

## CHAPTER I.

## PART I.

*Directions to unconverted, graceless Sinners, for the attaining of true saving Grace.*

IF ungodly, miserable sinners were as few, as the devil and their self-love would make themselves believe, I might forbear this part of my work as needless. For the whole need not the physician, but the sick. If you go into twenty families, and ask them all, Whether any of them are in an unsanctified state, unrenewed and unpardoned, and under the wrath and curse of God? you will meet with few that will not tell you, they hope it is better with them than so; and though they are sinners, as all are, yet that they are repenting, pardoned sinners. Nay, there is scarce one of many of the most wicked and notoriously ungodly, but hope they are in a penitent, pardoned state. Even the haters of God will say they love him; and the scorners at godliness will say that they are not ungodly; and that it is but hypocrisy and singularity that they deride: and it were well for them, if saying so would go for proof, and he that will be their judge would take their words. But God will not be deceived, though foolish men are wise enough to deceive themselves. Wickedness will be wickedness when it hath clothed itself with the fairest names: God will condemn it when it hath found out the most plausible pretences and excuses. Though the ungodly think to bear it out in pride and scorn, and think to be saved by their hypocritical lip-service, as soon as the most holy worshippers of the Lord, yet "shall they be like chaff which the wind driveth away: they shall not be able to stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous<sup>a</sup>." And if God know better than foolish men, then certainly the flock is little to whom the "Father will give the kingdom<sup>b</sup>." And "wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat<sup>c</sup>: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there

<sup>a</sup> Psal. l. 4, 5, 6.<sup>b</sup> Luke xii. 32.<sup>c</sup> Matt. vii. 13, 14.

be that find it." When Christ was asked, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" he answered, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." But, alas! we need no other information than common experience, to tell us whether the greatest part of men be holy and heavenly, and self-denying; that seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and love God above all, and will forsake all they have for the sake of Christ; and undoubtedly none but such are saved; as you may see Heb. xii. 14. Matt. vi. 20, 21. 33.

Seeing then the godly are so few, and the ungodly so many; and that God will take nothing for holiness that is not such indeed; and seeing it is so terrible a thing to any man that hath his wits about him, to live one day in an unconverted state, because he that dieth so, is lost for ever; methinks it should be our wisdom to be suspicious of ourselves, and careful lest we be deceived in so great a business, and diligent in searching and examining our hearts, whether they are truly sanctified or not; because it can be no harm to make sure work for our salvation; whereas presumption, carelessness, and negligence, may betray us to remediless misery and despair.

I do not here suppose the reader to have any such acquaintance with his heart, or care of his salvation, or obedient willingness to be taught and ruled by Jesus Christ, as is proper to those that are truly sanctified; for it is ungodly persons to whom I am now speaking. And, yet, if I should not suppose them to have some capacity and disposition to make use of the Directions which I give them, I might as well pass them by, and spare my labour. I tell thee therefore, reader, what it is that I presuppose in thee, and expect from thee, and I think thou wilt not judge me unreasonable in my suppositions and expectations.

1. I suppose thee to be a man, and therefore that thou hast reason and natural free-will (that is, the natural faculty of choosing and refusing), which should keep thy sensitive appetite in obedience; and that thou art capable of loving and serving thy Creator, and enjoying him in everlasting life.

2. I suppose that thou knowest thyself to be a man; and therefore that thy sensitive part, or flesh, should no more rule thee, or be ungoverned by thee, than the horse should

rule the rider, or be unruled by him: and that thou understandest that thou art made on purpose to love and serve thy Maker, and to be happy in his love and glory for ever. If thou know not this much, thou knowest not that thou art a man, or else knowest not what a man is.

3. I suppose thee to have a natural self-love, and a desire of thy own preservation and happiness; and that thou hast no desire to be miserable, or to be hated of God, or to be cast out of his favour and presence into hell, and there to be tormented with devils everlastingly: yea, I will suppose that thou art not indifferent whether thou dwell in heaven or hell, in joy or torment; but would fain be saved and be happy; whether thou be godly or ungodly, wise or foolish, I will be bold to take all this for granted: and I hope in all this I do not wrong thee.

4. I suppose thee to be one that knowest that thou didst not make thyself; nor give thyself that power or wisdom which thou hast; and that he that made thee and all the world, must needs be before all the world; and that he is eternal, having no beginning (for if ever there had been a time when there was nothing, there never would have been any thing; because nothing can make nothing); and I suppose thou dost confess that all the power, and wisdom, and goodness of the whole creation set together, is less than the power, and wisdom, and goodness of the Creator; because nothing can give more than it hath to give. I suppose, therefore, that thou dost confess that there is a God; for to be the eternal, infinite Being, and the most powerful, wise, and good, and the first cause of all created being, and power, and wisdom, and goodness, this (with the subsequent relations to the creature) is to be GOD. If thou wilt deny that there is a God, thou must deny that thou art a man, and that there is any man, or any being\*.

\* See the proof of the Godhead, and that God is the Governor of the world, and that there is another life for man, in the beginning of my 'Holy Commonwealth,' chap. 1, 2, 3. *Commoda quibus utimur, lucemque quas fruimur, spiritumque quem ducimus, ab eo nobis dari atque impertiri videmus.* Cic. Pro. S. Ros. 131. vol. ii. p. 65. Read Galen's Hymns to the Creator, l. i. de usu partium, præcipuè, l. lii. cap. 10. *Nulla gens est tam immansueta, neque tam fera, quæ non, etiamsi ignoret, qualem habere Deum deceat, tamen habendum sciat.* Cic. Leg. i. 24. *Omnibus enim innatus est, et in thymis quasi insculptum, esse deos.* Cic. Nat. D. ii. 12. *Deum agnoscere ex operibus ejus.* Cic. Tusc. i. 70. *Nullum est animal præter hominem, quod ha-*

5. I suppose thou knowest that God, who gave a being unto all things, is by this title of creation, the absolute Owner or Lord of all: and that he that made the reasonable creatures, with natures to be governed, in order to a further end, is by that title, their supreme Governor; and therefore hath his laws commanding duty, and promising reward, and threatening punishment; and therefore will judge men according to these laws, and will be just in judgment, and in his rewards and punishments. And that he that freely gave the creature its being, and all the good it hath, and must give it all that ever it shall have, is the Father or most bountiful Benefactor to his creatures. Surely I screw thee not too high in supposing thee to know all this; for all this is no more than that there is a God. For he is not God, if he be not the creator, and therefore our owner, our ruler, and benefactor, our absolute Lord, our most righteous governor, and our most loving father, or benefactor.

6. I suppose therefore that thou art convinced, that God must be absolutely submitted to, and obeyed before all others in the world, and loved above all friends, or pleasures, or creatures whatsoever. For to say, 'He is my Owner,' is to say, 'I must yield myself to him as his own:' to say, 'I take him for my supreme Governor,' is to say, that 'I will absolutely be ruled by him:' and to say, 'I take him as my dearest Father or chief Benefactor,' is to say, that 'I am obliged to give him my dearest love, and highest thanks:' otherwise you do but jest, or say you know not what, or contradict yourselves, while you say, 'He is your God.'

7. I suppose that thou art easily convinced, that in all the world there is no creature that can shew so full a title to thee as God; or that hath so great authority to govern thee, or that can be so good to thee, or do so much for thee, as God can do, or hath done, and will do, if thou do thy part; and therefore that there is nothing to be preferred before him, or compared with him in our obedience or love:

*beat notitiam aliquam dei. Cic. Leg. i. 25. Nulla gens tam fera, nemo omnium tam sit immanis, cujus mentem non imbuerit deorum opinio. Cic. Tusc. i. 20. "I had rather believe all the fables in the Legend, and the Talmud, and the Alcoran, than that this universal frame is without a mind." Lord Bacon, Essay 16. "A little philosophy inclineth a man's mind to atheism: but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion." Lord Bacon, Essay 16.*

nor is there any that can save us from his justice, if we stand out against him.

8. I suppose that as thou knowest God is just, in his laws and judgments, so that he is so faithful that he will not, and so all-sufficient, that he need not deceive mankind, and govern them by mere deceit: this better beseems the devil, than God: and therefore that as he governeth man on earth by the hopes and fears of another life, he doth not delude them into such hopes or fears: and as he doth not procure obedience by any rewards or punishments in this life, as the principal means (the wicked prospering, and the best being persecuted and afflicted here), therefore his rewards or punishments, must needs be principally hereafter in the life to come. For if he have no rewards and punishments, he hath no judgment; and if he have no judgment, he hath no laws (or else no justice); and if he have no laws (or no justice), he is no governor of man (or not a righteous governor); and if he be not our governor (and just), he is not our God; and if he were not our God, we had never been his creatures, nor had a being, or been men<sup>f</sup>.

9. I suppose thou knowest that if God had not discovered what he would do with us, in the life to come, yet man is highest bound to obey and love his Maker, because he is our absolute Lord, our highest ruler, and our chief benefactor; and all that we are or have is from him. And that if man be bound to spend his life in the service of his God, it is certain that he shall be no loser by him, no not by the costliest obedience that we can perform; for God cannot appoint us any thing that is vain; nor can he be worse to us than an honest man, that will see that we lose not by his service. Therefore that God for whom we must spend and forsake this life, and all those pleasures which sensualists enjoy, hath certainly some greater thing to give us, in another life.

<sup>f</sup> *Mundum autem censent regi numine deorum, eumque esse quasi communem urbem, et civitatem hominum, et deorum. Cic. Fin. iii. 64. Impiis apud inferos penas esse preparatas. Cic. Inv. i. 46. Vero et Jovem, et dominatorem rerum, et omnia metu regentem, et, ut idem Ennius,*

*—patrem divumque, hominumque,*

*et presentem ac præpotentem deum. Quod qui dubitet, haud sane intelligo, cur non idem, sol sit, an ullus sit, dubitare possit. Cic. Nat. D. ii. 4.*

10. I may take it for granted at the worst, that neither thyself, nor any infidel in the world, can say that you are sure that there is not another life for man, in which his present obedience shall be rewarded, and disobedience punished. The worst that ever infidel could say was, that 'He thinketh that there is no other life.' None of you dare deny the possibility of it, nor can with any reason deny the probability. Well, then, let this be remembered while we proceed a little further with you.

11. I suppose or expect that you have so much use of sense and reason, as to know the brevity and vanity of all the glory and pleasures of the flesh; and that they are all so quickly gone, that were they greater than they are, they can be of no considerable value. Alas, what is time! How quickly gone, and then it is nothing! and all things then are nothing which are passed with it! So that the joys or sorrows of so short a life, are no great matter of gain or loss.

I may therefore suppose that thou canst easily conclude, that the bare probability or possibility of an endless happiness, should be infinitely preferred before such transitory vanity, even the greatest matters that can be expected here; and that the probability or possibility of endless misery in hell, should engage us with far greater care and diligence to avoid it, than is due for the avoiding any thing that you can think to escape by sinning; or any of the sufferings of this momentary life. If you see not this, you have lost your reason; that the mere probability or possibility of a heaven and hell, should much more command our care and diligence, than the fading vanities of this dreaming, transitory life.

12. Well, then; we have got thus far in the clearest light. You see that a religious, holy life, is every man's duty, not only as they owe it to God as their creator, their owner, governor, and benefactor; but also, because as lovers of ourselves, our reason commandeth us to have ten thousandfold more regard of a probable or possible joy and torment which are endless, than of any that is small and of short continuance. And if this be so, that a holy life is every man's duty, with respect to the life that is to come, then it is most evident, that there is such a life to come in-

deed, and that it is more than probable or possible, even certain. For if it be but man's duty to manage this life, by the hopes and fears of another life, then it must follow, that either there is such a life to come, or else that God hath made it man's duty to hope, and fear, and care, and labour, and live in vain; and that he himself doth tantalize and cheat his creatures, and rule the world by motives of deceit, and make religion and obedience to our Maker to be a life of folly, delusion, and our loss. And he that believeth this of God, doth scarcely believe him to be God. Though I have mentioned this argument in another treatise, I think it not unmeet here to repeat it for thy benefit.

13. And seeing I suppose thee to be convinced of the life to come, and that man's happiness and misery is there, I must needs suppose that thou dost confess, that all things in this life, whether prosperity or adversity, honour or dishonour, are to be esteemed and used as they refer to the life to come. For nothing is more plain, than that the means are to have all their esteem and use in order to their end. That only is good in this life, which tendeth to the happiness of our endless life; and that is evil indeed in this life, that tendeth to our endless hurt, and to deprive us of the everlasting good. And therefore no price or motive should hire us to sin against God, and to forfeit or hinder our endless happiness.

14. I may suppose, if thou have reason, that thou wilt confess that God cannot be too much loved, nor obeyed too exactly, nor served too diligently (especially by such backward sinners, that have scarce any mind to love or worship him at all); and that no man can make too sure of heaven, or pay too dear for it, or do too much for his salvation, if it be but that which God hath appointed him to do. And that you have nothing else that is so much worth your time, and love, and care, and labour. And therefore though you have need to be stopped in your love, and care, and labour for the world, because for it you may easily pay too dear, and do too much; yet there is no need of stopping men in their love, and care, and labour for God and their salvation; which is worth more than ever we can do, and where the best are apt to do too little.

† Non enim temere, nec fortuito sat, et creati sumus, sed profecto fuit quædam

15. I also suppose thee to be one that knowest, that this present life is given us on trial, to prepare for the life that shall come after; and that as men live here, they shall speed for ever; and that time cannot be recalled, when it is gone; and therefore that we should make the best of it while we have it.

16. I suppose thee also to be easily convinced, that seeing man hath his reason and life for matters of everlasting consequence, his thoughts of them should be frequent and very serious, and his reason should be used about these things, by retired, sober deliberation.

