

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
THE SPOTS
OF THE GODLY
AND OF THE WICKED

WRITTEN BY

JEREMIAH BURROUGHS

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The Difference Between the Spots of the Godly, and of the Wicked

by Jeremiah Burroughs

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Courteous Reader,

Here thou hast before thine eyes a little Manuel, taken by a Dextrous Baruch, from the mouth of Jeremiah. By it, as Abel, though dead, he speaketh; and albeit the Carkass of the dead Lyon lyeth rotting in the ground, yet his Name and Doctrine yeelds Sweetness. He needs no Herauld to proclaim his praises. His own works do sufficiently praise him in the Gates. Aaron and his Sons had discerning spirits to destinguish the spots of Leprosie, shewing which made unclean, and which not; and this

Author treads in their steps, and, as a judicious Critick, discerns between the precious and the vile, distinguishing the Faint-spots of Weakness, from the Plague-spots of Wickedness, that so we may cease from false plea's, and be found spotless at the great Day. He makes not spots where were none, but seeks to cleanse them where they are, by the sweet Calls of Admonition and Reproof: If he discover thy secret spots and sores, like the good Samaritan, he'll give thee oyl and wine to cure them. Some spots are inconsistent with grace, and if not cleansed, they'll be thy death, even Plague-sores that will eternally separate thee from God. Come therefore, and purchase this little Treatise, which may be of great and eternal concernment, helping thee to be found of the Lord Christ at the last day, without spot, and blameless.

The First SERMON

July the 6th, 1645

Deut. 32:5. Their spot is not the spot of his Children.

The words read, is a part of Moses Song, that he sung a little before he was to die; (like the Swan that sings sweetest when Death approaches) The Scope and End of this Song of Moses, it was to leave a Testimony behind him after he should be gone, of the goodness, and mercy, and faithfulness of God towards this people; and of their sinfulness, and perversness toward; him again; to the end, that if great evils should befall them after he was gone, they should have no cause to speak ill of God, or of his Servant Moses. You have brought us to a fair Land, you gave us many fair Promises, that God would be our God, and be gracious to us, and that he would never leave us; yet see what befalls us. Moses now leaves this on purpose behind him, for ever to stop their mouths; as if Moses should say, It's true, the Lord hath made me an Instrument of bringing you out of Egypt, and by me hath made many Promises to you, to encourage you; and hath chosen you to be a peculiar people, and led

you along all this while: But, if evils do befall you, if you be brought into a sad, and distressed Condition after I am dead and gone; Remember what I leave behind me, and know, that God is to be justified in All, and his Words is to be justified; but you have sinned and rebelled against God, and have brought upon your selves all the evil that is come upon you. This is the Scope of this Song of Moses.

He leaves this by way of a Song; for so was this 32d of Deut. in the Heb: a Song like one of David's Psalms; and he leaves by way of a Song, that they might the better remember it, and teach their Children the very words of it. And he begins in a very elegant way; Give ear, oh ye Heavens, and will speak; and hear O Earth, the words of my mouth. Why Moses, there was a time thou saidst, thou was't not eloquent? but that was because he would excuse himself from work: But here it appears that he was very eloquent; Give ear, O Heavens, and hearken, O Earth, as if Moses should say, That, that I am speaking of this people (that are a wretched and stout-hearted people) will not be regarded; but Heaven and Earth shall be witness against them; the Heavens and the Earth shall hear. Though what's spoken out of the Word by way of reprehension of a sinful people, may be neglected and past by; yet know, that there is an Impression upon the Heavens and Earth; and rather than the Lord will want witnesses, Heaven and Earth shall come to witness against that people.

After his Preface, which is in the two first verses. He begins with lifting up of the Name of God; Because I will publish the Name of the Lord, Ascribe the Greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, his Work is perfect; for all his waies are Judgment: a God of Truth, and without Iniquity, Just and Right is he: As if he should say, Whatsoever becomes of you, yet the Name of God is Great and Glorious. — And it's a good way to convince and humble sinners, by lifting up their hearts to see the Glory of the Great God, with whom they have to do, against whom they have sinned — And it was an excellent Argument of Moses's Faith when he was to die; yet he could bless himself, as it were, in God — as if he should say, Well, the Lord hath carried me through many Changes and Troubles, and many Afflictions, varieties of Conditions; and what yet God will do with his people, I know not; but this I am sure, he is a Great God, and Blessed; and he is a Rock, and his work is Perfect, and all his waies are Judgment,

a God of Truth, without Iniquity, Just and Right is he: I am sure, whatsoever becomes of me, whatsoever becomes of the people; yet God is to be acknowledged, Holy, Righteous, Just, Perfect, Great and Good in all his Waies. O! 'tis good to have our hearts so confirmed alwaies in God, to keep good thoughts of God, to have God high in our thoughts and hearts, whatsoever changes or state we meet withal in this world.

But then he comes upon them, having lifted up God, and justified God, That they have corrupted themselves; they have forsaken this Blessed and Glorious God that hath been so true to them in all his waies.

Corrupted themselves! you will say, who is not corrupted? who is not without sin? O but were it but onely some human frailty, were not so much; but they have so corrupted themselves, that Their spot is not the spot of my Children; It is beyond that could have been expected; for those that had so near a Relation to God as this people had! they are bespotted and defiled with their sin, and so, as this spot of theirs is not the spot of his Children. Thus you have the scope of the words, and how they came in.

Their spot. The word translated here spot, signifies a blemish, a fault; 'tis the same word that you have in the 17th of this Book, i.e. Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the Lord thy God, any Bullock or Sheep wherein is blemish, or any ill-favouredness. But we know what the English word is; Their spot; the spot of their sin; that sin of theirs; that blemish is not the spot of his Children: What though the Children of God have spots, while they live in this world? they have many sins that are defiling: But, the spots of these men is of another nature, it is not the spot of his Children.

There are Three Doctrinal points in these words; the first two implied, the third expressed: The two that are implied, are these:

1. Doct. First, That sin is a spot.
2. Doct. Secondly, That even the Children of God while they live in this world, have their spots.
- 3 Doct. Thirdly, (Which is the main and scope of the words) That there's a

great deal of difference between the sins and spots of wicked and ungodly men, and the spots of Gods Children.

That's that, that I aim at in the choice of these words, To shew the difference between the sins of wicked men, and the sins of the Saints; And I have chosen this Scripture to handle this point for these two end:

First, To take away that great plea that most carnal hearts have, whereby they put off the power of the Word from their hearts, and are secure in their sinful waies. Way, say they, can we be without sin? are the best without sin upon them? now because none are without sin, therefore they think to put it off, and grow secure; and upon this very thought, put off abundance of truths that they heard preached out of the word, that doth them no good at all, and meerly upon this Reason. Now were it that this plea were but taken from them, the word might prevail a great deal more upon them.

Now therefore, I hope before we have done this Scripture, I shall weaken, if not wholly take away that plea that secure-sinners have for themselves, because all have their sins: I shall shew thee, that there is a great deal of difference, perhaps, between thy sin, and the sins of a Child of God.

And then the second End why I chose this scripture, is, for the comfort of Gods Children. On the one side, one man is secure and hardened, because though he hath sins, why, all men have sins: On the other side, those that are Gods Children, because they feel so much sin in them as they do, they are afraid that they are not Gods Children; they are afraid that their sins that are in them, doth argue them not to be Gods Children. Now they will have help likewise in the opening of this point, when they shall have laid before them that are the sins of Gods Children, and the sins of the wicked, and the differences of them.

I shall, for the making way to this great point, first speak a little of the two former that are implied, and no farther than to make say unto the third, which is the great point in the Text.

1 Doct. First then, That sin it is a spot; A [spot?], in Jam. 1:27. Pure Religion, and undefiled before God, and the Father, is this, To visit the

Fatherless and Widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world: That is, to keep from the sins of the world; the of the world, are the world-spot. Sin it is,

First, A defiling spot; a spot that doth defile, a blemish that doth defile the soul of man in the presence of the Holy God: It's contrary to the pure Nature of God, it is the mixture of the soul with that that's worse than its self; it's a defiling thing. The mingling of Gold with Silver, doth not defile the Silver; but mingling of Lead with Silver, doth defile the Silver, because the Lead is worse than Silver: So the Communion that the soul hath with God, and as it were, the mingling of the heart in God, and with Divine things, doth not defile it, but make it better; but the mingling of the heart with the world, it doth defile the soul, because the soul is mingled with that that's worse than it self; It is a defiling-spot: You know what it is to have the Body besmear'd with dirt, and have Clothes bespotted with filth and dirt; look how it is with your Bodies besmear'd with dirt, or your Clothes, so it is with the Face of your Soul in the Presence of God, when sin is upon you; It's a defiling-spot.

Secondly, Sin it's a spreading-spot, it's like the spot of the Leprosie, that spreads more and more; and let a sinner live never so long, this spot will bespread him more and more. If you had a spot upon your Flesh, that were but little at the first, it may be you would neglect it; but if you saw it spread more and more then you would think there were something in it: It is so with thy sin, when you are young, the spot is but small in comparison; but as you grow, the spot spreads more and more until you are all over blains and spots: So are old sinners; sin is a spreading-spot, it spreads in a soul, in a family, in any society where sinners live.

Thirdly, It is an infecting-spot, a spot that of itself infects; a Plague spot, that doth infect the soul, and infects every thing you meddle with, and doth infect the company you converse with; that's the nature of this spot.

And then Fourthly, It's a staining-spot, It doth pain the soul, so as all the created power in Heaven and Earth is not able to wash it away; thou mayest think little of the sin that thou committest, thou committest it, and hast pleasure and delight in such a sinful way, for a quarter of an hour; it may be thy pleasure lasts no longer; well, but when this pleasure

is done, there's a stain left upon thy soul that doth mark thee out to Eternal Death; such a stain left, that will abide to all Eternity upon the Soul, if onely, that one means be not applied, the Blood of Jesus Christ. Let all the Angels in Heaven, and Men in the World, put to their wisdom and strength, to get cut the stain that is in thy Soul, and it is too little; onely the Blood of the Son of God, can cleanse and take out that stain that is in thy soul; such a spot is sin! a staining spot! In Jer. 2:22 Though thou wash thee with Nitre, and take thee much Sope; yet thine Iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord: Ye may use many means to get away your sin, perhaps you may cover it over, or there may be some kind of slight sorrow; But it's not all the sorrow in the World, if thou wert able to shed as many tears as there are Drops of Water in the Sea, to wash away thy sin, if their were nothing else to do it, all thy tears will not do it; It must be onely the blood of the Son of God. Many people think to wash away their sins with their sorrow; But they must know, there is something beyond sorrow, it is onely the blood of Jesus Christ, can cleanse and take away this stain.

Use, Now, If sin be such a stain, such a spot; hence then, let us learn to look into Gods Glass, to see out own spots, how we are bespotted by our sin; if it is such a Foul, such a Spreading, such a Staining spot, How is it that Men and Women see it not? they see not their own faces; Oh they never were acquainted with Gods Glass; What's that, you will say? why, James 1:23. will shew you what the Glass of God is, in which you may see your Faces, in which you may see your spots; If any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural Face in a Glass; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner a man he was. But who looketh into the perfect Law of liberty, and continueth there in, &c. And the Law of God is the Glass that God would have thee to look unto, to see thy face in; thou canst not know thy heart, but by holding the Law of God before thee. Paul thought himself beautiful enough, until the Law came. That Scripture is notable for it, in Rom. 7:9. For I was alive without the Law once; But when the Commandment came, Sin revived, and I died: I was alive, I was jollie, and thought my self well enough; but when the Commandment came, when God did but take the Glass of the Law, and hold it before my face, I saw my self a most ugly Monster: I remember I have read of an old

strumpet that had sed a false Glass continually to look in, and that presented her beautiful unto her self, and she would never look upon any other: But once there being a Glass by, she chanc'd to look into it, wherein she beheld her face, and being told her that it was a true Glass, she ran mad upon the sight of her ugly face: certainly the generality of men have no other Glasses to look into, and to behold the face of their souls, but their own carnal conceits, and the wayes of other men, and the like: But if God should but hold the Glass of his Law to some of your faces, to behold how loathsom you are in the Eyes of God) for so they are in Gods eye as this Glass presents them if they are not washed in the blood of Christ:) and it would be a dreadful sight to many a soul: But yet better that you saw it now while there are wayes to cleanse your souls of their spots, than when you should die; for if when you should be at the point of Death, and be ready to go to the great God to Recieve the sentence of your Eternal Doom; If conscience should hold the Glass of Gods Law before you, and there make you see the ugly face of your soul, spotted by sin, Oh! it would be a soul-sinking sight unto you. Learn you to look now into the Glass of the Law, and examine your soul by the holy Law of God, that you may see your spots there; many of you spend a great deal of time every morning in looking into the Glass, to see if all things be well in your face; Oh that you would but spend as much time in looking into the Law of God, and examining of your hearts by the word: There stands a Glass in the window, and there lies a Book on the shelf; Why may not the Law of God be as well taken, to look into your hearts, as the Glass taken to see your face in? People are little acquainted with this Glass; and therefore know not their own souls.

