

A CALL
TO THE
UNCONVERTED

TO
TURN AND LIVE,

**AND ACCEPT OF MERCY WHILE MERCY MAY BE HAD, AS EVER
THEY WOULD FIND MERCY IN THE DAY OF THEIR EXTREMITY :**

FROM THE LIVING GOD.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,
FORMS OF PRAYER FOR MORNING AND EVENING FOR A FAMILY,
FOR A PENITENT SINNER, AND FOR THE LORD'S DAY.

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PREFACE.

IN that short acquaintance I had with that reverend learned servant of Christ, Bishop Usher, he was oft, from first to last, importuning me to write a Directory for the several ranks of professed Christians, which might distinctly give each one their portion; beginning with the unconverted, and then proceeding to the babes in Christ, and then to the strong; and mixing some special helps against the several sins that they are addicted to. By the suddenness of his motion at our first congress, I perceived it was in his mind before; and I told him, both that it was abundantly done by many already; and that his unacquaintedness with my weakness, might make him think me fitter for it than I was. But this did not satisfy him, but still he made it his request. I confess I was not moved by his reasons, nor did I apprehend any great need of doing more than is done in that way: nor that I was likely to do more. And, therefore, I parted from him without the least purpose to answer his desire. But since his death, his words often came into my mind; and the great reverence I bore to him, did the more incline me to think with some complacency of his motion. And having of late intended to write a "Family Directory," I began to apprehend how congruously the fore-mentioned work should lead the way; and the several conditions of men's souls be spoken of, before we come to the several relations. Hereupon I resolved, by God's assistance, to proceed in the order following. First, to speak to the impenitent, unconverted sinners, who are not yet so much as purposing to turn; or at least are not setting about the work. And with these, I thought, a wakening persuasive was a more necessary means than mere directions; for directions suppose men willing to obey them. But the per-

sons that we have first to deal with, are wilful and asleep in sin, and as men that are past feeling, having given themselves over to sin with greediness. My next work must be for those that have some purposes to turn, and are about the work, to direct them for a thorough and a true conversion, that they miscarry not in the birth. The third part must be directions for the younger and weaker sort of Christians, that they may be established, built up, and persevere. The fourth part, directions for lapsed and backsliding Christians, for their safe recovery. Besides these, there is intended some short persuasions and directions against some special errors of the times, and against some common, killing sins. As for directions to doubting, troubled consciences, that is done already. And the strong I shall not write directions for, because they are so much taught of God already. And then the last part is intended more especially for families, as such, directing the several relations in their duties. Some of these are already written. Whether I shall have life and leisure for the rest, God only knoweth; and therefore I shall publish the several parts by themselves, as I write them. And the rather because they are intended for men of different states, and because I would not deter them by the bulk or price, from reading what is written for their benefit. The use that this part is published for, is, 1. For masters and parents to read often in their families, if they have servants or children that are yet unconverted. 2. For all such unconverted persons to read and consider of themselves. 3. For the richer sort, that have any pity on such miserable souls, to give to the unsanctified that need them, (if they have not fitter at hand to use and give). The Lord awake us to work while it is day, for the saving of our own and others' souls, in subserviency to the blessed God, the Maker, the Redeemer, and the Sanctifier of souls.

RICHARD BAXTER.

December 10, 1657.

*To all Unsanctified Persons that shall read this Book; especially
my Hearers in the Parish of Kidderminster.*

MEN AND BRETHREN,

THE eternal God that made you for life everlasting, and hath redeemed you by his only Son, when you had lost it, and yourselves; being mindful of you in your sin and misery, hath indited the Gospel, and sealed it by his Spirit, and commanded his ministers to preach it to the world, that pardon being freely offered you, and heaven being set before you, he might call you off from your fleshly pleasures, and from following after this deceitful world, and acquaint you with the life you were created and redeemed for, before you are dead and past remedy. He sendeth you not prophets or apostles, that receive their message by immediate revelation, but yet he calleth you by his ordinary ministers, who are commissioned by him to preach the same Gospel, which Christ and his apostles first delivered. The Lord standeth over you, and seeth how you forget him and your latter end, and how light you make of everlasting things, as men that understand not what they have to do or suffer. He seeth how bold you are in sin, and how fearless of his threatenings, and how careless of your souls, and how the works of infidels are in your lives, while the belief of Christians is in your mouths. He seeth the dreadful day at hand, when your sorrows will begin, and you must lament all this with fruitless cries in torment and desperation; and then the remembrance of your folly will tear your hearts, if true conversion now prevent it not. In compassion of your sinful, miserable souls, the Lord that better knows your case than you can know it, hath made it our duty to speak to you in his name*, and to tell you plainly of your sin and

* 2 Cor. v. 19.

misery, and what will be your end, and how sad a change you will shortly see, if yet you go on a little longer. Having bought you at so dear a rate as the blood of his Son Jesus Christ, and made you so free and general a promise of pardon, and grace, and everlasting glory, he commandeth us to tender all this to you, as the gift of God, and to entreat you to consider of the necessity and worth of what he offereth. He seeth and pitieth you, while you are drowned in worldly cares and pleasures, and eagerly following childish toys, and wasting that short and precious time for a thing of naught, in which you should make ready for an everlasting life, and therefore he hath commanded us to call after you, and to tell you how you lose your labour, and are about to lose your souls, and to tell you what greater and better things you might certainly have, if you would hearken to his call ^b. We believe and obey the voice of God; and come to you daily on his message, who hath charged us to preach and be instant with you in season, and out of season, and to lift up our voice like a trumpet, and shew you your transgressions and your sins ^c. But woe and alas! to the grief of our souls and your own undoing, you stop your ears, you stiffen your necks, you harden your hearts, and break our hearts, and send us back to God with groans, to tell him that we have done his message, but can do no good, nor scarcely get a sober hearing. O that our eyes were as a fountain of tears, that we might lament our ignorant, careless people that have Christ before them, and pardon, and life, and heaven before them, and have not hearts to know and value them! That might have Christ, and grace, and glory, as well as others, if it were not for their wilful negligence and contempt. O that the Lord would fill our hearts with more compassion to these miserable souls, that we might cast ourselves even at their feet, and follow them to their houses, and speak to them with our bitter tears. For long have we preached to many of them, as in vain: we study plainness to make them understand, and many of them will not understand us: we study piercing words to make them feel, but they will not feel. If the greatest matters would work with them, we should awake them. If the sweetest things would work, we should entice them, and win their hearts. If the most

^b Isa. lv. 1—3.^c Isa. lviii. 1, 2. 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2.

dreadful things would work, we should at least affright them from their wickedness. If truth and sincerity would take with them, we should soon convince them. If the God that made them, and the Christ that bought them might be heard, the case would soon be altered with them. If Scripture might be heard, we should soon prevail. If reason, even the best and strongest reason might be heard, we should not doubt but we should speedily convince them. If experience might be heard, and even their own experience, and the experience of all the world, the matter might be mended. Yea, if the conscience within them might be heard, the case would be better with them than it is. But if nothing can be heard, what then shall we do for them? If the dreadful God of heaven be slighted, who then shall be regarded? If the inestimable love and blood of a Redeemer be made light of, what then shall be valued? If heaven have no desirable glory with them, and everlasting joys be worth nothing; if they can jest at hell, and dance about a bottomless-pit, and play with the consuming fire, and that when God and man do warn them of it: what shall we do for such souls as these?

Once more in the name of the God of heaven, I shall do the message to you which he hath commanded us, and leave it in these standing lines to convert you or condemn you; to change you, or rise up in judgment against you, and to be a witness to your faces, that once you had a serious call to turn. Hear, all you that are the drudges of the world, and the servants of flesh and satan; that spend your days in looking after prosperity on earth, and drown your consciences in drinking, and gluttony, and idleness, and foolish sports, and know you sin, and yet will sin, as if you set God at defiance, and bid him do his worst, and spare not. Hearken all you that mind not God, and have no heart to holy things, and feel no savour in the word or worship of the Lord, or in the thoughts or mention of eternal life; that are careless of your immortal souls, and never bestowed one hour in inquiring what case they are in, whether sanctified or unsanctified, and whether you are ready to appear before the Lord! Hearken all you that by sinning in the light, have sinned yourselves into atheism and infidelity, and do not believe the word of God. "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear" the gracious and yet dreadful call of God! His eye

is all this while upon you, your sins are registered, and you shall surely hear of them again ; God keepeth the book now ; and he will write it upon your consciences with his terrors ; and then you also shall keep it yourselves. O sinners ! that you knew but what you are doing ! And who you are all this while offending ! The sun itself is darkness before the glory of that Majesty which you daily abuse and carelessly provoke. The sinning angels were not able to stand before him, but were cast down to be tormented with devils. And dare such silly worms as you so carelessly offend, and set yourselves against your Maker ! O that you did but a little know what a case that wretched soul is in, that hath engaged the living God against him ! The word of his mouth that made thee can unmake thee ; a frown of his face will cut thee off, and cast thee out into utter darkness : how eager are the devils to be doing with thee that have tempted thee, and do but wait for the word from God to take and use thee as their own ! And then in a moment thou wilt be in hell. If God be against thee, all things are against thee. This world is but thy prison for all that thou so lovest it : thou art but reserved in it to the day of wrath^d. The Judge is coming, thy soul is even going : yea, a little while and thy friends shall say of thee, ' He is dead ; ' and thou shalt see the things that thou dost now despise, and feel what now thou wilt not believe. Death will bring such an argument as thou canst not answer : an argument that shall effectually confute thy cavils against the word and ways of God, and all thy self-conceited dotages : and then how soon will thy mind be changed ! Then be an unbeliever if thou canst ! Stand then to all thy former words which thou wast wont to utter against the Scriptures, or against a holy and heavenly life ! Make good that cause then before the Lord, which thou wast wont to plead against thy teachers, and against the people that feared God. Then stand to thy old opinions, and contemptuous thoughts of the diligence of the saints. Make ready now thy strongest reasons, and stand up then before the Judge, and plead like a man, for thy fleshly, thy worldly, and ungodly life ; but know that thou must have one to plead with thee, that will not be outfaced by thee, nor so easily put off as we thy fel-

^d Job xxi. 30.

low creatures. O poor deceived, wretched soul! there is nothing but a slender veil of flesh betwixt thee and that amazing sight, which will quickly silence thee and turn thy tune, and make thee of another mind! As soon as death has drawn this curtain, thou shalt see that which will quickly leave thee speechless. And how quickly will that day and hour come! When thou hast had but a few more merry hours, and but a few more pleasant draughts and morsels, and a little more of the honours and riches of the world, thy portion will be spent, and thy pleasures ended, and all is then gone that thou settest thy heart upon, of all that thou soldest thy Saviour and salvation for, there is nothing left but the heavy reckoning. As a thief that sits merrily spending the money in an alehouse which he hath stolen, when men are riding in post haste to apprehend him: so it is with you; while you are drowned in cares or fleshly pleasures, and making merry with your own shame, death is coming in post haste to seize upon you and carry your souls to such a place and state, as now you little know or think of. Suppose when you are bold and busy in your sin, that a messenger were but coming post from London to apprehend you, and take away your life, though you saw him not: yet if you knew of his coming it would mar your mirth, and you would be thinking of the haste he makes, and hearkening when he knocketh at your door. O that ye could but see what haste death makes, though yet it hath not overtaken you! No post so swift! No messenger more sure! As sure as the sun will be with you in the morning, though it hath many thousand, and hundred thousand miles to go in the night: so sure will death be quickly with you, and then where is your sport and pleasure? Then will you jest and brave it out? Then will you jeer at them that warned you? Then is it better to be a believing saint, or a sensual worldling? And then whose shall all those things be that you have gathered? Do you not observe that days and weeks are quickly gone, and nights and mornings come apace, and speedily succeed each other? You sleep, but "your damnation slumbereth not;" you linger, "but your judgment this long time lingereth not^f;" to which you are reserved for punishment^g. "O that you were wise to understand this,

^a Luke xii. 19.—21.^f 2 Pet. ii. 3—5.^g 2 Pet. 8, 9.

and that you did consider your latter end ^b.” “He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear” the call of God in this day of his salvation.

O careless sinners, that you did but know the love that you unthankfully neglect, and the preciousness of the blood of Christ which you despise! O that you did but know the riches of the Gospel! O that you did but know a little the certainty, and the glory, and blessedness of that everlasting life, which now you will not set your hearts upon, nor be persuaded first and diligently to seek ⁱ. Did you but know the endless life with God which you now neglect, how quickly would you cast away your sin! How quickly would you change your mind and life, your course and company, and turn the streams of your affections, and lay out your care another way! How resolutely would you scorn to yield to such temptations as now deceive you, and carry you away! How zealously would you bestir yourselves for that most blessed life! How earnest would you be with God in prayer! How diligent in hearing, learning, and inquiring! How serious in meditating on the laws of God ^k! How fearful of sinning in thought, word, or deed! And how careful to please God and grow in holiness! O what a changed people would you be! And why should not the certain word of God be believed, and prevail with you, which openeth to you these glorious and eternal things? Yea, let me tell you, that even here upon earth, you little know the difference between the life you refuse and the life you choose. The sanctified are conversing with God, when you scarce dare think of him, and when you are conversing but with earth and flesh, their conversation is in heaven, when you are utter strangers to it, and your belly is your god, and you are minding earthly things ^l. They are seeking after the face of God when you seek for nothing higher than this world. They are busily laying out for an endless life, where they shall be equal with the angels ^m, when you are taken up with a shadow, and a transitory thing of naught. How low and base is your earthly, fleshly, sinful life, in comparison of the noble, spiritual life of true believers? Many a time have I looked on such men with grief and pity to see them trudge about

^b Deut. xxvii. 20.

ⁱ Heb. xi. 6. xii. 28. Matt. vi. 13.

^k Psal. i. 2.

^l Phil. iii. 18—20.

^m Luke xx. 36.

the world, and spend their lives, care, and labour for nothing but a little food and raiment, or a little fading pelf, or fleshly pleasures, or empty honours, as if they had no higher thing to mind. What difference is there between the lives of these men, and of the beasts that perish, that spend their time in working, and eating, and living, but that they may live? They taste not of the inward heavenly pleasures which believers taste and live upon. I had rather have a little of their comfort, which the forethoughts of their heavenly inheritance doth afford them, though I had all their scorn, and sufferings with them, than to have all your pleasures and treacherous prosperities; I would not have one of your secret gripes and pangs of conscience, dark and dreadful thoughts of death and the life to come, for all that ever the world hath done for you or all that you should reasonably hope that it should do. If I were in your unconverted, carnal state, and knew but what I know, believed but what I now believe, methinks my life would be a foretaste of hell. How oft should I be thinking of the terrors of the Lord, and of the dismal day that is hasting on! Sure death and hell would be still before me. I should think of them by day, and dream of them by night; I should lie down in fear, and rise in fear, and live in fear, lest death should come before I were converted: I should have small felicity in any thing that I possessed, and little pleasure in any company, and little joy in any thing in the world, as long as I knew myself to be under the curse and wrath of God: I should still be afraid of hearing that voice, "Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee." And that fearful sentence would be written upon my conscience; "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." O poor sinner! it is a more joyful life than this that you might live, if you were but willing, but truly willing to hearken to Christ, and to come home to God. You might then draw near to God with boldness, and call him your Father, and comfortably trust him with your souls and bodies. If you look upon promises, you may say, 'They are all mine;' if upon the curse, you may say, 'From this I am delivered.' When you read the law, you may see what you are saved from: when you read the Gospel, you may see him that redeemed you, and

ⁿ Luke xii. 20.

^o Isa. xlviii. 22. lvii. 21.

see the course of his love, and holy life, and sufferings, and trace him in his temptations, tears, and blood, in the work of your salvation. You may see death conquered, and heaven opened, and your resurrection and glorification provided for, in the resurrection and glorification of your Lord. If you look on the saints, you may say, 'They are my brethren and companions.' If on the unsanctified, you may rejoice to think that you are saved from that state. If you look upon the heavens, the sun, and moon, and stars innumerable, you may think and say, 'My Father's face is infinitely more glorious; it is higher matters that he hath prepared for his saints. Yonder is but the outward court of heaven. The blessedness that he hath promised me, is so much higher, that flesh and blood cannot behold it.' If you think of the grave you may remember that the glorified spirit, a living Head, and a loving Father, have all so near relation to your dust, that it cannot be forgotten or neglected; but will more certainly revive than the plants and flowers in the spring; because the soul is still alive, that is the root of the body, and Christ is alive, that is the root of both. Even death, which is the king of fears, may be remembered and entertained with joy, as being the day of your deliverance from the remnants of sin and sorrow, and the day which you believed, and hoped, and waited for, when you shall see the blessed things which you have heard of, and shall find by present joyful experience, what it was to choose the better part, and be a sincere believing saint. What say you sirs? is not this a more delightful life, to be assured of salvation, and ready to die, than to live as the ungodly, that have their hearts "overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and the cares of this life, and so that day comes upon them unawares^p." Might you not live a comfortable life, if once you were made the heirs of heaven, and sure to be saved when you leave the world? O look about you then, and think what you do, and cast not away such hopes as these for very nothing. The flesh and world can give you no such hopes or comforts.

And besides all the misery that you bring upon yourselves, you are the troublers of others as long as you are unconverted. You trouble magistrates to rule you by their

laws. You trouble ministers, by resisting the light and guidance which they offer you : your sin and misery is the greatest grief and trouble to them in the world. You trouble the commonwealth, and draw the judgments of God upon us : it is you that most disturb the holy peace and order of the churches, and hinder our union and reformation, and are the shame and trouble of the churches where you intrude, and of all the places where you are. Ah, Lord ! how heavy and sad a case is this, that even in England, where the Gospel doth abound above any other nation in the world ; where teaching is so plain and common, and all the helps we can desire are at hand, when the sword hath been hewing us, and judgment hath run as a fire through the land : when deliverances have relieved us, and so many admirable mercies have engaged us to God, and to the Gospel, and to an holy life ; that yet after all this our cities, and towns, and countries, shall abound with multitudes of unsanctified men, and swarm with so much sensuality, as every where to our grief we see. One would have thought, that after all this light, and all this experience, and all these judgments and mercies of God, the people of this nation should have joined together, as one man, to turn to the Lord ; and should have come to their godly teachers, and lamented all their former sins, and desired them to join with them in public humiliation to confess them openly, and beg pardon of them from the Lord, and should have craved their instruction for the time to come, and be glad to be ruled by the spirit within, and the ministers of Christ without, according to the word of God. One would think, that after such reason and Scripture evidence as they hear ; and after all these means and mercies, there should not be an ungodly person left among us, nor a worldling, nor a drunkard, or a hater of reformation, or an enemy to holiness, be found in all our towns or countries. If we be not all agreed about some ceremonies or forms of government, one would think that, before this, we should have been all agreed to live a holy and heavenly life, in obedience to God, his word and ministers, and in love and peace with one another. But, alas ! how far are our people from this course ! Most of them, in most places, do set their hearts on earthly things, and seek not first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof,

but look at holiness as a needless thing; their families are prayerless, or else a few heartless, lifeless words must serve instead of hearty, fervent, daily prayer; their children are not taught the knowledge of Christ, and the covenant of grace, nor brought up in the nurture of the Lord, though they falsely promised this in their baptism. They instruct not their servants in the matters of salvation; but so their work be done they care not. There are more oaths, and curses, and ribald and railing speeches in their families, than gracious words that tend to edification. How few are the families that fear the Lord, and inquire after his word and ministers, how they should live, and what they should do; and are willing to be taught and ruled, and that heartily look after everlasting life! And those few that God hath made so happy, are commonly the bye word of their neighbours; when we see some live in drunkenness, and some in pride and worldliness, and most of them have little care of their salvation, though the cause be gross, and past all controversy, yet will they hardly be convinced of their misery, and more hardly recovered and reformed; but when we have done all that we are able, to save them from their sins, we leave them, most of them, as we find them. And if, according to the law of God, we cast them out of the communion of the church, when they have obstinately rejected all our admonitions, they rage at us as if we were their enemies, and their hearts are filled with malice against us, and they will sooner set themselves against the Lord, and his laws, and church, and ministers, than against their deadly sins. This is the doleful case of England; we have magistrates that countenance the ways of godliness, and a happy opportunity for unity and reformation is before us; and faithful ministers long to see the right ordering of the church, and of the ordinances of God; but the power of sin in our people doth frustrate almost all. No where almost can a faithful minister set up the unquestionable discipline of Christ, or put back the most scandalous, impenitent sinners from the communion of the church, and participation of the sacrament, but the most of the people rail at them, and revile them: as if these ignorant, careless souls were wiser than their teachers, or than God himself; and fitter to rule the church than they. And thus in the day of our vi-

situation, when God calls upon us to reform his church, though magistrates seem willing, and faithful ministers are willing, yet are the multitude of the people still unwilling ; and sin hath so blinded them, and hardened their hearts, that even in these days of light and grace, they were the obstinate enemies of light and grace, and will not be brought by the calls of God, to see their folly, and know what is for their good. O that the people of England knew, “at least in this their day, the things that belong unto their peace, before they are hid from their eyes^a !” O foolish and miserable souls ! who hath bewitched^r your minds into such madness, and your hearts into such deadness, that you should be such mortal enemies to yourselves, and go on so obstinately towards damnation, that neither the word of God, nor the persuasions of men can change your minds, or hold your hands, or stop you till you are past remedy ! Well, sinners ! this life will not last always ; this patience will not wait upon you still. Do not think that you shall abuse your Maker and Redeemer, and serve his enemies, and debase your souls, and trouble the world, and wrong the church, and reproach the godly, and grieve your teachers, and hinder reformation, and all this upon free cost. You know not yet what this must cost you, but you must shortly know, when the righteous God shall take you in hand, who will handle you in another manner than the sharpest magistrates, or the plainest dealing pastors did, unless you prevent the everlasting torments by a sound conversion, and a speedy obeying the call of God. “He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear,” while mercy hath a voice to call.

One desperate objection (which I have after touched, but with too much brevity,) I find sticks close to the hearts of many ungodly men. They think that God doth not so much care what men think, or say, or do, as we persuade them ; and therefore they care so little themselves. For the convincing of such atheistical men as these, I shall propound the following questions.

1. Dost thou think God careth whether thou be a man or not ? If not, who made thee, and preserved thee ? If he do, then sure he careth whether thou behave thyself as a man. No man is so foolish as to make any instrument,

^a Luke xix. 42.

^r Gal. iii. 1.

build a house, or a ship, and not care, when he hath done, whether it be good for the use he made it. Do not, for shame then, impute such folly to the God of wisdom, as if he made so noble a creature as man, and endowed him with such noble faculties, and all for nothing, and careth not what becometh of him when he hath done. Why should God give thee a mind that can know him, and a heart that can love him, when he careth not whether thou know him, and love him, or not? Do you not see, that in the course of nature, every thing is fitted to its use? The beasts know not God; nor are capable of loving him, because they were made for no such use; but thy capacity shews that thou wast made for God, and for a life to come.

2. Dost thou think that God is every where present, and infinite, and all-sufficient? If not, thou dost not believe that he is God, and it is unreasonable to imagine, that God hath made a world that is greater, and more extensive or comprehensive than himself! For none can communicate more than he hath. But if thou art forced to confess that God is every where, and as sufficient for every single man, as if he had never another creature to regard, thou must needs confess then that he is not careless of the hearts and ways of the sons of men: for they are things that are still before his eyes. It is base and blasphemous thoughts of God, as if he were limited, absent, or insufficient, that makes men think him so regardless of their hearts and ways.

3. Dost thou think that God careth what becomes of thy body? Whether thou be sick or well? Whether thou live or die? If not, then how camest thou by thy life, and health, and mercies? If they came from any other fountain, tell us from whence: is it not to God that thou prayest for thy life and health? Darest thou say to him, 'I will not depend upon thee? I will not be beholden to thee for the life and mercies of another day?' If so, then thou art a blind atheist. But if thou thinkest he cares for thy body, canst thou think he cares not more for thy soul? If he must regard to furnish thee with mercies, he will sure have a regard whether thou love and live to him that gave them.

4. Dost thou believe that God is the governor of the world, or not? If not, then there can be no rightful government. For as no justice of peace can have a power,

but from the sovereign ; so no sovereign can have power, but from God ; nor be a lawful governor, but under him : and then all the world would be turned into confusion. But if thou must needs confess that God is the Governor of the world, what an unwise, unrighteous governor wouldst thou make him, if thou thinkest that he regardeth not the hearts and ways of those whom he doth govern ! This still is but to deny him to be God.

5. If God do not care so much what is in our hearts, or what we do, why then should he make a law for our hearts, and words, and ways ? Would he command us that which he doth not care for ? Would he so strictly forbid sin, if he were indifferent whether we sin or not ? Would he promise eternal life to the holy and obedient, if he cared not whether we be holy and obedient, or no ? Would he threaten hell to all that are ungodly, if he cared not whether we are godly or not ? Darest thou say, that the Almighty, Holy God is fain to rule the world by a lie, and to deceive men into obedience ? Yea, the very law of nature itself, doth contain not only precepts of our duty, but the hopes and fears of the life to come, without which the world could not be governed : and certainly they are no deceits, by which an infinite wisdom, and power, and goodness, doth govern the world.

6. If God did not much regard our hearts and lives, why doth he make all the world to be our servants ? Doth he give us the sun, and moon, and stars, the earth, and all creatures to attend us, and serve us with their lives and virtues, and yet doth he not care for our hearts or service ? This is as foolish as to say, that he hath made all the world in vain, and careth not for it, now he hath made it.

7. If he cared not for the frame of our hearts and lives, he would not have sent his Son to redeem us, and to cleanse us from iniquity, and sanctify us a peculiar people to himself*. Surely the price that was paid for sinners, and the wonderful design of God in our redemption, doth shew that he makes not light of sin, and that he is wonderfully in love with holiness.

8. If God did not regard our hearts and lives, he would not have made it the office of his ministers, to call us daily to repentance and a holy life ; nor commanded them to

* Tit. ii. 14.

make such a stir with sinners to win them unto God ; he would not have appointed all his ordinances, public and private, also to this end. Doth God command all this ado for a thing he regards not ?

9. Nor would he punish the world with hell hereafter, or so many judgments here, as thousands feel, if he cared not what they think or do. Methinks, men that are so often groaning under his rod, should feel that he looks after their hearts and ways.

10. And how can the Holy Ghost be our Sanctifier, if God be so indifferent, whether we be clean or unclean ? Dare you think that the Holy Ghost doth take upon him a needless work ?

11. Methinks you might perceive, even in the malice of the tempter, that God is holy, and hateth iniquity ; and his word is true, that telleth us of the eternal punishment of sin. The Scripture tells us of the angels' fall, and that many of them are become devils by their sin, and are malicious enemies of man's salvation. And do you not easily perceive it to be true ? How came they else to be such importunate tempters of men, which we feel, alas ! by too much experience ? Or if this evidence be not palpable enough to convince the infidel ; how come they to make so many bargains with conjurers and witches, to draw them from God and salvation, as they have done ? How come they to appear in terrible shapes to so many as they have done, and still upon designs that declare their own dejected, base condition, and their enmity to God and man, and their eager desire to engage men in a way of sin ? If any infidel will not believe that really there have been witches and apparitions, and consequently that there are devils, who are miserable, malicious spirits, who by sin are cast out of the favour of God, and would draw men into their miserable case ; let them come and reason the case with me, and I shall quickly tell them of so many sure and undeniable instances, and give them so much proof of the truth of it, as shall leave them nothing to say against it, unless they will still say, ' We will not believe.' Yea, so much, as that I will not be beholden to the vilest atheist or infidel to believe it, if he will not quite renounce his reason, but give it leave to see the light.

12. Lastly, if yet you think that God (the Sovereign Ruler of the world, that is every where present, and pre-

serveth all) doth care so little what men are, or what they do, whether they are holy or unholy, obedient or disobedient to his laws; then methinks that you yourselves, and all the rest of your fellow-creatures, should little care.

Two questions therefore I must propound to you :

1. Do not you care what men say of you, or do to you? Are you contented that men slander you, and abuse you, or set your houses or towns on fire, or destroy your cattle, or wives or children, and imprison, wound or kill yourselves? If you will make a great matter what men say or do against you, can you be so mad, (for it is no better) as to think that the omnipotent, holy God, should little regard what is said or done against himself, and against his servants, and that by such silly worms as men, that are his workmanship? Did not selfishness make you blind and partial, you would know that one sin against God, deserves more punishment than ten thousand thousand times as much against such silly things as you. Do you make no matter of difference between a bad servant and a good? an obedient and disobedient child? a son that will lay down his life for you, and a son that longs for your death, that he may have your land? Between a faithful friend and a deadly enemy? If you do not, you are not men, but something else in human shape. If you do, then you are somewhat worse than men, if yet you would have the blessed God, to make no great difference between those that love him above all the world, and those that regard him not; between the holy and unholy soul.

And 2. I would ask you whether you would have the rulers of the world to take care what men say or do, or would you not? If not, then you would have all the world turned loose, and you would have every man that is poorer than you, have leave to rob you: and every man that hateth you, have leave to beat, or kill you; and every man that liketh your house, or lands, or goods, or cattle, to have leave to take them from you; and every man defile your wives or daughters, that hath a mind to it? And so we should see whither it is that infidelity leads men. But if you like not this, then you are most unreasonable, if you would have magistrates to be regardful of men's actions, and not God. If magistrates must hang men for wronging you,

and the eternal Majesty must not punish them for wronging him, and breaking his laws, which is infinitely a greater matter. As if you would have a constable punish men, and the king or judge, to have no regard of it. For kings are under God, as constables are under kings, and a thousand fold lower.