17. And I suppose thee to be a man, and therefore so far acquainted with thyself, as that thou mayst know, if thou wilt, whether thy heart and life do answer thy convictions, and whether they are more for heaven or earth; and therefore that thou art capable of self-judging in this case.

Perhaps you will say, that while I am directing you to be holy, I suppose you to be holy first; for all this seemeth to go far towards it. But I must profess that I see not any thing in all these suppositions, but what I may suppose to be in a heathen; and that I think all this, is but supposing thee to have the use of thy reason, in the points in hand. Speak freely: Is there any one of all these points that thou canst or darest deny? I think there is not. And therefore if heathens and wicked men deny them in their practice, that doth but shew that sin doth brutify them, and that, as men asleep, or in a crowd of business, they have not the use of the reason which they possess, in the matters which their minds are turned from.

18. Yea, one thing more I think I may suppose in all or most that will read this book; that you take on you also to believe in Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier, and that the Scriptures are the Word of God. And if you do so indeed, I may then hope that my work is in a manner done, before I begin it: but if you do it but opinionatively and uneffectually, yet God and man may plead with you the truths which you profess.

Having told you what I presuppose in you, I proceed now to the Directions. But I again entreat and charge thee,

*vis, quæ generi consuleret humano: nec id gigneret, aut aleret, quod, cum exantlaviæct omnes labores, tum incideret in mortis malum sempiternum. Cic. Tusc. l. 118.*



reader, as thou lovest thy soul, and wouldst not be condemned for hypocrisy and sloth, that thou dost not refuse to put in practice what is taught thee, and shew thereby, that whatever thou pretendest, thou art not willing to do thy part for thy own salvation, no not in the most reasonable, necessary things<sup>a</sup>.

*Direction 1.* 'If thou be truly willing to be sanctified and a child of God, remain not in a state of ignorance; but do thy best to come into the light, and understand the Word of God, in the matters of salvation.'

If knowledge be unnecessary, why have we understanding? and wherein doth a man excel a beast? If any knowledge at all be necessary, certainly it must be the knowledge of the greatest and most necessary things: and nothing is so great and necessary as to obey thy Maker, and to save thy soul. Knowledge is to be valued according to its usefulness. If it be a matter of as great concernment to know how to do your worldly business, and to trade and gather worldly wealth, and to understand the laws, and to maintain your honour, as it is to know how to be reconciled unto God, to be pardoned and justified, to please your Creator, to prepare in time for death and judgment, and an endless life, then let worldly wisdom have the pre-eminence. But if all earthly things be dreams and shadows, and valuable only as they serve us in the way to heaven, then surely the heavenly wisdom is the best. Alas, how far is that man from being wise, that is acquainted with all the punctilios of the law, that is

<sup>a</sup> Absent enim illic omnia unde orta sunt. Cic. Sen. 80. vol. 7, p. 816. Sed credo, deos immortales sparsisse animos in corpora humana, ut essent, qui terras tuerentur, quique celestium ordinem contemplantes, imitarentur eum vitæ modo atque constantiâ. Cic. Sen. 77. vol. 7. p. 815. Sunt enim e terra homines non ut incolæ atque habitatores, sed quasi spectatores superarum rerum atque celestium, quarum spectaculum ad nullum aliud genus animantium pertinet. Cic. Nat. Deo. ii. 140. Nam cum cæteras animantes abjecisset ad pastum, solum hominem erexit, ad cælique, quasi cognationis domicilique pristini, conspectum excitavit: tum speciem ita formavit oris, ut in ea penitus reconditos mores effligeret. Cic. Leg. 1. 26. Nisi Deus... istis te corporis custodiis liberaverit, huc tibi aditus patere non potest. Cic. Som. Scip. 3. vol. 7. p. 915. Virorum sapientissimorum ac fortissimorum civium mentes, quæ mihi videntur ex hominum vita ad deorum religionem et sanctimoniam demigrasse. Cic. Pro. Rab. 30. Animum tamen esse ingeneratum a Deo: ex quo vere vel agnatio nobis cum celestibus, vel genus, vel stirps appellari potest. Cic. Leg. 1. 24.

<sup>b</sup> Qui seipsum cognoverit, cognoscet in se omnia: Deum, ad cujus imaginem factus est: mundum, cujus simulacrum gerit; creaturas omnes cum quibus symbolum habet. Paul. Scafiger. Theol. p. 722.

excellent in the knowledge of all the languages, sciences, and arts, and yet knoweth not how to live to God, to mortify the flesh, to conquer sin, to deny himself, nor to answer in judgment for his fleshly life, nor to escape damnation! As far is such a learned man from being wise, as he is from being happy.

Two sorts among us do quietly live in damning ignorance. First, abundance of poor people, who think they may continue in it, because they were bred in it; and that because they are not book-learned, therefore they need not learn how to be saved; and because their parents neglected to teach them when they were young, therefore they may neglect themselves ever after, and need not learn the things they were made for. Alas, sirs, what have you your lives, your time and reason for? Do you think it is only to know how to do your worldly business? Or is it to prepare for a better world? It is better that you knew not how to eat, or drink, or speak or go, or dress yourselves, than that you know not the will of God, and the way to your salvation. Hear what the Holy Ghost saith, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them<sup>k</sup>." Darkness is unsafe and full of fears; the light is safe and comfortable. A man in ignorance is never like to hit his way: nor can he know whether he be in or out; nor what enemy or danger he is near. It is the devil that is the prince of darkness, and his kingdom is a kingdom of darkness, and his works are works of darkness<sup>l</sup>. Grace turneth men from darkness to light<sup>m</sup>, and causeth them to cast off the works of darkness<sup>n</sup>. Because we are the children of light and of the day, and not of darkness or of night<sup>o</sup>. They that were sometime darkness, are light in the Lord, when they are converted, and must walk as the children of the light<sup>p</sup>. In the dark the devil and wicked men may cheat you, and do almost what they list with you. You will not buy your ware in the dark, nor travel, or do your work in the dark: and will you judge of the state of your souls in the dark? and do the work of your salvation in the dark? I tell you the devil cou

<sup>k</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

<sup>l</sup> Ephes. vi. 12. Col. i. 13. 1 John ii. xi. Luke xi. 34, :

<sup>m</sup> Acts xxvi. 18.

<sup>n</sup> Rom. xiii. 12.

<sup>o</sup> 1 Thes. v. 5.

<sup>p</sup> Ephes. v. 8.

never entice so many souls to hell, if he did not first put out the light, or put out their eyes. They would never so follow him by crowds, to everlasting torments, by daylight, and with open eyes. If men did but know well what they do when they are sinning, and whither they go in a carnal life, they would quickly stop, and go no further. All the devils in hell could never draw so many thither, if men's ignorance were not the advantage of temptations.

Another sort among us that are ignorant of the things of God, are sensual gentlemen, and scholars, that have so much breeding as to understand the words, and speak somewhat better than the ruder sort, but indeed never knew the nature, truth, and goodness of the things they speak of: they are many of them as ignorant of the nature of faith, and sanctification, and the working of the Holy Ghost in planting the image of God upon the soul, and of the saint's communion with God, and the nature of a holy life, as if they had never heard or believed, that there is such a thing as any of these in being. Nicodemus is a lively instance in this case: a ruler in Israel, and a Pharisee, and yet he knew not what it was to be born again. And the pride of these gallants maketh their ignorance much harder to be cured, than other men's; because it hindereth them from knowing and confessing it<sup>1</sup>. If any one would convince them of it, they say with

<sup>1</sup> Cum quem pœnitet peccasse pene innocens est: maxima purgationum pars est voluntaria pœnitentia delictorum. Scal. Thes. p. 742. Facilius iis ignoscitur qui non perseverasse sed ab errore se revocare meliuntur; est enim humanum peccare, sed bellissimum in errore perseverare. Cle. in Vat. Nullus enim suavior anime cibus est, quam cognitio veritatis. Lactant. Instit. lib. 1. c. 1. Bunemann, p. 11. It is a marvellous and doleful case to think how ignorant some people live, even to old age, under constant and excellent teaching. Some learn neither words nor sense, but hear as if they heard not: some learn words, and know the sense no more than if they had learned but a tongue unknown; and will repeat their creed and catechism, when they know not what it is that they say. A worthy minister of Helvetia told me, that their people are very constant at their sermons, and yet most of them grossly ignorant of the things which they most frequently hear. It is almost incredible what ignorance some ministers report that they have found in some of the eldest of their auditors. Nay, when I have examined some that have professed strictness in religion, above the common sort of people, I have found some ignorant of some of the fundamentals of the Christian faith. And I remember what an ancient bishop about twelve hundred years ago saith, Maximus Taurinensis in his homilies, that when he had long preached to his people, even on an evening after one of his sermons, he heard a cry or noise among the people, and hearkening what it was, they were by their outcry helping to deliver the moon, that was in labour and wanted help. This is cited also by Papirius Massonus, in vita Hilgii Papæ. p. 67.

scorn, as the Pharisees to Christ, "Are we blind also?" Yea, they are ready to insult over the children of the light, that are wise to salvation, because they differ from the loose or hypocritical opinions of these gentlemen, in some matters of God's worship; of which their worships are as competent judges, as the Pharisees, of the doctrine of Christ, or as Nicodemus of regeneration, or as Simon Magus, or Julian, or Porphyry, of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. These honourable, miserable men, will bear no contradiction or reproof: who dare be so unmannerly, disobedient, or bold, as to tell them that they are out of the way to heaven, and strangers to it (that I say not, enemies); and to presume to stop them in the way to hell, or to hinder them from damning themselves, and as many others as they can? They think this talk of Christ, and grace, and life eternal, if it be but serious (and not like their own, in form, or levity, or scorn), is but the troublesome preciseness of hypocritical, humorous, crack-brained fellows: and say of the godly, as the Pharisees, "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed<sup>1</sup>."

Well, gentlemen or poor men, whoever you be that savour not the things of the Spirit<sup>2</sup>, but live in ignorance of the mysteries of salvation, be it known to you, that heavenly truth and holiness are works of light, and never prosper in the dark; and that your best understanding should be used for God and your salvation, if for any thing at all. It is the devil and his deceits that fear the light. Do but understand well what you do, and then be wicked if you can; and then set light by Christ and holiness if you dare! O come but out of darkness into the light, and you will see that which will make you tremble to live ungodly and unconverted another day: and you will see that which will make you with penitent remorse lament your so long neglect of heaven, and wonder that you could live so far, and so long besides your wits, as to choose a course of vanity and bestiality in the chains of satan, before the joyful liberty of the saints: and, though we must not be so uncivil as to tell you where you are, and what you are doing, you will then more uncivilly call yourselves, "exceedingly mad, and foolish, disobedient,"

<sup>1</sup> John ix. 40.    <sup>2</sup> John vii. 47—49.    <sup>3</sup> Rom. viii. 5—7. 13.

deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures<sup>a</sup>," as one did that thought himself before as wise and good as any of you. Live not in a sleepy state of ignorance, if ever you would have saving grace.

*Direct.* 11. 'Especially labour first to understand the true nature of a state of sin, and a state of grace.'

It is like you will say, that all are sinners; and that Christ died for sinners; and that you were regenerate in your baptism; and that for the sins that since then you have committed, you have repented of them, and therefore you hope they are forgiven.

But, stay a little, man, and understand the matter well as you go; for it is your salvation that lieth at the stake. It is very true that all are sinners: but it is as true, that some are in a state of sin, and some in a state of grace: some are converted sinners, and some unconverted sinners: some live in sins inconsistent with holiness (which therefore may be called mortal), others have none but infirmities which consist with spiritual life (which in this sense may be called venial): some hate their sin, and long to be perfectly delivered from it: and others so love it, as they are loath to leave it. And is there no difference, think you, between these?

It is as true also, that Christ died for sinners: (or else where were our hope?) But it is true also, that he died to "save his people from their sins<sup>a</sup>," and "to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God<sup>b</sup>," and "to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works<sup>c</sup>," and that "except a man be born again, and converted, and become as a little child (in humility and beginning the world anew), he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven<sup>d</sup>," and that even he that died for sinners, will at last condemn the workers of iniquity, and say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire<sup>e</sup>," "I never knew you<sup>f</sup>."

It is very true, that you were sacramentally regenerate in baptism, and that he that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved, and all that are the children of promise, and have that promise sealed to them by baptism, are regenerate. The ancients taught that baptism puts men into a state of grace;

<sup>a</sup> Acts xxvi. 11. Tit. iii. 3.    <sup>b</sup> Matt. i. 21.    <sup>c</sup> Acts xxvi. 18.    <sup>d</sup> Tit. ii. 14.

<sup>e</sup> John iii. 3. 5. Matt. xviii. 3.    <sup>f</sup> Matt. xxv. 41.    <sup>g</sup> Matt. vii. 23.

that is, that all that sincerely renounce the world, the devil, and the flesh, and are sincerely given up to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, according to the covenant of grace, and profess and seal this by their baptism, shall be pardoned, and made the heirs of life. But as it is true, that baptism thus saveth, so is it as true, that it is not the "outward washing only the filth of the flesh" that will suffice, but the "answer of a good conscience towards God<sup>b</sup>." And that "no man can enter into the kingdom of God, that is not born of the Spirit, as well as of water<sup>c</sup>." And that Simon Magus and many another have had the water of baptism, that never had the Spirit, but still remain in the "gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, and had no part nor lot in that business, their hearts being not right in the sight of God<sup>d</sup>." And nothing is more sure, than that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ (notwithstanding his baptism) he is none of his<sup>e</sup>!" And that if you have his Spirit, you "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit:" and are "not carnally but spiritually minded," and are "alive to God," and as "dead to the world<sup>f</sup>." Whether all that were baptised are such as these, when they come to age, judge you.

