:14. That good thing which is committed to thee keep by the Holy Ghost. Whatever that good thing was that's there meant, it is certain, that the Grace of God is the great good thing that must be kept; keep it safe that it be not lost; keep it alive, that it grow not to decay; keep it in good liking, nourish and cherish the Grace of God. Kings must be nursing Fathers, Queens nursing Mothers to their good Subjects; So must Christians be to the good in their hearts; keep Grace in good plight, and keep it in good order, keep it in action Let your Faith be working Faith, let your Love and your Holy desires be working Love, and working desires. There's no way to keep Grace in Life, without you keep it in action; Holy action is both the end of keeping Grace in Life, and the means to maintain its life.

O Christians, keep your Graces in constant exercise; be busily working for God and Glory; do not let these precious Talents rust for want of use; whilst Grace lies idle or asleep, then Lust Lord's it in the Soul. If you keep it not in constant action, to the crucifying of Lust, Lust will be busy a crucifying of Grace.

What Government will there be, when Governors side with, and take the part of evil ones, and curb and discountenance, or take part against them that are good? If you would govern your hearts aright, take part with the Grace that is in you, and take up Arms against Lust. Thou hast Pride in thy heart, thou hast frowardness, thou hast

Covetousness, but wilt thou take part with these? Wilt thou be on the side of thy lusts? Tread upon them; be glad, be thankful for every word, for every Friend that will speak against the Pride and Covetousness of thy Heart. Be not angry when thou art checked or reprov'd, be thankful for anything that speaks against them. But take part with the good that is in you; when the Spirit lusteth against the flesh, when Grace rises and resists Corruption, when the interest of Christ within thee, crosseth and contradicteth the interest of the Flesh, take part with Christ and his Grace. We are too apt to take part with our Flesh, when we do not think we do. When the Flesh enticeth us to what we would have, this liberty, or that gain, or pleasure, we sometimes to do our Flesh a kindness, will study arguments to prove it good and right, which Flesh would have. Though it be naught or pernicious, yet because its pleasing to our Flesh, we do what we can to prove it lawful and good. This is a taking part with the flesh, a siding with and strengthening this Rebel.

On the other side, when Grace calls us to Duties that are contrary to the Flesh, to hard and self-denying Duties; to more strictness, to more Severity than our flesh can bear, then we often study Objections against it; Christ is not so austere—, but while we thus take part with the flesh, the evil that is in us, and thereby take part against the good that is in us, what Government is there like to be, all the while in those hearts, where the Rebels are sided with, and the good Subjects discountenanced and opposed?

5. In strengthening the sinews of Government, Rewards and Punishments. What are laws? What Government can there be if there were no Rewards and Punishments? Who would obey, if there were no reward to obedience? Who would fear to rebel, if men should suffer nothing for their rebellion? Rewards and Punishments, are the Sanction and strength of Laws. Now for the strengthening of these sinews of Government, consider,

1. That there is an eternal World. After we have made an end in this World, there is another where we must have a being. Man dieth not

as a beast dieth, as a Dog or a Swine; as a Wiseman dieth not as a Fool dieth, so neither do Wise men or Fools, die as a Beast dieth; there is not an end of us when we die, as there is of the Beasts that perish; we pass away out of this, into another World. Eccl. 12:7. Then shall the dust return to the earth, and the spirit to God that gave it. Man, though he hath a mortal body, yet he hath an immortal Soul. The Spirit of a man, is the Candle of the Lord; and when this Candle is once lighted, it shall never go out. Its carried away hence, but its carried to God that gave it. The Souls of all men, good and bad, when they die, do all go to God; even those that go to the Devil, are first carried to God, by him to receive their Sentence to their everlasting state. Sinners when they die, go not to God as their Reward, or Blessedness, but to God as their Judge. Sinners will say as Christ did, Luke 23:46. Father into thy hands I commend my spirit, but God will say to them, who are ye? Away from me ye workers of iniquity, I know you not, Mat. 7:23. I am none of your Father, ye are of your Father the Devil; get you down to him. Commend your Spirits to me? What have you given up your Souls to the Devil, and all your life long have they been serving of him, and he been corrupting and depraving of them, blinding them, hardening them, made them such a filthy and unclean thing, and now do ye think to come off so, to commend these filthy and unclean Souls to me? Away with them, I will none of them. If those that are sanctified by my Spirit, and serve me with their Spirit, come to me when they die, I will take them to me; I will acknowledge myself their Father, they shall dwell with me; but those that have served sin, and the Devil while they lived, let not them think to commend their Spirits to me when they die, I will none of them. Well but whether we must dwell with God or the Devil, into the other World all Souls, good and bad must pass when they go hence.

2. There is an eternal Judgment. So the Apostle tells us. Heb. 6:2, of the Doctrine of eternal Judgment. It is called an Eternal Judgment, not as if the day of Judgment should last forever; in how long or how short a time, that judgment shall be dispatched, no man certainly knows; the glorious God can make short work, and will do so, in that

great and dreadful day. Its called Eternal Judgment because it sentenceth men to their everlasting state, and its the last judgment, there shall never be another to all Eternity, but the sentence of this Judgment shall stand forever. 2 Cor. 5:10. We must all stand before the Judgment — Rom. 2:6. Who will render to every man according to his works— to them that by patient continuance in well-doing, do seek for glory honor and immortality, eternal Life; but to them that are contentious, and obey not the truth, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every Soul of them that do evil.

3. In the Judgment to come, the secrets of the heart shall be opened and judged: Men shall be judged for their words, men shall be judged for their deeds, but not for these only, but for the secrets of their hearts. Eccl. 12:14. God shall bring every work to Judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil. The Judgments of men are only over our Bodies, and outward Acts; they know not our hearts, and therefore cannot be our hearts Judges. But,

1. God sees the heart. I the Lord search the heart and try the reins. Jer. 17:10. He seeth in secret, and he that seeth in secret, will reward openly; Mat. 6:4.

1. He seeth the good that is in secret, the love and fear of his Name, our inward desires and thirsting's and breathings after him; every holy thought, every holy purpose, the inward mourning's of the heart, under sin and temptation, the inward strivings & wrestling's of the heart, against temptation and corruption, our self-loathing's and self-abasing's, the integrity and uprightness of our hearts; whilst men are censuring or reproaching or punishing us as hypocrites, God sees the integrity that is in our Souls. O Friends, get an honest upright heart in the sight of God, you shall never lose the benefit and blessedness of it, God sees the sincerity of the upright, and will certainly reward it.

2. He seeth the evil that is in secret; the proud heart, the false and guileful heart are open before him. Beware of playing the Hypocrite,

of satisfying yourselves with Hypocritical Duties, hypocritical Praying, hypocritical Hearing, or Professing, God sees what that heart of thine is a doing, while thy tongue is a praying, or thine ear hearing, thou mayst deceive men and thine own self, but God cannot be deceived.

2. The secrets of the heart shall be opened and judged in that Judgment of God. 1 Cor. 4:5. Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the Counsels of the heart, and then shall every man have praise of God.

1. The things of the heart are hidden and dark things. The thoughts of the heart dark thoughts, the Counsels of the Lord dark Counsels, even the good things that are in the heart, are to all others but dark things.

2. In the day of Judgment, these things of darkness shall be all brought to light; the secrets shall be all made manifest. What a sight will there be in that day, when the hearts of all the World, shall be seen as it were at one view; What a blessed sight will there be, when all the Beauty and inward Glory of the Saints, all their Graces, shall be seen! What a black sight also will there be, when all the filth and garbage that is in sinners hearts, all the venomous brood, all the Cockatrices eggs, that ever have been hatched in those unclean hearts; when all the wicked Counsels and Devices of their hearts, all the Curses and Blasphemies, all the Cozenage and Fraud of the heart, all the wicked Plots and Contrivances of the heart against God or his Saints, all the Adulteries and Filthiness of the heart, all the Madness and Follies of the heart, all the Malice, and Spite, and Rage of the heart: when all these shall be presented at one view, O what an odious sight will there be! Sinners, do not cheat yourselves in your sinful ways, with hopes of Secrecy; for all must be brought to light. If all that wickedness and hypocrisy, if those filthy lusts and unclean thoughts, that are in your hearts should be now seen, by all this Congregation, how would you be ashamed, and how would you blush

to look anybody in the Face! But because thy naughty heart and its naughty thoughts, and desires cannot be seen, thou mayest be a proud fellow, of a froward heart, of a dissembling lying heart, and nobody the wiser, therefore thou lettest thyself alone to be as thou art; as long as thou hast a secret covering for all thy ugly Conditions, 'tis well enough; but do not cheat thyself thus, all these hidden things of darkness must be brought to light, thou must be turned inside outward, and all the shame of thy Nakedness, and thy Naughtiness be made appear, and be laid open before God Angels and Men.

4. There are eternal Rewards and Punishments, that in this Judgment of God, shall be awarded to every soul. Whatever the state of your Souls shall then be found to be, they shall receive a due recompense of reward, and eternal recompense. Therefore this Judgment, as I told you before, Heb. 6:2, is called an eternal Judgment, because it appoints to every man an eternal reward. To the repenting and renewed and upright hearts, it appoints Eternal Blessedness for their Reward; to the impenitent wicked and unrenewed Hearts, it appointeth Eternal Torment for their Reward. Mat. 25:48. These, the wicked, shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. O what a weight is there in the Crown of Glory, that shall be the reward of the righteous. The Apostle calls it an exceeding eternal weight of Glory, 2 Cor. 4:17. And O what a weight is there in that Curse, and that wrath that shall be the reward of the Wicked! How will it break the backs and crush the bones, and tear the bowels, and burn the Souls, of every wicked one! Sinners, a fire, a fire is prepared for you. What Torment is like the Torment of fire, and what fire is like the fire of Hell! But O that word, Eternity, Eternity, that's the scalding and scorching Word; Everlasting Fire that shall never be quenched. How weary are the days, how long are the nights to a sick man, that's tormented in his bed? But what will an eternal night be, that shall never know morning! Who can dwell with the devouring fire, who can dwell with everlasting burnings, Isa. 33:14. It is fire that you must have your dwelling in; It is devouring fire that will devour all your former goins and pleasures of sin; as the lean kine in Pharaohs dream, did eat up

the fat ones, This fire shall eat up all your pleasant days and merry nights. Ye will devour yourselves; these Bodies and Souls it will devour; it will devour by burning, a tormenting burning. O dreadful! Sinners, do not your hearts yet tremble? What not to think of burning? Devouring burning? How do ye think that ye shall look upon sin, when these Bodies and these Souls of yours shall be all on a light fire? When those Eyes, and that Tongue, and those Hands, and every Limb, shall be all glowing fire, as red-hot iron in a Furnace? How do ye think ye shall endure it? But yet you have not all, the worst is yet behind; 'tis Everlasting burnings, fire that shall never be quenched. O that word, Never, never, never an end, what a burning Dagger will it be, in the Souls of those damned ones? Think what it hath already been to Judas, who hath been burning in this fire, above 1600 years; think what it hath been to Cain, that hath been burning there almost ever since the World began, above 5000 years, and yet are burning still at this day; what a long and dismal time have they had of it already? But all this is not so much as a minute, or a moment to those Everlasting Ages of Torment, that are still to run out, and will never be expired. Such are the Rewards of the Wicked, Torment, Torment in extremity, and Torment to Eternity; and the upright heart shall be rewarded with a weight of Glory and Joy, and this shall be an exceeding and eternal Glory.

5. A sense of these eternal Rewards, is the very strength and sinews of Government, Where I shall show,

1. What I mean by a sense of these eternal things. There are three things in it.

1. A believing these things. That there is such an Eternal Judgment, and Eternal Reward. These things are certain, Psal. 58:11. Verity there is a reward for the righteous, verily he is a God that Judgeth in the earth. And as verily as there is a reward for the righteous, so verily there is a reward for the Sinner. These things are certain, and these things must be believed. Heb. 11:6. He that cometh to God must believe that God is, and that he is the rewarder of them that

diligently seek him. And as he must be believed a Rewarder of them that seek him, so a Revenger of them that slight him, and disobey him. He that cometh to God, and will obtain this Reward, and escape this vengeance, must believe this, or he will never come. The reason of the Rebellion of men's hearts against God, is their unbelief; believe the Judgment of God, and that will bring you under his Government. When you come to say, verily 'tis so, this is no sable or delusion, 'tis certainly so, 'tis undoubtedly so, such a Judgment there shall be, such rewards there shall be given, as verily as if I saw it done, then your hearts will be governed, and never till then

2. An understanding what these rewards shall be. What great and wonderful Rewards they are. Things to come must be known ere they will affect. Heady sinners, However they say, they believe, yet they little know what 'tis to believe. They know not what 'tis to be saved, they know not what 'tis to be damned. Psal. 92:6,7. A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this. When the wicked spring up, as the grass, and all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they should be destroyed forever. A brutish man understandeth not this neither, that sinners shall be destroyed, nor what a dreadful destruction their destruction shall be. Its true these things to come cannot be perfectly known here; we know but in part, we understand but imperfectly; 1 Cor. 13:9, 1 Joh. 3:2. It doth not yet appear what we shall be. Now are we Sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be. And so of sinners, now are they the children of the Devil, but it doth not yet appear what they shall be. Sinners that are brands prepared for the burning, do little think what that burning is, that is prepared for them; and they shall never know it perfectly, till they come there. But yet such a knowledge of these great and astonishing things may be had here, as may work mightily towards the governing of the heart; and a knowledge there must be of them, or they will never work. There is a fore-knowledge, that's gotten by believing, and meditating of these things. Psal. 107:43. Who so is wise will ponder these things, and they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord; and as his loving kindness, so his Wrath and indignation; and there is an after-knowledge or an

experimental knowledge. Some sinners will never know what hell is, till they know it by experience; till they fall into the pit, and the sense of that wrath, when they come to be preyed upon and wrapped up in the devouring Flames, teach them what a dreadful wrath it is. Beware sinners of such an experimental knowledge of Hell; wherein your flesh and your bones, and the Torments of them, shall make you know, what now you will not understand. 'It is a foreknowledge, by observing and pondering what is written, and preached of these great things, that is necessary to your present Government.

3. A feeling of these things. I mean now, a feeling beforehand; a feeling that's gotten by your fore-knowledge. What we believe and understand if they be great things, will make impressions upon our senses. By the knowledge of God, and of the blessedness of Heaven, the Saints get some foretastes of that Glory and Blessedness. 1 Pet. 2:3. If we have tasted that the Lord is gracious. And by the knowledge of the Wrath and Judgments of God, some sinners get a taste of that wrath; it makes their hearts to begin to burn above ground. There's a heaven begun in the hearts of Saints, and a hell begun in the hearts of some Sinners.

And this now is that, which I mean by a sense of the things to come; the getting such a belief of the certainty of these things, such an understanding of the greatness of these things, that may deeply affect the Heart; that may leave powerful impressions on the Senses; that the heart may be powerfully moved and deeply affected with them. Sinners hearts are as stones and senseless stocks, when we have spoken to them of the deep things of God, we may say of these eternal things, as the Apostle of his temporal Sufferings, Acts 20:24. None of these things move them, or will in the least work upon them; but if we could let in a little more light into their Minds, if we could show them some glimpses of the Glory to some, some flashes of the Eternal fire, this would make those stocks to feel.

2. This sense of the eternal things is the sinews of Government. There can be no Government without Rewards and Punishments,

and if these Rewards and Punishments be not believed, known and perceived, its all one as to Government, as if there were none at all. 'It is the understanding and sense of these Rewards, that is the strength of Government.

Now there is according to the two different Rewards, a different sense of them.

1. An alluring encouraging and obliging sense: A sense of the Magnificence, of the Kindness and Mercies of the Lord will encourage to Subjection and obedience to him. It will draw forth our love, and stir up all our Powers, to active Obedience. O how would the lively sense of God and the blessedness of Heaven kindle Affection enlarge our desires, raise our hopes, and fill us with joy? What would be loved as God is loved? What would be desired as God is desired? What would be hoped for, as heaven is hoped for? What would our love or desires or hopes find too much to be done or suffered, where there is a deep sense of these great things, that shall be the reward of all.

And how would such a lively sense of God and of heaven, abate our love, and cool our desires after earth and the things thereof? Who would regard dust and stones and trash, that had Gold and Pearls before him? What would this money be, these Sheep and Oxen be, these carnal pleasures and sports be, how easily could they be wanted, how little would they be loved or desired, were that Glory, Honor, Immortality that is above, more before our Eye and upon our Hearts? You complain you cannot get your hearts loosened and disentangled from these earthly things; O 'tis because heaven is so much out of sight: you have so little sense of the good things to come, that hence it is you fall a lusting so after the good things present. Get more sense of God into your hearts, and you will feel your Affections to fall, and abate towards these earthly things. Look on the things not seen, as the Apostle did, 2 Cor. 4:18. Upon the things that are eternal, and you will disdain and contemn, the things that are seen which are but Temporal.

2. The sense of the punishments to come will be an awing sense. The severities of the Lord, and his dreadful wrath and vengeance would awe the heart into subjection to him. O what an influence would this have upon the Governing our fears, and our griefs and our anger? Whom should we then fear but God? What would the wrath of man be, what would temporal sufferings be, how little would they be feared, were there a due awe of God upon our hearts? Your awe of God would say the same to you as the Prophet. Isa. 2:22. Cease ye from man, trust not in him, and fear him not; and as Christ said, Rev. 2:10. Fear none of those things you shall suffer. And Luk. 12:5. Fear not them that kill the body — fear God who is able to cast into Hell. Whom should we then fear but God? And what should we then fear but sin against God, which maketh so obnoxious to his wrath? You that now make light of Sin, can lie, and defraud, and be covetous, and do anything else your hearts lead you to, and make nothing of it, or but a small matter, Get an awe of God on your hearts, and your sins would make you tremble, and what an influence would it have upon the suppressing your sinful Anger? It would take up all our quarrels; a sense of Heaven and Hell would make us all friends, those great things would swallow up the lesser. What do I stand vexing and fretting my self at everyone that crosseth me? How stands it with my Soul to God ward? How may I escape the wrath to come? Is it peace betwixt the Almighty and my Soul? Friends, 'tis a sign that you have little sense of your eternal concernments, where every little thing so excessively moves, and disturbs your Spirits.

3. How to get and maintain upon our hearts, this sense of the eternal things.

There are two things, I have told you, are supposed to this sense, a believing, and an understanding these great things; and to the improving of what we believe, and understand of them, there's a third thing necessary, Meditation and frequent thinking upon them. Exercise your thoughts more upon the Eternal World; spend more thoughts, think oftener upon it, and spend more deep thoughts of

heart upon them. Our thinking and meditating, is the same with that looking on the things not seen, mentioned before, 2 Cor. 4. Look more Heavenward, and look more towards hell, and this will affect your hearts; particularly think these three thoughts.

1. Think this thought, In this eternal world I must shortly be, one of these two Rewards must be my Reward; one of these two States, Eternal Blessedness or Eternal Misery, must be my State. That Heaven which I now hear Preached of, that Hell which I now am warned of, I shall be [in] one of them, in a little while. As sure as I am alive, and here this day, so sure shall I be in Heaven or Hell a few days hence, what's become of those many that were alive a few years since, that I knew and was acquainted with, and did eat and drink with, and buy and sell with, that now are no more seen? Where are they all? They are all passed over, and gone into the other World, They are gone, and I am following after, I must shortly be with them. The Saints that are dead and gone, they are entered into their Reward, they are gone to Christ, they are entered into the joy of their Lord; and if I be one of them, partaker of the same Faith, walking in the same holy steps, I also shall have the same reward. The sinners that are dead and gone, they are entered into their Reward; shut out from the Presence and Joy of the Lord, and shut up under Chains of darkness, and burning in the Furnace of Fire; and if I follow them in their sins, and be impenitent therein, a little while hence I shall I shall overtake them; I shall have [my] chain with them, my furnace with them.