Secondly, If sin be such a spot, O learn we to be humbled for our spots, if we have seen them, and to be ashured of them: If we have seen our faces besmear'd, it doth deject us, especially if we be in Company that are our Superiors: Know that you are always before the Infinite God, and his blessed Angels, and they behold your spots; O therefore be humbled and be ashamed for your spots. An Ingenuous disposition of heart, is ashamed if either flesh or garments bespotted; but now, one of a sordid disposition, that is all the week raking in Kennels, or Dust-heaps, though they be bespotted, they care not, because many times the very temper of their spirits, is like to their employment; but now one that is of an

Ingenuous disposition, if he be defiled, he is ashamed and troubled for it: O labour to purge your spots and stains; know, that this is the work that you have to do, To get your souls cleansed and purged; The Lord hath set open a Fountain for sin, and for uncleanness, for Judah, and for Jerusalem to wash in, O wash your hearts, O Jerusalem. So I may say to every soul, wash thy heart from thy spots; thou wilt wash thy face and hands dayly, O that dayly there might be a washing of thy heart! If thou hast committed sin, let it not lie and soak in; if there should any spots happen upon your cloeths, you presently lay salt upon it, to keep it from staining; so, so soon as thou hast committed sin, lay the salt tears of thy Repentance, though that be not all, the blood of Christ is the main thing, to keep thy soul clean from this staining-spot; and to do it presently will be a great deal more ease than to stay long; as a spot of Ink, as soon as it falls, if you seek to get it away, it will be done with a little trouble; but if you let it soak in, you cannot get it out after wards. And so it is with sin that lies long upon the soul: O! many of your sins are old stains that have been many years upon you; and as it is in your cloeths that have old stains, washing will not serve, all the Soap you can use will not get them out, but you must lay them a frosting in a winter night; O! so your old sins; you must not think that those old spots and stains upon your soul, that you shall get them off so easily, you must be willing to lie a soaking, and frosting, to indure what hardship God calls you to, so be it that you may be cleansed from them: It's an expression that I remember Austin hath; saith he, You would have all things good and clean in your house; all the furniture in your house; yea your shooes if they be bespotted, you will have them clean: And hast thou more care of thy very shooes, then of thy soul that's spotted and defiled: O! there's little care for the cleansing of that: But now my Brethren, these things especially should be applyed, when we are to go more immediately and solemnly into the presence of God. We must look into the Glass of the Law every day, be humbled, be ashamed; and labour to purge the spots of our souls, and that continually; But I say, when we are to go into Gods presence in a more immediate manner, as when we are to go to prefer a petition to God, and that, such a petition as concerns our souls and Eternal estates, when we are to go to hear his word, and worship him: When we are to go to his Table, at the Lords Supper, we had need then prepare by looking into that Glass, and by being humbled for our sins, and labouring to cleanse:

Though you care act so much for spots upon your face and clothes when you are at home, yet when you are to go before your Betters, then what looking is there in the Glass to be trim, and to have clothes that are clean washt. Remember now, that every time thou art to go to worship God, thou art to set thy self as in his immediate presence, to have to deal with that infinite holy God whose pure eyes cannot indure to behold the least iniquity; that God that is so Holy that the very Angels cover their faces as not being able to behold him, thou art to go before this God, and wilt thou go bespotted and be smeared, and never look into the glass of the Law to see how thou art there, that thou mayest labour to cleanse thy soul? wilt thou come into Gods presence in thy filth? O! bold sinner that know'st not what it is to deal with the Infinite Holy God: Those that know what God is, what his Infinite Holiness means, when they come into Gods presence they make it the great part of their work in preparing their hearts before they come; and indeed the spiritual part of Godliness doth a much consist in this one thing, as in any, in the preparation of the heart for the presence of God in Holy duties; and that man or woman that is careful and conscionable in this thing, may have good comfort to themselves that they are acquainted with the spiritual part of Godliness; that wherein the power of it consists: But for such that can go into Gods presence, and no such sear and reverence of God is in their heart, certainly these neither know God, nor have any thing of the power of Godliness in their hearts — Now no matter my Brethren, what we endure in this World so be it we may get our souls cleansed from the filth and the spots that are upon them that when there shall be a farther Presence of God, which we shall have, than that we have now in Holy Duties; that then we may stand before him without spot; so saith the Apostle in 2 Pet. 3:14. Wherefore (Beloved) seeing ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace without spot and blameless — You look for new Heavens and new Earth; when all the world shall be on fire about your ears, and the Elements melting with servent heat; and the Heavens departing like a Scrowl, and the like: do you look for such things? do you look for the appearing of the Holy God? and dare you stand in the Presence of that Holy God, when he comes to pass the Sentence of your Eternal Estate upon your souls? dare you stand before him with such defiled, stained souls, as you have? Oh no! Saith the Apostle, Wherefore, Beloved, seeing ye look for such things, be diligent,

that you may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless —
If those spots that are upon many of your Spirits shall abide upon you at that day, Wo be to you that ever you were born; you cannot be found in peace before God, except you be found without spot, and blameless —

Yet, let me say farther, Wo to that soul that shall have one spot upon it at that day.

If this should be means of the Great Day of Judgment, as many Divines take it; though there may be some doubt about some other time: But suppose that it be meant of that day, as it is ordinarily taken; Then, wo to that man or woman that ever they have been, that shall have but one spot upon them: For, then we must be delivered from every spot, or otherwise our souls will perish for ever: But ye may be without spot, and blameless before him — Thus much for that point.

2. Doct. The Second Point is, That Gods Children have their spots; the best of all, have their spots.

The Church is compared to the Moon; Christ he is the Sun of Righteousness but the Church, in Rev. 12, is compared to the Moon, and the Moon hath her spots, the Sun none. No godly man or woman, in regard of their souls, is like Absalom, as he was in regard of his body; his body was without any blemish, from the crown of the head, to the sole of the foot; but it can be said of no bodie's soul so; you are clean, but not all: The best Garden hath its worms; and the best Soul hath its spots; for while we live here, there is that Corruption remaining, that will breed defilement of it self: But considering that we live in a wicked world here, and converse with wicked men, it is as impossible to live in the world, and to converse with men, without any spots, as for a company of people to ride together in foul way, in the midst of Winter, and to keep their Garments so, that none should have a spot. The Condition of this world is such, as indeed, it is not fit to have a Saint in it without spots. God hath reserved the time of full-cleansing of his people, to another world. Christ could cleanse his people presently from all their spots; I, but because they are to live in this world, Christ sees it is not so suitable for this vile world.

This world is not worthy of the Saints, take them with all their infirmities;

but it is not for the world to have the Saints live without spot; and if the world be offended at it, let them be offended; let them be stumbling-blocks unto them; and I make no question, but it is so to many souls: The world they rejoice when they behold the sins that are in the Saints; but thou hast little cause to rejoice in the sins of others, if thou knewest all; for it may be intended for thy ruin: I know no greater stumbling-block to wicked men, than the sins of those that do profess Godliness; but wo to those by whom offences come: The Lord by continuing of spots in his own people, doth exercise Faith, and Humility, and Patience, and other Graces, in such a way, as he takes pleasure and delight to see the exercise of them.

But this is not the Point that I do intend. Yet, O thou godly heart, thou knowest this to be a truth, That there are spots in thee; yea, sometimes those that are Godly, think there's nothing else but spots in them; but be of good comfort in this, though thy Condition be sad in this world, so long as thou art spotted, yet be of good comfort here, Jesus Christ is without any spots, Christ thy Saviour hath no spots. Heb. 9:14. How much more shall the Blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your Conscience from dead works, to serve the Living God? Christ offered himself without spot; and this is the comfort of the Saints while they have their many spots in this world — And so in 1 Pet. 1:19. there's the same expression: We are redeemed with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb, without blemish, and without spot. You will say, What comfort is it to me in the midst of my spots, that Jesus Christ my Saviour hath no spots? — What? This is comfort, Because God looks upon thee not as thou art in thy self, but in his Son; and reckons thee as a member of his Son, and deal with thee according to the Relation thou hast to him — And the Righteousness of his Son is made over to thee. Christ is a Covenant-Head, the Head of the Covenant; and in that regard, being without spot, it is of unspeakable comfort unto a gracious heart, when it sees it self defil'd and bespotted by sin.

And then yet further, know, That through the righteousness of Christ, thou art lookt upon thy self, in the point of Justification, without spot too. The Saints have their spots that is, they have their weaknesses, and some sins, their Sanctification is imperfect; I, but in regard of Justification, so,

they are altogether without spot: So you have it in Cant. 4:7. Where Christ speaks of his Spouse, Thou art all fair, my Love, there is no spot in thee — You will say, This seems to be against this text: No, not at all; for we may be without any spot, in regard of our Justification, and yet we may be spotted and defiled, and God may see that we are defiled with spots in our sanctification. It's true, the Lord will not charge these spots upon thy soul that art in Christ; yet he doth expect that thou shouldst be humbled for them.

And so in Ephes. 5:27. there we have both together, there's a Scripture that shews that thou shalt one day be without any spot in regard of thy sanctification too; though thou be'st spotted now, yet the time is coming when thou shalt be delivered from all these spots in regard of thy sanctification; saith the Apostle there, Christ loved his Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctifie and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word: That he might present it to him self a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blame. Mark, what heaps of words here are; here's sanctifying, cleansing washing, presenting a glorious Church, not having spot, not having wrinkle, or any such thing; But that it should be holy and without blemish: All these expressions are to shew the state the Saints should be brought unto, and to uphold thy spirit in the sight of all thy spots: — Let me speak to thee who art sensible of the many spots that are in thy soul. What is it that doth uphold thy heart? One would wonder that any soul that knows what it is to deal with such an infinite holy God as the Lord is, one would wonder what should uphold the soul, seeing it's so defiled, and nothing but spots in every thing! What can uphold it here from sinking? It may be that that upholds you, is this, We have all our sins, and we are all sinners. If there were nothing else to uphold a gracious heart but that, it could not but sink even in despair, notwithstanding that. But now these three things uphold a gracious heart: I have my spots indeed, and am defil'd, wo to me, for the defilements of my soul, my life: This is indeed the burden that I have in this World, the great affliction that is upon me, that my soul is so defil'd: O! but blessed be God, I have to deal with God through Jesus Christ, who hath offered up himself to the Father without any spot; I have to deal with God through the Lamb that was sacrificed, that had no spot, and it

was for me that he was slain, and God looks upon me through him, and he is made of God sanctification — I am indeed imperfect, and have many spots; yet, blessed be God he hath reveal'd, that justification is perfect in this life: That the Lord through the righteousness of his Son, looks upon me as without spot; that is, will not lay any of these spots to my charge — Yea, and further, This is the comfort of my soul, that though I have many spots now, yet there is a way reveal'd to cleanse my soul from all spots, through the blood of Christ, and through the word of God, to cleanse and wash me: Yea, I find in the word, that Jesus Christ had such a desire to cleanse my soul from spots, as he gave himself to that very end: And there is a time when all these spots must be washed away, and when this defil'd, polluted soul of mine shall be before the Lord and his Christ, and live for ever with them, without any spot o[r] wrinkle, or any defilement whatsoever; but shall be made fully perfect in my sanctification, as now I am in my justification: And it's this that upholds my soul — That's somewhat indeed; that in this life of thine, wherein there is so much corruption, if thy soul be upheld from sinking with such considerations as these are, surely thou art gone beyond a carnal heart, and I may even say, That thy spot is the spot of Gods Children, from this, and not the spot of the wicked and ungodly: Remember that one expression in Ephes. 5. which is very remarkable, and of great use; Christ loved us, and gave himself, that he might sanctifie and wash us, and the like: Mark, it is made the great fruit of the love of Jesus Christ, to sanctifie a soul, therefore it's matter of great consequence; for Christ shews his love in a special manner in sanctifying and cleansing the soul — This is from the peculiar and electing love of God — And it shews, when Christ comes to cleanse the soul from spots and defilements, that he had loved from all eternity, that soul. But on the contrary, if the Lord do let thee lye in the filth of thy sin, it is an Argument that he never set his heart upon thee. As for instance, suppose a man were riding on the highway, and sees a Child there lie all in the filth, ready to be choak't with the dirt and mire, and to perish there; well, as he is riding by, he looks upon the Child, and sees it ready to perish; and when he hath look't upon it, away he goes and leaves it there; would not every one say, Certainly this is not the Father of the Child that rides so away. But now if the Father or Mother should come by, and see the Child, the Mother would screek out, O my Child! and snatches it up, and carries it away, and gets

water and washes it, and so cleanses the Child. And herein doth the Mother or Father shew their love they have to the Child. Thus it is (for all the World) in the love of Christ; Christ, he sees all your filthiness and pollution; he sees Men and Women wallowing up and down in the dirt; Christ looks upon them, and goes by, leaves them still, and lets them wallow in their corruptions more and more, and passes by; surely the heart of Christ is not much towards them, there's little relation that Christ or God hath to such as these are: But now, when as there is one that belongs to Jesus Christ, and that Christ hath set his love upon from eternity, Christ sees such a one wallowing in the filth of sin; O! the very bowels of Christ do earn, O! Christ takes them, and with his own blood cleanseth them: and will never leave washing and cleansing of the soul, till he hath cleansed it from all its spots, and presented it before the Father.

And mark, in the second place; Christ loved us; and this is a fruit of Christs love, to cleanse us from our spots — And then he gave himself, that he might cleanse us, perhaps you think it's of little moment to be cleansed from the filth of your sin; but Christ accounted it such a matter, that he would give his life for it: I account the cleansing of these souls from the filth of their sins, worth my life; I will give my life for it; so that it cost more then Ten Thousand Worlds to cleanse a soul from the filth of its sin, as well as from the guilt: I beseech you consider of this, that the cleansing of a soul from the filth of sin, did cost Christ that which was more worth than Ten thousand Worlds, but, O! how many is there that can wallow in sin, and take delight in it? But I say, it is of so great consequence to be cleansed from sin, as Christ is content to give his very life to cleanse his Church from sin — Now if thy heart be thus, that thou account the love of Christ to consist in this, and that thou canst prise Christ upon This, That he gave himself, to the end that he might cleanse thy soul from thy sin; surely thou dost prise cleansing from sin indeed; and if thou dost prise it at so high a rate, this is a good Argument that thou art one of Gods Children: Therefore daily exercise thy Faith upon this Christ, by the applying of the blood of Jesus Christ to thy soul, and the renewing of the work of thy repentance, seeing, as long as thou livest, their will be spots.

The Second SERMON

July the 20th, 1645

3. Doct

But now comes in the Third Point: It's true, the people of God have all their spots; I, but know, There's a great deal of difference between the spots of the godly, and the spots of the wicked.