It is true also, that if you truly repent, you are forgiven: but it is as true, that true repentance is the very conversion of the soul from sin to God, and leaveth not any man in the power of sin. It is not for a man when he hath had all the pleasure that sin will yield him, to wish then that he had not committed it, (which he may do then at an easy rate) and yet to keep the rest that are still pleasant and profitable to his flesh. Like a man that casts away the bottle which he hath drunk empty, but keeps that which is full; or as men sell off their barren kine, and buy milch ones in their stead: this kind of repentance is a mockery, and not a cure for the soul. If thou have true repentance, it hath so far turned thy heart from sin, that thou wouldst not commit it, if it were to do again, though thou hadst all the same temptations; and it hath so far turned thy heart to God and holiness, that thou wouldst live a holy life, if it were all to do again, though thou hadst the same temptations as afore against it. This is the nature of true repentance: such a repentance indeed

<sup>b</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 21.<sup>c</sup> John iii. 5.<sup>d</sup> Acts viii. 13. 21. 23.<sup>e</sup> Rom. viii. 9.<sup>f</sup> Rom. viii. 1. 5—8. 10. 13. 14.

is never too late to save : but I am sure it never comes too soon.

Mark, now, I beseech you, what a state of sin, and what a state of holiness is.

He that is in a state of sin, hath habitually and predominantly a greater love to some pleasures, or profits, or honours of this world, than he hath to God and to the glory which he hath promised ; he preferreth, and seeketh, and holdeth (if he can) his fleshly prosperity in this world, before the favour of God and the happiness of the world to come. His heart is turned from God unto the creature, and is principally set on things on earth. Thus his sin is the blindness, and madness, and perfidiousness, and idolatry of his soul, and his forsaking of God, and his salvation, for a thing of naught. It is that to his soul, which poison, and death, and sickness, and lameness, and blindness are to his body : it is such dealing with God, as that man is guilty of to his dearest friend or father, who should hate him and his company, and love the company of a dog or toad much better than his ; and obey his enemy against him : and it is like a madman's dealing with his physician, who seeks to kill him as his enemy, because he crosseth his appetite or will, to cure him. Think of this well, and then tell me, whether this be a state to be continued in. This state of sin, is something worse than a mere inconsiderate act of sin, in one that otherwise liveth an obedient, holy life.

On the other side, a state of holiness, is nothing else but the habitual and predominant devotion and dedication of soul, and body, and life, and all that we have to God : an esteeming, and loving, and serving, and seeking him, before all the pleasures and prosperity of the flesh : making his favour, and everlasting happiness in heaven our end, and Jesus Christ our way, and referring all things in the world unto that end, and making this the scope, design, and business of our lives. It is a turning from a deceitful world to God ; and preferring the Creator before the creature, and heaven before earth, and eternity before an inch of time, and our souls before our corruptible bodies, and the authority and laws of God, the universal Governor of the world, before the word or will of any man, how great soever ; and a subjecting our sensitive faculties to our reason, and advancing this rea-

son by Divine revelation ; and living by faith, and not by sight : in a word, it is a laying up our treasure in heaven, and setting our hearts there, and living in a heavenly conversation, setting our affections on the things above, and not on the things that are on earth : and a rejoicing in hope of the glory to come, when sensualists have nothing but transitory, brutish pleasures to rejoice in.

This is a state and life of holiness : when we persuade you to be holy, we persuade you to no worse than this : when we commend a life of godliness to your choice, this is the life we mean, and that we commend to you. And can you understand this well, and yet be unwilling of it ? It cannot be. Do but know well what godliness and ungodliness, what grace and sin are, and the work is almost done.

*Direct.* 111. ‘To know what a life of holiness is, believe the Word of God, and those that have tried it ; and believe not the slanders of the devil and of ungodly men, that never tried or knew the things which they reproach.’

Reason cannot question the reasonableness of this advice. Who is wiser than God ? or who is to be believed before him ? And what men are more likely to know what they talk of, than such as speak from their own experience ? Nothing more familiar with wicked men, than to slander and reproach the holy ways and servants of the Lord. No wisdom, no measure of holiness or righteousness will exempt the godly from their malice ; otherwise, Christ himself at least would have been exempted, if not his apostles and other saints, whom they have slandered and put to death. Christ hath foretold us what to expect from them. “ If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own : but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than the Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you : if they have kept my sayings, they will keep yours also<sup>s</sup>.”

The truth is, wicked men are the seed and children of the devil, and have his image, and obey him, and think, and speak, and do as he would have them. And the godly

<sup>s</sup> John xv. 18—20.



are the seed and members of Christ, and bear his image, and obey him: and do you think that the devil will bid his children speak well of the ways or followers of Christ? I must confess, till I had found the truth of it by experience, I was not sensible how impudent in belying, and cruel in abusing the servants of Christ, his worldly, malicious enemies are. I had read oft how early an enmity was put between the woman's and the serpent's seed, and I had read and wondered, that the first man that was born into the world did murder his brother for worshipping God more acceptably than himself; "because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous<sup>b</sup>." I had read the inference, "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you<sup>c</sup>;" but yet I did not so fully understand, that wicked men and devils are so very like, and so near of kin; till the words of Christ, expounded by visible demonstrations, had taught it me. Indeed the apostle saith<sup>d</sup>, that Cain was of that wicked one, that is, the devil: but Christ saith more plainly, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him: when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it<sup>e</sup>." Here note, that cruel murdering and lying, are the principal actions of a devil; and that as the father of these, he is the father of the wicked, who are most notoriously addicted to these two courses against the most innocent servants of the Lamb. How just it is that they dwell together hereafter, that are here so like in disposition and action: even as the righteous shall dwell with Christ, who bore his image, and imitated his holy, suffering life.

I conclude, then, that if thou wilt never turn to God and a holy life, till wicked men give over belying, and reproaching them, thou mayst as well say, that thou wilt never be reconciled to God, till the devil be first reconciled to him; and never love Christ, till the devil love him, or bid thee love him; or never be a saint, till the devil be a saint, or will give thee leave; and that thou wilt not be saved, till the devil be willing that thou be saved.

<sup>b</sup> 1 John iii. 12.<sup>c</sup> 1 John iii. 13.<sup>d</sup> 1 John iii. 12.<sup>e</sup> John viii. 44.

*Direct. iv.* ‘That thy understanding may be enlightened, and thy heart renewed, be much and serious in reading the Word of God, and those books that are fitted to men in an unconverted state, and especially in hearing the plain and searching preaching of the word.’

There is a heavenly light, and power, and majesty in the Word of God, which in the serious reading or hearing of it, may pierce the heart; and prick it, and open it, that corruption may go out, and grace come in. “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart<sup>a</sup>.” Moreover, “by them it is that we are warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward<sup>b</sup>.” The eunuch was reading the Scripture, when Philip was sent to expound it to him for his conversion<sup>c</sup>. The preaching of Peter did prick many thousands to the heart to their conversion<sup>d</sup>. The heart of Lydia was opened to attend to the preaching of Paul<sup>e</sup>. “The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit<sup>f</sup>.” These “weapons are mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ<sup>g</sup>.” Hast thou often read and heard already, and yet findest no change upon thy heart? Yet read and hear again and again: ministers must not give over preaching, when they have laboured without success: why then should you give over hearing or reading? As the husbandman laboureth, and looketh to God for rain, and for the blessing, so must we, and so must you. Look up to God: remember it is his word, in which he calleth you to repentance, and offereth you mercy, and treateth with you concerning your everlasting happiness: lament your former negligence and disobedience, and beg his blessing on his word, and you shall find it will not be in vain.

And the serious reading of books which expound and apply the Scriptures, suitable to your case, may, by the blessing of God, be effectual to your conversion. I have written

<sup>a</sup> Psal. xix. 7, 8.

<sup>b</sup> Psal. xix. 11.

<sup>c</sup> Acts viii.

<sup>d</sup> Acts ii. 37.

<sup>e</sup> Acts xvi. 14.

<sup>f</sup> Heb. iv. 12.

<sup>g</sup> 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

so many to this use myself, that I shall be the shorter on this subject now, and desire you to read them, or some of them, if you have not fitter at hand; viz. A Call to the Unconverted;—A Treatise of Conversion;—Now or Never;—Directions for a sound Conversion;—A Saint or a Brute;—A Treatise of Judgment;—A Sermon against making light of Christ;—A Sermon of Christ's Dominion;—Another of his Sovereignty, &c.

*Direct. v.* 'If thou wouldst not be destitute of saving grace, let thy reason be exercised about the matters of thy salvation, in some proportion of frequent, sober, serious thoughts, as thou art convinced the weight of the matter doth require.'

To have reason is common to all men, even the sleepy and distracted: to use reason is common to all that have their senses awake, and fit to serve their minds: to use reason in the greatest matters, is proper to wise men, that know for what end God made them reasonable". Inconsiderate men are all ungodly men; for reason not used is as bad as no reason, and will prove much worse in the day of reckoning. The truth is, though sinners are exceeding blind and erroneous about the things of God, yet all God's precepts are so reasonable, and tend so clearly to our joy and happiness, that if the devil did not win most souls by silencing reason, and laying it asleep, or drowning its voice, with the

\* The word itself exciteeth reason, and preachers are by reason to shame all sin as a thing unreasonable. And the want of such excitation, by powerful preaching, and plain instructing, and the persons considering, is a great cause of the world's undoing. For those preachers that lay all the blame on the people's stupidity or malignity, I desire them to read a satisfactory answer in Acosta the Jesuit\*, lib. iv. c. 2, 3 & 4. Few souls perish, comparatively, where all the means are used which should be used by their superiors for their salvation: if every parish had holy, skilful, laborious pastors, that would publicly and privately do their part, great things might be expected in the world. But, saith Acosta, Itaque præcipua causa ad ministros parum idoneos redit. Quæ namque est prædicatio nostra? quæ fiducia? signa certe non edimus: vitæ sanctitate non eminemus; beneficentia non invitamus; verbi ac spiritus efficacia non persuademus; lachrymis ac precibus à Deo non impetramus; Inimò ne magnopere quidem curamus. Quæ ergo nostra querela est? quæ tanta Indorum accusatio? lib. iv. p. 365. An ingenuous confession of the Roman priesthood. And such priests can expect no better success. But having seen another sort of ministers, through God's mercy, I have seen an answerable fruit of their endeavours.

\* Joseph Acosta was a celebrated Spanish author, born at Medina del Campo, about the year 1540. He was a missionary and provincial of the Jesuits in Peru, and died in Salamanca, 1600. Among other works, he wrote a treatise "De procuranda Indorum Salute." 8vo. Salam. 1588. Also, "De Christo Revelato," 4to. Rom. 1590. See Rees's Cyclo. art. Acosta.—(T. C.)

noise and crowd of worldly business, hell would not have so many sad inhabitants. I scarce believe that God will condemn any sinner that ever lived in the world, that had the use of reason; no, not the heathens that had but one talent, but he will be able to say to them as Luke xix. 22. "Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant: Thou knewest," &c. To serve God and labour diligently for salvation, and prefer it before all worldly things, is so reasonable a thing, that every one that repenteth of the contrary course, doth call it from his heart an impious madness. Reason must needs be for God that made it. Reason must needs be for that which is its proper end and use. Sin, as it is in the understanding, is nothing but unreasonableness; a blindness and error; a loss and corruption of reason in the matters of God and our salvation. And grace, as in the understanding, doth but cure this folly and distraction, and make us reasonable again; it is but the opening of our eyes, and making us wise in the greatest matters. It is not a more unmanly thing to love and plead for blindness, madness, and diseases, and to hate both sight, and health, and wit, than it is to love and plead for sin, and to hate and vilify a holy life.

Grant me but this one thing, that thou wilt but soberly exercise thy reason, about these great, important questions; Where must I abide for ever? What must I do to be saved? What was I created and redeemed for? and I shall hope that thy own understanding, as erroneous as it is, will work out something that will promote thy good. Do but withdraw thyself one hour in a day from company and other business, and consider but as soberly and seriously of thy end and life, as thou knowest the nature and weight of the matter doth require, and I am persuaded thy own reason and conscience will call thee to repentance, and set thee, at least, in a far better way than thou wast in before. When thou walkest alone, or when thou wakest in the night, remember soberly that God is present, that time is hasting to an end, that judgment is at hand, where thou must give account of all thy hours, of thy lusts, and passions, and desires; of all thy thoughts, and words, and deeds; and that thy endless joy or misery dependeth wholly and certainly on this little time. Think but soberly on such things as these,

but one hour in a day or two, and try whether it will not once recover thee to wit and godliness; and folly and sin will vanish before the force of considering reason, as the darkness vanisheth before the light. I entreat thee now as in the presence of God, and as thou wilt answer the denial of so reasonable a request at the day of judgment, that thou wilt but resolve to try this course of a sober, serious consideration, about thy sin, thy duty, thy danger, thy hope, thy account, and thy everlasting state: try it sometimes; especially on the Lord's days; and do but mark the result of all; and whither it is that such sober consideration doth point or lead thee? whether it be not towards a diligent, holy, heavenly life? If thou deny me thus much, God and thy conscience shall bear witness, that thou thoughtest thy salvation of little worth, and therefore mayst justly be denied it.

Would it not be strange that a man should be penitent and godly, that never once thought of the matter with any seriousness in his life? Can so many and great diseases of soul be cured, before you have once soberly considered that you have them, and how great and dangerous they are, and by what remedies they must be cured? Can grace be obtained and exercised, while you never so much as think of it? Can the main business of our lives be done without any serious thoughts; when we think it fit to bestow so many upon the trivial matters of this world? Doth the world and the flesh deserve to be remembered all the day, and week, and year? and doth not God and thy salvation deserve to be thought on one hour in a day, or one day in a week? Judge of these things, but as a man of reason. If thou look that God, who hath given thee reason to guide thy will, and a will to command thy actions, should yet carry thee to heaven like a stone, or save thee against or without thy will, before thou didst ever once soberly think of it, thou mayst have leisure in hell to lament the folly of such expectations.