Well let this be one thought of your hearts, how nearly you are all concerned in the other World, and how certainly you shall be there. As sure as you have a being for a time in this World, so sure shall you every one of you have an Eternal being in the other World; either in the everlasting pleasures above, or the everlasting pangs and plagues below.

2. Think much this thought, Which of these two states in Eternity must be my state, is determining every day. It is thy present life,

thine every days course here, that must determine the Case, whither thou must, when thou goest hence, Rom. 2:7,8. Thy reward must be according to thy work, thy reaping must be according to thy sowing. Gal. 6:7,8. Think with yourselves, I am every day working for Eternity, sowing for Everlasting; what would you reap? What would you, should be your reward in the other world? I know what you would answer here, I would reap in Mercy, I would be rewarded in Joy and Glory. But what [must] you reap, where must your reward be? Why that you are every day determining. Look what your ways and your works are, such your reward must be, Sow in Righteousness and you shall reap in mercy, Hos. 10:12. Sow in tears, and you shall reap in joy. Psal. 126:6. But if you sow in Tares, sow to your flesh, sow Sin and Vanity, I leave it to yourselves to judge, what your reaping must be.

Were such thoughts abiding upon our hearts, what manner of Persons should we then be? Is this the business of my life? Is this the great debate of every day, where mine everlasting dwelling must be, whether in the Paradise of God, or in the dungeon with Devils, whether in everlasting Blessedness, or Burnings? Is this the great question to be resolved and determined, what I shall be hereafter, by what I am every day? O no more sinning against God; O no more neglecting of Christ; O no more hardness and impenitency of heart; O no more of this worldliness, or wantonness, or drunkenness; mine heart shakes to think, whither these are carrying me, and where they will lay me. Arise O my Soul, shake off these Lusts, shake thyself out of sleep; 'tis high time to awaken; stop, stop this evil course; cast off the works of darkness, lest thou be suddenly swallowed up of Everlasting darkness.

3. Think this thought, The state and the way of mine [heart] is the great thing that must determine what mine eternal state must be. My works must determine what my reward must be, and the state of mine heart will determine what my works will be.

Well now, exercise yourselves to such thoughts; dwell in such Meditations; and think not that you have done anything to purpose, till your thoughts have begotten strong impressions upon your hearts, and you are wrought to a sense of those great things, and let your sense of them be an abiding sense.

O what even and steady lives should we then live; the evenness of our lives will be both the beauty of our Conversations, when there is a due proportion of our days one to another, this will make our lives beautiful; and 'twill be, the evidence of our integrity. Fits of Devotion, fits of holy Affections, will prove little to us of our uprightness; our deadness and dumps, when those fits are overs will weaken all our hopes and confidences, and call all into question. It is our standing holy Affections, that will be our standing Comfort.

O friends, how uneven and unsteady are we? What unstable Souls? What wandering stars are we? How sadly different are we from ourselves? Sometimes in our secret duties, or at public Ordinances, our hearts seem full of God, full of heavenly Affections. What moving's, what melting's, what enlargements of heart do we feel? All spirit, and love, and joy, and then shortly after, behold all is lost; our Sun dips into a Cloud, the stars fall to the Earth, our Spirits sink and flag, and the flesh gets up again. O if we could but hold in the serene temper we sometimes are in, what a life should we have of it! But it doth not hold; we are given to Changes, the temper of our hearts often change with our business and employments; when we are busying ourselves about the things of God, then we are spiritual and heavenly, ('twere well if it were so always) when we are called forth about our earthly employments, we become as earthly as other men. Do you none of you find it so? Do you not complain 'tis so? Lord help me, it is even too true, I even find it so with me; sometimes our tempers change with our company, when we are conversant with those that fear God, there is some Spirit, and some savor in our Converses, O it were well if it were always so; sometimes and too often, we are barren, and carnal and dead, in the best Society, our conversing with Christians, is too often an useless, and carnal, and

unsavory Converse. But if it be better with us, when in good company, how doth it use to be, when we fall into carnal company, or vain company? We seem to have even quite lost our God, and our Religion, our eternal concernments are laid by, and our care about them is intermitted, our God and our Souls are thrust behind the door, or trodden underfoot.

Whence is all this? O our sense of eternal things, is for the time worn off. Brethren, God is the same God, Mal. 3:6. I am the Lord, I change not. There's the same eye of God upon you, wherever you be, he that looks how you carry it in your Duties, looks upon you in your businesses, looks upon you in every company. Wherever you are; and as God is the same God, so your everlasting concernments are still the same; Heaven is as much to be desired, Hell as much to be feared, your Salvation is to be as carefully wrought out; you have as important business lying upon you everywhere, as you have anywhere, and this work will never prosper, if it hath not your constant care. 'Tis true, we are not to speak the same words, in all Companies, and our behavior is not to be alike, in its particular Circumstances, in all Companies; but in the general, a serious and holy behavior, the carrying ourselves so as men that are in a journey heavenwards, the owning and propagating serious Religion, the behaving ourselves so, that others may evidently see the spirit of Glory, and of God resting upon us, and may be both convinced that God is in us of a truth, and if it be possible, be gained to God; or at least made ashamed of their own sinful and carnal ways. Such a temper should we be in, and such a carriage should we be of, in what Company soever we be; we are always in the sight of God, and we should be nowhere but upon business for God, and we should carry ourselves as such; What the Apostle speaks of his Ministry, should be exemplified in the practice of Christians, 2 Cor. 2:17. As of sincerity, as of God, in the sight of God, so speak we in Christ. Wherever you are, behave yourselves in sincerity, in simplicity; whatever you speak, speak it as in the sight of God; be faithful, approve yourselves to God in all that you do.

O friends, this, even this steady, this sincere course of life, this universal approving yourselves to God in all you do, will be the fruit of such an abiding sense of God upon your hearts. This will be the poise that will make you move swiftly, this will be the Ballast, that will make you sail steadily. And this swift and steady motion heavenward, will both make you appear to be Christians indeed, and mightily improve and advance your souls, in that grace of God that bringeth Salvation. O beloved that this now might be the fruit of these many words, that I have spoken to you; that you would, every one of you, set your hearts to it, to get and to hold, such a deep sense of the eternal things upon your spirits, as might have influence to the carrying you on in this even and steady course. Do not everyone of you need some establishment? More settledness, more fixedness in a heavenly frame? Do not you feel yourselves so up and down, so off and on, that you can hardly fix? Would it not be more comfortable for you, if you could get to be more like the unchangeable God, that as he is the same God, so you might be the same Christians, of the same Spirit, of the same way, so fixed and composed in your Spirits, that you might not be moved from the hope, nor from the holiness of the Gospel? Would it not be comfortable to you, were it thus with you? Would it not be much to the honor of the Gospel, and to the joy of your own Souls? Then once again, I exhort you by the Lord Jesus, get this sight of God in your eye, keep this sense of God upon your hearts, which will have its fruit unto this settled and even course of holiness, the end whereof will be everlasting life. This is that which I strive for, and am reaching towards in mine own Soul, and I must say with the Apostle, Phil. 3:12. I press these things upon you, not as though I had already obtained, but I follow after if I may obtain through Christ Jesus. And what I seek, and wait, and hope for in mine own Soul, my hearts desire is, that you also may follow after, and be partakers of the same Grace, that my Soul is in pursuit of, that you and I may rejoice together in the day of the Lord. Thus much for the keeping the heart under Government.

CHAP. XXIII

Keep the Heart under Guard

2. Keep the Heart under Guard. Keep it, and all the good that's in it in safety, that it be not lost. Christians must keep their Hearts, as Worldlings keep their Money, and their Jewels, and their writings, by which they hold their Estates. If they have any stronger or safer place than other, there they lay them up, and whatever else they have to look to, their special eye and their strictest Watch, is upon their treasure. And here I shall show you,

1. Why Christians must especially guard their hearts.

2. How Christians must guard their hearts.

1. Why Christians must especially guard their hearts. They must set a guard upon their tongues, they must watch their words, and all their carriages, but above all keeping, they must keep their hearts. So the word in the Text is rendered, and interpreted by some, keep the heart with diligence, above all keepings. Keep the heart, but why so? Because the heart is,

1. The fountain of Life.

2. The spring of all vital actions.

3. The record of all our sacred Transactions.

4. The cabinet of our Jewels.

5. Our box of evidences.

6. The ark of our strength.

7. A sacrifice for God.

8. The temple of the Lord.

1. Because the heart is the fountain of Life. It is the reason urged in the Text, for out of it are the issues of Life. The issues, that is, the streams, or rivulets of life. The heart is the fountain from whence all our living streams do flow. Christ is our life, and the seat or habitation of Christ is in the heart; therefore that expression, Col. 1:27. Christ in you the hope of Glory. The hope of the Saints is a living and lively hope, the life of our hope is from Christ, and from Christ within us, Eph. 3:17. Christ dwells in the heart by Faith. The heart Natural, is the fountain of Natural Life, it is the *primum vivens*; and the heart Spiritual is the fountain of Spiritual Life; we begin to live from within; as death begins in the heart, so life. Death Natural ends in the heart, the heart is the last that dieth, but death spiritual begins in the heart, the heart is the first that dies. Sinners dead works do all arise from their dead hearts; the root dies first, and then the branches, and fruit wither and fall off; the Devils great design is, firstly upon the heart, when he hath slain the good that is within, he can with ease destroy whatever good is without, the fruit will fall off of itself, when the root is dead. The heart is the first that dies, in a spiritual sense, and 'tis the first that lives. It is there the seed of God, his immortal Seed, is first received, and takes its root; so that there is the same reason to set a guard upon our hearts, as to preserve our life, if you would keep yourselves alive, if you would not fall down among the dead, then look well to your hearts which are the fountain of life.

2. It is the spring of all our vital actions and operations. This is included in the former; the heart is the fountain of life, and life is the fountain of action. A dead man cannot see, nor hear, nor speak, nor move, he must live before he can speak or move. And what can the spiritually dead do? The dead praise not the Lord, Psal. 115:17. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, Is. 38:19. That is spoken, of the naturally dead, and living; and must we not say the same, of the

spiritually dead, and the living Souls? Dead Souls cannot praise the Lord; they cannot pray, nor believe, nor hope, nor serve the Lord; the living, the living Soul, it shall praise thee, it shall pray unto thee, and serve thee. Hypocrites are all dead at heart, and therefore all their services are but dead services; they make a show, and keep a stir in the outward parts of Religion; they can talk as Christians, and walk and move; but it is with these dead Souls, as with those dead bodies, which we call walking Ghosts; they look like men, and speak like men, and go up and down like men, but still they have no Soul in them; It is the Devil that acts in them, and speaks in them, and carrieth them up and down; none of all their actions or motions are vital actions; the devil can make them speak, and walk, and look like living men, but he cannot make them live; such is the Hypocrites Religion, he can pray, and hear, and sing, and speak as Christians do, but he is dead at heart, and thereupon all his duties are but dead duties.

Friends, you are as much concerned to keep your hearts, as you are to be able to do anything that will please God, or save your Souls. What is the intent of your Religion? Why do ye come together to pray, and hear, and partake of the Table of the Lord? You will say, I come to perform these duties, to please the Lord, I come in order to the saving of my Soul. Do you so? Then look to your hearts better, see that there be the root of Religion within you: see that your praying be the praying with the heart, that your hearing be not the opening your ear, but the opening of your heart to the Word; see that whatever you do, that hath any show of Religion in it, you do it heartily; watch your hearts when you come into the house of the Lord, watch your hearts, when you set upon any work for God, lest they give you the slip, and so make all your Services to be but bodily exercises, which as 1 Tim. 4:8, profit little. Bodily exercises, that is, the outward part of our Religion; Ear Religion, Tongue Religion, Knee Religion; these bodily Exercises, where there is not a heart at the bottom of them, profit nothing at all; they will do nothing to the pleasing of God, or the saving our Souls.

Friends, beware of Hypocrisy; take heed lest any of you be found hypocrites; that your faith you seem to have, be not the faith of hypocrites, that your hope be not the Hypocrites hope, that your praying, and fasting, and alms, be not all the Sacrifices of hypocrites; and such sacrifices they are, if they be Sacrifices without a heart. Come not before the Lord with hollow Vessels, which will make a sound, but have nothing in them. We that look upon you, cannot tell what there is within you; we see your faces, and hear your voices, but what is under, God knows; look you to it, that it be not all hollow, and empty within; he that seeth the heart, seeth what there is within; and will accept or reject according to what he finds of the heart in all you do.

Friends, What do ye here this day? Have you brought with you ever a Sacrifice for God, ever a living Sacrifice? The living God will regard none of you, if you bring not a living Sacrifice. He doth not require of you, as he did of old, a Bullock, or a Ram for a Sacrifice; No, nor a Dove, nor a Lamb for a Sacrifice, it is a Soul for a Sacrifice, a living Soul, that is quickened and sanctified by the Blood and Spirit of Christ. And upon this account farther are you concerned to look to, and to keep your hearts; as ever you would do anything in Religion, that is acceptable with God, or of any avail to your own Salvation. The heart is the spring of all vital Actions, and they are only our vital Actions, our living and lively duties, that will be accepted of the living God. Would you not be rejected for hypocrites? Would you not compass the Lord about with lies, as Ephraim did, Hos. 11:12, would you not come before the Lord with lies, and comfort yourselves with lies? Then see that you bring your hearts with you before him. Is there any life begotten in your hearts? Is Christ formed upon you? Is the Spirit of Christ poured forth into you? Is there the life of God in your hearts? And is this the spring of all your acceptable services? Then as you love your lives, as you fear to serve the living God with dead service, set a careful guard upon your hearts, that neither these be stolen away from God, nor that life which is within you be stolen out of your hearts.

Brethren, I would not that any of you be found hypocrites; therefore do I labor with you, therefore do I preach to you, and warn every one of you, that you may be presented perfect and upright in the day of the Lord. I would not that you be found hypocrites in that day, nor would I that your Religious actions be found hypocritical actions, in your present day. 'It is said of the limbs of Antichrist, 1 Tim. 4:2. That they speak lies in hypocrisies. I would have Christians, not only none such, as speak lies in hypocrisy, no nor to speak truth in hypocrisy, to do good in hypocrisy; and therefore 'tis, that I have spent so much time among you, upon this Subject of looking to your hearts, that these may be right with God, in all that you do. I fear there are hypocrites among you, I fear that much of the Religion of some of you, may be but hypocritical Religion; but look to yourselves, and as you would be loath to have no better acceptance than hypocrites, as you would dread to have your portion with hypocrites, so dread it to satisfy yourselves with hypocritical duties; serve the God of your hearts with an hearty service; serve the true God, with an heart, and with a true heart; serve the living God with living hearts; see that there be the life of God in your hearts, and let the life within you, be the Spring of all your Performances; that all that ever you do in Religion be the issues of life.

3. It is the record of all the transactions, which have been betwixt Christ and your Souls. If ye be Christ's, there have been great dealings betwixt Christ and your Souls; Christ hath been dealing with you; dealing with you by his word, dealing with you by his Spirit; instructing and enlightening your Souls, convincing and awakening your Hearts, persuading and alluring your hearts after him; Christ hath been dealing with you, about your repenting and turning to the Lord, about your Reconciliation and making peace with God; God hath been in Christ reconciling you to himself, 2 Cor. 5:19. You have not had us dealing with you, in the name of Christ, who are the Ministers of Reconciliation, 2 Cor. 5:18, but he who is the great Reconciler, Christ himself hath been dealing with you, and hath reconciled you to God. So sure as the Devil hath been dealing with sinners, he hath drawn them away from God, drawn them to sin and

wickedness against God, hath been hardening them against God; you could never have been so wicked, you could never have been so hardened, against God, as you are; hardened against conversion, hardened against repentance, if the Devil had not been dealing with you. You see what hard hearts you have; we cannot humble you, we cannot persuade you to repent and turn, our words do nothing with you; you will not be persuaded to return, but you go on your way, and remain stupid, and senseless of your sin and misery; you will not be persuaded 'tis so bad with you. We cannot for our hearts, make you sensible of your wretched cases, nor put a stop to you in your sins; You may see well enough who hath been dealing with you, that you continue so sinful still, and so hardened in your sins; It is the Devil that hath had to do with you, thus to deprave you, and to harden you; as sure as the Devil hath been dealing with sinners, so sure hath Christ been dealing with his Saints. 'It is not Ministers that have awakened you, that have convinced and humbled you, and brought you about to the Lord, 'tis Christ that hath done these things for you. We could never have humbled you, we could never have persuaded, nor turned, nor reconciled you to God, if Christ himself had not done it. You were once foolish and disobedient, led about with diverse lusts; you were once Drunkards, Liars, Covetous and Profane, and you had been amongst this uncircumcised Crew to this day, if Christ had not fetched you off; 'tis with him you have had to do, as 'tis said, Heb. 4:13. All things are naked and open before his eyes (with whom we have to do). You have to do with Christ, Christ hath been dealing with you that are Christians, or you had never come to this, you had never been these living Souls; you had never known what you do of God, nor known what you do of Sin, nor been washed from your sins; you had never been here praying, and hearing, and praising the Lord, and become followers of the Lamb, if Christ had not had to do with you. Particularly you that are Christians, there have been great transactions betwixt God and your Souls.

1. In point of Covenant. Behold, you that are Christians, you are in Covenant with the Lord; by reason whereof, I may say concerning

you, as Moses concerning Israel, Deut. 26:17, 18. Thou hast avouched the Lord to be thy God, to walk in his ways and keep his statutes. And the Lord hath avouched thee to be his peculiar People. You have avouched the Lord to be yours, and the Lord hath avouched you to be his; a solemn and mutual Covenant hath there passed, between the Lord and you; he is become your Covenant God, you are become his Covenant People; How came this to pass? How is it, that you are not still as poor sinners are, in Covenant with Death, and Agreement with Hell? How comes it to pass, that when poor sinners are in Covenant with the Devil, you are in Covenant with God? O you may thank Christ for this, he hath been effectually dealing with you in this thing. He hath not only procured such a gracious Covenant, a Covenant of Mercy, a Covenant of Pardons, a Covenant of Peace, but he hath also,

1. Made offer of this Covenant of God to you; inviting you to come and join yourselves to the Lord, in a perpetual Covenant that shall never be forgotten.

2. He hath made void your Covenant with Death, and disannulled your Agreement with Hell. He hath given you a heart to break and make void that wicked Covenant; to break with the Devil, to break with Sin and the World, and to come out from among them.

3. He hath effectually persuaded you into this Covenant of God. He hath brought you into the bond of the Covenant. Ezek. 20:37. He hath sprinkled you with the Blood of the Covenant, and hath gained your hearty acceptance of all this. You have opened your Mouth to the Lord, you have vowed yourselves, you have sworn yourselves his Covenant Servants; not with your Mouths only, not in profession only, but you have engaged your hearts to the Lord. Jer. 30:21. Your Hearts are no longer your own, you have given them to the Lord, to be his forever. So that you can now say, through Grace to the Lord, what he said to Israel. Is. 54:20. The Mountains shall depart, and the Hills shall be removed, but through the help of God, my faithfulness shall not depart, nor shall the Covenant of my peace ever be

removed. His I am, and through his Grace I am determined to be the Lord's forever.

