DIRECTIONS

AND

PERSUASIONS

TO A

SOUND CONVERSION.

FOR

PREVENTION OF THAT DECEIT AND DAMNATION OF SOULS, AND
OF THOSE SCANDALS, HERESIES, AND DESPERATE
APOSTACIES, THAT ARE THE CONSEQUENTS
OF A COUNTERFEIT OR SUPERFICIAL
CHANGE.
PREFACE.

It is a weight so unconceivable that dependeth on the soundness of conversion and sanctification, that our care and diligence cannot be too great to make it sure. As the professed atheist, heathens, and infidels without, so the self-deceiving hypocrites within the church, do wilfully cast away themselves for ever, by neglecting such a business of everlasting consequence, when they have time, and warnings, and assistance to dispatch it. Multitudes live like brutes or atheists, forgetting that they are born in sin and misery, and settled in it by wilful custom, and must be converted or condemned. These know not (many of them) what need they have of a conversion, nor what conversion or sanctification is. And some that have been Preachers of the Gospel, have been so lamentably ignorant in so great a matter, that they have persuaded the poor deluded people that it is only the gross and heinous sinners that need conversion; branding them with the name of Puritans, that will not take a dead profession joined with civility, for true sanctification; and promise salvation to those, that Christ hath with many asseverations professed shall not enter into the kingdom of God. Others that confess that a thorough sanctification is a necessary thing, do delude their souls with something that is like it. Hence is the misery and dishonour of the church. Holiness itself is disgraced by the sins of them that are unholy, because they pretend to that which they have not. Hence it is, that we have thousands that call themselves Christians, that live a worldly, fleshly life, and some of them hating the way of godliness and yet think they are converted, because they are sorry when they have sinned, and wish when it is past that they had not done it, and cry God mercy for it, and confess that they are sinners; and this they take for true repentance: when sin was never mortified in their souls, nor their hearts ever brought
to hate it, and forsake it; but when they have had the pro-
tit and pleasure of sin, they are sorry for the danger, but
never regenerate and made new creatures by the Spirit of
Christ. Hence also it is, that we have such abundance of
mere opinionists, that take themselves for religious people.
Because they have changed their opinions, and their par-
ties, and can prate contentiously against those that are not
of their mind, and join themselves with those that seem to
be the strictest, they take themselves to be truly sanctified:
and this makes such gadding from one opinion to another,
and such censuring, reviling, and divisions, upon that ac-
count, because their religion is most in their opinions, and
hath not mortified their carnal, selfish inclinations and pas-
sions, nor brought them to a holy, heavenly mind. Hence
also it is, that we have so many sensual, scandalous profes-
sors, that seem to be religious, but bridle not their tongues,
their appetites, or their lusts, but are railers, or backbiters,
or tipplers, or gluttons, or filthy and lascivious, or some way
scandalous to their holy profession, because they are stran-
gers to a thorough conversion, but take up with the coun-
terfeit of a superficial change. Hence also we have so many
worldlings, that think themselves religious men; that make
Christ but a servant to their worldly interest, and seek
heaven but for a reserve, when earth forsakes them, and have
something in this world that is so dear to them that they
cannot forsake it for the hopes of glory; but give up them-
selves to Christ, with secret exceptions and reserves, for
their prosperity in the world: and all because they never
knew a sound conversion, which should have rooted out of
their hearts this worldly interest, and delivered them up en-
tirely, and absolutely to Christ. Hence also it is that we
have so few professors that can lay by their pride, and bear
disesteem or injury, and love their enemies, and bless them
that curse them, yea, or love their godly friends that cross
them, or dishonour them. And so few that can deny them-
selves in their honour, or any considerable thing, for the
sake of Christ, and in obedience, and conformity to his will.
And all because they never had that saving change, that
takes down self, and sets up Christ as Sovereign in the soul.
And hence also it is that we have in this age so many dread-
ful instances of apostasy: so many reproaching the Scrip-
ture, that once they thought had converted them, and the
way of holiness, that once they did profess; and denying the Lord himself that bought them; and all because they formerly took up with a superficial, counterfeit conversion. O how commonly, and how lamentably doth this misery appear among professors in their unsavoury discourse, their strife and envy, on religious pretences, their dead formality, their passionate divisions, or their selfish, proud, and earthly minds! A thorough conversion would have cured all this, at least as to the dominion of it.

Having therefore in my "Call to the Unconverted" endeavoured to awaken careless souls, and persuade the obstinate to turn and live, I have here spoken to them that seem to be about the work, and given them some directions and persuasions, to prevent their perishing in the birth, and so to prevent that hypocrisy which else they are like to be formed into, and the deceit of their hearts, the error of their lives, and the misery at their death, which is like to follow. That they live not as those that flatter God with their mouths, and "lie unto him with their tongues, because their heart is not right with him, neither are they steadfast in his covenant." Lest denying deep entertainment, and rooting to the seed of life, or choking it by the radicated, predominant love and cares of the world, they wither when the heat of persecution shall break forth: and lest building on the sands, they fall when the winds and storms arise, and their fall be great: and so "they go out from us, that they may be made manifest that they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." Look therefore to this great, important business, "and give all diligence to make your calling and election sure." And trust not your hearts too easily, or too confidently; "but turn to the Lord with all your hearts." Cleave to him resolvedly, or with purpose of heart: and see that you sell all and buy the pearl: and stick not at the price, but absolutely resign yourselves to Christ, and turn to him, as Zaccheus and other primitive converts did, surrendering all that you have unto his will. Leave not any root of bitterness behind; make no exceptions, or reserves; but deny

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a Psal. lxxviii. 36, 37.  
b Matt. xiii. 20—23.  
c Matt. vii. 26, 27.  
d 1 John ii. 19.  
e 2 Pet. i. 10.  
f Acts xi. 23.  
g Matt. xiii. 46.  
h Luke xix. 8, 9.
yourselves; forsake all, and follow him that hath led you this self-denying way; and trust to his blood, and merits, and promise, for a treasure in heaven, and then you are his disciples, and true Christians indeed. Reader, if thou heartily make this covenant and keep it, thou shalt find that Christ will not deceive thee, when the world deceiveth them that chose it, in their greatest extremity; but if thou draw back, and think these terms too hard, remember that everlasting life was offered thee, and remember why and for what thou didst reject it. And if in this life-time thou wilt have thy good things, expect to be tormented, when the believing, self-denying souls are comforted.

RICHARD BAXTER.

May 29, 1656.

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SOUND CONVERSION.

Directions to Sinners that are purposed to Turn, and are under the Work of Conversion: that it Miscarry not.

The first and greatest matter in the seeking after the salvation of our souls, is, to be sure that we lay the foundation well, and that the work of conversion be thoroughly wrought. To this end I have already used many persuasions with the unconverted to return, as thinking all further directions vain, till we have persuaded men to a consent and willingness to practise them. And in the end of that discourse I added a few directions for the use of such as are willing to be converted. But because I know that this is a matter of exceeding consequence, I dare not thus leave it, before I have added some further directions, to prevent the miscarrying of this work where it is begun. And lest I should lose my labour, through the unpreparedness of the reader; I shall first give you some preparing considerations, which may awaken you to the practice of the directions which I shall give you.

1. Consider first, that half-conversions are the undoing of many thousand souls. If you are but like Agrippa, (Acts xxvi. 28.) "almost persuaded to be Christians," you will be but almost saved. Many a thousand that are now past help, have had the word come near them, and cast them into
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a fear, and made some stir and trouble in their souls, awakening their consciences, and forcing them to some good purposes and promises, yea, and bringing them to the performance of a half-reformation; but this is not it that will serve your turn. Many have been so much changed, as not to be far from the kingdom of God, that yet came short of it; Mark xii. 34. There is no promise in Scripture that you shall be pardoned if you almost repent and believe; or be saved, if you be almost sanctified and obedient; but on the contrary, the Lord hath plainly resolved, that you must turn or die, though you almost turn; and repent, or perish, though you almost repent; and that you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, without conversion and a new birth, though you came never so near it. God hath resolved upon the terms of your salvation; and it is in vain to hope for salvation upon any other terms. God will not change nor come down to your terms: it is you that must change and come quite over to his terms, or you are lost for ever. If you come never so near them, you are but lost men if you come not up to them. The Lord well knew what he did, when he made his covenant and law, and he imposed nothing on the sons of men but what his infinite wisdom told him it was fit for him to impose; and he will not now compound with sinners, and take less than he requireth; that is, less than the preeminency in their hearts; nor will he ever come down to any lower terms with you, than those which he propoundeth to you in his Gospel. And therefore, poor sinners, as you love your souls, do not stand dodging and halving with God; but give up yourselves entirely to him; and do not stop at the beginnings of a conversion, but go through with it, till you are become new creatures indeed, or you are undone when you have done all. A half, unsound convert will as certainly perish as a drunkard or a whoremonger, though his torment may not be so great.

2. Consider also, that if you do not go through with the work when you are upon it, you may perhaps make it more difficult than it was before ever you meddled with it, and make it a very doubtful case whether ever it will be done. As it is with a wound or other sore; if you tamper with it with salves that are not agreeable to it, or are disorderly applied; or if you skin it over before it be searched to the bottom, it must be opened again, and will cost you double.
pains before it be cured. Or as I have seen it with some
that have had a bone broken, or out of joint, and it hath been
set amiss at first: O what torments were the poor creatures
fain to undergo, in having it broken, or stretched and set
again! which might have been spared, if it had been tho-
roughly done at first. So, if you will be shrinking and draw-
ning back, and favouring your flesh, and will not go to the
quick, you will make your conversion much more difficult;
you must be brought to it again, and fetch your groans yet
deeper than before; and weep over all your former tears;
your doubts will be multiplied; your fears and sorrows will
be increased; and all will go sorer with you than at first.
O what a case will you be in, when your sores must be
lanced a second time, and your bones, as it were, broken
again! Then you will wish you had gone through with it
at the first.

Yea, perhaps you may put God to it to fetch you in by
some sharp affliction, and send out so boisterous and churl-
ish a messenger to call you home as may make you wish you
had hearkened to a more gentle call: when the sheep will
straggle, the dog must be sent to affright them home. Many
a foolish sinner makes light of the gentle invitations of grace,
and they stand hovering between their sins and Christ; and
sometimes they have a mind to turn, and the next tempta-
tion they are off again, and then they come on again coldly
and with half a heart; and thus they stand trifling with the
God of heaven till he is fain to take another course with
them, and resolves to use some sharper means: and when
he layeth them under his rod, and they can neither fly from,
nor resist him, but see that their lives and souls are at his
mercy, then they begin to look about them, and see their
folly, and change their minds. You can tarry, and delay,
and dally with the dreadful God, in the time of your pros-
perity, and we may ask you over and over whether you will
turn before we can have a hearty answer; but what will you
do when God shall begin to frown, and when he takes you in
hand by his irresistible power, and lets loose upon you the
terrors of his wrath? Will you then make as light of his
mercy as you do now? Have you not read, Dan. v. 6. how
small an apparition of his anger did make a carousing king
look pale, and his joints to tremble in the midst of his jo-
viality? A Manasseh will bethink himself and come in when
he is laid in irons, though he could set light by God before; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13. If Jonah will run away from God, he can send a boisterous messenger to arrest him, and cast him as it were into the belly of hell, and make him cry for mercy to him that he disobeyed. So if you will stand trifling with God, and will not by fair means be persuaded to yield and come away, you may shortly look to hear from him in another manner; for he hath a voice that will make the proudest face look pale, and the most stubborn heart to tremble. If an idle, stubborn child will not learn nor be ruled, the master or parent will teach him with the rod, and give him a lash, and ask him, 'Will you yet learn?' and another lash, and ask him, 'What say you now, will you yet obey?' So will God do by you, if he love you, and mean to save you: when he hath taken away your wealth, your friends, your children, will you then hearken to him or will you not? When you lie groaning on your couch, and all your parts are overwhelmed with pains, and death begins to lay hands upon you, and bids you now come and answer for your rebellions and delays before the living God, what will you do then? Will you turn or not? O the lamentable folly of sinners, that put themselves to so much sorrow, and great calamity for themselves! When sickness comes, and death draws near, you beg, and cry, and groan, and promise: when you feel the rod, what Christians will you then be? And why not without so much ado? You then think God deals somewhat hardly with you: and why will you not turn then by gentler means? You might spare yourselves much of this misery if you would; and you will not. Is it a seemly thing for a man to be driven to heaven by scourges? Is God so bad a master, and heaven so bad a place, that you will not turn to them, and mind them, and seek them, till there be no remedy, and you are, as it were, driven to it against your will? Is the world such an inheritance, and sin so good a thing, and the flesh or devil so good a master, that you will not leave them till you are whipped away? What a shameful, unreasonable course is this?

Well sirs, the case is plain before you. Turn you must at one time or other, or be the firebrands of hell. And seeing it is a thing that must be done, were it not best for you to take the easiest and the surest way to do it? Why, this is the easiest and the surest way; even to strike while the iron
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is hot, before it cool again; and to go through with it when God doth move you and persuade you; if you love your flesh itself, do not put him to take up the rod, and fetch you home by stripes and terrors.

But that is not the worst; for it will sorely hazard the work itself, and consequently your salvation, if you do not go through with it at the first attempt. I know there is many an one that hath been converted and saved, after many purposes, and promises, and half-conversions. But yet I must tell you, that this is a very dangerous course: for you do not know when you grieve the Spirit of grace, and set so light by mercy when it is offered you, whether that Spirit may not utterly forsake you, and leave you to your own ungodly wills, and let you take your lusts, and pleasures, and say, 'Let this wretch be filthy still; let him keep his drunkenness, his companions, his worldliness, and the curse of God with them, till he have tried what it is that they will do for him: let him follow his own conceits, and the pride and obstinacy of his own heart, till he find whither they will bring him: let him serve the flesh and the world, till he understand whether God or they be the better master. Seeing he will not be wise on earth, let him learn in hell, and let torments teach him, seeing mercy might not teach him.' O poor soul! what a case art thou in, if this should once be the resolution of God!

Moreover, you may easily know that the longer you stay, the more leisure you give the devil to assault you, and to try one way when he cannot prevail by another, and to strengthen his temptations: like a foolish soldier, that will stand still to be shot at, rather than assault the enemy.

And the longer you delay, the more your sin gets strength and rooting. If you cannot bend a twig, how will you be able to bend it when it is a tree? If you cannot pluck up a tender plant, are you likely to pluck up a sturdy oak? Custom gives strength and root to vices. A blackamoor may as well change his skin, or a leopard his spots, as those that are accustomed to do evil, can learn to do well. Jer. xiii.23.

If you stick at conversion as a difficult matter to-day, it will be more difficult to-morrow, or the next month, and the next year, than it is now.

Yea, the very resistance of the Spirit doth harden the heart, and the delays and triflings of the soul do bring it to
an insensibility and boldness in sin, and drive away the fear of God from the heart. Now it may be you are somewhat awakened, and begin to see that you must turn or die; but if you trifle and delay, this light may be gone, and leave you in greater darkness than before; and the voice that now awakeneth you, may be silent and leave you to fall asleep again.

Moreover, you know that you are uncertain of the continuance of the Gospel. You know not whether you shall have such lively, serious preachers as you now have, nor you know not whether you shall have such godly neighbours and company to encourage you and help you in the work. God will remove them one after another to himself, and then you will have fewer prayers for you, and fewer warnings, and good examples, and perhaps be left wholly to the company of deceived, ungodly fools, that will do nothing but hinder and discourage you from conversion. And you are not sure that religion will continue in that reputation as now it is in. The times may turn, before you turn; and godliness may become a scorn again, and, it may be, a matter of suffering, and may cost you your lives to live as the servants of Christ must do. And therefore if you stop at it now as a difficult thing, when you have all the helps and encouragements that you can expect, and the way to heaven is made so fair; and when magistrates, and ministers, and neighbours are ready to encourage and help you; what will you do in times of persecution and discouragement? If you cannot turn when you have all these helps and means, what will you do when they are taken from you? If you cannot row with the stream, how will you row against it? If you dare not set to sea, when you have wind, and tide, and sunshine, what will you do in storms and tempests, when all is against you? O what would some of your forefathers have given to have seen the days that you see! How glad would many a thousand in other countries of the world be, to have but the helps to heaven that you have? Never look to have the way fairer and easier while you live. If you think heaven is offered you at too dear a rate now, you may even let it go, and try whether hell be better; for the next offer is like to be upon harder terms rather than easier. If you cannot now find in your hearts to turn and live a holy life, what would you have done in the days of the apostles, or ancient Christians?
And, what would you have done in Spain or Italy, where it would cost you your lives? He that will not be converted now, but thinks the terms of grace too hard, is so impious a despiser of Christ and heaven, that it is no wonder if God resolve that he shall never taste of the salvation that was offered him. Luke xiv. 24.

Moreover, you know upon what uncertainties you hold your lives; you have no assurance of them for an hour, but you are sure that they are passing away whilst you delay. And will you trifle then in a work that must be done? What a case are you in, if death find you unconverted! The heart of man is not able now to conceive the misery of your case. How dare you venture to live another day in an unconverted state, lest death should find you so? Are you not afraid when you lie down at night, and afraid when you go out of your doors in the morning, lest death surprise you before you are converted? If you be not, it is long of your deadness and presumption.

And I would fain hear what it is that should thus stop you. What are you afraid of? Is God an enemy, that you are loath to come to him? Is the devil a friend, that you are so loath to leave him? Is sin a paradise? Is holiness a misery? Is it a pleasanter life to love your money, or your lands, or your meat and drink, and lusts, than to love the most blessed God, the Creator of the world, the life of our souls, and our eternal felicity? Is it better to pamper a carcass that must shortly stink as the dung, than to provide for a living immortal soul? Whether do you think that earth or heaven will be the more glorious and durable felicity?

What is it, sirs, that you stick at, that you make so many delays before you will turn? Is there any difficulty in the point? Do you think it a hard question whether you should turn or not? Why, how can you be so blind? Do you stand pausing upon the business, as if it were a doubt, whether God or the world were better, and whether sin or holiness, Christ or death, heaven or hell, were to be preferred? I pray you, consider; can you reasonably think that conversion will do you any harm? Can it bring you into a worse condition than you are in? Sure you cannot fear such a thing; you are in your blood; you are dead in sin; you are children of wrath, while you are unconverted; you are under the curse of the law of God; you are the slaves of the devil, you are the heirs
of hell, and under the guilt of all your sins; your life is a continued rebellion against God; you are employed every day in the destroying of yourselves, in kindling the flames that must everlastingly torment you, and laying in fuel for the perpetuating of your misery; and fighting against your friends, that would deliver you, and unthankfully abusing Christ, and grace, and ministers, and friends, that would save your souls. This is the condition that every one of you is in, till you are converted. And can you fear lest conversion would bring you into a worse condition than this? Sirs, these truths are sure and plain; and if yet you stick at it, your error is so palpably gross, that unless you are madmen, I may be bold to say it is a wilful error. And if you love to be deceived, and wilfully choose a lie, you must take that you get by it.

3. Consider further, That half-conversions do often prove an occasion of deluding men's souls, and making them quiet in a miserable state, and so of keeping them from being converted to the last. If you had never done any thing in it, you would move easily be persuaded that your case is bad, and that there is still a necessity of your change. But when you have had some convictions, and troubles of mind, and fears, and sorrows, and so have fallen into an outside, partial reformation, and now are persuaded that you are truly converted, when it is no such matter, what a dangerous impediment to your conversion may this prove? And all because you slubber over the work, and cut it off before it reacheth to sincerity, and strive against the workings of the Spirit, and break away from your physician before he hath done the cure, and would not follow it on to the end. I know that a half-conversion, if it be known to be no more, is much better than none; and doth often prepare men for a saving work. But when this half-conversion is taken to be a true and saving change, as too commonly it is, it proves one of the greatest impediments of salvation. Whenever Christ shall afterward knock at your door, you will not know him, as thinking he dwells with you already. If you read any books that call on you to be converted, or hear any preachers that call on you to turn, you have this at hand to eooen yourselves with, and frustrate all. You will think, 'This is not spoken to me; for I am converted already.' O how quietly do such poor, deluded sinners, daily read and hear their own doom
and misery, and never once dream that they are the men that are meant, and therefore are never dismayed at the matter! This formeth you into a state of hypocrisy, and makes the course of your duties and your lives to be hypocritical. If another man that knows himself to be still unconverted, do but read the threatenings of the word against such, or hear of the terrors of the Lord from a minister, he may be brought to confess that this is his own case, and so to perceive the misery of his condition. But when such as you do read and hear these things, they never trouble you, for you think that they do not touch you: you are Scripture-proof, and sermon-proof: and all by the delusion of your half-conversion. O how zealously will such a man cry out against the sins of others! and tell them of their misery, and persuade them to turn, and shew them the danger that is near them if they do not: and in the meantime little thinks that it is his own case, and that he speaks all this against his own soul. How will such men applaud a sermon that drives at the conversion of a sinner, and that tells them their misery while they are unconverted! 'O thinks he, this touched such and such; I am glad that such a man and such a man heard it:' and he little thinks that it as nearly touch'd himself. How smoothly will he go on in any discourse against wicked, unregenerate men, as David heard the parable of Nathan, and it never once entereth into their thoughts, that they speak all this against themselves; till the Judge shall tell them, when it is too late, "Thou art the man." It will turn not only the stream of your thoughts into hypocrisy and self-deceit, but also the stream of your speeches to others; yes, and the current of your prayers, and all the rest of your religious performances. When in confession you should acknowledge and lament an unregenerate, carnal state, you will only confess that you have the infirmities of the saints, and that you have this or that sin, which yet you think is mortified. When you should importunately beg for renewing grace, you will beg only for strengthening grace, or assurance; when you should be labouring to break your hearts, you will be studying to heal them; and will be hearkening after present comforts, when you have more need of godly sorrow. It will fill your mouths in prayer with pharisaical thanksgivings for the mercies of regeneration, justification, adoption, sanctification, which you never received.
Little doth many a soul know what sanctification, and the several graces of the Spirit are, that use to give God thanks for them: there is many and many an one that must for ever be in hell, that were used in their prayers to give God thanks for their hopes of glory: and the common cause of all this deceit and misery, is, that men do run from under the hands of their physician, before he ever went to the bottom of their sore, and go away with a half-conversion, and so spend all the rest of their lives, in a mere delusion, as verily thinking they are converted, when they are not. How confidently will such receive the Lord's supper, and thrust themselves into the communion of the saints, as if they had as good right as others to be there, till the Lord of the feast shall take them to task, and say, "Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?" and then they will be speechless; Matt. xxii. 12. How many false, deceiving comforts, and perhaps even seeming raptures and assurance, may these have in themselves, as verily thinking their case is good, when, alas, they never yet laid the foundation. Yea, and it is to be observed, that satan is a friend to the comforts of this kind of men, and therefore will do all that he can to promote them; for he would willingly keep his garrison in peace; Luke xi. 21. And therefore he may possibly be a comforting spirit to them himself, and imitate the Holy Ghost the Comforter of the saints; and, it may be, give them such raptures as seem higher than those which the Spirit of holiness doth give. He envieth the saints their peace and comfort, because he foresees how durable they will prove: but he can be content that deluded hypocrites may have joy, because their comforts do not weaken but strengthen his kingdom within them, and he knows they are like to endure but for awhile.

And thus you may perceive, how hard it is to convert one of these half-converted men, that have strangled the new creature as it were, in the birth, and that are fortified against all the means of grace, by a false conceit that they are sanctified already. See therefore that you make sure work, and take not up in the middle, and with halves, but take your present time, and give up your souls to a total change.

4. Consider, If you take up short of a thorough conversion, you lose all your labour, and sufferings and hopes, as to the matter of your salvation.
And what pity is it that so much should be lost? Alas, to see many of our hearers touched at a sermon, and come to a minister and bewail their sin, and seem to be humbled, and promise to be new men, and yet all this to be lost; how sad a case is this to think of? To see them leave their company and former course of life, and come among the professors of holiness, and all men take them for real converts; and yet all this to be lost, and their souls lost after all: how sad a case is this! If you grow up to the greatest parts for outward duty, and be able to discourse, or pray, or preach, even to the admiration of the hearers; yet if you do not ground this on a thorough conversion, all is but lost, as to your own salvation. If you keep up the highest strain of profession, and get the highest esteem in the church, so that others depend on you as oracles; yea, if the pope with all his infallibility should canonize you for saints; it were all but loss. If you should keep up the most confident persuasion of your salvation, and hope to go to heaven, to the last hour of your lives; it were all but lost if you build not all on a thorough conversion. Yea, if you should be taken by persecutors for one of the party to which you join, and should suffer for the cause of religion among them; all were but lost, without a sound conversion; 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3.

It is a pitiful case to see some poor unsanctified souls, how they wander and change from one opinion to another, and from party to party, to find out that which they want within. They turn to this party first, and that party next, and then to another, and then think they are sure in the way to heaven, when they never thoroughly turned to God by Jesus Christ; and therefore are certainly out of the way, whatever party it be that they join with. Some go to the giddy sects that make the highest pretences to strictness: and some go to Rome, because they think that there they shall have more company, and hear the deluding sound of unity, universality, antiquity, succession, miracles, and such like: and then they think they have hit the way. Alas, poor souls! If God were but nearest and dearest to your hearts, and Christ and his righteousness exalted within you, and your souls unfeignedly turned from your sins, you would be in the certain way to heaven, in what country, or company, or church soever you were; supposing that you believe and do nothing there, which is inconsistent with this life of grace.
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(Though yet every Christian should choose that particular society, if he can, where he may not only be saved, but most certainly saved, and find the greatest helps, and least hindrances, or else where he may do God the greatest service.) But choose what company you will in the world, the strictest, the most reformed, the most splendid in outward pomp and glory, or of whatever excellency else you may imagine, you will never be saved in it yourselves, as long as your hearts are unconverted. I know the Papists have found out many devices, by sacraments, and ceremonies, and the merits of the saints, to patch up the defect of a thorough conversion; but all are mere delusions that pretend to such a thing.

O then think of this, poor sinner: hast thou gone so far, and done so much, and shall all be lost because thou wilt not follow it to the end? Hast thou groaned, and wept, and confessed, and bemoaned thine own condition? Hast thou prayed, and read, and heard, and fasted, and changed thy company, and much of thy course of life? And shall all this be lost, for want of going to the bottom, and making a thorough work of it? What a loss will this be?

5. Consider also, What an admirable help and advantage it will be to you through the whole course of your lives, if the work of conversion be once thoroughly wrought. I will shew you this in some particulars.

(1.) It will be an excellent help to your understandings, against the grosser errors of the world, and will establish you in the truth much more than mere arguments can do; for you will be able to speak for the truth from feeling and experience: he that hath the law written both in his Bible and in his heart, is likely to hold it faster than he that hath it in his Bible alone. But of this I have spoken already in my "Treatise against Infidelity," Part ii.

(2.) If you be but thoroughly converted, you will have that within you which will be a continual help against temptations: you have not only experience of the mischief of sinning, and the folly of those reasons that are brought for its defence; but you have also a new nature, which is against the temptation, as life is against poison: and as it is a great disadvantage to the law of Christ, that it speaks against the nature of the ungodly; so is it a disadvantage to the temptations of the devil, that they would draw a Christian against
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his new nature. You have that within you that will plead more effectually against sensuality, uncharitableness, pride or worldliness, or any the like sin, than learning or reason alone can do. (As in the forecited book I have further manifested.)

(3.) If conversion be thoroughly wrought, you will have within you a continual helper of your graces, and a remembrancer to put you in mind of duty, and a spur to put you on to the performance, and a furtherer of your souls in the performance itself: it is out of this spark and principle within you, that the Holy Ghost doth raise the acts of grace. This is it that the word, and prayer, and conference, and sacraments, and all the means of grace must work upon. If we see you do amiss, we have hopes that you will hear us; if we plainly reprove you, we may look you should take it in good part: for you have that within you that saith as we say, and is at deadly enmity with the sin which we reprove. If we provoke you to love and to good works, we dare almost promise ourselves that you will obey; for you have that within you that disposeth you to the duty, and preacheth our sermons to you over again. O what an advantage it is to our teaching, when you are all taught of God within, as well as by his messengers without! But when we speak to the unconverted, we have little to work upon: we give physic to the dead; we speak all against the bent of their souls; and every reproof and exhortation to holiness goes against their very natures; and therefore what wonder if we have the smaller hopes to prevail?

(4.) If the work be thoroughly done at first, it will help to resolve many doubts that may be afterwards cast into your minds: you need not be still at a loss and looking behind you, and questioning your foundation, but may go cheerfully and boldly on. O what an excellent encouragement is this! to know that you have hitherto made good your ground, and left all safe and sure behind you, and have nothing to do but to look before you; and press on towards the mark till you lay hold upon the prize: whereas if you be in any great doubt of your conversion, it will be stopping you and discouraging you in all your work; you will be still looking behind you, and saying, 'What if I should yet be unconverted?' when you should cheerfully address yourselves to prayer or sacraments, how sadly will you go, as be-
ing utterly uncertain whether you have a saving right to them; or whether God will accept a sacrifice at your hand? When you should grow and go forward, you will have little heart to it, because you know not whether you are yet in the way; and this will damp your life and comfort in every duty, when you must say, 'I know not whether yet I be thoroughly converted.' O therefore stop not the work at first.

(5.) And lastly, If the work be thoroughly done at first you will persevere, when others fall away. You will have rooting in yourselves, entertaining the seed as into depth of earth; and you will have the Holy Ghost within you, and (more than so) engaged for your preservation, and the perfecting of your salvation; when they that received the word as seed upon a rock, and never give it deep entertainment, will wither and fall away in the time of trial; and from them that have not saving grace, shall be taken away, even that which they seemed to have; Matt. xiii. 12. xxv. 19.

6. And lastly, Consider, If you fall short of a true conversion at the first, the devil will take occasion by it, to tempt you at last to utter despair. When you have made many essays and trials, and been about the work again and again, he will persuade you that there is no possibility of accomplishing it. If we convince an open profane person that is unconverted, he may easier see that yet there is hopes of it, but if a man have been half-converted, and lived long in a formal, self-deceiving profession of religion, and been taken by himself and others for a godly man, as it is very hard to convince this man that he is unconverted, so when he is convinced of it, he will easily fall into desperation. For satan will tell him, 'If thou be yet unconverted after so many confessions and prayers, and after so long a course of religion, what hope canst thou have that it should yet be done? Thou wilt never have better opportunities than thou hast had. If such sermons as thou hast heard could not do it, what hope is there of it? If such books, and such company, and such mercies and such afflictions have not done it, what hope canst thou have? Canst thou hear any livelier teaching than thou hast heard; or speak any holier words than thou hast spoken? If yet the work be quite undone, it is not forsaking another sin, nor going a step further that will do it; and therefore never think of it, for there is no hope: dost thou not know how oft thou hast tried in vain? and what
canst thou do more?" And thus you give advantage to the tempter by your first delays, and taking up in mere preparatories. And therefore I beseech you as you love your souls, take heed of resisting the Spirit of grace, and breaking off the work before it is thoroughly done, but go to the bottom, and follow it on, till it be accomplished in sincerity. And now hoping that upon these considerations you are resolved to do your best, I shall come to the thing which I principally intended; which is to give you certain Directions, which if you will obey, you may be converts and saints indeed.

Direct. I. Lest the work of conversion should miscarry where it seemeth to be begun, or in a hopeful way, I first advise you, 'To labour after a right understanding of the true nature of Christianity, and the meaning of the Gospel which is sent for to convert you.' You are naturally slaves to the prince of darkness; and live in a state of darkness, and do the works of darkness, and are hastening apace to utter darkness. And it is the light of saving knowledge that must recover you, or there is no recovery. God is the Father of Light, and dwelleth in light; Christ is the light of the world; his ministers also are the lights of the world, as under him; and are sent to turn men from darkness to light, by the Gospel which is the light to our feet: and this is to make us children of light, that we may no more do the works of darkness, but may be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. 1 John i. 5, 9. James i. 17. Matt. v. 14. Acts xxvi. 18. John viii. 12. 2 Pet. i. 19. Eph. v. 8, 13. Col. i. 12. Believe it, darkness is not the way to the celestial glory. Ignorance is your disease, and knowledge must be your cure. I know the ignorant have many excuses, and are apt to think that the case is not so bad with them as we make it to be; and that there is no such need of knowledge, but a man may be saved without it. But this is because they want that knowledge that should shew them the misery of their ignorance and the worth of knowledge. Hath not the Scripture plainly told you, that "If the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, whose minds the God of this world hath blinded, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them; 2 Cor. iii. 4. I know that many that have much knowledge are ungodly; but what of that? Can any man therefore be godly or be saved, without know-
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ledge? You may have a bad servant that yet is skilful enough in his work, but yet you will not mend the matter, by taking one that hath no skill at all. You may send a man on your errand that knows the way, and yet will not go it, but loiter and deceive you: but what of that, will you therefore think to mend the matter by sending one that knoweth not a step of the way, nor will learn it? Though a man of knowledge may be the servant of the devil, yet no man without knowledge (that hath the use of his reason) can be the servant of God. A man may go to hell with knowledge, but he certainly shall go to hell without it. I do not say that you must all be men of learning, and skilled in the arts and sciences, and languages: but you must have the knowledge of a Christian, though not of a scholar. Can you love or serve a God that you know not? Can you let go friends, and goods, and life, for a glory which you have no knowledge of? Can you make it the principal business of your lives to seek for a heaven whose excellencies you know not of? Can you lament your sin and misery, when you are unacquainted with it? Or will you strive against sin as the greatest evil, when you know not the evil of it? Will you believe in a Christ, whom you do not know, and trust your souls and all upon him? Will you rest upon a promise, or fear a threatening, or be ruled by a law, which you do not understand? It is not possible to be Christians without knowing the substance of Christianity: nor is it possible for you to be saved without knowing the way of salvation.

Labour, therefore, to be well acquainted with the grounds and reasons, and nature of your religion. The clearer your light is, the warmer and livelier your hearts will be. Illumination is the first part of sanctification. The head is the passage to the heart. O if you did but thoroughly know what sin is, and what a life it is to serve the flesh, and what the end of this will prove, with what detestation would you cast it away! If you did thoroughly know what a life of holiness is, how speedily would you choose it. If you did truly know what God is; how infinitely powerful and wise, and good; how holy, and just, and true; and what title he hath to you, and authority over you; and what an eternal portion he would be to you, how is it possible that you could prefer the dirt of the world before him, or delay any longer to return unto him? If you did but truly know what Christ
is, and what he hath done and suffered for you, and what that pardon, and grace, and glory are which he hath purchased for you, and offereth to you, and how sure his promise is by which it is offered, it is not possible that you should refuse to entertain him, or delay to give up your souls unto him. Do you think a man that truly knows what heaven is, and what hell is, can still be in doubt whether he should turn or not? Alas! sirs, if God would but open your eyes, to see where you are, and what you are doing, you would run as for your lives, and quickly change your minds and ways. You would no more stay in your carnal state, than you would stay in a house that were falling down on your heads, or in a ship that you perceived sinking under you, or on the sands when you see the tide coming towards you. If you did but see your chamber full of devils this night, you would not stand to ask whether you should be gone. And sure then if you knew how the devils are about you, how they deceive you, and rule you, and wait to drag you away to hell, you would never stay a night longer willingly in such a state. While men understand not what the Gospel means, nor what a minister saith to them, no wonder if they regard them not, but continue in their sin. If you see a bear or a mad dog making towards a man, and tell him of it, and call to him to be gone, if he be a man of another language, and do not understand you, he will make never the more haste; but if he understand and believe you, he will away. If people think that ministers are in jest with them, or that they are uncertain of what they say, no marvel if they hear us in jest, or as men that believe not what they hear. But if you knew that your lives lay on it, yea, your everlasting life, would you not regard it, and look about you? Now you stand deliberating and questioning the business whether you should turn, and let go sin, or no. But if you knew that you must certainly have hell with it, if you keep it, methinks your doubt should quickly be resolved, and you should be loath to give another night's lodging to so chargeable and dangerous a guest. Now when we persuade you to holiness of life, you will demur on it, as if there were some doubtfulness in the matter. But if you knew the nature and end of holiness, you would soon be out of doubt; and if you knew but how much happier you might be with God, you would never stick at the parting with your most
delightful sins. As the Jews rejected Christ, and preferred a murderer before him, and cried out 'Crucify him,' and all because they did not know him (1 Cor. ii. 8. John viii. 9. i. 10. Acts xiii. 27.), so you let Christ knock and call, and offer you salvation, and you stand questioning whether you should obey his call, and whether you should not prefer your lusts before him; and all because you know him not, nor the grace and glory which he tendereth to you. When men understand not the reasons of God, that should prevail with them, no wonder if they part not with that which is as dear to them as their lives. But when once they know the reasons of Christianity, those moving, weighty, undeniable reasons, that are fetched from God, and heaven, and hell, they will then stand questioning the matter no longer; but they will resign up all, even life itself. All this I speak of a spiritual, powerful, and a practical knowledge, and not of every swimming opinion and conceit.

Study, therefore, what God is, and what he is to you, and what he would be to you. Study what sin is, and what the damnation is which it deserves. Study what Christ is, and hath done and suffered for you, and what he is willing to do, if you neglect him not. Study what the world is, and what is the utmost that sin will do for you. Study what the everlasting glory is which you may have with God, if you lose it not by your folly. And study what faith is, and what repentance is, and what love and joy, and a holy and heavenly life are, and how little reason you have to be afraid of them. If this understanding have but deeply possessed you, it will bias your hearts, and make you resolved, settled converts.

Whereas, if you seem to turn and scarce know why, and seem to take up a Christian life before you are thoroughly possessed with the nature, grounds, and reasons of it, no marvel if you are quickly lost again in the dark, and if every caviller that you meet with can nonplus you, and make you stagger, and call in question all that you have done, and ravel all your work; or if you do but run from one party to another, and follow every one that tells you a fair tale, and never know what to fix upon, nor when you are in the way, and when you are out.

The apprehensions of the mind do move the whole man. Wisdom is the guide and stay of the soul. Sinning is doing
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foolishly, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. And sinners are fools; Prov. i. 22. Psal. lxxv. 4. Their mirth is but the mirth of fools, and their song the song of fools; Eccl. vii. 4, 5. Yea, the best of their services, while they refuse to hear and obey, is but the sacrifice of fools; Eccl. v. 1. And such are not fit for the house of God; "for God hath no pleasure in fools;" Eccl. v. 4. He hath need to have his wits about him, and know what he doth that will be the servant of the God of heaven, and escape the deceits of a subtle devil, and get to heaven through so many difficulties as are before him. Above all getting, therefore, get wisdom.

Direct. II. If you would not have the work of your conversion miscarry, when you understand what is offered you, then search the Scriptures daily, to see whether those things be so or not.

So did the Bereans, Acts xvii. 11.; and the text saith, that, therefore, they believed. We come not to cheat and deceive you; and, therefore, we desire not that you should take any thing from us, but what we can prove to you from the word of God to be certainly true. We desire not to lead you in the dark, but by the light to lead you out of darkness; and, therefore, we refuse not to submit all our doctrine to an equal trial. Though we would not have you wrong your souls by an unjust distrust of us, yet would we not desire you to take these great and mighty things merely upon our words; for then your faith will be in man; and then no marvel if it be weak, and ineffectual, and quickly shaken. If you trust a man to-day, you may distrust him to-morrow; and if one man be of greatest credit with you this year, perhaps another of a contrary mind may be of more credit with you the next year. And, therefore, we desire no further to be believed by you, than is necessary to lead you up to God, and to help you to understand that word which you must believe. Our desire, therefore, is, that you search the Scripture, and try whether the things that we tell you be the truth. The word will never work on you to purpose till you see and hear God in it, and perceive that it is he, and not man only, that speaks to you. When you hear none speaking to you but the minister, no marvel if you dare despise him; for he is a frail and silly man like yourselves; when you think that the doctrine which we preach to you is merely of our own
devising, and the conjecture of our own brain, no marvel if
you set light by it, and will not let go all that you have, at
the persuasion of a preacher. But when you have searched
the Scripture, and find that it is the word of the God of hea-
ven, dare you despise it then? When you there find that
we said no more than we are commanded, and God that hath
spoken this word will stand to it; then sure it will go nearer
you, and you will consider of it, and make light of it no more.
If we offered you bad wares, we should desire a dark shop;
and if our gold were light or bad, we would not call for the
balance and the touchstone. But when we are sure the
things that we speak are true, we desire nothing more than
trial. Beauty and comeliness hath no advantage of loath-
some deformity, when they are both together in the dark,
but the light will shew the difference. Error may be a loser
by the light; and, therefore, shuns it; John iii. 19—21. But
truth is a gainer by it, and therefore seeks it. Let Papists
hide the Scriptures from the people, and forbid the reading
of them in a tongue which they understand, and teach them
to speak to God they know not what; we dare not do so,
nor do we desire it. Our doctrine will not go off well in the
dark; and, therefore, we call you to the law and to the tes-
timony, and desire you to take our words into the light, and
see whether they be according to the word of the Lord. No-
thing troubleth us more than that we cannot persuade our
hearers to this trial. Some of them are so hardened in their
sin and misery, that they will not be at so much labour as
to open their Bibles, and try whether we say true or not.
Some of them will not trouble their minds with the thoughts
of it. "God is not in all their thoughts;" Psal. x. 4. And
some are already too wise to learn; and they will not so long
abate their confidence of their former opinions; though, poor
souls, their ignorance doth threaten their damnation. Andsome
are so engaged in a sinful party, that their companions will
not give them leave to make so much question of the way
that they are in; and some will scarce take the Scripture
for the rule by which they must try and be tried, but look
more to custom, and the will of those in power over them.
And most are unwilling to try, because they are unwilling
to know the truth, and cannot endure to find themselves
miserable, nor see the sin which they would not leave, nor
see the duty which they love not to practise. And thus we cannot get them to try whether the things that we teach them be so.

For want of this it is that men deceive themselves, and think their case to be safe when it is miserable, because they will not try it by the word. This makes them rage, and be confident in their folly (Prov. xiv. 16.), and laugh and sing at the brink of hell, and swim as merrily down the stream to the devouring gulf as if no evil were near them. This makes them in the depth of misery to have no pity on themselves, and to do so little to escape it; though they have time, and means, and help at hand, yet there are not hearts in them to make use of them; yea, they run themselves daily further on the score; and all because we cannot get them to search the Scripture, and try whether sin be so small a matter, and whether this will not be bitterness in the end. Hence it is that they are so easily drawn by a temptation; and that they dislike a holy life, and have base thoughts of them that are most diligent for salvation, and are most precious in the eyes of God; and that they can even deride the way that they should walk in (Prov. 1. 20. Psal. i. 2.), because they will not search the Scripture, to see what it saith to these matters. The word is a light, and would do much to open their eyes, and win them over to God, if they would but come to it with a desire to know the truth. You think that the ungodly that are rich and great, are in a better condition than a godly man that is poor and despised. And why is this, but because you will not go into the sanctuary, and see in what a slippery place they stand, and what will be the end of these men? Psal. lxxiii. 16, 17, 22. In a word, this is the undoing of millions of souls. They are all their lifetime out of the way to heaven, and yet will not be persuaded to ask the way; but they run on and wink, and put it to the venture. Many a thousand are gone out of the world, before they ever spent the quantity of one day in trying by the Scripture whether their state were good, and their way were right. Nay, let their teachers tell them that they must be sanctified and take another course, they will differ from their teachers though they be never so wise or learned; and they will contradict them, and not believe or regard them. And yet we cannot get them to come to us, and put the case to a trial, and let the Scripture be the judge. Would
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they but do this, they could never sure have such hard thoughts of their teachers, and be offended at their plainest, closest dealing. You would then say, 'I see now the minister says not this of himself, he speaks but that which God commandeth him; and if he would not deliver the message of the Lord, he were unworthy and unfit to be his ambassador. He were cruel to me if he would not pull me out of the fire, by the plainest, closest means;' Jude 23. 'He hated me if he would not rebuke me, but suffer sin upon me;' Lev. xix. 17. 'If he would please men he should not be the servant of Christ;' Gal. i. 10. 'I know it is no pleasure to him to trouble me, or to provoke me; but it would be his own destruction if he tell me not of my danger,' Ezek. iii. 18. 'And I have no reason to wish him to damn his own soul, and suffer me to do the like by mine; and all for fear of displeasing me in my sin.' These would be your thoughts if you would but try our words by the Scripture, and see whether we speak not the mind of God.

And sure it would go somewhat deeper in your hearts, and it would stick by you, and be more before your eyes, when you once understood that it is the word of God.