*Direct.* vi. 'Suffer not the devil by company, pleasure, or worldly business, to divert or hinder thee from these serious considerations.'

The devil hath but two ways to procure thy damnation. The one is, by keeping thee from any sober remem-

brance of spiritual and eternal things; and the other is, if thou wilt needs think of them, to deceive thee into false, erroneous thoughts. To bring to pass the first of these (which is the most common, powerful means), his ordinary way is by diversion<sup>1</sup>: finding thee still something else to do: putting some other thoughts into thy mind, and some other work into thy hand; so that thou canst never have leisure for any sober thoughts of God: whenever the Spirit of God knocks at thy door, thou art so taken up with other company, or other business, that thou canst not hear, or wilt not open to him. Many a time he hath been ready to teach thee, but thou wast not at leisure to hear and learn. Many a time he secretly jogged thy conscience, and checked thee in thy sin, and called thee aside to consider soberly about thy spiritual and everlasting state, when the noise of foolish mirth and pleasures, or the bustles of encumbering cares and business have caused thee to stop thy ears, and put him off, and refuse the motion. And if the abused Spirit of God depart, and leave thee to thy beloved mirth and business, and to thyself, it is but just; and then thou wilt never have a serious, effectual thought of heaven, perhaps, till thou have lost it; nor a sober thought of hell, till thou art in it; unless it be some despairing, or some dull ineffectual thought.

O therefore, as thou lovest thy soul, do not love thy pleasure or business so well as to refuse to treat with the Spirit of God, who comes to offer thee greater pleasures, and to engage thee in a more important business. O lay by all, to hear awhile what God and conscience have to say to thee. They have greater business with thee, than any others that thou conversest with. They have better offers and motions to make to thee, than thou shalt hear from any of thy old companions. If the devil can but take thee up a while, with one pleasure one day, and another business another day, and keep thee from the work that thou camest into the world for, till time be gone, and thou art slept unawares into damnation, then he hath his desire, and hath the

<sup>1</sup> Even learning and honest studies may be used as a diversion from more necessary things. Saith Petrarch in *vita sua*, *Iugenio sui ad omne bonum et salubre studium apto; sed ad moralem præcipue philosophiam, et ad poeticam prono. Quam ipsam processu temporis neglexi, sacris literis delectatus, in quibus sensi dulcedinem abditam, quam aliquando contempseram; poeticis literis non nisi ad ornamentum reservatis.*

end he aimed at, and hath won the day, and thou art lost for ever.

It is like thou settest some limits to thy folly, and purposest to do thus but a little while: but when one pleasure withereth, the devil will provide a fresh one for thee; and when one business is over, which causeth thee to pretend necessity, another, and another, and another will succeed, and thou wilt think thou hast such necessity still, till time is gone, and thou see, too late, how grossly thou wast deceived. Resolve, therefore, that whatever company, or pleasure, or business would divert thee, that thou wilt not be befooled out of thy salvation, nor taken off from minding the one thing necessary. If company plead an interest in thee, know of them whether they are better company than the Spirit of God and thy conscience;—if pleasure would detain thee, inquire whether it be more pure and durable pleasures, than thou mayst have in heaven, by harkening unto grace;—if business still pretend necessity, inquire whether it be a greater business than to prepare thy soul and thy accounts for judgment, and of greater necessity than thy salvation. If not, let it not have the precedency: if thou be wise, do that first that must needs be done; and let that stand by, that may best be spared. What will it profit thee to win all the world, and lose thy soul? At least, if thou durst say that thy pleasure and business are better than heaven, yet might they sometime be forborn, while thou seriously thinkest of thy salvation.

*Direct.* vii. 'If thou wouldst be converted and saved, be not a malicious or peevish enemy to those that would convert and save thee: be not angry with them that tell thee of thy sin or duty, as if they did thee wrong or hurt.'

God worketh by instruments: when he will convert a Cornelius, a Peter must be sent for, and willingly heard. When he will recall and save a sinner, he hath usually some public minister or private friend, that shall be a messenger of that searching and convincing truth, which is fit to awaken them, enlighten them, and recover them. If God furnish these instruments with compassion to your souls, and willingness to instruct you, and you will take them for your enemies, and peevishly quarrel with them, and contradict them, and perhaps reproach them, and do them a mischief

for their good will, what an inhuman, barbarous course of ingratitude is this? Will you be angry with men for endeavouring to save you from the fire of hell? Do they endeavour to make any gain or advantage by you? or only to help your souls to heaven? Indeed, if their endeavours did serve any ambitious design of their own, to bring the world (as the pope and his clergy would do) under their own jurisdiction, you had reason then to suspect their fraud. But the truth is, Christ hath purposely appointed his greatest church-officers to be but ministers, even the servants of all, to rule and save men as volunteers, without any coercive power, by the management of his powerful word upon their consciences; and to beseech and entreat the poorest of the flock, as those that are not lords over God's heritage, nor masters of their faith, but their servants in Christ, and helpers of their joy; that so whenever we deliver our message to them, they may see that we exercise not dominion over them, and aim at no worldly honours, or gain, or advantage to ourselves, but at the mere conversion and saving of their souls. Whereas, if he had allowed us to exercise authority as the kings of the Gentiles, and to be called gracious lords, and to encumber ourselves with the affairs of this life, our doctrine would have been rejected by the generality of the world, and we should always have come to them on this great disadvantage, that they would have thought we sought not them, but theirs; and that we preached not for them, but for ourselves, to make a prize of them<sup>a</sup>: as the Jesuits, when they attempt the conversion of the Indians, do still find this their great impediment, the princes and people suppose them to pretend the Gospel, but as a means to subjugate them and their dominions to the pope; because they tell them that they must be all subject to the pope, if they will be saved. Now when Christ hath appointed a poor, self-denying, entreating ministry, against whom you can have none of these pretences, to stoop to your feet, with the most submissive entreaties, that you would but turn to God and live, you have no excuse for your own barbarous ingratitude, if you will fly in their faces, and use them as your enemies, and be offended with them

<sup>a</sup> 1 Peter v. 2, 3, 4. 2 Cor. x. 4. 2 Cor. v. 19, 30. 2 Cor. i. 24. 1 Cor. iv. 1. 2 Cor. iii. 6. xi. 23. Joel i. 9, 13. 2 Cor. iv. 5. Mark x. 44. Matt. xx. 27. Luke xxii. 24, 25, 26.



for endeavouring to save you. You know they can hold their tithes and livings by smoothing, and cold, and general preaching, as well as by more faithful dealing (if not better): you know they can get no worldly advantage by dealing so plainly with you: you know that they hazard by it, their reputation with such as you; and they cannot be ignorant that it is like to expose them to your ill will and indignation.

And they are men as well as you, and therefore, undoubtedly, desire the good will and the good word of others, and take no pleasure to be scorned or hated: undoubtedly they break through much temptation and reluctance of the flesh, before they can so far deny themselves as to endeavour your salvation on such terms: and seeing it is all for you, methinks you should be their chief encouragers: if others should oppose them, you should be for them, because they are for you. If I go with a convoy to relieve a besieged garrison, I shall expect opposition from the enemy that besiegeth them; but if the besieged themselves shall shoot at us, and use us as enemies for venturing our lives to relieve them, it is time to be gone, and let them take what they get by it.

Perhaps you think that the preacher, or private admonisher, is too plain with you; but you should consider that self-love is like to make you partial in your own cause, and therefore a more incapable judge than they<sup>\*</sup>. And you should consider that God hath commanded them to deal plainly, and told them that else the people's blood shall be required at their hands<sup>†</sup>. And that God best knoweth what medicine and diet is fittest for your disease; and that the case is of such grand importance (whether you shall live in heaven or hell for ever?) that it is scarce possible for a minister to be too plain and serious with you: and that your disease is so obstinate, that gentler means have been too long frustrate, and therefore sharper must be tried: else why were you not converted by gentler dealing until now? If you fall down in a swoon, or be ready to be drowned, you

<sup>\*</sup> Seneca scribit, Tam necessarium fuisse Romano populo nasci Catonem, quam Scipionem: alter enim cum hostibus nostris bellum, alter cum moribus gessit. Sen. Phil. Epist. 88. p. 288. Els. 1649.

<sup>†</sup> Isa. lviii. 1. Esck. xviii.

will give leave to the standers-by to handle you a little more roughly than at another time, and will not bring your action against them for laying hands on you, or ruffling your silks or bravery; if your house be on fire, you will give men leave to speak in another manner, than when they modulate their voices into a civil and complimenting tone.

It may be you think that they are censorious in judging you to be unconverted, when you are not; and to be worse and in more danger than you are, and speaking harder of you than you deserve. But it is you that should be most suspicious of yourselves, and afraid in so great a matter of being deceived. A stander-by may see more than a player: I am sure he that is awake may see more of you, than you of yourselves when you are asleep.

But suppose it were as you imagine; it is his love that mistakingly attempteth your good: he intendeth you no harm: it is your salvation that he desireth: it is your damnation that he would prevent. You have cause to love him, and be thankful for his good-will, and not to be angry with him, and reproach him for his mistakes. He is none of those that brings you into the inquisition, and would fine, or imprison, or banish, or burn, or hang, or torment you, in order to convert and save you: the worst he doth, is but to speak those words, which, if true, you are deeply concerned to regard; and if mistaken, can do you no hurt, unless you are the cause yourself. If it be in public preaching, he speaketh generally by descriptions, and not by nomination; no more of you, than of others in your case: nor of you at all, if you are not in that case. If he speak privately to you; there is no witness but yourself; and therefore it is no matter of disgrace. Never, for shame, pretend that thou art willing to be converted and saved, when thou hatest those that would promote it; and art angry with every one that tells thee of thy case, and couldst find in thy heart to stop their mouths, or do them a mischief.

*Direct.* VIII. 'If thou art willing indeed to be converted, do thy best to discover that yet thou art unconverted, and in a lost and miserable state.'

Who will endeavour to cure a disease which he thinks he hath not? or to vomit up the poison which he thinks he never took, or taketh to be no poison? or to come out of

the ditch, that thinks he is not in it? or who will turn back again, that will not believe but he is in the right way? Who will labour to be converted, that thinks he is converted already? Or who will come to Christ as the physician of his soul, that thinks he is not sick, or is cured already? The common cause that men live and die without the grace of repentance, sanctification, and justification, which should save them, is because they will not believe but that they have it, when they have it not; and that they are penitent, and justified, and sanctified already. It is not my desire to make any of you think worse of your condition than it is; but if you will not know what it is, you will not be fit for recovering grace, nor use the means for your own recovery: you think it is so sad a conclusion, to find yourselves in a state of condemnation, that you are exceeding unwilling to know it or confess it.

But I beseech you consider but these two things: first, either it is true that you are in so miserable a state, or it is not true: if it be not true, the closest trial will but comfort you, by discovering that you are sanctified already: but if it be true, then do you think it will save you to be ignorant of your danger? Will it cure your disease, to believe that you have it not? Will thinking well of yourselves falsely, prove that you are well indeed? Is it the way to grace, to think you have it, when you have it not? Will it bring you to heaven, to think that you are going thither, when you are in the way to hell? Nay, do you not know, that it is the principal temptation of the devil, to keep men from a state of repentance and salvation, to deceive them thus, and persuade them that they are in such a state already? Judge soberly of the case. Do you think if all the impenitent, unconverted sinners in the world were certain that they are indeed in a graceless state, in which if they died, they were past all hope, that they would not quickly look about them, and better understand the offers of a Saviour, and live in continual solicitude and fear, till they found themselves in a safer state? If you were sure yourselves, that you must yet be

\* Bernard. de grad. humil. grad. 8. describeth men's excusing their sins thus "If it may be, they will say, I did not do it; or else, It was no sin, but lawful; or else, I did it not oft or much; or else, I meant no harm; or else, I was persuaded by another, and drawn to it by temptation."

made new creatures, or be damned, would it not set you on work to seek more diligently after grace than ever you have done? The devil knoweth this well enough; that he could scarce keep you quiet this night in his snares, but you would be ready to repent and beg for mercy, and resolve on a new life, before to-morrow, if you were but sure that you are yet in a state of condemnation. And therefore he doth all that he can to hide your sin and danger from your eyes, and to quiet you with the conceit, that though you are sinners, yet you are penitent, pardoned, and safe.

Well, sirs, there can be no harm in knowing the truth. And therefore will you but try yourselves, whether you are unsanctified or not? You were baptised into the name of the Holy Ghost as your Sanctifier; and if now you neglect or mock at sanctification, what do you but deride your baptism, or neglect that which is its sense and end? It doth not so much concern you to know that you live the life of nature, as to know whether sanctification have made you spiritually alive to God.

And let me tell you this for your encouragement, that we do not call you to know that you are unconverted, and unpardoned, and miserable, as men that have no remedy, but must sit down in despair, and be tormented with the fore-knowledge of your endless pains before the time. No; it is but that you may speedily and thankfully accept of Christ, the full remedy, and turn to God, and quickly get out of your sin and terror, and enter into a life of safety and of peace. We desire not your continuance in that life which tendeth to despair and horror: we would have you out of it, if it were in our power before to-morrow; and therefore it is that we would have you understand what danger you are in, that you may go no further, but speedily turn back, and seek for help. And I hope there is no hurt, though there be some present trouble, in such a discovery of your danger as this is.

Well, if you are but willing to know, I shall help you a little to know what you are.

1. If you are persecutors, or haters, or deriders of men, for being diligent and serious in the service of God, and fearful of sinning, and because they go not with the multitude to do evil, it is a certain sign that you are in a state of death: yea, if you love not such men, and desire not rather

to be such yourselves, than to be the greatest of the ungodly<sup>a</sup>.

2. If you love the world best, and set your affections most on things below, and mind most earthly things; nay, if you seek not first God's kingdom, and the righteousness thereof; and if your hearts be not in heaven, and your affections set on the things that are above; and you prefer not your hopes of life eternal before all the pleasures and prosperity of this world, it is a certain sign that you are but worldly and ungodly men<sup>b</sup>.