The truth is, wicked men are fallen so far from God to themselves, that they are as God's to themselves in their own esteem, and besides themselves they know no God; and therefore any wrong that is done against them, or any good that is done for them, they would have regarded: but the wrong and disobedience that is against God, they would have nothing made of it. And they have such narrow, blasphemous thoughts of God, as if he were a finite creature like themselves, that can be but in one place at once, that makes them so blaspheme his providence, and think he minds no good or evil, and will not regard the godly, or punish the ungodly, but were like the idols of the heathen, that have eyes and see not, and ears that hear not, and hands without an executive power. But when the memorial book of God is opened, which is written for them that fear the Lord, and think upon his name; and when the Lord shall say of them, "These are mine," as he is making up his jewels, and spareth them, as a man spareth his son that serveth him, then shall these infidels return to their wits, and the righteous shall return from their fears and sufferings, and shall discern between the righteous and the wicked, between those that serve God, and those that serve him not^t.

Another objection I find most common in the mouths of the ungodly, especially of late years; they say, 'We can do nothing without God; we cannot have grace, if God will not give it us; and if he will, we shall quickly turn; if he have not predestinated us, and will not turn us, how can we turn ourselves or be saved? It is not in him that wills, or in him that runs.' And thus they think they are excused.

I have answered this formerly, and in this book; but let me now say thus much. 1. Though you cannot cure yourselves, you can hurt and poison yourselves; it is God that must sanctify your hearts; but who corrupted them? Will you wilfully take poison, because you cannot cure your-

^t Mal. iii. 16—18.

selves? Methinks you should the more forbear it: you should the more take heed of sinning, if you cannot mend what sin doth mar. 2. Though you cannot be converted without the special grace of God, yet you must know, that God giveth his grace in the use of his holy means which he hath appointed to that end; and common grace may enable you to forbear your gross sinning, as to the outward act, and to use those means. Can you truly say, that you do as much as you are able to do? Are you not able to go by an alehouse door, or to shut your mouths and keep out the drink? Or to forbear the company that hardeneth you to sin? Are you not able to go hear the word, and think of what you heard when you come home? And to consider with yourselves of your own condition, and of everlasting things? Are you not able to read good books, from day to day, at least on the Lord's day, and to converse with those that fear the Lord? You cannot say that you have done what you are able. 3. And therefore you must know that you can forfeit the grace and help of God, by your wilful sinning or negligence, though you cannot, without grace, turn to God. If you will not do what you can, it is just with God to deny you that grace by which you might do more. 4. And for God's decrees, you must know that they separate not the end and means, but tie them together. God never decreed to save any but the sanctified, nor to damn any but the unsanctified. God doth as truly decree from everlasting, whether your land this year shall be barren, or fruitful, and just how long you shall live in the world, as he hath decreed, whether you shall be saved or not. And yet you would think that man but a fool, that would forbear ploughing and sowing, and say, 'If God have decreed that my ground shall bear corn, it will bear whether I plough and sow or not. If God have decreed that I shall live, I shall live whether I eat or not; but if he have not, it is not eating will keep me alive.' Do you know how to answer such a man, or do you not? If you do, then you know how to answer yourselves; for the case is alike: God's decree is as peremptory about your bodies as your souls; if you do not then try first these conclusions upon your bodies, before you venture to try them on your souls; see first whether God will keep you alive without food or raiment,

and whether he will give you corn without tillage and labour, and whether he will bring you to your journey's end without your travel or carriage: and if you speed well in this, then try whether he will bring you to heaven without your diligent use of means, and sit down and say, 'We cannot sanctify ourselves.'

And for the point of Freewill, which you harp so long upon, divines are not so much disagreed about it as you imagine. Augustine as well as Pelagius, Calvin as well as Arminius, the Dominicans as well as the Jesuits, all do generally maintain, that man hath freewill; the orthodox say, that freewill is corrupted and disposed to evil. Epiphanius condemned Origen for saying, that man had lost the image of God, and makes it a point of heresy. And yet one may truly say, 'That man hath lost God's image;' and another may truly say, 'That he hath not lost it.' For there is a twofold image of God on man: the one is natural, and that is our reason and freewill, and this is not lost; the other is qualitative and ethical, and this is our holiness, and this is lost, and by grace restored. No man of brains denieth, that a man hath a will that is naturally free; it is free from violence, and it is a self-determining principle; but it is not free from evil dispositions. It is habitually averse to God and holiness, and inclined to earthly, fleshly things. It is enslaved by a sinful bias. This, no man, methinks, that is a Christian, should deny; and of the aged, I see not how an infidel can deny it. Alas, we easily confess to you, that you have not this spiritual, moral freewill, which is but your right inclination, and your habitual willingness itself. If you had a will that were freed from wicked inclinations, I had no need to write such books as these to persuade you to be willing in a case which your own salvation lieth on. To the grief of our souls, we perceive after all our preachings and persuasions, that the ungodly have not this spiritual freewill. But this is nothing but your willingness itself, and inclination to be willing; and therefore the want of it is so far from excusing you, that the more you want it (that is, the more you are wilful in sin), the worse you are, and the sorer will be your punishment. And our preaching and persuasions, and your hearing and considering, are the appointed means to get this moral power of freedom, that is to make you truly willing.

Well sirs, I have but three requests to you, and I have done : First, That you will seriously read over this small treatise ; (and if you have such that need it in your families, that you read it over and over to them : and if those that fear God would go now and then to their ignorant neighbours, and read this or some other book to them of this subject, they might be a means of winning of souls). If we cannot entreat so small a labour of men for their own salvation, as to read such short instructions as these, they set little by themselves, and will most justly perish. Secondly, When you have read over this book, I would entreat you to go alone, and ponder a little what you have read, and bethink you, as in the sight of God, whether it be not true, and do not nearly touch your souls, and whether it be not time for you to look about you : and also entreat that you will fall upon your knees and beseech the Lord that he will open your eyes to understand the truth, and turn your hearts to the love of God, and beg of him all that saving grace, that you have so long neglected, and follow it on from day to day, till your hearts be changed ; and withal, that you will go to your pastors (that are set over you, to take care of the health and safety of your souls, as physicians do for the health of your bodies) and desire them to direct you what course to take, and acquaint them with your spiritual estate, that you may have the benefit of their advice and ministerial help. Or if you have not a faithful pastor at home, make use of some other in so great a need. Thirdly, When by reading, consideration, prayer and ministerial advice, you are once acquainted with your sin and misery, with your duty and remedy, delay not, but presently forsake your sinful company and courses, and turn unto God, and obey his call, and as you love your souls, take heed that you go not on against so loud a call of God, and against your own conscience, lest it go worse with you in the day of judgment, than with Sodom and Gomorrah. Inquire of God, as a man that is willing to know the truth, and not be a wilful cheater of his soul. Search the Holy Scripture daily, and see whether these things be so or not ; try impartially whether it be safer to trust heaven or earth ; and whether it be better to follow God or man, the Spirit or the flesh ; and better to live in holiness or sin. And whe-

ther an unsanctified estate be safe for you to abide in one day longer ; and when you have found out which is best, resolve accordingly, and make your choice without any more ado. If you will be true to your own souls, and do not love everlasting torments, I beseech you, as from the Lord, that you will but take this reasonable advice. O what happy towns and countries, and what a happy nation might we have, if we could but persuade our neighbours to agree to such a necessary motion ! What joyful men would all faithful ministers be, if they could but see their people truly heavenly and holy ! This would be the unity, the peace, the safety, the glory of our churches, the happiness of our neighbours, and the comfort of our souls. Then how comfortable should we preach absolution and peace to you, and deliver the sacraments, which are the seals of peace to you. And with what love and joy might we live among you ; at your death-bed, how boldly might we comfort and encourage your departing souls ; and at your burial, how comfortably might we leave you in the grave, in expectation to meet your soul in heaven, and to see your bodies raised to that glory.

But if still the most of you will go on in a careless, ignorant, fleshly, worldly, or unholy life ; and all our desires and labours cannot so far prevail, as to keep you from the wilful damning of yourselves, we must then imitate our Lord, who delighteth himself in those few that are his jewels, and the little flock that shall receive the kingdom, when the most shall reap the misery which they sowed. In nature excellent things are few. The world hath not many suns or moons ; it is but a little of the earth that is gold or silver ; princes and nobles are but a small part of the sons of men. And it is no great number that are learned, judicious or wise, here in this world. And therefore the gate being strait, and the way narrow, there be but few that find salvation ; yet God will have his glory and pleasure in those few. And when Christ "shall come with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, his coming will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all true believers."

And for the rest, as God the Father vouchsafed to create them, and God the Son disdained not to bear the penalty of their sins upon the cross; and did not judge such sufferings vain, though he knew that by refusing the sanctification of the Holy Ghost, they would finally destroy themselves; so we that are his ministers, though these be not gathered, judge not our labour wholly lost. See Isa. xlix. 5.

Reader, I have done with thee, (when thou hast perused this book); but sin hath not yet done with thee (even those that thou thoughtest had been forgotten long ago), and satan hath not yet done with thee (though now he be out of sight); and God hath not yet done with thee, because thou wilt not be persuaded to have done with deadly, reigning sin. I have written thee this persuasive, as one that is going into another world, where the things are seen that I here speak of, and as one that knoweth thou must shortly be there thyself. As ever thou wouldst meet me with comfort before the Lord that made us; as ever thou wilt escape the everlasting plagues prepared for the final neglecters of salvation, and for all that are not sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and love not the communion of the saints, as members of the holy catholic church; and as ever thou hopest to see the face of Christ the Judge, and of the majesty of the Father, with peace and comfort, to be received into glory, when thou art turned naked out of this world: I beseech thee, I charge thee, to hear and obey the call of God, and resolvedly to turn, that thou mayst live. But if thou wilt not, even when thou hast no true reason for it, but because thou wilt not; I summon thee, answer for it before the Lord, and require thee there to bear me witness I gave thee warning, and that thou wert not condemned for want of a call to turn and live, but because thou wouldst not believe it, and obey it; which also must be the testimony of thy serious monitor,

RICHARD BAXTER.

December 11, 1657.

A CALL

TO THE

UNCONVERTED.

EZEKIEL xxxiii. 11.

Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

IT hath been the astonishing wonder of many a man, as well as me, to read in the holy Scripture, how few will be saved, and that the greatest part even of those that are called, will be everlastingly shut out of the kingdom of heaven, and tormented with the devils in eternal fire. Infidels believe not this when they read it, and therefore must feel it. Those that do believe it, are forced to cry out with Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out^a." But nature itself doth teach us all, to lay the blame of evil works upon the doers, and therefore when we see any heinous thing done, a principle of justice doth provoke us to inquire after him that did it, that the evil of the work may return the evil of shame upon the author. If we saw a man killed and cut in pieces by the way, we should presently ask, 'Oh! who did this cruel deed?' If the town were wilfully set on fire, you would ask, 'What wicked wretch did this?' So when we read that the most will be firebrands of hell for ever, we must needs think with our-

^a Rom. xi. 13.

selves, how comes this to pass? And, who is it long of? Who is it that is so cruel as to be the cause of such a thing as this? And we can meet with few that will own the guilt. It is indeed confessed by all, that satan is the cause, but that doth not resolve the doubt, because he is not the principal cause. He doth not force men to sin, but tempt them to it, and leaves it to their own wills, whether they will do it or not. He doth not carry men to an alehouse, and force open their mouths, and pour in the drink; nor doth he hold them that they cannot go to God's service, nor doth he force their hearts from holy thoughts. It lieth, therefore, between God himself, and the sinner, one of them must needs be the principal cause of all this misery, which ever it is: for there is no other to cast it upon. And God disclaimeth it. He will not take it upon him. And the wicked disclaim it usually, and they will not take it upon them, and this is the controversy that is here managed in the text.

The Lord complaineth of the people, and the people think it is long of God: the same controversy is handled in chap. xviii. where, (ver. 25.) they plainly say, "That the way of the Lord is not equal." And God saith, "It is their ways that are not equal." So here they say, (ver. 19.) "If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how shall we then live?" As if they should say, If we must die and be miserable, how can we help it? As if it were not long of them but God. But God, in my text, doth clear himself of it, and telleth them how they may help it if they will, and persuadeth them to use the means: and if they will not be persuaded, he lets them know that it is long of themselves; and if this will not satisfy them, he will not, therefore, forbear to punish them. It is he that will be their Judge, and he will judge them according to their ways; they are no judges of him, or of themselves, as wanting authority, wisdom, and impartiality, nor is it their cavilling and quarrelling with God, that shall serve their turn, or save them from the execution of justice which they murmur at.

The words of this verse contain, 1. God's purgation or clearing himself from the blame of their destruction. This he doth, not by disowning his law, that the "wicked shall die;" nor by disowning his judgments and execution according to that law, or giving them any hope that the law

shall not be executed ; but by profession that it is not their death that he takes pleasure in, but their returning rather, that they may live. And this he confirmeth to them by his oath. 2. An express exhortation to the wicked to return ; wherein God doth not only command, but persuade and condescend also to reason the case with them, Why will they die ? The direct end of this exhortation is, that they may turn and live. The secondary, or reserved ends, upon supposition that this is not attained, are these two : First, To convince them by the means which he used, that it is not long of God if they be miserable. Secondly, To convince them from their manifest wilfulness, in rejecting all his commands and persuasions, that it is long of themselves ; and they die even because they will die.

The substance of the text doth lie in these observations following.

Doct. I. It is the unchangeable law of God, that wicked men must turn or die.

Doct. II. It is the promise of God that the wicked shall live, if they will but turn.

Doct. III. God takes pleasure in men's conversion and salvation, but not in their death or damnation : he had rather they would return and live, than go on and die.

Doct. IV. This is a most certain truth, which because God would not have men to question, he hath confirmed it to them solemnly by his oath.

Doct. V. The Lord doth redouble his commands and persuasions to the wicked to turn.

Doct. VI. The Lord condescendeth to reason the case with them, and asketh the wicked, why they will die ?

Doct. VII. If after all this, the wicked will not return, it is not long of God that they perish, but of themselves : their own wilfulness is the cause of their damnation ; they therefore die because they will die.

Having laid the text open before your eyes in these plain propositions, I shall next speak somewhat of each of them in order, though very briefly.

Doct. I. It is the unchangeable law of God, that wicked men must turn or die.

If you will believe God, believe this. There is but one of these two ways for every wicked man, either conversion,

or damnation. I know the wicked will hardly be persuaded, either of the truth or equity of this. No wonder if the guilty quarrel with the law. Few men are apt to believe that which they would not have to be true; and fewer would have that to be true, which they apprehend to be against them. But it is not quarrelling with the law, or with the judge, that will save the malefactor: believing and regarding the law might have prevented his death; but denying and accusing it, will but hasten it. If it were not so, a hundred would bring their reason against the law, for one that would bring his reason to the law: and men would rather choose to give their reasons why they should not be punished, than to hear the commands and reasons of their governors which require them to obey. The law was not made for you to judge, but that you might be ruled and judged by it. But if there be any so blind, as to venture to question either the truth or justice of the law of God, I shall briefly give you that evidence of both, which, methinks, would satisfy a reasonable man. And first, if you doubt whether this be the word of God or not, besides a hundred other texts, you may be satisfied by these few. "Verily, I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven^b." "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God^c." "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature: old things are passed away, behold all things are become new^d." "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him^e." "Without holiness no man shall see God^f." "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his^g." "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature^h." "According unto his abundant grace, he hath begotten us again to a lively hopeⁱ." "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever^k." "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envyings, and

^b Matt. xviii. 3.^c John iii. 3.^d 2 Cor. v. 17.^e Col. iii. 9, 10.^f Heb. xii. 14.^g Rom. viii. 8, 9.^h Gal. vi. 15.ⁱ 1 Pet. i. 3.^k Ver. 23.

evil-speakings, as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby¹.” “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God^m.” “And the Lord loveth the righteous; but the wicked his soul hatethⁿ.” As I need not stay to open these texts which are so plain, so I think I need not add any more of that multitude which speak the like. If thou be a man that dost believe the word of God, there is already enough to satisfy thee, that the wicked must be converted or condemned. You are already brought so far, that you must either confess that this is true, or say plainly, you will not believe the word of God. And if once you be come to that pass, there is but small hopes of you: look to yourselves as well as you can; for it is like you will not be long out of hell. You would be ready to fly in the face of him that should give you the lie; and yet dare you give the lie to God? But if you tell God plainly you will not believe him, blame him not if he never warn you more, or if he forsake you, and give you up as hopeless: for to what purpose should he warn you, if you would not believe him. Should he send an angel from heaven to you, it seems you would not believe, for an angel can speak but the word of God; and if an angel should bring you any other Gospel, you are not to receive it, but to hold him accursed^o. And surely there is no angel to be believed before the Son of God, who came from the Father to bring us this doctrine. If he be not to be believed, then all the angels in heaven are not to be believed. And if you stand on these terms with God, I shall leave you till he deal with you in a more convincing way. God hath a voice that will make you hear! Though he entreat you to hear the voice of his Gospel, he will make you hear the voice of his condemning sentence, without entreaty. We cannot make you believe against your wills; but God will make you feel against your wills. But let us hear what reason you have, why you will not believe this word of God, which tells us, that the wicked must be converted or condemned. I know your reason; it is because that you judge it unlikely that God should be so unmerciful; you think it cruelty to damn men everlastingly for so small a thing as a sinful life. And

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2.^m Psal. ix. 17.ⁿ Psal. xi. 4.^o Gal. i. 8.

this leads us up to the second thing, which is to justify the equity of God in his laws and judgment.

And first, I think you will not deny but that it is most suitable to an immortal soul, to be ruled by laws that promise an immortal reward, and threaten an endless punishment. Otherwise the law should not be suited to the nature of the subject, who will not be fully ruled by any lower means than the hopes or fears of everlasting things: as it is in case of temporal punishment. If a law were now made, that the most heinous crimes should be punished with a hundred years captivity, this might be of some efficacy, as being equal to our lives. But if there had been no other penalties before the flood, when men lived eight or nine hundred years, it would not have been sufficient, because men would know that they might have so many hundred years impunity afterward. So it is in our present case.

2. I suppose you will confess, that the promise of an endless and inconceivable glory, is not unsuitable to the wisdom of God, or the case of man. And why then should you not think so of the threatening of an endless and unspeakable misery?

3. When you find it in the word of God, that so it is, and so it will be, do you think yourselves fit to contradict this word? Will you call your Maker to the bar, and examine his word upon the imputation of falsehood? Will you sit upon him, and judge him by the law of your conceits? Are you wiser and better, and more righteous than he? Must the God of heaven come to school to you to learn wisdom? Must Infinite Wisdom learn of folly; and Infinite Goodness be corrected by a swinish sinner, that cannot keep himself an hour clean? Must the Almighty stand at the bar of a worm? O horrid arrogance of senseless dust! Shall every mole, or clod, or dunghill, accuse the sun of darkness, and undertake to illuminate the world? Where were you when the Almighty made the laws, that he did not call you to his counsel? Surely he made them before you was born, without desiring your advice, and you came into the world too late for to reverse them. If you could have done so great a work, you should have stepped out of your nothingness, and have contradicted Christ when he was on earth, or Moses before him, or have saved Adam and his

sinful progeny from the threatening death, that so there might have been no need of Christ. And what if God withdraw his patience and sustentation, and let you drop into hell while you are quarrelling with his words, will you then believe that there is a hell?

4. If sin be such an evil that it required the death of Christ for its expiation, no wonder if it deserve our everlasting misery.

5. And if the sins of the devils deserved an endless torment, why not also the sin of man?

6. And methinks, you should perceive that it is not possible for the best of men, much less for the wicked to be competent judges of the desert of sin. Alas! we are both blind and partial. You can never know fully the desert of sin, till you fully know the evil of sin; and you can never know the evil of sin, till you fully know, 1. The excellency of the soul which it deformeth. 2. And the excellency of holiness, which it doth obliterate. 3. And the reason and the excellency of the law which it violateth. And, 4. The excellency of the glory which it doth despise. And, 5. The excellency and office of reason which it treadeth down. 6. No, nor till you know the infinite excellency, almightiness, and holiness of that God, against whom it is committed. When you fully know all these, you shall fully know the desert of sin. Besides, you know that the offender is too partial to judge the law, or the proceedings of his judge. We judge by feeling, which binds our reason. We see in common worldly things, that most men think the cause is right which is their own; and that all is wrong that is done against them; and let the most wise, or just, or impartial friends persuade them to the contrary, and it is all in vain. There are few children but think the father unmerciful, or that he dealeth hardly with them, if he whip them. There is scarce the vilest, swinish wretch, but thinketh the church doth wrong him, if they excommunicate him; or scarce a thief or murderer that is hanged, but would accuse the law and judge of cruelty, if that would serve turn.

7. Can you think that an unholy soul is fit for heaven? Alas! they cannot love God here, nor do him any service which he can accept. They are contrary to God, they loathe that which he most loveth; and love that which he

abhorreth. They are incapable of that imperfect communion with him, which his saints here do partake of. How then can they live in that perfect love of him, and full delights and communion with him, which is the blessedness of heaven? You do not accuse yourselves of unmercifulness, if you make not your enemy your bosom counsellor; or if you take not your swine to bed and board with you: no, nor if you take away his life, though he never sinned. And yet will you blame the absolute Lord, the most wise and gracious Sovereign of the world, if he condemn the unconverted man to perpetual misery.

USE. I beseech you now, all that love your souls, that instead of quarrelling with God, and with his word, you will presently stoop to it, and use it for your good. All you that are yet unconverted in this assembly, take this as the undoubted truth of God; you must ere long be converted or condemned, there is no other way but Turn or Die. When God, that cannot lie, hath told you this, when you hear from the Maker and Judge of the world, it is time for him that hath ears to hear; by this time you may see what you have to trust to. You are but dead and damned men, except you will be converted. Should I tell you otherwise I should deceive you with a lie. Should I hide this from you I should undo you, and be guilty of your blood, as the verses before my text assure me, ver. 8. "When I say to the wicked man, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thine hand." You see then, though this be a rough, unwelcome doctrine, it is such as we must preach, and you must hear. It is easier to hear of hell than feel it. If your necessities did not require it we should not gall your tender ears, with truths that seem so harsh and grievous. Hell would not be so full, if people were but willing to know their case, and to hear and think of it. The reason why so few escape it, is, because they strive not to enter in at the strait gate of conversion, and to go the narrow way of holiness while they have time; and they strive not, because they be not awakened to a lively feeling of the danger they are in: and they be not awakened, because they are loath to hear or think of it; and that is partly, through foolish tenderness, and carnal self-

truth, methinks the weight of it should force you to remember it, and it should follow you and give you no rest till you love ; and partly, because they do not well believe the word that threateneth it. If you will not thoroughly believe this are converted. If you had but once heard this word, by the voice of an angel, 'Thou must be converted or condemned ; turn or die !' Would it not stick in your mind, and haunt you night and day ? So that in your sinning you would remember it, as if the voice were still in your ears, 'Turn or Die !' O happy were your souls, if it might thus work with you, and never be forgotten, or let you alone till it hath driven home your hearts to God. But if you will cast it out by forgetfulness, or unbelief, how can it work to your conversion and salvation ? But take this with you, to your sorrow, though you may put this out of your minds, you cannot put it out of the Bible ; but there it will stand as a sealed truth, which you shall experimentally know for ever, that there is no other way, but Turn or Die.

O what is the matter then that the hearts of sinners be not pierced with such a weighty truth ! A man would think now that every unconverted soul that hears these words should be pricked to the heart, and think with themselves, 'This is my own case,' and never be quiet till they found themselves converted. Believe it, sirs, this drowsy, careless temper will not last long. Conversion and condemnation, are both of them awakening things : and one of them will make you feel ere long, I can foretell it as truly, as if I saw it with my eyes, that either grace or hell will shortly bring these matters to the quick, and make you say, 'What have I done ? What foolish, wicked courses have I taken ?' The scornful and the stupid state of sinners, will last but a little while : as soon as they either Turn or Die, the presumptuous dream will be at an end, and then their wits and feeling will return.

But, I foresee there are two things that are like to harden the unconverted, and make me lose all my labour, except they can be taken out of the way : and that is, the misunderstanding of those two words, 'The wicked,' and 'Turn.' Some will think with themselves, it is true, the wicked must Turn or Die ; but what is that to me ? I am not Wicked, though I am a sinner, as all men be. Others will think, it

is true that we must turn from our evil ways ; but I am turned long ago, I hope this is not now to do. And thus, while wicked men think they are not wicked, but are already converted, we lose all our labour in persuading them to turn. I shall therefore, before I go any further, tell you here, who are meant by ' the wicked,' and who they be that must Turn or Die, and also what is meant by Turning ; and who they be that are truly converted ; and this I have purposely reserved for this place, preferring the method that fits my end.

And here you may observe, that in the sense of the text, a wicked man and a converted man are contraries. No man is a wicked man that is converted, and no man is a converted man that is wicked : so that to be a wicked man, and to be an unconverted man, is all one. And therefore in opening one, we shall open both.

Before I can tell you what either wickedness or conversion is, I must go to the bottom, and fetch up the matter from the beginning.

It pleased the great Creator of the world, to make three sorts of living creatures ; angels he made pure spirits without flesh, and therefore he made them only for heaven and not to dwell on earth. Beasts were made flesh without immortal souls ; and therefore they were made only for earth, and not for heaven. Man is of a middle nature, between both, as partaking of both flesh and spirit : and therefore he was made both for heaven and earth. But as his flesh is made to be but a servant to his spirit, so is he made for earth, but as his passage, or way to heaven, and not that this should be his home or happiness. The blessed state that man was made for, was to behold the glorious majesty of the Lord and to praise him among his holy angels, and to love him, and be filled with his love for ever. And as this was the end that man was made for, so God did give him means that were fitted to the attaining of it. These means were principally two. First, The right inclination and disposition of the mind of man. Secondly, The right ordering of his life and practice. For the first, God suited the disposition of man to his end ; giving him such knowledge of God, as was fit for his present state, and a heart disposed and inclined to God in holy love. But yet he did not fix or confirm him in this condition ; but having made him a free agent, he left

him in the hands of his own free-will. For the second, God did that which belonged to him; that is, he gave man a perfect law requiring him to continue in the love of God, and perfectly to obey him. By the wilful breach of this law, man did not only forfeit his hopes of everlasting life, but also turned his heart from God, and fixed it on these lower, fleshly things, and hereby did blot out the spiritual image of God from his soul. So that man did both fall short of the glory of God, which was his end, and put himself out of the way, by which he should have attained it; and this, both as to the frame of his heart, and of his life. The holy inclination and love of his soul to God, he lost; and instead of it, he contracted an inclination and love to the pleasing of his flesh, or carnal self, by earthly things: growing strange to God, and acquainted with the creature: and the course of his life was suited to the bent and inclination of his heart; he lived to his carnal self, and not to God; he sought the creature for the pleasing of his flesh, instead of seeking to please the Lord. With this nature or corrupt inclination, we are all now born into the world; for "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" As a lion hath a fierce and cruel nature, before he doth devour, and as an adder hath a venomous nature before she stings, so in our very infancy we have those sinful natures or inclinations, before we think, or speak, or do amiss. And hence springeth all the sin of our lives. And not only so, but when God hath of his mercy provided us a remedy, even the Lord Jesus Christ, to be the Saviour of our souls, and bring us back to God again, we naturally love our present state, and are loath to be brought out of it, and therefore are set against the means of our recovery; and though custom hath taught us to thank Christ for his good will, yet carnal self persuadeth us to refuse his remedies, and to desire to be excused when we are commanded to take the medicines which he offereth, and are called to forsake all, and follow him to God and glory.

I pray you read over this leaf again, and mark it; for in these few words you have a true description of our natural state; and consequently of a wicked man. For every man that is in this state of corrupted nature, is a wicked man, and in a state of death.

By this also you are prepared to understand what it is to

be converted, to which end you must further know, that the mercy of God, not willing that man should perish in his sin, provided a remedy, by causing his Son to take our nature, and being in one person God and man, to become a Mediator between God and man; and by dying for our sins on the cross, to ransom us from the curse of God, and the power of the devil: and having thus redeemed us, the Father hath delivered us into his hands, as his own. Hereupon the Father and the Mediator do make a new law and covenant for man. Not like the first, which gave life to none but the perfectly obedient, and condemned man for every sin; but Christ hath made a law of grace, or a promise of pardon and everlasting life to all, that by true repentance, and by faith in Christ, are converted unto God. Like an act of oblivion, which is made by a prince, to a company of rebels, on condition they will lay down their arms, and come in, and be loyal subjects for the time to come.

But because the Lord knoweth that the heart of man is grown so wicked, that for all this, men will not accept of the remedy if they be left to themselves; therefore the Holy Ghost hath undertaken it as his office, to inspire the apostles, and seal up the Scripture by miracles and wonders, and to illuminate and convert the souls of the elect.

So that by this much you see, that as there are Three Persons in the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; so each of these Persons have their several works, which are eminently ascribed to them.

The Father's works were, to create us, to rule us as his rational creatures, by the law of nature, and judge us thereby; and in mercy to provide us a Redeemer when we were lost; and to send his Son, and accept his ransom.

The works of the Son for us were these; to ransom and redeem us by his sufferings and righteousness, to give out the promise or law of grace, and rule and judge the world as their Redeemer, on terms of grace, and to make intercession for us, that the benefits of his death may be communicated, and to send the Holy Ghost, (which the Father also doth by the Son).

The works of the Holy Ghost for us are these: to indite the holy Scriptures, by inspiring, and guiding the prophets and apostles; and sealing the word, by his miraculous gifts

and works ; and the illuminating and exciting the ordinary ministers of the Gospel ; and so enabling them, and helping them to publish that word, and by the same word illuminating and converting the souls of men. So that as you could not have been reasonable creatures, if the Father had not created you ; nor have had any access to God, if the Son had not redeemed you ; so neither can you have a part in Christ, or be saved, except the Holy Ghost do sanctify you.