And this Scripture I chose for the handling of this point, to take away that vain plea that hardens the hearts of most men in their sin; Why it's true, we have sin, and who hath not? the best of all have their sins. I appeal to you, whether you do not know that this is the great hardning conceit of most people in the World? Thou hast thy sins, and the best have their sins; but there's a great deal of difference between the sins of the one, and the sins of the other; you will see a great deal of difference, however, whatever thou sayest; Psal. 22:18. saith David, I have not wickedly departed from my God: David would not say but that he had sometimes departed from God; I, but I have not wickedly departed from him, saith David; I can appeal to God in that: There is still remaining in the Saints, corruptions; in their understandings there is some dimness, though there be light; But I may say of that, as in Isa. 11. The dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation; It shall not be such dimness; It's spoken there in case of affliction and misery: We may apply it thus, by way of allusion, in case of the remaining corruptions: There is in the understanding a dimness, but not like that that was before, and is in natural men: There is not that dimness of darkness in the weakest Man or Woman in the World that is converted, that hath the least natural parts as in the greatest learned Man or Woman in the World that is unconverted: And though, perhaps, a Child of God may have some security in his heart

for a while, yet in 1 Thes. 5:6. Let us not sleep as do others, lest perhaps we should sleep and be overtaken; yet saith the Apostle, God forbid we should sleep as do others: There's a great deal of difference between the sleep of Gods people, and the sleep of others; that is, between the security of their hearts, and the security of other mens hearts: It was the special work of the Priest in the time of the Law, to discern between spot and spot; to shew which was the spot of Leprosie, and wich was not.

When there was a spot in the bodies of men, they were to come to the Priest to discern whether their spot were the spot of Leprosie, or no.

And 'tis a special work of the Ministers of the Gospel, to shew the difference of spots, between the spots of the wicked, and the spots of the Children of God. And here indeed doth consist the spiritualness of their Ministry, and a great deal of efficacy of it is in this thing; and without this, our Ministry is like to do little good; and therefore, though I had thoughts of some other things, yet I thought alwaies, except there were something laid down about this, I might preach many Arguments, open many points of Religion to you, and the want of the knowledg of this, might hinder the efficacy of all. Jer. 15:18. If thou shalt separate between the precious and the vile (saith he to Jeremiah) then shalt thou be as my mouth: So that, that's the work that God looks for from his Ministers; and indeed it's the work of a soul saving Ministry, to separate between the precious and the vile; and then indeed when they speak, they are as the mouth of God to a people: God makes men in this point, to be as his mouth, for it is a point that doth separate between the precious and the vile: Therefore, as Moses said of the whole Song in the 46 v. of this Chap. Set your hearts unto all the words which I testifie among you, &c. For it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your life: I may say of this part of the Song, I beseech you brethren, set your hearts to it, and mind it, for certainly it is not a vain thing, it is your life; It's as much as your souls are worth, the understanding of this point rightly; and thousands of souls do perish eternally for want of the understanding this point rightly — Then let's fall upon it.

There's much difference between the sins that are in wicked men, and the sins that are in the Saints. It must be granted,

First, that in some particular acts, a wicked man may do something better than the godly; and not sin so much in some acts; as we have famous examples of this.

As in the example of Abimelech; compare him with David: Abimelech in respect of Abraham's wife, and David in respect of Uriah's; Abimelech did carry himself like a Saint, and David rather like a wicked man, in comparison.

And, Secondly, If we compare Rehoboam and Amaziah, with Asa; Rehoboam and Amaziah were both wicked men, but yet they, in some acts, did better than Asa that was a godly man; it is very remarkable, the comparing the stories of them: For, Rehoboam he was a wicked man, and yet in 1 Kings 12:24. when ten tribes of his Kingdom did rebel against him, and he got an Army to reduce them again to their obedience, there comes but a poor Prophet of God to him, and saith, Thus saith the Lord, ye shall not go up nor fight against your Brethren the Children of Israel: Return every man to his house, for this thing is from me: The Text saith, they hearkned to the word of the Lord, and returned to depart according to the word of the Lord: A very strange thing, that a King, a wicked man, exasperated to the uttermost, that had an Army ready, whose cause could not but be justified before all the World; for who would have said what the Prophet did, That this was from the Lord: Yet that one poor man coming to him, and telling of him that it was from the Lord, though he must lose ten parts of his Kingdom, ten of twelve, yet Rehoboam hearkens to God, lets go his Army, lets go the ten parts of his Kingdom, hearing but a Prophet say. It was from the Lord! one would think that this were a Saint! what an obedient man was this to the word of God? and yet this was a wicked man, an unregenerate man.

Again, Amaziah, that was a man whose heart was not upright with God, 2 Chron. 25. he had likewise hired an Army, and there comes a man of God to him, in v. 7. saying, O King, let not the Army of Israel go with thee, for the Lord is not with Israel, to wit, with all the Children of Ephraim — But saith Amaziah, what shall we do for the hundred talents, which I have given to the Army of Israel? They had their pay afore-hand, why, saith the Prophet, the Lord is able to give thee much more than this: and Amaziah was content not only to part with his Army, but to lose the pay that he

had given them beforehand, meerly at the word of God, by one poor Prophet of his: Now one would think, a wicked man that was a Soldier, should have contemned such a message from a poor weak man, and bad him go and meddle with what he had to do with; yet these two men did not: But now, you shall find Asa that was a godly, man he did not do so well: These two the Scripture brands for wicked men at this time when they did so, and so for ought appears, continued and perished in their wickedness: But now, I say, Asa, that the Scripture notes for a godly man, you find him quite otherwise, 2 Chron. 16. there a Prophet did but come to Asa, and rebuke him for relying upon wicked men, for so much correspondency with those who were ungodly, the Text notes in the 10. v. Then Asa was wroth with the Seer, and put him in a Prison-House, for he was in a rage with him, because of this thing; and Asa oppressed some of the people the same time: This was a godly man, and the other wicked — You will say, here now the spot of Asa was worse than the spot of Rehoboam, or Amaziah, that were wicked men; sometimes, therefore, for some acts of sin, wicked men may do better than the Saints — And therefore, by the way, you should learn not to bless your selves in this, that you in some particular acts do good things; you may do good things, in particular acts, better than others that are godly, and yet you may perish eternally, and they may be saved in the day of Jesus Christ.

And it must be acknowledged likewise, that in regard of the excellency of the souls of the Saints, any spot in them, is worse than the spots of wicked men: As a Fly in a box of Ointment, is worse than a thousand in a Barrel of Beer; why, because the Ointment is more precious than that &, in divers circumstances likewise, the spots of the Saints may be worse than the spots of wicked men: Which I have had some occasion to speak to, out of another Scripture: But, for all this, in respect of some particular acts, and in respect of the excellency of their souls above others, and in respect of some circumstances, one may be worse than another: But take all together, and the spots or sins of wicked men, are farr worse than the sins of the godly; and that I shall shew in these Three regards, the difference between the sins of wicked men, and the godly; and shew, that one is far worse than the other.

First, In respect of the nature of their sin.

Secondly, In respect of the behaviours of their hearts about them.

And, Thirdly, In respect of the present dealings of God with them for their sin — Their spots are different in these three regards.

For the First, In regard of the nature of their spots, and that in divers regards, (except indeed in some extraordinary cases, one of which we spoke of before in those examples I say) the spots of the wicked are far worse than the spots of the godly; yea, the truth is take them at any time, if you consider all things together, they are worse.

First, The sin of a godly man is rather a Scar, then a Wound that is healed, or almost healed: And the sin of the ungodly is a rotten putrifying sore in the flesh. Look what the difference is between the Scar of a wound that is almost healed, and a filthy putrified sore in the flesh; that difference there is between the sin of the Saints, and the sins of other men.

You will say, that, that's but a similitude; what do you mean by that of the scar, and a rotten sore? —

Why, the plain meaning of it is this, That the sin of a godly man, it is but the hinderance of his soul in the making of God to be his last End; the frame of a godly man's soul is alwayes for God as his last End; and his sin comes in but as an impediment and hinderence unto him in this work of his, in making God to be his last End — But now the sin of a wicked man, it is the departing from God, and closing with some other thing as his last End; and chief good. Now here lies a broad difference: When the heart of a man that is godly, makes God to be his End, and the scope and aim of it, is at God; now in some particular acts it is put off and hindered in this work of his. But now a man that is wicked, doth decline from God, and depart from him, to some other good, for his End, and closes with it as his chief good: Now this is exceeding vile and abominable — So that the sin of a godly man is the hinderance of thy soul that's making after God as thy last End: But on, the other side, it is the declining of thy soul to some base contentment, as thy cheif good, that thou makest to be as thy God.

Secondly, The spot of the Children of God, it is not such a contagious, such an infectious spot as the spot of the wicked is. It is true, there is an infection in all sin, some contagion; but there's a great deal of difference between the contagion and infection of the remainder of sin that is in the Saints, and that that is in the hearts of unregenerate men.

You will say, What difference?

Difference? First, In this: The contagion and infection of sin in a wicked man, makes his very person to be abominable, and is loathsome, through his sin: The sins of the Saints, have no such infection in them; they have not such a contagion in them, as to make their persons to be abominable and hateful before God: God hates the workers of iniquity; but he hates not the Saints, that have iniquity in them; and this is a wide difference in their contagion and infection.

Yea, Secondly, That sin that is in a wicked man, it doth defile all his actions, so as it makes his very actions, the best of his actions, to be turned into sin: While thou art an unregenerate man, thy sin is of such a contagious nature, that it makes all thy actions sin, thy best actions it turns them even unto sin: In Psal. 109:7. Let his prayer become sin: All thine actions before God are sinful, thy best actions, while thou art an unregenerate man: There is not onely sin in them, but that sin hath so defil'd them, as they are even turned into sin to thee: Out of an unclean thing there cannot proceed that which is clean; out of a corrupt Tree there cannot be good fruit. Now, there is nothing but the fruits of sin, that comes from an unregenerate heart — But now, the Saints, though they have sin in them, yea, they have some sin cleaving to every one of their actions; there is no action that a Child of God doth, but hath some sin cleaves to it: But yet there is not that infection in it, as to turn his actions into sin; no, God looks upon his action as a holy action for all that: The work that he doth, is look't upon as the work of the spirit of God in him, though there be evil cleaves to it, as it comes through him: And therefore there is not such an infection in their sin, as in thine.

And then, Secondly, The infection and contagion of the sin of wicked men is such, as it defiles all they meddle with, and makes every thing that they meddle with, to be unclean to them: You know what the Scripture saith in

1 Tit. 1:5. Unto the pure all things are pure; but to the unbelieving and undefiled, is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defiled: There is that uncleanness and filthiness in thee, while thou art unregenerate, as every thing is made unclean: All the Mercies of God are unclean to thee, thou hast no sanctified use of them; all the Ordinances, the use of them to thee are polluted and unclean: As in the Law, the uncleanness of the Leprosie was such, as whatever the Leprosie did touch, it was unclean; so it is with thee, whatever thou medlest with, thy meat, thy drink, thy clothes, thy estate, and every thing is made to be unclean to thee. We account the disease of the Plague a very grievous disease, because they who have it, can meddle with nothing, but it is in danger to be infected; any clothes that they put on, and the meat and drink that they take into them: So it is in the sins of unregenerate men, all things that they meddle with, are spiritually infected to them, and they have no sanctified use of any thing. But it is not so with the Saints: They have sin in them, but you never read that their sin makes every thing unclean: No, to the pure all things are pure; God looks upon them as pure, and they have a holy use of Estate, they do enjoy Gods Ordinances, Gods Works, Gods Mercy: The wicked therefore, are not onely spotted, but you find in Scripture, they are called spots, in the abstract; because of the impression of their sin: 2 Pet. 2:13. and in Jude 12. They are spots in your Feasts: Not spotted, but spots; as if they were all turned into pollution

Thirdly, The spots of the Saints are not like the spots of wicked men; nor their sin, the spots of the Saints in this, they are not such deadly spots; the spots of wicked men, they are deadly spots: Wicked men, therefore, being defil'd with their sin, they lie in their sin as a Carrion lies in a Common-shore; That's the similitude that the Holy Ghost uses to express the wickedness, & wicked men & women in the World by; 1 John 5:19, The whole World lies in wickedness; the meaning of that Text cannot be exprest better than thus; Look, as you see a filthy Carrion, lying dead and rotten in the Common-shore, so doth the World lie in wickedness: Surely their wickedness is another manner of wickedness, than the wickedness of the Saints: There's a great deal of difference between a sickly countenance of a weak man, and the gastly countenance of a dead carkase: a great deal of difference between the stiffness in a mans joynts,

or in his flesh, by reason of some cold; and the stiffness in a body that lies by the walls; a great deal of difference between some breakings out of your Children, breakings out of heat, or other humors; and the filthy corruption that is in a dead carcase, that breaks out there: The Saints, though they have sin in them, yet they have a principle of life that works out that sin that is in them: Now the ungodly, they have sin, but they have no principle of life to work it out: Hence, in Prov. 25:26. the Righteous when they fall, they are said to be like a troubled Fountain: Now, you know, a Fountain that's troubled, or if there be dirt and filth put into a Fountain, it's all in a soil, and all looks filthy and dirty as any puddle doth; for the present you can see no difference between that, and any filthy puddle: But do but stay a while, and you will see, that the Fountain having a living spring in it, will work out all that filth. But now, if you cast dirt into a plash of water in the high-way, there it lies, and there it putrifies. Just thus is the difference between the sin of the wicked and ungodly, and the sin of the godly; The sin of the godly is as the troubled Fountain; I, but there is a principle of life to work out that sin, and will work it out in time; but the sin of the wicked is like the dirt that is cast into the plash in the high-way, and there it lies and putrifies, and it is filthy: There is no Spring to work out that filth: Hence in 1 Pet. 1. The hopes of the Saints are said to be living hopes, that is, such hopes as is working out that filth that is in their souls: The wicked, therefore, their spot is a deadly spot; but the Saints, they have a principle of life. Take the Saints of God in their worst condition, when they are most overcome by temptation, and yet there is some symptoms of life; life will appear in them.

You will say, What symptoms of life will appear in a godly man or woman, when they are overcome with sin and corruption? Yes, you shall find Four, that will act in them when they are most overcome with their corruptions.