3. If your estimation, belief and hopes, of everlasting life through Christ, be not such, as will prevail with you to deny yourselves, and forsake father, and mother, and the nearest friends; and house, and land, and life, and all that you have, for Christ, and for these hopes of a happiness hereafter, you are no true Christians, nor in a state of saving grace<sup>c</sup>.

4. If you have not been converted, regenerated, and sanctified by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, making you spiritual, and causing you to mind the things of the Spirit above the things of the flesh. If this Spirit be not in you, and you walk not after it, but after the flesh; making provision for the flesh, to satisfy its desires, and preferring the pleasing of the flesh, before the pleasing of God, it is certain that you are in a state of death<sup>d</sup>.

5. If you have any known sin which you do not hate, and had not rather leave it than keep it, and do not pray, and strive, and watch against it, as far as you know and observe it; but rather excuse it, plead for it, desire it, and are loath to part with it, so that your will is habitually more for it than against it, it is a sign of an impenitent, unrenewed heart<sup>e</sup>.

<sup>a</sup> See Gal. iv. 29. Acts xxvi. 11. 1 Tim. i. 13. 1 Pet. iv. 2—5. Psal. xv. 4. 1 John iii. 8—15. John xiii. 35. Psal. lxxxiv. 10.

<sup>b</sup> See this in Matt. vi. 19—21. 33. Phil. iii. 18—20. Col. iii. 1—4. Psal. lxxiii. 25. 1 John ii. 15—17. James i. 27. Luke xii. 20, 21. xvi. 25.

<sup>c</sup> See Luke xiv. 26. 33. Matt. x. 37—39. xiii. 21, 22.

<sup>d</sup> See Matt. xviii. 3. John iii. 3, 5, 6. Heb. xii. 14. Rom. viii. 1, 5—13. xiii. 13, 14. Luke xvi. 19. 25. xii. 20, 21. Heb. xi. 25, 26. 2 Cor. iv. 16—18. v. 7. Rom. vii. 17, 18.

<sup>e</sup> 1 John iii. 3, 4, 6—10. 24. Gal. v. 16, 19—25. Rom. vii. 22. 24. viii. 13. Luke xiii. 3, 5. Matt. v. 19, 20. 2 Tim. ii. 19. Psal. v. 5. Luke xiii. 27.

6. If you love not the Word, as it is a light discovering your sin and duty, but only as it is a general truth, or as it reproveth others: if you love not the most searching preaching, and would not know how bad you are, and come not to the light, that your deeds may be manifest, it is a sign that you are not children of the light, but of the darkness<sup>f</sup>.

7. If the laws of your Creator and Redeemer be not of greatest power and authority with you, and the will and word of God cannot do more with you, than the word or will of any man; and the threatenings and promises of God be not more prevalent with you, than the threats or promises of any men, it is a sign that you take not God for your God, but in heart are atheists and ungodly men<sup>g</sup>.

8. If you have not, in a deliberate covenant or resolution, devoted and given up yourselves to God as your Father and felicity, to Jesus Christ as your only Saviour, and your Lord and King, and to the Holy Ghost as your Sanctifier, to be made holy by him, desiring that your heart and life should be perfectly conformed to the will of God, and that you might know him, and love him, and enjoy him more; you are void of godliness and true Christianity: for this is the very covenant which you make in baptism, which you call your christening<sup>h</sup>.

I have now plainly shewed you, and fully proved, from the Word of God, by what infallible signs an ungodly man may know that he is ungodly, if he will. May you not know whether it be thus with you, if you are willing to know? May you not know, if you will, whether your desire and design of life, be more for this world, or that to come? and whether heaven or earth be preferred and sought first? and whether your fleshly prosperity and pleasure, or your souls be principally cared for and regarded? May you not know, if you will, whether you love or loathe the serious worshippers of God<sup>i</sup>? and whether you had rather be delivered from

<sup>f</sup> John iii. 19—21.

<sup>g</sup> Luke xix. 27. Matt. vii. 21—23. 26. Dan. iii. 16—18. vi. 5. 10. Jer. xvii. 5, 6. Luke xii. 4. Acts v. 29. Psal. xiv. 1, &c.

<sup>h</sup> Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. 2 Cor. viii. 5. 1 Cor. vi. 17. John i. 10—12. Gal. iv. 6. Rom. viii. 14, 15.

<sup>i</sup> Atque haud scio, an pietate adversus Deos sublata, fides etiam, et societas humani generis, et una excellentissima virtus, justitia, tollatur. Cic. Nat. D. i. 4.

your sins or keep them? and whether your wills be more against them, or for them? and whether you love a holy life or not? and whether you had rather be perfect in holiness and obedience to God, or be excused from it, and please the flesh? and whether you had rather be such a one as Paul, or as Caesar? a persecuted saint in poverty and contempt, or a persecuting conqueror or king? May you not know, if you will, whether you love a searching ministry, that telleth you of the worst, and would not deceive you? May you not know, whether you are resolutely devoted and given up to God, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as your Father and felicity, your Saviour and your Sanctifier; and whether the scope, design and business of your lives is more for God, or for the flesh, for heaven or earth; and which it is that bears the sway, and which it is that comes behind, and hath but the leavings of the other, or only so much as it can spare? Certainly these are things so near you, and so remarkable in your hearts, that you may come to the knowledge of them if you will. But if you will not, who can help it?

What a sottish cavil is it then of those ignorant men, that ask us, when we tell them of these things, Whether ever we were in heaven?—or ever saw the book of life?—and how we can tell who shall be saved, and who shall be damned? If it were about a May-game this jesting were more seasonable; but to talk thus distractedly about the matters of salvation and damnation, and to make such a jest of the damning of souls, is a kind of foolery that hath no excuse. What though we never were in heaven? and never saw the book of life? dost thou think I never saw the Scriptures? Why, wretched sinner, dost thou not know, that Christ came down from heaven, to tell us who they be that shall come thither, and who they be that shall be shut out? And did he not know what he said? Is God the Governor of the world, and hath he not a law by which he governeth them? and can I not tell by the law, who they be that the Judge will condemn or save? What else is the law made for, but to be the rule of life, and the rule of judgment? Read Psal. i. and xv. Matt. v. vii. and xxv., and all the texts which I even now cited, and see in them whether God hath not told you who they be that shall be saved, and who they be that shall be condemned? Nay, see whether this be not the very business of the Word of God?

And do you think that he hath written in vain? But some men have loved ignorance and ungodliness so long, till the Spirit of grace hath cast them off, and left them to the sottishness of their carnal minds, so that "they have eyes and see not, and ears and hear not, and hearts and understand not." But those that are willing and diligent to know their sin and duty, in order to their recovery, God will not let them search in vain, nor hide the remedy from their eyes.

*Direct. ix.* 'When you have found yourselves in a state of sin and death, understand and consider what a state that is.'

It may be you will think it a tolerable condition, and linger in it, as if you were safe; or delay your repentance, as if it were a matter of no great haste; unless you open your eyes, and look round about you, and see in how slippery a place you stand. Let me name some instances of the misery of an unregenerate, graceless state, and then judge of it as the Word of God directs you.

1. As long as you are unconverted, you must needs be loathsome and abominable to God<sup>k</sup>. His holy nature is unreconcilable to sin, and would be unreconcilable to sinners, if it were not that he can cleanse and purify them. Did you know what sin is, and know God's holiness, you would understand this much better. Your own averseness to God, and your dislike of the holiness of his laws and servants, might tell you what thoughts he hath of you. "He hateth all the workers of iniquity<sup>l</sup>." Indeed he taketh you for his enemies, and as such he will handle you, if you be not converted. I know many persons that are most deeply guilty, especially men of honour and esteem in the world, would scorn to have this title given to themselves; but verily God is not fearful of offending them, nor so tender of their defiled

<sup>k</sup> *Mira Ciceronis fictio in Lib. 1. de Univers. Atque ille, qui recte et honeste curriculum vivendi a natura datum confecerit, ad illud astrum, quo cum aptus fuerit, revertetur. Qui autem immoderate et intemperate vixerit, eum secundus ortus in figuram muliebrem transferet. Et si ne tum quidem finem vitiorum faciet: gravius etiam jactabitur, et in suis moribus simillimas figuras pecudum, et ferarum transferetur: neque malorum terminum prius adspiciet, quam illam sequi coeperit conversionem, quam habebat in se ipse, ejusdem et unius, simul innatam. Quod tum eveniet, cum illa, quæ ex igne, aëre, atque terra, turbulenta, et rationis expertia insederiant, denique iratione depulerit, et ad pristinam, ut optimam affectionem animi pervenerit. Op. vol. vii. p. 941.*

<sup>l</sup> *Psalm. v. 5.*



honour, as they are of their own, or as they expect the preacher should be. If those be the king's enemies that refuse his government and set up another, then those are the enemies of God, and of the Redeemer, and of the Holy Ghost, that set up the base concupiscence of their flesh, and the honour and prosperity of this world, and the will of man, and refuse the government of God their Creator and Redeemer, and refuse the sanctifying teachings and operations of the Holy Ghost. Read Luke xix. 27.

Some think it strange that any men should be called "haters of God;" and I believe you will find it hard to meet with that man that will confess it by himself, till converting grace or hell constrain him. And indeed if God himself had not charged men with that sin, and called them by that name, we should scarce have found belief or patience when we had endeavoured to convince the world of it. Entreat but the worst of men to repent of hating God, and try how they will take it. Yet they may read that name in Scripture<sup>m</sup>. Did not the Jews hate Christ, think you, when they murdered him? and when they hated all his followers for his sake<sup>n</sup>? And doth not Christ say, "that they shall be hated for his sake," not only of the Jews, but also of "all nations, and all men<sup>o</sup>." Even by the "world<sup>p</sup>." And this was a hating "both Christ and his Father<sup>r</sup>." But you will say, It is not possible that any man can hate God. I answer, how then came the devils to hate him? Yea, every ungodly man hateth God: indeed no man hateth him as good, or as merciful to them; but they hate him as holy and just, as one that will not let him have the pleasure of sin, without damning them: as one engaged in justice to cast them into hell, if they die without conversion: and as one that hath made so pure and precise a law to govern them, and convinceth them of sin, and calls them to that repentance and holiness which they hate. Why did the world hate Christ himself? He tells you, "The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify against it, that the works thereof are evil<sup>s</sup>." "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil<sup>t</sup>."

<sup>m</sup> Rom. i. 30. Psal. lxxxi. 15. Luke xix. 14.      <sup>n</sup> Matt. x. 22. Mark xiii. 13.

<sup>o</sup> Matt. xxiv. 9. x. 22.

<sup>p</sup> John xvii. 14. xv. 17—19, &c.

<sup>r</sup> John xv. 23, 24.

<sup>s</sup> John vii. 7.

<sup>t</sup> John iii. 19.

Nay, it is a wonder of blindness, that this God-hating world and age, should not perceive that they are God-haters, while they hate his servants to the death, and implacably rage against them, and hate his holy ways and kingdom, and bend all their power and interest in most of the kingdoms of the world, against his interest and his people upon earth : while the devil fighteth his battles against Christ through the world, by their hands, they will yet confess the devil's malice against God, but deny their own ; as if he used their hands without their hearts. Well ! poor, wretched worms ! instead of denying your enmity to him, lament it, and know that he also taketh you for his enemies, and will prove too hard for you when you have done your worst. Read Psal. ii., and tremble, and submit. This is especially the case of persecutors and open enemies ; but in their measure also of all that would not have him to reign over them. And therefore Christ came to reconcile us unto God, and God to us ; and it is only the sanctified that are reconciled to him<sup>1</sup>. "The carnal mind is enmity against God ; for it is not subject to the law of God ; nor indeed can be<sup>2</sup>." Mark that text well.

2. As long as you are unsanctified, you are unjustified and unpardoned : you are under the guilt of all the sins that ever you committed : every sinful thought, word and deed, of which the least deserveth hell, is on your score, to be answered for by yourself : and what this signifieth, the threatenings of the law will tell you<sup>3</sup>. There is no sin forgiven to an impenitent, unconverted sinner.

3. And no wonder, when the unconverted have no special interest in Christ. The pardon and life that is given by God, is given in and with the Son<sup>4</sup> : "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son : he that hath the Son, hath life ; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life<sup>5</sup>." Till we are members of Christ, we have no part in the pardon and salvation purchased by him : and ungodly sinners are not his members. So that Jesus Christ, who is the hope and life of all his own, doth leave thee as he found thee : and that is not the worst : for,

4. It will be far worse with the impenitent rejecters of

<sup>1</sup> See Col. i. 21. Phil. iii. 18. 1 Cor. xv. 23. Rom. v. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. viii. 7.

<sup>3</sup> See Acts xxvi. 18. Mark iv. 12. Col. i. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. viii. 9.

<sup>5</sup> 1 John v. 10—12.

the grace of Christ, than if they had never heard of a Redeemer. For it cannot be, that God having provided so precious a remedy for sinful, miserable souls, should suffer it to be despised and rejected, without increased punishment. Was it not enough that you had disobeyed your great Creator, but you must also set light by a most gracious Redeemer, that offered you pardon, purchased by his blood, if you would but have come to God by him? Yea, the Saviour that you despised shall be himself your Judge, and the grace and mercy which you set so light by, shall be the heaviest aggravation of your sin and misery. For "how shall you escape, if you neglect so great salvation?" "And of how much sorer punishment (than the despisers of Moses' law) shall they be thought worthy, who have trodden under foot the Son of God, &c.<sup>b</sup>"

5. The very prayers and sacrifice of the wicked are abominable to God (except such as contain their returning from their wickedness). So that terror ariseth to you from that which you expect should be your help<sup>c</sup>.