So that by this time you may see the several causes of this work. The Father sendeth the Son ; the Son redeemeth us, and maketh the promise of grace ; the Holy Ghost inditeth and sealeth this Gospel ; the apostles are the secretaries of the Spirit, to write it ; the preachers of the Gospel to proclaim, and persuade men to obey it ; and the Holy Ghost doth make their preaching effectual, by opening the hearts of men to entertain it. And all this to repair the image of God upon the soul, and to set the heart upon God again, and take it off the creature, and carnal self, to which it is revolted, and so turn the current of this life into a heavenly course, which before was earthly ; and all this by the entertainment of Christ by faith, who is the physician of the soul.

By this which I have said, you may see what it is to be wicked, and what it is to be unconverted. Which I think, will be yet plainer to you, if I describe them, as consisting of their several parts : and for the first, A wicked man may be known by these three things :

First, He is one that placeth his chief content on earth ; and loveth the creature more than God ; and his fleshly prosperity, above the heavenly felicity ; he savoureth the things of the flesh, but neither discerneth nor savoureth the things of the Spirit : though he will say, that heaven is better than earth, yet doth he not really so esteem it to himself. If he might be sure of earth, he would let go heaven, and had rather stay here than be removed thither. A life of perfect holiness, in the sight of God, and in his love, and praises for ever in heaven, doth not find such liking with his heart as a life of health, and wealth, and honour here upon earth. And though he falsely profess that he loveth God above all, yet indeed he never felt the power of divine love within him, but his mind is more set on the world, or fleshly pleasures, than

on God. In a word, whoever loveth earth above heaven, and fleshly prosperity more than God, is a wicked, unconverted man.

On the other side, a converted man is illuminated to discern the loveliness of God ; and so far believeth the glory that is to be had with God, that his heart is taken up to it, and set more upon it than on any thing in this world. He had rather see the face of God, and live in his everlasting love and praises, than have all the wealth or pleasure of the world. He seeth that all things else are vanity, and nothing but God can fill the soul : and therefore let the world go which way it will, he layeth up his treasures and hopes in heaven ; and for that he is resolved to let go all. As the fire doth mount upward, and the needle that is touched with the loadstone, still turneth to the north, so the converted soul is inclined unto God. Nothing else can satisfy him : nor can he find any content and rest but in his love. In a word, all that are converted do esteem and love God better than all the world, and the heavenly felicity is dearer to them than their fleshly prosperity. The proof of what I have said, you may find in these places of Scripture, Phil. iii. 18. 21. Matt. vi. 19—21. Col. iii. 1—4. Rom. viii. 3. 6—9. 18. 23. Psal. lxxiii. 25, 26.

Secondly, A wicked man is one that maketh it the principal business of his life to prosper in the world, and attain his fleshly ends. And though he may read and hear, and do much in the outward duties of religion, and forbear disgraceful sins ; yet this is all but upon the bye, and he never makes it the trade and principal business of his life to please God, and attain everlasting glory, but puts off God with the leavings of the world, and gives him no more service than the flesh can spare ; for he will not part with all for heaven.

On the contrary, a converted man is one that makes it the principal care and business of his life to please God, and to be saved ; and takes all the blessings of this life, but as accommodations in his journey towards another life, and useth the creature in subordination unto God, he loveth a holy life, and longeth to be more holy ; he hath no sin but what he hateth, and longeth, and prayeth, and striveth to be rid of. The drift and bent of his life is for God ; and if he sin, it is contrary to the very bent of his heart and life, and

therefore he rises again, and lamenteth it, and dare not wilfully live in any known sin. There is nothing in this world so dear to him but he can give it up to God, and forsake it for him and the hopes of glory. All this you may see in Col. iii. 1—5. Matt. vi. 20. 33. Luke xviii. 22, 23. 29. xiv. 18. 24. 26, 27. Rom. viii. 13. Gal. v. 24. Luke xii. 21., &c.

Thirdly, the soul of a wicked man did never truly discern and relish the mystery of redemption, nor thankfully entertain an offered Saviour, nor is he taken up with the love of the Redeemer, nor willing to be ruled by him, as the physician of his soul, that he may be saved from the guilt and power of his sins, and recovered unto God; but his heart is insensible of this unspeakable benefit, and is quite against the healing means by which he should be recovered. Though he may be willing to be carnally religious, yet he never resigned up his soul to Christ, and to the motions and conduct of his word and Spirit.

On the contrary, the converted soul having felt himself undone by sin; and perceiving that he hath lost his peace with God, and hopes of heaven, and is in danger of everlasting misery, doth thankfully entertain the tidings of redemption, and believing in the Lord Jesus as his only Saviour, resigneth up himself to him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. He taketh Christ as the life of his soul, and liveth by him, and useth him as a salve for every sore, admiring the wisdom and love of God in his wonderful work of man's redemption. In a word, Christ doth even dwell in his heart by faith, and the life that he now liveth is by the faith of the Son of God, that hath loved him, and gave himself for him. Yea, it is not so much he that liveth, as Christ in him: for these, see John i. 11, 12. iii. 19, 20. Rom. viii. 9. Phil. iii. 7—10. Gal. ii. 20. John xv. 2—4. 1 Cor. i. 20. ii. 2.

You see now in plain terms, from the word of God, who are the wicked, and who are the converted. Ignorant people think, that if a man be no swearer, nor curser, nor railer, nor drunkard, nor fornicator, nor extortioner, nor wrong any body in their dealings, and if they come to church, and say their prayers, these cannot be wicked men. Or if a man that hath been guilty of drunkenness, swearing, gaming, or the like vices, do but forbear them for the time to come, they

think that this is a converted man. Others think, that if a man that hath been an enemy, and a scorner of godliness, do but approve it, and join himself with those that are godly, and be hated for it by the wicked, as the godly are, that this needs must be a converted man. And some are so foolish as to think they are converted, by taking up some new and false opinion; and falling into some dividing party as Baptists, Quakers, Papists, or such like. And some think, if they have but been affrighted by the fears of hell, and had convictions, and gripes of conscience, and thereupon have purposed, and promised, amendment, and taken up a life of civil behaviour, and outward religion, that this must needs be true conversion. And these are the poor deluded souls that are like to lose the benefit of all our persuasions. And when they hear that the wicked must Turn or Die, they think that this is not spoken of them; for they are not wicked, but are Turned already. And therefore it is, that Christ told some of the rulers of the Jews, who were more grave and civil than the common people, that "Publicans and harlots do go into the kingdom of God before them^p." Not that a harlot or gross sinner can be saved without conversion, but because it was easier to make those gross sinners perceive their sin and misery, and the necessity of a change, when the more civil sort do delude themselves by thinking that they are converted already when they be not.

O sirs, conversion is another kind of work than most are aware of. It is not a small matter to bring an earthly mind to heaven, and to shew man the amiable excellencies of God, till he be taken up in such love to him, that can never be quenched, to break the heart for sin, and make him fly for refuge unto Christ, and thankfully embrace him as the life of his soul, to have the very drift and bent of the heart and life to be changed; so that a man renounceth that which he took for his felicity, and placeth his felicity where he never did before, and liveth not to the same end, and driveth not on the same design in the world as formerly he did: in a word, he that is in Christ, "is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new^q." He hath a new understanding, a new will and resolution, new sorrows, and desires, and love and delight; new thoughts,

^p Matt. xxi. 31.

^q 2 Cor. v. 17.

new speeches, new company, (if possible) and a new conversation. Sin that before was a jesting matter with him, is now so odious and terrible to him, that he flies from it as from death. The world that was so lovely in his eyes, doth now appear but as vanity and vexation ; God that was before neglected, is now the only happiness of his soul ; before he was forgotten and every lust preferred before him ; but now he is set next the heart, and all things must give place to him ; and the heart is taken up in the attendance, and observance, of him, and is grieved when he hides his face, and never thinks itself well without him. Christ himself, that was wont to be slightly thought of, is now his only hope and refuge, and he lives upon him, as on his daily bread, he cannot pray without him, nor rejoice without him, nor think, nor speak, nor live, without him. Heaven itself, that before was looked upon but as a tolerable reserve, which he hoped might serve turn better than hell, when he could not stay any longer in the world, is now taken for his home, the place of his only hope and rest, where he shall see, and love, and praise that God that hath his heart already. Hell, that did seem before but as a bugbear to frighten men from sin, doth now appear to be a real misery, that is not to be ventured on or jested with. The works of holiness, which before he was weary of, and seemed to be more ado than needs, are now both his recreation, and his business, and the trade he lives upon. The Bible, which was before to him but almost as a common book, is now as the law of God, as a letter written to him from heaven, and subscribed with the name of the Eternal Majesty ; it is the rule of his thoughts, and words, and deeds ; the commands are binding, the threats are dreadful and the promises of it speak life to his soul. The godly that seemed to him but like other men, are now the most excellent and happiest on earth. And the wicked, that were his playfellows, are now his grief ; and he that could laugh at their sins, is more ready now to weep for their sin and misery^r. In short, he hath a new end in his thoughts, and a new way in his endeavours, and therefore his heart and life are new. Before, his carnal self was his end ; and his pleasure, and worldly profits and credits were his way. And now, God and everlasting glory are his end ; and Christ,

^r Psalm xv. 4. xvi. 3. Phil. iii. 18.

and the Spirit, and word, and ordinances, holiness to God, and righteousness and mercy to men, these are his way. Before, self was the chiefest ruler, to which the matters of God and conscience must stoop and give place : and now, God in Christ, by the Spirit, word, and ministry, is the chiefest ruler, to whom both self, and all the matters of self, must give place. So that this is not a change in one, or two, or twenty points, but in the whole soul ; and the very end and bent of the conversation. A man may step out of one path into another, and yet have his face still the same way, and be still going towards the same place ; but it is another matter to turn quite back again, and take his journey the clean contrary way to a contrary place. So is it here ; a man may turn from drunkenness to thriftiness, and forsake his good fellowship, and other gross, disgraceful sins, and set upon some duties of religion, and yet be going still to the same end as before, intending his carnal self above all, and giving it still the government of his soul. But when he is converted, this self is denied, and taken down, and God is set up, and his face is turned the contrary way ; and he that before was addicted to himself, and lived to himself, is now by sanctification devoted unto God, and liveth unto God. Before he asked himself what he should do with his time, his parts, and his estate, and for himself he used them ; but now he asketh God what he shall do with them, and useth them for him : before he would please God so far as might stand with the pleasure of his flesh and carnal self, but not to any great displeasure of them ; but now he will please God, let flesh and self be never so much displeased. This is the great change that God will make upon all that shall be saved.

You can say that the Holy Ghost is our Sanctifier ; but do you know what sanctification is ? Why, this is it that I have now opened to you : and every man or woman in the world must have this, or be condemned to everlasting misery. They must Turn or Die.

Do you believe all this, sirs, or do you not ? Surely you dare not say you do not ; for it is past all doubt or denial. These are not controversies, where one learned, pious man is of one mind, and another of another ; where one party saith this, and the other saith that ; Papists and Baptists,

and every sect among us, that deserve to be called Christians, are all agreed in this that I have said ; and if you will not believe the God of truth, and that in a case where every sect and party doth believe him, you are utterly inexcusable.

But if you do believe this, how comes it to pass that you are so quiet in an unconverted state ? Do you think you are converted ? And can you find this wonderful change upon your souls ? Have you been thus born again, and made anew ? Be not these strange matters to many of you ? And such as you never felt upon yourselves ? If you cannot tell the day or week of your change, or the very sermon that converted you, yet do you find that the work is done, and such a change indeed there is ? And that you have such hearts as are before described ? Alas, the most do follow their worldly business, and little trouble their minds with such thoughts. And if they be but restrained from scandalous sins, and can say, ' I am no whoremonger, nor thief, nor curser, nor swearer, nor tippler, nor extortioner ; I go to the church and say my prayers ; ' they think that this is true conversion, and they shall be saved as well as any. Alas, this is foolish cheating of yourselves ; this is too much contempt of an endless glory, and too gross neglect of your immortal souls. Can you make so light of heaven and hell ? your corpse will shortly lie in the dust, and angels or devils will presently seize upon your souls ; and every man or woman of you all, will shortly be among other company, and in another case than now you are ; you will dwell in these houses but a little longer ; you will work in your shops and fields but a little longer ; you will sit in these seats, and dwell on this earth but a little longer ; you will see with those eyes, and hear with those ears, and speak with those tongues but a little longer, till the resurrection day ; and can you make shift to forget this ? O what a place will you be shortly in of joy or torment ! O what a sight will you shortly see in heaven or hell ! O what thoughts will shortly fill your hearts with unspeakable delight or horror ! What work will you be employed in ! To praise the Lord with saints and angels, or to cry out in fire unquenchable with devils ; and should all this be forgotten ? And all this will be endless, and sealed up by an unchangeable decree. Eternity, eternity will be the measure of your

joys or sorrows, and can this be forgotten? And all this is true sirs, most certainly true : when you have gone up and down a little longer, and slept and awaked but a few times more, you will be dead and gone, and find all true that now I tell you ; and yet can you now so much forget it? You shall then remember you heard this sermon, and that this day, in this place, you were remembered of these things, and perceive them matters a thousand times greater than either you or I could here conceive, and yet shall they now be so much forgotten?

Beloved friends, if the Lord had not awakened me to believe and lay to heart these things myself, I should have remained in the dark and selfish state, and have perished for ever: but if he have truly made me sensible of them, it will constrain me to compassionate you, as well as myself. If your eyes were so far open as to see hell, and you saw your neighbours that were unconverted, dragged thither with hideous cries; though they were such as you accounted honest people on earth, and feared no such matter by themselves, such a sight would make you go home and think of it; and think again, and make you warn all about you, as that damned worldling in Luke xvi. 28. would have had his brethren warned, lest they come to that place of torment. Why, faith is a kind of sight, it is the eye of the soul, the evidence of things not seen : if I believe God, it is next to seeing; and therefore I beseech you excuse me, if I be half as earnest with you about these matters, as if I had seen them. If I must die to-morrow, and it were in my power to come again from another world, and tell you what I had seen, would you not be willing to hear me? And would you not believe, and regard what I should tell you? If I might preach one sermon to you after I am dead, and have seen what is done in the world to come, would you not have me plainly speak the truth? and would you not crowd to hear me? and would you not lay it to heart? But this must not be; God hath his appointed way of teaching you by Scripture and ministers; and he will not humour unbelievers so far, as to send men from the dead to them, and alter his established way; if any man quarrel with the sun, God will not humour him so far, as to set up a clearer light. Friends, I beseech you regard me now, as you would do if

I should come from the dead to you ; for I can give you the full assurance of the truth of what I say to you, as if I had been there and seen it with my eyes ; for it is possible for one from the dead to deceive you ; but Jesus can never deceive you ; the word of God delivered in Scripture, and sealed up by the miracles, and holy workings of the Spirit, can never deceive you. Believe this, or believe nothing. Believe, and obey this, or you are undone. Now, as ever you believe the word of God, and as ever you care for the salvation of your souls, let me beg of you this reasonable request, and I beseech you deny me not, That you would without any more delay, when you are gone from hence, remember what you heard, and enter into an earnest search of your hearts, and say unto yourselves, ' Is it so indeed ? Must I Turn or Die ? Must I be converted or condemned ? It is time for me then to look about me, before it be too late. O why did not I look after this till now ? Why did I venturously put off or slubber over so great a business ? Was I awake, or in my wits ? O blessed God, what a mercy is it that thou didst not cut off my life all this while, before I had any certain hope of eternal life ! Well, God forbid, that I should neglect this work any longer. What state is my soul in ? Am I converted, or am I not ? Was ever such a change, or work done upon my soul ? Have I been illuminated by the word and Spirit of the Lord, to see the odiousness of sin, the need of a Saviour, the love of Christ, and the excellencies of God and glory ? Is my heart broken, or humbled within me, for my former life ? Have I thankfully entertained my Saviour and Lord, that offered himself with pardon and life to my soul ? Do I hate my former sinful life, and the remnant of every sin that is in me ? Do I fly from them as my deadly enemies ? Do I give up myself to a life of holiness and obedience to God ? Do I love it and delight in it ? Can I truly say, that I am dead to the world, and carnal self ; and that I live for God, and the glory which he hath promised ? Hath heaven more of my estimation and resolution than earth ? And is God the dearest and highest in my soul ? Once, I am sure, I lived principally to the world and flesh, and God had nothing but some heartless services which the world could spare, and which were the leavings of the flesh. Is my

heart now turned another way? Have I a new design, and a new end, and a new train of holy affections? Have I set my hope and heart in heaven? And is it the scope and design, and bent of my heart and life, to get well to heaven, and see the glorious face of God, and live in his everlasting love and praise? And when I sin, is it against the habitual bent and design of my heart? And do I conquer all gross sins, and am I weary and willing to be rid of my infirmities? This is the state of a converted soul. And thus must it be with me, or I must perish. Is it thus with me indeed, or is it not? It is time to get this doubt resolved, before the dreadful Judge resolve it. I am not such a stranger to my own heart and life, but I may somewhat perceive whether I am thus converted or not: if I be not, it will do me no good to flatter my soul with false conceits and hopes. I am resolved no more to deceive myself, but to endeavour to know truly, off or on, whether I be converted, yea or no; that if I be, I may rejoice in it, and glorify my gracious Lord, and comfortably go on till I reach the crown; and if I am not, I may set myself to beg and seek after the grace that should convert me, and may turn without any more delay: for if I find in time that I am out of the way, by the help of Christ I may turn and be received; but if I stay till either my heart be forsaken of God in blindness and hardness, or till I be caught away by death, it is then too late. There is no place for repentance and conversion then; I know it must be now or never.'

Sirs, this is my request to you, that you will but take your hearts to task, and thus examine them, till you see, if it may be, whether you are converted or not; and if you cannot find it out by your own endeavours, go to your ministers, if they be faithful and experienced men, and desire their assistance. The matter is great, let not bashfulness, nor carelessness hinder you. They are set over you to advise you for the saving of your souls, as physicians advise you for the curing of your bodies. It undoes many thousands, that they think they are in the way to salvation, when they are not; and think that they are converted, when it is no such thing. And then when we call to them daily to turn, they go away as they came, and think that this concerns not them; for they are turned already, and hope they

shall do well enough in the way that they are in, at least if they do pick the fairest path, and avoid some of the foulest steps ; when alas, all this while, they live but to the world, and flesh, and are strangers to God, and eternal life, and are quite out of the way to heaven. And all this is much, because we cannot persuade them to a few serious thoughts of their condition, and to spend a few hours in the examination of their states : is there not many a self-conceited wretch that hears me this day, that never bestowed one hour, or a quarter of an hour in all their lives, to examine their souls, and try whether they are truly converted or not ? O merciful God that will care for such wretches that care no more for themselves, and that will do so much to save them from hell, and help them to heaven, who will do so little for it themselves ! If all that are in the way to hell, and in the state of damnation, did but know it, they durst not continue in it. The greatest hope that the devil hath, of bringing you to damnation without a rescue, is by keeping you blindfold and ignorant of your state, and making you believe that you may do well enough in the way that you are in. If you knew that you were out of the way to heaven, and were lost for ever, if you should die as you are, durst you sleep another night in the state that you are in ? Durst you live another day in it ? Could you heartily laugh, or be merry in such a state ? What ! and not know but you may be snatched away to hell in an hour ! Sure it would constrain you to forsake your former company and courses, and to betake yourselves to the ways of holiness, and the communion of the saints. Sure it would drive you to cry to God for a new heart, and to seek help of those that are fit to counsel you. There is none of you sure, that cares not for being damned. Well then, I beseech you presently make inquiry into your hearts, and give them no rest, till you find out your condition, that if it be good, you may rejoice in it and go on : and if it be bad, you may presently look about you for recovery, as men that believe they must Turn or Die. What say you, sirs, will you resolve and promise to be at thus much labour for your souls ? Will you fall upon this self-examination when you come home ? Is my request unreasonable ? Your consciences know it is not ; resolve on it then, before you stir ; knowing how much

it concerneth your souls, I beseech you for the sake of that God that doth command you, at whose bar you will shortly appear, that you will not deny me this reasonable request. For the sake of those souls that must Turn or Die, I beseech you deny me not ; even but to make it your business to understand your own conditions, and build upon sure ground, and know off or on, whether you are converted or no, and venture not your souls on negligent security.

But perhaps you will say, What if we should find ourselves yet unconverted, what shall we do then ? This question leadeth me to my second doctrine ; which will do much to the answering of it, to which I shall now proceed.

Doct. II. It is the promise of God, that the wicked shall live if they will but turn ; unfeignedly and thoroughly turn.

The Lord here professeth, that this is it he takes pleasure in, that the wicked Turn and Live. Heaven is made as sure to the converted, as hell is to the unconverted. Turn and Live, is as certain a truth as Turn or Die. God was not bound to provide us a Saviour, nor open to us the door of hope, nor call to us to repent and turn, when once we had cast ourselves away by sin. But he hath freely done it to magnify his mercy. Sinners, there are none of you shall have cause to go home and say, I preach desperation to you. Do we use to shut up the door of mercy against you ? O that you would not shut it up against yourselves ! Do we use to tell you that God will have no mercy on you, though you turn and be sanctified ? When did you ever hear a preacher say such a word ? You that bark at the preachers of the Gospel, for desiring to keep you out of hell, and say that they preach desperation ; tell me if you can, when did you ever hear any sober man say, that there is no hope for you, though ye repent and be converted ? No, it is the clean contrary that we daily proclaim from the Lord, That whosoever is born again, and by faith and repentance doth become a new creature, shall certainly be saved ; and so far we are from persuading you to despair of this, that we persuade you not to make any doubt of it. It is life and not death, that is the first part of our message to you ; our commission is to offer salvation ; certain salvation, a speedy, glorious, everlasting salvation, to every one of you ; to the poorest beggar, as well as to the greatest

lord ; to the worst of you, even to the drunkards, swearers, worldlings, thieves, yea, to the despisers and reproachers of the holy way of salvation. We are commanded by our Lord and Master, to offer you a pardon for all that is past, if you will but now at last return and live ; we are commanded to beseech and entreat you to accept the offer and return ; to tell you what preparation is made by Christ, what mercy stays for you, what patience waiteth on you, what thoughts of kindness God hath towards you ; and how happy, how certainly and unspeakably happy, you may be if you will. We have indeed, also, a message of wrath and death : yea, of a twofold wrath and death ; but neither of them is our principal message : we must tell you of the wrath that is on you already, and the death that you are born under, for the breach of the law of works : but this is only to shew you the need of mercy, and provoke you to esteem the grace of the Redeemer. And we tell you nothing but the truth, which you must know : for who will seek out for physic, that knows not that he is sick ? For telling you of your misery, is not it that makes you miserable, but driveth you to seek for mercy. It is you that have brought this death upon yourselves. We tell you also of another death, even remediless, and much greater torment will fall on those that will not be converted. But as this is true, and must be told you ; so it is but the last, and saddest part of our message ; we are first to offer you mercy, if you will turn : and it is only those that will not turn nor hear the voice of mercy, that we must foretel damnation to. Will you but cast away your transgressions, delay no longer, but come away at the call of Christ, and be converted, and become new creatures, and we have not a word of damning wrath or death to speak against you. I do here in the name of the Lord of Life proclaim to you all that hear me this day, to the worst of you, to the greatest, to the oldest sinner, that you may have mercy and salvation if you will but turn. There is mercy in God, there is sufficiency in the satisfaction of Christ, the promise is free, full and universal : you may have life if you will but turn. But then, as you love your souls, remember what turning it is the Scripture speaks of. It is not to mend the old house, but to pull down all, and build anew on Christ the rock and sure foun-

dation. It is not to mend somewhat in a carnal course of life, but to mortify the flesh, and live after the Spirit. It is not to serve the flesh and the world in a more reformed way, without any scandalous disgraceful sins, and with a certain kind of religiousness; but it is to change your master, and your works, and end, and set your face a contrary way, and do all for the life that you never saw, and dedicate yourselves, and all you have to God. This is the change that must be made, if you will live.

Yourselves are witness now, that it is salvation and not damnation, that is the great doctrine I preach to you, and the first part of my message to you. Accept of this, and we shall go no further with you; for we would not so much as affright or trouble you with the name of damnation without necessity.

But if you will not be saved, there is no remedy, but damnation must take place; for there is no middle place between the two. You must have either life or death.

And we are not only to offer you life, but to shew you the grounds on which we do it, and call you to believe, that God doth mean indeed as he speaks; that the promise is true, and extendeth conditionally to you as well as others, and that heaven is no fancy, but a true felicity.

If you ask, where is our commission for this offer? Among a hundred texts of Scripture, I will shew it unto you in these few:

First, you see it here in my text, and the following verses; and Ezek. xviii. as plain as can be spoke. And in 2 Cor. v. 17—21. you have the very sum of our commission, ("If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. Old things are passed away, behold all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, who hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself; not imputing their trespasses to them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God; for he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him). So Mark xvi. 15, 16. "Go ye into

the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth (that is, with such a converting faith as is expressed) and is baptized, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned." And Luke xxiv. 46, 47. "Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance (which is conversion) and remission of sins, should be preached in his name among all nations." And Acts v. 30, 31. "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree, him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." And Acts xiii. 38, 39. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." And lest you think this offer is restrained to the Jews, see Gal. vi. 15. "For in Christ, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." And Luke xiv. 17. "Come, for all things are now ready; and ver. 23, 24.

You see by this time, that we are commanded to offer life to you all, and to tell you from God, that if you will Turn you may Live.

Here you may safely trust your souls; for the love of God is the fountain of this offer*. And the blood of the Son of God hath purchased it; the faithfulness and truth of God is engaged to make the promise good; miracles have sealed up the truth of it; preachers are sent through the world to proclaim it; the sacraments are instituted and used for the solemn delivery of the mercy offered, to them that will accept it; and the Spirit doth open the heart to entertain it, and is itself the earnest of the full possession. So that the truth of it is past controversy, that the worst of you all, and every one of you, if you will but be converted, may be saved.

Indeed, if you will needs believe you shall be saved without conversion, then you believe a falsehood; and if I should preach that to you, I should preach a lie. This were not to believe God, but the devil and your own deceitful hearts. God hath his promise of life, and the devil hath his promise

* John iii. 16.

of life. God's promise is, 'Return and Live;' the devil's is, 'Thou shalt live whether thou turn or not.' The words of God are, as I have shewed you, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven¹." "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God²." "Without holiness none shall see God³." The devil's word is, 'You may be saved without being born again, and converted; you may go to heaven well enough, without being holy; God doth but frighten you; he is more merciful than to do as he saith; he will be better to you than his word.' And, alas! the greatest part of the world believe this word of the devil before the word of God, just as our first sin and misery came into the world. God saith to our first parents, 'If ye eat ye shall die;' the devil contradicts him, and saith, 'Ye shall not die;' and the woman believed the devil before God. So now the Lord saith, 'Turn or Die;' and the devil saith, 'You shall not die if you do but cry mercy at last, and give over the acts of sin, when you can practise it no longer.' And this is the word that the world believes. O heinous wickedness, to believe the devil before God!

And yet that is not the worst, but blasphemously they call this a believing and trusting in God, when they put him in the shape of satan, who was a liar from the beginning; and when they believe that the word of God is a lie, they call this a trusting God, and say they believe in him, and trust on him for salvation. Where did ever God say, that the unregenerate, unconverted, unsanctified, shall be saved? Shew such a word in Scripture, I challenge you if you can. Why, this is the devil's word, and to believe it, is to believe the devil, and is the sin that is commonly called presumption. And do you call this a believing and trusting God? There is enough in the word of God to comfort and strengthen the hearts of the sanctified. But not a word to strengthen the hands of wickedness, nor to give men the least hope of being saved, though they be never sanctified.

But if you will turn, and come into the way of mercy, the mercy of the Lord is ready to entertain you. Then trust God for salvation boldly and confidently, for he is engaged by his word to save you.

¹ Matt. xviii. 3.² John iii. 3. 5.³ Heb. xii. 14.

He will be a father to none but his children, and he will save none but those that forsake the world, the devil, and the flesh, and come into his family, to be members of his Son, and have communion with the saints. But if they will not come in, it is long of themselves; his doors are open; he keeps none back; he never sent such a message as this to any of you, 'It is now too late, I will not receive thee, though thou be converted.' He might have done so, and done you no wrong, but he did not, he doth not to this day, he is still ready to receive you, if you were but ready unfeignedly, and with all your hearts, to turn. And the fullness of this truth will yet more appear in the two following doctrines, which I shall, therefore, next proceed to, before I make a farther application of this.

Doct. III. God taketh pleasure in men's conversion and salvation, but not in their death and damnation. He had rather they would return and live, than go on and die.

I shall first teach you how to understand this; and then clear up the truth of it to you.

And for the first, you must observe these following things: 1. A simple willingness and complacency is the first act of the will, following the simple apprehension of the understanding, before it proceedeth to compare things together. But the choosing act of the will is a following act, and supposeth the comparing practical act of the understanding; and these two acts may often be carried to contrary objects, without any fault at all in the person.

2. An unfeigned willingness may have divers degrees. Some things I am so far willing of, as that I will do all that lieth in my power to accomplish them. And some things I am truly willing another should do, when yet I will not do all that ever I am able to procure it, having many reasons to dissuade me therefrom: though yet I will do all that belongs to me to do.

3. The will of a ruler, as such, is manifest in making and executing laws; but the will of a man in his simple natural capacity, or as absolute Lord of his own, is manifested in desiring or resolving of events.

4. A ruler's will, as law-giver, is, first and principally, that his law be obeyed, and not at all that the penalty be executed on any, but only on supposition that they will not

obey his laws. But a ruler's will, as judge, supposeth the law already either kept or broken. And, therefore, he resolveth on reward or punishment accordingly.

Having given you these necessary distinctions, I shall next apply them to the case in hand, in these following propositions :

1. It is in the glass of the word and creatures that in this life we must know God. And so, according to the nature of man, we ascribe to him understanding and will, removing all the imperfections that we can, because we are capable of no higher positive conceptions of him.