Friends, such a solemn and sacred Covenant transaction, hath there been in those very Hearts of yours, betwixt the Lord and you. He hath avouched himself to be yours, and you have avouched yourselves to be his own; and those Hearts of yours, are the Records wherein this Transaction is registered, and kept. Remember, and look back and consider, if there have not been such mutual engagements passed betwixt the Lord and you. Look into your Closets, and remember what of this kind hath passed between him and you in secret, look back to your Sacraments, and remember what Covenanting have been between the Lord and you at his Table; and what solemn sealing there hath been, God sealing to you, and you sealing back to him. Your Hearts are the Records, wherein these Sacred Transactions have been Registered; look into thine Heart, doth not this testify for thee, how thou hast bound thyself to be the Lord's forever, and hast accepted of his Bond to thee? The remembrance of this Covenant Transaction, will be of use to you as long as you live; will be of use to comfort you in the day of your doubts and fears, to confirm you in the day of Temptations, to hold you close to the Lord, according to the Vows that are upon you, to quicken you and hold you on in that way of holy and lively Obedience, which you have covenanted for. When you grow cold and careless and remiss in your way of Religion, then remember, Is this the Life I covenanted with God to live? When you are tempted to decline to a worldly life, or a fleshly life, then remember, I have promised to the Lord, that I will never return to such a life again. When you are out of heart, and complain of weaknesses and want of strength, and so are discouraged and disheartened, I shall never be able to hold to such an industrious life, then remember the Covenant of the Lord with you; who hath sealed to you, that he will help you and never fail you, nor forsake you; when your flesh and your heart fail you, he will be the strength of your heart. When you are in doubts and fears, that you are none of the Lord's, nor can lay any claim to him, then remember the Covenant which hath been made between

him and you, and how you own it, and stand to it to this day, and that may satisfy you. Of such great use will this Covenant of God be to you, and therefore your hearts, which are the Records where it is kept, must be carefully looked to.

2. In point of Communion. There have been great dealings between Christ and you, in a way of Friendly Communion. What Correspondences have there been held betwixt Christ and you? What friendly interviews have there been between you? Christ hath been often looking down upon you, and rejoicing in his portion, and you have been often looking up to him, and solacing yourselves in his love; Christ hath been supporting and sustaining your hearts, and you have been staying and leaning upon your beloved. What mutual engagements have there been? Christ hath been often sending down Messages of love to you; telling you, Soul I am thine; Hath he never sent thee some tokens of his love? Sent thee thy pardon, sent thee his peace? Hath he never sent thee down some tastes of the hidden Manna, and the white stone, and the new name? Rev. 2:17, and such a comfortable word with it, Soul be of good comfort, thy sins be forgiven thee, thy name is written in heaven. And do you never send up to your beloved? If you have nothing but a sigh to send, or a tear to send, yet up it must be sent to your beloved, to tell him, I am sick of love, or at least, I am sick for love.

How often hath thine heart ascended in Prayers, and his heart descended in gracious returns? What mutual embraces have there been, of thy Faith with him, and his love with thee? There hath been a Jacob's Ladder set up betwixt Christ and thee.

Christians, Such experiences I hope some of you have had, of such comfortable Communion with Christ. But what becomes of all these blessed Experiences? Hast thou forgotten them? Are they lost? O how hast thou kept thine heart? Sure such Mercies should be carefully recorded, and the record should be warily kept.

4. It is the Cabinet of all our Jewels. Christ and all his Graces are kept in the heart.

1. Christ and his Graces are jewels. Christ is a precious Jewel, he is the pearl of great Price, which the wise Merchant, Mat. 13:46, traded for; and is there said to be a Pearl of great price; of so great a price, that this one Pearl bought the whole World. Its intimated Mat. 16:26, that one Soul is more worth than all the World; this Pearl is more north than a whole World of Souls. It hath bought not only this world below, but the World above; this one pearl hath bought the whole Kingdom of heaven, all the everlasting treasures, the everlasting joy and pleasures above, that exceeding eternal weight of glory, all hath been bought by this Pearl. Christ is reckoned by foolish sinners, at a very low rate; Judas sold this Pearl for thirty pieces of silver; Sinners, many of them sell Christ at a lower rate than this, for their foolish and fleshly Lusts. They tread this Pearl in the dust and take very dung in its stead. The very dung of their filthy Pleasures is that which sinners take in Exchange for Christ. Whilst the Apostle counted all things dung in comparison of Christ, sinners make very dung of Christ, for the sake of their sins; but whatever sinners count him, Christ is a Pearl, more worth then all the world; and all the Glory and Bravery and Beauty of the World, are but Dunghil things, in comparison of Christ.

As Christ, so all the Graces of Christ are jewels. Faith is a jewel called 2 Pet. 1:1. Precious Faith. Meekness and Humility are jewels, of great price in the sight of God. Love is a jewel, and of so great price, that it is not to be bought for Money. Cant. 8:7. If a man would give all the Substance of his house for love, it would be contemned. As little reckoning as sinners make of the love of God now; though this Grace be offered them, and they may have it for the taking; an heart to love the Lord, is one of the branches of the Covenant, which the Lord freely offers to sinners, yet now they so slight it that they will not accept it; a lust is taken up instead of this love; yet hereafter these very sinners, would give all that ever they have for the least grain of the saving love of God. As little as you regard the love of God now, we

cannot persuade you to accept it, yet when you come to die, there's none of you, but would give all that ever you are worth, for a little sincere love to Christ. O now for a little Faith! O now that I could love the Lord Jesus in sincerity! I would be content to be a beggar, and not to have a Mite left me in all the World; all my Farms, all my Oxen, all my Houses and Lands, all my Money, all the substance of mine House, they shall all go, so that I might now find the saving love of God in me. No, they will not be bought so; If a man would give his house full of Gold for it, it would be contemned, as a poor and low price to buy love. The like may be said of every Grace, they are all Jewels, and they make those who have them to be Jewels. Mal. 3:17, in the day that I make up my jewels. Every gracious Soul is a Jewel in the sight of God. Sinners tread the Saints under feet, make very dirt of them, but God will take them into his bosom as his precious Jewels.

2. These Jewels, Christ and his Graces, are all kept in the heart. As the Heart is the Seat of Grace, Faith dwells in the heart, and Love dwells in the heart, and Hope dwells in the heart, so is it also the seat of Christ; Christ dwells in the heart by Faith, intimated in that Prayer of the Apostle. Eph. 3:17. If Christ hath any dwelling in sinners, 'tis only in their Mouths and upon their Lips; these will talk of Christ, and talk of Grace, but they have no dwelling in them, but upon their Tongues; but it is in the heart of the Saints, that Christ and his Graces dwell; Col. 1:27. Christ in you the hope of Glory. The heart of Saints is as the Heavens, all bespangled with these beautiful Stars. Christ is the Sun in those heavens, his Graces are as so many Stars, that have their brightness and luster from his light. The hearts of sinners are mere Dungeons, and dark holes, in which neither Sun nor Star appears; if there be any glimmering light, they are but Comets, or Torches, or stinking Snuffs, that they take for Star-light. Sinners, whatever brightness or beauty there be in any of your Faces, whatever Gaudy or merry Outsides you have, yet what an inside have you, your hearts are all dark holes, where dwells every abominable thing; Toads and Serpents, Zim and Jim, Owls and Satyrs, and every unclean thing dwells within you. Thou that hast the fairest outside,

there are Toads and Serpents and Worms crawling and breeding in thine heart. You would every one of you be afraid of yourselves, you would loath yourselves, and you would tremble at yourselves, you would (if you knew how) run away from yourselves in a fright, if you knew what were in your hearts. Sinners care not to look into their hearts, and some of them are afraid to look inwards; and well enough you may, you would see such ugly and monstrous Sights, as might even scare you out of your Wits. Saints have all their Riches within them, they have a treasure in their hearts. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart, Mat 12:35. There may be, and often is, poverty without, but there's a treasure within; the richest of sinners they have all their Treasures without them; in their houses, in their Purses, in their shops, in their Chests, but all the while, there's poverty and beggary in their hearts. Thou art a very beggar, Sinner, with all thy load of Wealth; 'tis a poor beggarly Soul thou hast, how richly soever thy Carcass be provided for. 'It is the heart of the Saints, where God bestows all his Riches.

Christians, Look to your hearts; you carry more riches in you than the whole World is worth; you lose all that ever you are worth if you lose your hearts. He that hath a Treasure in his house, will look more carefully, to the locking of his doors; especially the room where his Riches lie must be most fortified with Bolts and Bars. You have more to lose than the Princes of the Earth, and therefore have the more reason to keep those hearts wherein all your riches lie. Not only your graces, but your good works, are all kept in your hearts. If ever you have done any good in all your lives, whereof you hope for a reward in the other World; all your Duties, the holiness and fruitfulness of your Conversation, your works of Righteousness, your works of Mercy, these are all kept in your hearts. Conscience is the keeper of them, the Conscience of an honest holy gracious heavenly life, is a precious Treasure kept within you. 2 Cor. 1:12. This is our rejoicing, the Testimony of a good Conscience —. All your Duties arise from your hearts, all your Holiness and Fruitfulness and activity for God, are so many holy streams, flowing from a holy heart; and all these

streams return into the heart, there they must be kept against the day of Accounts.

5. It is the Ark of your strength. Some men's strength lies in their heads, in their Wisdom and Counsel, and Policy; a wise man is a strong man. Other men's strength lies in their hands, a Princes strength lies in his Armies, in his Forts and Castles and strong Towers; but a Christians strength is in his heart. The Lord is in his heart, and Psal. 73:26. Thou art the strength of mine heart. Eph. 6:10. Be ye strong in the Lord; and in the power of his might, The weakest Christians have a strong God, and hence it is they are strong and of good courage.

Christians have need of strength;

1. Of Strength for their Work, there are great things they have to do; they have much work, hard service; the life of a Christian is not a toying but a toiling life. You shall never get to Heaven by play, or by Idleness, you have much business lying upon you, and great business. The working out your Salvation is hard work. The Souls of Sinners lie idle, as if they had nothing to do. What pains dost thou use to take for thy Soul? What hast thou done all thy life long, towards the working out thy Salvation? Sinners, you live as if God should throw in Heaven upon you, and clothe you with Glory and immortality, whilst your Souls are fast asleep; no you must work if you will live; you must labor for the meat that endures to eternal life, Joh. 6:27, if ever you will have the eating of it. You must pray, and watch and strive to enter in at the strait gate, if ever you will get in. This should be your work, and it is the work of Christians; and for this their great work, they have great strength given them, and all their strength is in their hearts.

2. Christians have need of strength for their burdens, Christians have hard work, and heavy burdens lying upon them. Besides the Care that is upon them for their Souls, which is a great and weighty burden, and their fear of miscarrying in the matters of their Souls,

which is another burden; they have burdens of Sufferings, and Afflictions, ordinarily upon their backs. All the hatred and malice, all the scorns and reproaches of this Evil World, light and lie upon the backs of poor Christians, and how shall they bear their burdens if they have no strength.

3. They have need of Strength against their Enemies. Christians live in the midst of Enemies; Enemies without, the Devil and his Instruments; Enemies within, their own Lusts and Corruptions; and they must be in continual fight against these Enemies; and their Enemies being so many, and so strong, they have need of strength to resist them.

Christians have need of strength, and strength they have, and all their strength is in their hearts. There their Armor lies; The shield of Faith, the breast-plate of Righteousness, the helmet the hope of Salvation; and there their Captain dwells; the Captain of their Salvation lodges in their hearts.

Lose your hearts, and lose your strength, and what will you do at your Work? How will you bear your burdens? How will you stand against your Enemies, when your strength is lost? What became of Samson, when he was deprived of that, wherein his strength lay? what weakly Souls are careless Christians? Every little duty is too hard them; how quickly are they weary? Weary of Praying, weary of Hearing, weary of Meditation, weary of a watchful Life; a little work will make them weary. How little can they do, and how little can they bear? Every little cross sinks their spirits; and what resistance can they make against Enemies? Every lust is apt to carry them away, every Temptation overcomes them. O Christians, by how slow a pace do we keep on our way? How little sign do we make at our work? We have been Christians some of us, of twenty years standing or more; how little good have we done, how little treasure have we gotten in, how little execution have we done upon our sins and lusts, what poor weakly, lifeless, half-starved Souls have we to this day? Sure we have been ill keepers of our hearts; the ark of our strength hath been laid

waste, strangers have gotten in and devoured our strength, whilst we have loitered and slept. Friends, do not lie down and idly complain, I am weak, I am a poor feeble soul, I cannot do the things that I would, I cannot pray, I cannot hear, I cannot live but at a sad, and halting, and broken rate, God help me, 'tis a barren, and unsavory, and unprofitable life, that I live; 'tis a weariness to me that I can live to no better purpose, fain I would be more heavenly, and more lively, and more fruitful in my Life, but woe is me, I cannot, I cannot obtain; thus you complain of your weakness, of your unprofitableness; but why do ye stand complaining? Look to your hearts better, where your strength lies. Hast thou Christ in thine heart? Hast thou Grace in thine heart? And yet complainest thou hast no strength? Look better to thine heart; keep Christ closer to thee, get thy Faith increased, stir up and kindle that spark of love, call up all the Grace thou hast, and keep it in action Let not the rust eat up thy strength, a little more care and labor about your hearts, to get and keep those in better plight, will recover and renew your strength, and silence those unprofitable complaining's.

6. In your hearts are preserved all your evidences for heaven. This follows from the former. What are our Evidences for Heaven but the being of Christ, and the Graces of Christ in us? Your sincerity in the Covenant, your having your Conversations in all good Conscience, prove that Christ is in you, and you thereby prove that you shall hereafter be with him. Prove that you have Grace and you thereby prove that you shall have Glory. Prove that you are in Covenant with God, and walk before him, in all good Conscience, and that will prove that your names are written in heaven. And whether must you look for all this, but into your hearts? There as I told you, is a record kept of your Covenant and your Conscientious Life, and these are the Rooms where you must look to find Christ and his Grace.

The Devil will tell sinners, that they shall all to heaven; and to make them believe it, will provide them evidences, such as they are; but they are false and deceitful evidences. Thou art a Christian, thou hast been baptized into the name of Christ, thou attendest on the

Ordinances of Christ, thou goest to hear and to pray, &c. therefore thou needest not fear, but thou shalt to heaven. But let sinners look but into their hearts, where all good evidences are kept, and there they can find nothing; there's no Christ within them, no love to Christ, none of the holiness of Christ; their heart is a mere Hell, full of Darkness, Ignorance, Unbelief, Enmity against Christ, and his holy ways. As Christians Evidences for Heaven, so Sinners Evidences for Hell are mostly in their hearts. Whatever your hopes are, if you would look into, if you could see what hearts you have, these would quickly tell you, whether you must. There you should find your Covenant with Sin, and with death not disannulled; no Christ, no Grace, no Conscience, but an evil one, a guileful one, a guilty one, and nothing else but that which is vile and abominable.

Sinners Evidences for Hell are in their hearts; and such evidences they might find, as would kill all their hopes of Heaven. But Christians Evidences for Heaven are in their hearts, the Devil will be telling them, that they are none of Christ's; he will say to the Saints as God says to Sinners, Psal. 50:16. What has thou to do to take my Covenant into thy mouth. What hast thou to do with Christ? Thou art mine, thou art none of his.

Let thine heart be carefully kept, and thou mayst answer the Devil; None of his? Whose is this name that is written in my heart? Whose image are these Graces of my heart? I find the Faith of Christ in me, the love of Christ in me, the very life of Christ in me; Christ hath sent me many a token of his love, which I still keep by me; I remember what hath passed between Christ and me; I have given myself to Christ, I have laid hold on his Covenant, and have bound myself in Covenant to him, and I stand to that Covenant to this day. And there's my Conscience also within me, bearing me witness, that my care and endeavor hath been to walk before him according to the Covenant of my God; and therefore go on to lie thus unto me while thou wilt, Satan, I will not believe thee; I believe God, who hath said, there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, and walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit; and I will not belie mine own

sense, and experience of myself; this is the Testimony of my Conscience, that I have walked not after the Flesh but after the Spirit. And therefore Christ is mine, and I trust I shall one day be with him where he is.

Friends, if you look well to your hearts, and keep the records clear, this will be your benefit; whatever fears the Devil raises, 'tis but looking inwards, and there you will see that which will turn all your Fears into lively Hopes. But if you look not to your hearts, and keep them clean, you will be at a perpetual loss; you will never long know what to make of yourselves, nor what is like to become of you. Assurance necessarily depends on watchfulness, never look for a grounded peace without it; and never trust to that confidence, or assurance you seem to have, whilst you are of a careless heart. Whatever progress you have hitherto made in Religion, whatever experiences you have formerly had, of the workings of the Spirit of Grace in you, a careless heedless Spirit will so darken all your Experiences, and blot your Evidences, and leave you under such uncertainties, that for ought you know, you may be damned at last. As ever therefore you would maintain an abiding Assurance, that its well with you at present, and shall be well with you hereafter, be watchful over your hearts, that Record of all your Evidences. The reason why we are at such uncertainties, and so full of our doubts and fears, it lies all here; in our carelessness of our hearts. And yet who will take warning? O friends, steadfastly resolve, through the Grace of God, I will look better to it. Since my heart can never comfort me, unless I watch it more narrowly, mine eye shall be upon mine heart Night and Day. I will commit myself to the keeper of Israel, and I will set myself to keep whatever good thing he hath committed unto me.

7. It is a sacrifice for God. Psal. 51:17, The Sacrifices of God are a broken heart.

1. It is the heart that is a Sacrifice for God, therefore Prov. 23:26. Give me thine heart. It is the Sacrifices, all the Sacrifices of God is the

Sacrifice of the heart. There are other Sacrifices, but whatever they be, 'tis the heart that makes them such. Prayer is a Sacrifice, Psal. 141:2. Let my prayer come before thee as incense and the lifting up of mine hands, as an evening sacrifice. Praise is a Sacrifice; Psal. 50:14. Offer up to God thanksgiving. Alms are a Sacrifice; Heb. 13:16. With such sacrifices God is well pleased. But what maimed Sacrifices are all these, if offered up without a heart. What is Prayer without a heart? What is Praise; what are Alms, when the heart is not offered up with them? They are heart Prayers, and heart Praises, and heart Alms, that are such Sacrifices, with which God is well pleased.

2. What kind of heart it is, that is a Sacrifice to God. A broken or a wounded heart. The broken heart is the only sound heart. The wounding of the heart is as the lancing of the Impostume, it lets out the corruption, and leaves it a sound heart. The hard heart is a Sacrifice for the Devil; with such Sacrifices, with hard and unbroken hearts, the Devil is well pleased. Is thy heart a hard heart, and wilt thou thus give it up to God? Get it to be broken, or thou mayest as well carry it to the Devil for a Sacrifice. The Devil loves a hard heart, but it is an abomination to the Lord. A hard heart is an unclean beast, which is not for Sacrifice. All the filthiness and rottenness of the heart lies baked up together, in a hard heart; 'twill never be gotten out, 'till the heart be broken. In the Law, the Sacrifices were to be without blemish, Lev. 22:20,21,22. Whatsoever hath a blemish, that shall ye not offer. It shall be perfect and without blemish. Whatsoever is blind, or maimed, or having a Wenn, or Scurvy, or Scabbed, ye shall not offer. The unbroken heart, is a heart full of Blemishes, Wens and Ulcers; a Scurvy and a Scabbed heart; 'tis the wounded or broken heart, that is the perfect heart, or a heart without blemish.