This then is my request to you, sirs, that the work of your conversion may not miscarry, that you would carry all that you hear to the Scripture, and search there, and see whether it be so or not, that so you may be put out of doubt, and may be at a certainty, and not stand wavering; and that your faith may be resolved into the authority of God, and so the work may be divine, and consequently powerful and prevailing, when the ground and motive are divine. If you be not satisfied in the doctrine which the minister delivereth to you, first search the Scripture yourselves; and if that will not do, go to him, and desire him to shew you his grounds for it in the word of God, and join with you in prayer for a right understanding of it. Do you question whether there be so severe a judgment, and a heaven, and a hell, as ministers tell you? Search the Scripture, in Matt. xxv. and 2 i. 8—10. John v. 29. Matt. xiii. Do you question whether a man may not be saved without conversion, regeneration, and holiness? Open your Bibles, and see what God saith, John iii. 3. 6. Matt. xviii. 3. 2 Cor. v. 17. Rom. viii. 9. Heb. xii. 14. Do you think a man may be saved without knowledge? Let Scripture judge; 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.
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Thus if you will in all these weighty matters but go to the Scriptures, and see whether it say as your teachers say, you might soon be resolved, and that by the surest authority in the world. If you think that your ministers may be deceived, I hope you will confess that God cannot be deceived. If you think that your ministers are passionate, or self-conceited, or speak out of ill-will to you, I hope you dare not say so by the Lord; he owes you no ill-will, nor speaks a word but what is most sure. If you think us partial, sure God is impartial. What better judge can you have now, than he that is infallible, and must judge you all at the last? If any Papist put it into your head to ask, ‘Who shall be judge of the sense of Scripture?’ I answer, Who shall be judge of the Judge of all the world? The law is made to judge you, and not to be judged by you. None can be the proper judges of the sense of a law but the maker of it; though others must judge their cases by the law. Your work is to discern it, and understand and obey it; and our work is to help you to understand it; but it is neither our work nor yours to be the proper, or absolute judges of it. At least where it speaks plain it needs no judge.

Come then to the word in meekness and humility, with a teachable frame of spirit, and a willingness to know the
truth, and a resolution to stand to it, and yield to what shall be revealed to you, and beg of God to shew you his will, and lead you into the truth; and you will find that he will be found of them that seek him.

Direct. III. If you would not have the work of your conversion miscarry, my next advice is this:

'See that you be much in the serious consideration of the truths which you understand, betwixt God and you in secret.'

I have often spoken of this heretofore; but because I apprehend it to be a work of exceeding great concernment, I shall be longer on it again than on the rest.

The greatest matters in the world will not work much upon him that will not think of them. Consideration opens the ear that was stopped, and the heart that was shut up; it sets the powers of the soul at work, and awakeneth it from the sleep of incogitancy and security. The thoughts are the first actings of the soul, that set at work the rest. Thinking on the matters that must make us wise, and do the work of God on the heart, is that which lieth on us to do in order to our conversion. By Consideration a sinner makes use of the truth, which before lay by, and therefore could do nothing. By Consideration he taketh in the medicine to his soul, which before stood by, and could not work. By Consideration a man makes use of his reason, which before was laid asleep, and therefore could not do its work. When the master is from home, the scholars will be at play. When the coachman is asleep, the horses may miss the way, and possibly break his neck and their own. If the ploughman go his way, the oxen will stand still, or make but bad, unhandsome work. So when reason is laid asleep, and out of the way, what may not appetite do? and what may not the passions do? and what may not temptations do with the soul? A wise man, when he is asleep, hath as little use of his wisdom as a fool. A learned man when he is asleep can hardly dispute with an unlearned man that is awake. A strong man that is never so skilful at his weapons, is scarce able in his sleep to deal with the weakest child that is awake. Why all the powers of your soul are, as it were, asleep, till Consideration awake them, and set them on work. And what the better are you for being men, and having reason, if you have not the use of your reason when you need it? As
Men are inconsiderate because they are wicked, so are they the more wicked because they are inconsiderate. The keenest sword, the greatest cannon, will do no execution against an enemy, while they lie by and are not used. There is a mighty power in the word of God, and the example of Christ, to pull down strong holds, and conquer the strongest lusts and corruptions. But they will not do this while they are forgotten and neglected. Will heaven entice the man that thinks not of it? Will hell deter the man that thinks not of it? Why is it that all the reasoning in the world will do no more good on a man that is deaf, than if you said nothing? but because the passage to his thoughts and understanding is stopped up. And if you have eyes and see not, and ears and hear not, and wilfully cast it out of your thoughts, what good can any thing do to you that is spoken? It is not holding your mouth that will nourish you, if you will not let it down: not taking it into your stomach, if you will not keep it, but presently cast it up again; but it must be kept till it be digested and distributed. So it is not the most excellent truths in the world that will change your hearts, if you let them not down to your hearts, and keep them not there by meditation, till they are digested and turned into spiritual life. The plaster must be laid upon the sore if you would be cured. The wound and sickness is at your heart; and if you will not take in the word to your heart, where the sickness is, I know not how you should expect a cure. The soul will not be charmed into holiness by the bare hearing or saying over a few good words; as wizards use to cure diseases, or seem to cure them. It must be truth at the heart that must change the heart. And if you will not think on it, and think on it again, how can you expect it should come at your hearts?

You say you would gladly have Christ and grace, and are ready to lay the blame on God, because he doth not give it you, and say, 'We cannot convert ourselves;' but would you have the Spirit come in, while you hold the door against him? He knocks, and desireth you to open and let him in, and you wish him to come in; but you bolt the door, and no entreaty will procure you to open it. It is Consideration of the saving doctrine of the Gospel that openeth the heart, and giveth it entertainment. Set yourselves therefore on purpose to this work, and open the doors of your heart which are now shut, and let the King of glory come in.
believe that you love the light, when you shut the windows; and draw the curtains? If you will set yourselves to consider of the truth, the windows of your soul will be set open, and then the light will certainly come in. Now you read over whole chapters, and hear sermon after sermon, and either they never stir you, or at least it is but a little for a fit, like a man that hath a little warmed him at the fire in the winter, and when he goes from it, is colder than before: but if you would but set yourselves to consider of what you hear and read, one line of a chapter, or one sentence of a sermon would lay you in tears, or make you groan, or at least do more than now is done. Satan hath garrisoned the heart of every carnal man: and Consideration is the principal means to cast him out. If by considering of the terrible threatenings of the word, you would discharge these cannons of God against them, what a battery would it make in the corruptions of your souls! Our God is a consuming fire, and the fire of hell is threatened in his law, as the wages of sin: by serious Consideration you may as it were, fetch fire from God and from his word, and set fire to the very gates of satan's garrison, and fire him out of many of his holds.

But because this is so needful a point, I shall be so large upon it, as, i. To tell you some of those things that you should consider of. ii. To tell you in what manner you should do it. And, iii. To give you some motives to put you on.

i. The first thing that I would have you oft to think on, is, The nature of that God with whom ye have to do. Consider, that if he be the most wise, it is all the reason in the world that he should rule you. If he be good, and infinitely good, there is all the reason in the world that you should love him; and there is no shew of reason that you should love the world or sin before him. If he be faithful and true, his threatenings must be feared, and his promises must not be distrusted; and there is no reason that you should make any question of his word. If he be holy, then holiness must needs be most excellent, and those that are the holiest must needs be the best, because they are like to God; and then he must be an enemy to sin, and to all that are unholy, because they are contrary to his nature. Consider that he is almighty, and there is no resisting him, or standing out against him; in the twink of an eye can he snatch thy guilty soul from thy body, and cast it where sin is better known.
A word of his mouth can set all the world against thee, and set thine own conscience against thee too; a frown of his face can turn thee into hell; and if he be thine enemy, it is no matter who is thy friend; for all the world cannot save thee, if he do but condemn thee. They are blessed whom he blesseth, and they are cursed indeed whom he curseth. He was from eternity, and thou art but as it were of yesterday: thy being is from him; thy life is always in his hands, thou canst not live an hour without him, thou canst not fetch a breath without him, nor think a thought, nor speak a word, nor stir a foot or hand without him; thou mayst better live without bread, or drink, or fire, or air, or earth, or water, than without him. All the world is before him, but as the drop of a bucket, or a little sand or dust that should be laid in balance with all the earth. Hadst thou but compassed about this lower world, and seen all the nations of it, and its wonderful furniture, and seen the great deeps of the mighty ocean, and the abundance of creatures in them all: O what thoughts then wouldst thou have of God! But if thou hadst been above the stars, and seen the sun in all its glory, and seen the frame and course of those higher orbs, and seen the blessed, glorious angels, and all the inhabitants of the higher world, O then what thoughts of God wouldst thou entertain! O but if it were possible that thou hadst seen his glory, or seen but his back parts as Moses did, or seen him in Christ the now glorified Redeemer, what apprehensions wouldst thou have of him then! Then how wouldst thou abhor the name of sin, and how weary wouldst thou be of the pleasantest life that sensuality could afford thee! Then thou wouldst quickly know that no love can be great enough, and no praises can be high enough, and no service can be holy and good enough for such a God: then you would soon know, that this is not a God to be neglected, or dallied with; nor a God to be resisted, nor provoked by the wilful breaking of his laws. It is eternal life to know this God (John xvii. 3.); and for want of knowing him it is, that sin aboundeth in the world. This maketh holiness so scarce and lean: men worship they care not how, because they worship they know not whom. O therefore dwell on the meditations of the Almighty. So far as he doth possess thy mind, there will be no place for sin and vanity. One would think if I should set you no further task, and tell you of no...
other matters for meditation, this one should be enough; for this one is in a manner all. What will not the due knowledge of God do upon the soul? That is the best Christian, and the most happy man that knoweth most of him; and that is the most vile and miserable wretch that is furthest from him, and strangest to him; it is the character of the fool of fools, to have an heart whose disposition and practice saith, "There is no God;" Psalm xiv. 1. that is, to be so affected and employed in their hearts, as if there were no God, and when God is not in all his thoughts; Psalm x. 4. It was better with man when he had less knowledge for himself, and fewer thoughts for himself, and more of God. And there is no way to restore us to sound understanding, and to perfect our knowledge, but to turn our eye upon God again; for in knowing him, we know all that is worth the knowing. Take hold then of the blessed God in thy meditations, and fill thy thoughts with him, and dwell upon those thoughts. Remember he is always with thee, and wherever thou art, or whatever thou art doing, most certainly he seeth thee. As sure as thou art there, the Lord is there. He knoweth thy thoughts, he heareth thy words, he seeth all thy ways. And is such a God as this to be provoked or despised? Were it not better to provoke and despise all the world? Is his favour to be slighted? Were it not better to lose the favour of all the world? Consider of this!

2. Another thing that I would have you oft think of, is, What end you were made for, and what business it is that you came for into the world. You may well think that God made you not in vain; and that he made you for no lower end, than for himself; and that he would never have made you, nor so long preserved you, if he had not cared what you do. He would never have endued you with a reasonable and immortal soul, but for some high, and noble, and immortal end. Surely it was that you might be happy in knowing him, that he made you capable of knowing him; for he made nothing in vain. It is useful for a horse to know his pasture, and provender, and work, and perhaps his master; but he need not know whether there be a God; and accordingly he is qualified. But it is sure man's chief concernment to know that there is a God, and what he is, and how to serve him, and what he is and will be to us; or else we should never have been capa-
able of such things. And he would never have made you capable of loving him, but that you should be exercised and made happy in that love. The frame, and faculties, and capacity of your souls, and the scope of Scripture, do all declare, that you were sent into this world, to seek after God, and to love him, and obey him, and rejoice in him in your measure; and to prepare for a life of nearer communion, where you may enjoy him and praise him in the highest perfection. Consider with yourselves, whether a life of sin be that which you were made for; or whether God sent you hither to break his laws, and follow your own lusts. And whether the satisfying of your flesh, and the gathering a little worldly wealth, and the feathering of a nest which you must so quickly leave, be like to be the business that you were sent about into the world.

3. The next thing that I would have you consider of, is, How you have answered the ends of your creation, and how you have done the business that you came into the world to do. Look back upon the drift of your hearts and lives; read over the most ancient records of your consciences, and see what you have been, and what you have been doing in the world till now. Have you spent your days in seeking after God, and your estates and strength in faithful serving him? Have you lived all this time in the admiration of his excellencies, and the fervent love of him, and delightful remembrance of him, and the zealous worship of him? If you have done this, you had not need of a conversion. But consider, have you not forgotten what business you had in the world, and little minded the world that you should have prepared for, and lived as if you knew not him that made you, or why he made you? Was sport and merriment the end that you were created for? Was ease and idleness, or eating, or drinking, or vain discourses, or recreation, the business that you came into the world about? Was living to the flesh, and scraping up riches, or gaping after the esteem of men, the work that God sent you hither to do? Was this it that he preserved you for, and daily gave you in provision for? What, was it to forget him, and slight him, and turn him out of your hearts, and rob him of his service and honour; and to set up your flesh in his stead, and give that to it, that was due to him? Bethink you what you have done, and whether you have done the work that you were sent to do, or not.
4. The next thing you should use to consider of, is, How grievously you have sinned, and what a case it is that your sin hath brought you into. If you take but an impartial view of your lives, you may see how far you have missed your marks, and how far you have been from what you should have been; and how little you have done of that which was your business. And O what abundance of aggravations have your sins! which I shall pass over now, because I must mention them under another head. It is not only some actually out-breakings against the bent of your heart and life, but your very heart was false and gone from God, and set in you to do evil.

O the time that you have lost; the means and helps that you have neglected; the motions that you have resisted; the swarms of evil thoughts that have filled your imaginations; the streams of vain and idle words that have flowed from your mouth; the works of darkness, in public and in secret, that God hath seen you in! And all this while, how empty were you in inward holiness, and how barren of good works, to God or man? What have you done with all your talents, and how little or nothing hath God had of all!

And now consider what a case you are in, while you remain unconverted. You have made yourselves the sinks of sin, the slaves of satan, and the flesh; and are skilful in nothing but doing evil; if you be called to prayer or holy meditation, your hearts are against it, and you are not used to it, and therefore you know not how to do it to any purpose: but to think the thoughts of lust, or covetousness, or hatred, or malice, or revenge, this you can do without any toil. To speak of the world, or of your sports and pleasures, or against those that you bear ill will to, this you can do without any study. You are such as are spoken of, Jer. iv. 22. "My people is foolish, they have not known me: they are sottish children, and they have no understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." You are grown strangers to the God that made you, in whose love and service you should live and find your chief delights. Your hearts are hardened, and you are dead in your sins: the guilt of the sins of your lives are still upon you: you can neither look into your hearts and lives, no, not on one day of your lives, or the best hour that you have spent, but you must see the ugly face of sin, which deserveth condem-
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tnation. You have made God your enemy, that should have been your only felicity: and yet you are always at his mercy, and in his hands. Little do you know how long his patience will yet endure to you; or what hour he will call away your souls: and if death come, alas, what a case will it find you in! How lamentably unready are you to meet him! How unready to appear before the dreadful God whom you have offended! and what a terrible appearance do you think that will be to you! Most certainly if you die before you are converted, you will not be from among the devils and damned souls an hour. The law hath cursed you already, and the execution will be answerable, if you die in your sins. And thus you may see the gain of sin, and what it is that you have been doing all this while for your own souls; and what a case it is that you have brought yourselves into; and what need you have speedily to look about you.

5. The next step of your Consideration should be this; Bethink yourselves what a blessed condition you might be in, if by conversion you were but recovered from this misery, and brought home to God. This moved the heart of the prodigal son to return; Luke xv. 16, 17. "When he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger?" He that hath not husks to feed on with the swine, considered the plenty that he had forsaken at home. The poorest member of the household of Christ, is in a better condition than the greatest king on earth, that is unconverted. You might have lived another kind of life than you have done, for safety, and benefit, and true content, if you would have turned your minds and life to God. Were you but converted, you would be the living members of Christ, and his precious benefits would be yours; his blood would cleanse you from all your sins, and they would be all freely forgiven you; God would be reconciled to you, and become your friend, yea, your Father and your God; and will take you for his household servants, and adopted children: the Holy Ghost would dwell in you, and guide your understandings, and shew you that which flesh and blood cannot reveal, and bring you into acquaintance with the mysteries of God: he will be a Spirit of light and life within you, and work your hearts yet more to God, and give you yet stronger inclinations and affections to the things above. He will
help you when you are weak, and quicken you where you are dull, and be your remembrancer when you are forgetful of necessary things: he will help you in prayer, both for matter and for manner, and help you in meditation and conference, and other duties: he will warn you of your danger, and strengthen you against temptations, and cause you to overcome; and if you fall, he will cause you to rise again: he will be an indwelling comforter to you, and so effectually speak peace to you in the midst of your disquietness, that by speaking it, he will create it in you: and in the multitude of your thoughts within you, his comforts will delight your souls. O what a life might you live, if Christ by his Spirit did once live in you! You may easily conjecture how tender Christ would be of his own members, how dearly he would love them, how constantly he would watch over them, how plentifully he would provide for them, and how safely he would preserve them. And if you should come into a rougher way, he would lead you out: afflictions should never be laid on you but for your good; and continue no longer than your need continueth them, and be taken off at last to your satisfaction and contentment. Indeed your life would be a life of mercies; and that which is but a common mercy to common men would be a special mercy to you, as coming from your Father's love, and furthering your salvation, and hinting out to you your everlasting mercies. You could not open your eyes, but you would see that which may encourage and comfort you; all the works of God which you behold, would shew you his majesty, his love, and power, and lead you to himself. You could not open your Bible, but you would find in it the blessed lines of love: O what good it would do you, to read there the blessed attributes of your God! to look upon his name! to peruse the description of his most perfect nature! What good would it do you to read of the nature, and incarnation, and life, and death, and resurrection, and ascension, and intercession, and return of your blessed Redeemer? What good would it do you to find those holy rules which your new nature is agreeable to, and to read over the law that is written in your hearts, and read the curse from which you are delivered? What life and joy would your souls receive from the many, and full, and free promises of grace! Were you once but truly sanctified and made new, your condition would be
often comfortable, but always safe; and when you were in
the greatest fears and perplexities, you would still be fast in
the arms of Christ: and what a life would that be, to have
daily access to God in prayer; to have leave in all your
wants and danger, to seek to him with a promise of hearing
and success; that you may be sure of much more from him,
than a child can from the tenderest father, or a wife from the
most loving husband upon the earth. What a life would it
be, when you may always think on God as your felicity, and
fetch your highest delights from him, from whom the un-
godly have their greatest terrors? And it is no contempti-
ble part of your benefits that you may live among his peo-
ple, and in their special love, and have a special communion
with them, and interest in their prayers, and may possess
among them the privileges of the saints and the ordinances
of God: that instead of idle talk, and the unprofitable fel-
lowship of the children and works of darkness, you may
join with the church of God in his praises, and feed with
them at his table, on the body and blood of Christ, and then
have conveyances of renewed grace and a renewed pardon
sealed to your souls; but how long should I stay, if I should
tell you but one half of the blessing of a sanctified and spi-
ritual state? In a word, God would be yours, Christ would
be yours, the Holy Ghost would be yours, all things would
be yours; the whole world would have some relation to
your welfare; devils would be subdued to you, and cast out
of your souls; sin would be both pardoned and overcome;
angels would be ministering spirits unto you for your good;
the promises of Scripture would be yours; and everlasting
glory would at last be yours; and while you staid on earth,
you might comfort yourselves as oft as you would, with the
believing foresight of that inconceivable, unspeakable,
endless felicity.

O sirs, what a treasure have I here expressed in a few
words! What hearts would you have if you were but pos-
sessed, lively and sensible of all that is contained in this leaf
or two! You would not envy the greatest prince on earth his
glory, nor change states with any man that was a stranger
to these things. Did you but use to consider of the state of
the saints; how could you keep off, and stay with sin, and
make so many delays in turning unto God! Sure this con-
sideration might turn the scales.
6. The next part of your meditation should be, Of the gracious and wonderful work of our redemption, and the means and remedies which are provided for your souls, and the terms on which salvation may be obtained.

For all the sins that you have committed, you are not given over to despair: the Lord hath not left you without a remedy: your conversion and salvation is not a thing impossible. Nay, so much is done by Christ already, that it is brought upon reasonable terms even to your hands. A new and living way is consecrated for us by Christ through the veil of his flesh, and by his blood we may have boldness to enter into the holiest; Heb. x. 19, 20. He hath borne your burden; and offereth you instead of it his burden, which is light; Matt. xi. 28. He hath removed the impossibility and nailed to his cross the hand writing that was against you; Col. ii. 14, 15. And instead of it offereth you his easy yoke. He hath spoiled the principalities and powers that had captivated you, and openly triumphed over them on the cross. You are not left under the care of making satisfaction to God for your own sins; but only of accepting the Redeemer that hath satisfied. This much I dare confidently say to you all, without extending his benefits too far. It would be for want of faith in you, and not for want of satisfaction by the Redeemer, if any of you perish. And how free are his offers! How full are his promises! You are conditionally all pardoned and justified already, as is legible under the hand of God. And the condition which is imposed on you is not some meritorious or mercenary work, but the accepting of the benefit freely given, according to its nature, use, and ends. This is the faith by which you must be justified. These are the terms on which you may be saved. And which is more, the Lord hath provided means, even excellent, and plentiful, and powerful means, for the furthering of your souls in the performance of this condition, and helping you to believe, and repent, that you may live: and if the Spirit make not these means effectual, and adjoin not his special grace, and after this you remain unconverted, it will not be long of him, but of yourselves. So that you may perceive how hopeful a case you are yet in, by the blood of your Redeemer. If you destroy not your own hopes, and make not your case desperate by wilful impenitency, and refusal of free grace, how fair are you yet for heaven!
what happy advantages have you for salvation! It is brought even to your doors; it is thrust as it were into your hands; the Redeemer hath done so much for you all, as to bring your salvation to the choice of your own wills; and if you be his chosen ones, he will also make you willing. You have precepts to believe, you are threatened if you will not believe; you have promise upon promise, and Christ himself offereth you pardon, and life, and salvation with him, if you are but truly and heartily willing. You have God himself condescending to beseech you to accept them; and ambassadors entreating you in his name and stead; 2 Cor. v. 19, 20. You have ordinances fitted to your necessities; both reading, and preaching, and sacraments, and prayer. You have store of plain and powerful books; you have the godly about you, most desirous to assist you, that would be glad to see or hear of your conversion; you have the sight of the wicked, that are wallowing in their own dung, and the dirt of the world, to make you hate such beastly ways. You have reason and conscience within you to consider of these matters, and set them home, and apply them to yourselves; you have time and strength to do all this, if you will not abuse it, and provoke God to take it from you for your negligence. You have mercies of many sorts, outward and inward, to win upon you, and encourage you in the work. And sometimes afflictions to remember you, and awaken you, and spur you on; the devil and all your enemies are so far disabled, that they cannot destroy you against your wills, nor keep you from Christ, but by your own consents. The angels in heaven are ready to help you, and would even rejoice at your conversion. This is your case, and these are your helps, and encouragements, you are not shut up under desperation. God never told you, 'It is in vain to think of conversion; it is too late:' if any have told you so, it was the devil, and not God; and one would think that such considerations as these should drive the nail to the head, and be effectual to move you to resolve and turn.

7. The last thing that I would set before you to be considered, is, What is like to be the end of it, if after all this you should die unconverted.

O sirs, your hearts are not able now to conceive of it, nor the tongue of any mortal man to utter it. But so much of it we can certainly utter, as one would think should make
your hearts to tremble. You have seen, it may be, a dying
man, in what pangs and agonies he parteth with his soul:
and you have seen, it is like, the corps that was left there
behind, and seen it laid in the common earth. But you see
not what became of the soul, nor what an appearance it made
in another world, nor what company did attend it, nor what
a place or state it passed into. O sirs, when the hour is at
hand that this must be your own case, it will awaken you to
other kind of affections, than you have or can have at the
reading of these words. It is wonderful that a little distance
should make us so insensible of that change which we are
all certain will come to pass; and yet through the folly and
deadness of our hearts it is so; but they are other kind of
thoughts of these weighty matters, which we shall have the
next hour after death, than the most lively affections before-
hand can afford us.

The misery was great that the Redeemer did find you in,
and which you deserved by your sin against the law of the
Creator. But if you be found unconverted at last, your pu-
nishment will be much sorer, and your case far worse than
it was before. The Redeemer's law or Gospel hath its pe-
culiar threatening, which differeth from the law of the mere
Creator in several respects; even (1.) In the nature of the
punishment, which will be torments of conscience for the
neglect of a Redeemer, and recovering grace, which you
should never have felt if you had never been redeemed. (2.)
And in the degree of the punishment, which will be far
sorer; Heb. x. 29. And (3.) In the remedilessness of it,
the sentence being irreversible and peremptory. The first
law indeed provided no remedy, but did not exclude remedy,
nor make it impossible; but the law of Christ doth posi-
tively and expressly exclude all remedy, and leave the soul
that goeth unconverted out of the body, to utter desperation,
and misery without help or hope of the end. But I shall
not stand now to describe to you the terrors of judgment or
of hell, because I have done it already in other books, which
I desire you to fetch the rest of this meditation from; that
is, my "Treatise of Judgment," and the beginning of my
third part of my "Book of Rest."

II. Having told you what should be the matter of your
Consideration, I shall next tell you (but briefly) in what
manner you should perform it. And here I shall not stand
to prescribe you any long or exact method for meditation, both because it agreeeth not with my present resolved brevity, and because the persons that I now deal with, are not capable of observing such rules; and if any desire such helps, they may transfer the directions which are given on another subject in my "Book of Rest," to the subject now in hand.

1. Do not stay till such thoughts will come of themselves into your minds, but set yourselves purposely to consider of these matters. Take some time to call your souls to an account concerning their present state, and their preparations for eternity. If a heathen Seneca could call himself every night to an account for the evil committed, and the good omitted in the day past, as he professeth that he ordinarily did; why may not even an unconverted man that hath the helps which are now among us, bethink himself of the state of his soul? But I know that a carnal heart is exceeding backward to serious consideration, and is loath to be troubled with such thoughts as these; and the devil will do what he can to hinder it, by himself and others; but yet if men would but do what they may do, it might be better with them than it is. Will you but now and then purposely withdraw yourselves from company into some secret place, and there set the Lord before your eyes, and call your souls to a strict account about the matters that I have mentioned even now, and make it your business to exercise your reason upon them; and as you purposely go to church to hear, so purposely set yourselves to this duty of Consideration as a necessary thing?

2. When you are upon it, labour to awaken your souls, and to be very serious in all your thoughts; and do not think of the matters of salvation, as you would do of an ordinary trivial business, which you do not much regard or care how it goes. But remember that your life lieth on it, even your everlasting life; and therefore call up the most earnest of your thoughts, and rouse up all the powers of your souls, and suffer them not to draw back, but command them to the work; and then set the seven points that I mentioned even now before you; and as you think of them, labour to be affected with them, in some measure according to their exceeding weight. As Moses said to Israel; Deut. xxxii. 46. "Set your hearts to all the words which I testify among you this day; which you shall command your children to do,"
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&c. For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life. And as Christ said, Luke ix. 44. "Let these sayings sink into your ears;" so I say to you, let the matters which you think of go to your hearts, and sink down to the quick of your affections.

And if your hearts would slip away from the work, and other thoughts would creep into your mind, and you are weary of these considerations before they have done their work, see that you give not way to this laziness, or unwillingness, but remember it is a work that must be done, and therefore hold your thoughts upon it, till your hearts are stirred and warmed within you.

And if after all, you cannot awake them to seriousness and sensibility, put two or three such awakening questions as these to yourselves.

1. Quest. What if it were but the case of my body, or state, or name, should I not earnestly consider of it? If one do but wrong me, how easily can I think of it, and how tenderly do I feel it, and can scarce forget it. If my good name be blemished, and I be but disgraced, I can think of it night and day. If I lose but a beast, or have any cross in the world, or decay in my estate, I can think of it with sensibility. If I lose a child or a friend, I can feel it as well as think on it. If my health be decayed, and my life in danger, I am in good earnest in thinking of this. And should I not be as serious in the matters of everlasting life? Should I not think of it, and soberly and earnestly think on it, when body and soul do lie at the stake, and when it concerneth my everlasting joy or torment?

2. Quest. What if I had but heard the Son of God himself calling on me to repent, and be converted, and seconding his commands with that earnest expression, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear;" would it not have brought me to some serious thoughts of my state? Why this he hath done in his word, and doth it by his ambassadors, and why then should I not consider it?

3. Quest. If I did but know that death were at my back, and ready to arrest me, and that I should be in another world before this day sevennight, I should then begin to rethink me in good sadness: and why do I not so now, when I have no hold of my life an hour, and when I am sure that shortly that time will come?
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4. Quest. If my eyes were but open to see that which I pretend to believe, and which is certainly true; even to see a glimpse of the majesty of the Lord, to see the saints in joy and glory, to see the damned souls in misery; and if I heard their lamentations; would not this even force my heart to Consideration? O then how earnestly should I think of these things? And why should I not do so now, when they are as sure as if I saw them, and when I must see them ere it be long?

Many more such awakening questions are at hand, but I give you but these brief touches on the things that are most common and obvious, that the most ignorant may be able to make some use of them. With such thoughts as these, you must bring on your backward hearts, and shake them out of their insensibility, and awaken them to the work.

III. When you have brought your hearts to be serious, be sure that you drive on your considerations to a resolution. Break not off in the middle, or before you bring the matter to an issue; but let all be done in order to practice. When you have been thinking of the excellencies of God and the world to come, and comparing them with all the delights on earth; put the question then to your hearts, and say, 'What sayst thou now, O my soul, which of these is the better for thee, which is the more desirable, and which of them shouldst thou prefer? Resolve then, and make thy choice according to the light and conviction which thou hast received.' When you are thinking of the reasons that should move you to be converted, ask yourselves, Whether these reasons be not clear, and what you have to say against them; and whether any thing that can be said to the contrary, can prove it better for you to be as you are, and to remain unconverted. Ask yourselves, 'Is my judgment resolved, or is it not? And if it be, (as sure it must be, if you be not beside yourselves) then write it down under your hands, or at least in your hearts, 'I do here confess before the Lord, that his commands are just, his motions are reasonable, his offers are exceeding merciful: I am satisfied that it is best for me to turn to him speedily, and with all my heart: I confess before him that I have no reason to the contrary, that deserves to be owned and called reason: this is my own judgment; of this I am convinced: if I turn not after this, the light that is in me, and the judgment that now
I possess, must needs be a witness against my soul.' If you would but thus drive on the case to a resolution of your judgments, you would have a great advantage for the resolv-
ing of your wills, which is the next thing that you must pro-
ceed to: and therefore next ask yourselves, 'Why should I not now resolve, and fixedly resolve to turn without any more delay? Is not the case plain before me? What rea-
son have I to stand questioning the matter any longer, and to be unwilling to be happy? Shall I provoke God by dal-
lying with him, and hazard my soul by lingering out my time in such a miserable state? No, by the grace of God I will return; even this hour, without any more delay.' Thus drive on all your considerations to resolution. (But of this I have more to say anon.)

By this time you may see of what necessity this duty of Consideration is, and how it must be performed, that it may further your conversion: but because it is a matter of so great necessity, I am loath to leave it thus, till I have done what I can to persuade you to the practice of it. To which end I entreat you to think of these following motives.

1. Consideration is a duty that you may perform if you will. You cannot say that is wholly out of your power; so that you are left inexcusable, if you will not be persuaded to it. You say you cannot convert yourselves; but cannot you set yourselves to consider of your ways, and bethink you of those truths that must be the instruments of your conver-
sion? Your thoughts are partly at the command of your will: you can turn them up and down from one thing to another. Even an unsanctified minister, that hath no saving relish of spiritual things, can think of them, and spend most of his time in thinking of them, that he may preach them to others: and why cannot you then turn your thoughts to them for yourselves? You can think of house, and land, and friends, and trading, and of any thing that aileth you, or any thing that you want, or any thing that you love or think would do you good: and why cannot you think of your sin, and danger, of God, and of his word and works, of the state of your souls, and of everlasting life? Are you not able to go sometimes by yourselves, and consider of these matters? Are you not able when you are alone in your beds, or as you travel in the way, or at your labour, to bethink how things
stand with your souls? Why are you not able, what is it that could hinder you, if you were but willing?

2. Yea further, Consideration is so cheap a remedy, that if you will not use this, you despise your souls: yea, and you despise the Lord himself, and the everlasting things which you are called to consider of. A man that is in danger of losing his estate, or health, or life, and will not so much as bethink him of a remedy, doth sure set light by them, and lose them by his contempt. A man that hath had but his house on fire, and would not so much as think how to quench it, doth deserve that it should be burnt. If your parents, or children, or friends were in distress, if you would not so much as think of them, it were a sign you did not set much by them. Why, sirs, are not your souls worth the thinking on? Is not God, is not your Redeemer, worth the thinking on? And yet you will hypocritically pretend that you love God above all, when you will not so much as seriously think of him; how can you shew greater contempt of any thing, than to cast it out of your minds as unworthy to be thought on? And how can you more plainly shew that you despise God and heaven, than by such a course as this? If it be not worth the thinking on, it is worth nothing.

3. Consider that God doth not set so light by your salvation. He thought it worth a great deal more: must Christ think it worth his bloody sufferings, and with such a life of labour and sorrow, and will not you judge it worth your serious considerations? If he had not thought on it, and thought again, how miserable should we have remained! Ministers also must think on it, and study how to save your souls. And should you not study how to save your own? Must another man make it the business of his life to think how to do you good, that you may be saved, and are you not as much bound to do good to yourselves? Yea, all that fear God about you, are bound to study to do you good; and should you not bethink you then of the things that concern your own good?

4. Moreover, what have you your reason for, but to consider; and wherein do you differ from the beasts, so much as in your reason? If you have reason, and will not use it, you brutify yourselves; you live like madmen; for what is madness, but a loss of the use of reason? And do you think it a small thing to deface so noble a creature as man, and to
turn yourselves into beasts and madmen? Do you think that God will not call you to account for your reason, how you have used it? Doubtless he gave it you for a higher employment, than to enable you to plough, and sow, and follow your trades, and provide for your flesh. If this were all that a man did exceed a beast in, what a silly, wretched wight were man? Yea, so much more miserable than beasts, as his knowledge begets more care, and sorrow, and fear, than theirs. What matter is it for having reason at all, if it be not that we may use it for the matters of God, and eternal life?

5. Moreover, your soul is an active principle, which will be working one way or other; your thoughts will be going on one thing or other; and therefore the bare consideration is no great labour to you. And if you must lay out your thoughts on something, is it not better lay them out on these things, than on any other? Have you any better matters to think on than these? Have you any greater matters, or matters of greater necessity to think of? You cannot sure imagine it; at least you will not say so for shame. This makes your inconsiderativeness an inexcusable sin. If thinking were toil to you, it were another matter. But when you must think of something, why not of God, and your eternal state, and the way to heaven, as well as of other matters? Will you rather throw away your thoughts, than God shall have them? If a man command his servant that is lame, to go on his business, the refuser hath a good excuse: 'I cannot go, or not without a great pain and danger:' but if he have a son or a servant that is so wanton that he cannot stand on his legs, but spends his time in running up and down, and dancing, and leaping, this person hath no excuse, if he will refuse to go on his master's or his father's errand; but will gad about on his pleasure all day, and will not go a few steps when he is bidden; especially if it were for his own life or welfare. So when you have thoughts that will not be kept idle, but will be gadding abroad through the world, and yet you will not think of God, and the matters of your peace, what wilfulness is this? If you should ask one that hath it not, for meat, or drink, or money, they might well deny you. But if you ask these, of one that hath abundance, and knows not what to do with them, but would throw them down the channel, rather than you should have them, what
would you think of such an one? Especially if it were your servant or your child that owed you much more? Thus do you by God and your own souls. You have thoughts enough and to spare, you know not what to do with them; and yet rather than you will spend one hour in a day or a week in serious thoughts of the state of your souls and the life to come, you will cast them away upon news, and tales, and other folk's business that do not concern you; yea, you will cast them down the sink of covetousness, and malice, and lust, and wantonness, and make them servants to the devil and the flesh. If you have a brook running by your land, you will endeavour to turn it over your ground, that seeing it must run, it may as well run that way where it may do good, as run in vain: so when your thoughts must run, is it not better that you turn them to your own hearts, and states, to prepare for the world that you are ready to step into, than to let them run in vain? If you see a man go into a wine-cellar (though it be his own) and pull out all the spigots, and let all the wine run about the cellar, and suffer nobody to catch it, or be the better for it, what would you conceive of the wisdom or charity of that man? Your thoughts are a thing more precious than wine, and such a thing as should not be spilt; and yet is not this your every day's practice? You are before him that knows your thoughts: deny it if you can. What hour of the day can a man come to you and find your thoughts altogether idle? What minute of an hour can a man come and ask you what are you now thinking on, and you can truly say, Nothing? I know as long as you are awake, you are always thinking of somewhat (and perhaps when you are asleep) and what is it on? This body shall have a thought, and that body a thought; every word you hear, and every wrong that is done you, and almost every thing you look upon, shall have a thought; and God and your own salvation shall have none; that is, you will lose them, and let them run in waste; but you will do no good with them, nor take in any profit by them to yourselves.

6. Have you any thing that better deserves your consideration, than God and your salvation? Certainly God hath more right to your thoughts than any thing else that you can place them on. Your flesh, your friends, your worldly business are neither so honourable, so necessary, or so pro-
suitable subjects, as God and heaven are. As there is more
profit to be got by the tillage of fruitful land, than barren
heath; or by digging in a mine of gold, than in a clay-pit;
so is there more pleasure and profit to be gotten in one hour's
serious thoughts of your salvation, than in thinking all your
lifetime of the world.

7. At least, methinks you should consider, how dispro-
portionably and unequally you lay out your thoughts. Can-
not you spare God the tenth; no, nor the hundredth part of
them? Look back upon your lives, and trace your thoughts
from day to day, and tell me how many hours in a week, in
a month, in a year, you have spent in serious thoughts of the
state of your souls, and of the life to come? Is it one hour
of a hundred, of a thousand, of ten thousand, with some of
you that is thus spent? Nay, I have very great cause to
fear that there are some, yea, that there are many, yea, that
there is far the greatest number, that never spent one hour
since they were born, in withdrawing themselves purposely
from all other business, and soberly and in good sadness
bethinking themselves what case they are in, what evidence
they have of their salvation, or how they must be justified
at the bar of God; no, nor what business they have in the
world, and to what end they were made, and how they have
done the work that they were made for. Ah! sirs, doth
conscience justify you in this? Or rather will it not tor-
ment you one day to remember it? What! did thy land,
and livings, worldly matters deserve all thy thoughts, and
did not the saving of thy soul deserve some of them? Did
thy lusts, and sports, and wantonness deserve all? and did
not God deserve some of them? Was it not worth now and
then an hour's time, no, nor one hour's study in all thy life,
to bethink thee in good sadness how to make sure of a life
of endless joy or glory, and how to escape the flames of hell?
This is not an equal distribution of thy thoughts, as thou
wilt confess at last in the horror of thy soul.

8. It is the end of your present time and warnings, that
you may consider and prepare for your everlasting state.
What have you to do on earth but to consider how to get
well to heaven? O that you did but know what a mercy it
is, before you enter upon an endless life, to have but time to
bethink you of it, and to make your election sure! If you
were to be called away suddenly, this night, and the angel of
the Lord should say to any of you, 'Prepare, for within this hour thou must die, and appear before the living God: ' then would you not cry out, 'O, not so suddenly Lord! Let me have a little more time to consider of my condition: let me have one month longer, to bethink me of the case of my soul, and make sure that I am justified from the guilt of my sins. Let me have one day more at least to prepare for my everlasting state; for alas, I am yet unready.' Would not these be your cries, if God should call you presently away? And yet now you have time, you will not consider of these matters and prepare.

9. Moreover, is it not time for you to consider your ways, when God doth consider them? If he would forget them, or did not regard them, you might regard them the less yourselves: but be sure of it, he doth observe them, whether you do or not; and he remembereth them though you forget them. Dost thou not know that all the sins of thy life are still on record before the Lord? Saith Job, "Thou numberest my steps; dost thou not watch over my sin? My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sowest up mine iniquity;" Job xiv. 16, 17. Do you think that God forgets your sins, as you forget them? Saith the Lord by the prophet Hosea, "They consider not in their hearts, that I remember all their wickedness; now their doings have beset them about, they are before my face;" Hosea vii. 2. But you will say, What if God do consider our ways? why surely then it is not for nothing, but evil is near if not prevented. As the Lord saith in Deut. xxxii. 34, 35. "Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures? To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time. For the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste." If God be registering up thy sins, thou hast cause to tremble, to think what that portends: "for in this hardness and impenitency of thy heart, thou art treasuring up wrath, against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;" Rom. ii. 5. As grace is the seed of glory, so sin is the seed of shame, and trouble, and everlasting torment; and though it may seem long before the harvest, you will taste the bitter fruit at last; and whatsoever you have sowed, that shall you reap.

10. Moreover, if any thing ailed you, you look that God
should presently consider you: or if you want any thing, you think he should consider your wants: and yet will you not consider of him, and of your own wants? When you are in trouble, you cry to God, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, consider my trouble;" Psal. ix. 33. "Consider and hear me, O God;" Psal. xiii. 3. When you lie in pain and sickness, you will then cry to God, "Consider mine affliction, and deliver me;" Psal. cxix. 153. If you be oppressed or abused, you will groan as the Israelites under their taskmasters, and perhaps cry to God, as the captive people, Lam. i. 11. "See O Lord, consider; for I am become vile: remember, O Lord, what is come upon us; consider, and behold our reproach; chap. v. 1. i. 20. And must God consider of you, that will not consider of him, or your own souls? Or may you not rather expect that dreadful answer, which he gives to such regardless sinners; Prov. i. 24—30. And hear your cries, as you hear his counsel; and think of you, as you thought of him.

Nay, more than so; even while you forget him, the Lord doth daily consider you, and supply your wants, and save you from dangers; and should you then cast him out of your thoughts? If he did not think of you, you would quickly feel it to your cost and sorrow.

11. Moreover, the nature of the matter is such, as one would think should force a reasonable creature to consider of it, and often and earnestly to consider. When all these things concur in the matter, he must be a block or a madman that will not consider, (1.) When they are the most excellent, or the greatest things in all the world. (2.) When they are our own matters, or nearly concern us. (3.) When they are the most necessary, and profitable, and delightful things. And (4.) When there is much difficulty in getting them, and danger of losing them. And all these go together in the matter of your salvation.

(1.) If you will not think of God and your souls, of heaven and hell, what then will you think of? All other things in the world are but toys and jesting matters to these. Crowns and kingdoms, lands and lordships are but chaff, and baubles, dirt and dung, to these everlasting things. The acts of renowned kings and conquerors, are but as puppet-plays in comparison of the working out of your salvation. And yet will you not be drawn to the consideration
of such astonishing things as these? One would think that
the exceeding greatness of the matter should force you to
consider it whether you will or no. When smaller objects
affect not the senses, yet greater will even force their way.
He that hath so hard a skin that he cannot feel a feather,
methinks should feel the weight of a millstone: and if he
feel not the prick of a pin, methinks he should feel a dagger.
He that cannot hear one whisper, methinks should hear a
canon, or a clap of thunder, if he have any such thing as
hearing left him. He hath bad eyes that cannot see the sun.
One would think so glorious an object as God, should so
entice the eyes of men that they should not look off him.
One would think that such matters as heaven and hell should
follow thy thoughts which way soever thou goest, so that
thou shouldst not be able to look besides them, or to think
almost of any thing else, unless with great neglect and dis-
esteeem. O what a thing is a stony heart, that can forget
not only the God that he liveth by, but also the place where
he must live for ever? Yea, that will not be persuaded to
the sober consideration of it for an hour.

(2.) And as these are the greatest matters, so they are
your own matters, and therefore one would think you should
not need so much ado to bring you to consider them. If it
were only other men's matters, I should not wonder at it.
But self-love should make you regard your own. In out-
ward matters, all seek their own things; Phil. ii. 21. And
have they not more reason to seek their own salvation? It
is your own souls, your own danger, your own sin, your own
duty, that I persuade you to consider of. It is that God,
that Christ, that would be your own; it is that heaven, that
blessedness, that may be your own, if you lose it not by neg-
lect; it is that hell, that torment, that will certainly be your
own, if you prevent it not. And should not this be thought
on? You will think of your own goods, or lands, or riches;
of your own families, your own business, your own lives,
and why not also of your own salvation?

(3.) Especially, when it is not only your own, but it is
the "one thing needful;" Luke x. 42. It is that which your
life or death, your everlasting joy or torment lieth on; and
therefore must be considered of, or you are utterly undone
for ever. Necessity lieth upon you; and woe be to you, if
you consider not of these things. It is not so necessary
that you eat, or drink, or sleep, or live, as it is necessary that you make sure your everlasting life. And the profit also doth answer the necessity. Buy but this one pearl, and you will be infinite gainers, though you sell all that you have in the world to buy it; Matt. xiii. 44—46. Get God, and get all: make sure of heaven, and then fear no loss, nor want, nor sorrow. If you count not all the world as dung for the winning of Christ, that you may be found in him, possessed of his righteousness, it is because you know neither the world nor Christ; Phil. iii. 7—9. Yea, the delight will also answer the commodity; for "in the presence of God is fulness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore; Psal. xvi. 11. And the forethoughts of them may well make "glad our hearts, and cause our glory to rejoice;" Psal. xvi. 8, 9. "For goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, and we shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever;" Psal. xxiii. 6. "He shall guide us with his counsel, and afterward receive us into glory;" Psal. lxxiii. 24. And lest yet you should suspect any lack of comfort, he tells you, you shall "enter into the joy of your Lord;" Matt. xxv. 23. "And that you shall be with him where he is, to behold his glory;" John xvii. 24.