2. And on the same grounds we do (with the Scriptures) distinguish between the acts of God's will, as diversified from the respects, or the objects, though as to God's essence they are all one.

3. And the bolder, because that when we speak of Christ, we have the more ground for it from his human nature.

4. And thus we say, that the simple complacency, will, or love of God, is to all that is naturally or morally good, according to the nature and degree of its goodness. And so he hath pleasure in the conversion and salvation of all, which yet will never come to pass.

5. And God, as Ruler and Law-giver of the world, had so far a practical will for their salvation, as to make them a free deed of gift of Christ and life, and an act of oblivion for all their sins, so be it they will not unthankfully reject it; and to command his messengers to offer this gift to all the world, and persuade them to accept it. And so he doth all that, as Law-giver or Promiser, belongs to him to do for their salvation.

6. But yet he resolveth, as Law-giver, that they that will not Turn, shall Die. And as Judge, when their day of grace is past, he will execute that decree.

7. So that he thus unfeignedly willeth the conversion of those that never will be converted, but not as absolute Lord, with the fullest efficacious resolution, nor as a thing which he resolveth shall undoubtedly come to pass, or would engage all his power to accomplish. It is in the power of a prince to set a guard upon a murderer, to see that he shall not murder and be hanged. But if upon good reason he

forbear this, and do but send to his subjects, and warn and entreat them not to be murderers, I hope he may well say, that he would not have them murder and be hanged; he takes no pleasure in it, but rather that they forbear, and live. And if he do more for some, upon some special reason, he is not bound to do so by all. The king may well say to all the murderers and felons in the land, 'I have no pleasure in your death, but rather that you would obey my laws and live; but if you will not, I am resolved for all this, that you shall die.' The judge may truly say to the thief, or a murderer, 'Alas! man, I have no delight in thy death, I had rather thou hadst kept the law, and saved thy life, but seeing thou hast not, I must condemn thee, or else I should be unjust.' So, though God have no pleasure in your damnation, and therefore calls upon you to return and live, yet he hath pleasure in the demonstration of his own justice, and the executing his laws; and, therefore, he is for all this fully resolved, that if you will not be converted, you shall be condemned. If God were so much against the death of the wicked, as that he were resolved to do all that he can to hinder it, then no man should be condemned, whereas Christ telleth you, that few will be saved. But so far God is against your damnation, as that he will teach you and warn you, and set before you life and death, and offer you your choice, and command his ministers to entreat you not to damn yourselves, but accept his mercy, and so to leave you without excuse; but if this will not do, and if still you be unconverted, he professeth to you he is resolved of your damnation, and hath commanded us to say to you in his name, ver. 18. "O wicked man, thou shalt surely die!" And Christ hath little less than sworn it over and over, with a "Verily, verily; except ye be converted and born again, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven^y." Mark that he saith, "You cannot." It is in vain to hope for it, and in vain to dream, that God is willing of it; for it is a thing that cannot be.

In a word, you see then the meaning of the text, that God, the great Law-giver of the world, doth take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn and live; though yet he be resolved that none shall live but those that turn; and as a Judge even delighteth in justice,

^y Matt. xviii. 3. John iii. 3.

and manifesteth his hatred of sin, though not in their misery which they have brought upon themselves, in itself considered.

2. And for the proofs of this point, I shall be very brief in them, because I suppose you easily believe it already.

1. The very gracious nature of God proclaimed, Exodus xxxiv. 6. xx. 6. and frequently elsewhere, may assure you of this, that he hath no pleasure in your death.

2. If God had more pleasure in thy death, than in thy conversion and life, he would not have so frequently commanded thee in his word to turn, he would not have made thee such promises of life, if thou wilt but turn; he would not have persuaded thee to it by so many reasons. The tenor of his Gospel proveth the point.

3. And his commission that he hath given to the ministers of the Gospel, doth fully prove it. If God had taken more pleasure in thy damnation, than in thy conversion and salvation, he would never have charged us to offer you mercy, and to teach you the way of life, both publicly and privately; and to entreat and beseech you to turn and live; to acquaint you of your sins, and foretel you of your danger: and to do all that possibly we can for your conversion, and to continue patiently so doing, though you should hate or abuse us for our pains. Would God have done this and appointed his ordinances for your good, if he had taken pleasure in your death?

4. It is proved also by the course of his providence. If God had rather you were damned than converted and saved, he would not second his word with his works, and entice you by his daily kindness to himself, and give you all the mercies of this life, which are his means to lead you to repentance, and bring you so often under his rod, to force you into your wits. He would not set so many examples before your eyes; no, nor wait on you so patiently as he doth from day to day, and year to year. These be not signs of one that taketh pleasure in your death; if this had been his delight, how easily could he have had thee long ago in hell? How oft, before this, could he have caught thee away in the midst of thy sins, with a curse or oath, or lie in thy mouth, in thy ignorance and pride, and sensuality; when thou wert lost in thy drunkenness, or last deriding the ways of God? How easily could he have stopped thy breath,

and tamed thee with his plagues, and made thee sober in another world? Alas! how small a matter is it for the Almighty to rule the tongue of the profanest railer, and tie the hands of the most malicious persecutor; or calm the fury of the bitterest of his enemies, and make them know they are but worms. If he should but frown upon thee, thou wouldst drop into thy grave. If he gave commission to one of his angels to go and destroy ten thousand sinners, how quickly would it be done? How easily can he lay thee upon the bed of languishing, and make thee lie roaring there in pain, and make thee eat the words of reproach which thou hast spoken against his servants, his word, his worship, and his holy ways; and make thee send to beg their prayers, whom thou didst despise in thy presumption? How easily can he lay that flesh under gripes and groans, and make it too weak to hold thy soul, and make it more loathsome than the dung of the earth? That flesh which now must have what it loves, and must not be displeased, and must be humoured with meat, drink, and clothes, whatsoever God says to the contrary, how quickly would the frowns of God consume it? When thou wast passionately defending thy sin, and quarrelling with them that would have drawn thee from it, and shewing thy spleen against the reprovers, and pleading for the works of darkness; how easily could God snatch thee away in a moment, and set thee before his dreadful Majesty, where thou mayst see ten thousand times ten thousand of glorious angels waiting on his throne, and call thee there to plead thy cause, and ask thee, 'What hast thou now to say against thy Creator, his truth, his servants, or his holy ways; now plead thy cause, and make the best of it thou canst. Now what canst thou say in excuse of thy sins? Now give account of thy worldliness and fleshly life, of thy time, of all thy mercies thou hast had.' O how thy stubborn heart would have melted, and thy proud looks be taken down, and thy countenance appalled, and thy stout words turned into speechless silence, or dreadful cries; if God had but set thee thus at his bar, and pleaded his own cause with thee, which thou hast here so maliciously pleaded against. How easily can he, at any time, say to thy guilty soul, 'Come away, and live in that flesh no longer; till the resurrection,' and it cannot resist? A word of his mouth,

would take off the noise of thy present life, and then all thy parts and powers would stand still; and if he say unto thee, 'Live no longer;' or 'Live in hell,' thou couldst not disobey.

But God hath yet done none of this; but hath patiently forborne thee, and mercifully upheld thee, and given thee that breath which thou didst breathe out against him, and given those mercies which thou didst sacrifice to the flesh, and afforded thee that provision which thou spentest to satisfy thy greedy throat: he gave thee every minute of that time which thou didst waste in idleness, and drunkenness, or worldliness. And doth not all his patience and mercy shew that he desired not thy damnation? Can the candle burn without the oil? Can your houses stand without the earth to bear them? As well as you can live one hour without the support of God. And why did he so long support thy life, but to see when thou wouldst bethink thee of the folly of thy ways, and return and live? Will any man purposely put arms into his enemy's hands to resist him? Or hold a candle to a murderer that is killing his children? Or to an idle servant that plays and sleeps the while? Surely it is to see whether thou wilt at last return and live, that God has so long waited on thee.

5. It is further proved by the sufferings of his Son that God taketh no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Would he have ransomed them from death at so dear a rate? Would he have astonished angels and men by his condescension? Would God have dwelt in flesh, and have come in the form of a servant, and have assumed humanity into one person with the Godhead? And would Christ have lived a life of suffering, and died a cursed death for sinners; if he had rather taken pleasure in their death? Suppose you saw him but so busy in preaching and healing of them, as you find him in Mark iii. 21.; or so long in fasting, as in Matt. iv.; or all night in prayer, as in Luke vi. 12.; or praying with drops of blood trickling from him instead of sweat, as Luke xxii. 44.; or suffering a cursed death upon the cross, and pouring out his soul as a sacrifice for our sins: would you have thought these the signs of one that delighteth in the death of the wicked?

And think not to extenuate it by saying, that it was only for his elect. For it was thy sin, and the sin of all the

world; that lay upon our Redeemer; and his sacrifice and satisfaction is sufficient for all, and the fruits of it are offered to one as well as another; but it is true that it was never the intent of his mind, to pardon and save any that would not by faith and repentance be converted. If you had seen and heard him weeping and bemoaning the state of disobedience in impenitent people, Luke xix. 41, 42., or complaining of their stubbornness, as Matt. xxiii. 37. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not?" Or if you had seen and heard him on the cross, praying for his persecutors, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do;" would you have suspected that he had delighted in the death of the wicked, even of those that perish by their wilful unbelief? "When God hath so loved" (not only loved, but so loved) "the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him," (by an effectual faith,) "should not perish, but have everlasting life," I think he hath hereby proved, against the malice of men and devils, that he takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but had rather that they would Turn and Live.

6. Lastly, If all this will not yet satisfy you, take his own word, that knoweth best his own mind, or at least believe his oath. But this leadeth me up to the fourth doctrine.

Doct. IV. The Lord hath confirmed it to us by his oath, that he hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he Turn and Live; that he may leave man no pretence to question the truth of it.

If you dare question his word, I hope you dare not question his oath. As Christ hath solemnly protested, that the unregenerate and unconverted cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, in Matt. xviii. 3. John iii. 3.; so God hath sworn, that his pleasure is not in their death, but in their conversion and life. And as the apostle saith, Heb. vi. 13. 16—18. "Because he can swear by no greater than himself, he saith, As I live, &c. For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consol-

tion, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us ; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." If there be any man that cannot reconcile this truth with the doctrine of predestination, or the actual damnation of the wicked, that is his own ignorance ; he hath no pretence left to deny or question therefore the truth of the point in hand ; for this is confirmed by the oath of God, and therefore must not be distorted, to reduce it to other points, but doubtful points must rather be reduced to it, and certain truths must be believed to agree with it, though our shallow brains do hardly discern the agreement.

USE. I do entreat thee, if thou be an unconverted sinner that hearest these words, that thou wouldst ponder a little upon the forementioned doctrines, and bethink thyself awhile, who it is that takes pleasure in thy sin and damnation. Certainly it is not God. He hath sworn for his part, that he takes no pleasure in it. And I know it is not the pleasing of him that you intend in it. You dare not say that you drink and swear, and neglect holy duties, and quench the motions of the Spirit, to please God. That were as if you should reproach the prince, and break his laws, and seek his death, and say, you did all this to please him.

Who is it then that takes pleasure in your sin and death ? Not any that bear the image of God, for they must be like-minded to him. God knows, it is small pleasure to your faithful teachers, to see you serve your deadly enemy, and madly venture your eternal state, and wilfully run into the flames of hell. It is small pleasure to them, to see upon your souls (in the sad effects) such blindness, and hard-heartedness, and carelessness, and presumption ; such wilfulness in evil, and such uncharitableness, and stiffness, against the ways of life and peace ; they know these are marks of death, and of the wrath of God, and they know from the word of God what is like to be the end of them ; and therefore it is no more pleasure to them, than to a tender physician to see the plague-marks break out upon his patient. Alas ! to foresee your everlasting torments, and know not how to prevent them ! To see how near you are to hell, and we cannot make you believe it, and consider it ! To see how easily, how certainly you might escape, if we knew but how to make you willing ! How fair you are for

everlasting salvation, if you would but turn and do your best, and make it the care and business of your lives ! But you will not do it, if our lives lay on it, we cannot persuade you to do it. We study day and night what to say to you, that may convince you, and persuade you, and yet it is undone : we lay before you the word of God, and shew you the very chapter and verse where it is written, that you cannot be saved except you be converted ; and yet we leave the most of you as we find you : we hope ye will believe the word of God, though you believe not us, and that you will regard it when we shew you plain Scripture for it : but we hope in vain, and labour in vain, as to any saving change upon your hearts. And do you think that this is a pleasant thing to us ? Many a time in secret prayers we are fain to complain to God with sad hearts, ‘ Alas, Lord, we have spoken it to them, in thy name, but they little regard us ; we have told them what thou bidst us tell them, concerning the danger of an unconverted state, but they do not believe us ; we have told them that thou hast protested, “ That there is no peace to the wicked ^z,” but the worst of them all will scarcely believe that they are wicked ; we have shewed them the word, where thou hast said, “ That if they live ‘after the flesh they shall die ^a,” but they say, they will believe in thee, when they will not believe thee : and that they will trust in thee, when they give no credit to thy word, and when they hope that the threatenings of thy word are false, they will yet call this a hoping in God ; and though we shew them where thou hast said, “ That when a wicked man dieth, all his hopes perish ^b,” yet cannot we persuade them from their deceitful hopes. We tell them what a base, unprofitable thing sin is, but they love it, and therefore will not leave it. We tell them how dear they buy their pleasure, and what they must pay for it in everlasting torment, and they bless themselves and will not believe it, but will do as the most do ; and because God is merciful, they will not believe him, but will venture their souls, come on it what will. We tell them how ready the Lord is to receive them ; and this does but make them delay their repentance, and be bolder in their sin. Some of them say, they purpose to repent, but they are still the same ; and some say, they

^z Isa. xlviii. 22. lvii. 21.^a Rom. viii. 13.^b Prov. xi. 7.

do repent already, while yet they are not converted from their sins. We exhort them, we entreat them, we offer them our help, but we cannot prevail with them, but they that were drunkards are drunkards still, and they that were voluptuous, flesh-pleasing wretches, are such still; and they that were worldlings are worldlings still; and they that were ignorant, proud and self-conceited, are so still. Few of them will see and confess their sin, and fewer will forsake it, but comfort themselves that all men are sinners; as if there were no difference between a converted sinner, and an unconverted. Some of them will not come near us when we are willing to instruct them, but think they know enough already, and need not our instruction: and some of them will give us the hearing, and do what they list; and most of them are like dead men that cannot feel; so that when we tell them of the matters of everlasting consequence, we cannot get a word of it to their hearts. If we do not obey them, and humour them in baptizing children of the most obstinately wicked; and giving them the Lord's supper, and doing all that they would have us, though never so much against the word of God, they will hate us, and rail at us; but if we beseech them to confess and forsake their sins, and save their souls, they will not do it. We tell them if they will but turn, we will deny them none of the ordinances of God, neither baptism to their children, nor the Lord's supper to themselves; but they will not hear us: they would have us to disobey God, damn our own souls to please them, and yet they will not turn, and save their own souls to please God. They are wiser in their own eyes than all their teachers; they rage, and are confident in their own way; and if we would never so fain we cannot change them. Lord, this is the case of our miserable neighbours, and we cannot help it; we see them ready to drop into hell, and we cannot help it; we know if they would unfeignedly turn, they might be saved; but we cannot persuade them: if we would beg it of them on our knees, we cannot persuade them to it; if we would beg it of them with tears, we cannot persuade them: and what more can we do?

These are the secret complaints and moans that many a poor minister is fain to make, and do you think that he hath any pleasure in this? Is it a pleasure to him to see you go

on in sin and cannot stop you? To see you so miserable, and cannot so much as make you sensible of it? To see you merry, when you are not sure to be an hour out of hell? To think what you must for ever suffer because you will not turn? And to think what an everlasting life of glory you wilfully despise and cast away? What sadder things can you bring to their hearts, and how can you devise to grieve them more?

Who is it then that you pleasure by your sin and death? It is none of your understanding, godly friends. Alas, it is the grief of their souls to see your misery, and they lament you many a time, when you give them little thanks for it, and when you have not hearts to lament yourselves.

Who is it then that takes pleasure in your sin? It is none but the three great enemies of God, whom you renounced in your baptism, and now are turned falsely to serve.

1. The devil, indeed, takes pleasure in your sin and death; for this is the very end of all his temptations: for this he watches night and day: you cannot devise to please him better, than to go on in sin: how glad is he when he sees thee going to the alehouse, or other sin; and when he heareth thee curse, or swear, or rail. How glad is he when he heareth thee revile the minister that would draw thee from thy sin, and help to save thee? These are his delight.

2. The wicked are also delighted in it, for it is agreeable to their nature.

3. But I know, for all this, that it is not the pleasing of the devil that you intend, even when you please him; but it is your own flesh, the greatest and most dangerous enemy, that you intend to please. It is the flesh that would be pampered, that would be pleased in meat and drink, and clothing, that would be pleased in your company, and pleased in applause and credit with the world, and pleased in sports and lusts, and idleness; this is the gulf that devoureth all. This is the very God that you serve, for the Scripture saith so much, "That their bellies are their God."

But I beseech you stay a little and consider the business.

1. *Quest.* Should your flesh be pleased before your Maker? Will you displease the Lord, and displease your teacher, and your godly friends, and all to please your brut-

ish appetites, or sensual desires? Is not God worthy to be a ruler of your flesh; if he shall not rule it, he will not save it; you cannot in reason expect that he should.

2. *Quest.* Your flesh is pleased with your sin; but is your conscience pleased? Doth not it grudge within you, and tell you sometimes that all is not well, and that your case is not so safe as you make it to be? And should not your souls and consciences be pleased before that corruptible flesh?

3. *Quest.* But is not your flesh preparing for its own displeasure also? It loves the bait, but doth it love the hook? It loves the strong drink and sweet morsels; it loves its ease, and sport, and merriment, it loves to be rich, and well spoken of by men, and to be somebody in the world, but doth it love the curse of God? Doth it love to stand trembling before his bar, and to be judged to everlasting fire? Doth it love to be tormented with the devils for ever? Take altogether; for there is no separating sin and hell, but only by faith and true conversion; if you will keep one, you must have the other. If death and hell be pleasant to thee no wonder then if thou go on in sin; but if they be not (as I am sure they be not) then what if sin be never so pleasant, is it worth the loss of life eternal? Is a little drink, meat, ease, the good word of sinners, or the riches of this world, to be valued above the joys of heaven? Or are they worth the sufferings of eternal fire? Sirs, these questions should be considered, before you go any farther, by every man that hath reason to consider, and that believes he hath a soul to save or lose.

Well, the Lord here sweareth that he hath no pleasure in your death, but rather that you would Turn and Live: if yet you will go on and die, rather than turn, remember it was not to please God that you did it, it was to please the world, and to please yourselves. And if men will damn themselves to please themselves, and run into endless torments for delight, and have not the wit, the heart, the grace to hearken to God or man that would reclaim them, what remedy? But they must take what they get by it, and repent in another manner, when it is too late. Before I proceed any farther in the application, I shall come to the next doctrine; which giveth a fuller ground for it.

Doct. V. So earnest is God for the conversion of sinners,

that he doubleth his commands and exhortations with vehemency ; “ Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die ? ”

This doctrine is the application of the former, as by a use of exhortation, and accordingly I shall handle it. Is there ever an unconverted sinner, that heareth these vehement words of God ? Is there ever a man or woman in this assembly, that is yet a stranger to the renewing, sanctifying works of the Holy Ghost ? (It is a happy assembly if it be not so with the most.) Harken then to the voice of your Maker, and turn to him by Christ without delay. Would you know the will of God ? Why this is his will, that you presently turn. Shall the living God send so earnest a message to his creatures, and should they not obey ? Harken then all you that live after the flesh ; the Lord that gave thee thy breath and being, hath sent a message to thee from heaven, and this is his message, “ Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die ? ” “ He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. ” Shall the voice of the Eternal Majesty be neglected ? If he do but terribly thunder, thou art afraid. O but this voice doth more nearly concern thee ; if he do but tell thee thou shalt die to-morrow, thou wouldst not make light of it : O but this word concerneth thy life or death everlasting ! It is both a command and an exhortation : as if he had said to thee, ‘ I charge thee upon the allegiance thou owest to me thy Creator and Redeemer, that thou renounce the flesh, the world, and the devil, and turn to me that thou mayst live. I condescend to entreat thee, as thou lovest or fearest him that made thee ; as thou lovest thine own life, even thine everlasting life, Turn and Live ; as ever thou wouldst escape eternal misery, Turn, turn, “ for why wilt thou die ? ” ’ And is there a heart in man, in a reasonable creature, that can once refuse such a message, such a command, such an exhortation as this ? O what a thing then is the heart of man !

Hearken then, all that love yourselves and all that regard your own salvation. Here is the most joyful message that ever was sent to the ears of man, “ Turn ye, turn ye, why will you die ? ” You are not yet shut up under desperation. Here is mercy offered, turn and you shall have it. O sirs, with what glad and joyful hearts should you receive these tidings ! I know that this is not the first time that you have heard it : but how have you regarded it, or how

do you regard it now? Hear, all you ignorant, careless sinners, the word of the Lord! Hear all you worldlings, you sensual fleshpleasers, you gluttons and drunkards, and whoremongers and swearers; you railers and backbiters, slanderers and liars; "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?"

Hear all you cold and outside professors, and all that are strangers to the life of Christ, and never knew the power of his cross and resurrection, and never felt your hearts warmed with his love, and live not on him as the strength of your souls; "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?"

Hear all that are void of the love of God, whose hearts are not towards him, nor taken up with the hopes of glory, but set more by your earthly prosperity and delights, than by the joys of heaven; you that are religious but a little on the bye, and give God no more than your flesh can spare; that have not denied your carnal selves, and forsaken all that you have for Christ, in the estimation and grounded resolution of your souls, but have some one thing in the world so dear to you, that you cannot spare it for Christ, if he requires it, but will rather even venture on his displeasure, than forsake it; "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?"

If you never heard it, or observed it before; remember that ye were told it from the word of God this day, that if you will but turn, you may live; and if you will not turn you shall surely die.

What now will you do sirs? What is your resolution? Will you turn or will you not? Halt not any longer between two opinions: if the Lord be God follow him; if your flesh be God, then serve it still. If heaven be better than earth and fleshly pleasures, come away then and seek a better country, and lay up your treasure where rust and moths do not corrupt, and thieves cannot break through and steal, and be awakened at last with all your might, to seek the kingdom that cannot be moved, Heb. xii. 28. And to employ your lives on a higher design, and turn the stream of your cares and labours, another way than formerly you have done; but if earth be better than heaven, or will do more for you, or last you longer, then keep it and make your best of it, and follow it still. Sirs, are you resolved what to do? If you be not, I will set a few more moving considerations before you, to see if reason will make you resolve.

Consider first, what preparations mercy hath made for your salvation. And what pity it is that any man should be damned after all this. The time was, when the flaming sword was in the way, and the curse of God's law would have kept thee back, if thou hadst been never so willing to turn to God: the time was, when thyself, and all the friends that thou hadst in the world, could never have procured thee the pardon of thy sins past, though thou hadst never so much lamented, and reformed them. But Christ hath removed this impediment, by the ransom of his blood. The time was, that God was wholly unreconciled, as being not satisfied for the violation of his law: but now he is so far satisfied and reconciled, as that he hath made thee a free act of oblivion, and a free deed of the gift of Christ and life, and offereth it to thee, and entreateth thee to accept it, and it may be thine if thou wilt. For, "He was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, and hath committed to us the word of actual reconciliation^d." Sinners, we are commanded to do this message to you all, as from the Lord. "Come, for all things are ready^e." Are all things ready, and are you unready? God is ready to entertain you and pardon all that you have done against him, if you will but come. As long as you have sinned, as wilfully as you have sinned, as heinously as you have sinned, he is ready to cast all behind his back, if you will but come. Though you have been prodigals, and run away from God, and have staid so long, he is ready even to meet you, and embrace you in his arms, and rejoice in your conversion, if you will but turn. Even the earthly worldling and swinish drunkard, may find God ready to bid him welcome, if they will but come. Doth not this turn thy heart within thee? O sinner, if thou hast a heart of flesh, and not of stone in thee, methinks this should melt it; shall the dreadful Infinite Majesty of heaven, even wait for thy returning, and be ready to receive thee who hast abused him, and forgotten him so long? Shall he delight in thy conversion, that might at any time glorify his justice in thy damnation? and doth it not yet melt thy heart within thee, and art thou not yet ready to come in? Hast thou not as much reason to be ready to come, as God hath to invite thee and bid thee welcome?

^d 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. ^e Luke xiv. 17.

But that is not all ; Christ hath done his part on the cross, and made such a way for thee to the Father that on his account thou mayst be welcome, if thou wilt come. And yet art thou not ready ?

A pardon is already expressly granted, and offered thee in the Gospel. And yet art thou not ready ?

The ministers of the Gospel are ready to assist thee, to instruct thee, and pronounce the absolving words of peace to thy soul ; they are ready to pray for thee, and to seal up thy pardon by the administration of the holy sacrament ; and yet art thou not ready ?

All that fear God about thee, are ready to rejoice in thy conversion, and to receive thee into the communion of saints ; and to give thee the right hand of fellowship, yea, though thou hadst been one that had been cast out of their society ; they dare not but forgive where God forgiveth, when it is manifest to them by thy confession and amendment : they dare not so much as hit thee in the teeth with thy former sins, because they know that God will not upbraid thee with them. If thou hadst been never so scandalous, if thou wouldst but heartily be converted and come in, they would not refuse thee, let the world say what they would against it. And are all these ready to receive thee, and yet art thou not ready to come in ?

Yea, heaven itself is ready ; the Lord will receive thee into the glory of the saints, as vile a beast as thou hast been, if thou wilt but be cleansed thou mayst have a place before his throne ; his angels will be ready to guard thy soul to the place of joy, if thou do but unfeignedly come in. And is God ready, the sacrifice of Christ ready, the promise ready, and pardon ready ? Are ministers ready, the people of God ready, and heaven itself ready, and angels ready, and all these but waiting for thy conversion, and yet art thou not ready ? What, not ready to live, when thou hast been dead so long ? Not ready to come to thy right understanding ; (as the prodigal is said to come to himself, Luke xv. 17.) when thou hast been besides thyself so long ? Not ready to be saved, when thou art even ready to be condemned ? Art thou not ready to lay hold on Christ that would deliver thee, when thou art even ready to drown, and sink into damnation ? Art thou not ready to be saved from hell,

when thou art even ready to be cast remediless into it; alas! man, dost thou know what thou dost? If thou die unconverted, there is no doubt to be made of thy damnation: and thou art not sure to live an hour: and yet art thou not ready to turn, and to come in? O miserable wretch! Hast thou not served the flesh and the devil long enough! Yet hast thou not enough of sin? Is it so good to thee, or so profitable for thee? Dost thou know what it is; that thou wouldst yet have more of it? Hast thou had so many calls, and so many mercies, and so many blows, and so many examples? Hast thou seen so many laid in the grave and yet art thou not ready to let go thy sins, and come to Christ? What, after so many convictions, and gripes of conscience, after so many purposes and promises, art thou not yet ready to turn and live? O that thy eyes, thy heart were opened, to know how fair an offer is now made to thee! And what a joyful message it is that we are sent on, to bid thee come, for all things are ready.

2. Consider also, what calls thou hast to Turn and Live. How many, how loud, how earnest, how dreadful, and yet what encouraging, joyful calls.

For the principal inviter, it is God himself. He that commandeth heaven and earth, commandeth thee to Turn: and presently, without delay to Turn. He commandeth the sun to run its course, and to rise upon thee every morning; and though it be so glorious a creature, and many times bigger than all the earth, yet it obeyeth him, and faileth not one minute of its appointed time. He commandeth all the planets, and orbs of heaven, and they obey. He commandeth the sea to ebb and flow, and the whole creation to keep its course, and all they obey him. The angels of heaven obey his will, when he sends them to minister to such silly worms as we on earth*. And yet if he command but a sinner to Turn, he will not obey him: he only thinks himself wiser than God, and he cavils and pleads the cause of sin, and will not obey. If the Lord Almighty says the word, the heavens and all therein obey him: but if he call a drunkard out of an alehouse he will not obey: or if he call a worldly, fleshly sinner to deny himself, and mortify the flesh, and set his heart on a better inheritance, he will not obey.

* Heb. i. 14.

If thou hadst any love in thee, thou wouldst know the voice, and say, ‘O this is my Father’s call! How can I find in my heart to disobey?’ For the sheep of Christ do “know and hear his voice; and they follow him, and he giveth them eternal life^f.” If thou hast any spiritual life and sense in thee, at least thou wouldst say, ‘This call is the dreadful voice of God, and who dare disobey?’ For saith the prophet, “The lion hath roared, who will not fear^g?” God is not a man that thou shouldst dally and play with him. Remember what he said to Paul at his conversion, “It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks^h.” Wilt thou yet go on and despise his word, and resist his Spirit, and stop thine ears against his call? Who is it that will have the worst of this? Dost thou know whom thou disobeyest and contendest with, and what thou art doing? It were a far wiser and easier task for thee, to contend with the thorns, and spurn them with thy bare feet, and beat them with thy bare hands, or put thy head into the burning fire. “Be not deceived, God will not be mockedⁱ.” Whosoever else be mocked God will not; you had better play with the fire in your thatch, than with the fire of his burning wrath. “For our God is a consuming fire^k.” O how unmeet a match are you for God: “It is a fearful thing to fall into his hands^l.” And therefore it is a fearful thing to contend with him, or resist him. As you love your own souls take heed what you do. What will you say, if he begin in wrath to plead with you? What will you do if he take you once in hand? Will you then strive against his judgment, as now you do against his grace? Saith the Lord “Fury is not in me:” that is, I delight not to destroy; I do it as it were unwillingly but yet, “Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me^m.” It is an unequal combat for the briars and stubble to make war with the fire.