The First is this, If they sin, if possibly they can, they labour to recall themselves: You shall find that their judgments are yet for holiness and strictness in the ways of God: perhaps they are overcome by a particular temptation, and they are troubled and afraid that there is no grace, and that there is no difference between them and wicked men: I, but you shall

find that even at that time when they are overcome with temptations, yet their judgments remain for God, and for his truth, and for his way, for the strictness of holiness; and they account the Law of God to be good, and holy, and righteous at that very time. We read of Saint Paul in Rom. 7. he had as great a conflict with his corruptions, as you shall find almost in any; so that he was even led Captive, and that he was sold under sin: But yet mark, in v. 12. though he had such a conflict with his corruptions, yet the Law was holy, and just, and good; I think he gives there some three Epatnites to the Law of God, when his corruptions did most strive against the Law of God; wherefore the Law is holy, and the Commandment is holy, and just, and good: So you shall find gracious hearts, though they be under temptation, and may be overcome with an act of sin, Well, though I be base and vile, though I have a filthy, and carnal, and base heart, yet Gods wayes are good wayes, and his Commandments are good Commandments, they are holy and blessed Commandments, onely my heart cannot get up to them; I, but though I cannot, yet I would not have the Commandment come down to me, I would not have it less holy and good than it is: This symptom of life you shall find: I, but if a man comes to fall into sin, and he begins to think that he was a fool to make so much conscience of sin, and to live so strictly, and holily, and it was but when he was young, and silly, and foolish why, the man's judgment is altered: O! when did you ever know such a man, that having so apostatised, ever return'd again, if once his judgment were gone against the wayes of God; though he may be overcome in an act, or there may be many distempers of heart, and passions, and the like, but if once he be taken in his judgment against the wayes of God, the goodness, and strictness, and the holiness of them, it's to be feared, that this Man is quite gone, and that his spot is not the spot of Gods Children: In Lev. 13:44. you have a notable Scripture there; and the reading of that Scripture, did hint to me this notion about the difference of the sins of the one and the other: Now the Leprosie was but as a tipe of the uncleanness of sin: The whole Chapter, you shall find, is spent in the discerning of Leprosie, what is the spot of Leprosie, and what not: Now mark, all a long you shall find that the Priest looking upon the spot, and seeing it to be thus and thus, saith the Text, he shall pronounce him unclean; but now in the 44. v. The Priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean, his Plague is in his head: If a man had it in other parts, then the Priest was onely to pronounce him unclean: But

now, when the Priest comes and looks upon a man, and sees the Plague to be in his head, then saith the Text, the Priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean: So here in the Leprosie of sin, if there be Leprosie of sin in a mans affections, it's very ill, he may be unclean by it; if it be got into his will, or got into his thoughts, there is a great deal of evil, but if it be got into the upper part of all, if it be got in the senses, the body, the actions, it may make him unclean; but if it be got into his judgment, if a man hath such a corrupt judgment, that he gives a judgment against Gods wayes, against the goodness and strictness of them, he gives a judgment against the holiness of the word, and saith, What need men be so precise and strict? and, the Law of God is not so strict with men. Now I say, when it comes to the judgments of men and women, such a Man or Woman is to be pronounced not unclean onely, but utterly unclean, for the Plague is got into his head: But there's the symptom of life that is in the Saints, though they be over taken with corruptions, yet their judgments are for God, and the strictness of the wayes of God, whereas the others are not.

Secondly, They do not yet forsake their lest End; that that is their ultimate scope and end, their heart is not taken off from that, (though as I said in the opening, they are hindered) I shall give you a Scripture for that, as coming in more fully, in Psal. 18:21. This Scripture was quoted before, to shew that there is a great deal of difference between the sins of wicked men, & the sins of the godly; in that act of David, saith David there, I have kept the wayes of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God: But now, David, how do you prove that? thou didst sin against thy God very grosly, why then dost thou say thou had'st not wickedly departed from thy God? why, he proves it in the 22 v. For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me: That is, as if he should say, Why Lord, though I was overtaken with this corruption, yet I made thee to be my end and my scope, my heart was yet towards thee; I did not put away thy statutes from me, but I was willing that thy statutes and judgments should stand before me; and herein he proves that he had not wickedly departed from God. Can you say so now? you say you have sin as others; but you hope your sin is not like the sin of wicked men; but, can you say as in the presence of God, Lord, thou knowest that I have not wickedly departed from thee; For all thy judgments are before me, and I do not put away thy statutes from me; O

Lord, thou knowest there is none of thy statutes that I would put away from me?

Thirdly, And then a Third symptom of life in the worst condition, is this, That though a man be fallen into great sins himself, yet for all this, he will have his heart prising other godly men that are not fallen into such great sins; when did you ever know any one godly man fall to be such an Apostate, as to hate the Saints, and yet to turn again to God? for thereby you may know whether he were godly or no; if it were a temptation in one that is godly, though he doth Apostatise very far, yet he will return back again: But for my part, I never knew it, nor heard of any man, that was a professor of Religion, and fell so far, as to hate the Saints, to hate other godly men, and to persecute them, I never knew any example that came again: But now you shall have many godly men, that fall foully; I, but yet their hearts are towards the Saints, and they think that they are in a blessed condition; Though I have a wicked and vile heart, and I cannot prevail against such and such corruptions, yet there are those that are able to prevail against their corruptions, there are those that are godly, O! they are in a happy condition; O! happy is such a man, such a woman, they are not overcome with such corruptions as I am overcome with: So that, though they be overcome with sin, yet they will still have their heart towards the Saints, and prising those that are not overcome with such corruptions as they are. But now it is not so with the wicked.

Fourthly, The last symptom of spiritual life that is in the Saints, is this: Though they be overcome with much corruptions, yet you shall find this ever in them, They do not lose the favour and relish of the most spiritual Ministry, and the Word, as others do: Wicked men they are so defil'd with their corruptions, that that takes away all their relish and tast of spiritual things: They cannot relish a spiritual Ministry more than a filthy one; but, now take one that ever had any true godliness in him, though he be very foully fallen, perhaps into some gross sins, yet he is able to taste the word in some degree, he can taste a difference between Ministry and Ministry; yea, between Company and Company, between the spirit of one Man, and the spirit of another; I say, he doth not wholly lose his savour, but still he hath some kind of savour, to taste a difference between that that is spiritual, and carnal, and especially in the Ministry of the word; he finds

some savour in that; for if ever he was converted, it was a spiritual work of the word that did convert him, and there is some seed of it doth remain in his heart, hence is that of the Holy Ghost by the Apostle Saint Peter, 1 Epist. C 1. ver. last. The word of the Lord endureth for ever; and this is the word which by the Gospel is preached to you: Now this word of the Lord, he doth not mean here the very Book and Letter of the word of God; but he means the word of God upon the hearts of the godly; for so you shall find he speaks of it in the 23. v. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever: For all flesh is as Grass, and all the glory, that is, all works of nature and common gifts, they vanish, but the word of God endureth for ever: that is, the word of God upon the hearts of the Saints: There is a spiritual seed, and efficacy of the word of God that first did beget the soul, that doth abide for ever: There is none falls off so, but hath some seed of the Spiritualness of Gods Word that doth abide in their hearts, that doth enable them to savour Gods Word — Thus you see their spot is not deadly: O! that if any of you that have godliness, and have fallen foully from God, that you would but consider of these things: Are there such seeds of life remaining in you? you are those that do yet belong to him; therefore do not you fall off more and more; if you be one that do belong to God, you will not abuse this that I am speaking to you, but your souls will prize it, and it will draw your hearts more to God: But now, the sickness of the wicked, that's a death: as in John 11:4. saith Christ concerning Lazarus, This sickness is not unto death: Two men are sick, one man he dies of it, the other is recovered; so you have your sins, and the godly man hath his sins, and outwardly the godly mans sin appears as much as yours doth; I, but yours may be to death, for all that: As now, according to this similitude of a spot, sometimes a man hath some kind of grievous spot upon his flesh caused by some distemper; well, but yet this is not so now as in the time of the Plague, when you see those blew tokens on you, which they call Gods Tokens, though perhaps you have no other spots not sores. So many men and women may seem to live very strictly, and not break out into such scandalous sins as others do, and their spots seem not to be so full of corruption as other mens are; I, but there are the blew spots of a Plague upon them that be unto death: And you know, a Father and Mother would rather a great deal, see the bodies of their Children to be all blistered, and spotted, and run with filth, then to see

but one of those blew spots upon them, though their skin should be never so whole.

You will say now, What sign may we give of the sickness of a soul to be unto death, seeing that godly men may by their sin be sick was well as others? I will give you these:

First, As in the distemper of the body, if be constant, though it be small, it may prove deadly: As, if a man hath a Cough, yet if it continues constant, it may prove deadly: Take heed of constant sins, though they be small sins; for if thou goest on in a constant way of sin, it may prove deadly.

And then, Secondly, If the disease reach to the heart, it proves deadly. In time of infection, if you can keep it from the heart, you are well enough: Physicians, though they give Medicines to keep the infection from the heart, yet they have never a Medicine to cure the heart, if once the disease get into it: They can keep it out of the heart, but not get it out of the heart: Jer. 4. v. 1. O! thy sin is evil and bitter, for it reaches unto thy heart, saith the Text: O! that's an evil and bitter corruption that reaches to thy heart, that is, so comes to thy heart, as it finds thy heart to close with that distemper and corruption of thine.

Thirdly, When the sickness is an increasing sickness. Lev. 13:8. When the spot spreads, then the Priest must say, it's a spot of Leprosie: So when thou hast some distemper and corruption, and it increases more and more; As it may be thou wert but a little vain, thou growest more vain, &c. Where the disease grows more and more upon thee, take heed it's a spot of Leprosie, and may prove to be thy mine.

Fourthly, A sicknes: is then deadly, when Nature is overcome with it, so as the party is not sensible of his sickness; a Man when he lies sick, so long as Nature is striving with it, there's good hopes; But one that comes to a man in a strong Feaver, and asks him how he doth; why, well, I thank God; he is not sensible of it; O! that makes his wife and all about him turn their heads, and fall a weeping; It were better he did feel pain: So when men through the custom of sin, grow senseless of sin, that's a sign that it is unto death: perhaps when thou didst first commit sin, O, thy conscience did trouble thee; But thou hast used thy self so to it, that thou art not

sensible of it; O it's a sickness to death, and thou art like to dye by it, when by use of a sin, thou comest to be senseless of it.

Fifthly, When a man in a sickness cannot take any thing that will stay with him: So I may say of the sin of wicked men, though thy sin doth indanger thy soul, yet there's hope if so be that, that that is given thee might stay with thee, that is, the Word, that's as the Physick for thy soul: When some seasonable truth comes, and is applyed to thy soul against thy sin, if thou canst receive in that ingrafted word, that's like to save thy soul; But, if as soon as ever thou hearest a truth that comes near to thee, presently thy heart casts it up, and it will not abide with thee at all, it is a dangerous sign that thy sickness is a sickness unto death.

Lastly, That's a sickness to death, that, when a man doth take that that might help him, yet if it doth not work, then I say, it is dangerous too: So, it may be you do remember the Word, and it doth abide with you a while; but there's no good at all comes of it; it works mighty changes upon others, but nothing at all upon thee: If you come to a Physician in that case, and say, Sir, you did prescribe such or such a thing, I, but it works not; why, I wonder saith he, I have known it hath wrought upon such men and women, that I thought was in as desperate a condition as one could be, it wrought upon them, I, and did recover them: — So I may say to some that sit under the word, their souls are sick, and the word works not upon them; I, but it hath wrought upon others that have been as dangerously sick, why it's an Argument that their sickness was not unto death; God did not intend they should die. But if thou canst sit under the word, and it works not upon thee, it's a sign that thy sickness is unto death.

Fourthly, and Lastly, The suitableness that there is in the sin of one, to the nature of those that have their sin in them: One mans spot is like the spot of a Leprosie, that is, his spot is that that is suitable to the disposition of his soul: But now the spot of another, it's that that is a spot indeed; I, but it doth not arise from his natural disposition, but meerly an accidental distemper: The spot of one rises from the very natural temper of the heart; but the spot of the other rises from some accidental distemper that comes to him: When a Man or Woman, therefore, sins, and it is suitable to his nature, take him when he is most himself; I beseech you consider

this note, for it is as discerning as any: If so be, that thou be'st most thy self, then thou be'st most free for thy sin; know, that thy sin is that that comes from thy natural distemper, and not from any accidental distemper: I shall shew you what I intend by this: There is Poyson in a Toad, and there's Poyson got into a mans body: Now the Poyson that is in the Toad, is sutable to the nature of the Toad, and therefore the Toad likes well enough of it: But now let but a drop of Poyson be in a mans body, O, it presently makes a great deal of stir, and makes him deadly sick; why, because there's that got in, that is contrary to his nature: — Here's the difference between the sin of a wicked man, and the sin of a Child of God: The wicked man's sin is like Poyson in a Toad, that's suitable to his nature; But the sin of a Child of God is like Poyson in a mans stomack that is contrary to his nature; when a wicked man sins, he sinneth of himself, as it's said of the Devil, he is a lyar, and when he lies, he lyeth of himself, it comes from his own nature; so is the sin of a wicked man; sin is in it's proper Element in him, and that's the reason that wicked men are so unsensible of sin, because it is in its power Element; But now the sin of the Child of God is out of his place, and that's the reason that makes him feel it so much.

Now you will say, How may a man make use of this Note to know the nature of his sin? These are five or six particulars that I shall name about this.

First, When a Man or Woman is alone in secret, that no eye takes notice of them, then to examine themselves; how doth thy heart stand then, when thou art in secret, alone? thou canst not discern what the temper of thy heart is when thou art in company; thou arr most thy self when thou art in secret, alone; and, O what hearts of wickedness are there when thou art alone! whereas a godly Man, though he may be overcome with sin in Company, yet when he is alone, his heart is more for God, and set against his sin.

Secondly, That may be said to be a mans self, that is the First spring of his soul: As now, the thoughts and affections in the first rise of them, how are they, how is the guise, as I may so say, or the temper and disposition of thy thoughts and thine affections in the first rise of them? As now you may know what is the proper nature of the Fountain, by that that is next

to the Spring: Perhaps if the Fountain runs a Mile or two off, then there may come that that may alter the stream, that it may not be of the nature of the Fountain: So thou mayest know what thy nature is, by examining what the first working of thy thoughts and thine affections are, when thou art alone.

And Thirdly, Thou mayest know thy self in this, how thou standest when thou art got abroad from those that know thee not: You shall have many men, that when they are at home, and among their neighbours, they live very fairly and civilly; But let them go a journey abroad among some strangers, there they will be roaring, and filthy and unclean, there they all discover themselves: Therefore examine your selves in that.