(4.) And yet if all this might be had with a wet finger; if heaven were the portion of worldlings, and sluggards, that trouble not their thoughts much about it, then you might have some excuse for your inconsiderateness. But it is not so; there are difficulties in your way, and they are many and great. What a dark understanding have you to inform? What a dull and backward nature to spur on! What an unreasonable appetite! What raging passions! What violent, rebellious senses to contend with, to master, and to rule! Abundance of adversaries on every hand: a subtle devil, and as malicious as subtle; and as furious and able to do you a mischief, if God restrain him not. A world of wicked men about you; each one more stiff in error than you in the truth; and more fast to the devil than you are to God, (if his grace do not hold you faster than you will hold yourselves;) and therefore they are more able to deceive you, than you are to undeceive them: many of them are crafty and can puzzle such ignorant beginners as you, and put a face of reverence and truth upon damnable errors, and pernicious ways; and those that have not wit, have foolish
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violence, and scorn, and passion, and can drive you towards hell, if they cannot draw you. All these enemies you must conquer, or you are lost. And is it not time for a man in so much danger to consider of them, that he may know how to escape? And for one that is compassed about with such difficulties, to consider how he may well get through them? What abundance of things have you to consider of? of all your life past; of the relations you have borne; and how you have performed the duties of those relations? Of the time you have had; and how you have spent it? Of the means you have had, and what you have received by them? Of the present state of your souls, your sins, your miseries, your hopes, and the duties that are incumbent on you, in order to your recovery. Of the temptations to be encountered with; and the graces that are daily to be exercised and confirmed! Would not a man bethink himself with all possible care, and consider, a hundred times consider, that hath all this to do, or be undone for ever? You have much to know that will not easily be known, and yet must be known; much to do, receive and suffer, that hath difficulty adjoined with necessity: were it necessary and not hard, the facility might draw you to make light of it. And were it hard and not necessary the difficulty might more discourage you than the matter would excite you: but when it must be done, or you must be shut out of heaven, and lie in hell for it world without end, and yet there are so many difficulties in the way, I think it is time to look about you, and seriously consider.

12. To conclude, Consideration would prevent a world of misery, which else would make you consider when it is too late. It must be a principal means of your salvation if ever you be saved. If God have so much mercy for you, he will make you consider; and set your sins in order before you; (Psal. 1. 21.) and set hell-fire before your face, and hold your thoughts on it that you cannot look off. He will set before you a crucified Christ, and tell you, that this your sins have done, and make you think of the reason of his sufferings; and what there is in sin that could require it; and what it is to rebel against the Lord, and run yourselves into the consuming fire. Now your thoughts are gadding abroad the world, and straggling after every trifle, and going away from God; but if ever God will save you, he will overtake
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your hearts, and fetch them home, and shew them that they have something else to think on. If commands will not serve, he will send out his threatenings, and terrors shall come upon you, and pursue your soul as the wind; Job xxxiii. 15. He will fetch you out of the alehouse, and the gaming-house, and take you off the merry pin, and lay that upon your heart that you shall not easily shake off. If you are taken up with the cares of the world, he will shew you that you have somewhat else to care for; and drown those cares in greater cares. If you have such giddy, unsettled, vagrant minds, that you cannot call in your thoughts of God, nor hold them with him; he will lay those clogs and bolts upon them at first, that shall restrain them from their idle vagaries; and then he will set upon them such a bias, as shall better order them, and fix them for the time to come. Men do not use to go to heaven, and never think of it: and to escape hell-fire, and the plague of sin, and the curse of the law, and the wrath of God, and the rage of satan, and never think on it; nor do they use to mind other matters, and find themselves in heaven, before they ever dreamed of it, or before their hearts were set upon it. No sirs, if ever God will save you, he will make you consider, and again consider, and perhaps with many a sigh and groan; and bring these things so near your hearts, that you shall not only think on them, but feel them; according to that command, Deut. vi. 6, 7. xi. 18—20. They shall be as written before your eyes; you shall think of them when you lie down, and when you rise up, as if they were written upon the tester of your beds; you shall think of them when you sit at home, when you go abroad, as carrying them still with you, which way soever you go. As before, God was not in all your thoughts, so now he will be the sum and end of them all.

And if by your resistance you escape these considera-
tions, believe it, God will bring you to consideration by a severer and more dreadful way. If he do but give your conscience a commission, it will follow you, and bring you to such a consideration as Judas was brought to. If he lay you under his judgments, and speak to you by his rod, and give you a lash with every word, and ask you whether yet you will consider of it? It may bring such things to your thoughts, as you were but little troubled with before. If he say but the word, how soon will your soul be required of
you? And when you lie in hell and feel the smart, you will then consider of it. Now we cannot beg of you to bestow one hour in sober consideration: but then you shall do it without entreaty; then you will be as a man that hath the stone, or gout, or toothach, that cannot forget it, if he would never so fain. Forget your folly, your obstinacy, and unthankfulness then, if you can. Forget God's wrath, and the torment which you feel then if you can. Now you are so busy that you could not have while to think of the matters of the world to come; but then God will give you leisure; you shall have little else to do; you shall have time enough: when you have thought of these things ten thousand years, you shall still have time enough before you to think of them again. You will not consider now, but, when God hath performed the intents of his heart, in the latter days, you shall perfectly consider it; Jer. xxiii. 20. xxx. 24. "O that you were wise, that you understood this; that you would consider your latter end;" Deut. xxxii. 29.

What brings so many thousand souls to hell, but because they would not consider in time? If you could speak with any of those hopeless souls, and ask them, 'How came you to this place of torment?' they would tell you, 'because we did not consider of our case in time; we little thought of this day, though we were told of it; we had a load of sin upon us, and did not consider how we might be relieved: we had Christ and mercy set before us, but we did not consider the worth of them nor how to be made partakers of them: we had time, but we considered not how to make the best of it: we had the work of our salvation lay upon our hands, but we did not consider how we might accomplish it: O had we but considered what now we feel, we might have escaped all this, and have lived with God!' These would be the answers of those miserable souls, if you could but ask them the cause of their misery. There is scarce a thief or a murderer hanged at the gallows, but will cry out, 'O if I had but had the wit and grace to have considered this in time, I need not have come to this!' There is scarce an unthrift that falls into beggary, no nor a man that comes to any mischance, but will say, 'If I had considered it beforehand, I might have prevented it.' Most of the calamities of the world might have been prevented, by timely and sober considerations. God himself doth place men's wickedness
much in their inconsiderateness, and lays the cause of their destruction upon it. Whence is it that Israel was rebellious to astonishment; Isa. i. 3. "Why, Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Job xxxiv. 25—27. "He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead; therefore he knoweth their works, he overturneth them in the night, so that they are destroyed. He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others, because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways." Why do men live so wilfully in sin, but because "they consider not that they do evil;" Eccles. v. 1. How many such hath the world, that God pronounceth a woe to? Isa. v. 11, 12. That drink, and play, and give themselves to their merriments, "but they regard not the work of the Lord; neither consider the operation of his hands. They consider not in their hearts the folly of their ways;" Isa. xlv. 18—20. When they see God's judgments, they consider not the meaning of them, and therefore lay them not to heart; Isa. lvii. 1, 2.

And when God calleth men to conversion, or reformation, he useth to call them to consideration as the way to it; Hag. i. 5. "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways." The son that shall escape the misery of his father, is he that considereth, and turneth away from his transgressions, considereth, and doth not his forefather's work; Ezek. xviii. 14. 20. And when he sendeth the prophet to them, (Ezek. xii. 3.) it is but with this encouragement; "Though they are a rebellious house, it may be they will consider." And David professeth, that Consideration was the beginning of his conversion; Psal. cxix. 59. "I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies. I made haste and delayed not to keep thy statutes."

I know that it is the Lord, that must renew and revive a sinful soul; but yet, under God, Consideration must do much. O could we but persuade our people to consider, it is not sure possible that they could be as they are, or do as they do. Would so many thousands live in ease and quietness under the guilt of so many sins, and the wrath of God, if they did but well consider of it. Durst they live so peaceably in a state of death and in the slavery of the devil, if they did but well consider of it? Would they do no more to prepare for their speedy appearing before God, and for the es-
caping of hell-fire, if they did but consider of it? Would they swallow down their cups so greedily, and give up them-
selves to the world so eagerly, if they did but well consider
what they do? Methinks they should not. The cause of
sin and the devil is so naught, that I should hope to shame
it with the most of the ungodly, if I could but bring them to
a serious consideration of it. O how the kingdom of satan
would down, if we could but tell how to make them consi-
derate! How fast the devil would lose his servants! What
abundance Christ would gain! And how many would be
saved, if we could but tell how to make men considerate!
And one would think that this should be easily done, seeing
man is a self-loving, and reasonable creature; but yet to our
grief, and great admiration, we cannot bring them to it. I
should not doubt, but one sermon, or one sentence of a ser-
mon, might do more good than a hundred do now; if I were
but able to persuade the hearers when they come home, to
follow it by serious consideration. But we cannot bring
them to it; if our lives lay on it, we could not bring them
to it; though we know that their own lives and salvation
lieth on it, yet can we not bring them to it. They think,
and talk of other matters almost as soon as the sermon is
done, and they turn loose their thoughts; or if they do read,
or hear, or repeat a little, yet cannot we get them to one
half hour's secret and sober consideration of their case.
This is the reason why it is so rare a thing to see men tho-
roughly turn to God. This is much of the use of all God's
teachings and afflictions too, but to bring men to sober con-
sideration. God knows that sin hath unmanned us, and
lost us the use of our reason, where we have most use for it;
and therefore the means, and works of God, are to recover
us to our reason, and to make us men again: the very graces
of his Spirit are to make us to be more reasonable.

And now, before I dismiss this direction, I have a ques-
tion, and a request to make to thee, whoever thou art that
readest these lines. My question is this, 'Hast thou ever
soberly considered of thy ways and laid these greatest mat-
ters to heart, or hast thou not?' Dost thou ever use to re-
tire into thyself, and spend any time in this needful work?
If thou dost not, my request to thee is, that now at last thou
wouldst do it without delay. Shall I beg this of thee? Shall
the Lord that made thee, that bought thee, that pre-
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serveth thee request this of thee; that thou wouldst sometimes betake thyself into some secret place and set thyself purposely to this work of Consideration, and follow it earnestly and close with thy heart till thou hast made something of it, and brought it to a resolution? Wilt thou then spend a little time in reasoning the case with thyself, and calling thy heart to a strict account, and ask thyself, 'What is it that I was made for; and what business was I sent into the world about? And how have I dispatched it? How have I spent my time, my thoughts, my words; and how shall I answer for them? Am I ready to die, if it were this hour? Am I sure of my salvation? Is my soul converted, and truly sanctified by the Holy Ghost? If not, what reason have I to delay? Why do I not set about it, and speedily resolve? Shall I linger till death come and find me unconverted? O then what a sad appearance shall I make before the Lord!' And thus follow on the discourse with your hearts. What say you, sirs? Will you here promise me to bestow but some few hours, if it be but on the Lord's day, or when you are private on the way, or in your beds, or in your shops, in these considerations? I beseech you, as ever you will do any thing at my request, deny me not this request. It is nothing that is unreasonable. If I desired one of you to spend an hour in talking with me, you would grant it; yea, or if it were to ride, or go for me. And will you not be entreated to spend now and then a little time in thinking of the matters of your own salvation? Deny not this much to yourselves, deny it not to God, if you will deny it me. Should you not bethink you a few hours, of the place and state that you must live in for ever? Men will build strong where they think to live long; but a tent or a hut will serve a soldier for a few nights. O, sirs, Everlasting is a long day. In the name of God, let not conscience have such a charge as this against you hereafter: 'Thou art come to thy long home, to thy endless state, before ever thou spentest the space of an hour in deep, and sad, and serious considerations of it, or in trying thy title to it.' O what a confounding charge would this be. I am confident I have the witness of your consciences going along with me, and telling you it is but reasonable, yea, and needful, which I say. If yet you will not do it, and I cannot beg one hour's sober discourse in secret between you and your hearts about these
things, then what remedy, but even to leave you to your misery. But I shall tell you in the conclusion, that I have no hope of that soul, that will not be persuaded to this duty of Consideration. But if I could persuade you to this reasonable, this cheap, this necessary work, and to follow it close, I should have exceeding great hopes of the salvation of you all. I have told you the truth, consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding; 2 Tim. ii. 7. Or if you put me to conclude in harsher terms, they shall be still the oracles of God: "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you;" Psal. l. 22.

And so much for the third direction about Consideration, on which I have staid somewhat long, because I apprehend it of exceeding necessity.

Direct. IV. The fourth direction which I shall give you, that the work of your conversion may not miscarry, is this: 'See that the work of Humiliation be thoroughly done, and break not away from the spirit of contrition before he have done with you; and yet see that you mistake not the nature, and the ends of the work, and that you drive it not on further than God requireth you.'

Here I shall first shew you 1. The true nature of Humiliation. And

11. The use and ends of it. And

111. The mistakes about it, that you must avoid. And

1v. I shall press on the substance of the direction, and shew you the necessity of it.

1. There is a preparatory humiliation that goes before a saving change, which is not to be despised, because it is a drawing nearer unto God, though it be not a faithful closure with him. This preparatory humiliation, which many have that perish, doth chiefly consist in these things following. (1.) It lieth most in the fear of being damned. As it is most in the passions, so most in this of fear. (2.) It consisteth also in some apprehensions of the greatness of our sins, and the wrath of God, that hangs over our heads, and the danger that we are in of being damned for ever. (3.) It consisteth also in some apprehension of the folly that we are guilty of in sinning, and of some repentings that ever we did it, and some remorse of conscience for it. (4.) Hereeto may be joined some passions of sorrow, and this expressed by
groans and tears. (5.) And all this may be accompanied with confessions of sin to God and man, and lamentations for our misery, and in some it proceedeth to desperation itself. (6.) And lastly, it may proceed to an indignation against ourselves, and to the taking of a severe revenge on ourselves; yea, more than God would have men take; as Judas did by self-destroying. This desperation, and self-execution are no parts of the preparatory humiliation; but the excess and error of it, and the entrance upon hell.

2. But there is also a Humiliation that is proper to the converted, and which accompanieth salvation, and this containeth in it, all that is in the former, and much more. Even as the rational soul containeth the sensitive and vegetative, and much more. And this saving humiliation consisteth in these following particulars.

1. It beginneth in the understanding. 2. It is rooted in the will. 3. It worketh in the affection. And 4. When there is opportunity it sheweth itself in outward expressions and actions.

1. Humiliation in the understanding, consisteth in a low esteem of ourselves, and in a self-abasing, self-condemning judgment on ourselves; and that in these particulars.

(1.) It consisteth in a deep and solid apprehension of the odiousness of our own sins, habitual and actual, and of ourselves for our sins; and that because they are contrary to the blessed nature and law of God, and so contrary to our own perfection, and chief good. (2.) It consisteth also in a solid and fixed apprehension of our own ill-deserving, because of these sins; so that our judgments do subscribe to the equity of the condemning sentence of the law; and we judge ourselves unworthy of the smallest mercy, and worthy of hell-fire. (3.) It consisteth in an apprehension of our undone and miserable condition in ourselves. Not only as we are the heirs of torment, but as we are void of the image and Spirit of God, and have lost his favour, and are under his displeasure, and enmity by our sin, and have forfeited our part in everlasting glory, and how unable we are to help ourselves.

And [1.] This is in such a measure, that we truly judge our sin and ourselves for sin, to be more odious than any thing else could have made us, and our misery by sin in the foresaid particulars, to be greater than any outward calamity in the
flesh, and than any worldly loss could have procured us. And this we apprehend by a practical judgment, and not only by a bare ineffectual speculation. [2.] And the spring of this is some knowledge of God himself, whose majesty is so glorious, and whose wisdom is so infinite; who is so good in himself, and unto us, and whose holy nature is contrary to sin; and who hath an absolute propriety in us, and sovereignty over us. [3.] And also it proceedeth from a knowledge of the true state of man’s felicity, which by sin he hath cast away; that it consisteth in the pleasing and glorifying, and enjoying of God, in loving and delighting in him, and praising him for ever, and having a nature perfectly holy, and fitted hereunto. To see that sin is contrary to this felicity, and hath deprived us of it, is one of the springs of true Humiliation. And [4.] It proceedeth also from a believing knowledge of Christ crucified, whom our sins did put to death, who hath declared in the most lively manner to the world by his cross, and sufferings, what sin is, and what it hath done, and what a case we had brought ourselves into. Thus much of saving Humiliation consisting in the understanding.

2. The principal seat of this Humiliation is in the will, and there it consisteth in these following acts. (1.) As we think basely of ourselves, so the will hath a fixed displacency against ourselves for our sins, and a kind of loathing of ourselves for all our abominations; as you may read, Ezek. xxxvi. 31. xx. 43. vi. 9. A humble sinner is fallen out with himself, and as he is evil, his heart is against himself.

(2.) There is also in the will a deep repenting that ever we sinned, and wronged God, and abused grace, and have brought ourselves to this as we have done; so that the humbled soul could wish that he had spent his days in prison, in beggary, or in bodily misery, so that he had not spent them in sin; and if it were to do again, he would rather choose such a life of shame and calamity in the world, than a life of sin, and would be glad of the exchange.

(3.) A humbled soul is truly willing to grieve for the sins which he hath committed, and to be as deeply sensible of them, and afflicted for them, as God would have him. Even when he cannot shed a tear, yet his will is to shed them. When he cannot feel any deep afflicting of his soul for sin,
his hearty desire is, that he might feel it. He doth a hundred times weep in desire, when he doth it not in act.

(4.) A humble soul is truly willing to humble the flesh itself, by the use of those appointed means by which God would have him bring it in subjection; as by fasting, or abstinence, or mean attire, hard labour, and denying it unnecessary delights. It is a doubt worth the considering, whether any such humbling act must be used, purposely in revenge on ourselves for sin. To which I answer, that we may do nothing in such revenge that God doth not allow, or that makes our body less fit for his service; for that were to be revenged of God, and our souls; but those humbling means which are needful to tame the body, may well be used with this double intention; first and chiefly, as a means for our safety and duty for the time to come; that the flesh may not prevail, and then collaterally we should be the more content that the flesh is put to so much suffering, because it hath been and still is so great an enemy to God, and us, and the cause of all our sin, and misery; and this is the revenge that is warrantable in the penitent, and some think is meant, 2 Cor. vii. 11.

(5.) As the humbled soul hath base thoughts of himself, so he is willing that others should esteem and think of him accordingly, even as a vile, unworthy sinner, so far as his disgrace may be no wrong to the Gospel, or to others, or dishonour to God. His pride is so far taken down, that he can endure to be vilified with some consent; not approving of the sin of any men that doth it maliciously, but consenting to the judgment and rebukes of those that do it truly, and to the judgment of God, even by them that do it maliciously. The humbled soul does not stand defending and unjustly extenuating his sin, and excusing himself, and swelling against the reprover; whatever he may do in a temptation, if this temper were predominant, his pride, and not humility, must be predominant. But he judgeth himself as much as others can justly judge him, and humbly consenteth to be base in men's eyes, till God shall think it meet to raise him, and recover his esteem.

And the root of all this in the will, is, [1.] A love to God whom we have offended. [2.] A hatred of sin that hath offended him, and that hath made us vile. And [3.] A believ-
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ing sense of the love, and sufferings of Christ, that in his flesh hath condemned sin; Rom. viii. 2, 3. And thus you see what humiliation is in the will, which is the very life and soul of true humiliation.

3. Humiliation also consisteth in the affections; in an unsigneel sorrow for the sin which we have committed, and the corruption which is in sin; and a shame for these sins; and a holy fear of God whom we have offended, and of his judgments which we have deserved; and the hatred of our sins by which we have deserved them. But, as I must farther shew you anon, it is not the measure, but the sincerity of these passions, by which you must make a judgment of your state; and that will be hardly discerned by the passions themselves, but only by so much of the will as is in them, and therefore the will is the safest to judge by.

4. Humiliation also consisteth expressly in the outward action, when opportunity is offered; and it is not true in the heart, if it refuse to appear without, when God requireth it in your ordinary course. The outward acts of humiliation are these: (1.) A voluntary confession of sin to God, and to men, when God requireth it, and that is, when it is necessary to his honour, to the healing of them that we have endangerd, and satisfying the offended; at least in the hearing of men, in such cases as these to confess them openly to God. An unhumbled soul will refuse this for the shame; but the humble will freely take shame to themselves, and warn their brethren, and justify God, and give him the glory; 1 John i. 9. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us." Read Mark iii. 6. Levit. v. 5. xvi. 21. xxvi. 40 Numb. v. 6, 7. James v. 16. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." Prov. xxviii. 13. "He that hideth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Not that any man is to confess his secret sins to others, except in case that he cannot otherwise find relief; nor that a man is to publish those offences of his own, by which he may further dishonour God, and hinder the Gospel. But when the sin is open already, and especially when the offence of others, the hardening of the wicked, the satisfaction of the church concerning our repentance, do require our confession and open lamentation, the humble soul both must and will submit to it; but the rotten-hearted, unhumbled hypocrite
will confess but in these cases: (1.) When the secrecy of
the confession, or the smallness of the fault, or the custom-
ariness of such confession, doth make it to be a matter of no
great disgrace. (2.) Or when it is so open, that it is in vain
to attempt to hide it, and his confession will do nothing to
increase the disgrace. (3.) Or when conscience is awakened,
or they see they must die, or are forced by some terrible
judgment of God. In all these cases the wicked may confess.
And so Judas will confess “I have sinned in betraying the
innocent blood;” and Pharaoh will confess, “I and my peo-
ple have sinned.” And a thief on the gallows will confess;
and the vilest wretches on their death-bed will confess. But
we have more death-bed confessions than voluntary confes-
sions before the church. Nay, so far hath pride and hypo-
crisy prevailed, and the ancient discipline of the church
been neglected, that I think in most countries in England,
there are many more that make confessions on the gallows
than personally in the congregations.

(2.) Humiliation must be also expressed by all those exter-
nal means and signs which God, by Scripture or nature, calleth
us to. As by tears and groans, so far as we can seasonably
procure them. And by fasting, and laying by our worldly
pomp and bravery, and using mean, though decent, attire,
and by condescending to men of the lower sort, and stoop-
ing to the meanest. By humble language, and carriage;
and by forgiving others on this account, that we are sensi-
ble of the greatness of our debts to God. And thus I have
briefly shewed you the true nature of Humiliation, that you
may know what it is that I am persuading you to, and which
you must submit your hearts unto.

11. When I have told you the use and ends of Humilia-
tion, you will see more of the reason of its necessity to your-
selves. And first, it is one use of humiliation, to help on
the mortification of the flesh, or carnal-self, and to annihi-
late it as it is the idol of the soul. The nature of man’s sin-
ful and miserable estate, is, that he is fallen from God to
himself; and liveth now to himself, studying, and loving,
and pleasing himself, his natural self, above God. And a
sinner will let go many outward sins, and be driven from the
out-works before he will let go carnal-self, and be driven
from the castle and strength of sin. There is no part of
mortification so necessary, and so hard as self-denial; in-
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deed this doth virtually comprehend all the rest, and if this
be done, all is done. If it were but his friends, his super-
fluities, his house, his lands, perhaps a carnal heart might
part with it. But to part with his life, his all, his self, this
is a hard saying to him, and enough to make him go away
sorrowful, as Luke xviii. 22—24. And, therefore, here ap-
peareth the necessity of humiliation. This layeth all the
load on self, and breaketh the heart of the old man, and
maketh a man loathe himself, that formerly doted on himself.
It layeth this tower of Babel in the dust, and maketh us ab-
hor ourselves in dust and ashes. It setteth the house on fire
about our ears, which we both trusted and delighted in.
And makes us not only see, but feel, that it is time for us to
be gone. Pride is the master-vice in the unsanctified, and
it is the part of humiliation to cast it down. Self-seeking
is the business of their lives, till humiliation help to turn the
stream. And then if you did but see their thoughts, you
should see them think most vilely of themselves. And if
you do but overhear their prayers, or complaints, you shall
hear them still cry out upon themselves, as their greatest
enemies.

2. The next use of Humiliation, (and implied in this) is,
to mortify those sins which carnal-self doth live upon, and
is maintained by; and to stop all the avenues or passages of
its provision. Sin is sweet and dear to all that are unsan-
cified; but humiliation makes it bitter and base. As the
Indians cured the Spanish Captain of thirst after gold, by
pouring melted gold down his throat; or as children are
persuaded from playing with a beehive, when they are once
or twice stung by them; or from playing with snappish dogs,
when they are bitten by them: so God will teach his chil-
dren to know what it is to play with sin when they are smart-
ed by it. They will know a nettle from a harmless herb,
when they feel the sting. We are so apt to live by sense,
that God seeth it needful, that our faith have something of
sense to help it. When the conscience doth accuse, and the
heart is smarting, and groaning in pain, and we feel that no
shifting or striving will deliver us, then we begin to be
wiser than before, and to know what sin is, and what it will
do for us. When that which was our delight, is become our
burden, and a burden too heavy for us to bear, it cureth our
delighting in it. When David was watering his couch with
his tears, and made them his drink, his sin was not the same thing to him, as it was in the committing. Humiliation wasteth away the painting of this harlot, and sheweth her in her deformity. It unmasketh sin, which had got the vizard of virtue, or of a small matter, or harmless thing. It unmasketh satan, who was transformed into a friend, or an angel of light, and sheweth him, as we say, with his cloven feet and horns. How hard is it to cure a worldling of the love of money! But when God hath laid such a load of it on his conscience, that makes him groan, and cry for help, he hath then enough of it. When he feels those words in James v. 1—4. and he begins to weep and howl for the miseries that are coming on him, and he sees the stink of his corrupted riches, and the canker of his gold and silver doth begin to eat his flesh as fire, and his idol is but a witness against him, then he is better able to judge of it, than he was before. The wanton thinks he hath a happy life, when the harlot's lips do drop as the honey-comb. But when he perceiveth her end is bitter as wormwood, and sharp as a two-edged sword, and that her feet go down to death, and her steps take hold on hell, and he lieth in sorrow, complaining of his folly; (Prov. v. 2—5. 11, 12.) he is then of a more rectified judgment than he was. Manasseh humbled in irons, is not the same as he was upon the throne. Though grace did more to it than his fetters, yet were they some way serviceable to that end. Humiliation openeth the door of the heart, and telleth you what sin is to the quick; and letteth in the words of life, which passed no further than the ear or brain. It is a tiring work to talk to dead men, that have lost their feeling; especially when it is an effective and practical doctrine, which we must deliver to them, which is lost if it be not felt and practised. Till humiliation comes, we speak to dead men, or at least to men that are fast asleep. How many sermons have I heard that, one would think, should have turned men's hearts within them, and make them cry out against their sins, with sorrow and shame in the face of the congregation, and never meddle with them more! When yet the hearers have scarce been moved by them, but gone away as they came, as if they knew not what the preachers said, because their hearts were all the while asleep within them. But a humbled soul is an awakened soul. It will regard what is said to it; especially when they perceive that
it cometh from the Lord, and concerneth their salvation. It is a great encouragement to us, to speak to a man that hath ears, and life, and feeling; that will meet the word with an appetite, and take it with some relish, and let down the food that is put into their mouth. The will is the chiefest fort of sin. If we can there get in upon it, we may do something. But if it keep the heart, and we can get no nearer it than the ear or the brain, there will no good be done. Now humiliation openeth us a passage to the heart, that we may assault sin in its strength. When I tell you of the abominable nature of sin, that causeth the death of Christ, and causeth hell, and tell you that it is better to run into the fire, than to commit the least sin wilfully, though it be such as the world makes nothing of; another man may hear all this, and superficially believe it, and say it is true, but it is the humbled soul that feeleth what I say. What a stir have we with a drunkard, or worldling, or any other sensual sinner, in persuading him to cast away his sins with destestation; and all to little purpose! Sometimes he will, and sometimes he must needs be tasting them again; and thus he stands dallying, because the word hath not mastered his heart. But when God comes in upon the soul as with a tempest, and throweth open the doors, and, as it were, thundereth, and lighteneth in the conscience; and layeth hold upon the sinner, and shaketh him all in pieces by his terrors, and asketh him, 'Is sinning good for thee? Is a fleshly, careless life so good? Thou wretched worm! Thou foolish piece of clay! Darest thou thus abuse me to my face? Dost thou not know that I look on? Is this the work that I made thee for, and that I feed and preserve thee, and continue thee alive for? Away with thy sin, without any more ado, or I will have thy soul away, and deliver thee to the tormentors'. This wakeneth him out of his dalliance and delays; and makes him see that God is in good earnest with him, and therefore he must be so with God. If a physician have a patient that is addicted to his appetite, who hath the gout or stone, or other disease, and he forbid him wine, or strong drink, or such meats as he desireth, as long as he feels himself at ease he will be venturing on them, and will not be curbed by the words of the physician: but when the fit is on him, and he feels the torment, then he will be ruled. Pain will teach him more effectually than words could do.
When he feeleth what is hurtful to him, and feeleth that it always makes him sick, it will restrain him more than hearing of it could do. So when humiliation doit break your hearts, and make you feel that you are sick of sin, and filleth your soul with smart and sorrow, then you will be the more willing that God should destroy it in you. When it lieth so heavy on you, that you are unable to look up, and makes you go to God with groans and tears, and cry, 'O Lord be merciful to me a sinner!' When you are fain to go to ministers for ease to your consciences, and fill their ears with accusations of yourselves, and open even your odious, shameful sins, then you will be content to let them go. Now there is no talking to you of mortification, and the resolute rejecting of your sins; the precepts of the Gospel are too strict for you to submit to. But a broken heart would change your minds. The healthful ploughman saith, 'Give me that which I love.' These physicians would bring us all to their rules, that they may get money by us. I never mean to follow their directions.' But when sickness is upon him, and he hath tried all his own skill in vain, and pain giveth him no rest, then send for the physician, and then he will do any thing, and take any thing whatever he will give him, so that he may but be eased and recovered. So when your hearts are whole and unhumbled, these preachers and Scriptures are too strict for you; you must have that which you love. Self-conceited, precise ministers must have leave to talk; but you will never believe that God is of their mind, or will damn men for taking that which they have a mind of. O but when these sins are as swords in your hearts, and you begin to feel what ministers told you of, then you will be of another mind. Away then with this sin, there is nothing so odious, so hurtful, so intolerable. O that you could be rid of it, whatever it cost you! Then he will be your best friend that can tell you how to kill it, and be free from it; and he that would draw you out, would be as satan himself to you; Matt. xvi. 22, 23. Gal. xviii. 9. Humiliation diggeth so deep, that it undermineth sin, and the fortress of the devil; when the foundation is rooted up, it will soon be overthrown. When the murderers of Christ were pricked to the heart, they then cry out for counsel to the apostles; Acts ii. 37. When a murderer of the saints is stricken blindfold to the earth, and the Spirit withal doth humble his soul, he will then cry.
out, “Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?” Acts ix. 37. When a cruel jailor that scourged the servants of Christ, is by an earthquake brought to a heart-quake, he will then cry out, “What shall I do to be saved?” Acts xvi. 30.

And here comes in the usefulness of afflictions; even because they are so great advantages to Humiliation. Men will be brought to some reason by extremities. When they lie a dying, a man may talk to them, and they will not so proudly fly in his face, or make a scorn at the word of the Lord, as in their prosperity they did. God will be more regarded when he pleadeth with them with the rod in his hand. Stripes are the best logic and rhetoric for a fool. When sin hath captivated their reason to their flesh, the arguments to convince them may be such as the flesh is capable of perceiving. We may long tell a beast of danger and discommodities, before we can persuade him from that which he loves. Sensuality doth brutify men in too great a measure; and so far as they are brutish, it is not the clearest reasons that will prevail; and if God did not maintain in corrupted man some remnants of free reason, we might preach to beasts as hopefully as to men. But afflictions tend to weaken the enemy that doth captivate them; as prosperity by accident tends to strengthen him. The flesh understandeth the language of the rod better than the language of reason, or of the word of God.

And as the sensible part of our Humiliation promoteth mortification; so the rational and voluntary Humiliation, which is proper to the sanctified, is a principal part of mortification itself. And thus you may see that it is necessary that we be thoroughly humbled, that sin may be thoroughly killed in us.

3. Another use of Humiliation is to fit the soul for a meet entertainment of further grace, and that both for the honour of Christ and grace, and for our own welfare.

(1.) In respect of Christ, it is equal that he should dwell in such souls only as are fit to entertain him. Neither his person, nor his business are such as can suit with the unhumbled heart. Till humiliation make a sinner feel his sin and misery, it is not possible that Christ as Christ should be heartily welcome to him, or received in that sort as his honour doth expect. Who cares for the physician that feels no sickness, and fears not death? He may pass by the
doors of such a man, and he will not call him in; but when
pain and fears of death are on him, he will send, and seek,
and bid him welcome. Will any man fly to Christ for suc-
cour that feeleth not his wants, and danger? Will they hold
on him, as the only refuge of their souls, and cleave to him
as their only hope, that feel no great need of him? Will
they lie at his feet, and beg for mercy, that feel themselves
well enough without him? When men do but hear of sin
and misery, and superficially believe it, they may coldly
look after Christ and grace; and feel the worth of the lat-
ter, in such a manner as they feel the weight of the former.
But never is Christ valued and sought after as Christ, till
sorrow hath taught us how to value him: nor is he en-
tertained in the necessary honour of a Redeemer, till humilia-
tion throw open all the doors: no man can seek him with
his whole heart, that seeks him not with a broken heart.

And it is certain that Christ will come on no lower terms
into the soul. Though he come to do us good, yet he will
have the honour of doing it: though he come to heal us,
and not for any need he hath of us, yet he will have the wel-
come that is due to a physician. He comes to save us, but
he will be honoured in our salvation. He inviteth all to the
marriage supper, and even compelleth them to come in; but
he expecteth that they bring a wedding garment, and come
not in a garb that will dishonour his house. Though his
grace be free, yet he will not expose it to contempt, but will
have the fulness and freeness of it glorified. Though he
came not to redeem himself but us, yet he came to be glori-
fied in the work of redemption. He hath no grace so free, as
to save those that will not esteem it, and give him thanks for it.
And therefore, though faith is enough to accept the gift, yet
must it be a thankful faith, that will magnify the giver, and
an humble faith that will feel the worth of it, and an obe-
diential faith that will answer the ends of it. And therefore
that faith which is the condition of our justification, is fitted
as well to the honour of the giver, as the commodity of the
receiver. And as reason telleth us that it should be so, so
Christ consenteth that it be so. The soul that is truly unit-
ed to Christ, and partaketh of his nature, doth think its own
receiving greatest, where the honour of Christ is greatest;
and it cannot take pleasure in the thoughts of such a kind
of grace as should dishonour the Lord of grace himself. As
Christ is solicitous for the saving of the soul, so he makes the soul solicitous of the right entertainment of him that saveth it. And therefore though his blood, and not his teaching or his government, was the ransom of our souls; yet he is resolved to justify none by his blood, but on the condition of that faith, which is a hearty consent to his teaching and dominion. It is not in the application or bestowing of Christ's benefits, as it was in the purchasing of them: when he came to ransom us, he consented to be a sufferer, and gave his cheeks to the smiter, and submitted to reproach; he endured the cross, despising the shame, and being reviled, he reviled not again, but prayed for his persecutors: but when he comes by his saving grace into the soul, he will not there be entertained with contempt; for in the flesh he came on purpose to be humbled, but in the Spirit he comes to be exalted: in the flesh he came to condemn the sin that reigned in our flesh, (Rom. viii. 3.) and so was made sin for us, that is, a sacrifice for sin; 2 Cor. v. 21. but in the Spirit he comes to conquer our flesh, and by the law of his quickening Spirit, to free us from the law of sin and death; both that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, and also that there might be no condemnation to us, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" Rom. viii. 1, 2, 4. The kingdom of Christ was not worldly; for if it had been worldly, he would have sought to establish it by strength of arms and fighting, which are worldly means; John xviii.36. But his kingdom is within us; it is a spiritual kingdom; and therefore though in the world he was used with contempt, as a fool, and as a sinner, and a man of sorrows; yet within us he will be used with honour and reverence, as a King and absolute Lord. It was the hour of the executioner and the power of darkness, when he was in his suffering; but it is the hour of his triumph and marriage, and the prevailing power of the heavenly light, when he cometh by saving grace into the soul. On the cross he was as a sinner, and stood in our place, and bore what was our due, and not his own; but in the soul he is the conqueror of sin, and cometh to take possession of his own, and doth the work that belongeth to him in his dignity; and therefore he will there be acknowledged and honoured. On the cross he was pulling down the kingdom of satan, and setting up his own, but in the preparatory purchase: but in the soul he
doth both by immediate execution. On the cross, sin and satan had their full blow at him; but when he entereth the soul, he hath his blow at them, and ceaseth not till he have destroyed them. In purchasing he expendeth his own; but in converting he takes possession of that which he purchased. In a word, he came into the world in flesh for his undertaken humiliation; but he comes into the soul by his Spirit, for his deserved exaltation; and therefore though he endured to be spit upon in the flesh, he will not endure to be slighted in the soul. And as in the world he was scorned with the title of a king, and crowned with thorns, and clothed in such kingly robes, as might make him the fitter object for their reproach: so when his Spirit entereth into the soul, he will be there enthroned in our most reverent, subjective, and deepest esteem, and crowned with our highest love, and thankfulness, and bowed to with the tenders of obedience, and our praise. The cross shall there be the portion of his enemies, and the crown and sceptre shall be his; and as all were preferred before him, even Barabbas himself, so all things shall be put under him in the sanctified soul, and he shall be preferred before all.

This is the end of humiliation, to make ready the heart for a fuller entertainment of the Lord that bought it; and to prepare the way before him, and fit the soul to be the temple of his Spirit. An humbled soul would never have put him off with excuses from oxen, and farms, and wives; as Luke xiv. and Matt. xxii. but the unhumbled will make light of him.

And (2.) As Christ himself will be honourably received, or not at all, so must the mercies and graces which he offereth. He will not apply his blood and righteousness to them that care not for it. He will not pardon such a mass of iniquities, and remove such mountains as lie upon the soul, for them that feel not the necessity of such a mercy. He will not take men from the power of the devil, and the drudgery of sin, and the suburbs of hell, and make them his members and the sons of God, and the heirs of heaven, that have not learned the value of these benefits, but set more by their very sin and misery, and the trifles of the world. Christ doth not despise his blood, his Spirit, his covenant, his pardon, nor his heavenly inheritance, and therefore he will give them to none that do despise them, till he teacheth them
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better to know their worth. Do you think it would stand with the wisdom of Christ, to give such unspeakable blessings as these, to men that have not hearts to value them? Why, it is more to give a man justification and adoption, than to give him all this visible world; the sun, the moon, the firmament, and the earth. And should these be given to one that cares not for them? Why, by this means God should miss of his ends: he should not have the love, the honour, or the thanks that he intended by his gift. It is necessary therefore that the soul be thoroughly humbled, that pardon may be received as pardon, and grace as grace, and not set light by.

And (3.) As this is necessary for the honour both of Christ and grace, so also it is necessary for our own benefit and consolation. The mercy cannot indeed be ours, if humiliation do not make us capable of it. These cordials must be taken into an empty stomach, and not be drowned in phlegm and filth. A man on the gallows will be glad of a pardon; but a stranger by, that thinks he is innocent, would not regard it, but take it for an accusation. There is no great sweetness in the name of a Redeemer to an unhumbled soul. It sets naught by the Spirit; the Gospel is no Gospel to it; the tidings of salvation are not so glad to such an one, as the tidings of riches or worldly delights would be.

As it is the preparation of the stomach that maketh our meat sweet to us: and the coarsest fare is pleasanter to the sound, than sweetmeats to the sick; so if we were not emptied of ourselves, and vile and lost in our own apprehensions, and if contrition did not quicken our appetites, the Lord himself, and all the miracles of saving grace, would be but as things of naught in our eyes, and we should be weary to hear or think of them. But O, what an inestimable treasure is Christ to the humbled soul! What life is in his promises! What sweetness in every passage of his grace, and what a feast in his immeasurable love!

(4.) Another use of Humiliation, implied in the former, is, that it is necessary to bring men to yield to the terms of the covenant of grace. Nature holds fast its fleshly pleasures, and lives by feeling and upon present things, and knows not how to live upon invisibles by a life of faith. And this is the life that all must live, that will live in Christ; and therefore he calleth them to the forsaking of all; the
crucifying the world and flesh, the denying of themselves, if they will be his disciples. But O, how loath is nature to part with all, and make a full resignation unto Christ! but fain it would make sure of present things, for fear lest the promises of heaven should but deceive them, and then they would have heaven at last in reserve. And on these terms it is that hypocrites are religious, and thus it is that they deceive their souls. But when the heart is truly broken, it will then stand no longer on such terms with Christ, but yield up all: it will then no longer condition with him, but stand to his conditions, and thankfully accept them. Any thing will then serve with Christ, and grace, and the hopes of glory.

(5.) Another use of Humiliation is, to fit us for the retaining and improving of grace, when we have received it. The proverb is, "Lightly come, lightly go." If God should give the pardon of sin to the unhumbled, how soon would it be cast away? And how easily would such be hearkening to temptation, and returning to their vomit! The burnt child, we say, dreads the fire. When sin hath killed you once, and broken your hearts, you will think the worse of it while you live. And when a temptation comes, you will think of your former smart. 'Is not this it that cost me so many groans, and laid me in the dust, and had almost damned me? and shall I go to it again? Was I so hardly recovered by a miracle of mercy? And shall I run again into the misery that I was saved from? Had I not sorrow, and fear, and care enough, but I must go back again for more, and renew my trouble?' Thus the remembrance of your sorrows, will be a continual preservative to you. And a contrite spirit that is emptied of itself, and is taught the worth of Christ and mercy, will not only hold them fast, but will know how to use them, in thankfulness to God and benefit to himself.

(6.) Another use of Humiliation, is, to fit the soul for its approach to God himself, from whom it had revolted. As it beseems not any creature to approach the God of heaven, but in reverential humility, so it beseems not any sinner to approach him, but in contrite humility: who can come out of such wickedness and misery, and not bring along the sense of it on his heart? It beseemeth not a prodigal to meet his father as confidently and boldly, as if he had never departed from him; but to say, "Father, I have sinned against heaven
and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son;" Luke xv. 18. It is not ingenuous for a guilty soul, or one that is snatched as a brand out of the fire, to look towards God with a brazen face, but with shame and sorrow to hang down the head, and smite upon the breast, and say, "O Lord be merciful to me a sinner." "For God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble;" 1 Pet. iv. 6. "Though the Lord be high, yet he hath regard unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off;" Psal. cxxxviii. 6. "For thus saith the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity; whose name is Holy; and I dwell in the high and holy place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones;" Isa. lvii. 15. "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at my word;" Isa. lxvi. 2. "The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit;" Psal. xxxiv. 18. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise;" Psal. li. 17. There is no turning to God, unless we "loathe ourselves for all our abominations;" Ezek. xvi. 63.

The nearer we approach him, the more we must "abhor ourselves in dust and ashes;" Job xlii. 6. He will not embrace a sinner in his dung; but will first wash and cleanse him; Isa. i. 16. Conversion must make us humble, and as little children, that are teachable, and look not after great matters in the world, or else there is no entering the kingdom of God; Matt. xviii. 3, 4. And thus you see the uses and necessity of Humiliation.

III. By what hath been already said, you may perceive what mistakes are carefully to be avoided, about your Humiliation, and with what caution it must be sought.

1. One error that you must take heed of, is, that you take not Humiliation for an indifferent thing, or for such an appurtenance of faith as may be spared: think not an humbled soul, while such, can be sanctified. Some carnal hearts conceive, that it is only more heinous sinners that must be contrite and brokenhearted; and that this is not necessary to them that have been brought up civilly or religiously from their youth. But it is as possible to be saved without faith, as without repentance, and that special humiliation
which I described to you before, it is part of your sanctification.

2. Another mistake to be carefully avoided, is, the placing of your humiliation, either only, or principally, in the passionate part, or in the outward expression of those passions. I mean, either in pinching grief, and sorrow of heart, or else in tears. But you must remember that the life of it is, as was said before, in the judgment and the will. It is not the measure of passionate sorrow and anguish that will best shew the measure of your sincere humiliation; much less is it your tears or outward expressions. But it is your low esteem of yourselves, and contentedness to be vile in the eyes of others; and your displacency with yourselves, and willingness to mourn and weep for sin as much as God would have you, with the rest of the acts of the judgment and will before described.