And thus you see who it is that calleth you, that should move you to hear this call, and Turn: so consider also, by what instruments, and how often, and earnestly he doth it.

^f John xii. 4.

^g Amos iii. 8.

^h Acts ix. 5.

ⁱ Gal. vi. 7.

^k Heb. xii. 29.

^l Heb. x. 31.

^m Isa. xxvii. 4. 6.

1. Every leaf of the blessed Book of God hath, as it were, a voice, and calls out unto thee. "Turn and Live; Turn or thou wilt Die." How canst thou open it, and read a leaf, or hear a chapter, and not perceive God bids thee Turn?

2. It is the voice of every sermon thou hearest; for what else is the scope and drift of all, but to call, and persuade, and entreat thee to Turn?

3. It is the voice of many a motion of the Spirit, that secretly speaks over these words again, and urgeth thee to Turn.

4. It is likely sometimes, it is the voice of thy own conscience. Art thou not sometimes convinced, that all is not well with thee; and doth not thy conscience tell thee, that thou must be a new man, and take a new course, and often call upon thee to Return?

5. It is the voice of the gracious examples of the godly. When thou seest them live a heavenly life, and fly from the sin which is thy delight, this really calls upon thee to Turn.

6. It is the voice of all the works of God. For they also are God's books that teach thee this lesson, by shewing thee his greatness, and wisdom, and goodness, and calling thee to observe them, and admire the Creator. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy works; day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night sheweth knowledgeⁿ." Every time the sun riseth upon thee it really calleth thee to Turn, as if it should say, 'What do I travel and compass the world for, but to declare to men the glory of their Maker, and to light them to do his work? And do I still find thee doing the work of sin, and sleeping out thy life in negligence?' "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light^o." "The night is far spent, the day is at hand. It is now high time to awake out of sleep; let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." (This text was the means of Augustine's conversion.)

ⁿ Psal. xix. 1, 2.

^o Eph. v. 14.

^p Rom. xiii. 11—14.

7. It is the voice of every mercy thou dost possess. If thou couldst but hear, and understand them, they all cry out unto thee, Turn. Why doth the earth bear thee, but to seek and serve the Lord? Why doth it afford thee fruit, but to serve him? Why doth the air afford thee breath, but to serve him? Why do all the creatures serve thee with their labours, and their lives, but that thou mightest serve the Lord of them and thee? Why doth he give thee time, and health, and strength, but to serve him? Why hast thou meat, drink, and clothes, but for his service? Hast thou any thing which thou hast not received? And if thou didst receive them, it is reason thou shouldst bethink thee from whom, and to what end and use, thou didst receive them. Didst thou never cry to him for help in thy distress? And didst thou not then understand that it was thy part to turn and serve him if he would deliver thee? He hath done his part, and spared thee yet longer, and tried thee another and another year, and yet thou dost not Turn. You know the parable of the unfruitful fig-tree. When the Lord had said, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground;" he was entreated to try it one year longer, and then, if it proved not fruitful, to cut it down. Christ himself there makes the application twice over, "Except ye repent, you shall all likewise perish." How many years hath God looked for the fruits of love and holiness from thee, and hath found none? And yet hath spared thee. How many times, by thy wilful ignorance, carelessness, and disobedience, hast thou provoked justice to say, "Cut him down, why cumbereth he the ground?" And yet mercy hath prevailed, and patience hath forborne the killing, damning blow to this day. If thou hadst the understanding of a man within thee, thou wouldst know that all this calleth thee to Turn. "Dost thou think thou shalt still escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every one according to his deeds."

8. Moreover, it is the voice of every affliction, to call

^a Luke xiii. 6—9,

^r Ver. 3. 5.

^s Rom. ii. 3—6.

thee to make haste and Turn. Sickness and pain cry Turn. Poverty, the loss of friends, and every twig of the chastising rod, cry Turn; and yet wilt thou not hearken to the call? These have come near thee, and made thee feel. They have made thee groan, and can they not make thee Turn?

9. The very frame of thy nature and being itself bespeaketh thy return. Why hast thou reason, but to rule thy flesh, and serve the Lord? Why hast thou an understanding soul, but to learn and know his will, and do it? Why hast thou a heart within thee that can love, fear, and desire, but that thou shouldst fear him, and love him, and desire after him?

10. Yea, thine own engagements by promise to the Lord do call upon thee to turn and serve him. Thou hast bound thyself to him by a baptismal covenant, and renounced the world, the flesh, and the devil; this thou hast confirmed by the profession of Christianity, and renewed it at sacraments, and in times of affliction. And wilt thou promise, and vow, and never perform, and turn to God?

Lay all these together now, and see what should be the issue. The Holy Scriptures call upon thee to Turn; the ministers of Christ do call upon thee to Turn; the Spirit cries Turn; thy conscience cries Turn; the godly, by persuasions and examples, cry Turn; the whole world, and all the creatures therein that are presented to thy consideration, cry Turn: the patient forbearance of God cries Turn; all the mercies which thou receivest, cry Turn; the rod of God's chastisement cries Turn; thy reason, and the frame of thy nature bespeaks thy Turning; and so do all thy promises to God, and yet art thou not resolved to Turn?

3. Moreover, poor hard-hearted sinner, didst thou ever consider upon what terms thou standest all this while with him that calleth thee to Turn? Thou art his own, and owest him thyself, and all thou hast: and may he not command his own? Thou art his absolute servant, and shouldst serve no other master. Thou standest at his mercy, and thy life is in his hand; and he is resolved to save thee upon no other terms. Thou hast many malicious spiritual enemies, that would be glad if God would but forsake thee, and let them alone with thee, and leave thee to their will; how quickly would they deal with thee in another manner. And

thou canst not be delivered from them, but by turning unto God. Thou art fallen under his wrath by thy sin already ; and thou knowest not how long his patience will yet wait. Perhaps this is the last year ; perhaps the last day. His sword is even at thy heart, while the word is in thine ear ; and if thou turn not, thou art a dead and undone man. Were thy eyes but open to see where thou standest, even upon the brink of hell, and to see how many thousands are there already that did not turn, thou wouldst see that it is time to look about thee.

Well, sirs, look inwards now, and tell me how are your hearts affected with these offers of the Lord ? You hear what is his mind ; he delighteth not in your death. He calls to you, Turn, Turn ; it is a fearful sign, if all this move thee not, or if it do but half move thee ; and much more if it make thee more careless in thy misery, because thou hearest of the mercifulness of God. The working of the medicine will partly tell us, whether there be any hope of the cure. O what glad tidings would it be to those that are now in hell, if they had but such a message from God ! What a joyful word would it be to hear this, 'Turn and Live !' Yea, what a welcome word would it be to thyself, when thou hast felt that wrath of God but an hour ; or, if after a thousand, and ten thousand years torment, thou couldst but hear such a word from God, 'Turn and Live,' and yet wilt thou neglect it, and suffer us to return without our errand ?

Behold, sinners, we are set here as the messengers of the Lord, to set before you life and death ; what say you, which of them will you choose ? Christ standeth, as it were, by thee, with heaven in one hand and hell in the other, and offereth thee thy choice ; which wilt thou choose ? The voice of the Lord maketh the rock to tremble¹. And is it nothing to hear him threaten thee, if thou wilt not turn ? Dost thou not understand and feel this voice, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye Die?" Why, it is the voice of love, of infinite love, of thy best and kindest friend, as thou mightest easily perceive by the motion, and yet canst thou neglect it ? It is the voice of pity and compassion. The Lord seeth whither thou art going, better than thou dost, which makes him call after thee, 'Turn, turn.' He seeth what will become of thee, if

¹ See Psal. xxix.

thou turn not: he thinketh with himself, 'Ah! this poor sinner will cast himself into endless torment, if he do not turn: I must in justice deal with him according to my righteous law:' and therefore he calleth after thee, 'Turn, turn.' O sinner! if thou didst but know the thousandth part as well as God doth, the danger that is near you, and the misery that you are running into, we should have no more need to call after you to Turn.

Moreover, this voice that calleth to thee, is the same that hath prevailed with thousands already and called all to heaven that are now there: and they would not now for a thousand worlds that they had made light of it, and not turned to God. Now what are they possessing that turned at God's call? Now they perceive indeed that it was the voice of love, that meant them no more harm than their salvation. And if thou wilt obey the same call thou shalt come to the same happiness. There be millions that must for ever lament that they turned not, but there is never a soul in heaven that is sorry that they were converted.

Well, sirs, are you yet resolved, or are you not? Do I need to say any more to you, what will you do? Will you turn or not? Speak, man, in thy heart to God, though thou speak not out to me: speak, lest he take thy silence for a denial; speak quickly, lest he never make thee the like offer more; speak resolvedly, and not waveringly; for he will have no indifferents to be his followers. Say in thy heart now, without any more delay, even before you stir hence, 'By the grace of God, I am resolved presently to turn. And because I know mine own insufficiency, I am resolved to wait on God for his grace, and follow him in his ways, and forsake my former courses and companions, and give up myself to the guidance of the Lord.'

Sirs, you are not shut up in the darkness of heathenism, nor in the desperation of the damned. Life is before you, and you may have it on reasonable terms if you will; yea, on free-cost if you will accept it. The way of God lieth plain before you, the church is open to you, and you may have Christ, pardon and holiness, if you will. What say you? Will you or will you not? If you say nay, or say nothing, and still go on, God is witness, and this congregation is witness, and your own consciences are witness, how

fair an offer you had this day. Remember you might have Christ, and you would not. Remember, when you have lost it, that you might have had eternal life, as well as others, and would not: and all this because you would not Turn!

But let us come to the next Doctrine, and hear your reasons.

Doct. VI. The Lord condescendeth to reason the case with unconverted sinners, and to ask them why they will die.

A strange disputation it is, both as to the controversy; and as to the disputants.

1. The controversy or question propounded to dispute of, is, Why wicked men will damn themselves? Or, Whether they will die rather than turn? Whether they have any sufficient reason for so doing?

2. The disputants are God and man: the most holy God, and wicked, unconverted sinners.

Is it not a strange thing which God doth seem here to suppose, that any man should be willing to die, and be damned; yea, that this should be the case of all the wicked: that is, of the greatest part of the world? But you will say, 'This cannot be; for nature desireth the preservation and felicity of itself, and the wicked are more selfish than others, and not less; and therefore how can any man be willing to be damned?'

To which I answer, 1. It is a certain truth, that no man can be willing of any evil, as evil, but only as it hath some appearance of good; much less can any man be willing to be eternally tormented. Misery, as such, is desired by none. 2. But yet for all that, it is most true, which God here teacheth us, that the cause why the wicked die and are damned, is, because they will die and be damned. And this is true in several respects.

1. Because they will go the way that leads to hell, though they are told by God and man whether it goes and where it ends. And though God hath so often professed in his word, that if they hold on in that way they shall be condemned: and that they shall not be saved unless they Turn. "There is no peace (saith the Lord) unto the wicked." "The way of peace they know not; there is no judgment in their going; they have made them crooked paths, whosoever goeth

therein shall not know peace^x." They have the word, and the oath of the living God for it, that if they will not turn, they shall not enter into his rest. And yet wicked they are, and wicked they will be, let God and man say what they will: fleshly they are, and fleshly they will be; worldlings they are, and worldlings they will be, though God hath told them, that "the love of the world is enmity to God; and that if any man love the world, (in that measure) the love of the Father is not in him^y." So that consequentially these men are willing to be damned, though not directly: they are willing of the way to hell, and love the certain cause of their torment, though they be not willing of hell itself, and do not love the pain which they must endure.

Is not this the truth of your case, sirs? You would not burn in hell, but you will kindle the fire by your sins; and cast yourselves into it; you would not be tormented with devils in hell, but you will do that which will certainly procure it in despite of all that can be said against it. It is just as if you would say, 'I will drink this ratsbane, or other poison, but yet I would not die. I will cast myself headlong from the top of a steeple, but yet I will not kill myself. I will thrust my knife into my heart, but yet I will not take away my life. I will put this fire into the thatch of my house, but yet I will not burn it.' Just so it is with wicked men; they will be wicked, and live after the flesh and the world, and yet they would not be damned: But do you not know, that the means do lead unto the end? and that God hath, by his righteous law, concluded, that ye must repent or perish? He that will take poison may as well say, 'I will kill myself,' for it will prove no better in the end: though perhaps he loved it for the sweetness of the sugar that was mixed with it, and would not be persuaded it was poison, but that he might take it and do well enough; but it is not his conceits and confidence that will save his life. So if you will be drunkards, or fornicators, or worldlings, or live after the flesh, you may as well say plainly, 'We will be damned;' for so you shall be unless you turn. Would you not rebuke the folly of a thief or murderer that would say, 'I will steal or kill, but I will not be hanged;' when he knows, that if he do the one, the judge in justice will see that the

^x Isa. lix. 8.

^y James iv. 4. John ii. 15.

other be done. If he says, 'I will steal and murder,' he may as well say plainly, 'I will be hanged;' so if you will go on in a carnal life, you may as well say plainly, 'We will go to hell.'

2. Moreover, the wicked will not use those means without which there is no hope of their salvation: he that will not eat, may as well say plainly he will not live, unless he can tell how to live without meat. He that will not go his journey, may as well say plainly he will not come to the end. He that falls into the water, and will not come out, nor suffer another to help him out, may as well say plainly, he will be drowned. So if you be carnal and ungodly, and will not be converted, nor use the means by which you should be converted, but think it more ado than needs, you may as well say plainly, you will be damned. For if you have found out a way to be saved without conversion, you have done that which was never done before.

3. Yea, this is not all, but the wicked are unwilling even of salvation itself. Though they may desire somewhat which they call by the name of heaven, yet heaven itself, considered in the true nature of the felicity, they desire not: yea, their hearts are quite against it. Heaven is a state of perfect holiness, and of continual love and praise to God, and the wicked have no heart to this. The imperfect love, praise, and holiness which is here to be obtained, they have no mind of; much less of that which is so much greater: the joys of heaven are of so pure and spiritual a nature, that the heart of the wicked cannot truly desire them.

So that by this time you may see on what ground it is that God supposeth that the wicked are willing of their own destruction: they will not Turn, though they must Turn or Die. They will rather venture on certain misery, than be converted; and then to quiet themselves in their sins, they will make themselves believe, that they shall nevertheless escape.

2. And as the controversy is matter of wonder (that ever men should be such enemies to themselves, as wilfully to cast away their souls), so are the disputants too. That God should stoop so low, as thus to plead the case with man; and that man should be so strangely obstinate as to need all

this in so plain a case ; yea, and to resist all this, when their own salvation lieth upon the issue.

No wonder, if they will not hear us that are men, when they will not hear the Lord himself: as God saith, when he sent the prophet to the Israelites, "The house of Israel will not hearken unto thee: for they will not hearken unto me: For all the house of Israel are impudent, and hard-hearted ^a." No wonder, if they can plead against a minister, or a godly neighbour, when they will plead against the Lord himself, even against the plainest passages of his word, and think they have reason on their side. 'When they weary the Lord with their words,' they say, "Wherein have we wearied him ^a?" The priests that despised his name, durst ask, "Wherein have we despised thy name." And when they "polluted his altar, and made the tables of the Lord contemptible," they durst say, "Wherein have we polluted thee ^b?" But "Wo unto him (saith the Lord) that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou ^c?"

Quest. 'But why is it that God will reason the case with man?'

Ans. 1. Because that man, being a reasonable creature, is accordingly to be dealt with; and by reason to be persuaded and overcome. God hath therefore endowed them with reason, that they might use it for him. One would think a reasonable creature should not go against the clearest and greatest reason in the world, when it is set before him.

2. At least men shall see that God did require nothing of them that was unreasonable, but that whatever he commandeth them, and whatever he forbiddeth them, he hath all the right reason in the world on his side, and they have good reason to obey him, but none to disobey. And thus even the damned shall be forced to justify God, and confess that it was but reason that they should have turned to him, and they shall be forced to condemn themselves, and confess that they have little reason to cast away themselves by the neglecting of his grace in the day of their visitation.

USE. Look up your best and strongest reasons sinners, if you will make good your way: you see now with whom you have to deal. What sayst thou unconverted, sensual

^a Ezek. iii. 7.

^b Mal. ii. 7.

^c Mal. vi. 1. 7.

^d Isa. xlv. 9.

wretch? Darest thou venture upon a dispute with God: art thou able to confute him? Art thou ready to enter the lists? God asketh thee, 'Why wilt thou die?' Art thou furnished with a sufficient answer? Wilt thou undertake to prove that God is mistaken, and that thou art in the right? O what an undertaking is that! Why either he or you is mistaken, when he is for your conversion, and you are against it. He calls upon you to turn, and you will not: he bids you do it presently, even to-day, while it is called to-day, and you delay, and think it time enough hereafter. He saith, it must be a total change, and you must be holy and new creatures, and born again; and you think that less may serve the turn, and that it is enough to patch up the old man, without becoming new. Who is in the right now, God or you? God calleth on you to turn, and to live a holy life, and you will not; by your disobedient lives it appears you will not. If you will, why do you not? Why have you not done it all this while? And why do you not fall upon it yet? Your wills have the command of your lives. We may certainly conclude, that you are unwilling to turn, when you do not turn. And why will you not? Can you give any reason for it, that is worthy to be called a reason?

I that am but a worm, your fellow-creature, of a shallow capacity, dare challenge the wisest of you all to reason the case with me, while I plead my Maker's cause, and I need not be discouraged, when I know I plead but the cause that God pleadeth, and contend for him that will have the best at last. Had I but these two general grounds against you, I am sure that you have no good reason on your side.

1. I am sure it can be no good reason, which is against the God of truth and reason; it cannot be light that is contrary to the sun. There is no knowledge in any creature, but what it had from God; and therefore none can be wiser than God. It were damnable presumption for the highest angel to compare with his Creator, what is it then for a lump of dirt, an ignorant sot, that knoweth not himself, nor his own soul; that knoweth but little of the things which he seeth, yea, that is more ignorant than many of his neighbours, to set himself against the wisdom of the Lord? It is one of the fullest discoveries of the horrible wickedness of carnal men, and the stark madness of such who sin, that so

silly a mole dare contradict his Maker, and call in question the word of God : yea, that those people in our parishes, that are so beastly ignorant, that they cannot give us a reasonable answer, concerning the very principles of religion, and yet so wise in their own conceit, that they dare question the plainest truths of God, yea, contradict them, and cavil against them, when they can scarce speak sense, and will believe them no farther than agreeth with their foolish wisdom.

2. And as I know that God must needs be in the right, so I know the case is so palpable and gross which he pleadeth against, that no man can have reason for it. Is it possible that a man can have any good reason to break his master's laws, and reason to dishonour the Lord of glory, and reason to abuse the Lord that bought him? Is it possible that a man can have any good reason to damn his own immortal soul? Mark the Lord's question, "Turn ye, turn ye, Why will ye die? Is eternal death a thing to be desired? Are you in love with hell? What reason have you wilfully to perish? If you think you have some reason to sin, should you not remember that "death is the wages of sin^d?" And think whether you have any reason to undo yourselves, body and soul for ever? You should not only ask whether you love the adder, but whether you love the sting. It is such a thing for a man to cast away his everlasting happiness, and to sin against God, that no good reason can be given for it; but the more any one pleads for it, the more mad he sheweth himself to be. Had you a lordship or a kingdom offered to you, for every sin that you commit, it were not reason but madness to accept it. Could you by every sin obtain the highest thing on earth that flesh desireth, it were of no considerable value to persuade you in reason to commit it. If it were to please your greatest and dearest friends, or obey the greatest prince on earth, or to save your lives, or to escape the greatest earthly misery, all these are of no consideration to draw a man in reason to the committing of one sin. If it were a right hand, or a right eye that would hinder your salvation, it would be the most gainful way to cast it away, rather than go to hell to save it. For there is no saving a part, when you lose the whole. So exceedingly great are the matters of eternity, that nothing in this world

^d Rom: vi. 23.

deserveth once to be named in comparison with them, nor can any earthly thing, though it were life, and crowns, and kingdoms, be a reasonable excuse for matters of so high and everlasting consequence. A man can have no reason to cross his ultimate end. Heaven is such a thing, that if you lose it, nothing can supply the want, or make up the loss. And hell is such a thing, that if you suffer it, nothing can remove your misery, or give you ease and comfort. And therefore nothing can be a valuable consideration to excuse you for neglecting your own salvation. For saith our Saviour, "What shall it profit a man to win all the world and lose his own soul*."

O, sirs! did you but know what matters they are, we are now speaking to you of! The saints in heaven have other kind of thoughts of these things. If the devil could come to them that live in the sight and love of God, and should offer them a cup of ale, or a whore, or merry company, or sport to entice them away from God, and glory, I pray you tell me, how do you think they would entertain the motion. Nay, if he should offer them to be kings on the earth, do you think this would entice them down from heaven? O, with what hatred, and holy scorn would they disdain, and reject the motion; and why should not you do so that have heaven opened to your faith, if you had but faith to see it? There is never a soul in hell, but knows by this time, that it was a mad exchange to let go heaven for fleshly pleasure: and that it is not a little mirth, or pleasure, or worldly riches or honour, or the good will, or the word of men that will quench hell-fire, or make him a sinner that loseth his soul. O if you had heard what I believe, if you had seen what I believe, and that on the credit of the word of God, you would say, there can be no reason to warrant a man to damn his soul; you durst not sleep quietly another night, before you had resolved to Turn and Live.

If you see a man put his hand into the fire till it burn off, you marvel at it; but this is a thing that a man may have reason for; as Bishop Cranmer had when he burnt off his hand for subscribing to Popery. If you see a man cut off a leg, or an arm, it is a sad sight; but this is a thing a man may have good reason for; as many a man doth to save his

* Mark viii. 36.

life. If you see a man give his body to be burnt to ashes, and to be tormented with strappadoes and racks, and refuse deliverance when it is offered; this is a hard case to flesh and blood. But this a man hath good reason for; as you may see in Heb. xi. 33—36. And as many a hundred martyrs have done. But for a man to forsake the Lord that made him, and for a man to run into the fire of hell, when he is told of it, and entreated to turn, that he may be saved; this is a thing that can have no reason in the world, that is reason indeed, to justify, or excuse it. For heaven will pay for the loss of any thing that we can lose to get it, or for any labour which we bestow for it. But nothing can pay for the loss of heaven.

I beseech you now, let his word come nearer to your hearts. As you are convinced you have no reason to destroy yourselves, so tell me what reason you have to refuse to turn, and live to God; what reason hath the veriest worldling, or drunkard, or ignorant, careless sinner of you all, why you should not be as holy as any you know, and be as careful for your souls as any other? Will not hell be as hot to you as to others? Should not your own souls be as dear to you, as theirs to them? Hath not God as much authority over you? Why then will ye not become a sanctified people, as well as they?

O sirs, when God bringeth down the matter to the very principles of nature, and shews you that you have no more reason to be ungodly, than you have to damn your own souls: if yet you will not understand and Turn, it seems a desperate case that you are in.

And now either you have reason for what you do, or you have not. If not, will you go on against reason itself? Will you do that which you have no reason for? But if you think you have, produce them, and make the best of your matter, reason the case a little while with your fellow-creature, which is far easier than to reason the case with God. Tell me, man, here, before the Lord, as if thou wert to die this hour, why shouldst thou not resolve to turn this day, before thou stir from the place thou standest in? What reason hast thou to deny, or to delay? Hast thou any reason that satisfieth thine own conscience for it? Or any that thou darest own and plead at the bar of God? If thou

hast, let us hear them, bring them forth, and make them good. But alas ! what poor stuff, what nonsense, instead of reasons, do we daily hear from ungodly men ? But for their necessity, I should be ashamed to name them.

1. Object. One saith, ' If none shall be saved but such converted and sanctified ones as you talk of, heaven would be but empty ; then God help a great many.'

Ans. What, it seems you think God doth not know, or else that he is not to be believed : measure not all by yourself ; God hath thousands and millions of his sanctified ones ; but yet they are few in comparison of the world, as Christ himself hath told us in Matt. vii. 13, 14, and Luke xii. 32. It better beseems you to make that use of this truth which Christ teacheth you ; " Strive to enter in at the straight gate ; for straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it : but wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat." " And fear not little flock, (saith Christ to his sanctified ones,) for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

2. Object. ' I am sure if such as I go to hell, we shall have store of company.'

Ans. And will that be any ease or comfort to you ? Or do you think you may not have company enough in heaven ? Will you be undone for company ? Or will you not believe that God will execute his threatenings, because there are so many that are guilty ? All these are silly, unreasonable conceits.

3. Object. ' But all men are sinners, even the best of you all.'

Ans. But all are not unconverted sinners. The godly live not in gross sins ; and their very infirmities are their grief and burden, which they daily long, and pray, and strive to be rid of. Sin hath not dominion over them.

4. Object. ' I do not see that professors are any better than other men : they will overreach and oppress, and are as covetous as any.'

Ans. Whatever hypocrites are, it is not so with those that are sanctified. God hath thousands and ten thousands that are otherwise. Though the malicious world doth ac-

cuse them of what they can never prove, and of that which never entered into their hearts. And commonly they charge them with heart-sins, which none can see but God; because they can charge them with no such wickedness in their lives, as they are guilty of themselves.

Object. 5. 'But I am no whoremonger, nor drunkard, nor oppressor; and therefore why should you call upon me to be converted?'

Answ. As if you were not born after the flesh, and had not lived after the flesh, as well as others. Is it not as great a sin, as any of these, for a man to have an earthly mind, and to love the world above God, and to have a faithless, unhumbled heart? Nay, let me tell you more, that many persons that avoid disgraceful sins, are fast glued to the world, and as much slaves to the flesh, and as strange to God, and averse to heaven in their more civil course, as others are in their more shameful, notorious sins.

Object. 6. 'But I mean nobody any harm, or do no harm; and why then should God condemn me?'

Answ. Is it no harm to neglect the Lord that made thee, and the work for which thou camest into the world, and prefer the creature before the Creator, and neglect grace that is daily offered thee? It is the depth of thy sinfulness, to be insensible of it. The dead feel not that they are dead. If once thou wert made alive, thou wouldst see more amiss in thyself, and marvel at thyself for making so light of it.

Object. 7. 'I think you will make men mad under a pretence of converting them: it is enough to rack the brains of simple people, to muse so much on matters too high for them.'

Answ. 1. Can you be madder than you are already? Or at least, can there be a more dangerous madness, than to neglect your everlasting welfare, and wilfully undo yourselves?

2. A man is never well in his wits till he be converted; he neither knows God, nor sin, nor Christ, nor the world, nor himself, nor what his business is on the earth, so as to set himself about it, till he be converted. The Scripture saith that the wicked are unreasonable men^h; and "that the wisdom of the world is foolishness with Godⁱ;" and Luke xv. 17. it is said of the prodigal, "that when he came to

^h 2 Thess. iii. 2. ⁱ 1 Cor. i. 20.

himself," he resolved to Return. It is a wise world when men will disobey God, and run to hell for fear of being out of their wits.

3. What is there in the work that Christ calls you to, that should drive a man out of his wits? Is it the loving of God, and calling upon him, and comfortable thinking of the glory to come, and the forsaking of our sins, and the loving of one another, and delighting ourselves in the service of God? Are these such things as should make men mad?

4. And whereas you say, that these matters are too high for us, you accuse God himself for making this our work, and giving us his word, and commanding all that will be blessed, to meditate in it day and night. Are the matters which we are made for, and which we live for, too high for us to meddle with? This is plainly to unman us, and to make beasts of us, as if we were like to them that must meddle with no higher matters than what belongeth to flesh and earth, if heaven be too high for you to think on, and to provide for, it will be too high for you ever to possess.

5. If God should sometimes suffer any weak-headed person to be distracted by thinking of eternal things; this is because they misunderstand them, and run without a guide. And of the two, I had rather be in the case of such an one, than of the mad, unconverted world, that take their distraction to be their wisdom.

Object. 8. 'I do not think that God doth care so much what men think, or speak, or do, as to make so great a matter of it.'

Answ. It seems then, you take the word of God to be false, and then what will you believe? But your own reason might teach you better, if you believe not the Scriptures: for you see God doth not set so light by us, but that he vouchsafed to make us, and still preserveth us, and daily upholdeth us, and provideth for us; and will any wise man make a curious frame for nothing? Will you make, or buy a clock, or a watch, and daily look to it, and not care whether it go true or false? Surely if you believe not a particular eye of Providence observing your hearts and lives, you cannot believe or expect any particular Providence to observe your wants and troubles, to relieve you. And if God had so little cared for you, as you imagine, you would

never have lived till now : a hundred diseases would have striven which should first destroy you. Yea, the devil would have haunted you, and fetched you away alive, as the great fishes devour the less ; and as ravenous beasts and birds devour others. You cannot think that God made man for no end or use : and if he made him for any, it was sure for himself. And can you think he cares not whether his end be accomplished, and whether we do the work that we are made for ?

Yea, by this atheistical objection, you make God to have made, and upheld all the world, in vain. For what are all other lower creatures for, but for man ? What doth the earth but bear us, and nourish us ? And the beasts do serve us with their labours and lives : and so of the rest. And hath God made so glorious an habitation, and set man to dwell in it, and made all his servants ; and now doth he look for nothing at his hands ? Nor care how he thinks, or speaks, or lives ? This is most unreasonable.

Object. 9. ' It was a better world when men did not make so much ado in religion.'

Ans. It hath ever been the custom to praise the time past. That world that you speak of, was wont to say, It was a better world in our forefathers' days, and so did they of their forefathers. This is but an old custom, because we all feel the evil of our own times, but we see not that which was before us.

2. Perhaps you speak as you think : worldlings think the world is at the best, when it is agreeable to their minds ; and when they have most mirth and worldly pleasure. And I doubt not but the devil, as well as you, would say, that then it was a better world ; for then he had more service, and less disturbance ; but the world is best, when God is most loved, regarded and obeyed. And how else will you know when the world is good or bad, but by this ?