Now herein you see, both the necessity of looking to your hearts, and what it is that you must secure your hearts against; from all things, that may be a blemish to the heart; from all those Maladies and Diseases, that will be a blemish to the heart; that so you do not Sacrifice to God a corrupt thing. Mal. 1:14. He that sacrificeth to God

a corrupt thing, cursed be that deceiver. A sacrifice without a heart is a lame and maimed thing, a sacrifice from a polluted heart is the sacrifice of a corrupt thing.

Beloved, you come with your offerings to the Lord, but what have you to offer? O you have prayers and praises to offer up, but is there a heart in your prayers, a heart in your Praises, and is it a perfect and upright heart, a heart without blemish? A perfect heart, a heart without blemish? Who can bring such a heart? Who can say, mine heart is perfect? Who can say, mine heart is clean? Lord be merciful to me, mine heart is the worst thing within me; all sores and all blemishes and corruption.

Obj. My mouth must be stopped forever, my tongue must be silent forever, If I must never pray, nor praise God, till mine heart is a clean and a perfect heart.

Sol. There is a double perfection, a double cleanness of heart.

1. Legal, and so that only is a perfect heart, that fully answers the Righteousness of the Law, or first Covenant; that only, in this sense, is a perfect heart, which hath nothing of Evil or Hypocrisy; no spot or blemish at all in it, that the strictest Justice could be offended at; thus there's not a man in the World can say, mine heart is perfect, mine heart is a clean heart.

2. Evangelical, Such a perfection, which the new Covenant accepts, uprightness; a sincere heart is in a Gospel Sense, a perfect heart. A heart that hath been broken by the Word of Christ, and been purged by the blood of Christ; a heart that is a purging and cleansing daily, that hath its great spots and blemishes of unbelief and impenitence purged away, and hath no spots, but are begun to be purged, and are cleansing daily.

Now a heart that hath been thus initially purged and cleansed, will unless it be carefully looked to, contract new spots; the imposthume will gather and fester again, the Leprosy will fret and eat deeper and

deeper into it; longer than the purging work is carried on, the corrupting work will be carrying on. If the wounds of the heart be not carefully kept open, the Devil will quickly heal it up; his hardening is his healing the heart. He will be searing the heart so, as that though there be never so much wickedness in it, it shall not be felt and perceived; and when we cease to feel our sores, when the heart grows senseless of its sins, then is a time, when iniquity is like to abound. And there's no way in the World to prevent this increase of our corruptions, and hardening our hearts under it, but by keeping a constant Guard upon them, the Devil will be doing, sin will be working and growing upon us, if there be not a constant watch kept.

And what will ye do then for a Sacrifice for God? Wherewithal will you come before the Lord, and bow yourselves before the most high God, if you have not an heart, a clean heart, a perfect and upright heart, that he will accept? As you would be loath that God should meet you in all your Duties; your praying and hearing and praising his Name, and say unto you, as to Israel: Isa. 1:11. To what purpose is the multitude of your Sacrifices? When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands, to tread my Courts? Bring no more vain Oblations, your incense is an abomination to me. Your Sabbaths, your coming to the Assemblies I cannot away with, it is iniquity even your solemn meeting. Your meetings my Soul hateth, they are a trouble to me, I am weary to bear them; and when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you. Yea when you make many prayers, I will not hear. Friends, would you have the Lord thus to speak to you? Is this all the entertainment and acceptance you would have? When you come together to pray, and to hear, would you have the Lord to say, I am weary of this People, I am weary of these meetings, my Soul hateth this praying, and this hearing? Doubtless this will be all the entertainment you will have, whilst you come hither and bring not your hearts for a Sacrifice, yea, and that broken hearts, hearts without guile, sincere and perfect in the sight of God; and such hearts you will never bring, unless you will take more care and pains about them; and therefore I exhort you, as the Prophet goes on, ver. 16. Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the

evil of your doings; so also, watch ye, keep ye clean, prevent the return of your evils upon you. And then I should be bold to add as ver. 18, to call upon you, and encourage you in the Name and the Words of the Lord, Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Let your hearts be thus kept, and then come; come with your prayers, come with your praises and I will hear and accept you.

8. It is the Temple of the Lord. 2 Cor. 6:16. Ye are the temple of the living God. 'tis the heart especially, that is this Temple.

There are four things in the Temple of God, which are so many reasons, why our hearts should be carefully kept, and guarded.

1. The law of God is in his Temple. The law was read in the Temple, and kept in the Temple; and as in that Temple made with hands, so in that living Temple, made without hands, the Law of God is placed and preserved. Christians have the Law of God within them, their Bibles in their hearts; in the heart of a Christian is the Copy of the Bible. God hath not only preached it to their hearts, but they have laid it up in their hearts. Psal. 119:11. I have hid thy word within mine heart that I might not sin against thee. Mary kept the sayings of Christ and laid them up in her heart: Luk. 2:51. God promised, Jer. 31:33. I will write my Law in their hearts: and he hath done what he promised; he that once wrote his Law in Tables of Stone, hath also written it in fleshly Tables of Hearts. Therefore Psal. 40:8. Thy Law is within mine heart.

The Law written in the heart Notes.

1. All those holy Notions of God, of Christ, of Glory, Honor, Immortality, of the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God, and of the Mystery of Christ, which are written in the Scriptures are revealed in the heart.

2. All those holy Principles or divine Axioms, concerning Truth, Righteousness, Holiness, Mercy, Temperance, Sobriety, &c. the nature and necessity of them, to true Godliness and Blessedness.

3. That Law of the Spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus, the new Law, or Covenant of Grace, by which we are freed from the Law of sin and death, Rom. 8:2, the Tenor and the Terms of the Covenant, the Promises and the Conditions of the Covenant; the great Charter of the Saints, which gives them Title to, and will give them an entrance into the Everlasting Kingdom. The writing that Law is the writing the new Covenant in the heart.

4. That inward living Law, the holy bent, inclinations, dispositions begotten in the heart, by the Word, and Spirit of the Lord; that renewed Conscience, inwardly obliging and holding the heart, to the Obedience of the Word. A Christian hath not only something without him, but something within him, binding him to obedience; whereby it may be said, much more of him, then of those Gentiles, Rom. 2:14. He is a law to himself. His own heart holds him in to Christ, his own heart holds him on in Obedience to the Gospel. If all our Bibles should be lost, or burnt, if all our Preachers, that urge and press our Obedience, were laid aside and trodden underfoot, a Christian hath that within him, that would hold him on in his Christianity. That knowledge of God, and those Principles of Christianity, that love of Christ, and that renewed Conscience within him, will keep him a Christian still.

Now all this treasure, those holy Notions, holy Principles, this Law of Grace, and this living law of the new Covenant being all kept in the heart; the heart being the Temple of God, wherein all this is preserved, had need be carefully kept. Would you not have all the Notions of God, and the knowledge of Christ dimmed, and darkened, and razed out? Would you not lose all your holy Principles of Righteousness and Honesty of Temperance and Sobriety? Would you not have the book of the Covenant stolen away, on which all your Hopes and Expectations, all your title to Everlasting blessedness depends? Would you not lose that holy bent, and those holy inclinations, and that renewed Consciences, by all which you are disposed, and inwardly bound, bound in Spirit to the life of Christianity, would you not that all these should be lost? Would you

not return to be dim sighted, and dark Souls? Would you not exchange your holy Principles, for carnal Principles, your renewed purged Consciences, for corrupt Consciences? Would you not that the Temple of the Lord be robbed? Would you not that your heart be robbed of all these Treasures? Then set a Guard upon your hearts.

2. The name of God is in his Temple. Jer. 7:10, 12. 'tis said often, he places his name there. And of these living Temples, the hearts of Saints, 'tis said, Rev. 3:12. I will write the name of my God, and the name of the City of my God upon them. And Chap. 2:17, in this heart, there is a precious stone put, and upon this stone a new name written, which no man knows but he that hath it. A Christian hath not only the names of Christ called upon him, he is called a Christian, after the name of his Lord; but he hath this name written upon him, written upon his heart. Sure that Table should be kept clean in which is written such a precious name. What shall the name of God be written on a dunghill? Wilt thou suffer Sin and the Devil to make a very dunghill of thy heart, and in that dunghill write the name of thy God? If the heart be not well guarded, the Devil will be not only carrying out, but carrying in all the precious Treasures that are in your hearts, let Satan alone a while, and he'll carry them all away; Whatever thou hast now, thou shalt have nothing of God left in thee, nothing of Christ left in thee; none of all thy Graces, none of all thy comforts. Hast thou love for Christ, hast thou hope in Christ, hast thou peace or joy in God, hast thou either the image or the comforts of God in thee? Satan stands ready, if thou look not to him, to carry all away; thou wilt quickly be left a very miserable Soul, poor and blind and naked, if thou take not heed. And as the Devil will be carrying out, so he will be also, carrying in, to that heart of thine. Thy Gold and thy Jewels he will carry away, and he will bring in dirt, and filth, and trash. As he unloads thee, he will load thee; unload thee of the treasures of light, and load thee with the treasures of darkness. He will fill those hearts with every unclean thing, he will make those Temples to be very Stables, or Sties; he will make that heart a very Dunghil; and Christ must either have no name within thee, or that precious name written on a dunghill; and will you suffer such an

affront and abuse to be put upon your Lord? If you do not keep your hearts, so it will be.

3. The Worship of God is in his Temple. Mine house shall be called a house of Prayer. Mat. 21:13. In this inward Temple, the heart, is the inward and spiritual Worship of God. The people of God, are said to be the People that worship God in spirit, Phil. 3:3. There are great thoughts of heart, and many Scruples, arising about the outward Worship of God; about the keeping that pure, about the clearing and securing of that, against the Superstitious Inventions, and corrupt mixtures of human Impositions. And 'twere happy if the Houses of God in the Land, were swept cleaner, and kept cleaner from these than they are. But the main of our care lies not here; these are not the great things we are concerned to take care about. If outward Ordinances were never so purely administered, and kept never so free from adulterating mixtures, there's a greater thing then this, that lies upon us; that the inner Temple be kept pure, that the heart Worship be kept pure and entire. The heart also is to be a house of Prayer, and shall we make this house of Prayer, a den of Thieves, or a house of Merchandize? O what droves of unclean beasts are let in to these hearts of ours! What houses of Merchandize are these houses of prayer become! These Sanctuaries of the Lord are become mere shops of buyers and sellers. Whilst they should be employed in those spiritual exercises, of loving and fearing, of praying and praising God, offering up living and spiritual Sacrifices to the Lord, behold how our money is brought into our hearts; our sheep and Oxen, buying and selling and trading and getting gain, these are the inhabitants and these are the exercises of our hearts. It is a very grievous thing to consider, how much the [hearts] of Christians are taken up with these things; we cannot love the Lord as we should, we cannot mind Glory and Immortality as we should, It is miserable praying, lamentable praising, or meditating on God that is to be found in us; we are so disordered, distracted and confused in these spiritual exercises, there is such a mixture of Carnal thoughts; such carnal Affections, worldly Projects and Cares are thrusting in, that corrupt and spoil and enervate all our spiritual Duties, that we can

find nothing but blind and broken and maimed Sacrifices, to offer up unto the Lord.

Friends, How do you find it, when you set yourselves to pray, or meditate on God? Is not the World presently thrusting in? Are not your carnal Friends, or your businesses or pleasures thrusting in? And do not your thoughts and affections fall a gadding, and a wandering after these? And do you not hereby loose many a Prayer, and loose many a Sermon, and sadly complain of yourselves, that whatever duty you perform, its all spoiled in the doing, so that you can take no comfort in them? What help is there for it, but setting a better guard upon your hearts? Sure friends we had every one of us need to be more vigilant and watchful, to prevent these sad matters of our complaints. It is not complaining how bad 'tis, that will make amends or make up the matter; possibly your complaints of yourselves, may seem to give you some ease, but consider, the same complaints that you make of yourselves God also makes of you; The Lord God hath complaints against you for the same things. Think of that more than you do; God complains of you; do you say I am weary of such a distracted divided worldly heart? And I am weary too, says the Lord, Ah I will ease me of them, Isa. 1. I am weary of these halting, trifling, distracted hearts; these cold Prayers, these hypocritical Praises, these maimed, broken, confused Services, I am weary of them, saith the Lord. If you go on thus to Worship God, come hither as often as you will, God will be weary to meet you here; he hath been waiting from week to week, from Sabbath to Sabbath, to see if it may be better, if he could meet with such Sacrifices here, such hearts here as might be pleasing to him; he hath waited thus so long, and still finds so little of what he likes, so few living Sacrifices; he hath waited so long and found so little, that 'tis to be doubted, if we continue thus, we may come hither to meet one another, but our God will be weary to give us a meeting. Friends, if you would not that the things that offend in your hearts, should drive God away, then take more heed how you suffer these offenses, or things, to come in, or to lodge any longer in you.

4. God himself is in his Temple; 2 Cor. 6:16. Ye are the Temple of the living God. God hath said, I will dwell in them and walk in them. The hearts of the Saints are the house of God, and the house of God is his Habitation. The holy God will have none but a holy habitation. Will you let sin in, and the Devil in, to God's habitation. These will darken and defile your hearts. Those hearts are but blind houses, and dirty holes, where Sin and the Devil dwells, and is this the best habitation you can afford to the Almighty? What place do you think God will prepare for you, if you prepare no better a place for him; How long will the Lord stay with you, how certainly will he withdraw and forsake you, if you let lust in with him?

Sure Friends, if you had a due and a deep sense upon your hearts, of the Holiness, of the Glory, of the Majesty, of the Jealousy of the holy God, If you did verily believe, that of a very truth this Holy and Glorious God, had a mind to come and take up those very hearts of yours, for his own habitation, that he would come and dwell in you, and walk in you, and make those hearts his Chambers of Presence, and the Thrones of his Glory, If you had such respect for God, and such affection that you would have him pleased with his habitation, and not meet with that, which is an offense and a loathing to him in you; were you sensible, did you verily believe all this, you could not but take more care to keep these hearts cleaner and more free for him.

If you had a great Friend, a Lord or a Knight that would come but to lodge a Night in your house, what would you do? How would you prepare your house, for the entertaining of such a friend? What sweeping and washing, and rubbing, and scouring, and adorning, would there be; every Vessel would be brighted, every room would be beautified. Would you let it lie all dirty, and dusty, hanged with Cobwebs and Spiders? Would you let it lie nasty and filthy, and everything out of its place and order? Sure you would not, and when he were come in, would you set open your doors, to let in a rabble of sordid Beggars, or common Rogues or Drunkards, to come and drink and roar and spew in the very room where your friend were

entertained? No, you would sweep all within, and set a Porter at your doors, to keep the unclean rabble out. O what is the greatest friend in the World, to the great and holy God? Prepare him a holy habitation; open the doors and let the King of Glory come in, and then shut the door, and let no unclean thing enter, to offend and displease him; that so the Lord may take pleasure in you, and delight in you, and may say concerning you, this is my rest, here will I dwell forever.

CHAP. XXIV

How the heart is to be kept under Guard.

2. How the heart is to be kept under Guard.

1. What 'tis to be guarded against, that is, against

Thieves.

Blots.

Distempers.

1. Against Thieves. The great Thief is the World, and all that is of the World; and all that in the World, which is purloining from the heart. Its profits or worldly gains, its Pleasures and carnal Mirth, its Favor and Friendship and Fawning's. These all lie in wait for entrance into the heart, to the end they may rifle and spoil it of all that it hath. The World steals in upon the heart, and it never comes there, but to steals away its Treasure; and therefore 'tis to be observed, that the hearts of such Christians, as are most possessed of the World, are ever the most poor and beggarly. Never look to find much of Christ or his Grace, if anything at all, where the World hath gotten

Possession. Christ comes into the heart on purpose, to carry away the heart from the World; his Word is, where he comes, give me thine heart, Prov. 23:26. Love not the world nor the things of the world, 1 Joh. 2:15. And the world comes into the heart on purpose, to steal it away from Christ again. There is never any one that embraceth this present World, but 'tis to his loss; whatever the World brings, it takes away better than it brings. 2 Tim. 4:10. Demas hath forsaken us and embraced this present world. He embraced the World, and what got he by it? The same day he embraced the World, he forsook Christ.

Christian, art thou fallen in with the World? Are its gains and its pleasures gotten into thy heart? Doth it fawn and smile upon thee, and is thine heart taken and pleased with its fawning's? Look to thyself; what hast thou within thee? Hast thou Grace? Hast thou Peace? Does thy Soul flourish? For ought I know thou hast seen the last of thy good days, what time this World is thus embraced by thee.

O friends, set a watch against this Thief, set a guard against it; Take heed and beware of Covetousness, Luk. 12:15. That's the same Counsel, as guard your hearts against this World. Covetousness is the opening the door to let the world in, nay the world is gotten in already where Covetousness is. Thou which hast a Covetous heart, thine heart is already possessed of the world. May be thou hast yet but a little of it in thine hand, but thine heart is already full of it, the whole world is gotten in, where Covetousness is gotten in.

Worldly Professors, methinks you should be startled at it, if you considered, what a Thief you have within you. Whatever thou seemest to have of Christ, or the Treasures of heaven, thou art like to be but a poor wretch, in a little time.

And how is it like to be with thee, whose heart hath entertained the Pleasures and the merriments of the world? Or the favors and fawning's of the Men of the world? Who lovest to be somebody with evil men, to have their respect and esteem? He that would fain be somebody with the world, is like to be nobody with Christ. Make the

world to know its distance, and whatever you have to do in it, keep it at a distance from your hearts. Never look to thrive in Christianity, whilst you venture to be too busy with this world, or to dote on its favors or friendship.

O it were well with us, were we yet but sensible what a snare this world is to us; what a bane it is to all that's good in us. Never a flower in all our Garden will flourish, where these thorns stand so thick about it; that little Grace you have will be less daily, it will be choked up and devoured, if you keep you not more clear of this world. It were happy for us, were we deeply sensible of the danger we are in; but there's the Misery of it, people will not be sensible, nor be warned to take heed of it; this Thief steals away men's Reason and Consciences; makes them such children and fools, that they will not understand what an enemy it is to them. How many Sermons have been preached and published, to warn you, to take heed of a worldly heart; and yet how very few hearts are there, that do escape it! 'tis who can be richest, and who can be greatest in the world, that the most of our hearts are set upon; 'tis not who can be the holiest, or most heavenly, 'tis not who can improve in the Faith and Hope of the Gospel; in the love and fear of the Lord; who can get most of Christ and Heaven into his heart, and grow rich unto God; but who can grow greatest in this present world. Is not this too common a Case? Though the Lord hath been knocking off our fingers from it, pulling off our Chariot wheels, and making us to drive heavily; letting loose the spoilers upon us, to catch from some of us, what we have gotten, fed the Husbandman with short harvests, filled the Tradesman with complaints of bad Markets; yet all is one, how little soever many men can catch of this world, yet they will catch after it still; and what wonder is it then, while this world doth so generally carry our hearts, that Christ hath so much lost them. You that would save anything of what you have left in you, you that would ever get anymore while you live, you that would not go down to your graves stripped and naked of all that should then comfort you, get again I say to you, take heed of this world, take heed of this worldliness.