6. Your common mercies do but increase your sin and misery (till you return to God): your carnal hearts turn all to sin; "Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled, and unbelieving, is nothing pure: but even their mind and conscience is defiled<sup>d</sup>."

7. While you are unsanctified, you are impotent, and dead to any holy, acceptable work: when you should redeem your time, and prepare for eternity, and try your states, or pray, or meditate, or do good to others, you have no heart to any such spiritual works: your minds are biassed against them<sup>e</sup>. And it is not the excusable impotency of such, as would do good, but cannot: but it is the malicious impotency of the wicked (the same with that of devils), that cannot do good, because they will not; and will not, because they have blind, malicious, and ungodly hearts, which makes their sin so much the greater<sup>f</sup>.

8. While you have unsanctified hearts, you have at all times the seed and disposition unto every sin; and if you commit not the worst, it is because some providence restraining the tempter hindereth you. No thanks to you that

<sup>a</sup> Heb. ii. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Heb. x. 29.

<sup>c</sup> Prov. xv. 8. xxi. 27. Isa. i. 13.

<sup>d</sup> Tit. i. 15.

<sup>e</sup> Rom. viii. 7.

<sup>f</sup> Tit. i. 16.

you do not daily commit idolatry, blasphemy, theft, murder, adultery, &c. It is in your hearts to do it, when you have but temptation and opportunity; and will be, till you are renewed by sanctifying grace.

9. Till you are sanctified you are heirs of death and hell<sup>a</sup>, even under the curse, and condemned already in point of law, though judgment have not passed the final sentence<sup>b</sup>. And nothing is more certain, than that you had been damned and undone for ever, if you had died before you had been renewed by the Holy Ghost; and that yet this will be your miserable portion, if you should die unsanctified. Think, then, what a life you have lived until now? and think what it is to live any longer in such a case, in which if you die, you are certain to be damned. Conversion may save you, but unbelief and self-flattery will not save you from this endless misery<sup>c</sup>.

10. As long as you are unsanctified, you are hasting to this misery: sin is like to get more rooting; and your hearts to be more hardened, and at enmity with grace; and God more provoked; and the Spirit more grieved; and you are every day nearer to your final doom, when all these things will be more sensibly considered, and better understood<sup>d</sup>.

Thus I have given you a brief account of the case of unrenewed souls, and but a brief one, because I have done it before more largely<sup>e</sup>.

*Direct. x.* 'When you have found out how sad a condition you are in, consider what there is in sin to make you amends or repair your loss, that should be any hindrance to your conversion.'

Certainly you will not continue for nothing (if you know it to be nothing), in so dangerous and doleful a case as this. And yet you do it for that which is much worse than nothing, not considering what you do. Sit down sometimes and well bethink you, what recompence the world or sin will make you, for your God, your souls, your hopes, and all, when they

<sup>a</sup> Unus gehennæ ignis est in inferno, sed non uno modo omnes excruciat peccatores. Unusquisque animæ quantum exigit culpa, tantum illic sentitur et pœna: nam sicut hic non omnia corpora æqualiter calefacit, ita illic unus ignis animas pro quantitate criminum dissimiliter exurit. Hugo Etherianus de Anim. regre. cap. 12. "Sicilis enim undique in infernum descensus est," saith Anaxagoras (in Laert.) to one that only lamented that he must die in a strange country. Diog. Laert. lib. ii. Segm. 11. Amst. 1692. p. 86.

<sup>b</sup> See John iii. 18, 19. 36.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 1. 3. 2 Pet. ii. 3.

<sup>d</sup> Heb. xii. 14. Heb. ii. 3. Matt. xxv. ult.

<sup>e</sup> Treatise of Conversion.

are lost and past recovery? Think what it will then avail or comfort you, that once you were honoured, and had a great estate; that once you fared of the best, and had your delicious cups, and merry hours, and sumptuous attire, and all such pleasures. Think whether this will abate the horrors of death, or put by the wrath of God, or the sentence of your condemnation; or whether it will ease a tormented soul in hell? If not, think how small, and short, and silly a commodity and pleasure it is, that you buy so dear; and what a wise man can see in it, that should make it seem worth the joys of heaven, and worth your enduring everlasting torments. What is it that is supposed worth all this? Is it the snare of preferment? Is it vexing riches? Is it befooling honours? Is it distracting cares? Is it swinish luxury or lust? Is it beastly pleasures? Or what is it else that you will buy at so wonderful dear a rate? O lamentable folly of ungodly men! O foolish sinners! unworthy to see God! and worthy to be miserable! O strangely corrupted heart of man, that can sell his Maker, his Redeemer, and his salvation, at so base a price!

*Direct.* xi. 'And when you are casting up your account, as you put all that sin and the world will do for you in the one end of the scales, so put into the other the comforts both of this life, and of that to come, which you must part with for your sins.'

Search the Scriptures, and consider how happy the saints of God are there described. Think what it is, to have a purified, cleansed soul; to be free from the slavery of the flesh and its concupiscence; to have the sensitive appetite in subjection unto reason, and reason illuminated and rectified by faith; to be alive to God, and disposed and enabled to love and serve him; to have access to him in prayer, with boldness and assurance to be heard; to have a sealed pardon of all our sins, and an interest in Christ, who will answer for them all and justify us; to be the children of God, and the heirs of heaven; to have peace of conscience, and the joyful hopes of endless joys; to have communion with the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit, and to have that Spirit dwelling in us, and working to our further holiness and joy; to have communion with the saints; and the help and comfort of all God's ordinances, and to be under his many pre-

cious promises, and under his protection and provision in his family, and to cast all our care upon him; to delight ourselves daily in the remembrance and renewed experiences of his love, and in our too little knowledge of him, and love to him, and in the knowledge of his Son, and of the mysteries of the Gospel; to have all things work together for our good, and to be able with joy to welcome death, and to live as in heaven in the foresight of our everlasting happiness. I would have orderly here given you a particular account of the privileges of renewed souls, but that I have done so much in that already in my "Treatise of Conversion," and "Saints' Rest." This taste may help you to see what you lose, while you abide in an unconverted state.

*Direct.* XII. 'When you have thus considered of the condition you are in, consider also whether it be a condition to be rested in one day.'

If you die unconverted, you are past all hope; for out of hell there is no redemption: and certain you are to die ere long; and uncertain whether it will be this night<sup>m</sup>. You never lay down with assurance that you should rise again; you never went out of doors with assurance to return; you never heard a sermon with assurance that you should hear another; you never drew one breath with assurance that you should draw another: a thousand accidents and diseases are ready to stop your breath, and end your time, when God will have it so. And if you die this night in an unregenerate state, there is no more time, or help, or hope. And is this a case then for a wise man to continue in a day, that can do any thing towards his own recovery? Should you delay another day or hour, before you fall down at the feet of Christ, and cry for mercy, and return to God, and resolve upon a better course? May I not well say to thee, as the angels unto Lot, "Arise, lest thou be consumed: escape for thy life; look not behind thee<sup>n</sup>."

*Direct.* XIII. 'When thou art resolved, past thy waverings and delays, give up thyself entirely and unreservedly to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as thy happiness,

<sup>m</sup> Luke xii. 20. Alienus est à fide qui ad agendam penitentiam tempus expectat secretis. Jo. Benedictus Paris. in Annot. in Luc. xii. Multa vitam differentes mora incerta prævenit. Id. ib. ex Senec.

<sup>n</sup> Gen. xix. 15. 17. 22.

thy Saviour, and thy Sanctifier, in a hearty consent to the covenant of grace.'

This is thy Christianity; thy espousals with Christ. It is sacramentally done in baptism; but till it be personally owned, and heartily renewed by men at age, they have no reason to be numbered with adult believers, nor to dream of a part in the blessings of the covenant. It is a pity it is not made a more serious, solemn work, for men thus to renew their covenant with God. (For which I have written in a "Treatise of Confirmation," but hitherto in vain.) However, do it seriously thyself: it is the greatest and weightiest action of thy life.

To this end, peruse well the covenant of grace which is offered thee in the gospel: understand it well. In it God offereth, notwithstanding thy sins, to be thy reconciled God and Father in Christ, and to accept thee as a son, and an heir of heaven.

The Son offereth to be thy Saviour, to justify thee by his blood and grace, and teach thee, and govern thee as thy Head, in order to thy everlasting happiness. The Holy Spirit offereth to be thy Sanctifier, Comforter, and Guide, to overcome all the enmity of the devil, the world, and the flesh, in order to the full accomplishment of thy salvation; nothing is expected of thee, in order to thy title to the benefits of this covenant, but deliberately, unfeignedly, entirely to consent to it, and to continue that consent, and perform what thou consentest to perform, and that by the help of the grace which will be given thee. See, therefore, that thou well deliberate of the matter, but without delay; and count what thou shouldst gain or lose by it. And if thou find that thou art like to be a loser in the end, and knowest of any better way, even take it, and boast of it, when thou hast tried the end; but if thou art past doubt, that there is no way but this, dispatch it resolutely and seriously.

And take heed of one thing, lest thou say, "Why, this is no more than every body knoweth, and than I have done a hundred times, to give up myself in covenant to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." Dost thou know it, and yet hast thou not done it? Or hast thou done it with thy lips, and not unfeignedly with thy heart? Lament it as one of thy greatest sins, that thou hast thus provokingly dallied

with God; and admire his mercy, that he will yet vouchsafe to enter into covenant with one, that hath hypocritically profaned his covenant. If thou hadst ever seriously thus covenanted and given up thyself to God, thou wouldst not have neglected him by an ungodly life, nor lived after to the devil, the world, and the flesh, which were renounced. I tell you, the making of this Christian vow and covenant with God in Christ, is the act of greatest consequence of any in all thy life, and to be done with the greatest judgment, and reverence, and sincerity, and foresight, and firm resolution, of any thing that ever thou dost. And if it were done sincerely, by all that do it ignorantly, for fashion, only with the lips, then all professed Christians would be saved; whereas now, the abusers of that holy name and covenant will have the deepest place in hell. Write it out on thy heart, and put thy heart and hand to it resolvedly, and stand to thy consent, and all is thine own: conversion is wrought when this is done.

*Direct.* xiv. 'In present performance of thy covenant with God, away with thy former sinful life; and see that thou sin wilfully no more; but as far as thou art able, avoid the temptations which have deceived thee.'

God will never be reconciled to thy sins: if he be reconciled to thy person, it is as thou art justified by Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit: he entertaineth thee as one that turneth with repentance from sin to him. If thou wilfully or negligently go on in thy former course of sin, thou shewest that thou wast not sincerely resolved in thy covenant with God.

I know infirmities and imperfections will not be so easily cast off, but will cleave to thee in thy best obedience, till the day of thy perfection come. But I speak of gross and wilful sin; such as thou canst forbear, if thou be but sincerely, though imperfectly, willing°.

Hast thou been a profane swearer or curser, or used to take God's name in vain, or used to backbiting, slandering, lying, or to ribald, filthy talk? It is in thy power to forbear these sins, if thou be but willing. Say not, I fall into them through custom before I am aware; for that is a sign that

° Næ illi falsi sunt, qui diversissimas res pariter expectant, ignaviam voluptatem et præmia virtutis. Sallust. Delph. Lond. 1776. p. 131.



thou art not sincerely willing to forsake them. If thou wert truly penitent, and thy will sincerely opposite to these sins, thou wouldst be more tender and fearful to offend, and resolved against them, and make a greater matter of them, and abhor them, and not commit them, and say, I did it before I was aware; no more than thou wouldst spit in the face of thy father, or curse thy mother, or slander thy dearest friend, or speak treason against the king, and say, I did it through custom before I was aware. Sin will not be so played with by those that have been soundly humbled for it, and resolved against it.

Hast thou been a drunkard, or tipler, spending thy precious hours in an ale-house, prating over a pot, in the company of foolish, tempting sinners? It is in thy power, if thou be truly willing, to do so no more. If thou love and choose such company, and places, and actions, and discourse, how canst thou say thou art willing to forsake them, or that thy heart is changed? If thou do not love and choose them, how canst thou commit them, when none compels thee? No one carrieth thee to the place; no one forceth thee to sin; if thou do it, it is because thou wilt do it, and lovest it. If thou be in good earnest with God, and wilt be saved indeed, and art not content to part with heaven for thy cups and company, away with them presently, without delay.

Hast thou lived in wantonness, fornication, uncleanness, gluttony, gaming, pastimes, sensuality, to the pleasing of thy flesh, while thou hast displeased God? O bless the patience and mercy of the Lord, that thou wast not cut off all this while, and damned for thy sin before thou didst repent! And, as thou lovest thy soul, delay no longer; but make a stand, and go no further, not one step further in the way which thou knowest leads to hell. If thou knowest that this is the way to thy damnation, and yet wilt go on, what pity dost thou deserve from God or man?

If thou have been a covetous worldling, or an ambitious seeker of honour or preferment in the world, so that thy gain, or rising, or reputation, hath been the game which thou hast followed, and hath taken thee up instead of God and life eternal; away now with these known deceits, and hunt not after vanity and vexation. Thou knowest beforehand

what it will prove when thou hast overtaken it, and hast enjoyed all that it can yield thee; and how useless it will be as to thy comfort or happiness at last.

Surely, if men were willing, they are able to forbear such sins, and to make a stand, and look before, to prevent their misery: therefore God thus pleads with them, "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well," &c. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon<sup>a</sup>." Christ supposeth that the foresight of judgment may restrain men from sin, when he saith, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee<sup>b</sup>." Can the presence of men restrain a fornicator; and the presence of the judge restrain a thief, yea, or the foresight of the assizes? And shall not the presence of God, with the foresight of judgment and damnation restrain thee? Remember, that impenitent sin and damnation are conjoined. If you will cause one, God will cause the other. Choose one, and you shall not choose whether you will have the other. If you will have the serpent, you shall have the sting.