Fourthly, You may know when you are yourself, by examining your heart, how it works most naturally when you are from under government: Young people, many of them, they live fairly and civilly all the while they are under Government, but let them be once themselves, that they are free-men, from under any Government, then will be the most natural workings of their hearts: O! then presently you find that they fly out into wicked Company, why, that was the natural temper of their hearts before.

Fifthly, You may know when you are yourself, by what you are in time of prosperity and peace; in time of affliction, then you are, as it were, in Gods Fetters and Irons, and then you will speak very well, and promise very fair; but when you are at most peace in your own spirits, when you have the World at will, how do your hearts work then? the natural temper and pulse of your hearts is then when you are in the most peace, and the most prosperity; when you have all things about you according as you do desire, then is the most natural working of your hearts: It may be you think your hearts is good; why, because you have many good moods in times of sickness; O no, your heart may be very bad for all that: But look how your heart doth work when you are most in peace, and free from danger, that's the most natural working of a man's heart.

And then Sixthly, That's the most natural working of a man's heart, when he is himself, which he doth with most deliberation; a man may do otherwise then the natural temper of his heart would carry him on to, on a sudden; But it cannot be said, a mans self, as Paul said, It's not I that do

it, but sin that dwelleth in me: But now when a man upon deliberation and examination, will do a thing, then he doth it when he is most himself: So that by this you know the difference between the sins of one, and the sins of another: — The sins of wicked men are such as comes from their natural temper, that their hearts do close withall when they are most themselves: But, the sins of the Saints are such, that let them come but to be themselves, and then their hearts will not close with them so much: When temptations rise, it may draw away their hearts: I, but when they are themselves, and are abroad, they keep godly and gracious; and likewise, when they are from under Government, they are rather better; one that was a servant, and gracious then, when he comes to be for himself, he is better then, then he was before; for when he was a servant, he was much hindered; But when they come to be for themselves, then they appear to be more gracious: And though upon a suddain, they are overcome, yet let them come to deliberate, and then they are most for God; so that their sin comes not from their natural dispositions — Wicked men when they are most themselves, they sin most; but the Saints, when they are most themselves, they serve God most: And here's the difference between the spot of the wicked, and the spot of Gods Children: —

The Third SERMON

August the 10th, 1645

We are now to come to shew the differences between the spots of wicked men, and godly men, in the different behaviour of their souls about their sin: You shall find that the carriage and behaviour of a godly man about sin, is a great deal different from that that there is in a wicked man; which

will appear in many things: As in the first place,

First, A godly man, at least in his course and way, he doth not make provision for the flesh, he doth not make provision for sin, he doth not lay in before hand for his sin, as the wicked doth: The making provision for the flesh, it is made in Scripture to be opposite to the putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, in Rom. 13:14. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lasts thereof: You cannot put on the Lord Jesus Christ and yet make provision for the flesh, both together. Now a wicked carnal hearer, he thinks he can apply Christ, and make provision for the flesh, both at once: It's hard to say what possibly may befall a godly man in a temptation; but certainly, when a godly man may be acquainted with the wayes of Christ, and knows Christ, shall come to put on Jesus Christ, and apply Christ by Faith, he cannot but see, that the making provision for the flesh, and the putting on Christ at the same time, must needs be incompetent together: The way of the ungodly it is to be plotting and contriving for sin; O! doth thy conscience tell thee that this is thy way, to be in thy thoughts when thou art alone, contriving, plotting, advising, meditating, considering how to accomplish the satisfying of the lusts of thy flesh? thou art the man that knowest not what it is to put on Christ, and thy spot is not the spot of Gods Children: The Apostle speaking of the sins of the Saints, in Gal. 6. saith he, If any man be overtaken with a fault: ye that are spiritual, restore such a man: As if there were no faults that the Saints were guilty of, but such as they are overtaken with: But now, wicked men, they do overtake their sins, rather than their sins over take them: When a man shall be contriving and plotting, he will have such satisfaction to a sinful lust, I say he seeks to overtake his sin, rather than his sin overtakes him: That's the first thing.

Secondly, Suppose the sin hath in some measure overtaken a Saint: Yet in the second place, it is not easily entertain'd: Suppose sin did come and present it self, and follow a Child of God, I say, sin is not easily entertain'd, it is not admitted upon easie terms; a wicked man will admit of his sin upon very easie terms, some sin at least. If your servants shall leave the door by the latch, you will suspect them to be in covenant with the Thief, that they are one plotting with the other; So when any man

shall admit of a sin upon easie terms, that sin shall get in easily into the soul, it's a sign there is a league between the soul and sin. A gracious heart is watchful against sin, and is careful to keep it out, to lock and bolt it out: It will not leave the door at latch, so as to admit of sin upon easie terms.

Thirdly, Yet, suppose sin hath got in, a gracious heart is easily convinc't of his sin, a little matter will convince him, after his sin hath overcome him; he will not stand pleading for his sin, he will not stand in defence of his sin, so as a wicked man doth: we find David, though a King, and a man of a notable Spirit, yet in 2 Sam. 12 when Nathan came to him to tell him of his sin, presently saith David to Nathan, in the 13. v. I have sinned against the Lord: Nathan told him that he was the man, he did not stand out, Why, prove it if you can; who is able to say that I did this and this wickedness? No, I have sinned against the Lord: He falls down before the word of the Prophet, and acknowledges his sin, he is easily convinc't of his sin, if he be godly: Whereas a wicked man will stand pleading for his sin, pleading against it, that he hath not committed it, except that you find him out by some apparent hand; he will be pleading for his sin, either that he is not guilty, or if he be guilty, that it is not so great, it is but his nature: O! a godly man pleads not after this manner: Nature! he looks upon his sin as so much the more vile because it proceeds from such a wicked and cursed nature of his, and therefore David, in Psal. 51. when he was acknowledging the act of sin that he had been guilty of, when he comes to consider of his nature, O! I was conceived in sin (saith he) and brought forth in iniquity: He makes this to be a great aggravation of his sin, because it did flow from such a wicked nature: It is an Argument of gross ignorance, of a man or woman that knows not the things of God, and is not acquainted with Scripture, to plead for a sin, That it is their nature; It is the worse because of that: If a Thief should come to the barr, and plead before the Judg, Indeed I have committed this theft, but it is my nature; would this be a plea before a Judg? and certainly this plea will not go before the great Judg of all the World, to say, it is thy nature; No, the Saints know their sin is aggravated by that — Secondly, Neither will a Child of God ordinarily plead that it is a temptation; O! I, it is a temptation that hath prevaild against me, I was tempted to it, and such and such were the cause of it; I, but a gracious heart will rather charge the

wickedness that is within it, then charge a temptation; for the truth is, temptation could never prevail against us, were it not for the wickedness of our hearts; temptations came to Christ, but the Devil finding nothing in him, as the Scripture speaks, therefore could they not prevail over him: And were it not for the baseness of thy heart, temptations would not prevail; therefore for thee to put it off, It is thy temptation, O this is a carnal plea: I, but a gracious heart will charge himself before the Lord, O! it is his own wickedness.

Thirdly, Much less will a gracious heart put off his sin to God himself, and say, When God gives me more grace, I shall do better; but I cannot do any thing of my self; and therefore because God gives me no grace, that's the reason I fell into such sins: This is the boldness of the hearts of men and women, to think to put off all their sins upon God himself, as if there were no other reason why they commit sin, but because God is the cause of it: As for their part, they would do better, but onely God denies them his grace, and so they think to put off all from themselves, even to God. But know, the Lord will find thee out one day, and he will charge thy sin upon thy self, and thy destruction and thy wickedness it is from thy self, a gracious heart will not plead for sin after such away as this is: It's very dangerous when you hear of any that make profession of Religion, to plead for their loosness after such a manner as this is. We have cause to fear that their spot is not the spot of Gods Children.

Fourthly, When sin hath prevailed in some measure against a Child of God, yet he is quickly stopt in sin; he is easily convinc't of it, pleads not for it, and is ready to be stopt; a little thing will stop the course of his sin. O! any truths of God that come to him, his heart having a principle within it, suitable to the truths of God, his heart closes with those truths, and so comes to be stopt in his course: A wicked man sins, and having no principle of grace suitable to any truth of God, when any thing opposes his sin: his heart opposes that that would oppose sin, But a Child of God, though he be overcome with a sin, yet when the truth of God comes, it meets with something within the heart that is suitable to the truth, and it presently closes together: You have a notable example for that in the Prophet David, 1 Sam. 25:32. For the understanding of it, you may cast your eye upon some verses before; you shall find that David was in a way

of sin; That his choller had got up and prevail'd against him, and he was about a very wicked act, to avenge himself, and be guilty of blood: But Abigail meets with David in his way, when he was in the way of sin, and shews him in a very fair manner, the evil of his course, if he should accomplish what he did intend; And mark, David, though his blood was up, yet when Abigail came and spake but reason to him, to shew to him what the evil of his sin was like to be, Davids spirit falls, and David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel which sent thee this day to meet me: And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood — When David was in a mighty heat, in a way of sin: O! if a man should come to some of you when your passion is up, and you are resolved to do such and such a thing, if a man should come and plead the case fairly with you, that such a thing is evil, it's a sin against God; You will presently answer, I will, and I will, I care not, and let come of it what will come, I will do it; thus when the lust is up, there is no gainsaying of it, and no truth can stand against it; But now if the heart were gracious, though corruptions may be stirring for a while, yet let any truth of God come and be suggested to such a soul, it meets with something within that is suitable to it, and presently the heart will be ready to fall down, Oh blessed be God, and blessed be your Counsel, and blessed be God that hath hindred me from such a way of sin! O my retched nature was stirring and working, and I was resolved to have done such and such a thing; if the Lord had not in mercy sent you to have stopt me in such a way, O what might I have done! here now is the spirit of David. O consider this you that will plead sometimes for David sins, and did not David commit such a sin, you will say? I, but then take notice how quickly David was convinc't, and how soon was stopt in his sin.

Fifthly, There's no godly man whatever, though he hath many sins in him, yet there is no sin that reigns over him: This is a certain truth, that there is no man or woman in the World that hath the least degree of grace, that is under the power of any reigning sin: Sin may dwell, but not reign in them, and the Scripture is so express in this, that there can be no gainsaying of it: Rom. 6:14. For sin shall not have dominion over you; why? for ye are not under the Law, but under Grace; That soul that is under the dominion of any sin, is under the Law, that is, it is under the curse of the Law, it's in the state of nature, it hath no interest in Christ:

But now if the soul come once to be under grace, either sin must not have dominion over you, or God must not be faithful, one of them; for this is the promise of the Holy Ghost, If you be under grace, sin shall have no more dominion over you: He doth not say, that if you be under grace, then you shall commit no more sin; but sin shall have no dominion over you; therefore that man or woman over whom any one sin hath dominion, certainly is not under grace; This is the word of God, and O that God would carry it unto the consciences of whom it doth concern this day, that whosoever is under the dominion and reign of any sin, that soul for the present is not under grace, he hath no interest in the grace of Jesus Christ.

Now you will say, for the reign and dominion of sin, What's that?

*First, It's apparent in a great many, that they are under the reign of sin, that is, such men can go on constantly in a way of known-sins, meerly for contentment unto the flesh; why these are under the power and reign of sin: Yea, sometimes a sin that is a secret sin, may be a reigning sin: A man may be the subject of a King that he never saw in all his life: Perhaps he knows not where the King is, and yet he may be his Subject, and he may reign over him: So a secret sin may be a reigning sin: That's a reigning sin that a man gives himself up to, though it be in never so secret a way: There's a difference between a Tyrant that cometh violently to force men to submit to him, or one that comes with a sudden surprise, or with any cunning wayes to perswade men to come in to submit to him, and a Prince that is upon his Throne reigning, and having his Subjects acknowledging themselves to be as Subjects to him: Now the sins of the wicked they are reigning, that is, their sins command them, and they yeeld up their very wills unto their sins; the wills and the affections, it is in the sin; There is nothing more in the will of a natural man, then his sin: And therefore the Scripture makes these to be all one, the will of man, and the will of the flesh: Now when the will yeelds up to the wayes of sin, then sin may be said to be in the Throne: But now in a godly man there is a universal, spiritual, and irreconcilable opposition unto sin; though there be sin abiding in him, yet I say, there is a universal, spiritual, irreconcilable opposition unto his sin; sin doth not reign in a soul: so long as there is an opposition in a kingdom to any man, certainly he cannot be

said to reign: I say, if there be a universal opposition. Now in the soul of a Child of God there is an opposition to sin, a universal one, a spiritual one, and I may put a fourth, a powerful, universal, spiritual, irreconcilable opposition: I'll open these.

First, A powerful opposition: That is, he doth not onely wish that he could not sin, and wish that he might be otherwise, but he makes it to be the great work of his life above all things in the World, to set himself against his sin; so is if God would speak from Heaven and say unto him, Poor creature! what wouldest thou that I should do for thee? this soul would answer to God, Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest this is the unfeigned desire of my soul above all things, O give me but power against my sin, and especially against those special sins that my nature is most inclinable to. O! this is that that my heart is most against. Many people extreemly deceive themselves in this, in thinking that they oppose their sins, because they have some wishes, and desires, they would be glad that things were better with them then they are: I, but dost thou look upon it as a matter of life and death, and thereupon thy soul doth more strongly work in its opposition against thy sin, then against any thing in the World besides? many men and women have strong spirits in following their sins, but their spirits are not strong in the opposing of their sins: But he that is gracious, makes it to be his greatest and chiefest work.

And then the Second thing, It is a universal opposition; and that in these Two regards.