2. Against blots, that is, against willful allowed sins: Every willful sin, will be a blot upon your hearts. Our sins are blots and blemishes upon our lives, but every blot upon the life is also a blot upon the heart.

Blots will;

Darken and Obscure.

Defile.

1. Blots will darken and obscure the Heart. I told you, that in the heart is kept, all our evidences for heaven; our sins that we give way to, will be blots upon our evidences; will so obscure and blur them, that they will not be legible. Our sins will do the direct contrary to what the blood of Christ will do; the blood of Christ will blot out the hand writing that was against us, Col. 2:14. Our sins will blot out, whatever hand-writing there is for us. Thou that art a Christian, there is an hand-writing upon that heart, there is the Covenant of God, which is thy Charter for glory, written upon thy heart. There is the token of the Covenant, and thine interest in it, the Circumcision of the heart; there are the Articles of the Covenant, which have been consented to, between the Lord and thee, recorded in thine heart; whilst thou keepest thine heart clean, there thou mayest read thy Title to Glory; thou wilt find that within thee, which will comfort thee concerning thine everlasting state. There are the very Prints and Marks of the Lord Jesus, his image formed upon thy soul; which mark thee out for an heir of life; but what wilt thou do for comfort, when these writings and this holy image, are all blotted? When thy Circumcision is become as uncircumcision? Will blotted evidences Satisfy thee? Will a defaced image prove thy Title to Christ good? Set a guard against Sin; allow not yourselves in any iniquity, fear what sad work it will make upon your inner man. Hath the blood of Christ blotted out the hand-writing that was against you? Hath the Spirit of Christ, engraven a new hand-writing for you? O watch against iniquity, which will renew the old handwriting, and blot out the new.

Have you any comfortable Title to Glory? Any comfortable evidences for heaven? O sin them not away. Whatever comfortable evidences you have, never look that they should speak comfortably to you, longer than you keep your watch against sin; nor never trust to that comfort, which will hold up the head, whilst thou allowest thyself in sin. Psal. 66:18. If I regard iniquity in my heart God will not hear my prayer. And what comfort canst thou have, when thou art become such a one as God will not hear, when thou prayest? Thou art a Professor of Religion, and thou hast comfort in Christ, and confidence thou shalt be saved through him; and yet for all this, thou canst lie for thy advantage, or to cover a fault; thou canst drink, if not to down-right drunkenness, yet to intemperate excess, and make thyself a fool if not a down-right beast; or at least be a companion of Drunkards in their drunkenness: Thou canst defraud or do wrong, put off false wares, use deceitful balances; thou canst defame or backbite, thou canst be peevish and give rope to thy fretful passions, and let thine anger rest upon thee; thou canst profane the Sabbath, by Working, or Travailing or Loitering; thou canst live in an ordinary neglect of thy Family, and the Souls of them, without instructing them or praying with them, and the like, and thou canst let thyself alone in these evils, or some of them, or some other such like. But how dost thou hold up thine head under these things? When thou lookest into thine heart, how dost thou find it there? Dost thou not find thy sins to be blots within thee? Dost thou not find the writing blotted, thine evidences blurred, the image of Christ defaced, thy comforts vanished? If thou dost not, if thou canst be of good comfort still, if thou art of good cheer, and confident still; this comfort, this confidence is not the comfort of God, but false and deceitful. Thou mayest comfort thyself, and speak peace to thyself still, but mistake not thyself, God speaks not a word of comfort to thee in such a case: if thou hadst any real comfort before, that thou wilt find all blotted, and the true sense of it utterly lost. If thou hast peace in thine heart 'tis none of the peace of God, that is broken by thy returning to have peace with sin; Psal. 85:8. God will speak peace, but let them not turn again to folly.

2. Blots will defile. They are stains upon all our Glory. The coming in of Sin upon the heart, is as the breaking in of the Heathen upon God's inheritance. Psal. 79:1. O God the heathen are come into thine inheritance, thine holy temple have they defiled. The heart of a Christian, is (as is said) the Temple of the Lord; the Temple of the Lord is holy. Holiness becometh thine house, Psal. 93:5. 'tis only a clean heart that is a fit habitation for God. God hath been at great cost, to make the hearts of his people clear, that they may be a fit habitation for him. He hath washed them with blood, with the blood of his Son; hath washed out those original blots and stains, that were upon them. 1 Joh. 1:7. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth — He hath washed them with water. The Sanctifying work of his Spirit. God hath made him a clean habitation, and he looks that we should keep it clean. 1 Cor. 3:17. If any man defile the Temple of the Lord, him shall God destroy. God will depart from, God will pull down that house, and make a dunghill of it, which sin is suffered to defile, we had need take heed of such blots and stains upon our hearts, lest they drive out the holy One of Israel from us. Whilst we keep ourselves pure, the Lord God will delight to take his abode with us; Who is it Christians, you would have to dwell in you? O let me be a habitation for the Lord; let the holy Jesus, let the holy Spirit dwell in me; none but God, none but Christ, thou Lord art mine inhabitant, let me be thy habitation. Where God dwells, there light dwells, there peace dwells, there hope and joy dwells; I count upon nothing, I have no joy, no hope, no peace, all that I have is lost, all that I have to comfort me, all that I have to stay or support me, all that I have to delight and refresh me, all is lost, yea I have lost myself, when God is departed from me. Do you indeed look upon it, as so miserable a case, when the Lord hath forsaken you? Then take heed how you defile his habitation. Let willful sin in, and that will certainly drive the Lord out; and if you would keep sin out of the heart, keep it out of your lives. Life sins are heart blots. Jer 2:22. Their iniquity is marked before me. And 'tis the heart that bears its black marks upon it.

O friends, what sad marks have we upon us! What speckled and spotted souls have we! How miserably are our insides defiled! Minds

defiled, Affections defiled, Consciences defiled? 'tis a sign what Lives we have lived, 'tis a sign how well we keep our Garments, how well we keep us from practical iniquity; our heart stains, our heart defilements show sufficiently, how much iniquity hath abounded in us.

Friends, look inward; see what work sin hath made within you, what a Conscience hath it left you, what affections hath it left you? How hath it dimmed and defaced the Image of God in you? Do you complain that God is withdrawn from you! That you have lost his quickening presence, his comforting presence? That you have lost your Acquaintance, lost your Communion with God? That your only friend and portion and hope is become a stranger to you? Learn to keep you cleaner if you would have it better; count upon it, there is no hope that God should take pleasure in you, or give you any pleasure in him; that God should be a comfort to you, longer than you keep you more pure. Oh get your hearts washed anew; we have need of many washing days, who have so many sinning days. Every day should be a washing day to us. Take that counsel of the Prophet; Isa. 1:16. Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings. Make you clean, and keep you clean. Wash ye and watch ye, put away the evil of your doings, if you would that your hearts should long be kept clean. Wash your hands and wash your face, and wash your feet, or these will defile your hearts. Put away the Garment spotted with the flesh, keep your outward man clean, keep you unspotted from the World, that so you may be blameless and unreprouable in the sight of God. O Christians, let us study every one of us, to get to such a blameless and unrebukable Conversation, that not only the world may have nothing to spot us with, but that our Consciences may have nothing to spot us with, that our hearts may not have wherewith to reprove us? As little as may be, of the common and unavoidable infirmities of our flesh; but however we may be overtaken as to these, yet be unreprouable, as to any tolerated or allowed iniquities; these are the great blots wherewith the heart is defiled.

Brethren beloved, whoever among you that fear the Lord, I would fain do what I can, to prepare you a holy habitation for the holy one; that whereas he hath said 2 Cor. 6:16. I will dwell with them and walk in them, you may be such in whom his Soul may delight to dwell, that he may say of you all, as Psal. 132:14. This is my rest forever here will I dwell for I have desired it. It is a strange expression; the holy God speaks this to all his holy ones; to thee in particular, to thine heart if it be but a clean heart; the Almighty God says to thee, there is my rest, in that heart of thine will I dwell, for I have desired it; the Lord God hath a desire to be thy Guest, hath a desire to that poor Soul of thine, to take it up for his own dwelling. I would that you may be presented at last unspotted and unreprouable in his sight, and to this end that you may be presented holy at last, I would that you may be preserved holy and without blame at present; O look to those hearts, keep you pure, let there be written upon you, holiness to the Lord; they should be a little heaven into which nothing that defileth should enter. O purge yourselves of whatever may offend and then guard yourselves against it. This is my warning to you; and this is my prayer for you, that the very God of Peace, will sanctify you wholly, and I pray God that your whole Spirit, Soul and Body may be preserved blameless against the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And to him I commend you, who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his Glory, with exceeding joy, to him be Gloro forever, Amen.

3. Against Distempers. A good temper of heart, will be an advantage to us, in anything we have to do. A heart out of temper is like a bone out of joint, or like a Tempestuous Sea, there's no good sailing in it. We cannot keep our way, but shall be driven about, this way and that way, with every wind and wave. A heart out of temper, is like a door off the hinges, or a Chariot off the Wheels; it drags and goes untowardly and heavily on.

O how often are our Souls unhinged, our Chariots off the wheels, or our wheels without oil, and then what pitiful work do we make, at anything we have to do! When we have been in a crowd of worldly

business, or been foolishly merry and vain, what a discomposure do we find upon our Souls, and how unfit are we then for duty? When we come to pray or to hear, what labor doth it cost us, to reconcile our hearts to our Duties, or to get us into a praying or hearing frame. We come to pray, as a Musician comes to play, when his Instrument is out of Tune; he must spend a good deal of his time in tuning, before one stroke can be struck. How much work have we, to tune our hearts at such times, and it may be at last, 'tis more then we can do; and so we must either let the duty alone, or make such sad melody in the Ears of the Lord, as a Musician would do in ours, who should play on his Instrument, when every string is out of tune.

Get your hearts in temper, and keep them so. Be able to say with the Psalmist, Psal. 57:7. O God mine heart is fixed mine heart is fixed; The good temper of the heart notes, freedom and towardliness and disposedness, for anything God calls to, and firmness and stability in that towardliness. Let your hearts be established in Good. Let there be an abiding holy temper upon your Spirits, some of the distempers that we should guard our hearts against, are

1. Slightness and vanity of Spirit. A well-tempered heart is a serious heart. Seriousness of heart, is as ballast to a Ship, we shall go steadily whilst our hearts are serious. 1 Pet. 1:13. Gird up the loins of your minds, and be sober. Soberness here, is the same with seriousness. Christians are always engaged about serious and weighty things, their Eternity is concerned in every day they live, and in everything they do. Every action of our Lives, is a stroke at that work, which must have an influence upon our Eternal State. We have weighty work lying upon our hands every day, and hour, and how unsuitable is a slight and trifling Spirit, to important affairs? A slight heart is an empty and shallow heart, and a shallow heart is unfit to meddle in the deep things of God.

Watch against slightness of Spirit. Frothiness and Vanity becomes not a Christian at any time; we may say of the frolics and light and jovial lives, of the carnal world, as Solomon says of laughter, Eccl.

2:2. I said of laughter it is mad. A Christian is besides himself, when he indulgeth to a vain and frothy Spirit. Friends, 'tis not for us to live in jest; Eternal Life and Death are no jesting matters; learn to live in good earnest; those that are light and vain, that are little else but froth and vapor, in their ordinary Course, do use to be but little better in their most serious Duties. O what slight praying is there amongst us, what shallow and empty Duties do our slight and trifling hearts satisfy themselves withal? It may be, some of us, when we have spent a whole Sabbath with the Lord, if we do reflect upon the temper we have been in, may sometimes find, that we have hardly had a serious hour, in a whole day If they should be asked, as Christ asked his Disciples, Mat. 26:40. What could ye not watch with me one hour? What could ye not be serious with me, one hour? What could we answer? What returns do you think, slight and trifling duties are like to have? Look to it, God will give you but a slight answer, if you be but slight in seeking. O be sober, be serious; and if you would be serious in your most solemn duties, get this holy seriousness to be your temper. Beware of a vain and frothy habit, habituate yourselves to Godly seriousness; not but that there must be at times, some little Relaxation, the bow would grow weak, if it should stand always bent. But then,

1. Relaxation or remitting the intention of our Spirits, must be but short, and no more than necessary.

2. Never such as to be a hindrance to seriousness afterward, though I must sometimes unbend, yet I would never unhinge my Soul, or disjoint or discompose it, for its return to its work. We must not be of those, whose lives be in jest, and only now and then a fit of seriousness; 'tis thy life, thine ordinary course, thine ordinary frame, and only some little intervals for Recreation.

To secure yourselves against the distemper of a slight and vain Spirit, get a deep and standing sense upon your hearts, of the weight and importance of those great concerns, that are daily upon you: look more into Eternity. Remember, you have an immortal God, whose

eye is always upon you. You have an immortal Soul, that must live or die forever. Your business in this World, is not to please your humors, and gratify your flesh, and your fancies, but to serve the living God; to secure this God to yourselves, to be [your] God; to seek your peace and reconciliation with God; and to that end, to make Christ the reconciler, sure to you; to serve the Lord Christ and hereby to secure the Salvation of your Soul.

Remember that you have this great work lying upon you, and this is not the work of some short inches of your time, of an hour in a day, or one day in a week; but that this must be your every days work, and your all days work. Think often, what if I should miscarry in this great work, if I should loiter out, or laugh out, or trifle out so much of my time, that when I shall come to die, and away for the other world, I should find that work I lived for here, were not done or but half done, or but slightly done? If I should then find, that I had been light and vain in my Conversation, and but slight and shallow in my Religion? And whilst I was allowing my flesh, what it would have, I cut my Soul short of what it should have had. Death will make every one of you serious, the Grave, when you are stepping into it, will make you all in good earnest. And how would your living in jest, or in pleasant idleness, then look upon you? Remember these things daily; let deep thoughts of them, come daily upon you; and this would put you out of your slight and merry tune; the sense of these serious things would hold you in a serious temper.

CHAP. XXV

A Licentious heart

2. Looseness. There's a double looseness.

1. Such as is opposite to fixedness, that's the same, with lightness and vanity of heart; a whiffling in and out unstable Soul, a slippery heart, that we never know where to have it.

2. Such as is opposite to strictness; that is the same with licentiousness, and that is it, which I am now to speak to. A Licentious heart is a distempered heart. The contrary to this Distemper, is the compliance or closing of the heart with the Rule, and keeping to it. The new heart is made after the pattern of Christ its new Lord; there's the same Spirit in a Christian, which was in Christ; as he was, so are we in this world, 1 Joh. 4:17. His very Spirit and Image is formed upon our hearts. And it is conformed to the new Law or Rule, which Christ hath prescribed to it, and it stands determined for strictness or exactness of walking, according to this rule; whereof the Apostle speaketh, Gal. 6:16. As many as walk according to this Rule, peace be unto them. That is a strict heart, which is determined and disposed to live by Rule. Licentiousness of heart is the hearts allowing and indulging its Liberty, and Latitude in its Course. Christianity in general, is that which it takes up, but it will not be held within the limits of it. The strait Gate and the narrow way, is too strait and too narrow for it. That way it pretends to have chosen, but it will be breaking over the hedge, as the Inclinations and Interest of the Flesh lead it. In some things a Christian, in other things a Libertine.

O how much of this Licentiousness of heart, is to be found amongst Christians! Amongst all the Christians amongst us, how few exact and strict Christians are there? Whose hearts determine for exactness and strictness of life, who impose and charge upon themselves, the whole Rule and the diligent observing of every point and tittle of it? Such exactness in point of Practice, we cannot in this imperfect state reach unto; in many things we offend all. Jam. 3:2. Our feet slip, and our steps are turning aside every day; but it is the indulging ourselves a liberty for this turning aside, or the hearts not charging strictness upon it, that is this Licentiousness of heart.

There is a gradual Licentiousness of heart, and there is a total Licentiousness. A total Licentiousness is of such, who utterly reject the Yoke of Christ, and will not come under his Government, but will resign up themselves to Lust and carnal Inclinations, to command in Chief over them. As those Ephes. 2:3. Who walked in the lusts of their flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. Such Licentious ones are no Christians; if they have the name, yet the heart of a Christian is not found in them. Gradual Licentiousness is, when the heart, though it hath put itself under the Yoke of Christ, and resigned up its self to be governed by him, in opposition to the lusts of the flesh and the World, yet often falls a lusting after that liberty, from the exactness and severities of Christianity, which in the general it hath professed to consent and yield itself unto. And though the decree of the Soul, for following Christ in everything, be not made void, and utterly broken, yet it is so remiss and weak, that it will not hold it closely in; but there is a frequent breaking loose from the rule, and the heart too often indulgeth its self that liberty: How far forth a Christian may break loose from the Rule, and how far forth he may indulge and allow himself at times, and yet be a Christian still, is not easy to determine; but this is certain that every degree of this heart looseness, is a pernicious distemper, that must be watched against; especially if it rise so high, as that there be a dislike of strictness, and such a groaning under the severities of Religion, as maketh it seem a bondage to it, to be tied up so short. The more of this, the higher the Disease is, and the more to be doubted whether such men's Christianity be sound. The strictest Christian is the most healthful, and the most evidently a Christian indeed; and the greater latitude the heart indulges its self to, the more sickly the Soul is; if it be not quite dead, and no Christian at all.

Friends, You that are Christians indeed, if you know what you have done, you have vowed the greatness strictness possible. That is, to press on towards it, and to reach out after it. You did not Covenant to follow Christ to such a degree, and no higher; to advance in Religion to such a pitch, and no more; you did not Covenant for thus much Obedience; thus much duty, thus much diligence, thus much Zeal,

and no more; if ye be Christians indeed, you have covenanted to follow the Lord fully; to watch to every Duty, to watch against every sin; to press on to the highest pitch of holiness, to do to the utmost to please the Lord. If there were any reserve, in your vow to Christ, of any little liberty to the Flesh, of any limit of your zeal and care; if there were any such reserve, you are false in your Covenant, and but false Christians.

O friends, have you vowed the greatest strictness? Then watch against the least degrees of looseness. Get a settled Judgment, of the excellency and necessity of strictness; get an hearty love and good liking of it; let your Souls be bent upon it, let it be your desire, and your aim, and your hope, and your labor, to hold you close by Christ; and if you would not have licentious practices abound in your life, let no licentious Principles, no licentious affections nest themselves in your hearts; see that there be no lust after any other liberty, then Christ hath allowed you. Get to be heartily well pleased with all the Laws of Christ; with his narrowest ways; let that latitude of Religion, which is the measure of carnal disciples, be your fear and not your desire. And if you feel any itch after it, look upon it as a disease, and distemper of your heart. Count thyself but a weakly and sickly Christian, whilst it is thus with thee.

Know that it is your greatest Excellency; if Holiness be an Excellency, then the more strictly holy the more Excellent. Yea and you will find it your greatest Liberty; the more holiness the more enlargement of your hearts, to all the holy ways of God. Psal. 119:44, 45. I will keep thy law continually, &c. And I will walk at liberty; his meaning was not, I will walk licentiously, at liberty from thy Laws, at liberty from Rule; but I will walk freely in thy ways, when thou shalt knock off my fetters that hinder me. The more we can hold in, and inure ourselves, to be punctual in our Religion, the more freedom shall we find, and with the more ease and delight shall we run the way of God's Commands.