*Direct. xv.* 'If thou have sincerely given up thyself to God, and consented to his covenant, shew it, by turning the face of thy endeavours and conversation quite another way, and by seeking heaven more fervently and diligently than ever thou soughtest the world, or fleshly pleasures.'

Holiness consisteth not in a mere forbearance of a sensual life, but principally in living unto God. The principle, or heart of holiness is within, and consisteth in the love of God, and of his word, and ways, and servants, and honour, and interest in the world, and in the soul's delight in God, and the word and ways of God, and in its inclination

<sup>a</sup> Isa. i. 16,—18.

<sup>b</sup> Isa. lv. 2, 3, 6, 7.

<sup>c</sup> John v. 14. viii. 11.

towards him, and desire after him, and care to please him, and loathness to offend him. The expression of it in our lives, consisteth in the constant, diligent exercise of this internal life, according to the directions of the Word of God. If thou be a believer, and hast subjected thyself to God, as thy absolute sovereign, king, and judge, it will then be thy work to obey and please him, as a child his father, or a servant his master<sup>4</sup>. Do you think that God will have servants, and have nothing for them to do? Will one of you commend or reward your servant for doing nothing, and take it at the year's end for a satisfactory answer or account, if he say, I have done no harm? God calleth you not only to do no harm, but to love and serve him with all your heart, and soul, and might. If you have a better master than you had before, you should do more work than you did before. Will you not serve God more zealously than you served the devil? Will you not labour harder to save your souls than you did to damn them? Will you not be more zealous in good, than you were in evil? "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life<sup>5</sup>." If you are true believers, you have now laid up your hopes in heaven, and will therefore set yourselves to seek it, as worldlings set themselves to seek the world. And a sluggish wish, with heartless, lazy, dull endeavours, is no fit seeking of eternal joys. A creeping pace becometh not a man that is in the way to heaven; especially who went faster in the way to hell. This is not running as for our lives. You may well be diligent and make haste, where you have so great encouragement and help, and where you may expect so good an end, and where you are sure you shall never, in life or death, have cause to repent of any just endeavours, and where every step of your way is pure, and clean, and delectable, and paved with mercies, and fortified and secured by Divine protection; and where Christ is your conductor, and so many have sped so well before you, and the wisest and best in the world are your companions. Live then as men that have changed their master, their end, their

<sup>4</sup> Mal. i. 6.<sup>5</sup> Rom. vi. 21, 22.

hopes, their way and work. Religion layeth not men to sleep, though it be the only way to rest. It awakeneth the sleepy soul to higher thoughts, and hopes, and labours, than ever it was well acquainted with before. "He that is in Christ, is a new creature; old things are past away, behold, all things are become new<sup>a</sup>." You never sought which would pay for all your cost and diligence till now; you never were in a way that you might make haste in, without repenting of your haste, till now. How glad should you be that mercy hath brought you into the right way, after the wanderings of such a sinful life? And your gladness and thankfulness should now be shewed, by your cheerful diligence and zeal. As Christ did not raise up Lazarus from the dead, to do nothing, or live to little purpose (though the Scripture giveth us not the history of his life); so did he not raise you from the death of sin, to live idly, or to be unprofitable in the world. He that giveth you his Spirit, to be a principle of heavenly life within you, expecteth that you stir up the gift that he hath given you, and live according to that heavenly principle.

*Direct.* xvi. 'Engage thyself in the cheerful, constant use of the means and helps appointed by God, for thy confirmation and salvation.'

He can never expect to attain the end, that will not be persuaded to use the means. Of yourselves you can do nothing. God giveth his help, by the means which he hath appointed and fitted to your help. Of the use of these, I shall treat more fully afterwards; I am now only to name them to thee, that thou mayst know what it is thou hast to do.

1. That you must hear or read the Word of God, and other good books which expound it and apply it, I shewed you before. The new-born Christian doth incline to this, as the new-born child doth to the breast, "Laying aside all malice, and guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-born babes that desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby<sup>x</sup>." The blessed man's "delight is in the law of the Lord, and therein doth he meditate day and night<sup>y</sup>."

2. Another means is the public worshipping of God in

<sup>a</sup> 2 Cor. v. 17.

<sup>x</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.

<sup>y</sup> Psal. i. 2, 3.

communion with his church and people. Besides the benefit of the word there preached, the prayers of the church are effectual for the members; and it raiseth the soul to holy joys, to join with well ordered assemblies of the saints, in the praises of the Almighty. The assemblies of holy worshippers of God, are the places of his delight, and must be the places of our delight. They are most like to the celestial society, that sound forth the praises of the glorious Jehovah, with purest minds and cheerful voice. "In his temple doth every one speak of his glory<sup>a</sup>." In such a choir, what soul will not be rapt up with delight, and desire to join in the concert and harmony? In such a flame of united desires and praises, what soul so cold and dull that will not be inflamed, and with more than ordinary facility and alacrity fly up to God?

3. Another means is private prayer unto God. When God would tell Ananias that Paul was converted, he saith of him, "Behold, he prayeth<sup>b</sup>." Prayer is the breath of the new creature. The spirit of adoption given to every child of God is a spirit of prayer, and teacheth them to cry "Abba, Father," and helpeth their infirmities, when they know not what to pray for as they ought, and when words are wanting, it (as it were) intercedeth for them with groans, which they cannot express in words. And God knoweth the meaning of the Spirit in those groans<sup>c</sup>. The first workings of grace are in desires after grace, provoking the soul to fervent prayer, by which more grace is speedily obtained. "Ask," then, "and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you<sup>d</sup>."

4. Another means to be used is confession of sin; not only to God (for so every wicked man may do, because he knoweth that God is already acquainted with it all, and this is no addition to his shame: he so little regardeth the eye of God, that he is more ashamed when it is known to men): but in three cases, confession must be made also to man.  
1. In case you have wronged man, and are thus bound to make him satisfaction: as if you have robbed him, defrauded him, slandered him, or borne false witness against him.

<sup>a</sup> Psalm xxix. 9.<sup>b</sup> Acts ix. 11.<sup>c</sup> Gal. iv. 6. Rom. viii. 15. 26, 27.<sup>d</sup> Luke xi. 9.

2. In case you are children, or servants, that are under the government of parents and masters, and are called by them to give an account of your actions: you are bound then to give a true account. 3. In case you have need of the counsel or prayers of others, for the settling of your consciences in peace: in this case, you must so far open your case to them, as is necessary to their effectual help for your recovery. For if they know not the disease, they will be unfit to apply the remedy. In these cases, it is true, that "he that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but he that confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy."<sup>d</sup>

5. Another means to be used, is the familiar company, and holy converse with humble, sincere, experienced Christians. The Spirit that is in them, and breatheth, and acteth by them, will kindle the like holy flames in you. Away with the company of idle, prating, sensual men, that can talk of nothing but their worldly wealth, or business, or their reputations, or their appetites and lusts; associate yourselves with them that go the way to heaven, if you resolve yourselves to go in it. O what a deal of difference will you find between these two sorts of companions! The one sort, if you have any thoughts of repentance, would stifle them, and laugh you out of the use of your reason, into their own distracted mirth and dotage: and if you have any serious thoughts of your salvation, or any inclinations to repent, and be wise, they will do much to divert them, and hold you in the power and snares of satan, till it be too late: if you have any zeal, or heavenly-mindedness, they will do too much to quench it, and fetch down your minds to earth again. The other sort will speak of things of so great weight and moment, and that with seriousness and reverence, as will tend to raise and quicken your souls; and possess you with a taste of the heavenly things which they discourse of; they will encourage you by their own experiences, and direct you by that truth which hath directed them, and zealously communicate what they have received: they will pray for you, and teach you how to pray: they will give the example of holy, humble, obedient lives; and lovingly admonish you of your duties, and reprove your sins. In a word, as the carnal mind doth savour the things

<sup>d</sup> Prov. xviii. 13.

of the flesh, and is enmity against God, the company of such will be a powerful means to infect you with their plague, and make you such, if you were escaped from them; much more to keep you such, if you are not escaped: and as they that are spiritual, do mind the things of the Spirit, so their converse tendeth to make you spiritually-minded, as they are\*. Though there are some useful qualities and gifts in some that are ungodly, and some lamentable faults in many that are spiritual; yet experience will shew you so great a difference between them in the main, in heart and life, as will make you the more easily believe the difference that will be between them in the life to come.

6. Another means is serious meditation on the life to come, and the way thereto: which though all cannot manage so methodically as some, yet all should in some measure and season be acquainted with it.

7. The last means is, to choose some prudent, faithful guide and counsellor for your soul, to open those cases, which are not fit for all to know; and to resolve and advise you in cases that are too hard for you: not to lead you blindfold after the interest of any seduced or ambitious men, nor to engage you to his singular conceits, against the Scripture or the church of God; but to be to your soul, as a physician to your body, or a lawyer to your estates, to help you where they are wiser than you, and where you need their help.

Resolve now, that instead of your idle company and pastime, your excessive cares and sinful pleasures, you will wait on God in the reasonable use of these his own appointed means; and you will find, that he appointed them not in vain, and that you shall not lose your labour.

*Direct. xvii.* 'That in all this you may be sincere, and not deceived by an hypocritical change, be sure that God be all your confidence, and all your hopes be placed in heaven; and that there be no secret reserve in your hearts, for the world and flesh; and that you divide not your hearts between God and the things below, nor take not up with the religion of an hypocrite, which giveth God what the flesh can spare.'

When the devil cannot keep you from a change and re-

\* Rom. viii. 7, 8.

formation, he will seek to deceive you with a superficial change and half reformation, which goeth not to the root, nor doth recover the heart to God, nor deliver it entirely to him. If he can by a partial, deceitful change, persuade you that you are truly renewed and sanctified, and fix you there that you go no further, you are as surely his, as if you had continued in your grosser sins. And, of all other, this is the most common and dangerous cheat of souls, when they think to halve it between God and the world, and to secure their fleshly interest of pleasure and prosperity, and their salvation too; and so they will needs serve God and mammon.

This is the true character of a self-deceiving hypocrite. He is neither so fully persuaded of the certain truth of the Scripture and the life to come, nor yet so mortified to the flesh and world, as to take the joys of heaven for his whole portion, and to subject all his worldly prosperity and hopes thereunto, and to part with all things in this world, when it is necessary to the securing of his salvation: and therefore he will not lose his hold of present things, nor forsake his worldly interest for Christ, as long as he can keep it. Nor will he be any further religious, than may stand with his bodily welfare; resolving never to be undone by his godliness; but in the first place to save himself, and his prosperity in the world, as long as he can: and therefore he is truly a carnal, worldly-minded man; being denominated from what is predominant in him. And yet, because he knoweth that he must die, and for aught he knows, he may then find, against his will, that there is another life which he must enter upon; lest the Gospel should prove true, he must have some religion: and therefore he will take up as much as will stand with his temporal welfare, hoping that he may have both that and heaven hereafter; and he will be as religious as the predominant interest of the flesh will give him leave. He is resolved rather to venture his soul, than to be here undone: and that is his first principle. But he is resolved to be as godly as will stand with a worldly, fleshly life: that is his second principle. And he will hope for heaven as the end of such a way as this: that is his third. Therefore he will place most of his religion in those things which are most consistent with worldliness and carnality,



and will not cost his flesh too dear; as being of this or that opinion, church, or party (whether Papist, Protestant, or some smaller party), in adhering to that party, in being zealous for them, in acquiring and using such parts and gifts, as may make him highly esteemed by others; and in doing such good works as cost him not too dear; and in forbearing such sins as would procure his disgrace and shame, and cost his flesh dearer to commit them, than forbear them; and such other as his flesh can spare: this is his fourth principle. And he is resolved, when trial calleth him to part with God and his conscience, or with the world, that he will rather let go God and conscience, and venture upon the pains hereafter, which he thinks to be uncertain, than to run upon a certain calamity or undoing here: at least, he hath no resolution to the contrary, which will carry him out in a day of trial: this is his fifth principle. And his sixth principle is, That yet he will not torment himself, or blot his name, with confessing himself a temporizing worldling, resolved to turn any way to save himself. And therefore he will be sure to believe nothing to be truth and duty that is dangerous; but will furnish himself with arguments, to prove that it is not the will of God; and that sin is no sin: yea, perhaps, conscience and duty shall be pleaded for his sin: it shall be out of tenderness, and piety, and charity to others, that he will sin; and will charge them to be the sinners, that comply not, and do not wickedly as well as he. He will be one that shall first make a controversy of every sin which his flesh calls necessary, and of every duty which his flesh counts intolerably dear: and then, when it is a controversy, and many reputed wise, and some reputed good, are on his side, he thinks he is on equal terms with the most honest and sincere: he hath got a burrow for his conscience and his credit: he will not believe himself to be an hypocrite, and no one else must think him one, lest they be uncharitable; for then the censure must fall on the whole party; and then it is sufficient to defend his reputation of piety to say, Though we differ in opinion, we must not differ in affection, and must not condemn each other for such differences (a very great truth where rightly applied). But what is it, O hypocrite, that makes thee differ in cases where thy flesh is interested, rather than

in any other? and why wast thou never of that mind till now that thy worldly interest requireth it? and how cometh it to pass, that thou art always on the self-saving opinion? and whence is it that thou consultest with those only that are of the opinion that thou desirest should be true, and either not at all, or partially and slightly, with those that are against it? Wast thou ever conscious to thyself, that thou hast accounted what it might cost thee to be saved, and reckoned on the worst, and resolved in the strength of grace to go through all? Didst thou ever meddle with much of the self-denying part of religion, or any duties that would cost thee dear? May not thy conscience tell thee, that thou never didst believe that thou shouldst suffer much for thy religion; that is, thou hadst a secret purpose to avoid it?