First, All the faculties in the soul do rise up against sin: There is some kind of opposition in a wicked man against sin, that is, his conscience sometimes doth oppose the lusts that there is in his affections: It may be, a wicked man hath a convinc't conscience; and his conscience will not let him to be at quiet; but in his affections there is a liking of sin, onely his conscience will not let him be at quiet: — You will say, how shall a man discern this? You may discern it thus; If the opposition be meerly in your conscience and not in your heart and affections, then, though indeed you dare not for the present commit such a sin, yet you could wish with all your heart that you might have liberty to do it; you could wish that there were not such a Law to forbid it; you could be glad that that Law were more loose: And you would fain have such a thing not to be a sin; and if

you could commit it quietly without any danger, you would do it: Now the opposition is not in your will, it is onely in your conscience: This is an opposition to sin that a carnal heart may have; that is, he may have his conscience so flye in his face, as that he shall not dare for the present to commit his sin, no not in secret; a man may come so far: You will say, Indeed, many hypocrites may go thus far, as not to commit sin before others, but yet if it be in secret, then they will do it; No, a natural conscience may be able to carry a man to this height, that is, not onely to abstain from sin because of others, but from the acts of sin in secret, that he dares not for his life (though there be none but God and himself together) give way to his sin, and yet no saving-grace all this while: — You will say, how can that be? because though his conscience will not let him be quiet, yet he would be glad to have his sin if he might; here's no change of nature that's the evidence, that there is no grace; for if a man abstain from sin out of a principle of grace, it is from the change of his nature; and certainly here's no change of nature in this: so that it is not a universal opposition, it's but onely in one part of his soul: But now the opposition of a gracious heart it is in the whole soul; not onely my conscience is against my sin, but my will, and my affections; I have a principle in my will and affections, as well as in my conscience; all the faculties of the soul do oppose the sin.

And then Secondly, It's universal, that is, there's the opposition of all sin: not onely of some particular sin, but of every sin; what ever the sin be, yet the heart doth oppose it: So as it can appeal to God, Lord, thou that knowest all things, knowest there is not one way of wickedness in me, there's not one sin that my soul gives way to, but there is in my heart an opposition against every sin.

And then I say, It's a spiritual opposition; by that I mean this, that it's an opposition, not from arguments onely without that, because of the danger, or shame, or prejudice that will come by it; but the opposition is from a contrary stream of grace that there is in the heart: There's such a temptation to sin; but a carnal heart may think if I commit it, then there may come this ill, and the other evil of it, and so I will not commit it: But a gracious heart doth not oppose onely from such arguments, but from a contrary stream of grace that there is in the soul; now when the

opposition to sin comes from a contrary stream of grace, then the opposition is not onely to keep sin from acting, but indeed it doth decrease the habits of sin: And this should be the care of a godly man or woman, not meerly to keep in, that is, to restrain sin, but let me oppose the habits of sin: Let me find the habits of my sin to be weakned and mortified in me: Let me follow my corruption to the very root of it, and there labour to get the very root of my corruption to be deaded: O here's the work of a Child of God!

As now in the opposition of a stream of water, water that runs in such a stream, there may be two ways to oppose it: Either you may make a damm, and so damm it up: — Or otherwise, if there could be gotten a contrary stream, and so by that to overpower it, this would be another manner of opposition then meerly the damming of it up: If you damm up a stream, it rises up higher and higher, and seeks to get vent one way or other; but if there were a contrary stream that would carry it smoothly away: — So 'tis when the sins of wicked men are opposed, not onely when they are opposed by their friends, that these will not let them commit such a sin; but when their very consciences oppose their sin, their sin swells up the more, and they seek all evasions how they can get to have liberty to the commission of their sin; and if once they have but broken over the damm, they run with more violence; as many young people, when they are under government, their sin is but damm'd up, and their sins are swelling, and their hearts would fain have vent for their sin, but they dare not: But then afterwards when they come to be for themselves, their sin breaks out so much the more: But a gracious heart hath a new nature which God hath put into the soul, which is contrary to the nature of sin: That's the spiritual way of opposition of sin.

And then it's an irrecocinlable opposition; that is, such a soul that hath any truth of grace, will never be reconcil'd with any one sin: It resolves with it self, what ever becomes of me, yea though I should perish eternally, yet I am resolved to fight against my sin eternally: Yea, at such a time as a soul is afraid that God will cast it away for ever, yet at that time such a soul would be loath to sin against God — You shall have some men that have horrors of conscience, and they are afraid that God will cast them off; why then upon that, then I had as good leave of all, say

they; and if I must be damn'd, I had as good be damn'd for somewhat; O this is a sign that grace hath not got into thy heart: But there's another now, that hath some principles of grace got into his soul, and it may be such a one may have terrors of conscience too, and may be afraid that at last it shall be cast away: But yet it concludes thus; Well, whatsoever becomes of me, let God do with me what he will, yet I will do what I can to honour him: The name of God is blessed for ever, what ever becomes of me: And therefore that evil of mine that is in my heart, I am resolved to set my self against to the uttermost for ever —— Now this is a sign that there is grace, though much corruption doth very much prevail.

You may see now as I go along, thus much, that there may be spots in one, and spots in the other; But here's a great deal of difference between the sins of the one, and the sins of the other.

Further, Consider the grounds upon which wicked men do ordinarily sin: Godly men can rarely be found to commit sin upon such rounds as wicked men do! —— There are many grounds upon which wicked men go, to the commission of sin: —— I shall but yet in the naming of them, I do verily perswade my self I may speak to many of your hearts.

As thus: Commit a sin, why it's but one, and I will not live in many sins: It's but one sin that I would live in; and in that I hope God may favour me: What, not in one! —— Why, Godly men will not do so; where was there ever a godly man on the face of the Earth that would allow himself in a sin because it was but one? ——

Secondly, Saith a carnal heart, It's but one, and it's a little one: I will not commit such gross sins as others do, I will not swear, and openly profane the Sabbath, and be drunk, and a Whore-master: But sins in thought, and of a lesser nature, I hope they may be born with-all? And what need a man be so strict and precise? I, but know, that a gracious heart would never reason after such a manner; O no, such a one knows, that the least sin is a greater evil then the greatest affliction; that there is more evil in the least sin, then there is in all the torments of Hell besides: And a godly man that understands the wayes of God, doth know, that the least sin must have the blood of Jesus Christ to purge it out, that is more worth then ten Thousand worlds; and therefore he will not allow himself in the

least, because it is a little one.

The Third ground is this:

Why, the best of all have their sins as well as we: Those that we read of in Scripture, have they not fallen into foul sins: But I beseech you mark, though godly men have their infirmities, yet shew me any example that ever there was since the beginning of the World, any one godly man that did plead for his sin upon this account, because another godly man had committed it: O! he doth not commit sin upon such a ground as this is: He will not venture upon the practice of sin, because he sees others are guilty of it as well as himself; Oh no, If God hath dishonour by another, let me take heed how I add to this dishonour, saith a gracious heart.

Fourthly, Another ground is, because their sin is not so bad as the sins of others; mine is not the worst: Come and rebuke them for a sin, why, God grant you never do any worse —— Indeed in matters of affliction we may reason from a less to a greater, and take up a less to prevent a greater; but in matters of sin we should never make such comparisons; there is a kind of infiniteness in sin, and the least sin is enough to be my eternal ruine: What's that to me because others do worse? I beseech you consider of it, as we name these things, for I do not stand to enlarge every one: For the truth is, there's never a one of these but might be enlarged into a Sermon, and might be a great use to take away these grounds of sin upon which ungodly men do commit their sin.

Fifthly, Another is this: A wicked heart will venture upon sin, why, because he hears that God is merciful, and God's not so strict as many make him: This is a sign thy spot is not the spot of Gods Children: Where do we ever find that a gracious heart would ever reason thus, there is mercy with the Lord and therefore let me sin? O no, the reasonings of a gracious heart are, There is mercies with thee, O Lord, that thou mayest be feared, and therefore thou shalt be feared: Not, there are mercies with thee and therefore thou shalt be dishonoured; If there be such kind of reasonings in thy heart, that thou venturkest upon sin upon this ground, because God is merciful, know, that the Lord speaks to thy soul this day, that thy spot is not the spot of Gods Children.

Sixthly, And farther, Not onely because God is merciful, but God hath been already merciful; Indeed I hear that there is a great deal of danger in sin, but I have liv'd all this while, and nothing hath come of it; O! for men to sin upon reasoning of Gods patience! because the Lord hath been patient and suffered them all this while: O this is wicked boldness in thy heart, thou knowest not with whom it is thou hast to deal: Thou hast escaped all this while, O but a sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed: Thy spot is not the spot of Gods Child, that dar'st venture upon thy sin because thou hast escap'd so long a time as thou hast done.

Seventhly, And then yet farther; There's another ground that is worse then all these, that some will venture upon sin, why, because Jesus Christ hath died for sinners, because there is a purchase for the pardon of sin: Oh this is a most desperate turning the grace of God into wantonness, to dare to venture upon the commission of thy sin because Christ came to purchase the pardon of sin! why, did not Jesus Christ come into the World to dissolve the works of the Devil, and dost thou make Jesus Christ to be a means to strengthen the works of the Devil: Bold and presumptuous heart! the Lord rebuke thee, that dost account the blood of Jesus Christ not onely as a common thing, but as a polluted thing, as an unclean thing; surely thy spot is not the spot of Gods Children.

Eighthly, Another ground is this: A temptation comes to sin, and they will venture upon it: Why? they hope they shall repent afterwards; and though I do sin, it is but repenting afterwards; and if I do repent afterwards, then my sin shall be forgiven me, and not laid to my charge: But have you any thing in Scripture, That any Child of God committed sin upon such a ground as this is? and if thou dost so, thy spot likewise is not the spot of Gods Children: O foolish and base heart, thou wilt do that now, that thou dost know thou mayest wish thou had'st never done: This is infinite folly; and surely God doth not leave his Children to such wickedness as this is, to venture upon sin upon such grounds as these are.

Ninthly, Another ground may be this: They will venture upon it; why? because it may possibly stand with grace: You shall hear sometimes, many that make some kind of profession, to be reasoning after this manner: They will not indeed commit such things as they think cannot possibly stand with grace; but if they think it may possibly stand with

grace, they will make that to be the ground of their venturing upon it: O wretched and vile heart, that shalt thus reason to commit sin, because it may possibly stand with grace! Suppose it should be so, that many a man that commits such a sin should go to Heaven; but is it possible that a man committing sin upon such a ground, may go to Heaven: There's a great deal of difference between a thing done, and a thing done upon such a ground.

Tenthly, Lastly, (though many others might be named) for a man to venture upon a sin, why, because he hath done much good: This likewise is not the spot of Gods Child, for one to sin upon such a ground: I have done some good, and therefore I may venture upon some sin: This is the wickedness of a mans heart, that if he hath (as they use to say) kept his Church, he thinks he may have liberty in the week-day the more; if he be devout upon the Lords day, he may take liberty so much the more upon the week-day: O this is an Argument of a base and carnal heart, that knows not the wayes of God: To take liberty upon sin at one time, because they have been devout, and done good at another time: That's the next head, the different grounds.

I shall name but one thing more:

That a godly man in the commission of sin, he makes his falling into one sin, to be a means to help him against that sin, and against many others: If the Lord shall let him fall into some one sin, I say, he will make that to be a means to cleanse many others; but especially, to take heed against that sin: The bespotting of himself in some one spot, will be a means for the cleansing of many spots: Though he dare not commit sin upon that ground, yet it falls out so in the effect: As sometimes, if there be a few small spots in a Childs Coat, you regard not them; but if there be some great spot, it causes you to wash the whole Coat: So it is with one that hath any grace, if the Lord (notwithstanding his watchfulness and care) shall let him fall into some great spot, he makes this use, To be cleansing and washing of his soul, not onely from that spot, but from all other spots he knows in himself; but especially, to set himself against that particular sin, he will take heed of ever falling into that again:

C And therefore give me an example in all the book of God, where any one

man that was godly, committed the same sin twice: I say, after an act of repentance: It's true Peter denied his Master thrice, I, but that was as a continued thing, it was not after Peters heart was smitten and humbled, after his conviction and repentance — And for my part, I know no example from Genesis to the Revelation, of any one Child of God that fell twice into an outward Act; I do not say, that sins of thought, they may be repented of, and fallen into again, though the heart do labour and strive against them; but for an outward act of sin that any Child of God did ever fall into after God had shown him the evil, and he had repented of it: — And therefore the condition must needs be sad, when it is such as there can be no example in all the Scriptures to parallel it: For I appeal to thee, thou the makest any Profession of Religion, and thou fallest into some act of sin; Either thy Conscience doth accuse thee, and thou dost repent, or it doth not accuse thee, and thou dost not repent: If thy Conscience doth not accuse thee, and thou dost not repent, that's a sign thy heart is not troubled: — Well, if thy heart be troubled, and thou hast repented, give me an example of any one Child of God, that fell into such an act of sin again — Yea, I shall shew you in divers examples in Scripture, that evermore those Children of God that have been overtaken with their sin, they have been more eminent in that grace that is most contrary to that sin, than in any other grace.

Peter he fell through cowardise, to betray his Master: But yet when the Scripture speaks of him afterwards, it notes him specially for his boldness, in John 21:7. Therefore the Disciple whom Jesus loved, saith unto Peter, it is the Lord; now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fishers Coat unto him, and did cast himself into the Sea: Oh the love of Peter towards Christ after he had denied him! He had denied Christ; but now he was the most forward in his love to Christ; he would not stay till Christ came to the ship, but throws himself into the Sea, that he might presently be with Christ; he had broke his love before, and now you see how eminent he is in love above the other Disciples! — And so in boldness; In Acts 2:14. When the Jews did mock at the Apostles and Disciples, the Text saith, That Peter standing up with the eleven, lift up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judea: Not any of the other would speak, but Peter he appears the most forward; I, it was because Peter had denied Christ, and therefore he would be the most forward in

manifesting love to Christ — You cannot have comfort that your spot is the spot of Gods Children, except, if you have been overcome with a sin, yet afterwards you grow not up in that grace that is most eminently contrary to that sin.

Another example we have of Nichodemus: Nichodemus he began to have some work of grace upon him, but the Scripture notes him for a very timorous man, and that was his special infirmity, that he was afraid, and so would come to Christ by night: Now afterwards when the Scripture takes notice of this Nichodemus, especially it observes him for his boldness, for that which was contrary to that sinful distemper of his heart before. This you have in John 19:39. And there came also Nichodemus, Which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of Myrrhe and Aloes, about One hundred weight: Then took they the body of Jesus: He appeared now openly.