Two great dangers are here before you to be avoided. First, some there be that have terrible pangs of sorrow, and are ready to tear their own hair, yea, to make away themselves, as Judas, in the horror of their consciences; and these may seem to have true humiliation, and yet have none. And some can weep abundantly at a sermon or in a prayer, or in mentioning their sin to others; and therefore think that they are truly humbled; and yet it may be nothing so. For if at the same time their hearts are in love with sin, or had rather keep it than let it go, or have not an habitual hatred to it, and a predominant, superlative love to God, their humiliation is no saving work. That which is in the passions and tears, may be even forced against your wills; and it signifieth scarce so much as a common grace, were you are not willing of it. Many an one can weep through a passionate, womanish, tender nature, and yet not only remain unhumbled, but be proud, in a very high degree. How many such do we ordinarily see; especially women, that can weep more at a duty or conference, than some that are truly broken-hearted could do in all their lives; and yet be so far from being vile in their own eyes, and willing to be so in the eyes of others, that they will hate, and reproach, and rail at those that charge them with the faults which they seemed to lament; or at least that charge them with disgraceful sins; and they will excuse and mince their sins, and make a small matter of them, and love none so well as those that
have the highest thoughts of them. So, that pride doth ordinarily reign in their hearts, and break out in their words and lives, and make them hate the most faithful reprovers, and live in contention with any that dishonour them, for all the tears that come from their eyes. Judge not therefore by passions, or tears alone, but by the judgment and the will, as is aforesaid.

2. Another sort there are much better and happier than the former, that yet to their great trouble are mistaken in this point; and that is, they that think they have no true humiliation because they find not such pangs of sorrow, and freedom of tears, as others have, when as their hearts are contrite, even when they cannot weep a tear. Tell me but this; are you vile in your own eyes, because you are guilty of sin, and that against the Lord whom you chiefly love? Do you loathe your sins, because of your abominations, and could you heartily wish, that you had been suffering when you were sinning? And if it were to do again, would you choose to suffer rather than to sin? Have you a desire to grieve, and a desire to weep when you cannot weep? Can you quietly bear it, when you are vilified by others, because you know yourselves to be so vile? And are you thankful to a plain reprover, though he tell you of the most disgraceful sin? Do you think meanly of your own sayings and doings and think better of others, where there is any ground, than of yourselves? Do you justify God’s afflictions, and men’s true rebukes, and think yourselves unworthy of the communion of the saints, or to see their faces, and unworthy to live on the face of the earth? Yea, would you justify if he should condemn you? This is the state of an humbled soul. Find but this, and you need not doubt of God’s acceptance though you were unable to shed a tear. There is more humiliation in a base esteem of ourselves, than in a thousand tears; and more in a will, or desire to weep for sin, than in tears, that come through force of terror, or moisture of the brain, or passionate tenderness of nature. If the will be right you need not fear. It is he that most hateth sin, and is most hardly drawn to it, that is most truly humbled for it. He that will lament it to-day and commit it to-morrow, is far less humbled and penitent than he that would not be drawn to it with the hopes of all the pleasures of the world, nor commit it, if it were to save his life.
3. To avoid this, some run into the contrary mistake, and think that sorrow and tears are unnecessary, and that they may repent as well without them as with them; and they lay all in some dull, ineffectual wishes, and so they think the heart is changed. But certainly God made not the affections in vain. It cannot be that any man can have a sanctified will, but his affections will hold some correspondence with it, and be commanded by it. Though we cannot mourn in that measure as we desire, yet some sorrow there will be wherever the heart is truly changed: and apparently this sorrow will be the greatest. No man can heartily believe that sin is the greatest evil to his soul, and not be grieved for it. And indeed our liveliest affections should be exercised about these most weighty things. It is a shame to see a man mourn for a friend, and whine under a cross that toucheth but the flesh, and yet be so insensible of the plague of sin, and the anger of the Lord, and to laugh and jest with such mountains on his soul. Though grief and tears be not the heart, or principal part of our humiliation, yet are they to be looked after as our duty; yea, sorrow in some measure is of absolute necessity, and the want of tears is no good sign in them that have tears for other things. Indeed the sense of our folly and unkindness should be so great, that it should even turn our hearts into sorrow, and melt them in our breasts, and draw forth streams of tears from our eyes; and if we cannot bring ourselves to this, we must yet lament the hardness of our hearts, and not excuse it.

4. In the next place you are hence informed, how to answer that question, 'Whether it be possible for a man to be humbled and repent too much?' That part of humiliation which consisteth in the acts of the understanding and the will, cannot be too much as to the intention of the act; and if it be too much as to the objective extent, then, as it is misguided, so it changeth its nature, and ceaseth to be the thing that it was before. A man may think worse of himself than he is, by thinking falsely of himself, as that he is guilty of the sin which he is not guilty of; but this is not the same thing with true humiliation. But to have too clear an apprehension of the evil of his sin and his own vileness, this he need not fear. And in the will it is more clear: no man can be too willing to be rid of sin in God's time and way; nor be too much averse from it, as it is against the Lord. But
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then the other part of Humiliation, which consisteth in the depth of sorrow, or in tears, may possibly be too much; though I know very few that are guilty of it, or need to fear it; because the common case of the world is to be stupid, and hard-hearted; and most of the godly are lamentably insensible. But yet some few there are, that have need of this advice, that they strive not for too great a measure of grief. Let your hearts be against sin as much as is possible; but yet let there be some limits in your grief and tears. And this counsel is necessary to these sorts of people. 1. To melancholy people, that are in danger of being distracted, and made unreasonable and useless by overmuch sorrow. Their thoughts will be fixing, and musing, and sad, and dark, and full of fears, and either make things worse than they are, or else be more deeply affected with them than their heads can bear. 2. And this is the case of some weak-spirited women that are not melancholy; but yet by natural weakness of their brains, and strength of their passions, are unable to endure those serious, deep, affecting apprehensions which others may desire; but the depth of their sensibility, and greatness of their passion, doth presently endanger the crazing of their brains, and quickly cast them into melancholy, or worse.

And this is a very heavy affliction, where it comes, both to the persons themselves, and those about them. To be deprived of the use of reason, is one of the greatest corporal calamities in this life. And it is matter of offence and dishonour to the Gospel in the eyes of the ungodly, that understand not the case. When they see any languish in unmeasurable sorrow, or fall into distraction, it is a grievous temptation to them to fly from religion, and avoid godly sorrow, and all serious thoughts of heavenly things, and it occasioneth the foolish scorners to say, that religion makes men mad; and that this humiliation and conversion which we call them to, is the way to bring them out of their wits. So that by reason of the grief of the godly, and the hardening of the ungodly, the case is so sad that it requireth our greatest care to avoid it.

Quest. 'But if it be so dangerous to sorrow either too little or too much, what shall a poor sinner do in such a strait? And how shall he know when to restrain his sorrows?'

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Answ. It is but very few in the world that have cause to fear excess of this kind of sorrow. The common case of men, is to be blockish, and worldly sorrow doth cast more into melancholy and distraction than godly sorrow; but for those few that are in danger of excess, I shall first tell you how to discern it, and then how to remedy it.

1. When your sorrow is greater than your brains can bear, without apparent danger of distraction, or a melancholy disturbance and diminution of your understanding, then it is certainly too much, and to be restrained. For if you overthrow your reason, you will be a reproach to religion, and you will be fit for nothing that is truly good, either to your own edification, or the service of God.

2. If you be in any grievous disease, which sorrow would increase to the hazard of your life, you have reason to restrain it: though you may not forbear repenting, or carefulness of your salvation, yet the passion of grief you must moderate and abate.

3. When sorrow is so great as to discompose your mind, or enfeeble your body, so as to unfit you for the service of God, and make you more unable to do good, or receive good, you have reason then to moderate and restrain it.

4. When the greatness of your sorrow doth overmatch the necessary measure of your love, or joy, or thanks, and keep out these, and takes up more of your spirit than its part, having no room for greater duties, then it is excessive and to be restrained. There are some that will strive and struggle with their hearts, to wring out a few tears, and increase their sorrow, that yet make little conscience of other affections, and will not strive half so much to increase their faith, and love, and joy.

5. When your sorrow by the greatness of it, doth draw you into temptation, either to despair, or think hardly of God and his service, or to undervalue his grace and the satisfaction of Christ, as if it were too scant, and insufficient for you, you have then cause to moderate and restrain it.

6. When your sorrow is unseasonable, and will needs thrust in at those times when you are called to thankfulness, and joy, you have then cause to moderate and restrain it at that season. Not that we should wholly lay by sorrow in any day of joy and thanksgiving, unless we could lay by all our sin in the duties of that day; nor should we wholly lay
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by spiritual comfort and delight, in days of greatest humiliation. For as our state is here mixed of grace and sin, so must all our duties be mixed of joy and sorrow. It is only in heaven where we must have unmixed joys, and only in hell that there are unmixed sorrows; or at least, not in any state of grace. But yet for all that there are seasons now, when one of these must be more eminently exercised, and the other in a lower measure. As in times of calamity, and after a fall, we are called out so much to humiliation, that comfort should but moderate our sorrows, and the exercise of it be veiled for that time: so in times of special mercies from the Lord, we may be called out to exercise our thanks, and praise, and joy so eminently, that sorrow should but keep us humble, and be, as it were, serviceable to our joys. When grace and mercy are most eminent, then joy and praise should be predominant (which is through the most of a Christian's life, that walketh uprightly and carefully with God;) and when sin and judgments are most eminent, sorrow must be then predominant, as being a necessary means to solid joy. And therefore, ordinarily, a sinner that is but in the work of conversion, and newly coming to God from a rebellious state, must entertain more sorrow, and let out himself more to groans and tears than afterwards when he is brought to reconciliation with God, and walketh in integrity.

Quest. 'But when is it that my sorrow is too short, and I should labour to increase it?'

Answ. 1. When there is no apparent danger of the last-mentioned evils, that is, of destroying your bodies, distracting your brains, discomposing your minds, and drowning other graces and duties, and the rest; then you have little cause to be afraid of an excess.

2. When you have not smart enough to cause you to value the love of Christ, and highly prize his blood, and the effects of it, and hunger and thirst after him and his righteousness, and earnestly beg for the pardon of your sin; you have cause to desire then more sorrow. If you feel no great need of Christ, but pass by him as lightly as the full stomach by his food, as if you could do well enough without him; you may be sure then you have need to be broken more. If you set not so much by the love of God that you would part with any thing in the world to enjoy it, and would think no terms too dear for heaven; you have need to lie under the
sense of your sin and misery a little longer, and to beseech the Lord to save you from that heart of stone. When you can hear of the love and sufferings of your Redeemer, without any warmth of love to him again, and can read or hear the promise of grace, and offers of Christ, and eternal life, without any considerable joy, or thankfulness, it is time for you then to beg of God a tender heart.

3. When you make many pauses in the work of your conversion, and are sometimes in a good mind and then again at a stand, as if you were yet unresolved whether to turn or no: when you stick at Christ's terms of denying yourselves, and crucifying the flesh, and forsaking all for the hopes of glory, and think these sayings somewhat hard, and are considering of the matter whether you should yield to them or not, or are secretly reserving somewhat to yourselves; this certainly shews that you are not yet sufficiently humbled, or else you would never stand trifling thus with God. He must yet set your sins in order before you, and hold you awhile over the fire of hell, and ring your consciences such a peal, as shall make you yield and resolve your doubts, and teach you not to dally with your Maker. If Pharaoh himself be off and on with God, and sometimes he will let Israel go, and then again he will not; God will follow him with plague after plague, till he make him yield, and glad to drive or hasten them away. And even where he deals in ways of grace, he maketh so much use of sorrows, as to make men yield the sooner to his terms, and glad to have mercy on such terms, if they were harder.

4. When you are heartless and dull under the ordinances of God, and Scripture hath little life or sweetness to you, and you are almost indifferent whether you call upon God in secret or no, and whether you go to the congregation, and hear the word, and join in God's praises and the communion of the saints, and you have no great relish in holy conference, or any ordinance, but do them almost merely for custom, or to please your consciences, and not for any great need you feel of them, or good you find by them; this shews for certain you want some more of the rod and spur; your hearts be not awakened and broken sufficiently, but God must take you in hand again.

5. When you can be mindless of God, and of the life to come, and forget both your sins and Saviour's blood, and
set out your thoughts almost continually upon worldly vanities or common things, as if you were overgrown the need of Christ; this shews that the stone is yet in your hearts, and that God must keep you to a harder diet to mend your appetites, and make you feel your sin and misery, till it call off your thoughts from things that less concern you, and teach you to mind your everlasting state. If you begin to forget yourselves and him, it is time for you to have a remembrancer.

6. When you begin to taste more sweetness in the creature, and be more tickled with applause and honour, and pleased more with a full estate, and more impatient with poverty, or wants, or wrongs from men, and crosses in the world; and when you are set upon a thriving course, and are eager to grow rich, and fall in love with money; when you drown yourselves in worldly cares and business, and are cumbered about many things, through your own choice; this shews indeed that you are dangerously humbled; and if God have mercy for you, he will bring you low, and make your riches gall and wormwood to you, and abate your appetite, and teach you to know that one thing is needful; and to be more eager after the food that perisheth not, and hereafter to choose the better part; Luke x. 41, 42. John vi. 27.

7. When you can return to play with the occasions of sin, or look upon it with a reconcileable mind, as if you had yet some mind on it, and could almost find in your heart to be doing with it again; when you begin to have a mind of your old company and courses, or begin to draw as near it as you dare, and are gazing upon the bait, and tasting of the forbidden thing, and can scarce tell how to deny your fancies, your appetites, your senses, your desires; this shews that you want some wakening work: God must yet read you another lecture in the black book, and set you to spell those lines of blood which it seems you have forgotten; and kindle a little of that fire in your consciences, which else you would run into, till you feel and understand, whether it be good playing with sin, and the wrath of God, and the everlasting fire.

8. When you begin to be indifferent as to your communioin with God, and think not much whether he accept you, and manifest his love to you or not, but can huddle up your prayers, and look no more after them, or what becomes of
them, and use ordinances, and seldom inquire of the success; when you can spare the spiritual consolations of the saints, and fetch little of your comforts from Christ or heaven; but from your friends, and health and prosperity, and accommoda-
tions; and perhaps can be as merry in carnal company, when you say and do as they, as if you were considering of the love of Christ, this shews that the threatenings went not deep enough. Sorrow hath yet another part to play: you must be taught better to know your home, and to take more pleasure in your Father, and your Husband, and your breth-
thren, and your inheritance, than in strangers, or enemies to God and you.

9. When you begin to grow wanton with ordinances or other mercies, and instead of thankful receiving them, and feeding on them, you pick quarrels with them, and nothing will please you; either the minister is too weak, or he is too curious, or too formal; you must have it this way or that way; either you must have more of a form, or no form; in this gesture, or that order, and something or other is still amiss: this shews that you want humbling, and that you are fitter for the rod, than for meat. If God do but open you a door into your hearts, and shew you the monsters and empti-
tiness that are there, you will see, that the fault lay some-
where else than in the minister, or the ordinances: if it were in them, it was more in you. The cause of your loathing, and quarrelling with the world, was the fulness of your own stomach; and God must give you a vomit or purge, that shall make your hearts ache before it hath done working, and then your appetites will be mended, and your wanton-
ness will cease; and that will be sweet to you which before you slighted.

10. When you begin to be leavened with pride, and think highly of yourselves, and have good conceits of your own parts and performances, and would be noted, and taken for somebody among the godly, and you cannot endure to be overlooked or passed by: when you think meanly of other men’s parts and duties in comparison of yours, and think yourselves as wise as your teachers, and begin to hear them as judges with a magisterial spirit, and think you could do as well as this yourselves: when you are finding fault with that which should nourish you, and in every sermon you are most noting the defects, and think that this you could have
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mended; when you itch to be teachers yourselves, and think yourselves fitter to preach than to learn, to rule than to be ruled, to answer than to ask for resolution; when you think so well of yourselves, that the church is not pure or good enough for your company, though Christ disowneth it not, and they force you not to sin; when you grow censorious, and aggravate the faults of others, and extenuate their graces, and can see a mote in another's eye, but will discern none of their graces, if they be not as high as mountains; and none can pass for godly with you, but those of the most eminent magnitude; when you are itching after novelties in religion, and setting your wisdom against the present or ancient church; and affecting singularity, because you will be of no common way; when you cannot hear this minister, nor that minister, though the ministers of Christ; and you are harping upon that, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate;" as if Christ had called you to come out of the church, when he called you to come out of the company of infidels: all this cries aloud for further humiliation; you have a tympany that must be pricked, to let out the wind that puffs you up: if you be not for perdition, and to be forsaken, and given over to yourselves, you must be fetched over again, and humbled with a witness. When God hath turned your inside outward, and shewed you that you are poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and that you are empty nothings, who thought so well of yourselves; he will then make you stoop to those that you despised, and think yourselves unworthy of the communion of those that before you thought unworthy of yours. He will make you think you are unworthy to hear those ministers that you turned your back upon; and he will take down your teaching, talking vein, and make you glad again to be learners: in a word, he will by conversion make you as little children, or you shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And this spiritual pride is a most lamentable disease, and the issue usually is exceeding sad. For with many, it is the forerunner of damnable apostasy, and God gives them over to their own conceits, and the wisdom which they so esteem, till it have led them to perdition. And those that are cured, are many of them cured by the saddest way of any men in the world. For it is usual with God to let them alone, till they have run themselves into some abominable
error, or fallen into some shameful, scandalous sin, till they are made an hissing and bye-word among men; that shame and confusion may bring them to their wits, and they may learn to know what it was that they were proud of, and see that they were but silly worms.

And thus I have shewed you, when you must seek after deeper humiliation, and may conclude that you are not humbled enough. Yea, and when a greater measure is of some necessity to your souls.

*Quest.* 'Well, but yet you have not told us what course a poor sinner should take in such a strait, when he knows not whether his humiliation, as to the affectionate part, be too little or too much.'

*Answ.* 1. You may partly discern yourselves by what is said, whether you have need of more or less humiliation, if you can but try your hearts by these signs. 2. But yet I would advise, and earnestly persuade you, in cases of difficulty, to betake yourselves to some able, faithful minister for resolution. If you feel sorrow seize so deep upon your spirits, that it distempereth you, or threateneth your understanding, or your health, especially if you are either passionate women, or melancholy persons: stay not then any longer, lest delay do that which easily cannot be undone, but go and open your case and crave advice. This is a principal use of pastors, that you should have them at hand, to advise with in the diseases and dangers of your souls, as you do with physicians, in the diseases and dangers of the body. Lay by all sinful bashfulness, and trust not yourselves any longer with your own skill, but go to them that God hath set in office over you for such uses as these, and tell them your case: this is God's way, and he will bless his own ordinariness: melancholy and passionate distempered persons are not fit judges of their own condition. In this case you must distrust your own understanding, and be not self-conceited, and stick not obstinately to every fancy that comes into your heads, but in the sense of your weakness rely upon the guidance of your faithful overseers, till your distempers are overcome, and you are made more capable of discerning for yourselves.

5. You are further to be informed, that it is not for itself that sorrow and tears are so desirable, but as they are expressions of a gracious temper of the will, and as they help
on the ends that Humiliation is appointed to. And therefore you may hence learn in what sort you must seek after it. (1.) You must not place the chief part of your religion in it, as if it were a life of mere sorrow, that we are called to by the Gospel. But you must make it a servant to your faith, and love, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and other graces. As the use of the needle is but to make way for the thread, and then it is the thread and not the needle that makes the seam; so much of our sorrow is but to prepare for faith and love, and these are they that close the soul with Christ. It is therefore a sore mistake with some, that are very apprehensive of their want of sorrow, but little of their want of faith or love; and that pray and strive to break their hearts, or weep for sin, but not much for those higher graces, which it tendeth to. One must be done, and not the other left undone.

(2.) As tears are the expression of the heart, so those are the most kindly and sincere, which voluntarily flow from the inward feeling of the evil that we lament; if you could weep never so much, merely because you think that tears are in themselves necessary, and had not within, the hatred of sin, and sense of its vile and killing nature; this were not true humiliation at all. And if the heart be humbled before the Lord, it is not the want of tears that will cause him to despise it. Some are so backward to weep by nature, that they cannot weep for any outward thing, no, not for the loss of the dearest friend, when yet they would have done ten times more to redeem his life, than some that have tears at will. Groans are as sure expressions of sorrow as tears, with such as these. And the hearty rejection and detestation of sin, is yet a better evidence than either. But where men have naturally a weeping disposition, which they can manifest about crosses in the world, and yet cannot shed a tear for sin, there the case is the more suspicious.

(3.) The principal cause why you must strive for deeper sorrow, is, that you may obtain the ends of that sorrow; that sin may be more odious to you, and more effectually mortified; that self may be taken down, and Christ may be valued and desired, and exalted, and that you may be fitted for a holy communion with God for the time to come, and saved from pride, and kept in watchfulness.

6. From this that was last said, you have a rule by which
you may certainly discern, what measure of Humiliation it is that must be had. It must go so deep as to undermine our pride, and so far the heart must needs be broken, as is necessary to break the heart of sin, and carnal self. If this be not done, there is nothing done, though you weep out your eyes. You must be brought so low, that the blood of Christ, and the favour of God, may be more precious in your eyes than all the world, and in your very hearts preferred before it: and then you may be sure that your humiliation is sincere, whether you have tears or none.

7. From hence also you may see, that you must take heed of ascribing to your own humiliation any part of the office and honour of Christ: think not that you can satisfy the justice of the law, or merit any thing of God by the worth of your sorrows, though you should weep even tears of blood. It is not true humiliation if it consist not in the sense and acknowledgment of your unworthiness, and desert of condemnation, and if it do not lead you to look out for pardon and life from Christ, as being lost and wholly insufficient for yourselves. And therefore it would be a plain contradiction, if true humiliation should be taken as satisfaction or merit, or trusted on instead of Christ.

iv. Having thus far opened the nature and reasons of true Humiliation, I conclude with that advice which I principally here intended; refuse not to be thoroughly and deeply humbled. Be not weary of the humbling workings of the Spirit. Grief is an unwelcome guest to nature; but grace can see reason to bid it welcome. Grace is ingenuous, and cannot look back on so great unkindness, with unwillingness to mourn over it; Zech. xii. 10. There is somewhat of God in godly sorrow, and therefore the soul consenteth to it, and seeketh for it, and calls it in: yea, and is grieved that it can grieve no more. Not that sorrow as sorrow is desirable, but as a necessary consequent of our grievous sinning, and a necessary antecedent of our further recovery: as we may submit to death itself with a cheerful willingness, because it is sanctified to be the passage into glory, how dreadful soever it be to nature in itself; so much more may we submit to humiliation and brokenness of heart with a holy willingness, because it is sanctified to be the entrance into the state of grace. Consider for your satisfaction of these following things.
1. The main brunt of your sorrows will be but in the beginning: and when once you are settled in a holy course, you will find more peace and comfort, than ever you could have had in any other way. I know if you will be meddling with sin again, it will in its measure breed sorrow again: but a godly life is a life of uprightness, and conversion is a departing from sin, and consequently a departing from the cause of sorrow. And can you not bear such a sorrow for a little while?

2. Consider but whence you are coming: is it not out of a state of wrath? And where have you been all this while? Was it not in the power of satan? And what have you been doing all your lives? Hath it not been the drudgery of sin, and the offending of your Lord, and the destroying of yourselves? And is it meet, is it reasonable, is it ingenuous, for you to come out of such a case, without lamentation that you staid in it so long?

3. Consider also, that it is necessary to your own recovery and salvation. Do you think to take so dangerous a surfeit, and then to be cured without a vomit? You will endure for the health of your bodies, the bitterest pills, and most loathsome potions, the shortest diet, and the letting out of your blood, for you know that your life lieth on it, and there is no remedy; and should you not endure for the saving of your souls, the bitterest sorrows, the keenest rebukes, the freest confessions, and the most plentiful tears? Sin will not down at easier rates: self will not be conquered else: the heart of it will not be broken, till your hearts be broken. We know your sorrows merit nothing, and make not God amends for your sins, nor is it for want of sufficiency in the blood of Christ that we require them; but it is part of the fruit of his blood upon your souls. If his blood do not melt and break your hearts, you have no part in him. It becomes you to mourn over whom you have pierced; Zech. xiii. 10. And this fruit of his blood is a preparative to more. You may as well think of being saved without faith, as without repentance and humiliation.

4. Consider so much as is bitter in it, is of your own preparation; you may thank yourselves for it. Who was it that brought you to this necessity of sorrow? Have you been all your lifetime surfeiting of the creature and causing your own disease, and now will you grudge at the trouble of
a cure? Whom have you to blame and find fault with but yourselves? Was it not you that sinned? Was it not you that laid in the fuel of sorrows, and sowed the seeds of this bitter fruit, and cherished the cause of trouble in yourselves? God did not do this; it was you yourselves. He doth but undo that which you have been doing. Grudge not therefore at your physician, if you must be purged, and let blood, and dieted strictly, but thank yourselves for it that have made it so necessary.

5. Consider also that you have a wise and tender Physician, that hath known what sorrow and grief is himself, for he was made for you a man of sorrows; (Isaiah liii. 3.) and therefore can pity those that be in sorrow; he delighteth not in your trouble and grief, but in your cure and afterconsolations. And therefore you may be sure that he will deal gently and moderately with you, and lay no more on you than is necessary for your good; nor give you any more bitter a cup than your disease doth require. When he sheweth his greatest liking for the contrite, it is that he may revive their hearts; and he professeth withal, that he will not contend for ever, nor be always wrath, lest the spirit should fail before him, and the souls which he hath made; Isaiah lvii. 15, 16. He calls to him the weary and heavy-laden, that he may give them ease; Matt. xi. 28. He was sent to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised; Luke iv. 18. When he hath broken your hearts, he will as tenderly bind them up, and as safely heal them as you can reasonably desire. Even his ministers, that labour to break your hearts, and bring you low, even to the dust, have no worse meaning in it than to bring you to Christ, and life, and comfort; and though they are glad to see the weeping eyes of their hearers, and to hear their free confessions and lamentations, yet this is not because they take pleasure in your trouble, but because they foresee the saving fruits of it, and know it to be necessary to your everlasting peace. You may read what their thoughts are in the words of Paul, 2 Cor. vii. 9—11. "Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance; for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive no damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of; but
the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold, this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you; yea, what clearing of your-selves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what ve-hement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge, &c." Indeed, neither Christ nor his ministers have that fond, foolish love to you, and pity of you, as you have to yourselves: they be not so tender of you, as to save you from the sorrow which is needful to the saving of you from hell. But they would not put you to any more than needs; nor have you taste a drop of the vinegar and gall, or shed one tear, but what shall tend to your comfort and salvation.

6. Consider what sorrows they be that these sorrows do prevent, and what those suffer in hell, that avoid this godly sorrow on earth. O sirs, your repentant sorrows are joys to those; yours have hope, but theirs are quickened with des-peration; yours are small and but a drop to their ocean; yours are curing, but theirs are tormenting; yours are a fa-ther's rod, but theirs are the rack and gallows; yours are mixed with love, but theirs are unmixed, overwhelming them with confusion; yours are short, but theirs are endless. And had you rather sorrow as they do, than as the godly do? Had you rather howl with devils and rebels, than weep with saints and children? Had you rather be broken in hell by torments, than on earth by grace? Is it not an unreason-able thing of you, to make such a stir at the sorrow that must save you, when you remember what it would save you from, and what all must suffer that are not humbled here by grace! O, it is another kind of sorrow that others are now enduring. Grudge not at the pricking of a vein, when so many thousands are everlastingly bleeding at the heart.

7. Consider, the more you are rightly humbled, the sweeter will Christ and all his mercies be to you ever after while you live. One taste of the healing love of Christ, will make you bless those sorrows that prepared for it. The same Christ is not equally esteemed even by all that he will save: and had you not rather be emptied yet more of your-selves, that you may be fuller of Christ hereafter? When you do but feel his arms embracing you, and perceive him in that posture as the prodigal's father was; (Luke xv. 20.) you will thank that sorrow that fitted you for his arms.

8. If you be thoroughly humbled, you will walk the more
safely all your days, if other things correspond. It will make you hate the sin you smarted by, and fly the occasions of that which cost you so dear.

9. The sin of pride is one of the most mortal, damming sins in the world; and that which thousands of professors do miscarry by. And humiliation is most directly contrary to this; and therefore must needs be an amiable and necessary thing. It is worth all the sorrow that a hundred men endure here, to be saved from this dangerous sin of pride.

10. A thorough humiliation is usually a sign of the greater exaltation to come after. For “those that humble themselves shall be exalted, and those that exalt themselves shall be brought low;” Luke xiv. 11. “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, and he shall lift you up;” 1 Pet. v. 5. The higher you mean to build, the deeper you will dig to lay the foundation. Your consolations will be greater, as your sorrows have been greater. You may be free from those doubts that follow others all their days, lest they were never truly humbled. You need not be still questioning, or pulling up your foundations, as if you were to begin again. It is a sign that you are intended to greater employments, (if other things concur). Paul must be laid exceeding low in his conversion, that he might be the fitter as a chosen vessel to bear Christ’s name among the Gentiles.

Lay all this now together, sirs, and consider what cause you have to cherish the humbling works of grace, and not to quench them. When your hearts begin to be afflicted for sin, go not among foolish or merry companions to drink or laugh it away. Drive it not out of your minds, as unkindly as if it came to do you hurt; but get alone, and consider of the matter, and on your knees in secret beseech the Lord to follow it home, and break your hearts, and make you meet for his healing consolations, and not to leave you in this Red Sea, but to bring you through, and put the songs of praise into your mouths.

Direct. V. Having thus directed you about your Humiliation, the next direction which I would offer you, that you may not miscarry in the work of conversion, is this: ‘See that you close with the Lord Jesus Christ, understandingly, heartily, and entirely as he is revealed, and offered to you in the Gospel. In this your Christianity doth consist, upon
this your justification and salvation lie. This is the sum of your conversion, and the very heart of the new creature. The rest is all but the preparatives to this, or the fruits of this. Christ is the end and the fulfilling of the law, the substance of the Gospel, the way to the Father, the life, the help, and the hope of the believer; if you know not him, you know nothing; if you possess not him, you have nothing; and if you are out of him, you can do nothing that hath a promise of salvation. And therefore I shall distinctly (though briefly) tell you what it is to close with Christ, understandingly, heartily, and entirely, as he is offered in the Gospel.

And, 1. That you may close with Christ understandingly, you must look to these things. 1. That you understand who Christ is, as in his person and his offices. 2. That you understand the reason of his undertaking. 3. That you understand what it is that he hath done and suffered for us. 4. That you understand the nature and worth of his benefits, and what he will do for you. 5. That you understand the terms on which he conveyeth these benefits to men; and what is the nature, extent, and condition of the promises. And 6. That you understand the certain truth of all this.

For the first, you must understand that Jesus Christ hath two natures in one person; that he is both God and man: as he is God, of the same substance with his Father, and one in essence with him, the second person in the blessed Trinity; the Word of God, the only begotten Son of the Father, eternal, incomprehensible, and infinite. As man he hath a true human soul and body, as men have; so that his Godhead, his human soul, and his body, are really distinct. This human nature was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the Virgin Mary, without man, and born of her, and is so truly united to the Divine nature, as that they are one person: not that the Godhead is turned into the manhood, nor the manhood into the Godhead; but the Godhead hath taken the manhood into personal unity with itself. This was not from eternity, but when man had sinned, and lost himself, and needed a Redeemer. By reason of his miraculous conception, he was free from all original sin, being holy, harmless and undefiled. His person and natures were fit for his office; which was to be Mediator between God and man, to make reconciliation, and recover us to God. Had he not been God, but mere man, his dignity would not have been suffi-
directions to prevent

cient for such an interposition, nor his obedience or sufferings of any such value, as to be the price of our redemption. Nor could he have borne our burden, or conquered death, and risen again, and overcome the prince of death, the devil; nor have ruled his church, and preserved and sanctified them, and prospered his cause, and subdued his enemies, nor effectually interceded with the Father, nor judged the world, or raised the dead, and done the work of a perfect Saviour. Nor was the angelical nature sufficient for this office. Had he not been man, he had not been near enough to us, to have suffered in our stead, and taught us by his doctrine, and given us his example, nor could he have suffered or died for us; for God cannot die or suffer. As he is God he is one in nature with the Father; and as he is man, he is one in nature with us; and therefore is fit to mediate for us; and in him we are brought thus nigh to God. To this office of the Mediator there are many acts belonging, from whence it hath several denominations, of which more anon. So much for the person of Christ.

2. The next thing that you must understand, is, the reasons and ends of his undertaking; which though we are not able fully to comprehend, (nor the reason of any of the works of God;) yet must we observe so much as is revealed. And these following ends or reasons of this work, do shew themselves clearly in the Scripture, and in the event.

(1.) One is, The demonstration of God's justice, as he is Governor of the world, according to the law of nature. He made man a rational and voluntary agent, capable of good and evil, with desires and hopes of the good, and fears of the evil, and so to be ruled according to his nature. He made for him a law that revealed good and evil, with promises to move him by desire and hope, and with threatenings to drive him by necessary fear. By these engines God resolved to govern mankind. This law was the rule of man's duty, and of his receivings, or of God's judgment. According to this law, the world was to be governed by God. His governing justice consisteth in giving all their due according to his law: at least so far as that the end of the law may be attained, that is, the honour of the lawgiver preserved, transgression made odious by the terror of penalty, and obedience made honourable by its fruits of impunity and reward. Otherwise the law would not have
deterred effectually from evil, nor encouraged to good; es-
pecially to so much as creatures must go through for the
crown of life: and so the law would have been no fit instru-
ment for the government of the world; that is, the law would
have been no law. But this the wise and righteous God
would not be guilty of, of making a law that was no law,
and was unmeet for the ends to which he made it; which
was essential to it as a law. There was no way to avoid
this intolerable consequent when man had sinned, but strict
execution of the law, or by sufficient satisfaction instead of
such an execution. The execution would have destroyed
the commonwealth, even the whole inferior world, at least
the reasonable creature who was the subject. The wisdom
and love, and mercy of God would not give way to this, that
the world should be destroyed so soon after it was made,
and man left remediless in everlasting misery. Satisfaction
therefore must be the remedy: this must be such as might
be fit to procure the ends of the law, as if the law itself had
been executed; that is, as if the offenders did all die the
death that it did threaten. It must therefore be a public
demonstration of justice, and of the odiousness of sin, to the
terror and warning of sinners for the future. And this was
done with Jesus Christ, when none else in heaven or earth
could do it. For it did as fully demonstrate the justice of
God, and preserved his honour, and the usefulness of his law
and government, that a person so high and glorious, and so
dear to him, should suffer so much for sin, as if all the world
had suffered for themselves. And thus God "made him to
be sin for us, who knew no sin; 2 Cor. v. 21. And thus
"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being
made a curse for us; Gal. iii. 31.

(2.) Hereby also God demonstrated the holiness of his
nature; how much he hateth sin, and how irreconcileable
he is to it, as light to darkness. As the law and judgments
of God do proceed from his perfect nature and will, so do
they bear the image of that perfection and demonstrate it to
the world. This therefore is the nobler end and work of
Christ in our redemption, to declare the holiness and per-
fection of God in his nature and will; though the former
(the declaring of his governing justice,) be the nearer end.
If the death of Aaron's two sons were such a declaration,
that "he will be sanctified in all that draw near him;" Lev.
x. 2, 3. If his laws and present judgments do declare him to be "a holy and jealous God, that will not forgive sin without a valuable consideration or satisfaction; Josh. xxiv. 19. How much more evidently is this declaration in the death of Christ? If the Bethshemites cry out, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?" (1 Sam. vi. 20.) upon the death of 50,070 men; how much more may the guilty soul say so, when he thinks on the crucified Son of God? As it is the end of God's execution on transgressors, that "the Lord may be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy may be sanctified in righteousness;" (Isa. v. 16.) so was it his end in the sacrifice of his Son.

(3.) Another end of our redemption by Christ, is the demonstration of the infinite wisdom of God. His wisdom in the preventing the ruin of the created world; that it might not be said that sin and satan had frustrated him of the glory of his creation, and destroyed it almost as soon as he had made it. Yea, in getting an advantage by the malice of his enemies for the more admirable attainment of the ends of his law, and the glorifying of all his governing attributes. He would not have made man a free agent, and left him in the hand of his own will, and suffered him to sin, if his wisdom had not known how to secure his own interest and honour to the full. And so also in the economy and admirable frame of his gracious sapiential government by Christ, the manifold wisdom of God doth shine; Ephes. iii. 9, 10. As the wonderful structure of heaven and earth, and every part of this natural frame, doth gloriously reveal the wisdom of the Creator; so the wonderful contrivance of our redemption by Christ, and the reparation of the world by him, and the moral frame of this evangelical dispensation, doth wonderfully demonstrate the wisdom of the Redeemer. And as the observation of our natures may give us cause to say with David, Psal. cxxxix. 14. "I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;" so the observation of our natures and conditions, may well cause us to say, 'I will praise thee, for I am graciously and wonderfully redeemed; marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well.' As nature may teach us to admire the frame of nature; so grace will teach us to admire the frame of grace, and to see the beauty of its several parts, and much more of the whole, where all the parts are orderly composed.
(4.) Yea, the very power of God is demonstrated in Christ. And therefore he is called, Cor. i. 24. "The power of God and the wisdom of God:" not only formally, because Christ himself is the wise and powerful God; nor only efficiently, because God doth exercise his power and wisdom, by his Son in creation, redemption, and government; but also effectually and objectively, as Christ is the great and most admirable demonstration of the power and wisdom of God in the world.

What work transcendeth the incomprehensible miracle of the incarnation? That God should assume the nature of man into personal union? The creation of the sun is no greater a work of power, than the incarnation and sending of the Son of God, the intellectual sun, the light of the world, that living light, "that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world: though yet the darkness comprehendeth not his light;" John i. 4. 6. 9. What was he but the living visible power of God, when he healed all diseases, cast out devils, raised the dead, and rose from the dead himself, and ascended into glory, and sent down the Holy Spirit on his church, enduing them with power from on high: Acts i. 8. Luke xxiv. 49. When he was on earth he was anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, and went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil;" Acts x. 38. Being dead, "he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by the resurrection from the dead;" Rom. i. 4. "When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive;" Eph. iv. 8. Yea, he filled his servants with power; Acts vi. 8. Even such as was admired and desired by the ungodly; Acts viii. 19. He being "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they;" Heb. i. 3, 4. As Christ therefore in his glorified humanity united to the Godhead, is far more excellent than the angels of God, and more glorious than the sun, so is the power of God more abundantly demonstrated in him, than in the sun, or the angels, or any other creature. The illuminated do know this, "and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe; according to the working of
his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he rais-
ed him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in
the celestials, far above all principality, and power, and
might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not
only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and
hath put all things under his feet, and hath given him to be
Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the
fulness of him that filleth all in all;" Ephes. i. 19—23.

Besides this, even in the works of Christ for his church,
his calling, and sanctifying, and ruling, and preserving them,
his subduing their enemies, and raising them from the dead,
and glorifying them with himself, how glorious is the very
power of God by his Son; 2 Thess. i. 11. Phil. iii. 10. Eph.
iii. 7. 20. 2 Pet. i. 3. 16. 1 Cor. iv. 20. Ephes. vi. 10.
1 Cor. xv. 43. 1 Pet. i. 5. And, therefore, his Gospel may
well be called, "The power of God to salvation; Rom. i. 16.
Which hath been the instrument of his power in doing such
wonderful works in the world; 1 Cor. i. 18. ii. 5. 2 Cor.
vi. 7. 2 Cor. xiii. 3, 4.

(5.) But the most sweet and conspicuous end of our re-
demption, was the demonstration of God's love and mercy
to mankind, and that he might make known the riches of
his glory on the vessels of mercy prepared unto glory; Rom.
ix. 23. Of all God's attributes, there is none shineth more
illustriously in the work of our redemption than love and
mercy. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he
laid down his life for us;" 1 John iii. 16. By the creation
and sustentation of us we perceive the love of God, but more
abundantly by our redemption. In this was manifested the
love of God towards us, because that God sent his only be-
gotten son into the world, that we might live through him;
1 John iv. 9. O wonderful love which condescendeth to such
rebels, and embraces such unworthy and polluted sinners,
and pitieth them even in their blood! Even after we had
sold ourselves to satan, and cast away the mercies of our
creation, and had all come short of the glory of God, and
were sentenced to death, and ready for the execution, then
did this wonderful love step in, and rescue and recover us.
Not staying till we repented and cried for mercy, and cast
ourselves at his feet; but seeking us in the wilderness, and
finding us before we felt that we were lost, and being found
of us before we sought him, and beginning to us in the depth of
our misery. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;" 1 John iv. 10. Though God love us not in our sin and misery before our conversion, so far as in that state to justify us, and adopt us, and take pleasure in us, or have communion with us in the Spirit, yet doth he so far love us in that state, as to redeem us by the blood of Christ, and tender us his salvation, and to bring in his chosen effectually to entertain his offer. And thus "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given to us; for when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly, and commended his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us;" Rom. v. 6, 8. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" John xv. 13. What was the Son of God, but love incarnate? Love born of a Virgin, Love coming down from heaven to earth, and walking in flesh among the miserable, seeking and saving that which was lost. Was it not Love that spoke those words of life, those comfortable promises, those necessary precepts, those gracious encouragements which the Gospel doth abound with? Was it not Love itself that went preaching salvation to the sons of death, and deliverance to the captives, and offered to bind up broken hearts? Luke iv. 18. Was it not Love that invited the heavy-laden; Matt. xi. 28. And that sent even to the highways, and the hedges to compel men to come in, that his house may be filled; Matt. xxii. 9, 10. Luke xiv. 23. Was is not Love itself, that went up and down healing and doing good; that suffered them for whom he suffered, to scorn him, and spit upon him, and buffet him, and condemn him; that being reviled, reviled not again; that gave his life an offering for sin, and died and prayed for them that murdered him? No wonder if the Gospel be it that teacheth us to call God by the name of Love itself; 1 John iv. 8. For it is the Gospel that hath most fully revealed him to be so. No wonder if the Gospel do so frequently and unfortunately require us to love one another, and even to lay down our lives for Christ, and for one another, when it hath given us such a ground and motive, and president for our love. He that seeth the true face of redemption, and understandeth, and savoureth the Gospel, and the grace of Christ, must needs see most cogent reasons for such duties; 1 John
iv. 7—12. "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God: and every one that loveth is born of God, and know-eth God; he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love. If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us." So 1 John iii. 10, 11. 14. 16—18. No wonder if, by this love, we know that we are translated from death to life; and if by it the children of God be known from the children of the devil; 1 John iii. 10, 11. 14. For love is the very nature and image of our Father. No wonder if this be the new commandment, which had newly such a powerful motive, and president: and no wonder if it be the great distinguishing character, by which all men shall know that we are the disciples of Christ; John xiii. 35. When he had set us such a copy, and taught us this lesson by such effectual means, writing it out for us in lines of blood, even of his own most precious blood, and shedding it abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

But if we should come down to the particular benefits of Christ's death, and see what love is manifested in them, even in our calling, our justification, our adoption or sanctification, our preservation, and our everlasting glorification, we should find ourselves in an ocean that hath neither banks nor bottom; and when we have fathomed as far as we can, we must be contented to stand and admire it, and to say with the beloved apostle, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" 1 John iii. 1.

And this is the blessed employment of the saints, which they are called to by the Gospel, to live in the participation and consideration, and admiration of this wondrous love, that "Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith, and so being rooted and grounded in love, they may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God;" Ephes. iii. 17—19. And withal, "to be followers of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ hath loved us, and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour;" Eph. v. 1, 2. "And to love without dissimulation;" Rom. xii. 9, 10. "Even from a pure heart fervently;" 1 Pet. i. 22. "That we love as brethren, being compassionate, pitiful, and courteous; not
rendering evil for evil, but contrariwise blessing; knowing that we are thereunto called, that we should inherit a blessing;” 1 Pet. iii. 8, 9. “And that we keep ourselves in the love of God,” (Jude 21.), “that nothing may be able to separate us from it;” Rom. viii. 35—37. And if we thus imitate our heavenly pattern, “the God of love and peace will be with us;” 2 Cor. xiii. 11. And thus I have shewed you the principal ends of the undertaking of Christ in the work of our redemption, especially as they are attained directly by his cross and resurrection.

(6.) Another end also is apparent in the Scripture; which is the glorifying of God’s rewardimg justice, together with his mercy in the salvation of his elect. This end he partly attaineth here: (God hath his ends continually.) In this life his servants have much of his mercy; and the beginnings of their reward in the beginning of their salvation; but the fulness is hereafter in their glorification. All his promises he performeth in their seasons. Even in the present pardon of our sins he honoureth his faithfulness and justice; 1 John i. 9. His faithfulness in making good his promise, and his justice in rewarding the performers of the condition, and giving what his promise had made their due; that so men may even here in part “discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not; while they see God’s esteem of his people as his jewels, and spare them as a man spareth his son that serveth him;” Mal. iii. 17, 18. “The King of Zion is just, having salvation;” Zech. ix. 8. “The righteousness of God is manifested in our justification;” Rom. iii. 21, 22. “Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus;” Rom. iii. 25, 26.