And know this, that by how much the more loose you are from the ways of God, by so much the more loose from God; and what will you have to comfort you, what will you have to sweeten Religion to you, whilst God is at a distance from you? Keep you fast to him, and you shall live the more under his reviving, and refreshing influences. Religion hath its troubles and its harshness, and you will have little else then the harshness of it, longer than you keep you close to the Lord. The Waters of the Sanctuary will taste but brackish to you, longer than the Sun shines upon them; a little Sun-shine from above, a smile from the Face of God, this is the sweetness, this is the Blessedness. Keep close to God, and you shall keep the passage clear between Heaven and your Hearts. Religion will be like Ephraim's Idolatry. Hos. 8:7. It will be but a dry stalk, the Bud will yield no Meat. There will be the Labors of it, and the Troubles of it, but no Meat for your Souls to feed upon, longer than you meet with God in your Duties. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you, Jam. 4:8. Keep close by God, and he will keep close to you: May be, some of you have never yet tasted how Gracious the Lord is, nor will you ever be like to do, if you set not in closer in his ways. Loose Religion will keep you still in the dark, and in a weary and uncomfortable State. There's no such way to make Christ's ways pleasant, as by keeping constantly in them; no such way to make Christ's Yoke easy, as by holding it close to your Necks; it never so galls and wrings, as when it hangs loosely on; resolve upon strictness, and you shall taste the sweetness. Hold you in from running out after the Pleasures of the Flesh, and the Face of God will be a pleasure to you, which the Distemper of a loose and carnal Heart will certainly deprive you of; and hinder you from the relish, or finding delight therein.

3. Listlessness. A dull untoward, sluggish, unactive, lifeless temper, where the Edge of our Spirits is blunted, insomuch that whatever opportunities we have, or whatever calls we have to be doing for God, or our Souls, we have no list to them, but through the waywardness and untowardness of our hearts, we let them slip, and either do nothing, or nothing to purpose. Opportunities are a price put into our hands, but by reason of this sluggish, listless, untoward temper,

we have no heart to them; but became like the Fool, Prov. 17:16. In vain is there a price put into the hands of a Fool, which hath no heart to it. This is a wretched and pernicious Distemper.

1. It proceeds from an evil cause, From the carnality of our hearts, and our unsuitableness to the work of God. It is ungrateful and displeasing work to us; our hearts are so contrary to it, we had rather be anywhere than with God, we had rather be about any work, than the work of our Souls. We can be brisk and sprightly about our carnal and earthly employments, but for anything of Religion, there we drag and go heavily on; we are all Soul and Life, in what we have to do for our Flesh, but our hearts hang backward, and come but heavily and untowardly on, to do anything for God. This is from the little interest that God hath in our Souls, and the little affection we bear to him. We are yet carnal, and that's the reason we have so little Edge or so little list to spiritual things.

2. It is an ill sign. What ill sign is it? 'It is a sign of want of Grace; either that we have no Grace at all, or at least are but very low in the Grace of God; that our day is yet but a day of small things. Where is our Faith in Christ, when we are so backward in the work of Faith; As Christ said, Mat. 14:31. Wherefore dost thou doubt so, wherefore dost thou drag so, O thou of little Faith? Where's our Love to Christ, when our work for Christ goes so slowly on? 2 Cor. 5:14. The Love of Christ constrains us. The Love of Christ will quicken us, the Love of Christ will put Life into us; we should find our Tongues, and find our Hands, and find time to be more abundant in service, could we feel more of the Love of Christ in us. Thou makest nothing of it, that thou art such a dull, untoward, unactive Souls; but is it nothing to want Faith? Is it nothing to want love to Christ? Is it nothing to be without Grace in thy heart? Or if thou hast any to have so very little, as thou canst not tell, whither 'tis any or no? It is an ill sign, that thy Soul is in a very doubtful case, at least 'tis to be doubted; Whether thou hast any Grace in thee, Where in ordinary thou art so untoward and listless to the matters of God, and the businesses of Religion.

3. 'It is of ill consequence. 'It is a sign our case is bad, and it is a hindrance from our growing better. It is the vivacious active stirring soul, that's like to be the thriving Soul. Sluggards and Sleepers are never like to come to anything. We may preach to you while our hearts ache, we may instruct you, and tell you what is your duty, while we will, and you may hear us while you will, but in vain shall we preach, and in vain will you hear, till we can fire you out of this deadness, and whet and set an edge upon those blunted Souls what will it be, to be told of your Duty, whilst you remain to have so little heart to it? What becomes of all the Sermons you hear, of all the teaching you, what you should do, and how you should live? What becomes of all the convincing, awakening, quickening words, that are in your ears from day today? What doth all our Preaching, and all your hearing bring forth upon you? Truly friends, the little success that is to be perceived, of our Preaching among you, either to the converting of sinners, or improving of professors; the small success that does appear, (what there is within God knows) does even make us out of heart. But as little success as we have, we are never like to have it much better, unless we may stir your hearts, and awaken you to more diligence and activity. When we have done all we can, we are, I doubt, like at last, to leave the most of you, either quite dead in sin, or but very Dwarfs in Religion. Sinners, is it nothing to you, that the enlivening word should leave you still among the dead? Christians, is it nothing to you, that the nourishing and quickening Word should leave you but babes and infants? Is it not a trouble to you, and a discomfort to you, that you get no more, that you grow no faster, much more that any of you should consume and languish, under the hands of your Physicians? I must tell you, it is a discomfort to us, but is it not more a discomfort to you? Can you continue at this pass, and not be troubled at it. O what a comfort is it to be a thriving lively Christian? Methinks, when you see any such before your eyes, you should at least sigh out such a wish, O that it were so with me; and breath out such a groan, woe is me that 'tis not so; methinks it should be an heaviness of heart to you, to feel your own soul in Clogs, when you see others upon the wing; O that I could make you sensible of your diseases! That I could preach you heart sick, that I could but

make your hearts ache, under your distempers; that you might no longer be able to go up and down, without trouble in this unthriving case. Sure friends, you whose case this is, had need to be troubled; and 'twould be well for you, if your Souls were in pain, and refused to be comforted till you be cured.

To make you yet more sensible, of the perniciousness of this untoward dull and listless temper, look a little more upon the excellency of the contrary; a cheerful lively temper. 'It is called 2 Cor. 8:17. A forward mind. 1 Pet. 5:2. A ready mind that need not be spurred, and whipped, but goes cheerfully and freely on its way. What is a sprightly horse, to a dull and heavy jade? What is a blunted rusty knife, to that which is bright, and keen? What is a consumptive languishing body, to one that's lively, and healthful? What is a dark and lowering to a Sunshine day? What is Winter to Summer? Yea what are the living to the dead? What a pitiful thing is that dead and spiritless heart of thine, when thou lookest on them in whom is the life of God.

Hear O ye sleepy and listless Souls, awaken, stir up yourselves, shake off this sloth and sleep, work out this untoward spirit. What, do you mean to hang thus betwixt alive and dead? Will you hold you at this pass, till you come to your Graves? Is this all the care and the pains, you ever mean to bestow on God, and your Souls? Must the Lord ever find you so unready and untoward, to what he calls you to? Shall the world find a forward mind in you? Shall your flesh find such a ready mind, to whatever it hath for you to do, and will you only be unready and unactive for God? Wherefore have you Reason and Understandings? Wherefore have you the Scriptures before you? What are Sabbaths and Ordinances and Ministers for? Must we come hither only to sing you asleep, or to rock von in your Cradles? Where is that Grace that is in you? Where is your Faith? Where is your love to Christ? Where is your hope? If you have any Grace, where is it? What must all these precious talents be eaten up with rust, or laid up in a napkin? Remember the slothful Servants doom. Mat. 25:30. What are your immortal Souls? What is the holy God? What is Jesus

Christ? What are the glorious treasures of Eternity? Are all these worth no more of your care and industry? Will none of these things move you? Will not these great things quicken you? Hear them all calling upon you, God calls upon you, oh my children, if you have any respect for me, come along, come faster after me. Christ calls, oh my Disciples, if you have any love to me, if all that I have done for you, if all that I will do for you, will move you, arise and mend your pace. Heaven calls upon you, if ever you mean to come here, gird up your loins and come on. Yea Hell calls, look ye down hither, what a place is here prepared for Sleepers and Loiterers? Your poor Souls call, have ye any pity for me? Must I perish and die for the pleasing this lazy flesh? Your poor Families call, your poor Children call, your poor Neighbors call (which all need the utmost you can do for them). Where are your Bowels to usward? For our sakes awaken, for our sakes arise and be doing; we die if you will not give us a better example, we die if you sleep on, who should awaken and save us. The whole Interest of God in the World, calls upon you; for his names sake, for the Gospels sake, for the Churches sake, for Religions sake, which sinks, which decays, for the sake of all these, recover your Souls, and your Life.

O friends, what shall all these loud cries do upon you? Shall all leave you such lumps and loiterers?

Christians be yet awakened, call up all the Grace you have, whet those dull and blunted Spirits, get you a better edge upon them. Why may not this word give a whet to you? If you come hither sleepy Souls, what a Mercy would it be, if you might return home awakened? If you came hither dead, and dull, and listless Souls, what a comfort would it be, if you might return home quickened and enlivened? What if you should feel, that this word had kindled a fire in you, had made your hearts burn within you, burn with holy Love, and Life; what a mercy would this be to you! What if you might be sent hence, with ready minds, forward minds, bent upon a more active and useful, and heavenly life? And what if after all this, you should go away just as you came hither? Though the Bellows have

been blowing, yet your ashes are not purged away; though the fire hath been kindled, yet it will not burn? Would you like it, if all this should be lost, and do nothing upon you? If this untoward and dull temper of Soul should be too hard for the Word, and you should return from the Physician of Souls, with your diseases uncured? Do what you can friends, every one of you to help to your own recovery, to get up to this lively active frame; and if you can obtain it, then look to your hearts as long as you live, that if it be possible, this wretched distemper of a leaden, unuseful, lifeless, listless, unactive heart, may never return upon you.

CHAP. XVI

How to Guard the Heart

2. How the heart must be guarded. This I shall answer in these 5 particulars.

1. Set a constant watch upon it.
2. Keep all your Powers up in Arms.
3. Keep close by your Captain and Physician.
4. Carry up your Hearts where your Enemies cannot come.
5. Commit the keeping of them to the keeper of Israel.

1. Set a constant Watch upon it. That's a word, that is given to every Christian; Mark. 13:37. What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch. And of all things we have to watch, the heart is it, that must chiefly be watched. Our eyes must be chiefly there; whether ever else we

have to look, we must especially look upwards, and look inwards. We must look upwards; our eye must be upon God's eye; that all seeing eye that seeth in secret. Whether our eye be or no, God's eye is ever upon our hearts. I the Lord search the heart, and try the reins, Jer. 10 18. The eye of the Lord is a searching eye; there is no secret of the heart, but he espieth and searcheth it out; and 'tis a jealous eye, that will not wink at, nor allow, nor indulge to the least heart evils. The sense of that jealous eye, would awe us into more watchfulness over ourselves. The reason of our neglect of self-inspection is, that we forget that the Lord looks upon us. We cannot look upwards, but we shall behold the very eye of God upon us. If a hundred men stand looking upon us, and we do not look upon them, we cannot tell whether they look upon us or no; but if we look steadfastly upon them, we may see in their very eye, that they are looking upon us. Look up to God, and you will plainly see that his eye is upon you. And the observing of God's eye upon you, will turn your own eyes upon yourselves. What is it that the Lord looks thus upon me for? What is it that he sees in me? Is it anything he likes, that he looks upon? Is it his approving eye that is upon me? Is it a look of love or of kindness? Or is it that which he is offended at, or disliketh? Is there Jealousy, is there Displeasure, or Anger in that holy eye, that is upon me? Is it a smiling look, or a frowning and angry look that he casteth upon me? Look on me, I see he doth, His Eye is never off me; let me look upwards when I will, I see that God looks downwards; and his Eye is directly upon me; and his Eye is a piercing Eye, it pierceth to my very entrails, he beholds the very bottom of my heart; I had need look carefully to mine own Soul, when there is such an Eye upon it Night and Day. Thus look upwards, and set the Lord before your sight, as the Psalmist did, Psa. 16:8.

And then look inwards, and set your hearts before yourselves. There is an Expression, 2 Kings 8:47. If they shall bethink themselves, which may be interpreted, if they shall return into themselves, the Eye of the Body cannot see itself, but the eye of the Soul may, and must be chiefly upon its self. You that are looking about, this way and that way, you had more need look homewards. There are men that

are of great acquaintance in the world, but yet have no acquaintance with their own hearts. Whither their Souls be in safety, or among Thieves; Whither their Hearts be clean, or all bespotted and defiled; whether they be healthful or sickly Souls; whether they be alive or dead; 'tis more than they can tell where they be, or in what case they are. How is it with your Souls Friends? How fares it with you, in your inner Man? Who is there within with you? Are there none but Friends? Is Christ there? Is the Spirit of Grace there? Is there a good Conscience? Or are there not Robbers within? Is not thine heart a houseful of Thieves? Is not the world gotten in? Are not the pleasures of the Flesh within? Is not the Devil within? That unclean Spirit, hath he not defiled and defaced the Image of God? Is he not sowing his Tares in thee? Is not thine heart a defiled, diseased, distempered heart? Is it not a slight, and frothy, and vain heart? Is it not a loose and licentious heart? Is it not an untoward, wayward, listless heart? Look inward Christians, and look often inward, and see what hearts you have, and how 'tis with them, Psal. 4:4. Commune with your own hearts. Look into them, and talk with them, and take an Account how it fares with them. If I should ask you, how is it with your hearts, are they alive or dead? Are they clean Hearts, holy Hearts, tender Hearts, heavenly Hearts, lively and strong and working upwards? Or are they hard Hearts, polluted defiled hearts, dull and slow, and listless Hearts. If I should ask you thus, what account could you give? I doubt this is the account the most of you would give, I cannot tell. God knows how 'tis with me; for my part I know not how 'tis. That Heart hath been well looked to mean while; hast thou carried it like a wise man the while? Thou hast great acquaintance in the world; thou takest upon thee to know other men's hearts, and wilt judge, and censure them as thou listest; what man? And yet hast so little acquaintance with thyself? Be thou thine own judge; hast thou been a wise man the while, to be such a stranger to thyself, that thou dost not know thine own heart? Thou wilt say, the word tells me, Jer. 17:9. The Heart is deceitful, and who can know it? How then should I know it? I answer,

1. The more deceitful the Heart is, and the harder 'tis to know it, the more it had need be looked into.

2. Though it cannot be perfectly known, yet there may be much of it known; the heart of man is a great deep, 'tis true, and though thou canst not easily see to the bottom of it, yet if thou wilt but look down into the deep, thou must see a great way.

3. If thou canst not see thorough thine heart with thine own Eyes, yet with God's eyes thou mayest. Take the help of the Eyes of the Lord, and thou mayest understand, even all that is in thine heart. God that sees the Heart, reveals the heart; and he hath given thee such discoveries of thy very heart in his word, he hath made the Scriptures such a Looking-glass for thee, that if thou wouldst look into that more, there thou mightest see thyself, and all that is in thee, Heb. 4:12. The word of God is a discerners of the thoughts, and intents of the Heart.

Christians, if you would secure your hearts from danger, know them, and be acquainted more thoroughly with them, if you would know your hearts better, look oftener inward commune with your hearts; go down daily into your own Bosoms, take an account of yourselves, question with yourselves, how fares it with my Soul? Is there any real saving Grace in me? If there be, how fares it with that Grace I have? Does it thrive, doth it flourish, is it kept up in Life and Activity? Doth my light shine, doth my Love flame, do my thoughts and my affections climb, and are they working upwards? How is it with my Conscience? Is it kept pure? Doth it speak peace? Doth it deal faithfully? Doth it check me, doth it smite me for the least Evils? Doth it comfort me when 'tis better? Have I a good Conscience? Have I the Testimony of a good Conscience? Doth my Conscience witness for me, that I have been faithful? That my Desire, and my care, and endeavor is, and hath been in all things to approve myself to the Eye of God, and to be sincere, and upright before him!

O Beloved, What a Mercy to us would it be, if we would be persuaded to be much in such heart inspection, and much in such heart communing? The Devil would find the harder work to get in; there's no Disease, or Distemper would then grow upon your hearts, but it would be espied in the beginning; and so the more easily removed. Friends, let me prevail with you in this thing, I beseech you in the name of the Lord, set more upon this Heart-study. Of all the business you have to do in the world; there's nothing more necessary, nothing more advantageous; and yet I doubt nothing more neglected. Friends if you have been strangers at home, be no longer strangers; never say again, I cannot tell how it is with my Soul, study it till you can tell; and study it diligently, and you shall be able to tell. The Lord will help you to understand yourselves, if you will but more diligently commune with your own Hearts; will you be persuaded to it? Will you resolve upon it, to make this a great piece of your every days work? Never look for Soul prosperity, never look for Soul security, without a serious and frequent discharge of this great Duty. You may hear all your days, and pray for a better heart as long as you live, and all in vain, if you will not Watch as well as Pray. O that the Lord would so strike home this word upon your hearts, that you might feel this charge of the Lord, sensibly abiding upon you, to keep your Hearts by Heart-Acquaintance, and Heart-watchfulness.

My Soul is exceedingly concerned about the bringing you upon this Duty; and I am in great doubt, that the most of us are very deficient herein, either neglecting it, or but slightly or seldom being conversant in it. Sure Friends our Tongues would be better employed, our Speech would be with Grace, seasoned with Salt, we should have more savory words coming from us, we should commune one with another more about the concerns of our souls; were there more faithful communing with our Hearts, our whole conversations would savor more of it. We should be more Spiritual and Heavenly, more active for God, more fruitful, and abounding in every good work; our work for our Souls would be carried on with more Life, and with more Power; we should live a more self-denying, a more circumspect, a more heedful, and a more watchful Life, were

there a due watchfulness over our Hearts. What shall I say more in this thing? Be diligent, be careful; be diligent to know the state of your hearts. If I should say with Solomon, Prov. 27:23. Be diligent to know the state of thy Flocks, and look well to thine Herds, would you not hearken to me? If I should say, be diligent to look well to your Trades, and to your Money, would you not hearken to me in this? If I should say, be diligent to take care for your Healths; and look well to your Bodies, would not this Counsel be accepted by you? How much more then should you hearken to me in this. Be diligent to know the state of your Souls. O Friends, be diligent to know, and be diligent to get your Souls into a good state, and to secure them in it; be diligent to know what 'tis that hurts you, and what 'tis that hinders you, and what it is that endangers your Souls, and take heed of it; and then be diligent to know what 'tis that will help you, and further you, and advance you, and stablish your Souls in peace, and build them up in holiness, that you may take those advantages, and improve those helps that are before you? Such watchfulness as this, what a heart reviving, what an heart flourishing, what an heart rejoicing would follow upon it to yourselves? And what abundant Praise, Glory and Honor would grow up to the Name of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ? Then should those Hearts of yours, which are now too much Dens of Thieves, Shops of Vanity, Fountains of folly, Nests of Lusts, and Houses of Merchandize become the sacrifices of the Lord, and the Temples of the Living God, and he would dwell in them, and walk in them, and say of them, these are my rest, here will I abide forever.