The third is Joseph of Arimathea, v. 38. And after this, Joseph of Arimathea, being a Disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: He was at the first step a Disciple; but dare not appear; but afterwards he is noted for one of the most forward of all, and would go and own him before Pilate himself, yea, and at that time when Christ was in his lowest condition: That's a sign indeed of grace, to own Christ when he is in the lowest condition, when he was crucified and dead; yet now to appear to own him, and that before Princes! O! the Scripture takes special notice of those that had fallen into sin, that afterwards they grew more eminent in that grace that was contrary to that sin, than any other: As it is with a bone that is set, it is more strong then before; and so it is usual with those that are godly, if they be once overcome with their sin, they afterwards grow more strong against that sin: And thus even Acts come to decrease Habits; and that's a Paradox in Philosophy, it's true in Divinity, That the acts of the Saints sin, come not only to restrain them from falling into them again, but it is used by God to decrease the habits of their sin. Now I beseech you carry home these things to your souls; and O that the Lord would cause you to lay your hand upon your hearts, and say, Lord have mercy upon me; we are indeed all sinners, but we see that God will find a difference between one sin and another; and though all have their spots,

yet, as for my part, I am afraid that my spot is not the spot of Gods Children.

The Fourth SERMON

August the 23d, 1645

I Shall speak to one or two particulars more about this, (and then we come to the last thing propounded in the opening of this point:)

The behaviour of the heart of a Child of God toward this sin.

The sins of the Saints they drive them to Jesus Christ: If there be any truth of grace, though weak, thy sins will drive thee to Jesus Christ, not drive thee from him, but drive thee to him: And make thee prise Jesus Christ as the Immaculate Lamb of God that is come into the World to take away thy sin: It will make thee set a high price upon Christ, and cause thy heart to follow him with all thy might: Wicked men when they sin, they turn away from God and from Christ; and the things of Christ are less savoury to them: But the Saints when they sin, they are put upon the seeking after Christ, and prising of him so much the more.

Lastly, Their very sin makes them to long for Heaven; O wretched man that I am! saith Paul, who shall deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ, &c. O! he flies to Christ, and he desires to be present with Christ: & so the Saints they long for Heaven upon this ground above all other grounds and reasons, namely, because they know they shall never be delivered from the body of sin and death that they carry about with them, till they come to Heaven, and therefore they prise the state of Heaven as a glorious state, because they shall never

sin more against God: — I put it now, in the name of God, to your consciences this day; you say you hope to go to Heaven, what's that for which you prize Heaven most? why, a gracious heart would say, O Lord, though I endure some sorrows and afflictions here, yet thou knowest that the great burden of all, it is the burden of my sin; and when I shall be taken cut of this world, I know I shall never sin more, never sin more against thee. O that day! when shall that day come that my soul shall never sin more against that God that I do love? Thou that knowest all things, knowest, that this is my desire after Heaven upon this ground, above all other grounds whatsoever: Are you able to say so as in the pesence of God? this would be a good argument indeed, that though there be some spots, yet they may be the spots of Gods Children: And if it be so with thee, then attend to the next point, and that is —

The different dealings of God with his Children in regard of their sin, with his dealings with the wicked and ungodly in regard of their sins — As the behaviour of thy soul in respect of thy sin, is different from the wicked; so the behaviour of God towards thee will be very different from that of his towards the wicked and ungodly: They may not think to escape, so as thou mayest escape.

First, As in the first place: If a Child of God sins, yet he hath a pardon laid up for his sin, yea a pardon laid up before the sin is committed; I do not say, the pardon actually applyed, but laid up; for to say the thing is actually pardoned before committed, it's scarce English, much less Divinity: For whatever it be in Gods account, or what God will do, yet when we say the sinner is pardoned, it notes some work of God upon the Creation actual in being: As when we say the World was created, it was not created from eternity, why, it's a work of God upon the creation, therefore it has a Time: And so, what's a work of God in Himself? that is from eternity, But what's a work of God upon the creature, that's in time; without any change in Gods nature, any more-then the creating of the World did change his nature; there are forgivenesses with thee that thou mayest be feared; they lie up with thee: there are Pardons that lie up with God, there is an Atonement made for the sins of Gods Children, for the sins that they have committed, and sins that they shall commit: I say, an Atonement is made even for them, and a ransom is paid: Jesus Christ did

tender up himself to the Father for a ransom for all the sins of the elect, it's laid up there: So saith the Apostle 1 John 2:2. I write unto you, little Children, that ye sin not, and if any man sin, (that I shall take notice of by and by) we have an Advocate with the Father, and he is the propitiation for our sins: So that when an ungodly man sins, there the sentence of death comes out against him; But the Lord saith concerning his Children, Let their souls be pardoned, for I have found a ransom: Thou sayest, the best have their sin; True, but one man hath a ransom, hath a price paid for his sin, and thou hast none, none for ought thou knowest: In that condition wherein thou art, thou canst not know that thou hast any: Here's the difference between Gods dealing with his Children & others, one sins, and the Lord acknowledges a propitiation presently, a ransom, a price, a pardon that's laid in; but he acknowledges it not for thee.

Secondly, Yea, in the Second place, the Children of God when they sin, their condition is far different from the sin of the wicked; they have not only a price paid, and a pardon laid up; But you will say, how in case they do not sue out their pardon? I confess if they sue it not out, they have not the comfort of it: But yet the Scripture tells us, they have an Advocate with the Father — If they through ignorance do not know their sin, how can they sue out their pardon? yet they have an advocate with the Father continually, and it's the work of Jesus Christ at the right hand of the Father, to be an Advocate to plead for believers, with the Father; when ever they sin against the Father, there stands Christ their Advocate pleading, he watches if there come in any accusations against them; if the Law, or the Devil, or conscience shal send up an accusation, Christ stands as an Advocate to plead their cause: you know I suppose what an Advocate in Law doth mean; he stands to plead the cause of his Client; & whatsoever comes in against him, he is made acquainted withall, that he may stand to plead: This is the case of the Children of God; notwithstanding their sin, they have an Advocate with the Father: In 1 John 2:1. My little Children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not; ye ought not to sin, take heed of sinning; But if ye do, you have an advocate with he Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: — These things that I am speaking, I confess may prove dangerous to wicked carnal hearts, that are ready to turn the Grace of God into wantonness; but by that they may know, what I say belongs not to them, that their spots are

not the spots of Gods Children: Those that shall hear of this, and be hardened, or emboldned in sin the more, there need no other Argument to prove that their spots are none of the spots of Gods Children, than that: And therefore that what I say doth not at all belong to such: but how ever, it doth belong to many of the Children of God, and therefore they must have their portion, though such as it belongs not to, will be ready to snatch at it: And that's the second thing, in the different way of Gods dealing with his Children when they sin, and with the ungodly: Thou sinnest as others do: Thy sin for the Act may be the same; but when thou hast sinned, who stands before the Father to plead thy cause? what hath Christ to do with thee? or thee to do with him? but rather thy Conscience, and Law, and Devil stands pleading against thee, and none to answer for thee.

But, Thirdly, When a godly Man sins, God deals with him not according to the Law of Justice, but according to the Law of Grace; We are not under the Law (saith the Apostle concerning believers) but under grace; when another sins, the Law passes presently upon him; but saith the Apostle in Rom. 8:1. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. The Law cannot pass upon them to condemn them: They are not to be dealt withall according to the Law, but according to Grace: Now the ungodly when they sin, they are dealt withal according to the Law, God will do them no wrong, but the Law must pass upon them.

Yea, not onely so, but they are delivered from the Law, and from all the curse or the Law; I, the Lord hath promised that he will spare them as a Man doth his onely Son that serves him: In Mal. 3. last. If thou be'st a Child, this is thy portion; And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my Jewels, and I will spare them as a Man spareth his onely Son that serves him: This is a Text that hath a treasury of comfort in it to those that are Gods Children, that can by those former notes of the difference of sin, and their different behaviours towards their sin, approve themselves that they belong to God, here's the promise, That the Lord will spare them as a Father spareth his own Son that serves him: A Father will not cast cut his Son from his House, and disinherit him for every offence that he doth commit; neither will God deal so with his Children, though they have spots, though they have infimities: And hence

we find that God takes advantage against some for a little sin, and spares another though he be guilty of a greater sin: Gods mercy is his own, he may deal with his mercy as he pleases; he will do justly with all, but he will be merciful to whom he pleases; and hence it is the Scripture holds forth this, that some men the Lord hath taken advantage against for some smaller sin, and other men the Lord hath spared when they have been guilty of some greater sin; As that notable example of Saul, comparing that with David: David was one of Gods Children, and had spots, I, foul ones; Saul he was none of Gods Child, and he had his spots, and some of them was not so foul in regard of the nature of them, as Davids were, and yet see the different dealing of God with Saul and David; for Saul, you shall find that God rejects him utterly, and what for? In 1 Sam. 13:13. You may see wherefore God would reject Saul: And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly, thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee; for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever; But now thy kingdom shall not continue: — As if Samuel should have said, Well, this is the thing for which God will cut thee off, and cut off thy kingdom: — Why, what was it? if you examine the thing what it was, it was nothing but this, That there was an agreement between Saul and Samuel, that Samuel should come to him at such a time: Well, Samuel did not come just at the time, or staid, as Saul thought, somewhat too long: Saul was brought into great straits, the Philistines came upon him (his enemies:) Now upon this, being in such great straits, Saul had not sought to God for Gods presence with him in the battel; now thought Saul, I have staid for Samuel all this time, and he comes not, and rather then I will go out to battel without making supplication to God, and offering sacrifice, I will for this once venture upon it my self, for so he saith in the 12 vers. It was a burnt offering: It was to the Lord, it was in the time of my straits, and I forc't my self to it too: I was not so ready and forward to do it, it was in an absolute necessity, as I thought; and yet this is the sin for which Saul must be cut off and rejected, and his kingdom not to continue — You will say now, what was this to the sin of David, of Murder, and Adultery? Those were sins of another nature; well, what if they were, yet David was a Child, and Saul was not, and therefore he will pardon one, and condemn the other; and who can say to God, what dost thou?

And again, another sin of Saul you shall find in 1 Sam. 15. God required of Saul to go against Amalek, & utterly to destroy him. Well, Saul did do according to Gods command, and made a great slaughter, but he kept onely some of the Cattel and the fat ones; but he profest he kept them not for his own advantage, it was that he might offer for sacrifice to God: Now Samuel comes to him, though Saul had thought he had done nothing but that which God was pleased withal, for he stands to justifie himself in the 20 v. And Saul said unto Samuel, yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord, and have gone the way which the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the King of Amalek, and have utterly destroyed the Amalakites: I have done what God sent me about. Now Samuel he comes and convinces him, that he had not done what God had sent him to do; why? because he had spar'd some of the Cattel — Now Saul excuses himself afterwards to Samuel in v. 12. The people took of the spoyle, Sheep and Oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God is Gilgal: But mark what Samuel saith in the 22 v. Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? behold, to obey is better then sacrifice; and to hearken, then the fat of Rams; for Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry; because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord hath also rejected thee from being King: — These Scriptures might make any mans heart to tremble, and not to dare to venture upon sins that he thinks to be smaller sins; one would think that upon the consideration of these Scriptures, that no man ever living should be heard to plead this, and say, Why, godly people commit as great sins as they do: Why, David committed as great sins as I, and so others. But what if they did? They may be pardoned for their greater, and thou mayest be damn'd eternally for thy less: God will deal as a Father with his Children, to spare those that are his: And that's another particular in the different way of Gods dealings with his people.

Fourthly, The Children of God when they sin, yet they have the robes of the righteousness of the Son of God to cover them, even from God himself; not to cover them so but God knows them; for that's either simplicity or blasphemy, one of the two, to say that God sees them not: But to cover, that is, that they shall be taken so far from the eye of God, that he shall never look upon them to charge them with them, but that

they shall appear before him through the Robes of the righteousness of Christ as spotless, being justified through him. So in Psal. 32. Blessed is the Man whose sin is forgiven, and whose iniquity is covered; all their spots are covered and the Lord looks upon them as amiable and lovely in his eye: But now thou hast nothing to cover thy spots, but thy excuses. See the different condition of a believer, and another man. One man sins against God, and what hath he to cover his sins? Excuses, deny als, or lies, and there's all. I, but now the of ther he sins against God, and by Faith applye the precious robe of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and so covers himself before God Which do you think is the better covering Her's the difference between a Child of God and you.

Fifthly, And then fastly: Gods Children though they sin, yet still they are in covenant with God; God hath taken them in to an everlasting covenant with himself, that shall never be broken: Though they do offend, yet God will not charge it upon them as the breach of that great covenant of grace that God hath made with them in his Son, that's an everlasting covenant; God hath made a covenant to unite their hearts to fear his name, that he will never depart from them; and that he will put his fear into their hearts, and they shall never depart from him, notwithstanding all their infirmities: This must be made good, this covenant that God hath made with them, must stand. Now, O what a different condition is one in, from the other — Now though there may be thoughts in wicked hearts to abuse these things, yet I name them to this end, that you may see the exceeding difference between the state of one, and the state of the other; and that so by this you may be restless in your own spirits, till you come to know that you are in the state of these men that are so happy, that is, that you are of the Number of Gods Children — I shall not need to stand to give further notes and evidences; for the very opening of the point about the different behaviour of one in respect of their sin, from the other, will be enough to shew who are in this condition; and who not, whom God will deal with all in this gracious manner in respect of their sin, and whom not: — However, men of the World will deal so much the more harshly with those that do offend; if they can take any one that makes profession of Religion tripping in any thing, they will be more severe against them, than against others, because of their profession. Well, God doth not do so, if there be uprightness in the heart — No, you

will say, it's not because of that, but because of cloaking wickedness with their profession: Well, if you be sure your hearts be right in that, that profession your souls do love, and therefore it is the great grief of your souls that any one that makes profession of Religion should dishonour it by wicked courses; then (I say) can you approve your hearts before God, that your hearts are griev'd and troubled, and not rejoyce at it, that you can find any advantage against profession, as some do? — Then I confess, if the thing be vile and foul, and such a thing as you cannot in charity see that it may stand with truth of grace, to be a meer infirmity, but a wickedness; then you may follow it to the very foot and bottom; and those that shall trouble the people of God with gross and vile sins, and think to colour them over with profession of Religion, it's just with God they should be troubled: But if we have time, we shall speak somewhat to that in the close of all. We come now to the Application of the point, onely this caution about this thing.