But it is most eminently at judgment, and in the world to come, that this remunerative justice with mercy will be glorified. “When Christ shall come (purposely) to be glorified
in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," (not only in himself, but in them), and that because they were believers; 2 Thess. i. 10. When "we have fought the good fight, and finished our course, and kept the faith, we shall find that there is laid up for us a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge shall give us, and all that love his appearing at that day;" 2 Tim. iv. 8. He will justify and applaud them before all the world, yea, and judge them to everlasting life, with a "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. I will make thee ruler over many things; even because they had been faithful in a little;" Luke xix. 17. Matt. xxv. 21. 23. Because they shewed their love to him in his members, he will say to them, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; Matt. xxv. 34—36. He that now commandeth us to say to the righteous, "It shall be well with him," (Isa. iii. 10.), will in righteousness cause it then to be well with him. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father;" Matt. xiii. 43. And the righteousness and mercy of their Father shall as conspicuously and gloriously shine in them. For it is a day appointed for the "revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds:" Rom. ii. 5, 6. "The present faith and patience of the saints in all the persecutions and tribulations which they endure, is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that they may be accounted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which they suffer. It being a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble us, and to us that are troubled, rest with the saints;" 2 Thess. i. 5—7. "For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness;" Psal. xi. 7. "And in righteousness will he judge the world;" Acts xvii. 31. Rev. xix. 11. And, therefore, "in the keeping of his word there is a great reward;" Psal. xix. 11. Yea, a cup of water given in love to him, shall not be unrewarded; Matt. x. 41, 42. "To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward;" Prov. xi. 18. If in this life men are forced to say, "Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily, there is a God that judgeth in the earth;" Psal. lvi. 11. Much more when we receive the reward of the inheritance;" Col. iii. 24. This causeth the saints to forsake the pleasures of sin, because
they have respect to the recompence of reward; Heb. xi. 29. This is that that maketh them rejoice and be exceeding glad in their persecutions, because that great is their reward in heaven. And, therefore, it is that they cast not away their confidence, because it hath great recompence of reward; Heb. x. 25. If we let no man beguile us of our reward, (Col. ii. 18.), and if we look to ourselves that we lose not those things that we have wrought, we shall receive a full reward; 2 John viii. For the Lord hath said, “Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be; Rev. xxii. 12.

(7.) Another end of Christ’s undertaking in this blessed work, is, the complacency and glory of God in the love and praise, and service of his redeemed ones; in some measure here, but in perfection when they are perfected. Sin had made us unserviceable to God. And bringeth us back into a fitness for his service. He disposeth us Godward by faith and love. And he hath “redeemed us from our iniquity, and purifieth to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works;” Tit. ii. 14. “To which he createth us, that we should walk in them;” Ephes. ii. 10. And with such sacrifice God is well-pleased; Heb. xiii. 16. Phil. iv. 18. “The blood of the covenant” was, therefore, shed, “to make us perfect in every good work to do his will, who worketh in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight;” Heb. xiii. 20, 21. “And this must be our care, to walk worthy of the Lord in all well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good work;” Col. i. 10. “And then whatsoever we ask, we shall receive of him, because we keep his commandment, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight;” 1 John iii. 22. See 1 Thess. i. Heb. xi. 6. Rom. viii. 8. 2 Tim. ii. 4. 1 Cor. vii. 32. Heb. xi. 5.

But principally when we are glorified, and fitted by our perfection for the perfect love and praises of God, then will God perfectly take pleasure in us, and in our love and praise. The glory of the new Jerusalem and the harmony of everlasting praise and thanksgiving will be his delight. “He will rejoice over us with joy, he will rest in his love; he will joy over us with singing;” Zeph. iii. 17.

(8.) Another end of Christ’s undertaking this blessed work, is, the everlasting glory of God which shall shine forth in the glorified manhood of the Redeemer, and the
everlasting complacency that God will have in him, for his own perfection, and the work that he hath wrought.

Though Christ had no need to suffer for any sin or want of his own, yet was it his personal dignity, dominion, and everlasting glory, as well as our salvation, that was intended by him and by the Father in this work, and which he was to receive as the reward of his performances; Rom. xiv. 7. Phil. ii. 8—10. Matt. xxviii. 18, 19. Heb. i. 3, 4. 6. Eph. i. 22. Nay, if we may make comparisons, this seemeth the highest part of God's end in the sending of his Son. As there is no part of all the works of God to be compared to the person of the Redeemer, so consequently there is none in which the glory of God will shine forth so admirably and illustriously as in Christ. If on earth the heavenly voice bear witness that it was in "him that the Father was well-pleased," (Matt. iii. 17. xvii. 5. xii. 18.) which was uttered both at his baptism, and his transfiguration, when his disciples saw a glimpse of his glory, and he was the "chosen servant of God, in whom his soul delighted; Isa. xlii. 1. much more is it apparent, that in his heavenly glory he will be the Father's everlasting pleasure and delight: and in him, and by him, and for the work that he hath wrought, the redeemed in glory will honour him for ever; Rev. v. 9. "He is the head of the body, the church, the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell;" Col. i. 17—19. And, therefore, in him the glory of God will shine in fulness, and he shall have the preeminence in the Father's everlasting love. When Christ prayed (John xii. 28.), "Father, glorify thy name," he was answered by a voice from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again:" even in the Son that thus desired it. He hath done it on earth, and he will do it again more perfectly in heaven. "He hath glorified the Son, that the Son also may glorify him;" John xvii. 1. As he "glorified his Father on earth, and finished the work which he gave him to do," so the Father hath now glorified him with himself, that in his glory he may be yet more glorified; John xvii. 4, 5. In his transfiguration his face did shine as the sun; John xvii. 2. And in his appearance to Paul, his shining light did cast him blindfold and trembling on the earth; Acts ix.
4. 6. It was Stephen's encouragement to the suffering of his martyrdom to see the glory of God, and Jesus standing on God's right hand; Acts vii. 55, 56. When John saw him on the Lord's day in the Spirit, he beheld his eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet like burning brass in the furnace, and his voice was as the sound of many waters, and in his right hand were the stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was the sun that shineth in his strength; Rev. i. 14—16. His voice also did proclaim his glory, "I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore. Amen. And have the keys of hell and of death; ver. 17, 18. It was the Lord of glory that was crucified; 1 Cor. ii. 8. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory, (1 Tim. iii. 16.), where he is glorified with the Father in the praises of the saints; Rev. xii. 13. The glory in the holy mount was great at the giving of the law; but it was no glory to that of the Gospel administration, (2 Cor. iii. 7. 10.), much more to that of the glorified Redeemer, who hath overcome, and is set down with the Father in his throne; Rev. iii. 21. Yea, the glory that will be given to God for ever, will be through Jesus Christ; Rom. xvi. 17.

And indeed it is a very great question whether we shall immediately see the essence of God in heaven, or only see him in the glorified Redeemer; and whether Christ will not then be the Mediator of our fruition, as he was here the Mediator of acquisition. But certain we are, that God will be everlastinglughtnessed and glorified in the person of the Redeemer, as well as in the church which is his body.

(9.) And reducibly it may be said to be God's end in this blessed work, that he may more fully demonstrate his vindictive justice, according to the Gospel, or law of the Redeemer, upon them that finally reject his grace, than it would have been manifested on the terms of the law of the creation on Adam and his offspring. Though Christ came not into the world (primarily) to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved; yet was it his purpose that unbelievers that love darkness rather than light should fall under the special condemnation; John iii. 18, 19. And that they should not "see life, but the wrath of God should abide upon them;" ver. 36. God would not so much
as permit them to reject his salvation, but that he knows how he may be no loser by them: "He suffereth with much patience the vessels of wrath, to make his wrath and power known;" Rom. ix. 22. The mouths of the condemned will be utterly stopped, and they will be left speechless when they are judged on terms of grace, much more than they would have been if they had been judged only by the first law: when they see Christ and heaven that was offered them, and remember their wilful and obstinate contempt of them, their own consciences and tongues shall justify God, and confess that he is righteous in the most dreadful of his judgments. "If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall they escape that neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and then was confirmed by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost;" Heb. ii. 3, 4. And "if they escaped not, that refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not they escape that turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: for our God is a consuming fire;" Heb. xii. 25. 29. So much of the ends of Christ's undertaking in our redemption.

In which you may see that there are divers things which demonstrate the glory of the forementioned attributes of God, in this Gospel dispensation. (1.) It shineth forth in the person of the Redeemer as he was on earth, in his nature and wonderful conception, and his perfections. (2.) And it also shineth forth in the actions of his life, overcoming the world, and the devil, and perfectly fulfilling the law of God: so that the image of his Father did shine forth in his conversation. (3.) And also in his death and sufferings was the Father glorified, as I shewed before. (4.) And also in the most wise and holy frame of those laws by which the grace of the Mediator is conveyed, and the church governed. (5.) And by the image of God, by the impress of those laws on the souls of his saints, and by the holiness of their lives, the glory of God is also demonstrated. (6.) As also by the justifying sentence of the judge, and the glorious reward bestowed on the faithful. (7.) And by the condemning sentence and execution on the ungodly, in whom vindictive justice will be honoured. (8.) And in the perfection of the
individual saints, and their perfect love and praise. (9.) And in the saints as embodied in the heavenly Jerusalem, the glory of which will be the glory of God. (10.) And principally in the blessed person and work of the Redeemer. In all these will God's glory shine forth for ever.

**Quest.** But to whom is it that God doth thus demonstrate his glory?

**Answ.** 1. To the saints in this life, in that degree as is suited to a state of grace, and the condition of a traveller that lives by faith. We are apt to look upward, and long after fuller revelations of the heavenly kingdom and mystery, and marvel that God will not shew himself more fully to his saints on earth. Fain we would know more of God and Christ, and the life to come; and it is oft matter of some temptation to us, that God doth not satisfy these desires, but leaveth them in so much darkness, that are willing of his light. But this is because we do not consider how much of glory consisteth in the light; and that grace is more in the desires of it than in the possession: and if we should have as much of it as we desire, it were but to bring down heaven to earth. Means must be suited to their ends: God will discover to us so much of his glory as may quicken our desires, and keep alive our hope, and patience, and endeavours; but not so much as shall satisfy us, and answer our expectations: for heaven is not here. We must not carry our home about with us, but travel towards it, that we may reach it at the last.

2. God doth even now demonstrate the glory of his forementioned attributes, in the work of redemption, not only to his saints, but to the angels of heaven. The consideration of this hath often satisfied me, when I have been tempted to wonder at the work of redemption, that God should so far condescend as to be incarnate, and make such glorious discoveries of himself, and yet that so few in the world should take notice of it, and he should have from men so little of the honour that he seemeth by his preparations to expect. But the most part of the world did never once see the glory that shineth to them in the Redeemer. But God hath another world besides this, and other creatures besides man, in all likelihood incomparably more numerous (perhaps thousands for one) and certainly more excellent. And though Christ did assume the nature of angels, and came
not to redeem them that needed no Redeemer, yet may the
lustre of this work of redemption appear to the angels more
clearly than to man; and God may have a thousand-fold
more glory from them that are but the spectators and ad-
mirers, than from us in our present darkness, that are yet
possessors. As we that are here on earth do look upon and
admire the glory of the sun, which is as it were in another
world, and out of our reach; so the angels much more may
gaze upon the glory of the Son of God, admire the Lord in
the work of our redemption though they were not the re-
deemed ones: so that unto them doth God shine forth by it
in his excellencies.

Perhaps you will say, 'That cannot be; because this is
but seeing him in a glass; when the angels see him face to
face, and immediately behold his blessed essence; or else
how can the saints expect that beatific vision?' To which
I answer; First, that I am uncertain whether seeing face
to face be an immediate intuition of the essence of God, or
only such a sight of his glory in those emanations, that are
as appropriated to the place or state of bliss. God's essence
is every where; but that glory is not every where: and so I
know not whether our present knowledge be not called
enigmatical, and as in a glass, comparatively to that glory
prepared for the saints. But, secondly, I answer that cer-
tain I am that God is demonstrated to his angels in the Re-
deemer, yea, in the church itself, which is the subject of his
grace, and that they are both affected, and employed about
us accordingly. He that spoiled principalities, and powers,
and openly triumphed over them, and by death overcame
him that had the power of death; Col. ii. 15. Heb. ii. 14.
and had so much to do against the evil angels as enemies,
no doubt is joyfully observed by the good angels. And he
that is set so "far above principalities, and powers, and
might, and dominion, and every name that is named in this
world, or that which is to come;" (Ephes. i. 21.) and is
"gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels,
and authorities, and powers being made subject to him;"
(1 Pet. iii. 22.) no doubt is honoured and admired by angels.
And indeed it is expressly said, "Let all the angels of God
worship him;" Heb. i. 6. And what are they all but "mi-
nering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall
be heirs of salvation?" Heb. i. 14. And therefore sent forth
by Jesus Christ, the Lord of saints. Which makes some think that the title of angels was never given to any of these spirits, till the Mediator's undertaking, and that it was only as they were his deputed messengers, or servants, for the ends of that undertaking. Sure we are, they attended his birth with their acclamations, and his life and sufferings (as far as was meet) with their service, and that they are deputed to bear his servants in their hands, that they dash not their foot against a stone; that they are ascending, and descending, and are present with the churches in their holy worship, and that they rejoice at the conversion of one sinner; and that the least of Christ's servants, have their angels beholding the face of God; and that the law was given by their disposition or ordination, and they attend the departing souls of believers; and that they contend against evil spirits for our good, and are encamped about us, and that they shall attend the Lord at his coming to judgment, and be his glorious retinue and instruments in the work; and that they are numbered with us, as members of the same heavenly Jerusalem, and that we shall be like or equal to them; Luke ii. 14, 15. Mark iv. 11. Luke xxi. 43. Acts x. 6, 7, 22. Psal. xxxiv. 7. xvi. 11. Matt. xiii. 39, 41. xvi. 27. xxiv. 31. xxv. 31. xxvi. 53. Luke xvi. 22. Matt. xviii. 10. 2 Thess. i. 7. Luke xx. 36. Mark xii. 25. Acts vii. 65. Gal. iii. 19. Heb. xii. 22. 2 Pet. ii. 11. Luke xv. 10, John i. 51. Yea, men must be either confessed or denied, owned or disowned before the angels; Luke xii. 8, 9. See Rev. xix. 18. iii. 5. But if all this seem not sufficient to persuade you that the angels are so far interested in the affairs of God about the redeemed, as to behold and admire him in his blessed work, take notice of the express affirmations of the Scriptures; (1 Pet. i. 12.) "Which things the angels desire to look into." And why, but to see and admire the wisdom, and power, and goodness, and mercy, and justice of God, shining forth in the Redeemer? If this be not plain enough, mark well those words, Ephes. iii. 10. "To the intent that now unto the principalities, and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church, the manifold wisdom of God." You see here that the church of the redeemed is that admirable looking-glass, which God hath set up to this very intent, that his angels may in it or by it behold the manifold wisdom of God; yea, and that
upon the full revelation of Christ by the Gospel, they saw that which did more fully inform, and illuminate them. No doubt but the very work of the creation, yea, of this inferior world, that are made for the habitation and use of man, are far better known to angels than to man: for we know but little of what we daily see and use; and consequently it is by angels more than men, that God is beheld, admired, and glorified in them. And if it be so in these works of creation, we may well say it is so in the works of redemption.

3. But when we are perfected in glory, then we ourselves shall clearly see the glory of this mystery, and of God therein. As it is not till we come to heaven that we shall have the fullest benefits of redemption, so is it not till then, that we shall have the fullest understanding of it, and God have his fullest praises for it. As we are here but sowing the seed of our own glory, which we must reap in the everlasting fruition of God; so God is here but sowing those seeds of his praise and glory, which he will eternally reap by his blessed work. Do not therefore judge of the ends and fruits of Christ's undertakings, by what you see him attain on earth, but by what he shall attain in heaven, when he hath fully seen the travail of his soul to his satisfaction, and hath presented the whole church without spot unto God; and when the glorious marriage of the Lamb, with the heavenly Jerusalem is solemnized, and the kingdom delivered up to the Father; Isa. liii. 11. Eph. v. 27. Rev. xix. 7. 1 Cor. xv. 24. It will be another manner of conceiving which we shall have in heaven of this blessed work; when we see the face of our glorified Lord, and fully possess the fruits of his redemption, than this is that we have now by our weak believing. We shall then have another manner of sight of the wisdom, and power, and love, and justice that appear to man, in the face of Christ, than now we have.

4. Yea, the tormented discoveries of the glory of redemption to the condemned rejectors of it, shall also contribute to the glory of God.

You see then that this work hath most glorious ends; which I have mentioned the more largely, both to remove their temptations that are apt to think that it was an unnecessary thing, and the less regardable, and to teach men the true value of it, by shewing them the true ends.

For the former, I say, there was no necessity that God
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should make the world, and reveal his power, and wisdom, and goodness, in this excellent frame, but what did suppose the freewill of God the original cause. Will you therefore say, that the creation is vain; and undervalue God's admirable works, in which he thus revealeth himself to the intellectual creatures? So here; we confess that there could be no necessity of redemption, but what was originally derived from the will of God; (though a necessity 'ad finem' there was for the constitution of things, upon supposition of what went before the undertaking.) But yet shall we undervalue so glorious a work, in which the Divine perfections do so fully reveal themselves to the world?

And I say the more of this, because I do observe that it is the not apprehending the high and excellent ends of redemption, that makes it so much slighted, and consequently tempteth many to infidelity. For the ends and uses do set the value on the means. That is of little worth, that is to little purpose, and doth but little good. If men understood more the ends of redemption, and how much God doth shine forth in the world, in the person, and life, and laws, and works of the Son of God, they would then live in the admiration of it, and be always searching and prying into it, and desire to know nothing but God in Christ crucified, and account all things else but as loss and dung for this excellent knowledge. But, alas! the most do scarce discern any higher ends of Christ, or other use of him, than to save themselves from hell; and for want of faith, and through humiliation, they have but little sense of that: and therefore no wonder if the Redeemer be neglected, and God denied the honour of the work.

So much of this second point, the reasons and ends of Christ's undertaking. I shall purposely be shorter on the rest.

3. The third point to be understood concerning our Redeemer, is, What he hath done and suffered for mankind, and wherein his redeeming work consisted, both as to the general and special part. Should I stand on these at large, I must needs be voluminous; and therefore I shall but briefly recite them for your remembrance.

(1.) The first thing that Christ did for the saving of the world, was his interposing between offending man, and the wrath of God; and so preserving the world from that des-
truction, which the execution of the violated law would have procured: undertaking then to become the seed of the woman, and so to break the serpent's head; and revealing this grace by slow degrees, till the time of his coming.

(2.) And then when the fulness of time was come, he was made man, being conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary, and so the "Word was made flesh, and dwelt among men, who beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;" John i. 14. Thus God was manifested to men in the flesh; 1 Tim. iii. 16.

(3.) And as he was perfectly holy in his nature without any stain or guilt of original sin; so was he perfectly holy in his life, and never broke the least command of God in thought, word, or deed. Never could any convince him of sin; John viii. 46. He fulfilled the law of nature, which all the world was under, and the Mosaical law which the Jews were under, and the special law that was given to himself as Mediator, and was common to no other creature in the world.

And thus he performed these excellent works. (1.) By the fulfilling of all righteousness he pleased the Father, always accomplishing his will; and so did much of the work of a Saviour, in meriting for us; Matt. iii. 15. v. 17. John viii. 22. Matt. xii. 18. xvii. 5. Rom. v. 19. "For such an highpriest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners; Heb. vii. 26.

2. He hath conquered the tempter, that conquered us. And therefore did he purposely yield himself to such sore temptations; Matt. iv. that his victory might be glorious, and the second Adam might overcome him that had overcome the first. And thus he hath done much to the rescue of the captivated.

3. Hereby also he hath overcome the world, which overcame the first Adam and his posterity: he trampled upon its seeming glory; he neglected and despised its baits and allurements; he went through all its cruel persecutions and oppositions, so that the world now as well as the devil, are conquered things. By which he hath made way for the victory of his followers, and given them ground of great encouragement; John xvi. 33. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." Yea, I may say in a sort, he hath overcome the flesh also. For though Christ had no corrupted
flesh as we have to contend with, yet had he a natural and sensitive appetite, which the command of God did forbid him to fulfil. And therefore when innocent nature desired that the cup might pass from him, and abhor death by a simple aversion; yet perfect holiness permitted not this to proceed to a refusal by the comparing intellect, and choosing or refusing will; but saith, "Not my will, but thine be done." And when Christ was weary and hungry, the desire of food and rest by the sensitive appetite was no sin; but when the work of God forbade the fulfilling of such desires, he still denied them.

(4.) Hereby also he hath set us a perfect copy and pattern of obedience, and is become our example, whom we must endeavour to imitate. For he knew that it is the most effectual teaching, to do it by words and deeds together. It is a great help to us, when we do not only hear his voice, but see also which way he hath gone before us. When he saith, "Learn of me," he directs us not only to his words, but to himself, who was "meek and lowly;" Matt. xi. 28.

(5.) Moreover Christ received of the Father fulness of the Spirit, and power, for the benefit of the redeemed: that he might be meet to be the Head and treasury of the church, and to shower down the streams of grace upon his members and when all power was given him in heaven and earth, he might be fitted to the following application of his benefits, and to rule, and support, and defend his people.

(6.) Moreover he was pleased himself to become a preacher of the Gospel of salvation, not to all the world, but principally as a minister of the circumcision, that is, the Jews; Rom. xv. 8. He that purchaseth salvation, condescended also to proclaim it. The preaching of the Gospel is a work that Christ thought not himself too good for, sometimes to many, sometimes to one or two, as he had opportunity; often with tears, and always with earnestness and compassion, did he go about doing good, and seeking the lost, and healing the diseased, and calling men to faith and repentance, and offering them the grace and life which he purchased.

(7.) And he was pleased also to seal up his doctrine by his works, casting out devils, healing all diseases, raising the dead, and working divers other miracles, to assure them that he came from God, and did his work, and revealed his will, that so the world might have no excuse for their unbe-
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lie; but that they that would not believe upon any other account, might yet believe him for the sake of his works; John iii. 2. Acts ii. 22. Heb. ii. 4. John v. 36. x. 25. 38. xiv. 11, 12. xv. 24.

(8.) Besides all this, he gave up himself to a life of suffering, being despised by his creatures whom he came to redeem, and destitute voluntarily of fleshly pleasures, and of that riches and worldly provision that might procure it. He was a man of sorrows, afflicted from his youth, persecuted from the cradle; he gave his cheeks to the smiters, and his person to be made the scorn of fools; he was crowned with thorns, spit upon and buffetted, and having sweat water and blood, in his agony in the garden, he was hanged on a cross where thieves were both his companions and revilers, where they gave him gall and vinegar to drink, pierced his blessed body with a spear, and put him to a shameful, cursed death. But he endured the cross, despising the shame, and gave up himself thus a sacrifice for sin, and bore our transgressions, that we might be healed by his stripes; and having ransomed us by his blood, he was buried as an offender, continuing for a time in the power of the grave; Isa. liii. throughout, Matt. xxvi. xxvii. Heb. xii. 2. All this he consented to undergo, (though he consented not to the sin of them that did inflict it,) for he laid down his life, it was not taken from him against his will; John x. 17, 18.

(9.) Having thus paid the price of our reconciliation to God, the third day he rose again from the dead, though soldiers watch his grave; because he had foretold them that he would rise on the third day, yet were they soon daunted by the glory of an angel, that came and rolled away the stone. And so Christ made known his Divine power and victory, and the finishing of his work: and as by death he overcame him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, (Heb. iii. 14.) so by his resurrection he triumphed over death itself. For how should the grave detain the innocent, and death overcome the Lord of life? This was the glorious day of triumph; in remembrance of this he appointed the Lord's day to be observed by the church. The resurrection of Christ was the confusion of all the powers of darkness; the great argument to confirm the truth of his doctrine, and prove his Godhead to the unbelieving world.

(10.) Being risen, he more fully revealed his Gospel, and
sent forth his apostles and disciples, to proclaim the offers of life to the world, and settle the churches in a holy order, when they had gathered them, and to ordain such ministers to succeed them, as might carry on his work to the end of the world; Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. And thus he is the faithful Lawgiver to the church.

(11.) When he had abode thus forty days on earth, he ascended up into heaven, while his disciples stood by, and gazed after him; (Acts i. 9, 10.) and there hath taken possession in our nature, advancing it to the Father's right hand in glory, which was by sin depressed so low in misery. And so he is gone to prepare a place for us, leaving us a certain word of promise that he "will come again, and take us to himself, that where he is, there we may be also;" John xiv. 2, 3. And as "our life now is hid there with Christ in God, so when he shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory;" Col. iii. 3, 4.

(12.) Being ascended, he manifested his power and his truth in sending down the Holy Ghost upon his disciples, enabling them to do such works as he had done, and such as were necessary to convince the unbelieving world, and to conquer the opposing wisdom and power of the flesh; enabling them to speak in variety of languages, which they had never before learned; as also to understand and powerfully preach the mysteries of the Gospel, to confirm their doctrine by miracles, healing the lame, the blind, the sick, casting out devils, raising the dead, and conquering the resistance of principalities and powers, in seeming weakness, and in a contemptible garb. Not to speak now of the sanctifying work of the same Spirit, on them and on the rest of the church.

(13.) Lastly, In this glory Christ intercedeth for us, and is our High-priest in the heavens with God, living for ever, procuring and conveying to us the mercies which we need upon the account of his sacrifice; ruling his church, and preserving them; succeeding his cause and servants; restraining and subduing his enemies and ours; and will perfect his work at the day of his coming to judgment. So much of the works of Christ.

4. The fourth point to be understood concerning our redemption, is, The nature and worth of the benefits that are procured for us. Which though you may gather much from what is said, and the full handling of them would be a lar-
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ger work than is suitable to my present ends, yet such a brief recital I shall here give you, as my ends require.

In general, we have all from Jesus the Mediator that is worth the having; even all the blessings of this present life, and of the life to come. As we lost our right to all by sin, so we have our restored right by Christ alone, who came to destroy sin, and its effects. Had not he interposed, we might have had materially life, and natural faculties, and other things which now are mercies; but not as mercies, but as the requisites to our deserved punishment: even as the devils have their being and natural perfections to sustain them in their sufferings. Nature itself, so far as good, and all natural blessings are now of grace: and that not only of grace as they were to Adam, which was mercy without proper merit; but of Gospel grace procured by Christ, which is mercy contrary to merit. It is no sounder doctrine to say, that God doth without the merit of his Son bestow our common forfeited mercies, either on the elect or others, than that he giveth us his saving grace without it. As all things are delivered into the hands of Christ; (John xiii. 3.) so none can receive any good but from his hands. To give mercies to men that forfeit them, and deserve misery, is so far to pardon their sin; for to remit the sin, is to remit the punishment. But the Scripture is not acquainted with any pardon of sin, but what is on the account of the merits of Christ. They that deny this mercy of God, in giving even to the ungodly such a measure of forgiveness, do speak against the daily and hourly experience of all the world; and therefore need no other confutation.

More particularly, (1.) Christ having taken the human nature into union with the Divine, our nature is thereby inconceivably advanced, and brought nigh to God.

(2.) Having fulfilled the law and offered himself a sacrifice for sin, God's justice, and wisdom, and holiness, and goodness, are admirably demonstrated: and this sacrifice is both satisfactory and meritorious on our behalf; Heb. i. 3. 2 Cor. v. 19. Heb. ix. 26. x. 12.

(3.) The world, and the devil, and death, and the grave, are conquered by him, in preparation to our conquest.

(4.) The Lord Jesus himself being risen, and justified, hath received all power in heaven and in earth; Matt. xxviii. 19. And is enabled to do all things that are necessary for
his further ends. As the Redeemer he is become Lord of
ourselves, and of all we have; and he is made the Sovereign
Ruler of all, having full power to relax the law that cursed,
and to deal with the world on terms of grace.

(5.) Accordingly he hath kept off the stroke of the ri-
gorous justice of God, and hindered the strict execution of
the law of works, and giveth still abundance of forfeited
mercies to the sinful world, keeping them from desired
torments, while he is treating them on terms of life.

(6.) He hath made a universal deed of gift, of Christ
and life to all the world, on condition that they will but ac-
cept the offer; 1 John v. 10—12. John i. 11, 12. iii. 16—19.
In this testament, or promise, or act of oblivion, the sins of
all the world are conditionally pardoned, and they are con-
ditionally justified and reconciled to God.

(7.) He hath given apostles, evangelists, pastors, and
teachers, to proclaim this act of grace to the world, com-
manding them to go into all the world, and preach this Gos-
pel to every creature, and promise salvation to all that by
faith will become his true disciples; Mark xvi. 16. Matt.
xxviii. 20.22. So that their promulgation is universal.

(8.) Though his servants have most lamentably neglect-
ated their duty, and have not gone abroad in the world, to di-
vulge the Gospel according to his will; imagining that this
work had been proper to the apostles; and though the na-
tions have sinfully neglected a due inquiry after this blessed
light, yet hath he not left himself among them without wit-
ness, but hath given them some dawning of the day, or some
moonlight in the reflections of evangelical truth, who have
not seen the sun itself. Much mercy they have had not-
withstanding their transgressions; and while they served
devils, they have been provided for by God, “in whom they
live, and move, and have their being;” “doing them good,
and giving them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, fill-
ing their hearts with food and gladness;” and this to teach
them, “that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might
feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from ev-
evy one of them;” Acts xiv. 17. xvii. 27.28. “And that which
may be known of God, is manifest among them, for God
hath shewed it to them; for the invisible things of him from
the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood
by the things that are made, even his eternal power and God-
head: so that they are without excuse;” Rom. i. 19, 20. By experience they may find, that God dealeth not now in rigor of justice, but on terms of grace, and that sin is not now unpardonable; and they should know that the “goodness of God leadeth men to repentance;” Rom. ii. 4.

(9.) As the Gospel conditionally pardoneth all their sins, and offereth them everlasting life, so it containeth the clearest reasons and most effectual motives, to persuade them to accept the offer. It affordesth them most excellent precepts and instructions, and exhortations, and other helps to bring them to a willingness, that salvation may be theirs.

(10.) To which also is added abundance of outward, providential helps, to further the working of the Gospel; as seasonable afflictions and mercies of divers sorts.

(11.) And with these is usually concurrent some inward motions, and assistance of the Holy Ghost; as knocking at the door, where he is not yet let in, and entertained.

(12.) And by their presence in the visible church, even the ungodly have many benefits in the ordinances, and instructions, and examples of the saints. All these (besides a resurrection) are the common effects of general redemption, and not appropriated to the elect.

Besides which there are others that the elect only do receive. As (1.) God is pleased by effectual grace to draw them to his Son, and make the Gospel successful to their conversion, insuperably teaching and changing them by his Spirit, and causing them to repent, and believe in Christ, and to perform the conditions of his forementioned promises. That love that brought the Lord on earth, that clothed him with flesh, that lifted him up upon the cross, doth stream forth in his season into the hearts of his elect, and toucheth them with a changing power, and winneth them to his Father and himself, and dropeth into them those heavenly principles, which will grow up in them to everlasting life.

(2.) Hereupon the soul believing in Christ is united to him, as a member of his body, even of his true catholic church; and Christ is become the Head, the Husband, the Lord, the Saviour of that soul in a special sort. Christ himself is first given to us in these relations; and from him as our Head, his following benefits are conveyed. “He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life; for this life is in the Son;” 1 John v. 11, 12. He
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is the vine, and we are the branches, and out of him we can do nothing; John xv. 1, 2. 5. As it was not we that purchased our own salvation, so it is not we, but Christ, that must have the keeping, and dispensing of the purchased benefits. "For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell, and that he should be the Head over all things to his church," that it might by communication become his fullness; Col. i. 19. Ephes. i. 22, 23. He is our treasury, and from him we must have our continual supplies; for "with him the Father will give us all things;" Rom. viii. 32. And thus Christ will "dwell in our hearts by faith;" Ephes. iii. 17. and set up the kingdom of God within us.

(3.) Hereupon we have the pardon of all our sins; not only as to the temporal punishment, nor only as to the bestowing of temporal mercies, or common helps of creatures, and providences; for this is but a "winking at the days of our ignorance," (Acts xvii. 30.) in comparison of the pardon which afterward we receive. Nor is it only a conditional, or offered pardon; but it is an actual remission of the eternal, and of all the destructive, punishment. And thus we are justified from all that might be charged on us from the law; and accepted, and used as just by God. There is a kind of forgiveness that was promised to the sacrificers; Lev. iv. 20. 26. 31. 35. v. 10. 13. 16. 18. vi. 7. Numb. xv. 28. But as that was upon Christ's account, so it extended not to the pardon of the eternal punishment to any but true believers. He that was once crucified, "is exalted by God's right hand, a prince, and a Saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins;" Acts v. 31. "Through this man is preached the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses;" Acts xiii. 38, 39. When our eyes are open, and we "are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God," we then "receive remission of our sins;" Acts xxvi. 18. When we are "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of Christ; in him we have then redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins;" Col. i. 13, 14. And "blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered, to whom the Lord imputeth not sin;" Rom. iv. 7. And now "who shall condemn us? It is God,
that justifieth us: for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;” Rom. viii. 1. 33, 34.

(4.) With this benefit doth concur, our reconciliation to God, and our adoption; by which we are made his sons, and God is pleased to own us as our Father. For being one with Christ the Son of God, we are sons by him. For “to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name;” John i. 12. This is the wonderful love that the Father hath bestowed on those that were his enemies; that they should not only be reconciled to him by the death of his Son, but also be called the sons of God; Rom. v. 10. 1 John iii. 1. For he hath “chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved;” Ephes. i. 4—6. O what an unspeakable mercy is it to have the blessed God, whom we had so oft offended, to become our reconciled Father in Christ! For it is not an empty title that he assumeth; but he hath more abundant love to us, and tenderness of our welfare, than any title can make us understand.

(5.) And hereupon it doth immediately follow, that we have a right to the blessed inheritance of his sons, and are certain heirs of his heavenly kingdom; Col. i. 12. For if “sons, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ;” Rom. viii. 17. “Being saved by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, and justified by grace through Jesus Christ, we are made heirs, according to the hope of eternal life;” Tit. iii. 5—7. “Being begotten again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us;” 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.

(6.) Withal, the Holy Ghost is given to us, not only to close us at first with Christ, but to take up his abode in us, as his temples, and to be the agent and life of Christ within us, and to do his work, and maintain his interest, and cleanse us of all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and sanctify us throughout, and to strive against, and conquer the flesh, and to keep
us by divine power through faith unto salvation; 1 Cor. vi. 19. Gal. v. 17. 22. 2 Cor. vi. 1. 1 Pet. i. 5. For "because we are sons, God sendeth forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba, Father;" Gal. iv. 6. This Spirit of adoption which we receive doth "bear witness with our spirits, that we are the sons of God;" Rom. viii. 15, 16. For "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his;" Rom. viii. 9. By this Spirit is the spirit of the world cast out of us; the spirit of pride, and of blindness, and of delusion, and of hardheartedness, and of sensuality, and malice, and hypocrisy are cast out. By this is God's image imprinted on our souls; we are conformed to his blessed will; "we are made partakers of the Divine nature, being holy, as God is holy; Col. iii. 10. 2 Pet. i. 4. 1 Pet. i. 16. Hereby also we are fitted for the service of God, to which before we were undisposable and unfit. O what an ease is it to the soul, to be free from so much of the burden of sin. What an honour is it to have the Spirit of God within us, and to have a nature so truly heavenly and divine? How can it go ill with him that hath "God dwelling in him, and that dwells in God?" 1 John iv. 15.

(7.) Another of our precious benefits by Christ, is, that we shall be actually employed in the special and nearest service of God, that on earth is to be performed. Let diseased souls desire idleness; and swinish sinners take pleasure in the mire, and feed like ravenous beasts on carrion, or as dogs on dung. But the saints will ever rejoice in God, and take it for the most blessed life on earth, when they can do him the greatest service. Let his enemies that hate his service be weary of it, as if it were a toil or drudgery; but his children will desire no sweeter work. They never think themselves so well as when they are most serviceable to their blessed Lord, though at the greatest cost and labour to the flesh. So sweet is God's service, that the more of it we can do, the more is our pleasure, and honour, and content. Other work spendeth strength; but this increaseth it. Other work must have recreation intermixed, but this is itself the most delightful recreation. Other service is undertaken for the love of the wages, but this is undertaken for the love of the master, and the work, and is wages itself to them that go through with it. For other service is but a means, and that to some inferior end; but this is a means,
to the everlasting perfection, and blessedness of the soul; and such a means as containeth, or presently procureth, somewhat of the end. All the saints are even here "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that they shall shew forth the praises of him that hath called them out of darkness, into his marvellous light: they are a holy priesthood, to offer up a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ; 1 Pet. ii. 5. 9. Their very bodies are "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, in their reasonable service." What a sweet work is it to live in the daily love of God; in his praises, in the hopes, and sweet forethoughts of everlasting joys. The world affordeth not such a Master, nor such a work.

(8.) Another of the precious benefits by Christ, is, The liberty of access in all our wants to God by Prayer, with a promise to be heard. The flaming sword did keep the way to the tree of life, till Christ had taken it down, and consecrated for us a new and living way, through the vail, which is his flesh. And now we have "boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus; and, therefore, may draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith;" Heb. x. 19, 20. 22. When worldlings may cry to their Baal in vain, the "righteous cry, and the Lord heareth them, and delivereth them out of all their (hurtful) troubles." O what a mercy is it in our falls, in our distresses, in our dangers, in our wants, to have a God, a faithful, merciful Father to go to, and make our moan to for relief! What a mercy is it, when our flesh and our hearts do fail us, when friends and worldly things all fail us, to have God for the rock of our hearts, of our portion; Psal. lxxxiii. 26. When sickness begins to break these bodies, and earthly delights do all forsake us, and death calls us to come to our endless state, then to have a reconciled Father to go to, and crave his aid, upon the encouragement of a promise, and recommend our souls into his hand as to a faithful Creator, and our surest, dearest friend; this is a mercy that no man can well value, till they come to use it. To know every day, that as oft as ever we come to God, we are always welcome; and that our persons, and prayers are pleasing to him through his Son, what a mercy is it. One would think we should live joyfully, if we had but one such promise as this for faith to live upon: "Call upon me in the days of trouble, and I will deliver thee,
and thou shalt glorify me;” Psal. i. 15. “Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son;” John xiv. 13, 14. No wonder if they be rich, that have so free access to such a treasure; and if they be safe that have access to so sure a help. For God is a very present help in trouble; Psal. xlvi. 1.

(9.) Another precious benefit, is, That we have peace of conscience, or ground for it at the least, in our peace with God; and so may come to assurance of salvation, and may partake of the joy of the Holy Ghost. For in this peace and joy the kingdom of God doth much consist. When the chief cause of all our fear and sorrow is done away, what then is left to break our peace? When we have no cause to fear the flames of hell, nor the sting of death, or the appearance of our Judge, any further than to move us to make ready, what then should greatly trouble the soul? If God and heaven be not matter of comfort, I know not what is. If we saw a man, that had got many kingdoms, to be still sad, and dumpish, because he had no more, we would say, he were very ambitious, or covetous; and yet he might have reason for it. But if you have the love of God, and a title by promise to heavenly inheritance, and yet you are discontented, and God and glory is not enough for you, this is most unreasonable.

(10.) Another of our precious benefits by Christ, is, Our spiritual communion with his church, and holy members. We do not only join with them in outward communion, but we unite our desires, and there is a harmony of affections. We are in the main of one mind and will, and way, and we jointly constitute the body of our Lord. “We are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly, and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant;” Heb. xii. 22—24. We are joined to that body, and have communion with it, which consisteth both of militant, and triumphant saints, and of the angels also. “We are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, and are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone,
in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth un-
to a holy temple in the Lord; in whom we also are builded
together, for a habitation of God, through the Spirit; Ephes.
ii. 19—22. And as in holy concord we serve the Lord, hav-
ing one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one faith, one baptism,
one rule, the word of God, one mind, one heart, one work
of holiness and righteousness in the main; one hope, one
heaven, the place of our expectations. So have we the fruit
of the prayers of each other, and of all the church, and have
the honour, the safety, and other benefits of being members
of so blessed a society.

Yea, we have in this communion, the whole church
obliged, and disposed according to their capacity to endeav-
our the good of every member. So that ministers and ma-
gistrates, yea, though they were apostles, and prophets,
Paul, or Apollos, all are ours; 1 Cor. iii. 22. Kings have
their power for us, and for us they must use them. If we
suffer, every member must be as forward to assist us, and if
we want, to relieve us, according to their power, as if they
suffered with us; 1 Cor. xii. 25, 26.

Yea, the angels are our brethren (Rev. xxix. 9.) and fel-
low servants, yea, “ministering spirits, sent forth to minis-
ter for them that shall be heirs of salvation; Heb. i. 14.” To
“encamp about them, and to bear them in their arms,” re-
joicing to behold their graces, and prosperity, as was shew-
ed before.

(11.) Another of our precious benefits by Christ, is, That
“All things shall work together for good; Rom. viii. 28.
When we are sanctified to God, all things are sanctified to
us, to serve us for God, and help us to him. Every creature
that we have to do with, is, as it were, another thing to the
saints, than to other men. They are all wheels in that uni-
versal engine of grace, to carry us to salvation. The same
things that are common mercies to others, are special to
us, as proceeding from a special love, and being designed to a
special use. As flesh-pleasing is the ultimate end of the
ungodly, and all things are thereby debased, to be but means
to that ignoble end; so the pleasing and fruition of God, is
the end of all the saints, and thereby all things that they
have to do with, are advanced to the honour of being sancti-
tified means to this most high and noble end, and as they
are engaged to use them to this end, and consequently to
their own greatest advantage; so God hath engaged himself to bless them in that holy use, and to cause them all by his gracious providence to co-operate to their good. Their greatest afflictions, the cruellest persecutions from the most violent enemies, our wants, our weaknesses, and death itself, all must concur to carry on this work. What then should a Christian fear, but sin? How honourable, and how happy a life may he live, that hath all these assured for his service. And what causeless fears are they that use to afflict the servants of God, concerning their outward troubles, and necessities. What do we fear, and groan under, and complain of, but our Father's physic, and the means of our salvation? If this one truth were but believed, and received, and used according to its worth, O what a life would Christians live!

(12.) The last, and greatest of our benefits by Christ, is, Resurrection, and our justification at the bar of God, and our reception into glory. This is the end of all, and therefore containeth all. For this Christ died; for this we are Christians; for this we believe, hope and labour; for this we suffer, and deny ourselves, and renounce this world. Our bodies shall then be spiritual and glorious, no more troubled with infirmities, diseases or necessities. Our souls shall be both naturally and graciously perfected; both in their faculties and qualities. We shall be brought nigh to God: we shall be numbered with the inhabitants of the heavenly Jerusalem, and be members of that blessed society, and companions and equal with the angels of God: we shall for ever behold our glorified Redeemer, and see our own nature united to the Godhead; and we shall have the greatest and nearest intuition and fruition of God, the fullest love to him, and the sweetest rest, content and delight in him, that our created natures are capable of: we shall everlastingly be employed in this love, and delight, and in his praises with all the heavenly host: and the glory of God will shine forth in our glory, and the abundance of his goodness will be communicated to us: and he will be well-pleased with us, with our praises, with all that blessed society, and with our head: and this will endure to all eternity.

Christians, I have now named in a few words, those benefits by Christ, which the heart of man is not able to value, in any proportion to their inexpressible worth: I have named
that in an hour, which you will enjoy for ever. So much of
our benefits by Christ.

5. The fifth point to be understood in the right know-
ledge of Christ, is, The terms on which he conveyeth his be-
nefts to men, and how we must be made partakers of them.

And these mercies are of two sorts: 1. Common. 2.
Proper to them that are heirs of salvation. The common
are, 1. Those discoveries of grace, that are made even to
heathens in the creatures, and the merciful providences of
God. These are absolutely and freely bestowed in some
measure on all, but in a greater measure upon some, as
pleases the giver. 2. The supernatural, or instituted means
of revealing Christ, and life to the world, and drawing them
to a saving consent of faith. These are the Gospel written
and preached, with other concomitant helps. The commis-
sion Christ hath given to his ambassadors, is to teach this
Gospel to all the world, even to every (reasonable) creature,
without exception or restriction. And it is absolutely and
freely given, where it is given. But as to the providential
disposal of the event, God causeth it not to be sent to all,
but to whom he seeth meet.

The proper or special mercies are of two sorts: (1.)
Some are physical inherent qualities, or performed acts.
(2.) And some are adherent rights, or relations.

Of the former inherent sort, there are these three degrees:
(1.) There is the first special work of vocation, conversion
or regeneration, causing the sinner to repent and believe,
and giving him the principle of spiritual life. (2.) There is
the bestowing of the indwelling Spirit of God, and progres-
sive sanctification of heart and life, and perseverance with
victory. (3.) There is the perfecting of all this, in our glo-
rious perfection in the life to come.

(1.) For the first of these, God hath not promised it condi-
tionally or absolutely to any individual person that hath it
not. He hath bound all to repent and believe, but hath not
promised to make them do it: (only he hath revealed that
there are certain persons so given to Christ, as that they
shall be infallibly drawn to believe.) But he hath appoint-
ed certain means for the ungodly, which they are bound to
use in order to their conversion; and if they will not use
them, they are without excuse. If they will, they have very
much encouragement from God, both [1.] In the nature of the
means, which are fitted to their ends, and are mighty to bring down all oppositions: and [2.] In the commands and institution of God; whose wisdom and goodness may easily resolve us, that he will not appoint us means in vain, nor set his creatures on fruitless labour: and [3.] Also from the issue; for no man can stand forth and say, Such an one did his best in the use of means, and yet could not attain the end, but fell short of the grace and glory of God.