Object. 10. ' There are so many ways and religions, that we know not which to be of ; and therefore we will be even as we are.'

Ans. Because there are many, will you be of that way that you may be sure is wrong ? None are farther out of the way, than worldly, fleshly, unconverted sinners. For they do not err in this or that opinion, as many sects do ;

but in the very scope and drift of their lives. If you were going a journey that your life lay on, would you stop or turn again, because you meet some cross-ways, or because you see some travellers go the horse-way, and some the foot-way, and some perhaps break over the hedge, yea, and some miss the way? Or would you not rather be more careful to inquire the way? If you have some servants that know not how to do your work right, and some that are unfaithful, would you take it well at any of the rest, that would therefore be idle and do you no service, because they see the rest so bad?

Object. 11. 'I do not see that it goes any better with those that are so godly, than with other men. They are as poor, and in as much trouble as others.'

Answ. And perhaps in much more, when God sees it meet. They take not an earthly prosperity for their wages. They have laid up their treasure and hopes in another world, or else they are not Christians indeed. The less they have, the more is behind: and they are content to wait till then.

Object. 12. 'When you have said all that you can, I am resolved to hope well, and trust in God, and do as well as I can, and not make so much ado.'

Answ. 1. Is that doing as well as you can, when you will not turn to God, but your heart is against his holy and diligent service? It is as well as you will, indeed: but that is your misery.

2. My desire is that you should hope and trust in God. But for what is it that you will hope? Is it to be saved, if you turn and be sanctified? For this you have God's promise; and therefore hope for it, and spare not; but if you hope to be saved without conversion and a holy life, this is not to hope in God, but in satan, or yourselves; for God hath given you no such promise; but told you the contrary; but it is satan and self-love that made you such promises, and raised you to such hopes.

Well, if these, and such as these, be all you have to say against conversion, and a holy life, your all is nothing, and worse than nothing; and if these, and such as these, seem reasons sufficient to persuade you to forsake God, and cast yourselves into hell, the Lord deliver you from such reasons,

and from such blind understandings, and from such senseless, hardened hearts. Dare you stand to every one of these reasons at the bar of God? Do you think it will then serve your turn, to say, 'Lord I did not turn, because I had so much to do in the world, or, because I did not like the lives of some professors, or, because I saw men of so many minds?' O how easily will the light of that day confound and shame such reasons as these! Had you the world to look after? Let the world which you served, now pay you your wages, and save you if it can! Had you not a better world to look after first? And were ye not commanded to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness, and promised, that other things should be added to you^k? And were you not told, "that godliness was profitable to all things, having the promise of this life, and of that which is to come^l? Did the sins of professors hinder you? You should rather have been the more heedful, and learned by their falls to beware; and have been the more careful, and not the more careless; it was the Scripture and not their lives, that was your rule. Did the many opinions of the world hinder you? Why, the Scripture that was your rule, did teach you but one way, and that was the right way; if you had followed that, even in so much as was plain and easy, you would never have miscarried. Will not such answers as these confound and silence you? If these will not, God hath those that will. When he asketh the man, Matt. xxii. 12. "Friend how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?" That is, what dost thou in my church amongst professed Christians, without a holy heart and life? What answer did he make? Why, the text saith, "He was speechless," he had nothing to say. The clearness of the case, and the majesty of God, will then easily stop the mouths of the most confident of you, though you will not be put down by any thing that we can say to you now, but will make good your cause, be it never so bad. I know already, that never a reason that now you can give me, will do you any good at last, when your case must be opened before the Lord and all the world.

Nay, I scarce think that your own consciences are well satisfied with your reasons. For if they are, it seems then you have not so much as a purpose to repent: but if you do

^k Matt. vi. 33.

^l 1 Tim. iv. 8.

but purpose to repent, it seems you do not put much confidence in your reasons which you bring against it.

What say you, unconverted sinners? Have you any good reason to give, why you should not Turn, and presently Turn with all your hearts? Or, will you go to hell in despite of reason itself? Bethink you what you do, in time, for it will shortly be too late to bethink you. Can you find any fault with God, or his work, or wages? Is he a bad master? Is the devil whom you serve a better? Or is the flesh a better? Is there any harm in a holy life? Is a life of worldliness and ungodliness better? Do you think in your conscience, that it would do you any harm to be converted, and live a holy life? What harm can it do you? Is it harm to you to have the Spirit of Christ within you? And to have a cleansed, purified heart? If it be bad to be holy, why doth God say, "Be ye holy, for I am holy?" Is it evil to be like God? Is it not said, that "God made man in his own image?" Why, this holiness is his image: this Adam lost, and this Christ by his word and Spirit would restore to you, as he doth to all that he will save. Why were you baptized into the Holy Ghost; and why do you baptize your children into the Holy Ghost, as your Sanctifier, if ye will not be sanctified by him, but think it a hurt to be sanctified? Tell me truly, as before the Lord, though you are loath to live a holy life, had you not rather die in the case of those that do so, than of others? If you were to die this day, had you not rather die in the case of a converted man, than of the unconverted? Of a holy and heavenly man, than of a carnal, earthly man? And would you not say as Balaam, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his?" And why will you not now be of the mind that you will be of then? First or last you must come to this; either to be converted, or to wish you had been, when it is too late.

But what is it you are afraid of losing if you Turn? Is it your friends? You will but change them: God will be your friend, and Christ and the Spirit will be your friend, and every Christian will be your friend. You will get one friend that will stand in more stead than all the friends in the world could have done. The friends you lose would

^a 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. Lev. xx. 7.

^o Numb. xxiii. 10.

have but enticed you to hell, but could not have delivered you ; but the friend you get will save you from hell, and bring you to his own eternal rest.

Is it your pleasures that you are afraid of losing? You think you shall never have a merry day again, if once you be converted. Alas! that you should think it a greater pleasure to live in foolish sports and merriments, and please your flesh, than live in the believing thoughts of glory, and in the love of God, and in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, in which the state of grace consisteth. If it be a greater pleasure to you to think of your lands and inheritance, (if you were lord of all the country,) than it is to a child to play with pins ; why should it not be a greater joy to you to think of the kingdom of heaven being yours, than all the riches or pleasures of the world? As it is but foolish childishness that makes children so delight in gawds, that they would not leave them for all your lands ; so it is but foolish worldliness, and fleshliness, and wickedness, that makes you so much delight in your houses, and lands, and meat, and drink, and ease, and honour, as that you would not part with them for heavenly delights. But what will you do for pleasure when these are gone? Do you not think of that? When your pleasures end in horror, and go out with a stinking snuff, the pleasures of the saints are then at the best. I have had myself but a little taste of the heavenly pleasures, in the forethoughts of the blessed approaching day, and in the present persuasions of the love of God in Christ ; but I have taken too deep a draught of earthly pleasures, (so that you may see, if I be partial, it is on your side,) and yet I must profess from that little experience, that there is no comparison. There is more joy to be had in a day (if the sun of life shine clear upon us), in the state of holiness, than in a whole life of sinful pleasure ; I had “ rather be a door-keeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. A day in his courts is better than a thousand” any where else^p. The mirth of the wicked is like the laughter of a madman, that knows not his own misery : and therefore Solomon saith of such laughter, “ it is mad, and of mirth, what doth it?—It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting ; for that is

^p Psal. lxxxiv. 10.

the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter; for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning, but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than to hear the song of fools; for as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of a fool⁹." All the pleasure of fleshly things, is but like the scratching of a man that hath the itch; it is his disease that makes him desire it: and a wise man had rather be without his pleasure, than be troubled with his itch. Your loudest laughter is but like that of a man that is tickled, he laughs when he hath no cause of joy. And it is a wiser thing for a man to give all his estate and his life, to be tickled to make him laugh, than for you to part with the love of God, and the comforts of holiness, and the hopes of heaven, and to cast yourselves into damnation, that you may have your flesh tickled with the pleasure of sin for a little while. Judge as you are men whether this be a wise man's part. It is your carnal, unsanctified nature that makes a holy life seem grievous to you, and a course of sensuality seem more delightful. If you will but Turn, the Holy Ghost will give you another nature and inclination, and then it will be more pleasant to you to be rid of your sin, than now it is to keep it; and you will then say that you knew not what a comfortable life was till now, and that it was never well with you, till God and holiness were your delight.

Quest. 'But how cometh it to pass, that men should be so unreasonable in the matters of salvation? They have wit enough in other matters; what makes them so loath to be converted, that there should need so many words in so plain a case; and all will not do, but the most will live and die unconverted?'

Ans. To name them only in few words, the causes are these.

1. Men are naturally in love with earth and flesh, they are born sinners, and their nature hath an enmity to God and godliness, as the nature of a serpent hath to a man. And when all that we can say, goes against the habitual inclinations of their natures, no marvel if it little prevail.

⁹ Eccl. ii. 2. vii. 2. 6.

2. They are in darkness and know not the very things that they hear. Like a man that was born blind, and hears a high commendation of the light: but what will hearing do, unless he sees it? They know not what God is, nor what is the power of the cross of Christ, nor what the Spirit of holiness is, nor what it is to live in love by faith. They know not the certainty, and suitableness, and excellency of the heavenly inheritance. They know not what conversion, and a holy mind and conversation are, even when they hear of them. They are in a mist of ignorance, they are lost and bewildered in sin, like a man that hath lost himself in the night, and knows not where he is, nor how to come to himself again, till the daylight do recover him.

3. They are wilfully confident that they need no conversion, but some partial amendment; and that they are in the way to heaven already, and are converted, when they are not. And if you meet a man that is quite out of his way, you may long enough call on him to turn back again, if he will not believe you that he is out of the way.

4. They are become slaves to their flesh, and drowned in the world to make provision for it. Their lusts, and passions, and appetites have distracted them, and got such a hand over them, that they cannot tell how to deny them, or how to mind any thing else. So that the drunkard saith, 'I love a cup of good drink and cannot forbear it.' The glutton saith, 'I love good cheer, and I cannot forbear.' The fornicator saith, 'I love to have my lusts fulfilled, and I cannot forbear.' And the gamester loveth to have his sports, and he cannot forbear. So that they are even become captivated slaves to their flesh, and their very wilfulness is become an impotency, and what they would not do, they say they cannot. And the worldling is so taken up with earthly things, that he hath neither heart, nor mind, nor time for heavenly; but as in Pharaoh's dream, the lean kine did eat up the fat ones; so this lean and barren earth do eat up all the thoughts of heaven.

5. Some are so carried away by the stream of evil company, that they are possessed with hard thoughts of a godly life, by hearing them speak against it: or at least they think they may venture to do as they see most do; and so they hold on in their sinful ways. And when one is cut off and

cast into hell, and another snatched away from among them, to the same condemnation, it doth not much daunt them; because they see not whither they are gone. Poor wretches! They hold on in their ungodliness for all this; for they little know that their companions are now lamenting it in torments. In Luke xvi. the rich man in hell would fain have had one to warn his five brethren, lest they should come to that place of torment. It is like he knew their minds and lives, and knew that they were hasting thither, and little dreamed that he was there; yea, and little would have believed one that should have told them so. I remember a passage a gentleman told me he saw upon a bridge over the Severn^r. A man was driving a flock of fat lambs, and something meeting them and hindering their passage, one of the lambs leaped upon the wall of the bridge, and his legs slipping from under him, he fell into the stream, and the rest seeing him, did one after another leap over the bridge into the stream, and were all, or almost all, drowned. Those that were behind, did little know what was become of them that were gone before, but thought that they might venture to follow their companions. But as soon as ever they were over the wall and falling headlong, the case was altered. Even so it is with unconverted, carnal men. One dieth by them, and drops into hell, and another follows the same way; and yet they will go after them, because they think not whither they are going. Oh! but when death has once opened their eyes, and they see what is on the other side of the wall, even in another world, then what would they give to be where they were?

6. Moreover, they have a subtle, malicious enemy, that is unseen of them, and plays his game in the dark; and it is his principal business to hinder their conversion; and therefore to keep them where they are, by persuading them not to believe the Scriptures, or not to trouble their minds with these matters; or by persuading them to think ill of a godly life, or to think that it is more ado than needs, and that they may be saved without conversion, and without all this 'stir; and that God is so merciful, that he will not damn any such as they, or, at least, that they may stay a little longer, and take their pleasure, and follow the world a little longer yet, and then let it go, and repent hereafter; and by such jug-

^r Mr. R. Rowley, of Shrewsbury, upon Acham bridge.

gling, deluding cheats as these, the devil keeps most in his captivity, and leadeth them to his misery.

These, and such like impediments as these, do keep so many thousands unconverted, when God hath done so much, and Christ hath suffered so much, and ministers have said so much, for their conversion; when their reasons are silenced, and they are not able to answer the Lord that calls after them, "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" yet all comes to nothing with the greatest part of them; and they leave us no more to do after all, but to sit down and lament their wilful misery.

I have now shewed you the reasonableness of God's commands, and the unreasonableness of wicked men's disobedience. If nothing will serve turn, but men will yet refuse to Turn, we are next to consider who it is long of if they be damned. And this brings me to the last Doctrine; which is,
Doct. VII. That if, after all this, men will not turn, it is not long of God that they are condemned but of themselves, even their own wilfulness. They die because they will die, that is, because they will not Turn.

If you will go to hell, what remedy? God here acquits himself of your blood; it shall not lie on him if you be lost. A negligent minister may draw it upon him; and those that encourage you, or hinder you not, in sin, may draw it upon them; but be sure of it, it shall not lie upon God. Saith the Lord concerning his unprofitable vineyard, "Judge I pray you, between me and my vineyard, what could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done to it?" When he had "planted it in a fruitful soil, and fenced it, and gathered out the stones, and planted it with the choicest vines." What should he have done more to it? He hath made you men, and endued you with reason; he hath furnished you with external necessities, all creatures are at your service; he hath given you a righteous, perfect law; when you had broke it, and undone yourselves, he had pity on you, and sent his Son by a miracle of condescending mercy to die for you, and be a sacrifice for your sins, and he "was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." The Lord Jesus hath made you a deed of gift of himself, and eternal life with him, on the condition you will but accept it,

and return. He hath on this reasonable condition, offered you the free pardon of all your sins : he hath written this in his word, and sealed it by his Spirit, and sent it you by his ministers ; they have made the offer to you a hundred and a hundred times, and called you to accept it, and turn to God. They have in his name entreated you, and reasoned the case with you, and answered all your frivolous objections. - He hath long waited on you, and staid your leisure ; and suffered you to abuse him to his face. He hath mercifully sustained you in the midst of your sins : he hath compassed you about with all sorts of mercies : he hath also intermixed afflictions, to mind you of your folly, and call you to your wits : and his Spirit hath been often striving with your hearts, and saying there, ‘ Turn sinner, turn to him that calleth thee : whither art thou going ? What art thou doing ? Dost thou know what will be the end ? How long wilt thou hate thy friends, and love thine enemies ? When wilt thou let go all, and Turn, and deliver up thyself to God, and give thy Redeemer the possession of thy soul ? When shall it once be ? ’ These pleadings have been used with thee ; and when thou hast delayed, thou hast been urged to make haste, and God hath called to thee. “ To-day, while it is called to-day, harden not your heart ? Why not now without any more delay ? ” Life hath been set before you ; the joys of heaven have been opened to you in the Gospel : the certainty of them hath been manifested ; the certainty of the everlasting torments of the damned hath been declared to you, unless you would have had a sight of heaven and hell, what could you desire more ? Christ hath been, as it were, set forth crucified before your eyes, Gal. iii. 1. You have been a hundred times told, that you are but lost men, till you come unto him ; as oft as you have been told of the evil of sin, and of the vanity of sin, the world, and all the pleasures and wealth it can afford ; of the shortness and uncertainty of your lives, and the endless duration of the joy or torment of the life to come. All this and more than this, have you been told, and told again, even till you were weary of hearing it, and till you could make the lighter of it, because you had so often heard it ; like the smith’s dog, that is brought, by custom, to sleep under the noise of the hammers, when the sparks do fly about

his ears; and though all this have not converted you, yet you are alive, and might have mercy, to this day, if you had but hearts to entertain it. And now let reason itself be judge, whether it be long of God or you, if after all this you will be unconverted, and be damned? If you die now it is because you will die. What should be said more to you? Or what course should be taken, that is more like to prevail? Are you able to say and make it good, 'We would fain have been converted and become new creatures, but we could not; we would have changed our company, and our thoughts, and our discourse, but we could not.' Why could you not if you would? What hindered you, but the wickedness of your hearts? Who forced you to sin? Or who did hold you back from duty? Had you not the same teaching, and time, and liberty to be godly as your godly neighbours had? Why then could you not have been godly as well as they? Were the church doors shut against you, or did you not keep away yourselves? Or sit and sleep, or hear as if you did not hear? Did God put in any exceptions against you in his word, when he invited sinners to return, and when he promised mercy to those that do return? Did he say, 'I will pardon all that repent, except thee?' Did he shut you out from the liberty of his holy worship? Did he forbid you to pray to him any more than others? You know he did not. God did not drive you away from him, but you forsook him, and run away yourselves. And when he called you to him, you would not come. If God had excepted you out of the general promise and offer of mercy, or had said to you, 'Stand off, I will have nothing to do with such as you; pray not to me, for I will not hear you. If you repent never so much, and cry for mercy never so much, I will not regard you.' If God had left you nothing to trust to but desperation, then you had had a fair excuse. You might have said, 'To what end should I repent and turn, when it will do no good?' But this was not your case. You might have had Christ to be your Lord and Saviour, your Head and Husband, as well as others, and you would not; because that ye felt not yourselves sick enough for the physician; and because you could not spare your disease; in your hearts ye said as those rebels, Luke xix. 14. "We will not have this man to reign over us." Christ would have gathered you under the wings

of his salvation, and you would not^t. What desires of your welfare did the Lord express in his holy word? With what compassion did he stand over you and say, “O that my people had hearkened unto me, and that they had walked in my way^u.” “O that there were such a heart in this people, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever^x.” “O that they were wise, that they understood this; and that they would consider their latter end^y.” He would have been your God, and done all for you that your souls could well desire: but you loved the world and your flesh above him; and, therefore, you would not hearken to him; though you complimented with him, and gave him high titles, yet when he came to the closing, you would have none of him. No marvel then, if “he gave you up to your own heart’s lusts, and you walked in your own counsels^z.” He condescends to reason, and pleads the case with you, and asks you, “What is there in me, or my service, that you should be so much against me? What harm have I done thee, sinner? Have I deserved this unkind dealing at thy hands? Many mercies have I shewed thee; for which of them dost thou despise me? Is it I, or is it satan, that is thy enemy? Is it I, or is it thy carnal self that would undo thee? Is it a holy life, or a life of sin, that thou hast cause to fly from? If thou be undone, thou procurest this to thyself, by forsaking me the Lord, that would have saved thee^a.” “Doth not thine own wickedness correct thee, and thy sin reprove thee. Thou mayst see that it is an evil and bitter thing, that thou hast forsaken me^b.” “What iniquity have ye found in me, that you have followed after vanity, and forsaken me^c.” He calleth out, as it were, to the brutes to hear the controversy that he hath against you. “Hear O mountains, the Lord’s controversy, and ye strong foundations of the earth; for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel. O my people, what have I done to thee, and wherein have I wearied thee, testify against me; for I brought thee out of Egypt, and redeemed thee^d.” “Hear, O heavens, and give ear O earth,

^t Matt. xxiii. 27.^y Deut. xxxii. 29.^b Jer. ii. 19.^u Psal. lxxxii. 13.^z Psal. lxxxii. 11, 12.^c Jer. ii. 5, 6.^x Deut. v. 29.^a Jer. ii. 17.^d Mic. vi. 2—5.

for the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers^e!" &c. "Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy father that bought thee, and established thee^f?" When he saw that you forsook him even for nothing, and turned away from your Lord and life, to hunt after the chaff and feathers of the world, he told you of your folly, and called you to a more profitable employment. "Wherefore do you spend your 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, even the sure mercies of David. 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^g." And so Isa. i. 16—18. And when you would not hear, what complaints have you put him to, charging it on you as your wilfulness, and stubbornness? "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; for my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters; and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water^h." Many a time hath Christ proclaimed that free invitation to you, "Let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freelyⁱ." But you put him to complain after all his offers; "They will not come to me that they may have life^k." He hath invited you to feast with him in the kingdom of his grace; and you have had excuses from your grounds, and your cattle, and your worldly business, and when you would not come, you have said you could not, and provoked him to resolve that you should never taste of his supper^l. And who is it long of

^e Isa. i. 2—4.^f Deut. xxxii. 6.^g Isa. lv. 1—3, 6, 7.^h Jer. ii. 12, 13.ⁱ Rev. xxii. 17^k John v. 40.^l Luke xiv. 15—23.

now but yourselves? And what can you say is the chief cause of your damnation, but your own wills? You would be damned. The whole case is laid open by Christ himself, Prov. i. 20. to the end: "Wisdom crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets: she crieth in the chief place of concourse. How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof; behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you. Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would have none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. They would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof: therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from the fear of evil." I thought best to recite the whole text at large to you, because it doth so fully shew the cause of the destruction of the wicked. It is not because God would not teach them but because they would not learn. It is not because God would not call them, but because they would not turn at his reproof. Their wilfulness is their undoing.

USE. From what hath been said, you may further learn these following things:

1. From hence you may see, not only what blasphemy and impiety it is, to lay the blame of men's destruction upon God: but also how unfit these wicked wretches are, to bring in such a charge against their Maker. They cry out upon God, and say, he gives them no grace, and his threatenings are severe, and God forbid that all should be damned that be not converted and sanctified, and they think it hard measure, that a short sin should have an endless suffering; and if they be damned, they say, they cannot help it. When in

the meantime they are busy about their own destruction, even cutting the throat of their own souls, and will not be persuaded to hold their hand. They think God were cruel if he should damn them, and yet they are cruel to themselves, and they will run into the fire of hell, when God hath told them it is a little before them; and neither entreaties nor threatenings, nor any thing that can be said, will stop them. We see them almost undone; their careless, worldly, fleshly, lives do tell us, that they are in the power of the devil; we know, if they die before they are converted, all the world cannot save them; and knowing the uncertainty of their lives, we are afraid every day lest they drop into the fire. And, therefore, we entreat them to pity their own souls, and not to undo themselves when mercy is at hand, and they will not hear us. We entreat them to cast away their sin, and come to Christ without delay, and to have some mercy on themselves; but they will have none. And yet they think that God must be cruel if he condemn them. O wilful, wretched sinners! It is not God that is so cruel to you; it is you that are cruel to yourselves. You are told, you must Turn or Burn, and yet you turn not. You are told, that if you will needs keep your sins, you shall keep the curse of God with them, and yet you will keep them. You are told, that there is no way to happiness but by holiness, and yet you will not be holy. What would you have God say more to you? What would you have him do with his mercy? He offered it to you, and you will not have it. You are in the ditch of sin and misery, and he would give you his hand to help you out, and you refuse his help; he would cleanse you of your sins, and you had rather keep them. You love your lusts, and love your gluttony, and sports, and drunkenness, and will not let them go; and would you have him bring you to heaven whether you will or no? Or would you have him to bring you and your sins to heaven together? Why, that is an impossibility; you may as well expect he should turn the sun into darkness. What, an unsanctified, fleshly heart be in heaven! it cannot be! "There entereth nothing that is unclean," Rev. xxi. 17. "For what communication hath light with darkness, or Christ with Belial?" 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15. "All the day long hath he stretched out his hands to a disobedient and

gainsaying people," Rom. x. 25. What will ye do now? Will you cry to God for mercy? Why, God calleth upon you to have mercy upon yourselves, and you will not; ministers see the poisoned cup in the drunkard's hand, and tell him, 'There is poison in it,' and desire him to have mercy on his soul, and forbear, and he will not hear us; drink it he must, and will; he loves it, and, therefore, though hell comes next, he saith, he cannot help it. What should one say to such men as these? We tell the ungodly, careless worldlings, 'It is not such a life that will serve the turn, or ever bring you to heaven. If a bear were at your back, you would mend your pace; and when the curse of God is at your back, and satan and hell are at your back, you will not stir, but ask, 'What needs all this ado?' Is an immortal soul of no more worth? O have mercy upon yourselves! But they will have no mercy on themselves, nor once regard us. We tell them the end will be bitter. Who can dwell with the everlasting fire? And yet they will have no mercy upon themselves. And yet will these shameful wretches say, that God is more merciful than to condemn them? when it is themselves that cruelly and unmercifully run upon condemnation? And if we should go to them with our hats in our hands, and entreat them, we cannot stop them; if we should fall down on our knees to them, we cannot stop them; but to hell they will, and yet will not believe that they are going thither. If we beg of them, for the sake of God that made them, and preserveth them; for the sake of Christ that died for them; for the sake of their own poor souls, to pity themselves, and go no farther in the way to hell, but come to Christ while his arms are open, and enter into the state of life, while the door stands open, and now take mercy while mercy may be had, they will not be persuaded. If we should die for it, we cannot get them so much as now and then to consider with themselves of the matter, and to Turn. And yet they can say, 'I hope God will be merciful.' Did you never consider what he saith, Isa. xxvii. 11. "It is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them; and he that formed them will shew them no favour." If another man will not clothe you when you are naked, and feed you when you are hungry, you will say he is unmerciful. If he should cast

you into prison, or beat or torment you, you would say he is unmerciful. And yet you would do a thousand times more against yourselves, even cast away both soul and body for ever, and never complain of your own unmercifulness. Yea, and God that waited upon you all the while with his mercy, must be taken to be unmerciful, if he punish you after all this. Unless the holy God of heaven will give these wretches leave to trample upon his Son's blood, and with the Jews, as it were, again to spit in his face, and do despite to the Spirit of Grace, and make a jest of sin, and a mock at holiness, and set more light by saving mercy, than by the filth of their fleshly pleasure; and unless, after all this, he will save them by the mercy which they cast away, and would none of, God himself must be called unmerciful by them; but he will be justified when he judgeth; and he will not stand or fall at the bar of a sinful worm.

I know there are many particular cavils, that are brought by them against the Lord, but I shall not here stay to answer them particularly, having done it already in my "Treatise on Judgment," to which I shall refer them. Had the disputing part of the world been as careful to avoid sin and destruction, as they have been busy in searching after the cause of them, and forward indirectly to impute it to God, they might have exercised their wits more profitably, and have less wronged God, and sped better themselves. When so ugly a monster as sin is within us, and so heavy a thing as punishment is on us, and so dreadful a thing as hell is before us, one would think it should be an easy question who is in the fault, and whether God or man be the principal or culpable cause? Some men are such favourable judges of themselves, that they are proner to accuse the Infinite Perfection and Goodness itself, than their own hearts, and imitate their first parents, that said, "The serpent tempted me, and the woman that thou gavest me, gave unto me, and I did eat," secretly implying that God was the cause. So say they, 'The understanding that thou gavest me was unable to discern; the will that thou gavest me, was unable to make a better choice; the objects which thou didst set before me, did entice me; the temptation which thou didst permit to assault me, prevailed against me.' And some are so loath to think, that God can make a self-determining

creature, that they dare not deny him that which they take to be his prerogative, to be the determiner of the will in every sin, as the first efficient, immediate, physical cause. And many could be content to acquit God from so much causing of evil, if they could but reconcile it with his being the chief cause of good. As if truths would be no longer truths, than we are able to see them in their perfect order and coherence, because our ravelled wits cannot set them right together, nor assign each truth its proper place, we presume to conclude, that some must be cast away. This is the fruit of proud self-conceitedness, when men receive not God's truth as a child his lesson, in a holy submission to the holy omniscience of our teacher, but as censurers that are too wise to learn.

Object. 'But we cannot convert ourselves till God convert us; we can do nothing without his grace. It is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy.'

Answ. 1. God hath two degrees of mercy to shew: the mercy of conversion first, and the mercy of salvation last. The latter he will give to none but those that will and run, and hath promised it to them only. The former is to make them willing that were unwilling; and though your own willingness and endeavours deserve not his grace, yet your wilful refusal deserveth that it should be denied unto you. Your disability is your very unwillingness itself, which excuseth not your sin, but maketh it the greater. You could turn, if you were but truly willing, and if your wills themselves are so corrupted, that nothing but effectual grace will move them, you have the more cause to seek for that grace, and yield to it, and do what you can in the use of the means, and not neglect it, nor set against it. Do what you are able first, and then complain of God for denying you grace, if you have cause.

Object. 'But you seem to intimate, all this while, that man hath freewill.'

Answ. The dispute about freewill is beyond your capacity, I shall, therefore, now trouble you with no more but this about it. Your will is naturally a free, that is, a self-determining faculty, but it is viciously inclined, and backward to do good; and, therefore, we see by sad experience that it

hath not a virtuous, moral freedom. But that is the wickedness of it which deserveth the punishment. And I pray you let us not befool ourselves with opinions. Let the case be your own. If you had an enemy so malicious, that he falls upon you and beats you every time he meets you, and takes away the lives of your children, will you excuse him, because he saith, 'I have not freewill, it is my nature, I cannot choose, unless God give me grace?' If you have a servant that robbeth you, will you take such an answer from him? Might not every thief and murderer that is hanged at the assize, give such an answer, 'I have not free will, I cannot change my own heart. What can I do without God's grace?' And shall they, therefore, be acquitted? If not, why then should you think to be acquitted for a course of sin against the Lord?

2. From hence also you may observe these three things together. (1.) What a subtle tempter satan is. (2.) What a deceitful thing sin is. (3.) What a foolish corrupted creature man is. A subtle tempter, indeed, that can persuade the greatest part of the world to go wilfully into everlasting fire, when they have so many warnings and dissuasives as they have? A deceitful thing is sin, indeed, that can bewitch so many thousands to part with everlasting life, for a thing so base and utterly unworthy! A foolish creature is man, indeed, that will be so cheated of his salvation for nothing; yea, for a known nothing! and that by an enemy, and a known enemy! You would think it impossible that any man in his wits should be persuaded for a trifle, to cast himself into the fire or water, into a coal-pit, to the destruction of his life; and yet men will be enticed to cast themselves into hell. If your natural lives were in your own hands, that you should not die till you would kill yourselves, how long would most of you live? And yet, when your everlasting life is so far in your own hands, under God, that you cannot be undone till you undo yourselves, how few of you will forbear your own undoing? Ah, what a silly thing is man! and what a bewitching and befooling thing is sin!