Cau. Take heed that you deceive not your hearts about this thing: If a Man have two Children, one is godly, and the other is profane; if they can have an advantage over one that is the more godly, they will be more bitter to him than the other; and if they have two Servants, one godly the other profane, why, the profane one shall fare better then the godly, if they can have but the least advantage against them: Well, howsoever thou deal'st with Children or Servants when thou hast taken them in a fault, that the wicked find more favour from thee, yet God deals otherwise, his Children shall find favour from him: Onely let them take heed that they do not turn their hands to wickedness, or their hearts to folly, because of this.

APPLICATION

By way of Application.

In the first place, Hence then by all that hath been said in the opening of this difference, we may see full ground for the answering of the foolish carnal plea's of the men of the World for their sin; which was, I told you, the main reason I pitcht upon this Subject: This it is hardens men in their sin, why, Because all have their sins; methinks by what hath been said,

one would think that this plea should never be heard any more, among any that profess any knowledg in the Scripture, that it should never come out of your mouths, that do but understand any thing of Scripture: — What, wilt thou that art a wicked vile wretch, plead for thy wickedness, that the best have their sins? Thou that goest on in a constant way and course of ungodliness, wilt thou plead that all have their sins? thou canst not be provok't, but thou swearest and flyest in the face of God; thou that hast a heart not savouring any thing of God, nor never found any work of the Holy Ghost upon thy soul, dost thou say that all have their sins? God will find out a difference of sin. Rev. 1:14. It's said of Christ, that his eyes were like a flame of fire: O! Christ hath fiery eyes that will pierce through and through thee, wil see a great deal of difference between the sin of one, and the sin of the other: — I hou thinkest it enough to plead this, That the best have their faults, I beseech you let me reason it a little with you about this — The best, say you, have their faults; So say I too; but the worst have some good in them, materially good: Why may not this be as good a reason as thine? — There are some that are sav'd, and yet committed sin as well as I; so say I, there are some in Hell, and yet have done as much good perhaps as ever thou. Why is not the reasoning of one side as good as the other? — Thou tellest me, that thou sinnest sometimes, and so did David and Peter — I'le tell thee of Saul, I'le tel thee of Ahab, I'le tell thee of Herod; thou thinkest that David and Peter committed as great sins as thou — Why, Saul and Ahab, and Herod, and it may be Judas hath done as much good as ever thou, and yet they in Hell; as Saul that I spake before of, he sinn'd, yet it was not greater than thine; yet he did many good things, I have obeyed the Commandment of the Lord — And Ahab when the Prophet reprov'd him, he went and humbled himself in sackcloth for his sin: When hast thou ever done so for thy sin? — And Herod heard John Baptist gladly, and reformed many things: Surely the Argument wil hold as well, That such as are in Hell have done as much good as I have, as some that are in Heaven have committed as great sins as I have: O! it's not enough for thee that others do sin; they may be sav'd, and yet thou mayest eternally be destroyed: This will not be a plea to a mans Conscience, if it be inlightened, when he comes upon his sick-bed, & death-bed: Though now thou canst put off thy Conscience with this, that every one hath their sin, but when thou comest upon thy sick-bed, and death-bed, if God inlighten thy Conscience, O, it

will not be answer enough for thee, when thou feest thou art going before the great God, to receive the sentence of thy eternal doom, then thou wilt have such miss-givings in thy Conscience; O! but what if it prove that my sins be of another nature different from the sins of the godly, if it prove so, I am undone, I am cut off for ever.

Wherefore, in the second place, what you have heard from this point, should teach you to be very careful in the examining of your sins, and in labouring to find out of what nature your sins are: As we read in the Law, they were shut up when there was but a suspition that their disease was Lepotous: They were to be shut up for seven dayes upon meer suspition: O that God would but give thee a heart, even to shut up thy self, that is, to be thinking in thy retired Meditations, of what nature thy sin is: It is usual with those that are godly; with the Children of God, to be afraid (upon any sin they commit) that their sin is not the sin of Gods Children, you shall have them ready to say, Lord, did ever any of Gods Children do thus? is this such an evil as can belong to a Child of God? is it possible that one that hath so much shears as I, so many mercies as I, such enlightnings as I; such workings of the spirit as I; is it possible that there can be true grace, and yet that I should again fall into such and such a sin? One that is a Child of God; is afraid of every sin, lest it be of that nature as cannot stand with the truth of grace — Thou art ready to think that any thing may stand with the truth of grace, and with the state of grace; but one that knows what sin is, will be afraid of every thing; but most people are so confident, that they give satisfaction to themselves in any way of wickedness: We have all our infirmities and there's an end; as if there were no difference between one and another. O that God would cause this point to ring in thine ears, when thy Conscience tells thee of thy sin, that there is a great deal of difference between the one and the other; and the truth is, till thou hast upon examination found this out, that thou canst with comfort, as in the presence of God, say, that though I have infirmities and sins, yet upon the examination of my heart, and upon those rules that have been given out in thy word, I see hope that my sin is no other but the spot of Gods Children; and if it be so, then the

Third Use is a Use of consolation to all those that have many infirmities, and are burdened with them: Thou hast spots upon thee, and dost thou

find the behaviour of thy soul towards them, as heretofore thou hast heard? be of good comfort in this, that there is no cause that thou should raze the foundation upon every failing that thou seest to be in thy self; this is a wrong to Jesus Christ; and to the Covenant of grace, for one that hath approved himself to God upon examination, and hath found the work of grace, upon every failing to raze the very foundation, and think, Surely all that I have done is nought, it's all nothing, it's all but hypocrisie: It's fit indeed for thee upon thy sin, to examine, and to be humbled; let thy sin be matter for thy humiliation, but not matter for thy discouragement, not for the razing of the Foundation; to say, Well, I shall at length one day perish by the hands of Saul; God will cast me off at length, such a wretched creature as I am; Take heed of that: Those that are acquainted with the way of the Gospel, they know how to be deeply humbled for their sin, and yet not to be discouraged by their sin.

And further, As thou shouldest not raze the Foundation, so thou shouldest not be afraid to come into Gods presence. Thou hast failed indeed, thou must come into Gods presence, onely take heed of coming boldly, and impudently, as many there are that abuse the Grace of God, and think because of Christ, they may come with impudence; no, the grace of Christ doth not at all hinder humiliation, but furthers humiliation, makes it Evangellicall indeed; and so thou being humbled for thy sin, thou mayest then come with an holy boldness into Gods presence; do not think to fly the presence of God, because thou hast sinned and offended him. As a loving Father, it were a dishonour to him if upon every failing of his Child, his Child should shake and tremble so, as not to dare to come into the room where he were; do you think this were a commendation for a Father? If you inquire what this Child hath done, it may be he hath fail'd in some petty thing; he hath perhaps tarried half a quarter of an hour longer than his Father would have him in such a business, or not managed such or such a business to the full, as his Father required of him; and upon this he dar'd not come into his presence; surely we would conclude that this Man had not the bowels of a Father in him: Now if you would conclude so concerning men, then why wilt thou put this dishonour upon God himself, that hath the affections of a Father in him? And if there be any compassion in Fathers towards their Children, yet it is not so much as one drop of that infinite ocean that is in

God; and therefore let not every failing of thine make thee afraid to come into the presence of God, come to him yet as a Father, being humbled before him, and applying the righteousness of his Son.

And then further, Let the consideration of this be of comfort to thee (when thou hast committed sin against God, if thou be'st such a one as hath been spoken of) in remembering the Covenant that God hath made with thee, and bless God for the Covenant that he hath made with thee in Christ, and the difference that God hath made between thee and others in this thing; magnifie his free grace in the Covenant of grace, for from thence is it that thy spot shall not be a deadly spot; and God will not deal with thee as with the wicked: certainly this is not from the nature of thy sin, for that may be as hainous as the sins of the other, but that that makes the difference is the free-grace of God in Christ. O blessed be God for the Covenant of grace that hath made the difference. I remember I have read of Luther, he indeed saith when he was a Monk, though he were Conscientious then, yet then whensoever he committed any sin against God, his Conscience did so flye in his face, that he thought he was rejected utterly of God, til God made him know that Covenant of his grace in Christ; and then he thought he heard such a voice speaking to him, Oh Martin, do not despair, for thou shalt, as long as thou livest here in the flesh, sin against God; onely do thou lustily oppose thy sin, and resist thy sin, and then know, that thou art not under the Law, but under grace: It is from hence that there is this difference, therefore bless God that ever he reveal'd this Covenant of grace to thy soul.

And then likewise, let this comfort thee; let it be a means to set thy heart so much the more against sin, to take heed of sin: O take heed of abusing this grace of God: Here will be the sign whether all this comfort belong to thee or no: If the more thou hearest it, the more thy heart doth do the sin, and thou art the more afraid of sin because of this, thou dost the more labour to cleanse thy flesh and spirit from all the polutions of it. Canst thou say thus as in the presence of God: Lord, when I hear of these things, of that blessed grace of thine in the Gospel, what a difference thou art pleased to make between one and the other; why, Lord, it breaks my heart, and it makes me more afraid of sin than any thing in the World: Then thou mayest freely apply the comfort that is here, out of this

Scripture.

And lastly, Let me speak to those to whom this Consolation doth belong, That thou hadst need take heed to thy self, that thou preservest this thy consolation; for without great care it will hardly be preserved — I mean by that, this: Thou hadst need take heed that thou keepest thy Conscience as clean as may be, that thou mayest have a clear discerning of the difference of Gods dealing between one and the other.

And therefore, take, heed first of any sins against light; hath ever God given thee that comfort to thy soul, that though thou hast many failings, yet that God looks upon thee with another eye than upon the wicked? I say take heed ever after of any sin against Conscience: Take heed of repeating that same sin again and again — Take heed of lying in sin a long time: And take heed of being hardned in sin: For if ever thou shouldst fall to sin against Light, against thy Conscience, thou wilt hardly be able to discern any difference between thy sin and the sin of the wicked: And therefore look to thy self in this thing: Oh let those that are godly, take heed that they bring not themselves, in regard of their own sense into as lamentable a condition as the wicked are, to have as much horrors of Conscience in their own feeling, as the wicked and ungodly have O how great a pity is it that those between whom and the wicked, God hath made so great a difference, yet that through their negligence they shall bring themselves into as great a horror as the wicked and ungodly are in!

And lastly, That this may not be abused, let those that pretend unto God, and say they are his Children, and they are in the Covenant of grace, and speak much of free-grace, and yet by their wicked scandalous lives do manifest that indeed they are not Gods Children; let them know, that their spots are the worst spots of all, they are not onely the spots of wicked men, but even have the spots of Devils upon them: If any spot be a loathsome, an accursed, an abominable spot, it is the spot of a Man or Woman that makes much profession of the Gospel, and yet lives a scandalous, wicked, and ungodly life: — And especially, there are some whose spots are such as the heart of a man cannot but tremble at the very thoughts of them; Those that will put off their sin even to God himself: They take liberty to sin, and say they can do nothing without him: and so

give way to wickedness, and think if God would give them more grace, then they should do better; but till then they cannot be better; and so what blame there is, they lay it upon God himself: O what a spot is this, that thou wilt cast thy sin upon the infinite pure God! It's very observable in this Text: They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of Gods Children. Oh do not think to cast it upon Gods; as if Moses should have said, Do not you think to cast your sin upon God, for you have corrupted your selves, and your spot is not the spot of Gods Children.

And then for others that take liberty in sin; they think that all their sin is done away by the blood of Jesus Christ, and therefore they may take liberty; and though they dare not say, That therefore they may, yet this is the language of their hearts and lives, many that in these latter dayes hath spoken much about the Covenant of free grace, yet they have made the blood of Christ that is appointed by God to cleanse us from our iniquities, they have made this blood an occasion of defiling their souls by their iniquity. O what an horrible spot is this, that thou shalt make the blood of Christ to be the cause of it, as far as thou canst! that must be an abominable defilement when thou contractest filthiness from the blood of Christ, and from the grace of God in the Gospel. O this is the most dreadful spot of all spots whatsoever! the Lord rebuke thy wicked and cursed heart that shalt contract wickedness from hearing the Doctrine of free grace: Is there not reason of speaking these things? for do not you see some that speak more of free grace then ever they did, and yet more loose then ever they were before? O these are spots in our Feasts indeed, and in our converse and communion; they are spots to a Christian profession, such men and women as these are: For thy spots do not onely defile thy own soul, but the name of God, and profession of Jesus Christ. Thou dost what in the lye, to defile the very blood of Christ, and to defile the Covenant of grace; in the Epistle of Jude 4. They were afore of old ordained to this condemnation, saith the Text: Ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into Lasciviousness; There are two black brands of a reprobate: We have indeed no absolute notes and signs of a reprobate, but these are the two blackest. One is, God gives a man up to his hearts desire in wicked wayes — And the other, is to turn the grace of God into wantonness. How vile are those spots likewise, that men come now through the knowledg that they say they have of the Covenant of grace, to

have no kind of work of conscience upon them for their sin? Now their Consciences do not at all trouble them for their sin, there's no kind of sense at all upon them upon that account, and all because of grace (as they say:) Well, that spot must needs be an irrecoverable spot, that there's no sense at all of. — And if it come to that, that now thou canst take liberty to sin freely, and hast no conscience at all of this thy sin, I say, thy spot is a most dreadful spot, and 'tis to be fear'd an irrecoverable spot; all the mercy of God that serves to help to ease others when they have committed their sins, doth but plead against thee, to aggravate thy sin
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I'll conclude all with that one Text that we have in Jer. 23. that shews the difference of the sins of those that are nearer to God in way of profession, if they be wicked and ungodly; v. 13. 14. I have seen folly, saith the Prophet, in the Prophets of Samaria, they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to sin. In v. 14. I have seen also in the Prophets of Jerusalem, an horrible thing — That that is but folly in the Prophets of Samaria, in the Prophets of Jerusalem, is an horrible thing: The more near we are to God in the way of our profession, the more horrible are our sins if we make Religion to be a colour of our wickedness; if we seek to cover our wickedness by profession of Religion, that that is but folly in others, comes to be horrible in them — Consider what hath been said, and the Lord give you understanding.

FINIS.