The diseases of men's souls are wilfulness and blindness; the means of cure are the persuasions, with the revelations of the Gospel. Men have the natural powers of understanding and willing: but they want that right disposition which we call the habit, or moral power, which is no more than to say, They are habitually blind and wilful. It is so far from being unreasonable to teach and persuade men that are under such an impotency as this, that there is nothing in the world that doth more bespeak our teaching and persuasions; for this is the natural and instituted way to cure them, and give them power. What means of overcoming ignorance like teaching? And what means of overcoming habituated wilfulness, like persuasion, added to informing truths? We do not use to reason men out of a natural impotency, nor to persuade them to do that for which they have no faculties or object; but it is the very means of overcoming a moral impotency, and making men willing of the good which they rejected. And with this means doth God set in, and infallibly cause it to be effectual with his chosen. Thus no man cometh to the Son, except the Father draw him; and then for the two following degrees of holiness in our sanctification, and glorious perfection, God hath promised them to those that have this first degree. For the Spirit of holiness is promised to all that truly repent and believe, and salvation to all that are sanctified, and persevere. So that the right to these inheritance mercies, being a relation, is conveyed as other rights and relations, of which we are next to speak.

(2.) As the Spirit by the operation of the word upon the heart conveyeth the foresaid inherent benefits or qualities and acts, so the promise of grace, indited by Christ and the Spirit, doth as a deed of gift, or testament, or act of oblivion, bestow on us our rights and spiritual relations; and from
these they do result, as the immediate instrumental cause. Thus doth he give "power or right to as many as receive him, to become the sons of God;" John i. 12. Thus doth he give us pardon, justification, adoption, and our right to further grace and glory. And these promises are conditional; and our repenting and believing in Christ, is the condition. And therefore till conversion do bring us to repent and believe, we have no right to any of these benefits of the promise. And therefore though our repentance and faith be none of the proper cause of our justification, or right: yet the main work, in order to the procurement of these benefits, that is now to be done, is to persuade the sinner to repent and believe; to turn that he may live; for God’s act of grace is past already, and the conditional pardon is granted long ago, and will effectually pardon us as soon as we perform the condition, and not before. Till then, we hinder the efficacy of the deed of gift; for unbelief and impenitency are true causes of men’s condemnation, though faith and repentance be no proper causes of their salvation.

These promises being conditional, we cannot be assured of our part in the benefits, but by being assured that we perform the condition. By this you may see the nature of presumption; when men say, they believe that which never was promised; or believe that they have right to the blessings that are promised to others, and thus they believe that they shall have the benefits promised, when they perform not the conditions; all this is presuming, and not true believing. If men believe that God is reconciled to them, and will pardon them, and justify them, and save them, when they are unconverted, impenitent, unregenerate men; this is not indeed a believing of God, that hath never made them any such promise, nor ever told them any such matter, but the contrary; but it is a believing the false delusions of the devil and their own hearts. He that will claim any title to Christ, and pardon, and salvation, must have something to shew for it; yea, and something more than the most of the world have to shew; for the most shall be shut out. Every man, therefore that regardeth his salvation, must seriously ask his soul this question; What have I to shew for my title to salvation, more than the most of the world can shew? It is not saying, I hope to be saved, that will serve the turn, except I can give a reason of my hope. Thousands that lay
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Claim to salvation shall miss of it, because they have no title to it.' And that which you must have to shew, is this, A promise, or deed of gift on God's part, and the fulfilling of the condition on your part. God saith to all men, "Whosoever repenteth, believeth, or is converted, shall be saved." When you have found that you repent of all your sins, and truly believe, and are converted to God, then, and not till then, you may conclude that you shall be saved.

6. The sixth point to be understood and believed, concerning these benefits of Christ, is the infallible certainty of them. While men look on the promised glory to come, as on an uncertain thing, they will hardly be drawn to venture, and let go the profits and pleasures of the world to attain it; much less to part with life itself. The life of all our Christian motion, is the unfeigned belief of the truth of God's word, and specially of the unseen things of the world to come. Such as men's belief of heaven and hell is, such will be the bent of their hearts, and the course of their lives, and such and such they will be in yielding to sin, or in resisting it, and in all the service they do for God. As all men would take another course, if they did but see heaven and hell with their eyes; so all men would presently throw away their worldly, fleshly pleasures, and turn to God and a holy life, if they did but as thoroughly believe the joys and torments to come, as if they saw them. Flesh and blood can hardly judge of things, without the help of sense; and fleshly men take all things to be phantasms or nothings, that are not within the judgment of their senses. They must see it, or feel it, or taste it, or hear it; and believing is a way that hardly satisfies them; though it be God himself that they are to believe. Believing is trusting the credit of another; and we are naturally loath to trust to any but our eyes or other senses. We are so false ourselves, that we are ready to measure God by ourselves; and to think that he is a deceiver, because that we are such. And hence it is that the world is so ungodly that they venture on sin, and will not be at the cost and labour of a heavenly life; because they take the matters of the life to come, to be but uncertainties, and have not so true a belief of them, as might possess them with a deep apprehension of their reality. How should the word profit them, that mix it not with faith, (Heb. iv. 2.) unless by begetting faith itself? O what a change would a
sound belief of the Scriptures make in the world! But having spoken so oft of this in other writings, I shall say no more of it now. So much of the knowledge of Christ.

11. I have shewed you the first part of this Direction, How Christ must be received understandingly, I now come to the second, which is, That he must be received heartily. As God must be beloved, so Christ must be believed in, with all the heart, and soul, and strength. If not with all in a perfect degree, (for that will not be till we come to heaven) yet with all in a prevalent degree. There are many convictions, and good meanings, and wishes, and purposes, which may proceed from common grace, and be found in those that never shall be saved: these may be called (analogically) faith, and love, and desire, as those that are found in the truly regenerate; and yet the persons in whom they are found, may not fitly be called believers or lovers of God; because a man is to be denominated from that in him which is predominant, and hath the chief power on his heart. The soul of man is not so simple as to move but one way: its state in this life is to stand between two differing competitors, God and the world, spirit and flesh; and there is no man that is totally given up to either of them. No man is so good and spiritual, that hath not something in him that is bad and carnal; and no man is so fully addicted to God, but the creature hath too much interest in his heart. Nor is there any man so given up to the creature, in whom God hath no manner of interest at all, in his estimation and affections; if he indeed believe that there is a God. At least it is not so with all that are unconverted. Otherwise, I. What is it that common grace doth, if it no whit dispose them towards God? Certainly it would not else be grace. 2. And if this were not so, then we must say, that no unregenerate man hath any good in him, that is truly moral; for if there be no interest of God in his mind or will, there can be no good in him. But this is contrary to Scripture and experience. It was undoubtedly some moral good, which Christ loved the man for, in Mark x. 21. who was not far from the kingdom of God. 3. Otherwise all men must be equally departed from God, which is contrary to experience. 4. Yea, all men must be as bad on earth (privately) as in hell; which certainly is false. I may well say, that on earth there is some good in the worst; much more in those
that are almost persuaded to be converted Christians. Many a thought of the goodness of God, and the necessity of a Saviour, and of the love of Christ, and of the joys of heaven, may be stirring and working in the minds of the unsanctified; but if they take not up the heart for Christ, the person is not a true believer. As the Gospel must be believed to be true, so Christ that is offered us in the Gospel as good, must be heartily and thankfully accepted accordingly: and the glory, the justification, reconciliation with God, and other benefits procured by him, and offered with him, must be valued and desired above all earthly, fleshly things. If you are convinced that sin is evil, as contrary to God, and hurtful to you, and hereupon have some mind to let it go, and some wishes that Christ would save you from it, and yet still have a love to it that is greater than your dislike; and the bent of your hearts is more for it, than against it, and your habitual desires are rather to keep than to leave it: this is not sanctification, nor a saving consent to be saved by Christ. If you have some convictions that holiness is good, as being the image of God, and pleasing to him, and necessary to your salvation, and so should have some mind of holiness on these grounds; yet if you have on the other side a greater averseness to it, because it would deprive you of the pleasures of your sin, and the habitual inclination of your will is more against it than for it; certainly this will not stand with true sanctification, of faith in Christ, to save you from the power of sin by his Spirit. Thousands deceive themselves, by misunderstanding some common passages, that are spoken to comfort afflicted consciences: viz. That the least true desires after grace, do prove the soul to be gracious. This is true, if you speak of the least desires, which are predominant in the soul; when our desire is more habitually than our unwillingness, and we thus prefer Christ before all the world, the least of this is an evidence of saving grace. But such desires as are subdued by the contrary desires; and such a will as is accompanied with a greater unwillingness, habitually; and such a faith, as is drowned in greater unbelief; these are not evidences of a saving change; nor can you justly gather any special comfort from them. He that hath more unbelief than belief, is not to be called a believer, but an unbeliever; and he that hath more hatred or dislike of God and holiness than love to them, is not to be cal-
led godly, but ungodly, nor a lover of God, but a hater of him. I am easily persuaded, that many of you that are ungodly could be contented that God be glorified, if his glory do not cross your carnal interest; and so you desire God’s glory even for itself, as that which is absolutely good in itself; but if your fleshly interest be so dear to you, that you will sacrifice God’s glory to it, and had rather God were dishonoured than your fleshly interest contradicted, it is your flesh then that is made your God, and your chief end. It is not every wish, or minding of Christ, no, not to save you from sin as sin, that will prove you true believers: nor is it every minding of God, or love to him, no, not as one apprehended by you to be the chiefest good, and desirable for himself, as your end, that will prove indeed that you savingly love him; as long as the contrary mind and will is habitually predominant in you. Such as the very habit and bent of a man’s heart is, such indeed is the man. It is possible for a man, even a good man, to have two contrary ends and intentions, yea, ultimate ends; as that which is desired for itself, and referred to nothing else, is called ultimate; but it is not possible for him to have two principal, predominant ends. So far as we are carnal still, we make the pleasing of our flesh our ultimate end; for doubtless we do not sin only by pleasing the flesh, as a means to God’s glory; nor only in the mischoosing of other means; but yet this is none of our principal end, so far as men are truly sanctified. And because that is called a man’s mind, or will, which is the chiefest and highest in his mind and will; therefore we use to denominate men from that only which beareth rule in them: and thus we may say with Paul, “It is not I, but sin that dwelleth in me.” For a disowned act that proceedeth from us, against the bent and habit of our wills, and the course of our lives, from the remnants of a carnal, misguided will, is not it that must denominate the person, nor is so fully ours as the contrary act. And therefore though indeed we sinfully participate of it; yet when the question is, whether believing, or unbelief, sinning, or obeying be my work; it is not comparatively to be called mine, which I am much more against than for. So on the other side, if the unsanctified have some transient, superficial, uneffectual acts of desire, or faith, or love to God, which are contrary to the bent and habit of their hearts, this is not theirs, nor imputable to
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them, so far as hence to give them their denomination. It is not they that do it, but the common workings of the Spirit upon them.

If ever then you would be assured that you are Christians, look to the habitual bent of your hearts, and see that you do not only talk of Scripture, and slightly believe it, and speak well of Christ, with some good wishes, and meanings, and purposes; but as you love your souls, see that Christ be received as your dearest Saviour, with thankfulness and greatest love, and as your sovereign Lord and true subjection; and that he hath your superlative estimation and affections, and all things in the world be put under him in your souls. This must be so, if you will have the portion of believers: no faith that is short of this will prove you Christ’s disciples indeed, or heirs of the promises made to believers. The voice of Christ that calls to you in the Gospel, is, “My son give me thy heart;” Prov. xxiii. 26. Do what thou wilt in ways of duty, and think as highly as thou wilt of thyself, thou art no true believer in Christ’s account till thou hast given him thy heart. If he have thy tongue, if he have thy good opinion, nay, if thy body were burnt in his cause, if he had not thy love, thy heart, it were as nothing; (1 Cor. xiii. 3.) for thy works and sufferings, are so far acceptable (through Christ) as they are testimonies of this, that Christ hath thy heart. If he have not thy heart, he takes it as if he had nothing; and if he have this, he takes it as if he have all. For this is not only preferred by him before all; but also he knows that this commandeth all. If Christ have thy heart, the devil will not have thy tongue and life; the alehouse, or a harlot will not have thy body; and the world will not have the principal part of thy life. If Christ have thy heart, it will be heard much in thy conference; it will be seen in thy labours: for that which hath a man’s heart will hardly be hid, unless he purposely hide it, which a Christian neither can nor ought to do. It would make a man wonder to hear some wretches, that will run from God as fast as they can, and yet face you down that God hath their hearts; that have no mind, so much as to meditate, or talk of Christ, or his precious blood, or mysterious redemption, or the glorious kingdom purchased by him; that will be at neither cost nor labour in his service, and yet profess that Christ hath their hearts: that will re-
fuse a holy, heavenly life, and perhaps make a scorn of it, and maliciously prate against the sanctified, and yet will stand to it that the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier of the elect, hath their hearts. No wonder if those hearts are ill managed, and in a miserable, deceived state, that are so unacquainted with themselves.

Faith entereth at the understanding; but it hath not all its essential parts, and is not the Gospel faith indeed, till it hath possessed the will. The heart of faith is wanting, till faith hath taken possession of the heart. For by faith Christ dwelleth in the heart; Ephes. iii. 17. And if he dwell not in the heart, he dwells not in the man, in a saving sort. He had some interest in Judas, Simon Magus, Ananias and Sapphira, as to the head, and perhaps somewhat more in a superficial sort. But satan entered into the heart of one, and filled the heart of another of them with a lie, and the heart of the third was not right in the sight of God, and therefore he had no part or lot in Christ, but was still in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; and all because Christ was not heartily entertained; Acts v. 3. viii. 22, 23. It is in the heart that the word must have its rooting, or else it will wither in time of trial. It is seeking with the whole heart that is the evidence of the blessed; Psal. cxix. 2. And it is a feigned turning when men turn not to God with the whole heart; Jer. iii. 10. This is God's promise concerning his elect, "I will give them a heart to know me that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart;" Jer. xxiv. 7. See then that the heart be unfeignedly delivered up to Christ: for if Christ have it not, the flesh, the world, and the devil will have it. Your hearts must be a dwelling for one of these masters, choose you whether.

It is the damnation of the most professed Christians, that they have nothing for Christ but a good opinion, or a few good words, or outside services, or some slight religiousness on the bye, when the flesh and the world go away with their hearts, and yet they will not know it, or confess it. Christ will not be an underling or servant to your flesh. Your hearts he hath bought, and your hearts he will have, or you are none of his. If he shall have nothing from you but a name, you shall have nothing but the name of his purchased salvation.
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III. The last part of the Direction yet remains, viz. that you must close with Christ entirely, as well as understandingly and heartily. It is whole Christ that must be received with the whole heart.

For the understanding of this, it must be known, both how and why Christ is offered to us.

As he came into the world to destroy the works of the devil; (1 John iii. 8.) and to seek and save that which was lost; (Luke xix. 19.) and by his mediation to reconcile us to God, and bring us up to glory; so two things were to be done, for the accomplishment of this: first he was himself to merit our salvation, and pay the price of our redemption on the cross, and in his own person to conquer the world, the devil, and death, and the grave: and then he was by his intercession in the heavens to make application of this, and bestow the benefits thus purchased by him. And because it was he, and not we, that made the purchase, it therefore pleased the Father that the purchased treasure should be put into his hands, and not immediately put into ours. He is become our treasury, and authorised to be our Head: all power is given him in heaven and earth. We have so foully miscarried already, that he will no more trust his honour in our hands, as at first he did. We shall have nothing of pardon, or grace, or glory, but what we have in and from the Son. "God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son: he that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son hath not life;" 1 John v. 12. It is not only the nature and person of Christ that is to be believed in; but it is the person as impowered to certain ends, and clothed with his office that we must now entertain. Now the office of Christ being for our salvation, and the glory of God, is suited to these happy ends.

And our necessities are principally in these three points. 1. We have the guilt of sin upon us to be pardoned, and the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and the punishment of sin to be removed. 2. We have the corruption of our nature to be healed; the power of sin to be destroyed; the image of God repaired on us, and our hearts and lives to be acted and ordered according to the will of God; and to these ends, temptations to be conquered, and our souls directed, strengthened, and preserved to the end. 3. We must be raised from the grave at the last day; we must be justi-
fied in judgment, and possessed of that glory which is the end of our faith. To this, justification, sanctification, and glorification may the rest be reduced.

Now the office of Christ is suited to these necessities of ours; and as we cannot possibly be saved unless all these necessities be supplied, and these works done for us: so we cannot possibly have these things done but by accepting of Christ, as authorised and empowered, by his office and perfections, to do them.

The glory that God will have by this work, I have before expressed to you at large. He will have his justice, and wisdom, and power, and holiness, and mercy to be demonstrated and honoured by Christ. And therefore Christ hath resolved to give out none of his benefits, but in such manner and ways as may best attain these highest ends.

These several points therefore I must entreat you here to note distinctly. 1. That you must be brought into a special relation to the person of Christ, as clothed with his office, before you can lay claim to his saving benefits. He is the Head, and you must become his spouse; and so of the rest. This is called our uniting to Christ, which must go before our further communion with him. It is the will of God, that you shall never receive his benefits before you receive his Son; (except only those benefits which go before your union with Christ himself, in order to the accomplishing it; as the Gospel, the gift of faith to the elect, &c.) You shall never have actual pardon, justification, adoption, sanctification, or glory, till you have first saving interest in Christ himself. He is the vine, and we are the branches: we must be planted into him, and live in him, or else we can have nothing further from God, nor do any thing acceptable to God. And therefore the first and great work of faith is to receive and close with the person of Christ, as clothed with his office.

2. Understand and note, that as you shall not have his great benefits before, or without his person; so God hath resolved, that you shall not have his special benefits, unless you will take them all together: (I speak of men at age, that are capable of all.) You shall not have pardon and justification, or glory, without sanctification; nor the comforts of Christ without the guidance and government of Christ. You must have all or none.
3. From hence it follows, that therefore you must receive and close with Christ entirely, in his whole office, as he is to accomplish all these works, or else you cannot be united to him. He will not be divided: you shall not have Christ as a justifier of you, if you will not have him as a guide, and ruler, and sanctifier of you. He will not be a partial Saviour: if you will not consent that he shall save you from your sins, he will not consent to save you from hell.

4. Understand, and note that Christ will look to his Father's interest and honour, and his own, as well as to your salvation; yea, and before it. And therefore you must not hope for any mercy from him, in any way that is dishonourable to him, or that is inconsistent with his own blessed ends and interest. And therefore do not look for any such grace from him as shall discharge you from your duty, or give you liberty to dishonour or disobey him; nor do not think that you shall have him related to you only for your own ends, but on terms of highest honour to God and your Redeemer. And do not think that your grace is ever the less free, because God's honour is thus preferred: for if you are Christians indeed, you will take God's interest, as your own highest interest, and will confess, that you could not have your own ends and welfare any other way.

5. Understand and note also, that as all your mercies are in the hand of Christ, so Christ hath appointed in his Gospel a certain way and course of means, in which he will bestow it: and you cannot expect it from him, in any other way but his own. As God hath made Christ the way, and no man cometh unto the Father but by him, so Christ hath ordained a standing course of means, which are his way for the making over of his benefits; and here you must have them or go without them.

6. Understand and note, that there are some of Christ's ends and benefits, that the very natural man desires, and some that corrupted nature is against. Now it is therefore the established way of Christ to promise us those which we can desire, on condition that we will also accept of, and submit to, those that we are against. Not but that his grace doth dispose men to the performance of such conditions; but his grace worketh by means: and a conditional promise is his established means to draw men's hearts to the performance of the condition (which well considered, is a sufficient
answer to the arguments that are commonly urged against the conditionality of the promise). As the Spirit doth powerfully work within; so he useth that word from without, as his instrument, which worketh sapientially and powerfully to the same work. If a physician have two medicines to give his patient, as necessary for his cure, the one very sweet, and the other bitter; the one which he loves, and the other which he loathes, he will promise him the sweeter, if he will take the bitter one; that by the love of one, he may prevail against the loathing of the other, and may entice it down. He will not promise the bitter one which is loathed, and make the taking of the sweet one the condition: he will not say, 'I will give thee this aloes, on condition thou wilt take this sugar;' but contrary, 'I will give thee the sweeter, if thou wilt take the bitter.'

In Christ's ends, and works, 1. We naturally are more willing of that which makes for ourselves directly, than of that which makes directly for the honour of God and the Redeemer. We prefer our own ends before God's glory. And, therefore, Christ hath so ordered the condition of his promises, that unless we will take him in his relations of dignity as King and Lord, and will make the glory and pleasing of God our principal end, we shall have none of him, or his saving benefits. For he came not to fulfil our selfish desires, but to fetch us off from ourselves, and recover us to God, that he might have his own. And if we will not have our all in God, we shall have nothing. 2. And naturally we are willing, as to our own benefits, to be pardoned, and freed from the curse of the law, and the flames of hell, and natural death, and punishment. And, therefore, we are thus far naturally willing of free justification; but we are unwilling to let go the seeming profit, and credit, and pleasure of sin, and to deny the flesh, and forsake the world; and we are averse to the spiritual felicity of the saints, and to the holiness of heart, and life, that is the way to it. And, therefore, Christ hath most wisely so ordered it, in the tenor of his promises, that our repentance and faith shall be the condition of our justification and deliverance from death and hell. And this faith is the believing in him, and accepting him entirely in his whole office, to sanctify us, and rule us, as well as to justify us. And thus we must take him wholly, or we shall have none of him. And the accepting him as
our teacher, and sanctifier, and king, is as much (at least the condition of our justification, and pardon, and deliverance from hell) as the accepting him as a justifier of us is. He that had the power in his own hands, and that made the free promise, or deed of gift, hath put in such conditions, as his own wisdom saw best; and they are such as suit most congruously to all his ends; even the glory of God, in all his attributes, and the Redeemer's glory, and our own, and most full and free salvation. And on his conditions must we have his benefits, or we shall never have them.

7. Lastly, understand and note, that the means which Christ hath resolved on for teaching and ruling us, ordinarly, are his word, his ministers, and his Spirit; all must be submitted to together, where they may be had, and none of them laid by, by separation. His word is the grammar, or book, as it were, that we must learn. His ministers must teach us this book; and his Spirit (who, in the apostles and prophets, indited and sealed it) must inwardly teach us, by powerful illumination. The word is God's laws. The ministers are his ambassadors, or heralds to proclaim them, and command obedience in his name; and his Spirit must open men's hearts to entertain them. The word is God's seed; the ministers are the husbandmen, or servants that sow it; and the Spirit must give the increase, without which, our planting, and watering will do nothing. He, therefore, that takes Christ for his master and king, must resolve to be taught and ruled by his established means, even by his word and ministers, and Spirit conjunct. For he that refuseth and despiseth these, doth refuse and despise Christ; and consequently the Father that sent him; Luke x. 16. 1 Thess. iv. 8. For it was never the meaning of Christ, when he became the Teacher and King of the church, to stay on earth, and personally, and visibly to teach them himself; but these three are his means, which all must submit to, that will be his subjects and disciples. And he that despiseth the word, shall be destroyed: Prov. xiii. 13. He that will not have the word, ministry, and Spirit teach him, will not have Christ teach him. And he that refuseth to be ruled by these three, shall be destroyed as a rebel against Christ himself; Luke xix. 27. Still it is supposed that ministers must teach and rule, according to this word.

And the society in which Christ will teach and govern
us, is his church. As members, therefore, of the universal church, and in communion with his particular church where we live and have opportunity, we must wait on Christ for his teaching and benefits. For this is his school, where his disciples must diligently attend and learn.

Lay all this together, and this is the sum. The object of justifying, saving faith, is one only undivided Christ, one in person but of two natures, God and man; in office the Mediator between God and man, who hath already done the work of satisfaction, and merit, and is authorized further to bestow the benefits. By the Gospel grant he hath given himself as Head and Husband, Teacher, King, and Saviour, to all that will entirely and heartily accept him; and with himself he giveth justification by the promise; sanctification by the word, ministry, and Spirit; and final absolution, and everlasting life. If ever then you will have Christ, and life, you must accept him in all these essentials of his person, and offices, and that to the ends which his redemption was intended for. You must be willing to be sanctified by him, as well as to be justified. You must at once unfeignedly become his disciples, his subjects, his members, if you would become his saved ones. You must consent, that as your Teacher, and your Lord, he shall teach and rule your heart, and life, by his word, ministers, and Spirit, in communion with his church. No bar or exception must be put in, nor reservation made against any one of these parts of his office. If you yield not to these parts of his saving work, that tend but to the complete growth, you sin, and deprive yourselves of the benefit; but if you yield not to those that must make you truly sanctified, and justified men, you cannot be saved. The essentials of Christ's person, and office, do constitute him the Christ, and if he be not received in all those essentials, he is not received as Christ.

And thus I have given you the sum of the Gospel, and the description of faith, and true Christianity in this Direction for a right closing with the Lord Jesus Christ. And experience of most that I discourse with, persuades me to think this Direction of great necessity, and to entreat you thoroughly to peruse and consider it. I find abundance of ignorant people, that talk much of Christ, but know very little of him; that can scarce tell us whether he be God or man, or which person in the Trinity he is, nor to what end
he was incarnated, and died, nor what relation he stands in
to us, or what use he is of, or what he now is, or what he is
engaged to do for us. But if we ask them about their hopes
of salvation, they almost overlook the redemption by Christ,
and tell us of nothing but God's mercies, and their own good
meanings and endeavours. And I am afraid too many pro-
fessors of piety, (do look) almost all, at the natural part of
religion, and the meaning of their own hearts, and lives,
(and I would this were better done) while they forget the
supernatural parts, and little are affected with the infinite
love of God in Christ. I desire such to consider these
things: 1. You overlook the sum of your religion, which
is Christ crucified, besides whom Paul desired to know no-
thing. 2. You overlook the fountain of your own life, and
the author of your supplies; and you strive in vain for sac-
tification, or justification, if you seek them not from a cru-
cified Christ. 3. You leave undone the principal part of
your work, and live like moral heathens, while you have the
name of Christians. Your daily work is to study God in
the face of his Son; and to labour with all saints to com-
prehend the height, and breadth, and length, and depth, and
to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; Eph.
iii. 18, 19. All your graces should be daily quickened, and
set a work by the light of faith, in the contemplation of the
Redeemer, and his blessed work. This is the weight that
must set all the wheels a going. You do God no service,
that he can accept, if you serve him not in this Gospel work,
of loving, trusting, and admiring, and praising him in the
Redeemer, and for his redemption. 4. And so you rob God
of the principal part of his glory, which you are to give
him; which is for his most glorious work of our redemp-
tion. I pray you read over again the ends of this work,
which I laid down in the beginning of this Direction. 5.
Moreover, you rob yourselves of your principal comfort,
which must all come in by living upon Christ. 6. And you
harden the Antinomians and Libertines, and tempt men to
their extremes, that ran from us as Legalists, and as men
that savour not the doctrine of free grace, and are not of a
Gospel spirit and conversation. I would our great neglect of
Christ had not been a snare to these mistaken souls, and a
stumbling-block in their way.

O sirs, if a thought of your hearts, if a word of your
mOUTHS HAVE NOT SOME RELATION TO CHRIST, SUSPECT IT, YEA, REJECT IT. CALL IT NOT A SERMON OR A PRAYER, NOR A DUTY, THAT HATH NOTHING OF CHRIST IN IT. THOUGH THE PURE GODHEAD BE YOUR PRINCIPAL END, YET THERE IS NO WAY TO THIS END BUT BY CHRIST; AND THOUGH LOVE, WHICH IS EXERCISED ON THAT END, MUST ANIMATE ALL YOUR GRACES AND DUTIES, AS THEY ARE MEANS TO THAT END, YET FAITH HATH LOVE IN IT, OR ELSE IT IS NOT THE CHRISTIAN FAITH; AND CHRIST IS THE OBJECT OF YOUR FAITH AND LOVE; AND YOUR PERFECT, EVERLASTING LOVE WILL BE ANIMATED BY CHRIST. FOR YOUR LOVE AND PRAISE WILL BE TO HIM THAT WAS SLAIN, AND REDEEMED US TO GOD BY HIS BLOOD, OUT OF EVERY KINDRED, TONGUE, AND NATION, AND MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS TO GOD. SO MUCH FOR THE FIFTH DIRECTION.


THIS IS A VERY COMMON CAUSE OF THE DECEIT AND DESTRUCTION OF SUCH AS VERILY THINK THEY ARE CONVERTED. IT IS THE VERY NATURE AND BUSINESS OF TRUE CONVERSION, TO TURN MEN'S HEARTS FROM THE FLESH, AND FROM THE WORLD TO GOD, AND FROM AN EARTHLY AND SEEMING HAPPINESS, TO A HEAVENLY, REAL, EVERLASTING HAPPINESS. AND WHEN MEN ARE AFFRIGHTED INTO SOME KIND OF RELIGIOUSNESS, AND YET NEVER LEARNT TO DENY THEMSELVES, AND NEVER MORTIFIED THEIR FLESHLY-MIND, BUT THE LOVE OF THIS WORLD IS STILL THE CHIEFEST PRINCIPLE AT THEIR HEARTS; AND SO GO ON IN PROFESSION OF GODLINESS, WITH A SECRET RESERVE THAT THEY WILL LOOK AS WELL AS THEY CAN TO THEIR OUTWARD PROSPERITY, WHATEVER BECOME OF THEIR RELIGION; AND THEY WILL HAVE NO MORE TO DO WITH THE MATTERS OF ANOTHER WORLD, THAN MAY STAND WITH THEIR BODILY SAFETY IN THIS WORLD; THESE ARE THE MISERABLE, DELUDED HYPOCRITES, Whose HOPE WILL PROVE AS THE GIVING UP OF THE GHOST; WHOM CHRIST WILL DISOWN IN THEIR GREATEST EXTREMITIES, AFTER ALL THEIR SEEMING RELIGIOUSNESS. O SIRS, LOOK TO THIS AS EVER YOU WOULD BE HAPPY. IT IS AN EASY, IT IS A COMMON, IT IS A MOST DANGEROUS THING, TO SET UPON A COURSE OF OUTWARD PIETY, AND YET KEEP THE WORLD NEXT YOUR HEARTS, AND TAKE IT STILL AS A GREAT PART OF YOUR FELICITY, AND SECRETLY TO LOVE YOUR FORMER LUSTS, WHILE YOU SEEM
to be converted. The heart is so deceitful, that you have great cause to watch it narrowly in this point: it will closely cherish the love of the world, and your fleshly pleasures, when it seems to renounce them, and when your tongue can speak contemptuously of them. It was not for nothing Christ would have the firstfruits of his Gospel church, (who were to be the example of their successors,) to sell all, and lay it down at the feet of his apostles: and it is his standing rule, that whoever he be that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be his disciple; Luke xiv. 33. In estimation, affection, and resolution, it must be forsaken by all that will be saved; and also in practice, whenever God calls us to it. You can have but one happiness; if you will needs have it in this world, in the contenting of your flesh, there is no hope of having it also in another world, in the fruition of God. If you think not God and heaven enough for you, and cannot let go the prosperity of the flesh for them, you must let go all your hopes of them. God will not halve it with the world in your hearts, nor part stakes with the flesh; much less will he be below them, and take their leavings. Heaven will not be theirs, that set not by it more than earth. God will not call that love to him sincere, which is not a superlative love, and able to make you even to hate all those things that would draw away your affections and obedience from him; Luke xiv. 26, 27. There is no talk of serving God and mammon, and compounding you a happiness of earth and heaven. Do therefore as Christ bids you, Luke xiv. 28—30.

Sit down and count what it must cost you, if you will be saved, and on what rates it is that you must follow Christ. Can you voluntarily, for the love of him, and the hope of glory take up your cross, and follow him in poverty, in losses, in reproaches, through scorns, and scourgings, and prisons, and death? Do you value his loving-kindness better than life? Psal. lxiii. 3. Can you deny your eyes and appetites their desire? Can you consent to be vile in the eyes of men, and to tame your own flesh, and keep it in subjection, and live a flesh-displeasing life, that having suffered with Christ, you may also be glorified with him? Rom. viii. 17. If you cannot consent to these terms, you cannot be Christians, and you cannot be saved. If you must needs
be rich, or must be honourable, yea, if you must needs save your estates, or liberties, or lives, it is past all question, you must needs let go Christ and glory; if you must needs have the world, you must needs lose your souls. If you must have your good things here, you must not have them hereafter too, but be tormented, when Christ's sufferers are comforted; Luke xvi. 25. These hopes of purveying for the flesh, as long as they can, and then of being saved, when they can stay here no longer, are they that have deceived many a thousand to their undoing. It is a strange thing to see how the world doth blind very knowing men, and how unacquainted these hypocrites are with their own hearts. What a confident profession of downright godliness many of them will make; yea, of some extraordinary height in religion, when nothing is so dear to them as their present prosperity, and God hath not near so much interest in them as the flesh? What contrivances some of them make for riches, or rising in the world? And how tender others are of their honour with men; and how tenacious they are of their mammon of unrighteousness; and how much money and great men can do with them. And most of them pamper their flesh, and serve it in a cleanlier way of religiousness, even as much, though not so disgracefully and grossly as drunckards and whoremongers do in a more discernible sensuality. If the times do but change and countenance any error, how small an argument will make their judgments bend with the times. If truth and duty must cost them dear, O how they will shift, and stretch, and wriggle, to prove truth to be no truth, and duty to be no duty; and no argument is strong enough to satisfy them, when the flesh doth but say, 'It is bitter, it is dangerous, it may be my undoing.'

It is none of my meaning, that any should needlessly run into suffering, or cross their governors and themselves, through a spirit of pride, singularity, and contradiction; but that men should think themselves truly religious, that keep such reserves for their fleshly interest, and shew by the very drift of their lives, that they are worldlings, and never felt what it was to be crucified to the world, and deny themselves, but are religious on this supposition only, that it may stand with worldly ends, or at least not undo them in the world; this is a lamentable hypocritical self-deceit. When God hath so plainly said, "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the
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world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him;” 1 John ii. 15. Nay, that the neighbourhood, and all the country that know them should ring of the worldliness of some, that think themselves good Christians; and yet they will not see themselves. What a cheating, blinding thing is the world!

Well, sirs, if you will be Christians, count what it must cost you; and if you will be heirs of heaven, away with the world; cast it out of your hearts: and if your hands must yet trade in it, yet trade not for it; use it for God, but enjoy it not for itself. Take yourselves as strangers here; and look on the world as a desolate wilderness, through which, in the communion of the militant saints, you may safely travel on to heaven; but do not make it your home, nor take it for the smallest part of your felicity. To be sanctified without mortification, is a palpable contradiction. Be at a point with all things below, if you will groundedly hope for the heavenly inheritance. But I shall purposely forbear to enlarge this any further, because I have preached and written a treatise on this subject, which I desire you to peruse.

Direct. VII. My next Direction is this: ‘If you would be truly converted, be sure that you make an absolute resignation of yourselves, and all that you have to God.’

This is the very form and life of sanctification. To be sanctified, is to be separated in heart, life, and profession, from all other masters and ends, to God. When the heart that was set upon the world and flesh, is separated from them, and inclined to God by the power of love, and devoted to him, to serve and please him; this is indeed a sanctified heart. And when the life that before was spent in the service of satan, the world, and the flesh, is now taken off them, and spent, as to the drift and course of it, in the service of God, for the pleasing and glorifying of him, from the impulse of love, this is indeed a holy life. And herein consisteth the very nature of our sanctity. And when a man doth but profess to renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and to give up his heart and life unto God, this is a profession of holiness. God is both on the title of creation preservation, and redemption, our absolute Lord or Owner, and we are not our own, but his; and therefore we must give to God the things that are God's, and glorify him in our souls and bodies, which are his; 1 Cor. vi.19, 20. As we
are his own, so he will have his own, and be served by his own. Do not imagine that you have any title to yourselves, or propriety in yourselves; but without any more ado, make a full, unreserved, absolute resignation of yourselves, of your understandings, and of your wills, of your bodies, and of your names, and of every pennyworth of your estates, to God, for whom and from whom you have them. Think not that you have power to dispose of yourselves, or of any thing that you have. Ask not flesh and blood, what life you shall lead, or what mind or will, you shall be of? But ask God, to whom you do belong. Ask not your carnal selves, what you shall do with any of your estates, but ask God, and then ask conscience, Which is the way that God would have me use it in, that is, which way may I use it to be most serviceable to God? and that resolve upon. No service that you do to God will prove you sanctified, unless you have heartily and absolutely given up and devoted yourselves to him; and he that gives up himself, must needs give up all that he hath with himself. For he cannot keep it for himself (ultimately), when even himself is given up to God. Though you be not bound to give all that you have to the poor, nor all to the church, nor to deny your own bodies or families their due supplies, yet must it all be given up to God, even that which you make use of for yourselves and families: for as you are given up to God yourselves, so you must feed yourselves as his, and clothe yourselves and your families as his, to fit yourselves and them for his service, and not as your own, for the satisfying of your flesh. Thus it is that all comes to be pure to the pure, sanctified to them that are themselves first sanctified; because when you feed yourself, you do but feed a servant of God, that is consecrated to him, and separated from things common and unclean. And even as the tithes and offerings, that were given for the food and maintenance of the priests and Levites, were called the Lord's portion, and holy to the Lord, because they were their portion, that were separated to his altar; even so that which is necessary to fit you for God's service, while you use it to that very end, is sanctified in your sanctification, and is holy to God; for all his saints are a holy nation, a royal priesthood, to offer up acceptable sacrifice to him. And thus, "whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, you must do all to the glory of God;" 1 Cor. x. 31. "For of him,
and through him, and to him are all things, and therefore to him must be the glory for ever;” Rom. xi.36. God who is the end of your hearts and lives must be the end of every action of them, unless you will step out of the way of order, and safety, and holiness. For every action that is not from God, and by God, and for God, is contrary to the nature of true sanctification. If then you would be Christians indeed be heartily willing that God should have his own. Understand what an excellent honour, and privilege, and happiness it is to you to be his. If his right to you will not move you let your own necessity and benefit at least move you to give up yourselves and all that you have to God. Bring your hearts to the bar, and plead the cause of God with them, and convince them of God’s title to them, and how sinfully they have robbed him of his own all this while. Have your days and hours, your wealth and interest, been used purposely for God as his own? O what abundance be there, that in word and confident profession, do give themselves up, and all to God, and yet the use of themselves and all, do plainly shew that it is no such matter; but they dissembled with God, and yet never knew so much by themselves. How little do they use for God, when they have with seeming devotion resigned all to him? If a lord, or knight, or gentleman of £4,000 or £3,000 a year, or £400, or £300, were to shew the accounts of all his expenses, how much of all this should you find expended for God, when they have acknowledged that all is his? One would think by their lives, that they look to be saved by robbing God, and confessing the robbery, by saying that all is God’s, while they allow him next to nothing.

The devoted, resigned, sanctified soul hath the true principle of all obedience, and that which will do much to repel all temptations, and carry him through the greatest straits and trials. If I am not my own, I need not be over solicitous for myself, but may expect that he that oweth me should care for me: nor do I need to use any sinful shifts for my own preservation. If I have nothing of my own, what need I to sin for the saving of any thing? What need I to venture upon unwarrantable means, to preserve either credit, or goods, or life? It is self, and own, that are the roots of all sin, the heart of the old man, and the seed of hell: nothing else is pleaded against God and our salvation.
If the flesh would have you abuse God's creatures, you must remember they are not your own. If the devil would entice you to sin against God, either for the getting or keeping of any creature, it would easily repel the temptation, were you but rightly sensible that nothing is your own: for God hath no need that you should sin to get riches or honours for him. If you are called to let go your houses, or lands, or friends, or lives, or to deliver up your bodies to the flames, did you but rightly take them as none of your own, how easy would it be! You can be content that another man give his goods, or life itself to God, whenever God requireth it; but your own, you cannot be content to part with, and that because it is your own. But if you had rightly resigned all to God, and took not yourselves or any thing for your own, but looked upon yourselves and all as God's, the greatest works of obedience or suffering, would be much more easy to you; and you would have little difficulty or hindrance in your way. Self-denial is but sanctification itself, denominised from the wrong end and principle, which we forsake. And where self is denied and dead, what is there left to draw us from God, or stand up against him, in any part of our lives? So much interest as self hath in you, so much the world and the devil have in you. And nothing is more proper to a miserable hypocrite, than deep reserves of life, or worldly things to themselves, while they seem to give up all to God.

O happy soul, that is wrought to this sincerity by the Spirit of grace, to say unfeignedly, 'O Lord, I devote and resign myself wholly unto thee; I am not my own, nor desire any further to be, than to be thine: I have nothing that is my own, nor desire to have any thing that shall not be thine.' Happy and truly wise is that man, that keeps as constant and faithful a reckoning, how he lays out himself and all that he hath for God, as a faithful steward doth of his receivings and layings out for his master's use. Every penny that is reserved from God, is the fuel of sin, and a sacrifice to the devil and the flesh; and if it be pardoned to the truly penitent, by the sacrifice of Christ, that is no thanks to us that would else have made it the fuel of hell. God is not so careless of us or his mercies, but that he keeps an exact account of all that we have from him, and will require an account of our improvement of all: not only requiring his
own again, but his own with advantage; Matt. xxv. 27. Why else did he give us such leisure and ability to approve it? I can never forget what a sinful thought was once in my mind, which I will venture to confess, because it may possibly be the case of others, that so they may beware. Hearing of some that used to lay by the tenth part of their yearly comings in, for charitable uses, I purposed to do so too, and thought it a fair proportion: but since I have perceived what a vile and wicked thought that was, to offer to cut out a scantling for God, or give him a limited share of his own, or say that so much he shall have, and no more. Though we cannot say that God must have all in any one kind of service only; either only for the church, or only for the poor, or only for public uses; yet must we resolve, that in one way or other he must have all; and the particular portions to the poor, or church, or other uses, must be assigned by truly sanctified prudence, considering which way it may be most serviceable to God. I must relieve my own family, or kindred, if they want, but not because they are my own, but because God hath commanded me, and so hath made it a part of my obedience. But if I see where I may do more service to God by relieving a stranger, and that God doth more require it, I must yet prefer them before all the kindred that I have in the world. When the Christian pattern was set up by the primitive church, Acts ii. iv. they sold all, and laid down the whole price at the apostles' feet, which was not distributed to their natural kindred only, but to all the poor Christians that had no other relation to them, even as every one had need. And as it is the loving of our spiritual brethren in Christ, that is made the sign of our translation from death to life, so is it the relieving of Christ in these his members, that is, the relieving them, because they are his members, that is made the very matter of our cause in the last judgment, and the ground of the sentence of life or death; Matt. xxv. I must provide for my own body, and you must provide for your children, but that is (as I said before) not as I am my own, nor as your children are your own; but as I am a servant of Christ, that must be supported in his service, or as yourselves and yours are put under your care and duty by God. So that I may give it to myself or others, when I can truly say, I do but use it principally for God, and think that
the principal service I can do him by it; but I may neither
take to myself, nor give to any that are nearest to me, any
more than God commandeth, or his service doth require.
When you and yours have your daily bread, (which also
must be used for him) you must not go to flesh and blood,
but to God, to ask which way you shall dispose of the re-
mainder. This is a strange doctrine to the unsanctified
world, but that is because they are unsanctified. And it is
a doctrine that a worldly hypocrite is loath to believe and
understand; but that is because of carnality and hypocrisy,
that always deals with God like Ananias and Saphira, lying
to the Holy Ghost, and giving God but half (and few so
much as half) when they daily confess that all is from him,
and should be his; and pretend to be wholly devoted to him.
There are few men so bad, but will spare God something ra-
ther than go to hell: but indeed this is not to devote it to
God, but to use it for themselves, thinking by their sacri-
fices to stop the mouth of justice, and to please God by a
part, when they have displeased him in the rest. I much
fear (and not without apparent cause) that abundance among
us, that think themselves Christians, do worship and serve
God, but as some Indians are said to offer sacrifice to the
devil, not for any love they have to him or his service, but
for fear he should hurt them. And there are few hypocrites
but will pretend it is from very love.

O sirs, it is a greater matter to resign and give up your-
selves and all you have to God, and heartily to quit all claim
to yourselves, and all things, than many a thousand self-
deluded professors do imagine. Many look at this but as
some high, extraordinary strain of piety. And the Papists
almost appropriate it to a few that live in monastical orders,
when indeed the sincerity of the resignation and dedication,
is the very sincerity of sanctification itself.