3. From hence also you may learn, that it is no great wonder, if wicked men be hinderers of others in the way to heaven, and would have as many unconverted as they can, and would draw them into sin, and keep them in it. Can

you expect that they should have mercy on others, that have none upon themselves? and that they should much stick at the destruction of others, that stick not to destroy themselves? They do no worse by others, than they do by themselves.

4. Lastly, You may hence learn that the greatest enemy to man is himself, and the greatest judgment in this life, that can befall him, is to be left to himself; and that the great work that grace hath to do, is to save us from ourselves, and the greatest accusations and complaints of men should be against themselves, and that the greatest work we have to do ourselves, is to resist ourselves; and the greatest enemy we should daily pray, and watch, and strive against, is our carnal hearts and wills; and the greatest part of your work, if you would do good to others, and help them to heaven, is to save them from themselves, even from their own blind understandings, and corrupted wills, and perverse affections, and violent passions, and unruly senses. I only name all these for brevity sake, and leave them to your farther consideration,

Well, sirs, now we have found out the great delinquent and murderer of souls (even men's selves, their own wills); what remains, but that you judge according to the evidence, and confess this great iniquity before the Lord, and be humbled for it, and do so no more? To these three ends distinctly, I shall add a few words more. 1. Farther to convince you. 2. To humble you. And 3. To reform you, if there be yet any hopes.

1. We know so much of the exceeding gracious nature of God, who is willing to do good, and delighteth to shew mercy, that we have no reason to suspect him of being the culpable cause of our death, or call him cruel. He made all good, and he preserveth and maintaineth all. "The eyes of all things do wait upon him, and he giveth them their meat in due season; he openeth his hand, and satisfieth the desires of all the living^m." He is not only "righteous in all his ways," (and, therefore, will deal justly) "and holy in all his works, (and, therefore, not the author of sin) but "he is also good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his worksⁿ."

But as for man, we know his mind is dark, his will per-

^m Psal. cxlv. 15, 16.

ⁿ Psal. cxlv. 17. 9.

verse, his affections carry him so headlong, that he is fitted by folly and corruption, to such a work as the destroying of himself. If you saw a lamb lie killed in the way, would you sooner suspect the sheep, or the dog, or wolf to be the author of it, if they both stand by ; or if you see a house broken, and the people murdered, would you sooner suspect the prince, or judge, that is wise and just, and had no need ; or a known thief, or murderer ? I say, therefore, as James, i. 13—15. “ Let no man say when he is tempted, that he is tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man,” (to draw him to sin) “ but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin : and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” You see here, that sin is the brat of your own concupiscence, and not to be fathered on God ; and that death is the offspring of your own sin, and the fruit which it will yield you as soon as it is ripe. You have a treasure of evil in yourselves, as a spider hath of poison, from whence you are bringing forth hurt to yourselves ; and spinning such webs as entangle your own souls. Your nature shews it is you that are the cause.

2. It is evident, you are your own destroyers, in that you are so ready to entertain any temptation almost that is offered you. Satan is scarce readier to move you to any evil, than you are ready to hear, and to do as he would have you. If he would tempt your understanding to error, and prejudice, you yield. If he would hinder you from good resolutions, it is soon done. If he would cool any good desires or affections, it is soon done. If he would kindle any lust, or vile affections and desires in you, it is soon done. If he would put you on to evil thoughts, words, or deeds, you are so free, that he needs no rod or spur. If he would keep you from holy thoughts, and words, and ways, a little doth it ; you need no curb. You examine not his suggestions, nor resist them with any resolution, nor cast them out as he casts them in, nor quench the sparks which he endeavoureth to kindle. But you set in with him and meet him half-way, and embrace his motions, and tempt him to tempt you. And it is easy to catch such greedy fish that are ranging for a bait, and will take the bare hook.

3. Your destruction is evidently long of yourselves, in that you resist all that would help to save you, and would do you good, or hinder you from undoing yourselves. God would help and save you by his word, and you resist it, it is too strict for you. He would sanctify you by his Spirit, and you resist and quench it. If any man reprove you for your sin, you fly in his face with evil words; and if he would draw you to a holy life, and tell you of your present danger, you give him little thanks, but either bid him look to himself, he shall not answer for you; or else at best, you put him off with a heartless thanks, and will not turn when you are persuaded. If ministers would privately instruct and help you, you will not come at them, your unhumbled souls do feel but little need of their help. If they would catechise you, you are too old to be catechised, though you are not too old to be ignorant and unholy. Whatever they can say to you for your good, you are self-conceited and wise in your own eyes, (even in the depth of ignorance) that you will regard nothing that agreeth not with your present conceits, but contradict your teachers, as if you were wiser than they; you resist all that they can say to you, by your ignorance and wilfulness, and foolish cavils, and shifting evasions, and unthankful rejections; so that no good that is offered, can find any welcome acceptance or entertainment with you.

4. Moreover, it is apparent that you are self-destroyers, in that you draw the matter of your sin and destruction, even from the blessed God himself. You like not the contrivance of his wisdom. You like not his justice, but take it for cruelty. You like not his holiness, but are ready to think he is such an one as yourselves. Psal. l. 21. and makes as light of sin as you. You like not his truth, but would have his threatenings, even his peremptory threatenings, prove false. And his goodness, which you seem most highly to approve, you partly abuse to the strengthening of your sin, as if you might the freelier sin, because God is merciful, and because his grace doth so much abound.

5. Yea, you fetch destruction from your blessed Redeemer, and death from the Lord of life himself. And nothing more emboldeneth you in sin, than that Christ hath died for you; as if now the danger of death were over, and

you might boldly venture. As if Christ were become a servant to satan, and your sins, and must wait upon you while you are abusing him ; and because he is become the physician of souls, and is able to save to the utmost, all that come to God by him, you think he must suffer you to refuse his help, and throw away his medicines, and must save you, whether you will come to God by him or no ; so that a great part of your sins are occasioned by your bold presumption by the death of Christ.

Not considering that he came to redeem his people from their sin, and to sanctify them a peculiar people to himself, and to conform them in holiness to the image of their heavenly Father, and to their head.^p

6. You also fetch your own destruction from all the providences, and works of God. When you think of his eternal foreknowledge and decrees, it is to harden you in your sin, or possess your minds with quarrelling thoughts, as if his decrees might spare you the labour of repentance, and a holy life, or else were the cause of your sin and death. If he afflict you, you repine ; if he prosper you, you the more forget him, and are the more backward to the thoughts of the life to come. If the wicked prosper, you forget the end that will set all reckonings straight ; and are ready to think, it is as good to be wicked as godly. And thus you draw your death from all.

7. And the like you do from all the creatures, and mercies of God to you, he giveth them to you as the tokens of his love, and furniture for his service, and you turn them against him to the pleasing of your flesh. You eat and drink to please your appetite, and not for the glory of God, and to enable you for his work. Your clothes you abuse to pride. Your riches draw your hearts from heaven^q. Your honours and applause do puff you up ; if you have health and strength, it makes you more secure, and forget your end. Yea, other men's mercies are abused by you to your hurt. If you see their honours and dignity, you are provoked to envy them. If you see their riches, you are ready to covet them. If you look upon beauty, you are stirred up to lust. And it is well if godliness be not an eye-sore to you.

^p Matt. l. 21. Tit. ii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 15, 16. Col. iii. 10, 11. Phil. iii. 9, 10.

^q Phil. iii. 18.

8. The very gifts that God bestoweth on you, and the ordinances of grace which he hath instituted for his church you turn unto your sin. If you have better parts than others, you grow proud and self-conceited. If you have but common gifts you take them for special grace. You take the bare hearing of your duty for so good a work, as if it would excuse you for not obeying it. Your prayers are turned into sin, because you "regard iniquity in your hearts^r." "And depart not from iniquity when you call on the name of the Lord^s." "Your prayers are abominable, because you turn away your ear from hearing the law^t." And are more ready to "offer the sacrifice of fools," (thinking you do God some special service) "than to hear his word, and obey it^u." You examine not yourselves before you receive the supper of the Lord, but not discerning the Lord's body, do eat and drink judgment to yourselves^x.

9. Yea, the persons you converse with, and all their actions, you make the occasions of your sin and destruction. If they live in the fear of God, you hate them. If they live ungodly you imitate them. If the wicked are many, you think you may the more boldly follow them. If the godly be few, you are the more emboldened to despise them: if they walk exactly, you think they are too precise: if one of them fall into a particular temptation, you stumble upon them, and turn away from holiness, because others are imperfectly holy: as if you were warranted to break your necks because some others have, by their heedlessness, sprained a sinew or put out a bone. If a hypocrite discover himself, you say, 'They are all alike,' and think yourselves as honest as the best. A professor can scarce slip into any miscarriage, but because he cuts his finger, you think you may boldly cut your throats. If ministers deal plainly with you, you say they rail: if they speak gently or coldly, you either sleep under them, or are little more affected than the seats you sit upon. If any errors creep into the church, some greedily entertain them, and others reproach the Christian doctrine for them, which is most against them. And if we would draw you from any ancient, rooted

^r Psal. lxxvi. 18.^s 2 Tim. ii. 19.^t Prov. xxviii. 9.^u Eccl. v. 1.^x 1 Cor. xi. 28, 29.

error, which can but plead two, or three, or six, or seven hundred years custom, you are as much offended with a motion for reformation, as if you were to lose your life by it, and hold fast old errors while you cry out against new ones. Scarce a difference can arise among the ministers of the Gospel, but you will fetch your own death from it. And you will not hear, or at least, not obey the unquestionable doctrine of any of those that jump not with your conceits: one will not hear a minister, because he readeth his sermons, and another will not hear him, because he doth not read them. One will not hear him because he saith the Lord's prayer; and another will not hear him, because he doth not use it. One will not hear them that are for episcopacy, and another will not hear them that are against it. And thus I might shew you in many other cases, how you turn all that comes near you to your own destruction; so clear is it, that the ungodly are self-destroyers, and that their perdition is of themselves.

Methinks, now, upon the consideration of what is said, and the review of your own ways, you should bethink you what you have done, and be ashamed, and deeply humbled to remember it. If you be not, I pray you consider these following truths.

1. To be your own destroyers, is to sin against the deepest principle in your natures, even the principle of self-preservation. Every thing naturally desireth or inclineth to its own felicity, welfare, or perfection. And will you set yourselves to your own destruction? When you are commanded to love your neighbours as yourselves, it is supposed that you naturally love yourselves: but if you love your neighbours no better than yourselves, it seems you would have all the world be damned.

2. How extremely do you cross your own intentions! I know you intend not your own damnation, even when you are procuring it; you think you are but doing good to yourselves, by gratifying the desires of your flesh. But alas! it is but as a draught of cold water in a burning fever, or as the scratching of an itching wildfire, which increaseth the disease and pain. If indeed you would have pleasure, profit, or honour, seek them where they are to be found, and do not hunt after them in the way to hell.

3. What pity is it, that you should do that against yourselves which none else in earth or hell can do ! If all the world were combined against you, or all the devils in hell were combined against you, they could not destroy you without yourselves, nor make you sin, but by your own consent. And will you do that against yourselves which none else can do. You have hateful thoughts of the devil, because he is your enemy, and endeavoureth your destruction. And will you be worse than devils to yourselves ? Why thus it is with you, if you had hearts to understand it ; when you run into sin, and run from godliness, and refuse to turn at the call of God, you do more against your own souls than men or devils could do besides. And if you should set yourselves, and bend your wits to do yourselves the greatest mischief, you could not devise to do a greater.

4. You are false to the trust that God hath reposed in you. He hath much intrusted you with your own salvation ; and will you betray your trust ? He hath set you with all diligence to keep your hearts ; and is this the keeping of them^x.

5. You do even forbid all others to pity you, when you will have no pity on yourselves. If you cry to God in the day of your calamity, for mercy, mercy ; what can you expect, but that he should thrust you away, and say, ‘ Nay, thou wouldst not have mercy on thyself ; who brought this upon thee but thine own wilfulness ? ’ And if your brethren see you everlastingly in misery, how should they pity you, that were your own destroyers, and would not be dissuaded.

6. It will everlastingly make you your own tormentors in hell, to think on it, that you brought yourselves wilfully to that misery. O, what a griping thought it will be for ever, to think with yourselves, that this was your own doing. That you were warned of this day, and warned again, but it would not do ; that you wilfully sinned, and turned away from God ; that you had time as well as others, but you abused it ; you had teachers as well as others, but you refused their instructions : you had holy examples, but you did not imitate them : you were offered Christ, grace, and glory as well as others, but you had more mind to fleshly pleasures : you had a prize in your hands, but had not a heart to lay it out^y.

^x Prov. iv. 23.

^y Prov. xvii. 16.

Can it choose but torment you, to think of this your present folly? O that your eyes were opened to see what you have done in the wilful wronging of your own souls! And that you better understood those words of God, Prov. viii. 33—35. “Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord: but he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me, love death.”

And now I am come to the conclusion of this work, my heart is troubled to think how I shall leave you, lest after this the flesh should deceive you, and the world and the devil should keep you asleep, and I should leave you as I found you, till you awake in hell. Though, in care of your poor souls, I am afraid of this, as knowing the obstinacy of a carnal heart, yet I can say with the prophet Jeremiah, “I have not desired the woeful day, the Lord knoweth.” I have not with James and John, desired that fire might come down from heaven, to consume them that refused Jesus Christ. But it is the preventing of the eternal fire that I have been all this while endeavouring: and O that it had been a needless work! That God and conscience might have been as willing to spare me this labour, as some of you could have been. But dear friends, I am so loath you should lie in everlasting fire, and be shut out of heaven, if it be possible to prevent it, that I shall once more ask you, What do you now resolve? Will you Turn or Die? I look upon you as a physician on his patient, in a dangerous disease, that saith unto him, ‘Though you are so far gone, take but this medicine, and forbear but these few things that are so hurtful to you, and I dare warrant your life; but if you will not do this, you are a dead man.’ What would you think of such a man, if the physician and all the friends he hath, cannot persuade him to take one medicine to save his life, or to forbear one or two poisonous things that would kill him? This is your case. As far as you are gone in sin, do but now Turn and come to Christ, and take his remedies, and your souls shall live. Cast up your deadly sins by repentance, and return not to your poisonous vomit any more, and you

shall do well. But yet if it were your bodies, that we had to deal with, we might partly know what to do with you. Though you would not consent, you might be held or bound, while the medicine was poured down your throats, and hurtful things might be kept from you. But about your souls it cannot be so ; we cannot convert you against your wills. There is no carrying madmen to heaven in fetters. You may be condemned against your wills, because you sinned with your wills ; but you cannot be saved against your wills. The wisdom of God hath thought meet to lay men's salvation or destruction exceeding much upon the choice of their own wills : that no man shall come to heaven that choose not the way to heaven ; and no man shall come to hell, but shall be forced to say, ' I have the thing I chose, my own will did bring me hither.' Now if I could but get you to be willing, to be thoroughly, and resolvedly, and habitually willing, the work were more than half done. And alas ! must we lose our friends, and must they lose their God, their happiness, their souls, for want of this ? O God forbid ! It is a strange thing to me, that men are so inhuman and stupid in the greatest matters, that in lesser things are very civil and courteous, and good neighbours. For aught I know, I have the love of all, or almost all my neighbours, so far, that if I should send to every man in the town, or parish, or country, and request a reasonable courtesy of them, they will grant it me ; and yet when I come to request of them the greatest matter in the world, for themselves, and not for me, I can have nothing of many of them, but a patient hearing. I know not whether people think a man in the pulpit is in good sadness or not, and means as he speaks : for I think I have few neighbours, but if I were sitting familiarly with them, and telling them of what I have seen or done, or known in the world, they would believe me, and regard what I say ; but when I tell them from the infallible word of God, what they themselves shall see and know in the world to come, they shew by their lives that they do either not believe it, or not much regard it. If I met ever an one of them on the way, and told them, yonder is a coal-pit, or there is a quicksand, or there are thieves lay in wait for you, I could persuade them to turn by. But when I tell them that satan lieth in wait for them, and that sin is

poison to them, and that hell is not a matter to be jested with, they go on as if they did not hear me. Truly, neighbours, I am in as good earnest with you in the pulpit, as I am in any familiar discourse, and if ever you will regard me, I beseech you let it be here. I think there is never a man of you all, but if my own soul lay at your wills, you would be willing to save it (though I cannot promise that you would leave your sins for it). Tell me thou drunkard, art thou so cruel to me that speaks to thee, that thou wouldst not forbear a few cups of drink, if thou knewest it would save my soul from hell? Hadst thou rather I did burn there for ever, than thou shouldst live soberly as other men do? If so, may I not say, thou art an unmerciful monster, and not a man? If I came hungry or naked to one of your doors, would you not part with more than a cup of drink to relieve me? I am confident you would; if it were to save my life, I know you would (some of you) hazard your own. And yet will not be entreated to part with your sensual pleasures for your own salvation? Wouldst thou forbear a hundred cups of drink, man, to save my life, if it were in thy power, and wilt thou not do it to save thy own soul? I profess to you, sirs, I am as hearty a beggar with you this day, for the saving of your souls, as I would be for my own supply, if I were forced to come a begging to your doors. And, therefore, if you would hear me then, hear me now. If you would pity me then, be entreated now to pity yourselves. I do again beseech you, as if it were on my bended knees, that you would hearken to your Redeemer, and Turn, that you may Live. All you that have lived in ignorance, and carelessness, and presumption, to this day; and all you that have been drowned in the cares of the world, and have no mind of God and eternal glory; all you that are enslaved to your fleshly desires of meats and drinks, sports and lusts; and all you that know not the necessity of holiness, and never were acquainted with the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost upon your souls; that never embraced your blessed Redeemer by a lively faith, and with admiring and thankful apprehensions of his love, and that never felt a higher estimation of God and heaven, and a heartier love to them, than to your fleshly prosperity, and the things below: I earnestly beseech you, not only for my sake, but for the Lord's sake,

and for your soul's sake, that you go not on one day longer in your former condition, but look about you and cry to God for converting grace, that you may be made new creatures, and may escape the plagues that are a little before you. And if ever you will do any thing for me, grant me this request to Turn from your evil ways and live: deny me any thing that ever I shall ask you for myself, if you will but grant me this. And if you deny me this, I care not for any thing else that you would grant me. Nay, as ever you will do any thing at the request of the Lord that made you, and redeemed you, deny him not this; for if you deny him this, he cares for nothing that you shall grant him. As ever you would have him hear your prayers, and grant your requests, and do for you at the hour of death and day of judgment, or in any of your extremities, deny not his request now in the day of your prosperity. O sirs, believe it, death and judgment, and heaven and hell, are other matters when you come near them, than they seem to carnal eyes afar off. Then you will hear such a message as I bring you, with more awakened, regardful hearts.

Well, though I cannot hope so well of all, I will hope that some of you are by this time purposing to Turn and Live; and that you are ready to ask me, as the Jews did Peter, when they were pricked to their hearts, and said, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” How might we come to be truly converted? We are willing, if we did but know our duty. God forbid that we should choose destruction, by refusing conversion, as hitherto we have done.’

If these be the thoughts and purposes of your hearts, I say of you, as God did of a promising people, “They have well said, all that they have spoken: O that there was such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always.” Your purposes are good: O that there were but a heart in you to perform these purposes! And in hope thereof, I shall gladly give you direction what to do, and that but briefly, that you may the more easily remember it for your practice.

Direct. 1. If you would be converted and saved, labour to understand the necessity and true nature of conversion;

² Acts ii. 37.

^a Deut. v. 28, 29.

for what, and from what, and to what, and by what, it is that you must Turn.

Consider what a lamentable condition you are in till the hour of your conversion, that you may see it is not a state to be rested in. You are under the guilt of all the sins that ever you committed, and under the wrath of God, and the curse of his law ; you are bond-slaves to the devil, and daily employed in his work against the Lord, yourselves, and others. You are spiritually dead and deformed, as being void of the holy life, and nature, and image of the Lord. You are unfit for any holy work, and do nothing that is truly pleasing unto God. You are without any promise or assurance of his protection ; and live in continual danger of his justice, not knowing what hour you may be snatched away to hell, and most certain to be damned in that condition. And nothing short of conversion can prevent it. Whatever civilities, or amendments, or virtues, are short of true conversion, will never procure the saving of your souls. Keep the true sense of this natural misery, and so of the necessity of conversion, on your hearts.

And then you must understand what it is to be converted ; it is to have a new heart or disposition, and a new conversation.

Quest. 1. 'For what must we Turn ?'

Answ. For these ends following, which you may attain.

1. You shall immediately be made living members of Christ, and have interest in him, and be renewed after the image of God, and be adorned with all his graces, and quickened with a new and heavenly life, and saved from the tyranny of satan and the dominion of sin, and be justified from the curse of the law, and have the pardon of all the sins of your whole lives, and be accepted of God, and made his sons, and have liberty with boldness to call him Father, and go to him by prayer in all your needs, with a promise of acceptance ; you shall have the Holy Ghost to dwell in you, to sanctify and guide you. You shall have part in the brotherhood, communion, and prayers of the saints. You shall be fitted for God's service, and be freed from the dominion of sin, and be useful and a blessing to the place where you live, and shall have the promise of this life and that which is to come. You shall want nothing that is truly good for you, and your

necessary afflictions you will be enabled to bear. You may have some taste of the communion of God in the Spirit ; especially in all holy ordinances, where God prepareth a feast for your souls. You shall be heirs of heaven while you live on earth, and may foresee, by faith, the everlasting glory, and so may live and die in peace ; and you shall never be so low, but your peace and happiness will be incomparably greater than your misery.

How precious is every one of these blessings, which I do but briefly name, and which in this life you may receive !

And then, 2. At death your souls shall go to Christ, and at the day of judgment both soul and body shall be justified and glorified, and enter into your Master's joy ; where your happiness will consist in these particulars.

(1.) You shall be perfected yourselves : your mortal bodies shall be made immortal, and the corruptible shall put on incorruption ; you shall no more be hungry, thirsty, weary, or sick ; nor shall you need to fear either shame, sorrow, death, or hell. Your souls shall be perfectly freed from sin, and perfectly fitted for the knowledge, love, and praises of the Lord.

(2.) Your employment shall be to behold your glorified Redeemer, with all your holy fellow-citizens of heaven ; and to see the glory of the most blessed God, and to love him perfectly, and be loved by him, and to praise him everlastingly.

(3.) Your glory will contribute to the glory of the New Jerusalem, the city of the living God, which is more than to have a private felicity to yourselves.

(4.) Your glory will contribute to the glorifying of your Redeemer, who will everlastingly be magnified and pleased in you, that are the travail of his soul. And this is more than the glorifying of yourselves.

(5.) And the Eternal Majesty, the living God, will be glorified in your glory, both as he is magnified by your praises, and as he communicateth of his glory and goodness to you, and as he is pleased in you ; and in the accomplishment of his glorious works, in the glory of the New Jerusalem, and of his Son.

All this the poorest beggar of you that is converted, shall certainly and endlessly enjoy.

2. You see for what you must turn; next you must understand from what you must turn. And that is, in a word, from your carnal self, which is the end of all the unconverted. From the flesh, that would be pleased before God, and would still be enticing you thereto. From the world, that is the bait; and from the devil, that is the angler for souls, and the deceiver. And so from all known and wilful sins.

3. Next you must know to what you must turn. And that is, to God, as your end; to Christ, as the way to the Father; to holiness, as the way appointed you by Christ; and so, to the use of all the helps and means of grace offered you by the Lord.

4. Lastly, You must know by what you must turn. And that is, by Christ, as the only Redeemer and Intercessor; and by the Holy Ghost, as the Sanctifier; and by the word, as his instrument or means; and by faith and repentance, as the means and duties on your part to be performed. All this is of necessity.

Direct. 2. 'If you would be converted and saved, be much in secret, serious consideration.' Inconsiderateness undoes the world. Withdraw yourselves off into retired secrecy, and there bethink you of the end why you were made; of the life you have lived, the time you have lost, the sins you have committed; of the love, and sufferings, and fullness of Christ; of the danger you are in; of the nearness of death and judgment; and of the certainty and excellency of the joys of heaven; and of the certainty and terror of the torments of hell, and the eternity of both; and of the necessity of conversion and a holy life: steep your hearts in such considerations as these.

Direct. 3. 'If you will be converted and saved, attend upon the word of God, which is the ordinary means.' Read the Scripture, or hear it read, and other holy writings that do apply it; constantly attend upon the preaching of the word. As God will lighten the world by the sun, and not by himself alone, without it; so will he convert and save men by his ministers, who are the lights of the world^b. When he hath miraculously humbled Paul, he sendeth him to Ananias^c. And when he hath sent an angel to Cornelius, it is

^b Acts xxvi. 17, 18. Matt. v. 14.

^c Acts ix. 10.

but to bid him send for Peter, who must tell him what he is to believe and do.

Direct. 4. 'Betake yourselves to God, in a course of earnest, constant prayer.' Confess and lament your former lives, and beg his grace to illuminate and convert you. Beseech him to pardon what is past, and give you his Spirit, and change your hearts and lives, and lead you in his ways, and save you from temptation. And ply this work daily, and be not weary of it.

Direct. 5. 'Presently give over your known and wilful sins, make a stand, and go that way no further.' Be drunk no more, but avoid the places and occasion of it. Cast away your lusts and sinful pleasures with detestation. Curse and swear, and rail no more; and if you have wronged any, restore as Zaccheus did. If you will commit again your old sins, what blessing can you expect on the means of conversion?

Direct. 6. 'Presently, if possible, change your company, if it hath hitherto been bad.' Not by forsaking your necessary relations, but your unnecessary, sinful companions, and join yourselves with those that fear the Lord, and inquire of them the way to heaven^d.

Direct. 7. 'Deliver up yourselves to the Lord Jesus, as the physician of your souls, that he may pardon you by his blood, and sanctify you by his Spirit, by his word and ministers, the instruments of his Spirit. "He is the way, the truth, and the life: there is no coming to the Father but by him^e;" "nor is there any other name under heaven by which you can be saved^f." Study therefore his person, and nature, and what he hath done and suffered for you, and what he is to you, and what he will be, and how he is fitted to the full supply of all your necessities.

Direct. 8. If you mean indeed to Turn and Live, 'Do it speedily without delay.' If you be not willing to Turn to-day, you will not be willing to do it at all. Remember you are all this while in your blood; under the guilt of many thousand sins, and under God's wrath, and you stand at the very brink of hell; there is but a step between you and death. And this is not a case for a man that is well in his wits to be quiet in. Up therefore presently, and fly as for

^d Acts ix. 19. 26. Psal. xv. 4.

^e John xiv. 6.

^f Acts iv. 12.

your lives ; as you would be gone out of you house if it were all on fire over your heads. O if you did but know what continual danger you live in, and what daily unspeakable loss you sustain, and what a safer and sweeter life you might live, you would not stand trifling, but presently Turn. Multitudes miscarry that wilfully delay when they are convinced that it must be done. Your lives are short and uncertain ; and what a case are you in, if you die before you thoroughly Turn ! You have staid too late already ; and wronged God too long ; sin getteth strength and rooting ; while you delay, your conversion will grow more hard and doubtful. You have much to do, and therefore put not all off to the last, lest God forsake you, and give you up to yourselves, and then you are undone for ever.

Direct. 9. If you will Turn and Live, do it unreservedly, absolutely and universally. Think not to capitulate with Christ, and divide your heart between him and the world, and to part with some sins and keep the rest : and to let go that which your flesh can spare. This is but self-deluding : you must in heart and resolution forsake all that you have, or else you cannot be his disciples^s. If you will not take God and heaven for your portion, and lay all below at the feet of Christ, but you must needs also have your good things here, and have an earthly portion, and God and glory is not enough for you ; it is in vain to dream of salvation on these terms ; for it will not be. If you seem never so religious, if yet it be but a carnal righteousness, and the flesh's prosperity, or pleasure, or safety, be still excepted in your devotedness to God ; this is as certain a way to death, as open profaneness, though it be more plausible.

Direct. 10. If you will Turn and Live, do it resolvedly, and not stand still deliberating, as if it were a doubtful case. Stand not wavering, as if you were yet uncertain, whether God or the flesh be the better master : whether heaven or hell be the better end ; or whether sin or holiness be the better way : but away with your former lusts, and presently, habitually, and fixedly resolve : be not one day of one mind, and the next of another ; but be at a point with all the world, and resolvedly give up yourselves, and all you have, to God. Now, while you are reading or hearing this, re-

solve. Before you sleep another night, resolve. Before you stir from the place, resolve. Before satan hath time to take you off, resolve. You will never turn indeed till you do resolve; and that with a firm, unchangeable resolution. So much for the Directions.

And now I have done my part in this work, that you may Turn at the call of God and Live. What will become of it, I cannot tell. I have cast the seed at God's command; but it is not in my power to give the increase. I can go no farther with my message, I cannot bring it to your hearts; nor make it work: I cannot do your parts for you to entertain it, and consider of it; nor can I do God's part, by opening your heart, to cause you to entertain it; nor can I shew you heaven or hell to your eyesight, nor give you new and tender hearts. If I knew what more to do for your conversion, I hope I should do it.