O sirs! take warning from the mouth of Christ, who hath so oft and plainly warned you of this sin and danger! and told you how necessary self-denial, and a suffering disposition is, to all that are his disciples; and that the worldly, fleshly principle, predominant in the hypocrite, is manifest by his self-saving course: he must take up his cross, and follow him in a conformity to his sufferings, that will indeed be his disciple. We must suffer with him, if we will reign with him<sup>1</sup>. "He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it, yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while; for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word, and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful<sup>2</sup>." If thou have not taken heaven for thy part, and art not resolved to let go all that would keep thee from it, I must say to thy conscience; as Christ to one of thy predecessors, "Yet lackest thou one thing<sup>3</sup>," and such a one, as thou wilt find of flat necessity to thy salvation. And it is likely some trying time, even in this life, will detect thine hypocrisy, and make thee "go away sorrowful," for thy riches' sake, as he did<sup>1</sup>. If godliness with contentment seem not sufficient gain to thee, thou wilt make thy gain go instead of godliness; that is, thy gain shall be next thy heart, and have the precedency which godliness

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 17. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xiii. 20—22.

<sup>3</sup> Luke xviii. 22.

<sup>1</sup> Ver. 33.

should have, and thy gain shall choose thee thy religion, and overrule thy conscience, and sway thy life.

O sirs ! take warning by the apostates, and temporizing hypocrites, that have looked behind them ; and with Demas, for the world forsaken their duty, and are set up by justice as pillars of salt, for your warning and remembrance. And as ever you would make sure work in turning to God, and escape the too late repentance of the hypocrite, see that you go to the root, and resign the world to the will of God,—and reckon what it may cost you to be followers of Christ,—and look not after any portion, but the favour of God, and life eternal,—and see that there be no secret reserve in your hearts for your worldly interest or prosperity,—and think not of halving it between God and the world, nor making your religion compliant with the desires and interest of the flesh. Take God as enough for you ; yea, as all, or else you take him not as your God.

*Direct.* xviii. \* If you would prove true converts, come over to God as your Father and felicity, with desire and delight, and close with Christ, as your only Saviour, with thankfulness and joy ; and set upon the way of godliness with pleasure and alacrity, as your exceeding privilege, and the only way of profit, honour, and content : and do it not as against your wills, as those that had rather do otherwise if they durst, and account the service of God an unsuitable and unpleasant thing.

You are never truly changed, till your hearts be changed : and the heart is not changed, till the will or love be changed. Fear is not the man : but usually is mixed with unwillingness and dislike, and so is contrary to that which is indeed the man. Though fear may do much for you, it will not do enough : it is oft more sensible than love, even in the best, as being more passionate and violent : but yet there is no more acceptableness in all, than there is will or love<sup>b</sup>. God sent not soldiers, or inquisitors, or persecutors, to convert the world by working upon their fear, and driving them

\* *Passibilis timor est irrationabilis, et ad irrationabilia constitutus, sed cum præcipit quæ cum disciplina et recta ratione consistit, talis proprius est reverentia. Qui enim propter Christum et doctrinam ejus Deum timet, cum reverentia ei subjectus est ; cum ille qui per verbera aliaque tormenta timet Deum, passibilem timorem habere videtur.* Didymus Alex. in Pct. I.

upon that which they take to be a mischief to them: but he sent poor preachers, that had no matter of worldly fears or hopes to move their auditors with; but had authority from Christ to offer them eternal life; and who were to convert the world, by proposing to them the best and most desirable condition, and shewing them where is the true felicity; and proving the certainty and excellency of it to them, and working upon their love, desire, and hope. God will not be your God against your wills, while you esteem him as the devil, that is, only terrible and hurtful to you; and take his service for a slavery, and had rather be from him, and serve the world and the flesh, if it were not for fear of being damned. He will be feared as great, and holy, and just: but he will also be loved as good, and holy, and merciful, and every way suited to the felicity and rest of souls. If you take not God to be better than the creature, (and better to you,) and heaven to be better for you than earth, and holiness than sin, you are not converted: but, if you do, then shew it by your willingness, alacrity, and delight. Serve him with gladness and cheerfulness of heart, as one that hath found the way of life, and never had cause of gladness until now. If you see your servant do all his work with groans, and tears, and lamentations, you will not think he is well pleased with his master and his work. Come to God willingly, with your hearts, or you come not to him indeed at all. You must either make him and his service your delight, or at least your desire, as apprehending him most fit to be your delight, so far as you enjoy him.

*Direct. XIX.* 'Remember still that conversion is the turning from your carnal selves to God; and therefore that it engageth you in a perpetual opposition to your own corrupt conceits and wills, to mortify and annihilate them, and captivate them wholly to the holy word and will of God.'

Think not that your conversion dispatcheth all that is to be done in order to your salvation. No: it is but the beginning of your work (that is, of your delight and happiness); you are but engaged by it, to that which must be performed throughout all your lives; it entereth you into the right way, not to sit down there, but to go on till you come to the desired end. It entereth you into Christ's army, that afterwards you may there win the crown of life; and the

great enemy that you engage against, is yourselves. There will still be a law in your members, rebelling against the law that the Holy Ghost hath put into your minds: your own conceits and your own wills are the great rebels against Christ, and enemies of your sanctification. Therefore it must be your resolved, daily work to mortify them, and bring them clean over to the mind and will of God, which is their rule and end. If you feel any conceits arising in you that are contrary to the Scripture, and quarrel with the word of God, suppress them as rebellious, and give them not liberty to cavil with your Maker, and malapertly dispute with your Governor and Judge, but silence them, and force them reverently to submit. If you feel any will in you contrary to your Creator's will, and that there is something which you would have or do, which God is against, and hath forbid you, remember now how great a part of your work it is, to fly for help to the Spirit of grace, and to destroy all such rebellious desires. Think it not enough; that you can bear the denial of those desires; but presently destroy the desires themselves. For if you let alone the desires, they may at last lay hold upon their prey, before you are aware: or if you should be guilty of nothing but the desires themselves, it is no small iniquity; being the corruption of the heart, and the rebellion and adultery of the principal faculty, which should be kept loyal and chaste to God. The crossness of thy will to the will of God, is the sum of all the impiety and evil of the soul; and the subjection and conformity of thy will to his, is the heart of the new creature, and of thy rectitude and sanctification. Favour not, therefore, any self-conceitedness or self-willedness, nor any rebelliousness against the mind and will of God, any more than you would bear with the disjoining of your bones, which will be little for your ease or use, till they are reduced to their proper place.

*Direct. xx.* Lastly, 'Be sure that you renounce all conceit of self-sufficiency or merit, in any thing you do, and wholly rely on the Lord Jesus Christ, as your Head, and Life, and Saviour, and Intercessor with the Father.'

Remember that "without him ye can do nothing<sup>1</sup>." Nor can any thing you do be acceptable to God, any other way than in him, the beloved Son, in whom he is well pleas-

<sup>1</sup> John xv. 5,

ed. As your persons had never been accepted but in him, no more can any of your services. All your repentings, if you had wept out your eyes for sin, would not have satisfied the justice of God, nor procured you pardon and justification, without the satisfaction and merit of Christ. If he had not first taken away the sins of the world, and reconciled them so far to God, as to procure and tender them the pardon and salvation contained in his covenant, there had been no place for your repentance, nor faith, nor prayers, nor endeavours, as to any hope of your salvation. Your believing would not have saved you, nor indeed had any justifying object, if he had not purchased you the promise and gift of pardon and salvation to all believers.

Objection. But, perhaps, you will say, 'That if we had loved God, without a Saviour, we should have been saved; for God cannot hate and damn those that love him.' To which I answer, You could not have loved God as God, without a Saviour: to have loved him as the giver of your worldly prosperity, with a love subordinate to the love of sin and your carnal selves, and to love him as one that you imagine so unholy and unjust, as to give you leave to sin against him, and prefer every vanity before him, this is not to love God, but to love an image of your own fantasy; nor will it at all procure your salvation. But to love him as your God and happiness, with a superlative love, you could never have done without a Saviour. For, 1. Objectively; God being not your reconciled father, but your enemy, engaged in justice to damn you for ever, you could not love him as thus related to you, because he could not seem amiable to you; and therefore the damned hate him as their destroyer, as the thief or murderer hates the judge. 2. And as to the efficiency; your blinded minds, and depraved wills could never have been restored so far to their rectitude, as to have loved God as God, without the teaching of Christ, and the renewing, sanctifying work of his Spirit. And without a Saviour, you could never have expected this gift of the Holy Ghost. So that your supposition itself is groundless.

3. Indeed conversion is your implanting into Christ, and your uniting to him, and marriage with him, that he may be your life, and help, and hope. "He is the way, the truth,

and the life: and no man cometh to the Father, but by him<sup>a</sup>." "God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son: he that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life<sup>b</sup>." "He is the Vine, and ye are the branches: as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the Vine, so neither can ye, except ye abide in him: he that abideth not in Christ, is cast forth as a branch, and withered, to be burned<sup>c</sup>." All your life and help is in him, and from him: without Christ, you cannot believe in the Father, as in one that will shew you any saving mercy, but only as the devils, that believe him just, and tremble at his justice. Without Christ, you cannot love God, nor have any lively apprehensions of his love. Without Christ, you can have no hope of heaven, and therefore no endeavours for it. Without him, you cannot come near to God in prayer, as having no confidence, because no admittance, acceptance, or hope. Without him, how terrible are the thoughts of death, which in him we see as a conquered thing: and when we remember that he was dead, and is now alive, and the Lord of life, and hath the keys of death and hell, with what boldness may we lay down this flesh, and suffer death to undress our souls! It is only in Christ that we can comfortably think of the world to come; when we remember that he must be our Judge, and that in our nature, glorified, he is now in the highest, Lord of all; and that he is "preparing a place for us, and will come again to take us to himself, that where he is, there we may be also<sup>d</sup>." Alas! without Christ, we know not how to live an hour; nor can have hope or peace in any thing we have or do; nor look with comfort either upward or downward, to God, or the creature; nor think, without terrors of our sins, of God, or of the life to come. Resolve, therefore, that as true converts, you are wholly to live upon Jesus Christ, and to do all that you do by his Spirit and strength; and to expect all your acceptance with God, upon his account. When other men are reputed philosophers, or wise, for some unsatisfactory knowledge of these transitory things, do you desire to know nothing but a crucified, and glorified Christ: study him, and take him (objectively) for your wisdom. When other men have confidence in the flesh, and in their shew of wisdom, in will-worship, and humility,

<sup>a</sup> John xiv. 6.<sup>b</sup> 1 John v. 11, 12.<sup>c</sup> John xv. 4—6.<sup>d</sup> John xiv. 3.

after the commandments and doctrines of men<sup>9</sup>, and would establish their own righteousness, do you rejoice in Christ your righteousness; and set continually before your eyes, his doctrine and example, as your rule: look still to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith, who contemned all the glory of the world, and trampled upon its vanity, and subjected himself to a life of suffering, and made himself of no reputation, but “for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame,” and underwent the contradiction of sinners against himself. Live so, that you may truly say as Paul, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

Having given you these directions, I most earnestly beseech you to peruse and practise them, that my labour may not rise up as a witness against you, which I intend for your conversion and salvation. Think on it, whether this be an unreasonable course, or an unpleasant life, or a thing unnecessary? and what is reasonable, necessary and pleasant, if this be not?

And if you meet with any of those distracted sinners, that would deride you from Christ and your salvation, and say, ‘this is the way to make men mad,’ or, ‘this is more ado than needs;’ I will not stand here to manifest their brutishness and wickedness, having largely done it already, in my book called, “A Saint or a Brute,” and “Now or Never,” and in the third part of the “Saints’ Rest:” but only I desire thee, as a full defensative against all the pratings of the enemies of a holy, heavenly life, to take good notice but of these three things.

1. Mark well, the language of the holy Scriptures, and see whether it speak not contrary to these men: and bethink thee whether God or they be wiser, and whether God or they must be thy Judge?

2. Mark, whether these men do not change their minds, and turn their tongues when they come to die? Or think whether they will not change their minds, when death hath sent them into that world where there is none of these deceits? And think whether thou shouldst be moved with that man’s

<sup>9</sup> Col. ii. 20—23.

<sup>7</sup> Gal. ii. 20.



words, that will shortly change his mind himself, and wish he had never spoke such words\*?

3. Observe well, whether their own profession do not condemn them; and whether the very thing that they hate the godly for, be not that they are serious in practising that which these malignants themselves profess as their religion? And are they not then notorious hypocrites, to profess to believe in God; and yet scorn at those that "diligently seek him? to profess faith in Christ, and hate those that obey him? to profess to believe in the Holy Ghost as the sanctifier, and yet hate and scorn his sanctifying work? To profess to believe the day of judgment and everlasting torment of the ungodly, and yet to deride those that endeavour to escape it? to profess to believe that heaven is prepared for the godly, and yet scorn at those that make it the chief business of their lives to attain it? to profess to take the holy Scriptures for God's word and law, and yet to scorn those that obey it? to pray after each of the ten commandments, "Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law," and yet to hate all those that desire and endeavour to keep them? What impudent hypocrisy is joined with this malignity! Mark, whether the greatest diligence of the most godly be not justified by the formal profession of those very men that hate and scorn them? The difference between them is, that the godly profess Christianity in good earnest, and when they say what they believe, they believe as they say: but the ungodly customarily, and for company, take on them to be Christians when they are not, and by their own mouths condemn themselves, and hate and oppose the serious practice of that which they say they do themselves believe.

\* As the Athenians, that condemned Socrates to death, and then lamented it, and erected a brazen statue for his memorial.

† Acosta saith, that he that will be a pastor to the Indians, must not only resist the devil and the flesh, but must resist the custom of men which is grown powerful by time and multitude: and must oppose his breast to receive the darts of the envious and malevolent, who, if they see any thing contrary to their profane fashion, they cry out, a traitor! an hypocrite! an enemy! lib. 4. c. 15. p. 404. It seems among papists and barbarians, the Serpent's seed do hiss in the same manner against the good among themselves, as they do against us.