And let me tell you, that the unfeigned convert that at-
tains to this hath not only plucked up the root of sin,
(though all of us have too many strings of it left,) not only
stopped up the spring of temptation, and got the surest
evidence of his uprightness, but also is got himself into the
safest and most comfortable state. For when he hath ab-
solutely resigned himself and all to God, how confidently
may he expect that God should accept him, and use him as
his own? and how comfortably may he commit himself and
his cause, and all good affairs to God, as knowing that God
cannot be negligent and careless of his own? It is an ar-
gument that may make us confident of success, when we can
say as David, (Psal. cxix. 94.) "I am thine, save me." Isa.
lxiii. 19. Even Christ himself doth ingratiate his elect with
the Father on this account, (John xvii. 6, 9, 10.) "Thine
they were, and thou gavest them me: I pray for them: I
pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given
me: for they are thine: and all mine are thine, and thine
are mine, and I am glorified in them." And indeed by re-
signing all to God, it is the more our own; that is, we have
unspeakably more of the benefit of it, and so there is no
way to make it our own, but by quitting it absolutely up to
God. This is the mystery that the world will not learn, but
God will teach it all that shall be saved by the Spirit, and
by faith; Matt. xvi. 24—26. "Then Jesus said to his dis-
ciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself,
and take up his cross, and follow me: for whosoever will
save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life
for my sake shall find it." Methinks, a man that hath time,
and strength, and money, should long to be disbursing all
for God, that he might put it in the surest hands, and it may
be out of danger; yea, that it may be set to the most ho-
nest and profitable usuury. For when God hath it from the
dedication of an upright heart, it is sure: but till God have
it, it is in hazard, and all that he hath not is lost, and worse
than lost. When it is in our hands, thieves may steal it,
bad servants or unadvised children may consume it, and our
own thievish flesh may steal it, which is worst of all, and
consume it on our lusts: or if our children consume it not,
their children may: or if they save it, they may lose it most
of all by feeding their pride and fleshly minds by it; but if
once it be in God's hands, it is safe. You can make no
comfortable account of one penny, nor of one hour's time,
unless you can tell God that he had it himself, that you
used it for him, or that you live to him in the main, and that
the rest is pardoned. O that those parents understood this
doctrine, that had rather strengthen the fetters and tempta-
tions of their children with it, and help them into that state
which few are saved in, than to devote and use their estates
for God! Though Christ hath told them how hardly the
rich are saved, and how few such come to heaven, yet what
care is taken to leave their children rich, and how little to further the work of God, or their own accounts, that they may hear the "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of the Lord;" Matt. xxv. 21. 23.

O sirs, if you would be good husbands, and provident indeed for your souls, see that your hearts prove not false to you in this, and make no secret reserves for yourselves, but that God have yourselves first, and all things with yourselves; as Christ first gives himself to you and all things with himself; Rom. viii. 32. Never think your hearts right, but when they can readily say, "We are not our own;" 1 Cor. vi. 19. Think not that you come aright to God in any duty, if you do not heartily devote yourselves to him, and entreat him to accept you as wholly his, who neither are nor desire to be your own; and entreat him accordingly to use you for himself. Say not that any thing is your own that you possess, (Acts iv. 32.) in respect to God, and a communion of charity; though it be your own (as a talent that God doth intrust you with) in respect of men, by a legal propriety.

And then trust God boldly, for you are his own: serve him cheerfully, and draw near him believingly, for you are his own. In poverty, sickness, temptations, and the approach of death, rejoice in him confidently, for you are his own. Into his hands commend your departing spirits, for they are his own. What reason of distrustful fears can you now have? Do you fear lest God will yet hate you? Why remember that "no man ever yet hated his own flesh;" Ephes. v. 29. Nay, for shame, think not the blessed God to be worse than the wicked world; and Christ saith of the world, (John xv. 19.) "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own." And will not God then love his own do you think? And if you are willing to be his own, Christ is certainly willing that you should be his own, and will own all that own not themselves, but him. "He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out: and when he putteth forth his own sheep he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him; for they know his voice;" (John x. 3, 4. xiii. 1.) "Having loved his own which are in the world, to the end he loved them."
If you are but truly willing to be his own people, he is certainly willing to be your own Saviour and your own God. Not that you can have such a propriety in him, as he hath in you. But in these relations he will be your own; and glory, and help, and salvation shall be yours. And you may well conclude that "God, even our own God shall bless us;" Psal. lxvii. 6. There is much comfort may be fetched from that in Luke xv. 31. though parables must not be stretched too far: "Son thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."

And upon this ground it is that we have the greater encouragement, to believe that God accepteth of our very infants themselves; because it is his will that they should be devoted, engaged, and dedicated to him: and that which he would have us dedicate and offer to him, he will surely accept in that relation to which he would have it offered.

I beseech you therefore remember what it is to be truly converted: it is to be called from things common and unclean, and separated to God; it is to be brought nigh to him, as the children of his household, that are themselves, and all that they have, in his hands: it is to be taken off yourselves and your own, and to lose yourselves and all you have in God, by the most gainful loss; lest indeed you lose yourselves and all, while you persuade yourselves you save or gain. It is a taking God in Christ for your all, and so being content to have nothing but him and for him. It is a changing of your old master self, for God, a better master: and your old work, which was self-seeking and pleasing, to self-denial, and to the seeking and pleasing of God. See now that this be done, and that your treacherous hearts hide nothing for themselves, as Rachael under pretence of necessity, hid her idols, but say, 'Here I am, to be thine, O Lord, and to do thy will.'

More I would have said on this point, but that I have written of it already, in a sermon on 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. of the absolute dominion of Christ, and our self-resignation; which I desire you here to peruse, to set this further home.

Direct. VIII. My next advice that the work of conversion may not miscarry, is this; 'Take heed, lest you mistake a mere change of your opinions, and outward profession, and behaviour, for a true saving change.'

Wicked opinions must be changed, and so must evil pro-
sessions, and outward practices; but if no more be changed, you are wicked still. I have great cause to fear that this is the most common damning deceit, that useth to befall professors of godliness, and that it is the case of most hypocrites in the church. A man may be brought to hold any truth in Scripture as an opinion; and so far be sound and orthodox, and yet never be indeed a sound believer, nor have his heart possessed with the life and power of those sacred truths. It is one thing to have a man's opinion changed, and another thing to have his heart renewed, by the change of his practical estimation, resolutions, and dispositions. It is one thing to turn from loose, profane opinions, to strict opinions; and think the godly are indeed in the right, and that their case and way is safest and best; and it is another thing to be made one of them in newness, spirituality of heart, and life. A lively faith differs much from opinion, and that which is in unsanctified men, which we call faith, and is a kind of faith indeed, it is but a mere opinionative faith: I call it an opinionative faith, because it differs from saving faith, much like as opinion doth from knowledge. Merely speculative it is not; for some intention of practice there is; but the practical intention of such persons differs from the predominant intentions of the sanctified; even as their opinionative faith differs from the saving faith.

And it is no wonder if there be abundance of these opinionative believers in the world. For the truths of God have very great evidence; especially some of them; and men are yet men, and consequently reasonable creatures; and, therefore, have some aptitude to discern the evidence of truth. Some truths will compel assent even from the unwilling. Many a thousand ungodly men believe that to be true which they would not have to be true, if they could help it; because they do not heartily take it to be good in respect to themselves. Truth as truth, is the natural object of the understanding; though the same truth, as seeming evil to them, may be hated by them that are forced to assent to it. I know that sin hath much blinded men's understandings, and that the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, because they are foolishness to him, and must be spiritually discerned; 1 Cor. ii. 14. But though he cannot savingly receive them without the special illumination of the
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Spirit, nor opinionatively receive them without a common illumination of the Spirit, yet he may have this opinionative conviction and an answerable reformation, by the common grace of the Spirit, without the special grace. An unsanctified man may have something more than nature in him; and every unregenerate man is not merely, or only natural. Many are far convinced, that are far from being savingly converted. I can make you know that you shall die; that you must part with all your wealth, and fleshly pleasures, and divers such truths, whether you will or not. And one of these truths doth let in many more that depend upon them. So that as dark as the minds of natural men are, they yet lie open to many wholesome truths.

And as the understanding is thus far open to conviction, so the will itself, which is the heart of the old man, will far sooner yield to the changing of your opinions than to the saving change of heart, and life. It is not the bare opinion that your fleshly interest doth fight against, but the power and practice of godliness is it; and opinions, as they lead to these. It is one thing to be of opinion, that conversion is necessary, that sin must be forsaken, and God preferred before all the world; and it is another thing to be indeed converted, and to forsake sin, and to prefer God before the world. It is a far easier matter to convince a worldling that he should not love the world, than to cure him of his worldly love: and to convince a drunkard that he should leave his drunkenness, and the whoremonger that he should abhor his lusts, than to bring them to do these things, which they are convinced of. It will cost them dear (as the flesh accounts it) to deny themselves, and cast away the sin; but it costeth not so dear to take up the opinion that these things should be done. It will cost them dear to be downright for God, and practically religious; but they can take up an opinion that godliness is the best and necessary course at a cheaper rate. Strict practices pinch the flesh, but strict opinions may stand with its liberty. O what abundance of our poor neighbours would go to heaven, that are now in the way to hell, if an opinion that godliness is the wisest course, would serve the turn. If instead of conversion God would take up with an opinion that they ought to turn; and if, instead of a holy, heavenly life, God would accept of an opinion, that such are the happiest men that live such a life;
and if, instead of temperance, and meekness, and self-denial, and forgiving wrongs, God would accept of an opinion, and confession, that they should be temperate and meek, and self-denying, and should forbear others, and forgive them; then O what abundance would be saved, that are now in little hope of salvation! If instead of a diligent life of holiness, and good works, it would serve turn to lie still, and be of a good opinion, that men should strive, and labour for salvation, and lay out all they have for God, how happy then were our towns, and countries, in comparison of what they are!

I am afraid this deceit will be the undoing of many, that they take a change of their opinions for a true conversion. Have not some of you been formerly of the mind, that the best way is to eat and drink, and be merry, and venture your souls, and follow your worldly business, and never trouble yourselves with any deep and searching thoughts about your spiritual state, or your salvation? Have you not thought that this diligent godliness is but a needless strictness, and preciseness? and have you not since been convinced of your error, and perceived, that this is the wisest course, which you before thought to be needless, and thenceupon have betaken you to the company of the godly, and set upon a course of outward duties? and now you think that you are made new creatures, and that this is regeneration, and the work is done. I fear lest this be all the conversion that many forward professors are acquainted with! but woe to them that have no more.

And because the face of our present times, doth plainly shew the commonness and prevalency of this disease, and because it is a matter of so great concernment to you, I shall here give you (but as briefly as I well can) some signs by which a true conversion may be known from this mere opinionative change.

1. The true convert is brought to an unfeigned hatred of the whole body of sin; and especially of those secret or beloved sins, that did most powerfully captivate him before; 1 Cor. vi. 11. Tit. iii. 3. 5. Col. v. 3. 5. 7, 8. But the opinionative convert is still carnal, and unmortified, and inwardly at the heart, the interest of the flesh is habitually predominant. He is not brought to an unreconcilable hatred to the great master sins that ruled him, and lay deep-
est; but only hath eased the top of his stomach, and cropt off some of the branches of the tree of death. The thorns of worldly desires and cares are still rooted in his heart; and, therefore, no wonder if they choak the seed of wholesome truth, and there be a greater harvest for the devil than for God; Gal. v. 24. vi. 4. 8. Rom. viii. 5. Mat. xiii. 22.

2. Another sign that follows upon this, is, that the sound convert doth carry on the course of his obedience, in a way of self-denial, as living in a continual conflict with his own flesh, and expecting his comfort and salvation to come in upon the conquest. And, therefore, he can suffer for Christ, as well as be found in cheaper obedience, and he dare not, ordinarily, refuse the most costly service. For the spoils of his fleshly desires are his prey, and crown of glorying in the Lord; Luke xiv. 27. 33. Gal. v. 17. 24. 1 Cor. ix. 27. Luke ix. 23, 24. 2 Cor. xii. 9. Gal. vi. 14.

But the opinionative convert still liveth to his carnal-self. And, therefore, secretly at least, seeks himself, and layeth hold on present things, as the true convert layeth hold on eternal life. The truths of God being received but into his opinion, do not go deep enough to conquer self, and to take down his great idol, nor make him go through fire and water, and to serve God with the best, and honour him with his substance much less with his sufferings and death. He hath something that he cannot spare for God; Matt. xiii. 21. Luke xviii. 22—24.

3. The sound convert hath taken God for his portion, and heaven for that sure and full felicity, which he is resolved to venture upon. That is it that he hath set his heart and hopes upon, and thither tends the drift of his life; Col. iii. 1—4. Matt. vi. 20, 21.

But he that is changed only in his opinions, had never such sure apprehensions of the life to come; nor so full a confidence in the promises of God, as to set his heart unfeignedly upon God, and make him truly heavenly-minded. He may have a heavenly tongue, but he hath an earthly heart. A bare opinion, be it never so true, will not raise men’s hearts so high, as to make their affections, and the very design and business of their lives to be heavenly; Phil. iii. 18—20. Rom. xvi. 17, 18. viii. 5.

4. The sound convert hath seen the vuleness of himself, in the sinfulness of his heart and life, and the misery there-
by deserved; and so is a sincerely humbled self-accusing man.

But the opinionist is commonly unhumbled, and well-conceited of himself, and a self-justifying Pharisee; unless it be that self-accusing will cost him no disgrace, and he take it up as a custom, or that which may bring him into the repute of being humbled and sincere. For his opinion will not search, and pierce his heart, nor batter down his self-exalting thoughts, nor root up the master-sin of pride. These are two great works for an opinionist to perform. And, therefore, you shall hear him more in the excusing of his sin, the magnifying of himself, or the stiff maintaining of his own conceits, than in unfeigned self-abasing; Rom. xii. 16. 1 Cor. i. 19, 20. iii. 18. 2 Cor. x. 12. Luke xvi. 15.

5. The sound convert is so acquainted with the defects, and sins, and necessities of his own soul, that he is much taken up at home, in his studies, and cares, and censures, and his daily work. The acting and strengthening of grace, the subduing of corruption, and his daily walk with God, are much of his employments. Above all keeping, he keeps his heart, as knowing that thence are the issues of life. He cannot have while to spy out the faults of others, and meddle with their affairs, where duty binds him not, as others can do; because he hath so much to do at home; Gal. vi. 3, 4. Prov. iv. 23.

But the opinionist is most employed abroad, and about mere notions, and opinions; but he is little employed in such heart-searching, or heart-observing work. His light doth not pierce so deep as to shew him his heart, and the work that is there to be necessarily done. As the change is little upon his heart, so his employment is little there. He is little in bewailing his secret defects and corruptions, and little in keeping his soul's accounts; and little in secret striving with his heart to work it into communion with God, and into a spiritual, lively, fruitful frame. He is forward to aggravate others, and oft-times severe enough in censuring them. But he is a very gentle censurer of himself, and a patient man with his own corruptions, and puts the best construction upon all that is his own. He hath much labour, perhaps, in shaping his opinions, but little for the humbling and sanctifying his heart, by the power of the truth.
6. And as the difference lieth thus constantly in the heart, so it is usually manifested by the tongue; Matt. xii. 34. The sound convert is most desirous to discourse of those great and saving truths, which his very heart hath taken in, and which he hath found to be the seed of God for his regeneration, and the instruments of that holy and happy change, that is made upon him. He feeleth most favour and life in these great and most necessary points, which formed the image of God upon him. And upon these he daily feeds and lives. Read John xvii. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 1—6. ii. 2. Phil. iii. 8—11. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Acts xvi. 22, 23. In these Scriptures, you may find what points they were that the greatest saints did study and live upon.

But the opinionist is most forward to discourse of mere opinions, and to feed upon the air of notions, and controversies of lesser moment. For one hour’s holy, heavenly, experimental, heart-searching discourse, that you shall have from him, you shall have many and many hours’ discourse of his opinions. I mean it indifferently of all his opinions. I mean it, I say, of all his opinions whether true or false. For though falsehoods cannot be fit food for the soul, yet truths as themselves, also may be made of little service to them. A man may be a mere opinionist that hath true opinions, as well as he that hath false. Almost all the free and zealous discourses of these men, on matters of religion, is about their several sides, and parties, and opinions. If they be set upon a point, especially wherein they seem to themselves to be wiser than others, they have a fire of zeal for it in their breasts, that makes them desirous to be propagating it to others. About the orders and ceremonies of the church; about the forms of prayer, and the accidents of worship; about infant baptism, or other such controversies in religion, is the freest of their discourse.

Yea, you may perceive much of the difference, even in the very manner of their conference. A serious Christian, even when he is necessitated to speak of lower controverted points, yet doth it in a spiritual manner, as one that more savoureth higher truths, and makes a holy and heavenly life his end, even in these lower matters; and deals about such controversies in a practical manner, and in order to the growth of holiness.
But the opinionists, even when they speak of the most weighty truths, do speak of them but as opinions; and when they discourse of God, of Christ, of grace, of heaven, it is but as they discourse of a point in philosophy, or little better. They go not through the shell to the kernel; they look after the truth, but they have little relish of the goodness.

The like may be said of their reading, and hearing of sermons. The sound convert feeleth life and spirit in that which is little savoury to the opinionist. It is one thing in a sermon or text, that is pleasing to a true Christian, and another thing usually that is most pleasant to the opinionist. The true Christian delighteth in, and feedeth on, the inward life of spiritual doctrine, and the good which they offer him; that is, indeed, it is upon God, and Christ himself, that he is feasting his soul in reading, and hearing. For this is the soul of all, without which, letters and words are but a carcase. But the superficial opinionist is much more taken up, either with the history, or the elegancy of speech, or with the rational light of the discourse, still sticking in the bark, and savouring not Christ, and the Father in all. As a man that reads the deeds, or lease of his own lands, delights in one thing; and a clerk that reads the same, or the like, in a book of precedents, for his learning, delights in another thing. So is it in this case.

7. And hence it follows, that they are several sorts of duties, and exercises, usually, that these several sorts of persons are most addicted to. The sound convert is most addicted to those spiritual means, that tend most to the strengthening of his faith, and warming his heart with the love of God, and promoting holiness, and destroying sin; but tend to furnish him with speculative knowledge; and discourse, and to satisfy his fancy, or curious mind. The sound convert is much addicted to prayer, even in secret, and to heavenly meditations, and gracious discourse. But the opinionist is much more addicted to reading histories, or controversies, or dogmatical divinity, or civil and political matters. The sound convert savoureth best those preachers, and books, that speak the most weighty, spiritual truths, in the most weighty, spiritual manner, in power, and demonstration of the Spirit. But the opinionist refisheth those preachers, and books most, that either speak curious-
ly to please the ear, or exactly, and learnedly to please the natural intellect, or that speak for the opinions, or party that he is addicted to. But others he hath less mind of.

8. Moreover, the sound Christian layeth out most of his zeal, affections, and endeavours, about the great essentials of religion, and that, as I said, in a practical manner. But the opinionist layeth out his zeal upon opinions. Right or wrong it is but as opinions. Of these he makes his religion; for these he contendeth. He loveth those best that are of his own opinion, though there be nothing of the special image of God upon his soul; or if he love a true Christian, it is not so much for his holiness and spirituality, as because he is of his mind in those matters of opinion. Hence it is that he is usually a bitter censurer of those that are not of his opinion, how upright soever they may be; his very esteem of men, and love to them is partial, and factious, to those that are of his mind and sect. A Papist will esteem and love men of the Popish sect; and an Anabaptist will esteem and love men of that sect most; yea, a Protestant, if he be an opinionist, doth esteem of men, and love them as a sect. Whereas, the true Christian, as he is truly Catholic, and of the Catholic church, which is not confined to Papists, no, nor Protestants, so he hath truly Catholic affections, and loveth a Christian as a Christian, a godly man as godly; yea, if he saw more serious godliness in one that is not of his opinion in lesser things, yet would he love him more than one that is in such matters of his opinion, that is ungodly, or of more doubtful piety. For as it is God in Christ that he principally loveth, so it is Christ that he admireth in his members; and so much of Christ as he sees in any, so much are his special affections towards them.

9. Ordinarily, the mere opinionist will sacrifice the very ends of the Gospel, and the honour and success of the great fundamental truths of God, to the interest of those opinions which he hath in a singular manner made his own. He will rather hinder the propagation of the common truths, and the conversion of the ignorant, than he will silence his opinions, or suffer them to lose any advantages with the world. Hence it is, that we cannot prevail with the Papist, to silence awhile the differences between us and them, till we
have taught their ignorant (in Ireland, and other barbarous parts) the knowledge of those truths that all are agreed in. Nor can we get many Anabaptists, or any such sect, that is engaged in a division, to forbear their opinions, till we have endeavoured to lay the necessary grounds, on which all must build, that will be saved. But though it be apparent to the world, that their disputes and contentions do exceedingly harden the ignorant and ungodly against all religion, and hinder their conversion and salvation; yet will they go on in the unseasonable, intemperate bruiting of their conceits, and will not be persuaded to agree on those terms, for the managing of differences, as most tend to secure the interest of Christ and his Gospel in the main. If an opinionist be for the truth, he is usually without much zeal for it, because that nature doth not befriend the great spiritual truths of the Gospel, so much as it doth errors, and private conceits. But if he be of erroneous opinions, he is usually very zealous for them. For corrupted nature, and self, and satan, (and the world oft-times) do more befriend these, and furnish him with a zeal for them, and blow the coal. The counterfeit angel of light, is very ordinarily also a spirit of heat, and great activity; not a reviving fire, nor a refining fire, but a consuming fire, devouring Christian love, and meekness, and patience, and therewith the church, and truth of God, so far as it can prevail. For lesser matters, that minister questions, such men can lay by that which tends to godly edifying in faith. Yea, that Charity, which is the very end of the commandment, out of a "pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned. From these they swerve, and turn aside to vain jangling; oft-times desiring to be teachers of such things, in which they understand not what they say, nor whereof they speak. Consenting not to the wholesome words of Christ, and the doctrine which is according to godliness, they teach otherwise, being proud, knowing nothing, but doating about questions, and strife of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputing of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth;" 1 Tim. i. 4—6. vi. 3—5. Yea, they sometimes take their opinions, or their worldly gain that they often aim at, to be instead of godliness. And think, that to be godly, is to be of their mind and way. They "use to strive
about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers, and their vain babblings increase to more ungodliness;’ 2 Tim. ii. 14. 16.

But the true convert looks principally to the main. He loves every known truth of God; but in their order, and accordingly to their worth and weight. He will not, for his own opinions, wilfully do that which will hazard the main, or hinder the Gospel, and the saving of men’s souls. Though he will not be false to any truth, yet he will avoid “foolish and unlearned questions, knowing that they do gender strife; and the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, and meekly instruct opposers: following righteousness, faith, charity, peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart;” 2 Tim. ii. 22—25.

10. Lastly, True converts are steadfast, but opinionists are usually mutable and inconstant. The sound convert receiveth the greatest truths, and receives the goodness as well as the truth; and takes it not only into the head, but into the heart, and giveth it deep rooting: he closeth with God as his only felicity, and with Christ as his only refuge, and Redeemer, and with heaven as the sure, everlasting glory, to which the world is but a mole-hill, or a dungeon. No wonder then if this man be “steadfast, and immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, that knows his labour is not in vain in the Lord;” 1 Cor. xv. 58.

But the opinionist, either fasteneth on smaller matters, or else holdeth these great matters but as bare opinions, and therefore they have no such interest in his heart, as to establish him against shaking trials and temptations. For two sorts there are of these opinionists, the one sort have no zeal for their own opinions, because they are but opinions; and these are time-servers, and will change, as the king: their landlords change, and fit their opinions to their worldly end. The other sort have a burning zeal for their opinions; and these use to wander from one opinion to another, not able to resist the subtlety of seducers, but are taken with fair and plausible reasonings, not able to see into the heart of the cause. These are as “children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight and cunning craftiness of men, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;” Ephes. iv. 14. When with great confidence they have held one sort of opinions awhile, and
railed against those that were not of their mind; ere long they will themselves forsake them, and take up another way, and be as confident in that, and take no warning by the experience of their former deceit. And thus they go oft from one opinion to another, till at last, finding themselves deceived so oft, some of them cast off all religion, and think there is no certainty to be found in any, suspecting religion, when they should have suspected their false hearts: and all this comes to pass because they never received the truth in the love of it, that they might be sanctified and saved by it; 2 Thess. ii. 10—12. Nor ever gave it deep entertainment, or took it to heart that it might thoroughly convert them; but as a bare opinion into the brain to polish their tongues and outsides, and deceive themselves as much as others.

And thus I have shewed you the difference between a sound convert and an opinionist, or one that hath but an overly, superficial change, that you may see which of these is your own condition.

To return now to my advice, and exhortation, I entreat every person that readeth or heareth these words, to see that they stick not in an opinionative conversion. To which end I further desire you, 1. To consider that it is a higher matter that Christ came into the world for, than to change men's bare opinions; and it is a higher matter that the Gospel is intended for, and that ministers are sent to you for. For it is more than a corruption of men's opinions, that sin hath brought upon you; and therefore it must be a deeper disease that must be cured. The work of Christ by his Gospel, is no less, than to fetch you off all that which flesh and blood accounts your happiness, and to unite you to himself, and make you holy, as God is holy, and to give you a new nature, and make you as the dwellers or citizens of heaven, while you walk on earth; Phil. iii. 20, 21. And these are greater matters than the changing of a party or opinion. The Holy Ghost himself must dwell in you, and work in you, and employ your soul and life for God, that you may study him, and love him, and live to him here, and live with him for ever. Do but think well of the ends and meaning of the Gospel, and how much greater matters it drives at, and then you will see that there is no taking up with an opinionative religiousness.

2. Keep company, if it be possible, with the most sober,
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spiritual, and heavenly professors, that will be drawing you to the observation of your own heart and life, and opening to you the riches of the love of Christ, and winning up your affections to God and heaven: and be not the companions of inexperienced wranglers, that have no other religion, but a zeal for their opinions, and will endeavour rather to make you like satan, than like God, by possessing your minds with malice, and bitter thoughts of your brethren, and employing your tongues in reproaches, and vain strivings, and make you firebrands in the places where you live: neither be companions of them that hold the truth no deeper than opinion; for though some such may be useful to you in their places, yet if you have not more edifying familiars, your danger will be very great, lest you should let go the life of religion, and take up with mere notions and formalities as they.

3. When you have considered that every truth of God is a message to your hearts, as well as to your heads, and hath a work of God to do upon them, look after that work; and when you have heard or read a truth, go down into your hearts, and see what it hath done there: and if you find not in your will, and resolutions, and affections the image and fruits of the truth you have heard, fetch it up again, and ruminate upon it, and do not think you have received it, or done with it, till this be done: yea, take it but as lost, and sinfully rejected, if it have not done you some good at the very heart.

4. Also be sure that you practise all practical truths, upon the first opportunity, as soon as you have heard them. Imprison them not in unrighteousness. Cast them not out in forgetfulness: use not a lecture of divinity as if it were a lesson of music, or a mere philosophical or historical discourse. Read not the doctrine of salvation, and the promise of heaven, and the forewarnings of everlasting misery, as you read a common story, or a groundless conjecture in an almanack; but as a message from God, which tells you where you must dwell for ever, and as a direction sent from heaven, to teach you the way thither. Fall to work then, and practise what you know, if you would be Christians indeed. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." For the opinionative hearer seeth but a slight appearance of the truth, as a man that looks on his face in a glass, which he quickly forgets; but he that is
a sound believer and practiser, and not only an opinionative, forgetful hearer, is the man that shall "be blessed in his deed;" James i. 22—25. Opinion without practice, is building on the sand; but hearing, and sound believing, and doing, is building upon the rock, where the building will stand after all assaults; Matt. vii. 26—28. An opinionist doth but seem to be religious, while he keeps his reigning sins, and therefore his religion is in vain; but the practical religion is the pure and undefiled religion; James i. 26, 27. Hearty obedience will not only shew that your religion is deeper than mere opinion, but it will also advance it to a greater purity, and root it more deeply than it was before. A man that hath studied the art of navigation in his closet, may talk of it almost as well as he that hath been at sea; but when he comes to practise it, he will find that he is far to seek; but let this man go to sea, and join practice and experience to his theory, and then he may have a knowledge of the right kind. So, if a man that hath only read over military books, would be a true soldier; or a man that hath only studied physic, would be a true physician, what better way is there, than to fall to practice? And so you must, if you would have a religion that shall save your souls; and not only a religion that will furnish you with good opinions and expressions.

5. Moreover, if you would get above opinion, be still searching more and more after the evidences of the ancient fundamental truths that you have received; and lay open your hearts to the power of them. Think it not enough that you take the Christian religion for true, but labour after a clearer sight of its truth: for you may possibly upon some conjecture take it for a truth, by bare opinion, when as the sight of fuller evidences, and a full sight of those evidences might raise you from opinion to a working, saving faith.

6. Lastly. Take heed lest any thing be suffered to keep possession of your hearts, and so to confine the truth to your brain. When the world is kept up in life and power, and is nearest the heart, there is no room for the word there, but it must float upon the top, and swim in your opinion, because it can go no deeper, your lusts and profits having possession before it. The word can never go to the heart with unmortified men, but by casting your idols out of your hearts: nor will it take rooting in you, but by rooting out the world.
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O sirs, if you knew the misery of a mere opinionist, you would sure be persuaded now to practise these Directions, that may raise you higher. An opinionist is a deceiver of himself, and oft of others: a trouble of the church, if he have any zeal for opinions, and hit (as usually he doth) on the wrong; and when his religion is right, he is wrong himself, being out of the way, even when he is in the right way, because he is not right in that way; for he doth but sit down in it, when he should travel in it. A runner shall not win the prize by being in the right way only, unless he make haste. The knowledge of the opinionist doth but serve to aggravate his sin, and cause him to be beaten with many stripes; but is not of force to sanctify his heart and life, and to save him, James ii. fully shews. Stick not therefore in an opinionative religiousness.

Direct. IX. My next Direction that your conversion may prove sound, is this, 'Acquaint your souls by faith with the glory of the everlasting kingdom, and see that you make it your portion and your end, and from thence let the rest of your endeavours be animated.'

No man can be a sound Christian, that knoweth not the ends and portion of a Christian. There is a great deal of difference between the desires of heaven in a sanctified man, and an unsanctified. The believer prizeth it above earth, and had rather be with God than here; (though death that stands in the way, may possibly have harder thoughts from him.) But to the ungodly, there is nothing seemeth more desirable than this world; and therefore he only chooseth heaven before hell, but not before earth; and therefore shall not have it upon such a choice. We hear of gold and silver mines in the Indies: if you offer a golden mountain there, to an Englishman that hath an estate and family here that are dear unto him, perhaps he will say, 'I am uncertain whether their golden mountains be not mere fictions to deceive men; and if it be true, that there are such things, yet it is a great way thither, and the seas are perilous; and I am well enough already where I am, and therefore let who will go thither for me, I will stay at home as long as I can.' But if this man must needs be banished out of England, and had his choice whether he would go to the golden islands, or to dig in a coalpit, or live in a wilderness, he would rather choose the better than the worse. So it is with an ungodly
man's desires, in respect to this world, and that to come. If he could stay here, in fleshly pleasure for ever, he would; because he looks at heaven as uncertain, and a great way off, and the passage seemeth to him more troublesome and dangerous than it is, and he is where he would be already: but when he sees that there is no staying here for ever, but death will have him away; he had rather go to heaven, than to hell, and therefore will be religious, as far as the flesh and the world will give him leave, lest he should be cast into hell, when he is taken from the earth.

But take an Englishman that is in poverty and reproach, and hath neither house nor land, nor friend to comfort him, and let him have the offer of a golden island, and a person of unquestionable skilfulness and fidelity, that will promise in short time to bring him safe thither; if he believe this person, and can put his trust in him, doubtless he will be gone and follow him over sea and land; and though the passage may somewhat daunt him, yet the promised possession will carry him through all. So is it with the true Christian, he is dead to this world, and sees nothing here in which he can be happy; he is burdened and wearied with sin and suffering; he is firmly persuaded of the truth of the Gospel; and seeth by faith the world that is to flesh invisible; and believeth in Jesus Christ, who hath promised to convey him safely thither, and therefore he would go away; and though he love not death, the stormy passage, yet he will submit to it, having so sure a pilot, because he loves the life which through death he must pass into, and had rather be there than here.

Such as a man's principal end is, such is the man, and such is the course of his life. He that takes this world for his portion, and makes the felicity of it his end, is a carnal, worldly, unsanctified man, whatever good and godly actions may come in upon the bye. It is he, and only he, that is a sanctified believer, who looks on heaven as his only portion, and his sailing through the troublesome seas of this world, of purpose to come to that desired harbour; not loving these seas better than the land of rest, which he is sailing to; but patiently and painfully passing through them, because there is no other way to glory. As it is the desire of the land to which he is sailing, that moveth the mariner or passenger to do all that he doth in his voyage; and the de-
sire of his home or journey's end, that moveth the traveller all the way; and the desire of seeing a perfect building that moveth the builder in every stroke of his work; so it must be the love of God, and the desire of everlasting blessedness, that must be the very engine to move the rest of the affections and endeavours of the saints, and must make men resolve on the necessary labour and patience of believers. Take off this weight, and all the motions of Christianity will cease. No man will be at labour and sufferings for nothing, if he can avoid them. It is a life of labour, though sweet to the spirit, yet tedious to the flesh, which Christianity doth engage us in; and there is much suffering to be undergone; and this to the very last, and to the denial of ourselves; and if God require it, to the loss of all the comforts of the world: for no less than forsaking all that we have, will serve to make us Christ's disciples. And will any man do this for he knows not what? Will any man forsake all that he hath, unless it be for something better, which may be as sure to him as that he had, and may make him more happy? Look to it therefore, that you have right and believing thoughts of heaven, and that unfeignedly you take it for your home and happiness, and look not for any other portion. Till you see so much of the certainty and excellency of everlasting glory, as shall prevail with you to lay out your faithful labour for it, and to be at a point with all this world, as having laid up your treasure and hopes in the world to come, you have no ground to conclude that you are true Christian converts.

Seeing therefore, that it is heaven that is the very reason, the end, the life of all your religion, it follows, that you must necessarily understand somewhat of its excellency, and believe its certainty, and accordingly set your hearts upon it, and make the attainment of it your daily work and business in the world: this is to be a convert indeed.

Remember therefore first, what I told you before, where-in the nature of this blessedness doth consist. I will only name the essentials of it, that your apprehensions may be right, and forbear to say much, as being done already.

1. The first thing considerable in our everlasting blessedness, will be our personal perfection of the whole man; this is in order to the perfection of our everlasting operations and enjoyments. Our bodies shall be no more flesh and
blood, nor corruptible, or mortal, or subject to hunger, or pain, or weariness, nor to passions that rebel against the reasonable soul; but they shall be spiritual bodies, and immortal, and incorruptible, and undefiled. Our souls will be perfected in their natural perfections, and in their moral. They shall be of more advanced understanding, and comprehensive wisdom than now. Our wills shall attain to perfect rectitude in a perfect conformity to the will of God, and every affection shall be brought to its perfect order and elevation: all sin shall be done away, whether it were in the understanding, will, affections, or the actions. The executive power will be answerable to the rest of the perfections, and to the blessed work which it hath to do: and thus we shall be like the angels of God.

2. The next thing considerable in our blessedness, is, our approximation or approach to God: we shall be admitted into the holiest, and brought as near him as our natures are capable of, and we are fit for.

3. Moreover, we shall be members of the New Jerusalem, and receive our glory in communion with that blessed society, and so as members contribute to her glory.

4. And we shall behold the glorified person of our Redeemer, and he will be glorified on us as the fruits of his victory.

5. And we shall behold the face of the blessed God, and see his wisdom, and power, and glory, and know as we are known. Though we cannot now fully know the manner, yet in that sense as our angels are said to behold the face of God, (Matt. xviii. 10.) we also shall behold it.

6. We shall also enjoy him in the nearest relation, and by the most raised, vigorous affections of our soul. We shall be filled with his love as full as we can hold, and we shall abound with perfect love to him again: and the joy that is in his presence, which this intuition, and everlasting love will afford us, is such as no heart is here able to conceive.

7. Being thus furnished, we shall be employed in his perfect praises, in singing and rejoicing to him with the heavenly host, and magnifying his heart and holy name.

8. And in all this will the glory of God shine forth, and he will be admired in his saints; 2 Thess. i. 10, 11. In us
it shall appear how abundant he is in power, and wisdom, and goodness, in holiness, faithfulness, and righteousness.

9. And God himself will be well pleased with us, and with the new Jerusalem, and his glorified Son, and will take complacency in this manifestation and communication of his glory and of himself unto his creatures. And this is his ultimate end, and should be the highest point of ours. The revolution hath now brought all to that centre, which is both the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. His will is the fountain or efficient source of all, and it is the ultimate end and perfection of all.

There is no more to add, as to the matter, but that as to the duration, first, we may take it as that which leaves no room for any addition, that all this will be everlasting, leaving not any doubts or fears of a cessation. Abundance of glorious adjuncts of this felicity might be mentioned; but I pass them all by, and do but name these few which are the essential constitutive parts of our happiness, because I have touched them before, and more fully spoken of them in the "Saints' Rest." Thus much I thought meet to mention here, that you may have somewhat of that in your eye, that I am persuading you to intend and seek; and the rather, because I perceive that many of the godly have not such distinct apprehensions of the constitutive parts of this felicity, as they should have; but much wrong their souls, and God himself, and the glory of their profession, by looking but at some of the parts.

Believe God, sirs, that this is the life that you shall live, if you will take it for your portion, and set your hearts upon it, and follow the conduct of Christ for the obtaining it. Can you be content with heaven alone? Is it enough for you, though you be despised and persecuted in the world? Do you account this for certainty and excellency to be worth all? Yea, that all is dross and dung to this? Thus must you do if you will be true converts. For all such are heavenly in their minds and hearts, and in the drift of all their lives and conversations.

Direct. X. My next advice that you may prove sound converts, is this, 'Rest not, and count not yourselves truly converted, till God and his holy ways have your very love, and desire, and delight; and take not that for a saving
change, when you had rather live a worldly, ungodly life, if it were not for the fear of punishment.'

I shall speak but little of this, because I touched upon it before, when I told you that Christ must have your hearts, and because it is but a conseqentary of the last, or contained in it. But yet I think it best to present it here distinctly to your consideration, because a slavish kind of religiousness, doth deceive so many, and because the life of grace is here expressed. I deny not but holy fear is exceeding useful to us; even a fear of the threatenings and judgments of God. But yet I must tell you, that in fear there is much more that is common to the unsanctified, than there is in love, desire, and delight. Though "the fear of the Lord be the beginning of wisdom," it is love that is the perfection; and that fear is not filial, and of the right strain, if love be not its companion. Fear of punishment shews that you love your natural selves; but it shews not that you love God, and are true-hearted to him. The devils fear and tremble, but they do not love. It is love, and not fear that is the bias, the inclination, and (as I may say) the nature of the will of man. By his love it is that you must know what the man is. The philosopher saith, "Such as a man is, such is his end," which is all one as to say, "Such as a man is, such is his love." You may fear a thing at the same time when you hate it; and it is too common to have some hatred mixed with fear. You may be as much against God and his holy ways, when fear only drives you to some kind of religiousness, as others are that scarce meddle with religion at all. The first thing that God looks at, is what you would do; and the next is, what you do. If you do it, but had rather leave it undone, you lose your reward, and God will take it as if you had not done it: for it was not you that did it, if you did it not from love; but it was fear that dwelleth in you. God takes men's hearty desires and will, instead of the deed, where they have not power to fulfil them: but he never took the bare deed instead of the will. A blockish kind of worship, consisting in outward actions, without the heart, is fit to be given to a wooden god, a senseless idol; but the true and living God abhors it. He is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in spirit and in truth; such worshippers he seeketh, and such he will accept; John iv. 23, 24. A beggar will be glad of your alms, though you leave it with an ill will, because he needeth it:
but God hath no need of you, nor of your service, and therefore think not that he will accept you on such terms. That people worship God in vain, that draw near him with their mouth, and honour him with their lips, while their heart is far from him; Matt. xv. 8, 9. A man's heart is where his love is, rather than where his fear is. If you should lie still upon your knees, or in the holy assembly; if you should be the strictest observer of the ordinances on the Lord's days, and yet had such hearts in you, as had rather let all these alone, if it were not for fear of punishment; it will all be disregarded, and reckoned to you according to your wills, as if it had never been done by you at all. It is love that must win love, or make you fit for love to entertain. If you give your goods to the poor, or your bodies to be burned in a cause that in itself is good, and yet have not love, it availeth nothing; 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3, 5. You will not think your wife hath conjugal affection that loveth another man better than you, and had rather be gone from you, if she could live without you. It is an unnatural son that loves not his father, but had rather be from him, than with him. If God called you to a bestial drudgery or slavery, he would then look but for your work, and not care much whether you be willing or unwilling. If your ox draw your plough, and your horse carry his burden, you care not much whether it be willingly or unwillingly. Or if it be an enemy that you have to deal with, you will look for no more than a forced submission, or that he be disabled from doing you hurt. But this is not your case: it is a state of friendship that the Gospel calls you to, you must be nigh to God, his children, and the members of his Son, espoused to him by the dearest, strongest bonds: and do you think that it is possible that this should be done without your wills and affections? If you can be content with the portion of a slave and an enemy, then do your task, and deny God your affections: but if you look for the entertainment and portion of a friend, a child, a spouse, you must bring the heart of a friend, and of a child, and of a spouse. Fear may do good by driving you to the use of means, and taking out of your hands the things by which you would do yourselves a mischief: it may prepare you for saving grace, and when you are sanctified, it will prove a necessary servant of love, to keep you in awe, and save you from temptations. But love is the ruling affection
in the sanctified, and fear is therefore necessary, because of the present imperfection of love, and because of the variety of temptations that here beset us. Think not therefore that you are savagely renewed, till God have your very hearts. When you do but believe and tremble, it is better than to be unbelieving, and stupid, and secure; but you are not true Christians till you believe and love. We use to fly from that we fear, and therefore do apprehend it to be evil to us. We avoid the presence and company of those that we are afraid of, but we draw nigh them that we love, and delight in their company. We fear an enemy; we love a friend. We fear the devil naturally, but we do not love him. It is love that is that affection of the soul that entertaineth God as God, even as good; though that love must be accompanied with a filial fear, even a dread and reverence of his majesty and greatness, and a fear of displeasing him. If you should toil out yourselves in religious duties, with a heart that had rather forbear them, if you durst, you have not the heart of God's children in your breasts. The magistrate can frighten men to the congregation and outward worship. You may lock a man in the church, that had rather be away: and will any man think that this makes him acceptable to God? You may keep a thief from stealing by prison and irons, but this makes him not accepted with God as a true man. You may cure a man of cursing, and swearing, and railing, and idle and ribald talking, even in a minute of an hour, by cutting off his tongue; but will God accept him ever the more, as long as he has a heart that would do it if he could? There are abundance of people at this day that are kept from abusing the Lord's day, and from swearing, and stealing, yea, and from laying violent hands on all about them that are godly, and this by the law of men, and the fear of present punishment. And do you think that these are therefore innocent or acceptable with God? By this account you may make the devil a saint, when he is chained up from doing mischief. You may as well say that the lion is become a lamb, when he is shut up in his den; or that a mastiff dog is become harmless and gentle, when he is muzzled. Believe it, sirs, you are never Christians till you see that in God that wins your hearts to him, so that you would not change your master for any in the world; and till you see that in the hopes of everlasting glory, that you would not change it for any
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thing else that can be imagined by the heart of man; and till you see that goodness in a heavenly life, that you had rather live it than any life in the world. You are not converted to God indeed, till you had rather live in holiness, than in sin, if you had your freest choice; and till you would gladly be the strictest, holiest person that you know in the world; and long after more and more of it, and fain would reach perfection itself: for though we cannot be perfect here, yet no man is upright that desireth not to be perfect. For he that loveth holiness, as holiness, must needs love the greatest measure of holiness, with the greatest love. This is it that maketh sound converts to be so constant and faithful with God. A man is forward and ready to a work that he loves, when he draws back from it, as if it were a mischief, that hath no mind to do it. A man is hardly kept from the persons, and places, and employments that he loves: but a little will withdraw him from that which he loveth not. Why is it that we have so much ado to take off a drunkard from his companions and his lusts, but because he loves them better than temperance and gracious company? And why can we so hardly draw the lustful wretch from his filthy lusts, or the glutton, or the idle, sensual person from his needless or excessive recreations, but because they love them? And why is it that you cannot draw the worldling from his covetousness, but he parteth with his money almost as hardly as with his blood, but because he loveth it? And therefore what wonder if temptations be resisted, and the fairest baits of the world despised by him, that is truly in love with God? No wonder if nothing can turn back that man from the way to heaven, that is in love both with heaven and with the way. No wonder if that man stick close to Christ, and never forsake a holy life, that tasteth the sweetness of it, and feels it to do him good, and had rather go that way than any in the world. There is no true Christian but can say with David, that “a day in God’s courts is better than a thousand; and he had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents (yea, or the palaces) of wickedness.” Do but mark those professors that prove apostates, and forsake the way of godliness which they seemed to embrace, and see whether they be not such as either took up some bare opinions and outward duties upon a flash of superficial illumina-
tion, or else such as were frightened into a course of religion, and so went on from duty to duty, for fear of being damned, when all the while their hearts were more another way, and they had rather have been excused. These hypocrites are they that are disputing so oft the obligations to their duty, and asking, 'How do you prove that it is a duty to pray in my family, or a duty to observe the Lord's day, or to come constantly to the congregation, or to use the communion of the godly in private meetings, or to repeat sermons, or sing psalms, and the like?' Intimating that they are as birds in a cage, or hens in a pen, that are boring to get out, and had rather be at liberty. If it were not for the fear of the law of God that is upon them, they had rather let all these duties alone, or take them up but now and then at an idle time, when satan and the flesh will give them leave. 'If a feast be prepared and spread before them, a good stomach will not stand to ask, 'How can you prove it 'my duty to eat?'' but perhaps the sick that loath it may do so. If the cup be before the drunkard, he doth not stand on these terms, 'How do you prove it my duty now to drink this cup and the other cup.' No, if he might have but leave, he would drink on, without any questioning whether it be a duty. If the gamester, or the whoremonger, might but be sure that he should escape the punishment, he would never stick at the want of a precept, and ask, 'Is it my duty?' If there were but a gift of twenty pounds a man to be given to all the poor of the town, yea, and to all the people in general, I do not think I should meet with many people in the town that would draw back and say, 'What word of God commandeth me to take it?' Or, 'How can you prove that it is my duty?' And, why is all this, but because they have an inward love to the thing; and love will carry a man to that which seemeth good for him, without any command or threatening. If these ungodly wretches had one spark of spiritual life within them, and any taste and feeling of the matters that concern their own salvation, instead of asking, 'How can you prove that I must pray with my family, or that I must keep the Lord's day, or that I must converse with the godly, and live a holy life?' they would be readier to say, 'How can you prove that I may not pray with my family, and that I may not sanctify the Lord's day, and that I may not have communion with the saints in holiness?' Seeing so great a mercy is of-
ferred to the world, why may not I partake of it as well as others?" I can perceive in many that I converse with, the great difference between a heart that loves God and holiness, and a heart that seems religious and honest without such a love. The true convert perceiveth so much sweetness in holy duties, and so much spiritual advantage by them to his soul, that he is loath to be kept back; he cannot spare these ordinances and mercies, no more than he can spare the bread from his mouth, or the clothes from his back, yea, or the skin from his flesh; no, nor so much. He loveth them, he cannot live without them. At the worst that ever he is at, he had rather be holy than unholy, and live a godly than a fleshly, worldly life. And therefore, if he had but a bare leave from God, without a command to sanctify the Lord's day, and to live in the holy communion of the saints, he would joyfully take it with many thanks: for he need not be driven to his rest when he is weary, nor to his spiritual food when he is hungry, nor to Christ the refuge of his soul, when the curse and accuser are pursuing him. But the unsanctified hypocrite that never loved God or godliness in his heart, he stands questioning and inquiring for some proof of the necessity of these courses. And if he can but bring himself to hope that God will save him without so much ado, (which by the help of the devil he may easily be brought to hope,) away then goes the duty. If you could not shew him that there is a necessity of family prayer, and a necessity of sanctifying the Lord's day, and a necessity of forsaking his tippling and voluptuousness, and a necessity of living a heavenly life, he would quickly resolve of another course: for he had rather do otherwise if he durst. He never was religious from a true predominant love to God and a holy life, but for fear of hell, and for other inferior respects.