2. Keep all your powers up in arms. Our Enemies will fight for our Hearts. Sin, the World and the Devil are like Absalom, 2 Sam. 15:6, at first he used fair and flattering Speeches, and complemented, and kissed them that came nigh him, saying, O that I were made Judge in the Land, his meaning was, O that I were King, what a King would I be to you! So he stole the hearts of the Men of Israel. Afterwards he takes up Arms, and fights against those, whose hearts he could not steal from David. Our Spiritual Enemies deal a like by us; at first they attempt to steal away our Hearts from God; Sin smiles upon us, and fawns upon us, and promiseth what it will do for us; O that you

would hearken to me, how happy should ye be if you will follow me? It doth not pretend to be King, but to be our Servant; if you will love this world, all that is in the world, will be your Servants; but if this will not do, our Enemies will fight for us; our Fleshly Lusts will war against our Souls, to take them Captives, 1 Pet. 2:11, and the World and the Devil will side with Lust. The Devil will buffet, the world will rage and bluster against those that will still continue the Servants of Christ. Hereupon Christians are said to be Soldiers; 2 Tim. 2:3, their state here is a warring and warfaring state; they are to fight, 1 Tim. 6:12, fight the good fight of Faith, they are to wrestle, Eph. 6:12, against flesh and blood, against principalities and powers, against the Rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness's, or wicked Spirits in high places. Gal. 5:17. The Flesh lusteth, that is, fighteth against the Spirit; and the Spirit must lust or fight against the Flesh, and all this fighting, what is it for? 'tis for our hearts. The Devil and the World are fighting, and our Souls lie at stake. He that overcometh, there's a Soul gained, a Soul saved; he that is overcome, there's a Soul lost. When Men fight for their lives, when this must be the issue, kill or be killed, how desperately do they fight? We manage our warfare against sin and the Devil, as if there were no great matter lying upon it; Men count not themselves any great losers if they be overcome; and hereupon 'tis that we leave ourselves so open to Temptations, and stand as so many naked men against our Adversaries, and entertain such Truces and Treaties with them, and make such weak resistance against them; as if our contention were about a Flea, or a dead Dog; Men do not consider, that it is for their precious life, the Devil and the World is fighting, but that's it that sin and this world would have of you, they would have your hearts, they fight for your Souls.

Now hereupon Christians must be always up in Arms, and stand to their Arms. As the Devil rallies up Armies against us, so the Lord provides us of Armor, and requires us, Eph. 6:13, to put on our Armor, and to stand to our Arms. Take unto you the whole Armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. We may neither stand unarmed, nor put on our

Armor to sleep in, put on your Armor and stand in your Armor; especially we must keep close about us these 6 pieces of Armor.

1. The Shield of Faith. v. 16, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery Darts of the Devil. The Devil is shooting his Darts at us, and every Dart is levelled at the heart; The Devils Darts are fiery Darts, burn when they hit, that will burn up all the good in the Soul. Darts will stick, and fiery Darts will burn. When you see one Man burn in Lust, there's a Dart of the Devil that burns in his Heart; when you see others flame in anger and fury, there's a fiery Dart of the Devils in his Heart; his Tongue is set on fire of Hell. Jam. 3:6. Think on this, you that are apt to be thus set on fire; the next time you are in such a heat, that your hearts burn with fury, and your Tongue spits fire, in venting furious Language, then think with yourselves, I feel my Soul in a flame, the fire comes out at my Mouth, Lord whence comes all this? O I had need look to myself, sure there is a fiery Dart from the Devil in mine Heart; these angry, hot, and hasty words are no other but the smoke of that Fire, which the Devil hath kindled within me. Such a Thought as this might be as water to quench that Fire. But if such a thought would not do it, then take the Shield of Faith, by which you may quench these Fires. We are therefore exhorted 1. Pet. 5:9, to resist the Devil, steadfast in the Faith. Trust upon Christ for your help, stand against the Devil, as David against the Philistine, 1 Sam. 17:45, thou comest against me with sword and Spear, says David, but I come to thee in the Name of the Lord of Hosts; that is, I come trusting in the Lord of Hosts; This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand. There's his Faith, and that's his best Weapon. Resist the Devil, and trust in God; fight against sin, and trust in Christ for the victory. Isa. 26:4. Trust ye in the Lord Jehovah, for in him is Everlasting strength.

2. The helmet of hope, which is called, the helmet of Salvation, ver. 17. Rom. 8:24. Ye are saved by hope. Hope will strengthen the heart, and hold up the head. Christians should withstand Temptations and assaults, as men of hope; whatever your Temptations are, whatever buffetings of Satan you may be encountered with, how furiously

soever the world falls on, threatening you, thundering against you, persecuting you for your faithfulness to Christ; or fawning upon you, or flattering you away from your integrity; how thick soever the suggestions of your hearts lusts come upon you, enticing you, urging and pressing you. Do not undo thyself by thy Religion, do not ruin thyself by thy Conscience, come about after this World, save thyself from its rage, and accept of its kindnesses; how hard soever you may be thus tempted and set upon, and how apt soever thy faint heart may be, to fear and doubt, thou shalt never be able to stand; hold fast thine helmet; hope in God, who will be thy helper and deliverer. Psal. 43, ult. Why art thou cast down O my Soul—, Hope in God. Strive against sin, but strive in hope; resist Temptations, but resist in hope; withstand this evil world, withstand its flatteries, withstand its furies, and withstand in hope. Do not say, as once David did, 1 Sam. 27:1. I shall one day or other perish by the hand of Saul. I shall one day or other fall by Temptation, I shall never hold out, and so shift for thyself; hope for the Victory, hope in God for his help, hope in Christ for his strength, and in that hope, stand against Temptations.

3. The girdle of Truth, ver. 14. Having your loins girt about with truth. Look especially to this, that you be armed with truth and uprightness of heart. Whatever other Armor you seem to have, whatever faith you have, whatever hope you have, whatever word you have to support you, whatever Prayer you make to help you, there's no armor will hide a hypocritical heart, from God or the Devil. God strikes his dart into the false heart, through the joints of thine armor. And for the Devil, he is gotten in already; the Devil is already in thine heart, if it be a false and hypocritical heart; O get sincerity, and uprightness before the Lord; see that there be truth in your inward parts. A sound heart will be the best shelter, both against the Accusations and Temptations of all your adversaries; whereas if there were no enemies from without, a rotten heart will be its own ruin. That rust and that moth which is bred within, will eat thee out, though there should be no Thief to assault thee from abroad.

4. The breastplate of Righteousness. Put them both together, Truth and Uprightness of heart, and righteousness of Life, will be a mighty security against the Devil and all his whole Party. The Psalmist would trust to no other Armor, without that; Psal. 25:21, and that he will trust to. Let integrity and uprightnesse preserve me, for I wait on thee. Faith without Truth, Hope without Righteousness, or Uprightness, will never secure us. Sincerity and Uprightness of heart, is our best heart Armor; the Hypocrites Faith will not save him, the Hypocrites hope will perish with him, 'tis sincerity that will carry the day. Be honest and plain hearted towards God. Let there not be Guile and Unrighteousness found in you. Prov. 10:4. He that walketh uprightly, walketh surely. *Hic murus ahaeneus esto.* A good Conscience is a wall of brass, against all the darts that are cast against us.

5. The Sword of the Spirit. Ver. 17, which is the word of God. This was the weapon, by which Christ conquered the Devil, when he fought him hand to hand, Mat. 4:3. It is written, man shall not live by bread only—. It is written, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. It is written, thou shalt Worship the Lord thy God —. Be well versed in the Scripture, and you have a sword by you, to resist every Temptation. Art thou tempted to Pride? Remember, it is written, God resisteth the proud. Art thou tempted to a Covetous worldly Life? It is written, take heed and beware of Covetousness. Art thou tempted to Anger, and the bitter expressions of it? It is written, if ye bite, and devour one another, ye shall be consumed one of another. Art thou tempted to a carnal vain sensual Life? It is written, if ye live after the flesh ye shall die. Art thou tempted to a cold Lukewarm indifferent temper or way? It is written, because thou art neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth; And so whatever the Temptation be, have a particular word ready at hand, which may be a sword to strike through it

6. The spirit of prayer. Ver. 18. Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit: Meet every Temptation with the Sword in your mouth, and with a Prayer in your heart. Believe and Pray; Hope and Pray; be True, be Upright and pray; the Lord rebuke thee, The

Lord strengthen and uphold me; pray to him, be true to him, hope in him, who was tempted himself, and is able to succor them that are tempted.

Put on all this Armor, and stand to your Arms; be always up in Arms, be always ready to receive the Alarm. Let that word be for an alarm to you, and be ever in your ears, Rise Samson the Philistines are upon thee; Rise Soul, Sin is upon thee; the World is upon thee, thy Company are upon thee; or that Word of Christ, Mat. 26:46. Arise, he is at hand that betrays me; that ease that thou lovest, those Pleasures that thou lovest, that Money thou lovest, that carnal Acquaintance that thou lovest, whom thou never suspectest to be Enemies, they have a design to betray thee of thy life, to take away thine heart from God; and they are ever at hand to betray thee; however thou thinkest thou art armed, take heed of being secure; of what use is Armor to him that is asleep? Remember Saul and his whole Army, when they were asleep, David came upon them, and had them at his mercy, for all their Arms; and if he had hearkened to Abishai, had smitten him dead in the place: be never secure, stand upon your Watch, or you never stand to your Arms. Never think you are out of danger, you are in jeopardy every hour; your Enemy the Devil, is ever walking up and down, and watcheth to devour you. Therefore that Counsel is needful, 1 Pet. 5:8. Be vigilant, be sober, for your adversary &c. Be always as the besieged in a Town, that have their Enemy close at the Gates and the Walls; they are upon their Guard night and day; especially let the main fort the heart be still well watched and guarded. Set fear for your Sentinel; live in constant fear of a surprise; fear will keep the Soul waking; be conversant in the World in fear; be amongst your carnal friends and acquaintance, in fear; eat and drink in fear; pass the time of your whole warfare here in fear. O this fearless secure heart, how often hath it betrayed us into Mischief. How often have our hearts been even choked up of the World, and surfeited of carnal Pleasures, and robbed of its peace, and spoiled of its Treasuries, and we have exchanged a sprightful, lively, cheerful, healthful Soul, for a flat, leaden, earthly, senseless frame, before we were aware; and all because we were secure and

without fear? Live in fear daily, and in constant jealousy; be jealous of your friends, be jealous of your enemies, be jealous of this world, be jealous of every sin, be jealous of yourselves. Let a holy jealousy dwell in your eye, and let it keep you waking and watching. After all your professing, and praying, and believing, and hoping, would you not lose your hearts at last? And lose all you have hoped and labored for? Then beware of Security; if you would be in safety, then be never secure; but always stand, with your loins girded, and your lights burning. Stand upon your watch Tower; keep your doors shut but your windows open. Let your eye observe the approaches, and be ready and prepared for the assaults, that your enemies are making daily upon you. I never look you should be flourishing or conquering Christians, till you will be persuaded to be jealous Christians, fearing and watchful Christians, and therefore what I said to you before, I say to you again and again, stand upon your guard and watch.

3. Keep close by your Captain and Physician.

1. Keep by the side of Christ. You know what a stream there once ran down from that precious side; a stream of Blood and Water; this stream (as to the virtue and influence of it) is running down daily; and it is for the healing of diseased, and for the washing of spotted Souls. There's no balm will heal our diseases, this Blood is it, Christ must do it. There's no Sope will scour off our spots, this water must cleanse us; this Physic will heal every disease, this water will cleanse us from every spot, and will present us at last, without spot or wrinkle; Eph. 5:27, but what will diseased polluted Souls do, when their Physician is out of the way? Many sick persons die of those diseases, which had they been near the Physician, might have been cured. Keep you ever near to Christ, his Presence will be either preventing Physic, and keep off your Soul Diseases, that they seize not upon you, or else 'twill be curing Physic, that no disease shall be mortal to you. We never wander from Christ, but we catch that, which we cannot easily claw off; if the Devil can but catch a Christian wandering, what sad work doth he make with him? We may all say of our wanderings, from Christ, as Naomi; Ruth 1:21. I went out full but

I return empty, I went out whole but I return wounded, I went out fat and full, but I return lean and naked. What a sad plight do we see loose and wandering Souls to be in? Keep you home: When Dinah, Jacob's Daughter, would be gadding abroad, what a blot got she; Gen. 34:1. She went out a Virgin, and came home a Whore. Our very departing's from Christ, are our playing the Harlots against him; our other lovers, to whom we turn aside, do deflower us. What harlots do many of our hearts often become? We cannot stay by our Lord; out we must be running after other lovers, and so we are defiled. O prevent your Soul Pollutions, by keeping home. Art thou gotten near to Christ? Know when thou art well, and keep thee there. As Naomi said to Ruth, Ruth 2:22. Let not the man find thee in another field. Gleaning after other Reapers, gadding after other Lovers; he will take that unkindly if he do, and thou mayest smart for it. Hath Christ done by thee, as Boaz by Ruth, spread his Skirt over thee, and charged thee, keep fast by me and by my Servants, dare not to be gadding after others? You will smart for it if you do, and if ever you return, it will be by weeping Cross. Whatever wounds you receive, you will not say as Zach. 13:6. These are the wounds which I received in the house of my friend, but these wounds I have gotten in my absence from my Friend. If I had kept me in, I had saved all this hurt. O prevent your miseries, that you sustain by departing from Christ, by keeping you by him. And if you have been wandering and caught any hurt, O return to your Physician; and when thou art made whole, then say to thine heart, as Christ to the Man, Joh. 5:14. Sin no more, wander no more lest a worse thing come unto thee.

Christians, In our first coming to Christ, and our union with him, our deadly disease is cured; we that were dead are made alive, we that were sick are made sound. But the same Jesus that gave us this Life and Health, is he that must maintain our Souls in Life; and that life and spiritual health which we received from Christ by our Union, must be preserved by our Communion with him. See that you be in Union with Christ, that you be by Faith joined to the Lord, and then live in constant Communion with him; take heed of Ruptures, and breaches, take heed of distances, and estrangements from Christ.

Have you gotten Christ within you? O keep him within you. Let your beloved lodge between your breasts, and keep his dwelling in your Souls; and let there not be in you, a heart of unbelief, let there not be in you, a heart of vanity or iniquity, a heart of Pride or Guile, a Carnal, or Worldly heart to depart from the living God. Keep your hearts true to Christ, keep your hearts chaste, keep you pure in his sight. In your Union or Espousals to Christ you Covenanted against forsaking him; Hos. 2:19. I will betroth you unto me forever. So you have said the same to him, Lord I betroth [thee] unto me forever. Betrothing, or espousing is both the nearest Union, and the firmest Union.

1. 'It is the nearest Union. Our becoming Christians is our Union of hearts with the Lord. Christ hath therein given you his heart, and you have therein given him your hearts, and your heart and his become as one heart. You that are Christians are near unto Christ, as his own Soul; 1 Cor. 6:17. He that is joined to Christ is one spirit. He loveth you, he careth for you, he tendereth you as his own Soul.

2. It is the firmest union. I will betroth thee forever. It is written concerning Christ and his Saints, as concerning Husband and Wife; whom God hath joined together let no man, no nor Devil neither put asunder.

Now when there is such a nearness of Relation, and such a dearness of Affection, there must be also Cohabitation. You must live together, and dwell together with Christ. This is not only your duty as Christians, but your safety depends upon it. He who is your Husband is your refuge, where you may dwell safely; your only rock in whom you may hide yourselves from danger; if you forsake your Rock, take heed you be not forsaken of your Rock. Take heed you neither prove runaways from Christ, and forsake him utterly; no nor slink away, and skulk out, or turn aside from him. Keep constant to Christ and keep close to him. Let there be intimacy and dearness maintained betwixt Christ and your Souls; keep you in the memory of Christ, let your beloved be ever before your eye, be looking daily towards him;

keep you ever in the Love of God; Jude 21, be much in solacing yourselves in the Contemplation of his love, and keep your hearts in a flame of love to him. Be render how you provoke him to jealousy against you. Keep you close to Christ, by making all your carnal things, keep their distance from your hearts. Keep you in the diligent exercise of all the acts of Christianity, whereby your Communion with Christ is maintained; let there be nearness to Christ in point of Conversation, walk with Christ, yea walk in Christ, as the Expression is, Col. 2:6, as ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him. Whilst others walk in the Flesh, let Christians walk in the Spirit. Walk in Christ, both in Union with Christ, living in the strength of Christ; and in Conformity to Christ, in all well-pleasing before him. Let no place be a place for you, let no way be a way for you, let no company be company for you, where Christ would not be pleased to find you. Let no temper or frame of Spirit grow upon you, but what Christ would be pleased to find you in. Would Christ be pleased to find you among the vain company or vile ones of the Earth? Would Christ be pleased to find you in a careless, senseless, untoward, jolly, frothy, or in a sour, angry, envious, impatient temper? Keep you from such ways, keep you from such company, keep you out of such temptations, have as little to do as possible with them. Keep you out of vain and evil ways, company, and temptations, and keep you on with life and vigor and power, in the ways of Christ. Let not your ways only please Christ, but your walking in them; do not be slugs and drones and triflers in Christianity; follow the Lord, and follow him fully; follow the Lord, and let your Soul follow hard after him. Be doing the Will of Christ, and let your hearts stand complete in all the Wills of Christ. The most watchful, diligent, painful, lively Christians, these are they, that keep nearest to the Lord.

Friends, be warned to keep you thus near to the Lord. The Lord calls you such, Psal. 148:14 A people near unto him. Approve yourselves to be such, since the Lord hath made you near, keep you near to him. Live in Union and Communion with Christ, in intimacy of Acquaintance with Christ, and with all possible care that your whole course may be such, as may be a walking worthy his great name, and

be well pleasing to him. This is the way to keep you out of danger; and whatever befalls you, whilst you are thus walking in Christ, you will be still near your remedy; whilst you are near Christ, he will not be far from you, but will be ready to help, and ready to comfort you. You complain, it may be, every one of you, that your hearts are out of order. One cries, O my heart, what a proud heart it is? Another complains, O mine heart, it is a fretful, peevish heart. Another cries out, O mine heart is an earthly worldly heart, another, O my heart is a sluggish, slothful heart; another, O what shall I do? Mine heart is a dead and a hard heart? Why bring them all to the Physician. Where be the diseased or distressed Souls among you? What, be you all well? Is there no Soul disease upon you? O there is never a one of you but have your Soul Distempers, and sad ones too, why come to your Physician for your cure. If you were any of you sick of the Palsy, or Dropsy, Fever, or Consumption, and Christ stood here, as of old, every such diseased body would be thronging upon him: come ye poor blind, hardened Souls, come lay yourselves before the Lord, and cry unto him, Lord that mine eyes might be opened: Lord that mine hard heart might be broken, that my dead heart might be quickened. Whoever of you hath a complaint to make, hath a wound, hath a disease, or hath a weakness, or discomfort, come every one of you, whatever ails you; come bring in all the lame, and the blind, and the diseased, defiled, and distressed hearts, bring them in to the Physician, come and lay them all at the feet of Christ. Lord help me, Lord heal me, Lord wash me. But be sure you come with a purpose to keep you by him; when you come to him, come unto Christ and he will heal you, and then keep you by him and he will preserve you from Relapses into the same, or a worse disease; which if you wander from him again, is like to come upon you.