But O thou that art the gracious Father of Spirits, thou hast sworn thou delightest not in the death of the wicked; but rather that they turn and live, deny not thy blessing to these persuasions and directions; and suffer not thine enemies to triumph in thy sight; and the great deceiver of souls to prevail over thy Son, thy Spirit, and thy Word. O pity poor unconverted sinners, that have no hearts to pity or help themselves: command the blind to see, and the deaf to hear, and the dead to live, and let not sin and death be able to resist thee. Awaken the secure: resolve the unresolved: confirm the wavering: and let the eyes of sinners, that read these lines, be next employed in weeping over their sins; and bring them to themselves, and to thy Son, before their sins have brought them to perdition. If thou say but the word, these poor endeavours shall prosper, to the winning many a soul to their everlasting joy, and thine everlasting glory. Amen.

Five Prayers: one for Families; one for a Penitent Sinner: one for the Lord's day: one for Children and Servants: one in the method of the Lord's Prayer, being an Exposition of it: for the use of those only who need such helps.

Two reasons moved me to annex these prayers; 1. I observe that abundance of people, who have some good desires,

do forbear, through disability, to worship God in their families, who I hope would do it, if they had some helps. And though there be many such extant, yet few of these poor families have the books, and I can give them my own at a little cheaper rate, than I can buy others to give them.

2. Some that seem to have been brought to true repentance and newness of life, by God's blessing, on the reading of my books, have earnestly entreated me to write them a form of prayer for their families, because long disuse hath left them unable to pray before others.

For the service of God, and the good of men, I am contented to bear the censures of those who account all forms of book-prayers to be sin; for in an age when pride (the father), and ignorance (the mother), hath bred superstition (the daughter), and taught men to think that God as fondly valueth their several modes of speaking to him, as they do themselves, and thinketh as contemptuously of the contrary as they, the question whether form or no form, book or no book, hath been resolved unto such tragical and direful effects, that I were too tender, if a censure should discourage me.

A Prayer for Families, Morning and Evening.

Almighty, all-seeing, and most gracious God, the world and all therein, is made, maintained and ordered by thee: thou art everywhere present, being more than the soul of all the world. Though thou art revealed in thy glory to those only that are in heaven, thy grace is still at work on earth to prepare men for that glory: thou madest us not as the beasts that perish, but with reasonable, immortal souls, to know, and seek, and serve thee here, and then to live with all the blessed in the everlasting sight of thy heavenly glory, and the pleasures of thy perfect love, and praise. But we are ashamed to think how foolishly and sinfully we have forgotten and neglected our God and our souls, and our hopes of a blessed immortality, and have overmuch minded the things of this visible, transitory world, and the prosperity and pleasure of this corruptible flesh, which we know must turn to rottenness and dust. Thou gavest us a law which was just and good, to guide us in the only way to life, and

when by sin we had undone ourselves; thou gavest us a Saviour, even thy Eternal Word made man, who by his holy life and bitter sufferings reconciled us to thee, and both purchased salvation for us, and revealed it to us, better than an angel from heaven could have done, if thou hadst sent him to us sinners on such a message: but alas, how light have we set by our Redeemer! and by all that love which thou hast manifested by him, and how little have we studied and understood, and less obeyed that covenant of grace which thou hast made by him to lost mankind!

But O God, be merciful to us vile and miserable sinners; forgive the sins of our natural depravity and the follies of our youth, and all the ignorance, negligence, omissions and commissions of our lives: and give us true repentance for them, or else we know that thou wilt not forgive them. Our life is but as a shadow that passeth away, and it is but as a moment till we leave this world, and appear before thee to give up our account, and to speed for ever as here we have prepared. Should we die before thou hast turned our hearts from this sinful flesh and world to thee by true faith and repentance, we shall be lost for evermore. O woe to us that ever we were born, if thou forgive not our sins, and make us not holy before this short, uncertain life be at an end: had we all the riches and pleasures of this world, they would shortly leave us in the greater sorrows. We know that all our life is but the time which thy mercy allotteth us to prepare for death; therefore we should not put off our repentance and preparation to a sick bed: but now Lord, as if it were our last and dying words, we earnestly beg thy pardoning and sanctifying grace, through the merits and intercession of our Redeemer: O thou that hast pitied and saved so many millions of miserable sinners, pity and save us also, that we may glorify thy grace for ever; surely thou delightest not in the death of sinners, but rather that they return and live: hadst thou been unwilling to shew mercy, thou wouldst not have ransomed us at so precious a price, and still entreat us to be reconciled unto thee, we have no cause to distrust thy truth or goodness, but we are afraid lest unbelief, and pride, and hypocrisy, and a worldly, fleshly mind, should be our ruin. O save us from satan, and this tempting world, but especially from ourselves: teach us to

deny all ungodliness and fleshly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world. Let it be our chiefest daily work to please thee, and to lay up a treasure in heaven, and to make sure of a blessed life with Christ, and quietly to trust thee with soul and body. Make us faithful in our callings, and our duties to one another, and to all men, to our superiors, equals and inferiors : bless the king, and all in authority, that we may live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty : give wise, holy, and peaceable pastors to all the churches of Christ, and holy and peaceable minds to the people : convert the heathen and infidel nations of the world ; and cause us, and all thy people to seek first the hallowing of thy name, the coming of thy kingdom, the doing of thy will on earth as it is done in heaven : give us our daily bread, even all things necessary to life and godliness, and let us be therewith content. Forgive us our daily sins, and let thy love and mercy constrain us to love thee above all ; and for thy sake to love our neighbours as ourselves, and in all our dealings, to do justly and mercifully, as we would have others do by us. Keep us from hurtful temptations, from sin, and from thy judgments, and from the malice of our spiritual and corporal enemies ; and let our thoughts, affections, passions, words, and actions, be governed by thy word and Spirit to thy glory : make all our religion and obedience pleasant to us ; and let our souls be so delighted in the praises of thy kingdom, thy power, and thy glory, that it may secure and sweeten our labour by day, and our rest by night, and keep us in a longing and joyful hope of the heavenly glory : and let the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God our Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us now and for ever. Amen.

A Confession and Prayer for a Penitent Sinner.

O most great, most wise and gracious God, though thou hatest all the workers of iniquity, and canst not be reconciled unto sin ; yet through the mediation of thy blessed Son, with pity behold this miserable sinner who casteth himself down at the footstool of thy grace : had I lived to those high and holy ends, for which I was created and redeemed,

I might now have come to thee in the boldness and confidence of a child, in assurance of thy love and favour; but I have played the fool and the rebel against thee! I have wilfully forgotten the God that made me, and the Saviour that redeemed me, and the endless glory which thou didst set before me: I forgot the business which I was sent for into the world; and have lived as if I had been made for nothing, but to pass a few days in fleshly pleasure, and pamper a carcase for the worms: I wilfully forgot what it is to be a man, who had reason given him to rule his flesh, and to know his God, and to foresee his death, and the state of immortality: and I made my reason a servant to my senses, and lived too like the beasts that perish. O the precious time which I have lost, which all the world cannot call back! O the calls of grace, which I have neglected! O the calling of God, which I have resisted! The wonderful love which I unthankfully rejected! And the manifold mercies which I have abused, and turned into wantonness and sin! How deep is the guilt which I have contracted! And how great are the comforts which I have lost! I might have lived all this while in the love of thee my gracious God; and in the delight of thy holy word and ways! In the daily sweet foresight of heaven, and in the joy of the Holy Ghost, if I would have been ruled by thy righteous laws: but I have hearkened to the flesh, and to this wicked and deceitful world, and have preferred a short and sinful life before thy love and endless glory.

Alas, what have I been doing since I came into the world! Folly and sin have taken up my time. I am ashamed to look back upon the years that I have spent; and to think of the temptations that I have yielded to. Alas, what trifles have enticed me from my God! How little have I had for the holy pleasures which I have lost! Like Esau, I have profanely sold my birthright for one morsel, to please my fancy, my appetite, and my lust; I have set light by all the joys of heaven; I have unkindly despised the goodness of my Maker; I have slighted the love and grace of my Redeemer; I have resisted thy Holy Spirit, silenced my own conscience, and grieved thy ministers, and my own faithful friends, and have brought myself into this woeful case,

wherein I am a shame and burden to myself, and God is my terror, who should be only my hope and joy.

Thou knowest my secret sins, which are unknown to men; thou knowest all their aggravations. My sins O Lord, have found me out. Fears and sorrows overwhelm me! If I look behind me, I see my wickedness pursue my soul, and as an army, ready to overtake me, and devour me. If I look before me I see the just and dreadful judgment, and I know that thou wilt not acquit the guilty. If I look within me, I see a dark, defiled heart. If I look without me, I see a world still offering fresh temptations to deceive me. If I look above me, I see thine offended dreadful Majesty; and if I look beneath me, I see the place of endless torment, and the company which I deserve to suffer with. I am afraid to live, and more afraid to die.

But yet when I look to thy abundant mercy, and to thy Son, and to thy covenant, I have hope. Thy goodness is equal to thy greatness; thou art love itself, and thy mercy is over all thy works. So wonderfully hath thy Son condescended unto sinners, and done and suffered so much for their salvation, that if yet I should question thy willingness to forgive, I should but add to all my sins, by dishonouring that matchless mercy which thou dost design to glorify. Yea more, I find upon record in thy word, that through Christ thou hast made a covenant of grace, and act of oblivion, in which thou hast already conditionally, but freely pardoned all; granting them forgiveness of all their sins, without any exception, whenever by unfeigned faith and repentance, they turn to thee by Jesus Christ. And thy present mercy doth increase my hope, in that thou hast not cut me off, nor utterly left me to the hardness of my heart, but shewest me my sin and danger, before I am past remedy.

O, therefore, behold this prostrate sinner, which with the publican smiteth on his breast, and is ashamed to look up towards heaven: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner." I confess not only my original sin, but the follies, and furies of my youth, my manifold sins of ignorance and knowledge, of negligence and wilfulness, of omission and commission; against the law of nature, and against the grace and Gospel of thy Son; forgive and save me, O my God, for thy abundant mercy, and for the sacrifice and merit of thy Son, and

for the promise of forgiveness which thou hast made through him, for in these alone is all my trust. Condemn me not who condemn myself. O thou that hast opened so precious a fountain for sin, and for uncleanness, wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin. Though thy justice might send me presently to hell, let mercy triumph in my salvation. Thou hast no pleasure in the death of sinners, but rather that they repent and live: if my repentance be not such as thou requirest, O soften this hardened, flinty heart, and give me repentance unto life. Turn me to thyself, O God of my salvation, and cause thy face to shine upon me. "Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right Spirit within me." Meet not this poor, returning prodigal in thy wrath, but with the embracement of thy tender mercies. Cast me not from thy presence, and sentence me not to depart from thee with the workers of iniquity. Thou who didst patiently endure me when I despised thee, refuse me not now I seek unto thee, and here in the dust implore thy mercy. Thou didst convert and pardon a wicked Manasseh, and a persecuting Saul. And there are multitudes in heaven, who were once thine enemies. Glorify also thy superabounding grace, in the forgiveness of my abounding sins.

I ask not for liberty to sin again, but for deliverance from the sinning nature. O give me the renewing Spirit of thy Son, which may sanctify all the powers of my soul. Let me have the new and heavenly birth, and nature, and the spirit of adoption to reform me to thine image, that I may be holy as thou art holy. Illuminate me with the saving knowledge of thyself, and thy Son Jesus Christ. O fill me with thy love, that my heart may be wholly set upon thee; and the remembrance of thee be my chief delight: let the freest and sweetest of my thoughts run after thee: and the freest and sweetest of my discourse be of thee, and of thy glory, and of thy kingdom, and of thy word and ways! O let my treasure be laid up in heaven, and there let me daily and delightfully converse. Make it the great and daily business of my devoted soul, to please thee, and to honour thee, to promote thy kingdom, and to do thy will! Put thy fear into my heart, that I may never depart from thee. This world hath had too much of my heart already; let it now be

crucified to me, and I to it, by the cross of Christ : let me not love it, nor the things which are therein ; but having food and raiment, cause me therewith to be content. Destroy in me all fleshly lusts, that I may not live after the flesh, but the Spirit. Keep me from the snares of wicked company, and from the counsel and ways of the ungodly. Bless me with the hopeful communion of the saints, and with all the means that thou hast appointed to further our sanctification and salvation. O that my ways were so directed, that I might keep thy statutes ! Let me never return again to folly, nor forget the covenant of my God : help me to quench the first motion of sin, and to abhor all sinful desires and thoughts ; and let thy Spirit strengthen me against all temptations ; that I may conquer and endure to the end. Prepare me for sufferings, and for death, and judgment, that when I must leave this sinful world, I may yield up my departing soul with joy into the faithful hands of my dear Redeemer, that I be not numbered with the ungodly, which die in their unpardoned sin, and pass into everlasting misery ; but may be found in Christ, having the righteousness which is of God by faith : and may attain to the resurrection of the just : that so the remembrance of the sin and miseries from which thou hast delivered me, may farther my perpetual thanks and praise to thee my Creator, my Redeemer, and my Sanctifier.

And O that thou wouldst call and convert the miserable nations of idolaters and infidels, and the multitudes of ungodly hypocrites, who have the name of Christians, and not the truth, and power, and life. O send forth labourers into thy harvest and let not satan hinder them. Prosper thy Gospel, and the kingdom of thy Son, that sinners may more abundantly be converted to thee, and this earth may be made like unto heaven ; that when thou hast gathered us all into unity with Christ, we may all, with perfect love and joy, ascribe to thee the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

A Form of Praise and Prayer for the Lord's-day.

Glorious Jehovah, while angels and perfected spirits are praising thee in the presence of thy glory, thou hast allowed

and commanded us to take our part in the presence of thy grace : we have the same most holy God to praise ; and though we see thee not, our Head and Saviour seeth thee, and our faith discerneth thee in the glass of thy holy works and word. Though we are sinners, and unworthy, and cannot touch those holy things, without the marks of our pollution ; yet have we a great High Priest with thee, who was separated from sinners, holy, harmless, and undefiled, who appeareth for us, in the merits of his spotless life and sacrifice, and by whose hands only we dare presume to present a sacrifice to the most holy God. And thou hast ordained this day of holy rest, as a type and means of that heavenly rest with the triumphant church to which we aspire, and for which we hope. Thou didst accept their lower praise on earth, before they celebrated thy praise in glory : accept ours also by the same Mediator.

Glory be to thee, O God in the highest : on earth peace, goodwill towards men. Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, who wast, and art, and art to come ; Eternal, without beginning or end ; Immense, without all bounds or measure ; the Infinite Spirit, Father, Word, and Holy Ghost. The infinite Life, Understanding, and Will, infinitely powerful, wise, and good ; of thee, and through thee, and to thee are all things : to thee be glory for evermore. All thy works declare thy glory ; for thy glorious perfections appear on all, and for thy glory, and the pleasure of thy holy will, didst thou create them. The heavens, and all the hosts thereof ; the sun and all the glorious stars ; the fire with its motion, light and heat ; the earth and all that dwell thereon, with all its sweet and glorious ornaments ; the air and all the meteors ; the great deeps and all that swim therein ; all are the preachers of thy praise, and shew forth the great Creator's glory. How great is that power which made so great a world of nothing ; which with wonderful swiftness moved those great and glorious luminaries, which in a moment send forth the influences of their motion, light and heat through all the air, to sea and earth ; thy powerful life giveth life to all ; and preserveth this frame of nature which thou hast made. How glorious is that wisdom which ordereth all things, and assigneth to all their place and office, and by its perfect law maintaineth the beauty and harmony

of all ; how glorious is that Goodness and Love, which made all good and very good !

We praise and glorify thee our Lord and Owner ; for we and all things are thine own. We praise and glorify thee our King and Ruler ; for we are thy subjects, and our perfect obedience is thy due ; just are all thy laws and judgments ; true and sure is all thy word. We praise and glorify thee, our great Benefactor ; in thee we live, and move, and are ; all that we are, or have, or can do, is wholly from thee, the Cause of all ; and all is for thee, for thou art our End. Delightfully to love thee, is our greatest duty, and our only felicity ; for thou art love itself, and infinitely amiable.

When man by sin did turn away his heart from thee, believed the tempter against thy truth, obeyed his senses against thy authority and wisdom, and forsaking thy Fatherly love and goodness, became an idol to himself, thou didst not use him according to his desert ; when we forsook thee, thou didst not utterly forsake us ; when we had lost ourselves, and by sin became thine enemies, condemned by thy law ; thy mercy pitied us, and gave us the promise of a Redeemer, who in the fulness of time did assume our nature, fulfilled thy law, and suffered for our sins, and conquering death, did rise again, ascended to heaven, and is our glorified Head and Intercessor. Him hast thou exalted to be a Prince and Saviour to give us repentance and remission of sins. In him thou hast given pardon and justification, reconciliation and adoption, by a covenant of grace, to every penitent believer. Of enemies, and the heirs of death, thou hast made us sons and heirs of life.

We are the brands whom thou hast plucked out of the fire ; we are the captives of satan whom thou hast redeemed ; we are the condemned sinners, whom thou hast pardoned ; we praise thee, we glorify thee our merciful God, and gracious Redeemer. Our souls have now refuge from thy revenging wrath. Thy promise is sure : satan, and the world, and death are overcome : our Lord is risen ; he is risen, and we shall rise through him. O death, where is thy sting ! O grave, where is thy victory ! Our Saviour is ascended to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God ; and we shall ascend ; to his hands we may commit our departing

souls ; our Head is glorified, and it is his will and promise that we shall be with him where he is to see his glory ; he hath sealed us thereunto by his Holy Spirit ; we were dead in sins, and he hath quickened us ; we were dark in ignorance, and unbelief, and he hath enlightened us ; we were unholy and carnal, sold under sin, and he hath sanctified our wills, and killed our concupiscence. We praise and glorify this Spirit of life, with the Father and the Son from whom he is sent to be life, and light, and love to our dead, and dark, and disaffected souls. We are created, and redeemed, and sanctified for thy holy love, and praise, and service : O let these be the very nature of our souls, and the employment and pleasure of all our lives ! O, perfect thy weak and languid graces in us, that our love and praise may be more perfect ! We thank thee for thy word, and sacred ordinances, for the comfort of the holy assemblies and communion of the saints, and for the mercy of these thy holy days. But let not thy praise be here confined ; but be our daily life and bread, and work.

Fain we would praise thee with more holy and more joyful souls ; but how can we do it with so weak a faith and so great darkness and strangeness to thee ? With so little assurance of thy favour and our salvation ? Can we rightly thank thee for the grace which we are still in doubt of ? Fain we would be more like to those blessed souls who praise thee without our fears and dulness : but how can it be, while we love thee so little, and have so little taste and feeling of thy love ? And while this load of sin doth press us down, and we are imprisoned in the remnant of our carnal affections ? O kill this pride and selfishness, these lusts and passions ! Destroy this unbelief and darkness, and all our sins, which are the enemies of us, and of thy praise. Make us more holy and heavenly ; and O bring us nearer thee in faith and love, that we may be more suitable to the heavenly employment of thy praise.

Vouchsafe more of thy Spirit to all thy churches and servants in the world ; that as their darkness, and selfishness, and imperfections, have defiled, and divided, and weakened them, and made them a scandal and hardening to infidels ; so their knowledge, self-denial and impartial love, may truly reform, unite and strengthen them ; that the glory of

their holiness may win the unbelieving world to Christ. O let not satan keep up still so large a kingdom of tyranny, ignorance and wickedness in the earth, and make this world as the suburbs of hell : but let the earth be more conformable to heaven, in the glorifying of thy holy name, the advancing of thy kingdom, and the doing of thy just and holy will. Let thy way be known upon earth, and thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God, let all the people praise thee ! Yea, give thy Son the heathen for his inheritance, and let his Gospel enlighten the dark, forsaken nations of the earth. Let every knee bow to him, and every tongue confess that he is Christ, to their salvation and thy glory. Provide and send forth the messengers of thy grace through all the earth. Deliver all the churches from sin, division and oppression. Let thy holy word and worship continue in these kingdoms, whilst this world endureth. Bless the king and all in authority, with all that wisdom, justice and holiness, which are needful to his own and his subjects' safety, peace and welfare. Let every congregation among us have burning and shining lights, that the ignorant and ungodly perish not for want of teaching and exhortation. And open men's hearts to receive thy word, and cause them to know the day of their visitation. Be merciful to the afflicted, in sickness, dangers, wants or sorrows, according to thy goodness and their necessities. Let all the prayers and praises of the faithful throughout the world sent up this day in the name of our common Mediator, by him be presented acceptable unto thee ; notwithstanding the imperfections and blemishes that are on them, and the censures, divisions and injuries, which in their frowardness they are guilty of against each other : let them enter as one in Christ our Head, who are too sadly and stiffly distant among themselves. Prepare us all for that world of peace, where the harmony of universal love, and praise shall never be interrupted by sins, or griefs, or fears, or discord ; but shall be everlastingly perfect to our joy and to thy glory, through our glorified Mediator, who taught us when we pray to say, Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven, give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that

trespass against us : And lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever. Amen.

A short Prayer for Children and Servants.

Ever-living and most glorious God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost ! Infinite is thy power, thy wisdom, and thy goodness ! Thou art the Maker of all the world, the Redeemer of lost and sinful man, and the Sanctifier of the elect ! Thou hast made me a living, reasonable soul, placed awhile in this flesh and world to know, and love, and serve thee, my Creator, with all my heart, and mind, and strength, that I might obtain the reward of the heavenly glory. This should have been the greatest care, and business, and pleasure of all my life : I was bound to it by thy law : I was invited by thy mercy. And in my baptism I was devoted to this holy life, by a solemn covenant and vow. But alas, I have proved too unfaithful to that covenant : I have forgotten and neglected the God, the Saviour, and the Sanctifier, to whom I was engaged : and have too much served the devil, the world and flesh, which I renounced : I was born in sin, and sinfully I have lived. I have been too careless of my immortal soul, and of the great work for which I was created and redeemed : I have spent much of my precious time in vanity, in minding and pleasing this corruptible flesh : and I have hardened my heart against those instructions, by which thy Spirit, and my teachers, and my own conscience, did call upon me to repent and turn to thee.

And now, Lord, my convinced soul doth confess, that I have deserved to be forsaken by thee, and given over to my lust and folly, and to be cast out of thy glorious presence into damnation. But seeing thou hast given a Saviour to the world, and made a pardoning and gracious law, promising forgiveness and salvation through his merits, to every true penitent believer, I thankfully accept the mercy of thy covenant in Christ ; I humbly confess my sin and guiltiness ; I cast my miserable soul upon thy grace, and sacrifice, and intercession of my Saviour. O pardon all the sins of my corrupted heart and life ; and as a reconciled Father, take me to be thy child ; and give me thy renewing Spirit, to be

in me a principle of holy life, and light, and love, and thy seal and witness, that I am thine. Let him quicken my dead and hardened heart; let him enlighten my dark, unbelieving mind by clearer knowledge and firm belief; let him turn my will to the ready obedience of thy holy will; let him reveal to my soul the wonders of thy love in Christ, and fill it with love to thee and my Redeemer, and to all thy holy word and works, till all my sinful carnal love be quenched in me, and my sinful pleasures turned into a sweet delight in God; give me self-denial, humility, and lowliness, and save me from the great and hateful sins of selfishness, worldliness, and pride. O set my heart upon the heavenly glory, where I hope, ere long, to live with Christ and all his holy ones, in the joyful sight, and love, and praise of thee, the God of love, for ever. Deny me not any of those helps and mercies, which are needful to my sanctification and salvation. And cause me to live in a continual readiness for a safe and comfortable death. For what would it profit me to win all the world, and lose my soul, my Saviour, and my God?

Additions for Children.

Let thy blessings be upon my parents and governors, cause them to instruct and educate me in thy fear, and cause me with thankfulness to receive their instructions: and to love, honour, and obey them in obedience to thee. Keep me from the snares of evil company, temptations, and youthful pleasures, and let me be a companion of them that fear thee. Let my daily delight be to meditate on thy law; and let me never have the mark of the ungodly, to be a lover of pleasures more than of God. Furnish my youth with those treasures of wisdom and holiness, which may be daily increased and used to thy glory.

Additions for Servants.

And as thou hast made me a servant, make me conscionable and faithful in my place and trust, and careful of my master's goods and business, as I would be if it were my own. Make me submissive and obedient to my governors; keep me from self-will and pride, from murmuring and un-

reverent speeches, from falsehood, slothfulness, and all deceit. That I might not be an eye-servant, pleasing my lust and fleshly appetite; but may cheerfully and willingly do my duty, as believing that thou art the revenger of all unfaithfulness; and may do my service not only as unto man, but as to the Lord, expecting from thee my chief reward.

All this I beg and hope for, on the account of the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ, concluding in the words which he hath taught us. Our Father, which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name: Thy kingdom come: Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread: And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

A Prayer for the Morning, in the method of the Lord's Prayer, being an Exposition of it.

Most glorious God, who art power, and wisdom, and goodness itself, the Creator of all things; the Owner, the Ruler, and the Benefactor of the world, but especially of thy church and chosen ones. Though by sin original and actual we were thy enemies, the slaves of satan and our flesh, and under thy displeasure and the condemnation of thy law, yet thy children, redeemed by Jesus Christ thy Son, and regenerated by thy Holy Spirit, have leave to call thee their reconciled Father. For by thy covenant of grace, thou hast given them thy Son to be their Head, their Teacher, and their Saviour. And in him thou hast pardoned, adopted, and sanctified them; sealing and preparing them by thy Holy Spirit for thy celestial kingdom, and beginning in them that holy life, and light, and love, which shall be perfected with thee in everlasting glory. O with what wondrous love hast thou loved us, that of rebels we should be made the sons of God! Thou hast advanced us to this dignity that we might be devoted wholly to thee as thine own, and might delightfully obey thee, and entirely love thee with all our heart! And so might glorify thee here and for ever.

O cause both us, and all thy churches, and all the world to hallow thy great and holy name! And to live to thee

as our ultimate end! that thy shining image on holy souls may glorify thy divine perfection.

And cause both us and all the earth, to cast off the tyranny of satan and the flesh, and to acknowledge thy supreme authority, and to become the kingdoms of thee and thy Son Jesus, by a willing and absolute subjection. O perfect thy kingdom of grace in ourselves and in the world, and hasten the kingdom of glory.

And cause us and thy churches, and all the people of the earth, no more to be ruled by the lusts of the flesh, and their erroneous conceits, and by selfwill, which is the idol of the wicked; but by thy purest wisdom and holy will revealed in thy laws, make known thy word to all the world, and send them the messengers of grace and peace; and cause men to understand, believe, and obey, the Gospel of salvation. And that, with such holiness, unity, and love, that the earth, which is now too like to hell, may be made like unto heaven; and not only thy scattered, imperfect flock, but those also who in their carnal and ungodly minds do now refuse a holy life, and think thy words and ways too strict, may desire to imitate even the heavenly church; where thou art obeyed, and loved, and praised, with high delight, in harmony and perfection.

And because our being is the subject of our well-being, maintain us in the life, which thou hast here given us, until the work of life be finished; and give us such health of mind and body, and such protection, and supply of all our wants, as shall best fit us for our duty; and make us contented with our daily bread, and patient if we want. And save us from the love of riches, honours, and pleasures of this world, and the pride, and idleness, and sensuality which they cherish; and cause us to serve thy Providence by our diligent labour, and to serve thee faithfully with all that thou givest us; and let us not make provision for the flesh, to satisfy its desires and lusts.

And we beseech thee of thy mercy, through the sacrifice and propitiation of thy beloved Son, forgive us all our sins, original and actual, from our birth to this hour; our omissions of duty, and committing of what thou didst forbid; our sins of heart, and word, and deed; our sinful thoughts and affections, our sinful passions and discontents; our se-

cret and our open sins; our sins of negligence and ignorance, and rashness; but especially our sins against knowledge and conscience, which have made the deepest guilt and wounds. Spare us, O Lord, and let not our sin so find us out as to be our ruin; but let us so find it out as truly to repent and turn to thee! Especially punish us not with the loss of thy grace! Take not thy Holy Spirit from us, and deny us not his assistance and holy operations. Seal to us by that Spirit the pardon of our sins, and lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, and give us the joy of thy favour and salvation. And let thy love and mercy to us fill us not only with thankfulness to thee, but with love and mercy to our brethren and our enemies, that we may heartily forgive them that do us wrong, as through thy grace we hope to do.

And for the time to come, suffer us not to cast ourselves wilfully into temptations, but carefully to avoid them, and resolutely to resist and conquer what we cannot avoid; and O mortify those inward sins and lusts, which are our constant and most dangerous temptations. And let us not be tempted by satan or the world, or tried by thy judgments, above the strength which thy grace shall give us. Save us from a fearless confidence in our own strength; and let us not dally with the snare, nor taste the bait, nor play with the fire of wrath. But cause us to fear and depart from evil; lest before we are aware, we be entangled and overcome, and wounded with our guilt and with thy wrath, and our end should be worse than our beginning. Especially save us from those radical sins of error and unbelief, pride, hypocrisy, hardheartedness, sensuality, slothfulness, and the love of this present world, and the loss of our love to thee, to thy kingdom and thy ways.

And save us from the malice of satan and of wicked men, and from the evils which our sins would bring upon us.

And as we crave all this from thee, we humbly tender our praises with our future service to thee! Thou art the King of all the world, and more than the life of all the living! Thy kingdom is everlasting; wise, and just, and merciful, is thy government. Blessed are they that are faithful subjects; but who hath hardened himself against thee, and hath prospered? The whole creation proclaimeth thy perfection. But it is heaven where the blessed see thy

glory, and the glory of our Redeemer, where the angels and saints behold thee, admire thee, adore thee, love thee, and praise thee with triumphant, joyful songs, the holy, holy, holy God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, who was, and is, and is to come; of thee, and through thee, and to thee are all things. To thee be glory for ever. Amen.

The Creed.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Ten Commandments.

I. I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other God before me.

II. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

III. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

IV. Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy; six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do

any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath-day, and hallowed it.

V. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

VI. Thou shalt not kill.

VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII. Thou shalt not steal.

IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

X. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

END OF THE CALL TO THE UNCONVERTED.