2. Keep under Christ's Banner. Keep to your Colors. The Banner of Christ, hath engraven upon it, or his Colors bears upon it, as his Coat of Arms, the Covenant, the Cross, and the Crown; with this Motto, Pugnanti victoria, vincenti Corona. Victory to him that fights, the Crown to the Conqueror. The Covenant is for our union with Christ,

the Cross for our Trial, the Crown for our Encouragement. And here I shall give you three Directions,

1. Let the Covenant be upon your hearts. The Covenant is,

1. For the strength of our hearts; it notes our listing ourselves under Christ as his Servants, and Christ's undertaking the conduct of us. When we understand what we are engaged in, what hard service we have bound ourselves to, what a painful active life as Christians, we must count upon; our hearts will be apt to fail us, and cry out of the life of a Christian, as the Apostle of the work of the Ministry, 2 Cor. 2:16. Who is sufficient for these things? I shall never be able to bear through such a life? But then remember your Covenant; your Baptismal Covenant I mean, which doth not only engage you to the Lord, but engageth the Lord to you. Look to the Captain of your Salvation, who hath bound himself to help you through, who hath said, Heb. 13:5. I will never fail you nor forsake you. And then you shall be able to say with the Apostle; Phil. 4:13. I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me. Venture not on anything in your own strength, fear not nor be dismayed at anything whilst you have the Lord Jesus to be your strength. Christians, be not disheartened, fear not to engage in the strictest, and severest course of Christianity; lean upon the Lord and he will help you through. Set your hearts to the work, and leave the care of Success to him, that careth for you. Remember this, let your trust in Christ, your hold on the Covenant be your strength on which you lean, for the carrying you through the whole of your Christian course.

2. This Covenant will be the guide of your hearts. What is it that I have to do? How is it that I must live? Why look into your Covenant; what is it that you have engaged to do? How is it that you have covenanted to live? You have covenanted Holiness and Righteousness; you have covenanted against an idle Life, or doing nothing; against a trifling life, or doing your work by halves; against a worldly, or fleshly, or wicked life; the World, Flesh, and Devil, these you have all covenanted against. You have covenanted the crucifying

the Flesh, and the World, the resisting the Devil, and to follow Christ against them all. You have covenanted to fight against the Flesh, and the World, and to fight to the Victory; not to be less fleshly than other men, to be less worldly than other men, but you have covenanted against a fleshly and worldly life. Think not of carrying it fair with both; of cutting out a middle way betwixt Christ and the World, betwixt a fleshly and a heavenly life; 'tis a total victory over this flesh, and this world, over a fleshly, and a worldly life, which you have covenanted to pursue. Whenever you are at a stand and are in doubt, as to any particular actions, or way of life, that you have before you; and are questioning whether you should go on, or forbear, why then examine, would this be a serving my flesh, or a serving the Lord? Determine that well, and then your covenant would guide you, whether to do or forbear. Once let your hearts stand resolved to pursue the ends of your covenant, to live such a holy, such an heavenly, such a mortified, such a self-denying, such a diligent life, as you have covenanted to live; and then your very hearts, which are the records of your covenant, your very hearts will teach you what you should do.

When your flesh at any time pleads with you, for any abatement of the strictness of Christianity; for any Liberty of compliance with the more remiss, and loose amongst Christians; and suggests to you, not too far, not too fast not too high in Religion, drive on softly, deal gently with thy flesh, be not over rigid or severe to it; be not over busy, do not tire thyself at thy work; take time, take thine ease, drive on as thy carnal interest, and thy carnal inclinations can bear; then read over your covenant, and consider. Is such a life according to the writing that hath been agreed upon betwixt my Lord and me? Is this cold, and indifferent, and easy way of Religion, all that I have covenanted for? Well, this is one thing, if you would keep to your Colors, keep to your Covenant.

2. Take up your Cross upon your back. This is your Lord's word, Mat. 16:24. Whosoever will come after me, let him take up his Cross. This will be the proof of what there is of Christ or Christianity in your

hearts; a sound heart will make a strong back. He that loves much, will bear anything; he whose heart is not cross-proof is an unsound Christian. Your sinful shunning the Cross is your running from your Colors.

Christians, some little Trials we have had, some crosses we have met with; but for ought I know, the Lord may be preparing heavier crosses, greater sufferings for you, then ever you have been proved withal. O be so busy a fortifying your hearts, that you may never baulk your Christian course, whatever cross may stand in the way. I would not that we should needlessly run upon the cross, when we may avoid it. Sufferings may come fast enough, without our pulling them upon ourselves. But this I would, we might everyone stand to, resolve in the strength of the Lord, to be never the less hearty Christians, never the less holy, never the less precise, never the less zealous in the pursuit and practice of a sincere and exemplary Godly Life, for anything you may suffer for it from Men or Devils. I do not barely say, take up your cross rather than lay down your Christianity; but take up your cross rather than lay down your bold Profession of Christianity; take up your cross rather than lay down your zeal for Christ, or turn aside from the closest, and most resolved following of Christ. Let the Cross neither make us of Christians to become no Christians, no nor to be less Christians than we have seemed to be. It hath been so in former ages, that Christianity hath never improved, nor thrived so much, as under the sharpest, and severest persecutions, and why should it not be so still? Look to yourselves friends, there is hazard that your Souls may suffer, that you may be inward losers by your over solicitousness to escape outward losses; the Souls of many Professors may be losers, and the Souls of some may be quite lost, by the fears of the cross. Look to yourselves, that this be none of your Cases, that you be not losers by persecutions, especially take heed that you be not lost, your Souls lost by them. Be not persecuted from Christ, be not persecuted to Hell; let not the cross drive you back under the curse, from which you hoped that you had escaped.

And that you may not be losers, do what you can to be gainers, as other Christians have been before you. If it grow to be winter without, get you to be warmer within; if the winds rise, keep your garments the Closer about you; Think not to make your peace with evil men, by striking sail and following Christ more aloof; but make your Peace with God more sure, that you may be the more able to bear the reproaches of the World. Be as the Stars, that are never so bright, as when the night is darkest. Love one another, help one another, quicken and comfort, and encourage one another, so much the more, for that the world hateth, and goes about to hinder you; and never think, after all that hath been said, about the governing and guarding, the sanctifying and keeping your hearts, that yet your hearts are right, till you can hold fast your integrity, and hold on your way in all changes of weather.

3. Keep the Crown in your eye, and let that word be ever in your ear. Rev. 3:11. Hold fast what thou hast, that no man take thy Crown. Run from your Colors and you lose the Crown. He that hath heaven in his eyes, will not fear to have holiness in his life. The hope of the victory will encourage in the fight; the hope of the Crown will make the cross to be easy, and make us faithful in the covenant. Therefore Remember that word, Rev. 2:10. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a Crown of life. Christians, if you would not lose the Crown, then be faithful; be faithful to the death in the covenant of your Lord. Whatever difficulties or discouragements you may meet with in your way, whatever hardships or tribulations may befall you, if you can yet say with the Church, Psal. 44:17, 18. Though all this be come upon us, yet have we not forgotten thee, neither have we dealt falsely in thy Covenant, our heart is not turned back, neither have our steps declined from thy way. If you can but say this, your Lord will say also to you, whatever I have done, or brought upon you, yet I have not forgotten thee; the Covenant of my peace shall never be removed. Fight the good fight, keep the faith, till you have finished your course, and then know, there is laid up for thee a Crown of Righteousness, which I will surely give thee at that day.

4. Carry up your hearts thither, where your enemies cannot come. Carry them up to heaven; whatever treasure you lay up there, neither moth nor rust can corrupt, nor thieves break thorough and steal. There's no safety below, the Thief will be everywhere upon you; whilst you are conversant in the world, walking after the flesh, these are your enemies quarters; your hearts are in the midst of them, in the midst of those Thieves, that seek your life, whilst they are conversant about these fleshly things. Yea, whilst you are where God is; in your Duties, in Ordinances, if your hearts be not above at such times, if you feed only on what comes down, if you ascend not in your Duties, if you ascend not by Ordinances, if you get not up to have Communion with God in them, this flesh, and this world will be thrusting in upon you, and steal your hearts away. Christ hath been riding down to you this day, as the chariots and horses of fire, once were sent down for Elijah; 2 Kin. 2:11. The Chariots came down to fetch up the Prophet in them; the Ordinances of God, that you have been at this day, was the Chariot of God, that was sent down on purpose, that those hearts of yours might ride up in it into Glory. I hope some of your hearts got up into the Chariot, and are ascended with your Lord, who came down to fetch them up. What, Christian, is thine heart yet below? Where was it, when the Chariot came down? What are your Souls yet among the Sheep and the Oxen? Among the grass of the Field, and the dust of the Earth? What yet among the worms? What yet creeping upon this Earth, and feeding upon Ashes? Do your Souls still dwell in these Tombs and Sepulchers? I hope there may be some among you can say, I thank the Lord, mine heart is no longer here, it is risen, it is ascended, with my Lord, who came down for it, and hath carried it up with him. But man, how is it with thee, whose heart is left behind? Christ hath been here, and those that were wise took the Season, and got up with him into the Chariot. But is [thine] heart still upon this Earth? And must it away again, to its old trading, to its old feeding on this dirt, and trash? Hast thou been tasting of that Angels Food, that hidden Manna, the bread of God that came down from heaven, and canst thou now return to thy Quails, or thy Husks? Sure thou hadst not a taste of that heavenly

food, if thou dost not yet disgust and disrelish thine old carnal Delights.

But are your hearts, any of you, yet left below? Behold yet a Chariot from God is before you; this Ordinance of Preaching; behold the same Jesus in this Chariot is come down again for those hearts, that are not yet gotten up. Thy Lord is loath to leave thee here; wilt thou yet ascend with him? Why is there not a cry among you, Lord help me up into thy Chariot, Lord take my Soul up with thee, Lord let not me be left behind? Let Christ hear that voice from you, Lord take me up with thee; here this poor wretched heart of mine lies at thy feet, I cannot lift it up; 'tis too heavy for me, it hath weights but no wings; yet it groans after thee it would not that thou shouldst go up without it. Lord lift me up, Lord carry up this poor and wretched heart from Earth to Heaven. What must I yet dwell in Meshech, and have mine heart amongst the tents of Kedar? Must I yet live amongst these Thieves and Robbers? O where is that love that hath brought thee down again for me! Lovest thou me O Lord? And wilt thou yet leave me at this distance from thee? O take pity, O take me up, that I may from henceforth be with thee where thou art. Christians O that I could set you, even every one of you, a crying thus after the Lord, and a bemoaning these earthly and too carnal hearts, that they are not yet ascended! Let Christ yet hear that voice, and let it come deep even from the bottom of thy Soul; Let Christ hear, not that mouth crying, nor those eyes crying, but that Soul crying, Lord take me up also with thee, and he will take thee up. O get you into the Psalmists Posture and Spirit. Psal. 42:1, Psal. 84:2. As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God, when shall I come and appear before God? My Soul longeth, yea even fainteth for thee; my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God When Lord? O let this be the day, take me this very hour, and carry me up to the mountains of spices. Christians, be but unfeignedly willing, that Christ should carry away those hearts from this Earth, be but in good earnest with him, when you say, Lord take me up, and he will not leave you behind.

Get these hearts to heaven, and keep them there. Get you up from Earth to Heaven, and come not down again from Heaven to Earth. Let that blessedness be antedated, which is promised to be after the Resurrection. 1 Thes. 4:17. Then shall we ever be with the Lord. Say to the Lord, even from henceforth, as he says to his Church. Psal. 132:14. Thou shalt be my rest, here will I dwell forever. Let it not be a Visit to Heaven, that will satisfy you, but a Conversation in heaven. Phil. 3:20. Our Conversation is in heaven. Let it not be a few heavenly hours, or a short heavenly repast, but an heavenly life, that you design and follow after. When you get you once thus near unto the Lord, live as much as possible, in the constant views of his Glory; so continually beholding and feeding upon the foretastes and forethoughts of his Goodness and Grace, that you may be [changed] daily, from Glory to Glory, into the same image.

Know friends, that if there be any security in the world, from the Robbers and the Spoilers; from your Lusts, and Temptations, from suffering such losses again in your peace, the only security you have is to keep your hearts still above. Hast thou gotten thine heart to heaven? Keep thee where thou art; keep you out of harms way. If the Devil can but catch those hearts again below, catch you a roving, catch you a wandering after your carnal things; if he can but meet you declining from a heavenly to an earthly Conversation, from a spiritual to a carnal Conversation, O what sad spoils of whatever good days you have had, of whatever delights, and satisfactions, and joys, and comforts you have had; what spoils will he make of them all? Christians, whenever you can get, or do feel your hearts in a better frame, most full of the love, and life, and joy of the Lord, O think, what pity 'tis, what a sad fall it will be, to make an exchange of this blessed state, for the barren and brackish Pleasures of this world? Think with yourselves, shall I forsake the sweetness of the Fig-tree, and the fullness of the Olive, and go and browse upon brambles?

The design friends of all this is, to persuade and invite you to live in constant Communion with God. You have been received and

entertained this day, into special communion with God, and the intent and meaning of this solemn communion is, that by the sweetness and refreshing you find in it, you may be set into a way of ordinary communion with him. That your life may be a life of Communion with God; a life of faith, a life of love, a life of Holiness and Joy, that so you might prophesy to yourselves with the Psalmist, Psal. 23:6. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Brethren, do you in good earnest desire, to get you up to such a life as this? Do you heartily wish it might be thus with you? Have you any hope that you shall obtain, and will you follow after it? Will you go hence, as men and women designing any such thing? Shall we that have been with the Lord together this day, now agree together, in the Name of the Lord, to be reaching forward, with one heart and with one soul, towards such an heavenly life? Shall we help one another, and quicken one another, and set examples one to another, of such spirituality and heavenliness? What do ye think, would be the fruit of our appearance before the Lord this day, might we return to our houses, with our hearts full of such holy Resolutions, with our hearts flaming in such holy desires? Oh be impatient of thinking to return again to your old carnal, and sensual and worldly frames; to your cold, and indifferent, and lukewarm, and lifeless way of Religion. Let not the Devil catch you again wandering, or carelessly jogging on at your wonted rate; if he do, look for it, that whatsoever of the Divine Life or Love, of the Divine Hope or joy, hath been kindled in you this day, you will be quickly spoiled and robbed of it all; and those poor and weakly hearts, will fall into a worse condition than before. If you would keep anything about you that might comfort you, if you would secure your Souls, from being rifled of all that you have received, if you would not return to be dark and dead and barren Souls, then remember this Counsel you have received from the Lord, to whom my Prayer is for you; which was David's for Israel, 1 Chron. 29:18. O Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel our fathers, keep this forever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of this people and prepare their heart unto thee. Keep these thoughts fresh upon your

hearts, and you shall thereby keep your hearts, after the Lord hath spoken Grace unto you, from returning again to folly.

Lastly, Commit the keeping of your hearts to the keeper of Israel. Commit them to God, Psal. 127:1. Except the Lord keep the City, the watchmen waketh but in vain. The keeping of the heart is a greater trust, than the keeping of a City, and therefore had need be put into safe hands. God is able to keep it, 2 Tim. 1:12. I know whom I have believed, that he is able to keep, that which I have committed to him, unto that day. God is able, and God is faithful; faithful is he that hath called you, and will do it. But it may be you will say; O I shall never be able to keep mine heart in heaven; keep up the love and life and joy of God in my Soul! Keep myself pure, keep me close to God, that the Devil never catch me wandering abroad? Why I see he may catch me every hour; mine heart is given to wandering, and I cannot hold it in. It would be an ease, and a joy, and a great delight to me, could I get to be raised to such a pitch, to be all spiritual and heavenly; and there to fix, and be ever with the Lord. O what a joy it would be to me, had I but hope I might get to such a pitch! But woe is me, I shall never be able. Why, do your duty, and for such a comfortable success, let that care lie on the Lord. Commit it to him, both to help you into such a frame, and to keep you in it; he hath said, he will not fail you, He hath sealed to you this day, that he will help you, that he will keep you; trust upon him and he will do it.

But what is it to commit the keeping of our hearts to the Lord?

1. To give them to the Lord. God will keep nothing, but what is his own. Wilt thou give thine heart to the Devil, and then commit it to God to keep it for him? Give your hearts to the Lord, give them to him for his Servants, and then commit them to his Custody.

2. To trust him with the keeping of them, Psal. 143:9. Deliver me O God from mine enemies, for I flee unto thee to hide me. I have many enemies, that lie in wait for my Soul, I dare not trust to myself for

security. God is my trust and my refuge; I flee unto thee to hide me; I will trust under the shadow of thy wings: Psal. 36:7.

Therefore brethren, my Exhortation to you shall be the same with Peters Exhortation, to suffering Christians; 1 Pet. 4:19. Commit the keeping of your Souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful creator. Observe it, commit, but in well doing. Do not neglect your duty, and think to make it up with this, I have committed the care of myself to God; I say, do not neglect your hearts, be not idle and careless of your own duty, do not leave yourselves open to the Usurpation of lust or the invasion of the Devil, do not suffer your hearts to lead you on in your carnal ways; leave not that heart of thine to be a blind house, a dark hole, and filthy Dungeon, full of Abominations, and then think to make up the matter, with this to say, I have committed it to the Lord to wash it, and cleanse it, and keep it; I trust God with my Soul, he I hope will preserve it; commit the keeping of your Souls, in well doing; do your duty, keep your hearts under Government, keep them under Guard, be washing your hearts daily, be watching your hearts daily; though God be also, yet you are everyone, your own keepers; do your part, to keep that which God hath committed to you and then fear not, but God will do his part, he will keep whatever you have committed to him.

And thus I have at length run through this great duty of keeping the heart. The Lord knows how great need there is of every word that hath been spoken: O that none of it might be lost. Our poor hearts, God knows, have hitherto found us but poor heart-keepers. The case they are in, is Evidence sufficient to prove, how sadly they have been looked to. Some of them continuing in a lost state to this day, others of them, but half recovered others relapsed, and fallen back from what they were once hopefully recovered to; none of our hearts, but have often been among Thieves, where we have suffered great loss; and how many have been the heart distempers and diseases we have fallen into? O what slight, what licentious, what listless, dull, and lazy Souls have we been? Sure these hearts have found us but bad keepers. O what shall be the success of these many words that have

been spoken? What say you Christians? Is there any hope that your hearts shall be better looked to for the future? What say you? Will you now be faithful? Will you keep this charge of the Lord? Keep this heart with all diligence? Who is there among you, that will say, I confess my faults, and my great neglects this day? I confess I have been careless, the sad frame mine heart is in, is a witness against me; but through the Grace of God, I will look better to myself, and hope I shall not forget this word, as long as I live; I hope I shall leave meddling with other men's matters, and leave censuring of other men's ways, and from henceforth keep mine eye more close and constant upon mine own Soul. This do, be more faithful in keeping yourselves, and then you may be bold, to commit yourselves to the Lord, as unto a faithful Creator.

What hath been my design and desire in this whole work? But, 1. To prepare your hearts for the Lord, that he may accept them. 2. To bring them over to the Lord, that they may become his own. 3. To keep them for the Lord, to keep them pure, that he may take pleasure in them. O let this be done, and then you may commit them to the Lord to keep them safe.

Will you be persuaded, will you be prevailed upon, thus to prepare and bring over your hearts to the Lord? Thus to preserve and keep them pure and faithful to him? And so trust to his faithfulness? Might I prevail with you in this, I had done my work; and having put you thus into safe custody, should there be bold to leave you, in this Confidence, that you should be thenceforth all kept, by the mighty power of God, through faith unto Salvation.

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