Remember this when you have precious opportunities before you, of doing or receiving good, and when you see that you have leave to take these opportunities, and yet you draw back, and are questioning, 'How we can prove it to be your duty? Or that you cannot be saved without it?' Do not these questions plainly shew that you love not the work and delight not in a holy life? and that you had rather let it alone? Are you not blind if you see not this is in yourselves? Yea, it is plain that you have such an averseness or
hatred to God and a holy course of life, that if you did but know what shift to make to escape damnation, you would fly away from God and holiness, and have as little to do with them as you can. Your questions and cavils do plainly declare this wicked enmity and backwardness of your hearts; and consequently shew how far you are from true conversion.

Not that I am of their mind that think there is any good which the law of Christ obligeth us not to accept, and which we can refuse without sin and danger to ourselves: for God doth both draw us, and drive us at once. But when the threatening and punishment only can prevail with men, and men love not God and godliness for themselves, but had rather have liberty to live as the ungodly, I shall never take one of these for a sanctified man, nor have any hope of the saving of such a soul, how far soever his fears may carry him from his outward sins, or to outward duties; till God shall give him a better conversion than this, I say, I have not the smallest hope of this man's salvation. Then you are God's children, when the honour, the work, the family, the name of your Father are lovely and delightful to you: and when you grieve that there are any remnants of sin in your souls, and when your sins are to you as lameness to the lame, that pains them every step they go, and as sickness to the sick, that makes them groan, and groan again, and long to be rid of it: and when you think those the happiest men on earth that are the most holy, and wish from your hearts that you were such as they, though you had not a house to put your head in: when you look towards God with longing thoughts, and are grieved that your understandings can reach no nearer him, and know no more of him, and that your hearts cannot embrace him with a more burning love: when you admire the beauty of a meek, a patient, a mortified, spiritual, heavenly mind, and long to have more of this yourself, yea, to be perfect in all holiness and obedience: when your hearts are thus brought over to God, that you had rather have him than any other, and rather live in his family any where, and rather walk in his ways than in any; then are you indeed converted, and never till then, whatever other dispositions you may have.

And now if that were my business, what abundance of reason might I shew you, to make you willing to come over unto God, with love, and with delight. Whom else can
you love if he that is love itself seem not lovely to you? All loveliness is in him and from him; the creature hath none of itself, nor for itself: to love a life of sin, is to love the image and service of the devil; and to love that which feeds the flames of hell; what is it then to love this sin so well, as for the love of it to fly from God and godliness? Methinks men at the worst should love that which will do them good, and not prefer that before it which will hurt them. Do sinners indeed believe that God and holiness will do them hurt, and that sin will do them greater good? Is there ever a man so mad, that he dare speak this and stand to it? If indeed you think it best to live in sin, and therefore had rather keep it than leave it; your understandings are befooled, I had almost used Paul's phrase and said, bewitched; Gal. iii. 1. Will it do you any hurt to leave your beastly, sensual lives, and to "live soberly, righteously, and godly, in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ?" This is the doctrine of saving grace; Tit. ii. 11—13. Would it do you any harm to be assured of salvation, and ready to die, and to know that angels shall conduct your departing souls to Christ, and that you shall live in joy with him for ever? Or to be employed in those holy works that must prepare you for this day, and help you to this assurance? If God be naught for you, if holiness, and righteousness, and temperance be naught for you, then you may as well say, heaven is naught for you; and therefore you must resolve for sin and hell, and see whether that be good for you. I shall say no more of this point, because I have written of it already, in the conclusion of the "Saints' Rest," which I desire you to peruse.

Direct. XI. The next part of my advice is, 'If you would not have this saving work miscarry, turn then this present day and hour, without any more delay.' Somewhat I have spoken of this already, and therefore shall say the less. But yet I shall back this Direction with such reasons as will certainly convince you, if you be not unreasonable, of the folly of delay, and shew you that it concerneth you presently to return. And though my reasons will be numerous, it is not the number, but the strength of them, that I shall urge you principally to consider; and
because of the number, I will go over them with the greater brevity.

1. Consider to whom it is that you are commanded to turn: and then tell me whether there can be any reason for delay. It is not to an empty, deceitful creature, but to the faithful, all-sufficient God: to him that is the cause of all things; the strength of the creation, the joy of angels, the felicity of the saints, the sun and shield of all the righteous, and refuge of the distressed, and the glory of the whole world. Of such power, that his word can take down the sun from the firmament, and turn the earth and all things into nothing; for he doth more in giving them their being and continuance. Of such wisdom, that was never guilty of mistake, and therefore will not mislead you, nor draw you to any thing that is not for the best. Of such goodness, as that evil cannot stand in his sight, and nothing but your evil could make him displeased with you; and it is from nothing but evil that he calleth you to turn. It is not to a malicious enemy, that would do you a mischief, but it is to a gracious God, that is love itself: not to an implacable justice, but to a reconciled Father: not to revenging indignation, but to the embracement of those arms, and the mercy of that compassionate Lord, that is enough to melt the hardest heart, when you find yourself as the poor returning prodigal; (Luke xxv. 20.) in his bosom, when you deserved to have been under his feet. And will the great and blessed God invite thee to his favour, and wilt thou delay and demur upon the return? The greatest of the angels of heaven are glad of his favour, and value no happiness but the light of his countenance; heaven and earth are supported by him, and nothing can stand without him; how glad would those very devils be of his favour, that tempt thee to neglect his favour! And wilt thou delay to turn to such a God? Why man, thou art every minute at his mercy; if thou turn not, he can throw thee into hell when he will, more easily than I can throw this book to the ground; and yet dost thou delay? There are all things imaginable in him to draw thee: there is nothing that is good for thee, but it is perfectly in him; where thou mayst have it certain and perpetuated. There is nothing in him to give the least discouragement: let all the devils in hell, and all the enemies of God on earth, say the worst they can against his majesty, and they are not
able to find the smallest blemish in his absolute holiness, and wisdom, and goodness: and yet wilt thou delay to turn?

2. Consider also, as to whom, so to what it is that thou must turn. Not to uncleanness, but unto holiness: not to the sensual life of a beast, but to the noble, rational life of a man, and the more noble, heavenly life of a believer: not to an unprofitable, worldly toil, but to the most gainful employment that ever the sons of men were acquainted with: not to the deceitful drudgery of sin, but to that "godliness which is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come;" 1 Tim. iv. 8. Sirs, do you know what a life of holiness is? You do not know it, if you turn away from it: I am sure if you knew it, you would never fly from it, no, nor endure to live without it. Why, a life of holiness is nothing but a living unto God, to be conversant with him, as the wicked are with the world, and to be devoted to his service, as sensualists are to the flesh. It is to live in the love of God and our Redeemer; and in the foretastes of his everlasting glory, and of his love; and in the sweet forethoughts of that blessed life that shall never end; and in the honest, self-denying course that leadeth to that blessedness. A godly life is nothing else but a sowing the seed of heaven on earth; and a learning in the school of Christ, the songs of praise which we must use before the throne of God; and by suffering, a learning how to triumph and reign with Christ. And is there any thing in this life which you have cause to be afraid of? The sins and weaknesses of the godly are contrary to godliness; and therefore godliness is no more dishonoured by them, than health and life are dishonoured by your sicknesses. As health is never the worse to be liked, but the better, because of the painful grievousness of sickness, so godliness is to be liked the better, because the very failings of the saints are so grievous. If a true believer do but step out of the way of God, he is wounded, he is out of joint, he is as undone till he come in again; though it was but in one particular. And can you endure to continue strangers to it altogether so long? I know you may find faults in the godly, till they are perfect; but let the most malicious enemy of Christ on earth find any fault in godliness if he can.

Can you delay to come into your Father's family; into the vineyard of the Lord; into the kingdom of God on earth,
to be fellow-citizens of the saints, and of the household of God; to have the pardon of all your sins, and the sealed promise of everlasting glory? Why, sirs, when you are called on to turn, you are called to the porch of heaven, into the beginning of salvation. And will you delay to accept everlasting life?

3. Consider also, from what you are called to turn; and then judge whether there be any reason of delay. It is from the devil, your enemy; from the love of a deceitful world; from the seducement of corrupted, brutish flesh; it is from sin, the greatest evil. What is there in sin that you should delay to part with it? Is there any good in it? Or what hath it ever done for you that you should love it? Did it ever do you good? Or did it ever do any man good? It is the deadly enemy of Christ and you. That caused his death, and will cause yours, and is working for your damnation, if converting and pardoning grace prevent it not. And are you loath to leave it? It is the cause of all the miseries of the world, of all the sorrow that ever did befall you, and the cause of the damnation of them that perish. And do you delay to part with it?

4. Your delaying shews that you love not God, and that you prefer your sin before him, and that you would never part with it if you might have your will. For if you loved God, you would long to be restored to his favour, and to be near him, and employed in his service, and his family. Love is quick and diligent, and will not draw back. And it is a sign also that you are in love with sin; for else, why would you be so loath to leave it? He that would not leave his sin, and turn to God, till the next week, or next month, or year, would never turn if he might have his desire. For that which makes you desirous to stay a day or week longer, doth indeed make you loath to turn at all. And, therefore, it is but hypocrisy to take on you, that you are willing to turn hereafter, if you be not willing to do it now without delay.

5. Consider, but what a case you are in while you thus delay. Do you think you stand on dry ground, or in a safe condition? If you knew where you are, you would sit as upon thorns, as long as you are unconverted; you would be as a man that stood up to the knees in the sea, and saw the tide coming towards him, who certainly would think that
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there is no standing still in such a place. Read what I have
said of the state of the unconverted, and in my first "Trea-
tise of Conversion." In a word, you are the drudges of sin,
the slaves of the devil, the enemies of God, the abusers of
his grace and Spirit, the despisers of Christ, the heirs of hell.
And is this a state to stay in an hour? You have all your sin
unpardoned; you are under the curse of the law. The wrath
of God is upon you; and the fulness of it hangs over your
heads. Judgment is coming to pass upon you the dreadful
doom; the Lord is at hand; death is at the door, and waits
but for the word from the mouth of God, that it may arrest
you, and bring you to everlasting misery. And is this a
state for a man to stay in?

6. Moreover, your delaying giveth great advantage to
the tempter. If you would presently turn and forsake your
sins, and enter into a faithful covenant with God, the devil
would be almost out of hope, and the very heart of his tem-
tations would be broken. He would see that now it is too
late. There is no getting you out of the arms of Christ.
But as long as you delay, you keep him still in heart and
hope. He hath time to strengthen his prison and fetters,
and to renew his snares. And if one temptation serve not,
he hath time to try another, and another. As if you would
stand as a mark for satan to shoot at, as long as he please.
What likelihood is there, that ever so foolish a sinner should
be recovered and saved from his sin?

7. Moreover, your delaying is a vile abuse of Christ, and
the Holy Ghost, and may so far provoke him, as to leave
you to yourself, and then you are past help. If you delight
so to trample on your crucified Lord, and will so long put him
to it by refusing his grace, and grieving his Spirit, what can
you expect, but that he should turn away in wrath, and ut-
terly forsake you, and say, "Let him keep his sin, seeing he
had rather have it than my grace; let him continue ungod-
ly, seeing he is so loath to be sanctified; let him take his
own course, and die in his sin, and repent in hell, seeing he
would not repent on earth?" You provoke Christ thus to
give you up.

8. Consider also, I beseech you, if you ever mean to
turn, what it is that you stay for. Do you think to bring
down Christ and heaven to lower rates, and to be saved
hereafter with less ado? Sure you cannot be so foolish.
For God will be still the same, and Christ the same, and his promise hath still the same condition, which he will never change; and godliness will be the same, and as much against your carnal interest hereafter as it is now. When you have looked about you never so long, you will never find a fairer or nearer way; but this same way you must go, or perish. If you cannot leave sin now, how should you leave it then? It will be still as sweet to yourself as now. Or if one sin grow stale by the decay of nature, another that is worse will spring up in its stead, and though the acts abate, they will all live still at the root; for sin was never mortified by age. So that if ever you will turn, you may best turn now.

9. Yea, more than that, the longer you stay, the harder it will be. If it be hard to-day, it is like to be harder to-morrow. For as the Spirit of Christ is like to forsake you for your wilful delays, so custom will strengthen sin; and custom in sinning will harden your hearts, and make you as past feeling, to work all uncleanness with greediness; Eph. iv. 19. Cannot you crush this serpent when it is but in the spawn, and can you encounter it in its serpentine strength? Cannot you pluck up a tender plant, and can you pluck up an oak or cedar? O sinners! what do you do, to make your recovery so difficult by delay? You are never like to be fairer for heaven, and to find conversion an easier work than now you may do. Will you stay till the work be ten times harder, and yet do you think it so hard already?

10. Consider also, That sin gets daily victorious by your delay. We lay our batteries against it, and preach, and exhort, and pray against it, and it gets a kind of victory over all, as long as we prevail not with you to turn. It conquereth our persuasions and advice; it conquereth all the stirrings of your consciences; it conquereth all your heartless purposes, and deceitful promises. And these frequent conquers do strengthen your sin, and weaken your resistance, and leave the matter almost hopeless. Before a physician hath used remedies, he hath more hope of a cure, than when he hath tried all means, and finds that the best medicines do no good, but the man is still as bad or worse. So when all means have been tried with you, and yet you are unconverted, the case draws towards desperation itself. The very means are disabled more than before; that is, your hearts
are unapter to be wrought upon by them. When you have long been under sermons, and reading, and among good examples, and yet you are unconverted, these ordinances lose much of their force with you. Custom will make you slight them, and be dead-hearted under them. And it is these very same means and truths that you have frustrated, that must do the work, or it will never be done. The same plaister must heal you that you have thrown off so oft. And what a sad case is this, that there is no hope left, but in the very same medicine which you have taken so oft in vain?

11. Moreover, age itself hath many inconveniences, and youth hath many great advantages, and, therefore, it is folly to delay. In age the understanding and memory grows dull, and people grow incapable, and almost unchangeable. We see, by our every day's experience, that men think they should not change when they are old, that opinion or practice that they have been brought up in, they think that they should not then forsake it. To learn when they are old, and to turn when they are old, you see how much they are against it. Besides, how unfit is age to be at that pains, that you can undergo. How unfit to begin the holy warfare against the flesh, the world, and the devil. God's way is, to list his soldiers as soon as may be, even in their infancy, which they must own as soon as ever they come to age. And the devil would not have it done at all, and, therefore, he would have it put off as long as may be. In infancy he will tell the parents, with the Anabaptists, 'It is too soon to be dedicated to God, and entered into covenant.' When they come to their childhood, and youthful state, he will then persuade them, that it is yet too soon; and when he can no longer persuade them that it is yet too soon, he will then persuade them that it is too late. O what a happy thing it is to come unto God betimes, and with the first! What advantage hath youth! They have the vigour of wit, and of body. They be not rooted and hardened in it, not filled with prejudice and obstinacy against godliness, as others be. Besides, the capacity of serving God, of which anon.

12. You have such times of advantage and encouragement, as few ages of the world have ever seen, and few nations on earth do enjoy at this day. What plain and plentiful teaching have you? What abundance of good examples, and the society of the godly? Private and public helps
are common. Godliness is under as little suffering as ever you can expect to see it; yea, it is grown into reputation among us, so that it is an honour to serve God, and a dishonour to neglect it, (as well it may). Our rulers countenance the practices of godliness; they proclaim themselves the forward professors and patrons of it, and take this as their glory. And this is not ordinary in the world. Seldom hath the church seen such days on earth. And yet is not the way to heaven fair enough for you? Yet are you not ready to turn to God? When should men make hay, but when the sun shines? Will you delay till this harvest-time be over, and the winter of persecution come again? Can you better turn to God, when a godly life is the common scorn of the country, as it was a while ago; and when every one will be deriding and railing at you? Or when it may possibly cost you your lives? Have you sun, and wind, and tide to serve you, and will you stay to set out in storms and darkness?

13. Moreover, Your delay doth cast your conversion and salvation upon hazard, yea, upon many and grievous hazards. And is your everlasting happiness a matter to be wilfully hazarded, by causeless and unreasonable delays? (1.) If you delay to-day, you are utterly uncertain of living till to-morrow. If you put by this one motion, you know not whether ever you shall have another. Alas! that ever the heart of man should be so senseless, as to delay, when they know not but it may prove their damnation, and when heaven or hell must certainly follow; that they dare put off a day or hour, when they know not whether ever they shall see another. (2.) And as your life is uncertain, so are the means uncertain by which God useth to do the work. He may remove your teachers, and other helps; and then you will be further off than before. (3.) And if both should continue, yet grace itself is uncertain. You know not whether ever the Spirit of God will put another thought of turning into your hearts; or at least, whether he will give you hearts to turn.

14. Moreover, The delay of conversion continueth your sin, and so you will daily increase the number, and increase your guilt, and make your souls more abundantly miserable. Are you not deep enough in debt to God already, and have you not sin enough to answer for upon your souls? Would
you fain have one year's sin more, or one day's sin more to be charged upon you? O if you did but know what sin is, it would amaze you to think what a mountain lieth already upon your consciences. One sin unpardoned will sink the stoutest sinner into hell. And you have many a thousand upon your souls already, and would you yet have more? Methinks you should rather look about you, and bethink you how you may get a pardon for all that is past.

15. And as this sin increaseth daily by delay, so consequently the wrath of God increaseth; you will run further into his displeasure; and possibly you may cut down the bough that you stand upon, and hasten even bodily destruction to yourselves. When you live daily upon God, and are kept out of hell by a miracle of his mercy, methinks you should not desire yet longer to provoke him, lest he withdraw his mercy, and let you fall into misery.

16. And do but consider, what will become of you, if you be found in these delays. You are then lost, body and soul, for ever. Now if you had but hearts to know what is good for you, the worst of you might be converted and saved; for God doth freely offer you his grace. But if you die in your delays, in the twink of an eye, you will find yourselves utterly undone for ever. Now there is hope of a change, but when delays have brought you to hell, there is no more change, nor any more hope.

17. Consider, That your very time which you lose by these delays, is an inconceivable loss. When time is gone, what would you then give for one of those years, or days, or hours, which you now foolishly trifle away! O wretched sinners! are there so many thousand souls in hell, that would give a world if they had it, for one of your days, and yet can you afford to throw them away in worldliness, and sensuality, and loitering delays? I tell you, time is better worth, than all the wealth and honours of the world. The day is coming, when you will set by time; when it is gone, you will know what a blessing you made light of. But then all the world cannot call back one day or hour of this precious time, which you can sacrifice now to the service of your flesh, and cast away on unprofitable sinning.

18. Consider also, That God hath given you no time to spare. He hath not lent you one day or hour, more than is needful for the work that you have to do, and therefore you
have no reason to lose any by your delays. Do you imagine that God would give a man an hour’s time for nothing? much less for to abuse him and serve his enemy? No, let me tell you, that if you make your best of every hour, if you should never lose a minute of your lives, you would find all little enough for the work you have to do. I know not how others think of time, but for my part, I am forced daily to say, ‘How swift, how short is time; and how great is our work; and when we have done our best, how slowly goeth it on!’ O precious time! What hearts have they, what lives do those men lead, that think time long; that have time to spare, and pass it in idleness!

19. To convince you more, consider I beseech you, The exceeding greatness of the work you have to do; and tell me then, whether it be time for you to delay. Especially you that are yet unconverted, and strangers to the heavenly nature of the saints, you have far more to do than other men. You have a multitude of headstrong passions to subdue, and abundance of deadly sins to kill, and rooted vices to root up: you have many a false opinion of God and his ways, to be plucked up, and the customs of many years’ standing to be broken: you have blind minds that must be enlightened with heavenly knowledge; and abundance of spiritual truths that are above the reach of flesh and blood, that you must needs learn and understand: you have much to know, that is hard to be known: you have a dead soul to be made alive, and a hard heart to be melted, and a seared conscience to be softened and made tender, and the guilt of many thousand sins to be pardoned: you have a new heart to get, and a new end to aim at and seek after, and a new life to live; abundance of enemies you have to fight with and overcome; abundance of temptations to resist and conquer. Many graces to get, and preserve, and exercise, and increase, and abundance of holy works to do for the service of God, and the good of yourselves and others. O what a deal of work doth every one of these words contain; and yet what abundance more might I name! And have you all this to do, and yet will you delay? And they are not indifferent matters that are before you; it is no less than the saving of your souls, and the obtaining the blessed glory of the saints. Necessity is upon you: these are things that must be done, or else woe to you that ever you were born: and yet have
you another day to lose? Why sirs, if you had a hundred miles to go in a day or two, upon pain of death, would you delay? O think of the work that you have to do, and then judge whether it be not time to stir!

20. And methinks it should exceedingly terrify you to consider, what abundance by such delays do perish; and how few that wilfully delay are ever converted and saved. Many a soul that once had purposes hereafter to repent, is now in misery, where there is no repentance, that will do them any good. For my part, though I have known some very few converted when they are old; yet I must needs say, both that they were very few indeed, and that I had reason to believe, that they were such that had sinned before in ignorance, and did not wilfully put off repentance, when they were convinced that they must turn. Though I doubt not but God may convert even these if he please, yet I cannot say that I have ever known many, if any such, to be converted. Sure I am that God's usual time is in childhood or youth, before they have long abused grace, and wilfully delayed to turn when they were convinced. Some considerable time I confess many have before their first convictions and purposes be brought to any great ripeness of performance; but O how dangerous is it to delay!

21. Consider also, Either conversion is good or bad for you: either it is needful or unnecessary. If it be bad, and a needless thing, then let it alone for altogether. But if you are convinced that it is good and necessary, is it not better now, than to stay any longer? Is it not the sooner the better? Are you afraid of being safe, or happy too soon? If you are sick, you care not how soon you are well: if you have a bone out, you care not how soon it is set: if you fall into water, you care not how soon you get out: if your house be on fire, you care not how soon it be quenched: if you are but in fears by any doubts, or ill-tidings, you care not how soon your fears be over. And yet are you afraid of being too soon out of the power of the devil, and the danger of hell; and of being too soon the sons of God, and the holy, justified heirs of heaven?

22. Consider also, Either you can turn now or not. If you can, and yet will not, you are utterly without excuse. If you cannot to-day, how much less will you be able hereafter, when strength is less, and difficulties greater, and bur-
dens more? Is it not time therefore, to make out to Christ for strength, and should not the very sense of your disability dissuade you from delay?

23. Consider, How long you have staid already, and put God’s patience to it by your folly; hath not the devil, the world and the flesh, had many years time of your life already? Have you not been long enough swallowing the poison of sin? And long enough been abusing the Lord that made you, and the blood of the Son of God, that was shed for you, and the Spirit of grace, that hath moved and persuaded you? Are you not yet gone far enough from God, and have you not yet done enough to the damming of yourselves, and casting away everlasting life? O wretched sinners, it is rather time for you to fall down on your faces before the Lord, and with tears and groans, to lament it day and night, that ever you have gone so far in sin, and delayed so long to turn to him as you have done. Sure, if after so many years’ rebellion, you are yet so far from lamenting it, that you had rather have more of it, and had rather hold on a little longer no wonder if God forsake you, and let you alone.

24. Have you any hopes of God’s acceptance, and your salvation, or not? If you have such hopes, that when you turn, God will pardon all your sins, and give you everlasting life, is it think you an ingenuous thing to desire to offend him yet a little longer, from whom you expect such exceeding mercy and glory as you do? Have you the faces to speak what is in your hearts and practice, and to go to God with such words as these? ‘Lord I know I cannot have the pardon of one sin, without the blood of Christ, and the riches of thy mercy; nor can I be saved from hell without it; but yet I hope for all this from thy grace; I beseech thee let me live a little longer in my sins, a little longer let me trample on the blood of Christ, and despise thy commands, and abuse thy mercies; a little longer let me spit in the face of thy goodness, and prefer the flesh and the world before thee, and then pardon me all that ever I did, and take me into glory.’ Could you for shame put up such a request to God as this? If you could, you are past shame; if not, then do not practise and desire that, which you cannot for shame speak out and request.

25. Moreover, it is an exceeding advantage to you, to come in to God betimes, and an exceeding loss that you will
suffer by delay, if you were sure to be converted at last. If you speedily come in, you may have time to learn, and get more understanding in the matters of God, than else can be expected; for knowledge will not be had but by time and study. You may also have time to get strength of grace, when young beginners can expect no more than an infant's strength; you may grow to be men of parts and abilities, to be useful in the church, and profitable to those about you, when others cannot go or stand, unless they lean on the stronger for support. If you come in betime, you may do God a great deal of service; which in the evening of the day, you will neither have strength nor time to do. You may have time to get assurance of salvation, and to be ready with comfort when death shall call; when a weakling is like to be perplexed with doubts and fears, and death is like to be terrible, because of their unreadiness.

26. And did you ever consider, who and how many do stay for you while you delay? Do you know who it is that you make to wait your leisure? God himself stands over you with the offers of his mercy, as if he thought it long till you return, saying, "O that there were such a heart in them; and when will it once be? How long ye simple will ye love simplicity, and scorners delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn ye at my reproof;" Deut. v. 29. Jer. xiii. 17. Prov. i. 22. And do you think it wise, or safe, or mannerly, for you to make the God of heaven to wait on you, while you are serving his enemy? Can you offer God a baser indignity, than to expect that he should support your lives, and feed you, and preserve you, and patiently forbear you, while you abuse him to his face, and drudge for the flesh, the world, and the devil? Should a worm thus use the Lord that made him? You will not yourselves hold a candle in your hands, while it burns your own fingers; nor will you hold a nettle or a wasp in your hand to sting you; nor will you keep a dog in your house, that is good for nothing but to snarl at you, and bite your children, and worry your sheep; and yet God hath long held up your lives, while instead of light, you have yielded nothing but a stinking snuff; and instead of grapes, you have brought forth nothing but thorns and thistles; and while you have snarled at his children, and his flock, and done the worst you could against
him. And would you indeed put God to wait on you thus, while you serve the devil yet one day more? Must God as it were, hold the drunken the candle while he reels and spews? Must he draw the curtain, while the filthy wretch doth once more please his fleshly lusts? Marvel not, if he withdraw his supporting mercy, and let such wretches drop into hell.

And it is not God only, but his servants, and creatures, and ordinances, that all are waiting on you. The angels stay for the joy that is due to them upon your conversion. Ministers are studying, and preaching, and praying for you. Godly neighbours are praying and longing for your change. The springs and rivers are flowing for you; the winds blow for you; the sun shines for you; the clouds rain for you; the earth bears fruit for you; the beasts must labour, and suffer, and die for you; all things are doing, and would you stand still, or else do worse? What haste makes the sun about the world, to return in its time to give you light! What haste make other creatures in your service! And yet must you delay? Must God stay, and Christ, and the Spirit stay? Must angels stay, must ministers stay, must the godly stay, and the ordinances stay, and all the creatures stay your leisure, while you are abusing God and your souls, and others, and while you delay, as if it were too soon to turn?

27. Consider, That when you were lost, the Son of God did not delay the work of your redemption. He presently undertook it, and turned by the stroke of damning justice. In the fulness of time he came and performed what he undertook; he failed not one day of his appointed time. And will you now delay to accept the benefit, and turn to him? Must he make such haste to save you at so dear a rate, and now will you delay to be saved?

28. Moreover, God doth not delay to do you good. You have the day and night in their proper seasons; the sun doth not fail to rise upon you at the appointed time; you have the spring and harvest in their meetest seasons, the former and latter rain in season. When you are in want you have seasonable supplies; and when you are in danger, you have seasonable deliverance: and is it meet or equal that you should refuse to bring forth seasonable fruit, but still be putting off God with your delays?
29. Moreover, When you are in trouble and necessity, you are then in haste for deliverance and relief. Then you think every day a week, till your danger or suffering be past. If you be under the pain of a disease, or in danger of death, or under poverty, oppression, or disgrace, you would have God relieve you without delay; and yet you will not turn to him without delay. Then you are ready to cry out, 'How long, Lord, how long till deliverance come!' But you will not hear God when he crieth to you in your sins, 'How long will it be ere you turn from your transgressions, when shall it once be?' When you are to receive any outward deliverance, you care not how soon, the sooner the better; but when you are to turn to God, and receive his grace and title to glory, then you care not how late, as if you had no mind of it. Can you for shame beg of God to hasten your deliverances, when you remember your delays, and still continue to trifle with him, and draw back?

30. Your present prosperity, and worldly delights, are posting away without delay; and should you delay to make sure of better in their stead? Time is going, and health is going, youth is going, yea, life is going; your riches are taking wing, your fleshly pleasures do perish in the very using; your meat and drink is sweet to you little longer than it is in your throat. Shortly you must part with house and lands, with goods and friends, and all your mirth and earthly business will be done. All this you know, and yet will you delay to lay up a durable treasure which you may trust upon, and to provide you a better tenement before you be turned out of this? What will you do for an habitation, for pleasures and contents, when all that you have now is spent and gone, and earth will afford you nothing but a grave? If you could but keep that you have, I should not much wonder, that knowing so little of God and another world, you look not much after it; but when you perceive death knocking at your doors, and see that all your worldly comforts are packing up, and hasting away, methinks if you have your wits and sense about you, you should presently turn, and make sure of heaven, without any more delay.

31. Consider also, Whether it be equal, that you should delay your conversion, when you can seasonably dispatch your worldly business, and when your flesh would be provided for, you can hearken to it without delay. You have
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wit enough to sow your seed in season, and will not delay it till the time of harvest: you will reap your corn when it is ripe, and gather your fruit when it is ripe, without delay. You observe the seasons in the course of your labours, day by day, and year by year: you will not lie in bed when you should be at your work, nor delay all night to go to your rest; nor suffer your servants to delay your business; you will know your dinner-time and supper-time, day by day; if you be sick, you will seek help without delay, lest your disease should grow to be incurable. And yet will you delay your conversion, and the making sure of heaven? Why sirs, shall these trifles be done without delay, and shall your salvation be put off? In the name of God, sirs, what do you think of? Do you imagine that you can better suffer hell-fire, than hunger or nakedness? Or that you can better bear the loss of everlasting joys, than the loss of your commodities and provisions in the world? Sure, if you believe the life to come, you cannot think so. And can you have while for every thing, except that one thing, which all the rest are merely to promote, and in comparison of which they are all but dreams? Can you have while to work, to plough, and sow, and reap, and cannot you have while to prepare for eternal life? Why sirs, if you cannot find time yet to search your hearts, and prepare for death; turn to God, and give over eating, and drinking, and sleeping, and say, 'I cannot have time for these.' You may as wisely say so for these smaller matters, as the greater.

32. Moreover, if men offer you courtesies, and commodities for your bodies, you will not stand delaying, and need so many persuasions to accept them. If your landlord would for nothing renew your lease, if any man would give you houses, or lands, would you delay so long before you would accept them? A beggar at your door will not only thankfully take your alms, without your entreaty and importunity, but will beg for it, and be importunate with you to give it. And yet will you delay to accept the blessed offers of grace, which is a greater thing?

33. Yet consider, that it is God that is the giver, and you that are the miserable beggars and receivers: and therefore it is fitter that you should wait on God, and call on him for his grace, when he seemeth to delay, and not that he should wait on you. He can live without your receiving, but you
cannot live without his giving. The beggar must be glad of
an alms at any time, and the condemned person of a pardon
at any time; but the giver may well expect that his gift be
received without delay, or else he may let them go without it.

34. And methinks you should not deal worse with God,
when he comes to you as a physician to save your own souls,
than you would do with a neighbour or a friend, when it is
not for your own good, but for theirs. If your neighbour
lay a dying, you would go and visit him without delay: if he
fell down in a swoon, you would catch him up without de-
lay: if he fell into the fire or water, you would pluck him
out without delay: yea, you would do this much by a very
beast. And yet will you delay when it is not another, but
yourselves, that are sinking and drowning, and within a step
death and desperation? If a woman be but in travail,
her neighbours will come to her without delay; and yet when
their souls are in bondage to sin and satan, and a state of
death, they will let them lie there, year after year, and when
we desire them to be converted, here is nothing but delays.

35. If yet you perceive not how unreasonable you deal
with God and your souls, I beseech you consider whether
you do not deal worse with him, than you do with the devil
himself. If satan or his servants persuade you to sin, you
delay not so long but you are presently at it. You are ready
to follow every tippling companion or gamester that puts up
the finger: you are ready to go as they invite you: the very
sight of the cup doth presently prevail with the drunkard,
and the sight of his filthy mate prevaileth with the fornicat-
ator; and sin can be presently entertained without delay.
But when God comes, when Christ calls, when the Spirit
moveth, when the minister persuadeth, when conscience is
convinced, we can have nothing after all but wishes and pur-
poses, and promises, with delays. O what a stomach hath
that man, or what a brain, that will snatch at poison, and
swallow dung and dirt with greediness, without any chewing:
and when you offer him meat, stands sighing and looking at
it, and hardly will be persuaded to put it in his mouth, and
if he do, he is chewing it so long, that at last he even spits
it out again, and cannot get it down. Thus deal ungodly
wretches, between their poisonous sins, and the saving means
and grace of Christ.

Nay, more than this, so eager are they on their sin, that
we are not able to entreat them to delay it. When the passionate man is but provoked, we cannot persuade him to delay his railing language so long as to consider first of the issue. We cannot entreat the drunkard to put off his drunkenness but for one twelve-month, while he trieth another course: all the ministers in the country, cannot persuade the worldling to forbear his worldliness, and the proud persons their pride, and the ungodly person his ungodliness, for the space of one month, or week, or day. And yet when God hath a command, and a request to them, to turn to him, and be saved, here they can delay without our entreaty.

36. Consider also, that it is not possible for you to turn too soon; nor will you ever have cause to repent of your speediness. Delay may undo you, but speedy turning can do you no harm. I wonder what hurt you think it can do you, to be quickly reconciled to God! And why then should there be any delay, where it is not possible to be too hasty? Do you think that there is ever a saint in heaven, yea, or on earth, that is sorry that he staid not longer unconverted? No, you shall never hear of such a repentance from the mouth of any that is indeed converted.

37. But I must tell you on the contrary side, that if ever you be so happy as to be converted, you will repent it, and an hundred times repent it, that you delayed so long before you yielded. O how it will grieve you when your hearts are melted with the love of God, and are overcome with the infinite kindness of his pardoning, saving grace; that ever you had the hearts to abuse such a God, and deal so unkindly with him, and stand out so long against that compassion that was seeking your salvation! O how it will grieve your hearts to consider, that you have spent so much of your lives in sin, for the devil, and the flesh, and the deceitful world! O you would think with yourselves, 'Was not God more worthy of my youthful days? Had I not been better to have spent it in his service and the work of my salvation?' Alas! that I should waste such precious days, and now be so far behindhand as I am! Now I want that faith, that hope, that love, that peace, that assurance, that joy in the Holy Ghost which I might have had if I had spent those years for God, which I spent in the service of the world and the flesh. Then I might have had the comfort of a well-spent life, and with joy have now looked back upon those
days, and seen the good I have done to others, and the honour I had brought to God; whereas I must now look back upon all those years with sorrow, and shame, and anguish of mind.' You will think to yourselves then a hundred times, 'O that I had but that time again to spend for God, which I spent for sin, and to use for my soul, which I wasted for my brutish flesh!' Believe it, sirs, if ever you be converted, you must look for these repenting sorrows for all your delays, (and that is the best that can come of it). And who would now wilfully make work for sorrow?

38. And I pray you consider, whether it belongs of right to God or you, to determine of the day and hour of your coming in? It is he that must give you the pardon of your sins: and doth it not then belong to him to appoint the time of your receiving it? You cannot have Christ and life without him. It is he that must give you the kingdom of heaven; and is he not worthy then to appoint the time of your conversion, that you may be made partakers of it? But if he say, 'To-day,' dare you say, 'I will stay till to-morrow?'

39. Nay, consider whether God or you be likelier to know the meetest time. Dare you say that you know better when to turn than God doth? I suppose you dare not. And if you dare not say so, for shame let not your practice say so. God saith, 'To-day, while it is called to-day, hear my voice, and harden not your hearts.' And dare you say, 'It is better to stay one month longer, or one day longer?' God saith, 'Behold, this is the accepted time! Behold, this is the day of salvation;' 2 Cor. vi. 2. And will you say, 'It is time enough to-morrow? Do you know better than God? If your physician do but tell you in a pleurisy, or a fever, you must let blood this day before to-morrow, you will have so much reason as to submit to his understanding, and think that he knows better than you. And cannot you allow as much to the God of wisdom?

40. Consider also, that the speediness of your conversion when God first calls you, doth make you the more welcome, and is a thing exceeding pleasing to God. Our proverb is, 'A speedy gift is a double gift.' If you ask any thing of a friend, and he give it you presently, and cheerfully at the first asking, you will think you have it with a good will: but if he stand delaying first, and demurring upon it, you will think you have it with an ill-will, and that you owe him
the smaller thanks. If a very beggar at your door must stay long for an alms, he will think he is the less beholden to you. How much more may God be displeased, when he must stay so long for his own, and that for your benefit? God loveth a cheerful giver, and consequently a cheerful obeyer of his call. And if it be hearty and cheerful, it is the likelier to be speedy without such delays.

41. And I would desire you but to do with God as you would be done by. Would you take it well of your children if they should tear all their clothes, and cast their meat to the dogs, and tread it in the dirt, and when you entreat them to give over, they will not regard you? Would you stand month after month, entreating and waiting on them, as God doth on you, in a more foolish course? Or rather, would you not either soundly whip them, or take their meat from them, till hunger teach them to use it better? If your servant will spend the whole day and year in drinking and playing when he should do your work, will you wait on him all the year with entreaties, and pay him at last, as if he had served you? And can you expect that God should deal so by you?

42. And consider I pray you, that your delay is a denial, and so may God interpret it. For the time of your turning is part of the command. He that saith, 'Turn,' saith, 'Now,' even 'To-day,' without delay. He giveth you no longer day. If time be lengthened, and the offer be made again and again, that is more than he promised you, or you could have promised yourselves. His command is, 'Now, Return and Live.' And if you refuse the time, the present time, you refuse the offer, and forfeit the benefit. And if you knew but what it is to give God a denial in such a case as this, and what a case you were in if he should turn away in wrath, and never come near you more, you would then be afraid of jesting with his hot displeasure, or dallying with the Lord.

43. Methinks you should remember, that God doth not stay thus on all as he doth on you. Thousands are under burning and despair, and past all remedy, while patience is waiting yet upon you. Can you forget that others are in hell at this very hour, for as small sins as those that you are yet entangled, and linger in? Good Lord, what a thing is a senseless heart! That at the same time when millions are in misery for delaying or refusing to be converted, their successors should fiercely venture in their steps. Surely if
faith had but opened your ears, to hear the cries of those damned souls, you durst not imitate them by your delays.

44. And I must tell you, that God will not always thus wait on you, and attend you by his patience, as hitherto he hath done. Patience hath his appointed time. And if you outstay that time, you are miserable wretches. I can assure you, sirs, the glass is turned upon you; and when it is run out, you shall never have an hour of patience more. Then God will no more entreat you to be converted. He will not always stand over you with salvation, and say, 'O that this sinner would repent and live! O that he would take the mercies that I have provided for him!' Do not expect that God should do thus always with you; for it will not be.

45. Your delays do weary the servants of Christ that are employed for your recovery. Ministers will grow weary of preaching to you, and persuading you. When we come to men that were never warned before, we come in hopes that they will hear and obey; and this hope puts life and earnestness into our persuasions. But when we have persuaded men but a few times in vain, and leave them as we found them, our spirits begin to droop and flag. Much more when we have preached and persuaded you many years, and still you are the same, and are but where you were. This dulls a minister's spirit, and makes him preach heavily and coldly, when he is almost out of heart and hope. I do not justify ministers in this, and say, they should do thus. I know they should not; and if they were perfect, I know they would not. But they are but men, and imperfect themselves; and what man is able to be lively and fervent in his work when people stir not, and he sees no good done on the miserable hearers, as if he had the encouragement of success? O when we do but see the hearts of hardened, stubborn sinners relent, and break, and melt before the power of the word; and when we hear them cry out for Christ and mercy, and cry out against themselves for their former folly, and confess their sins, and ask us what they shall do to be saved, and are but willing to be ruled by Christ, the Physician of their souls; this would put life into a preacher that was cold and dull; this would even make a stone to speak. But when we tell men of God's threatenings till they are past believing them, and tell them of God's anger till they
seem to be past fearing it, and tell them of the plague of
sin, till they are past feeling; when, instead of preaching
men to faith, and repentance, and fear, and tenderness of
heart, we preach them into greater unbelief and carelessness,
and dead stupidity; this is enough to dull or break the heart
of almost any preacher in the world. What man is able to
follow so fruitless a work with liveliness? And then it is
you that will have the loss and danger of it: when you have
dried the breasts the child may famish. If your preachers
could not awake, and change you with all their convincing
arguments and fervency, how quietly may you sleep on,
when you have flattened them by discouragements. If sa-
tan can either dismount, or make useless these cannons that
were wont to batter his garrison, he may then possess your
souls in peace. You talk against persecutors that silenced
ministers; but O, sirs, it is you that are our greatest per-
secutors, that refuse and delay to yield to the calls of Christ
by our ministry, and make us labour so much in vain.
Though it be not vain as to our own souls, yet you make it
in vain as to yours. When we have studied till we almost
break our brains, and preached till we have quite broke our
strength, and we are consumed, and worn away with labour
and bodily pains that it procureth, then you come after, and
make us requital by breaking our hearts by your delays, and
refusing to turn and live. Truly, sirs, I must tell you for
my own part, that if it had not been for those that gave me
better encouragement by their obedience, I should never
have held out with you a quarter of this time. If all had
profited as little as some, and all had stuck as fast in an un-
converted state as some; if the humble, penitent, obedient
ones among you had not been my comfort and encourage-
ment under Christ, I had been gone from you many a year
ago, I could never have held out till now. Either my cor-
rupation would have made me run away with Jonas, or my
judgment would have commanded me to shake off the dust
off my feet, as a witness against you, and depart. But to
what end do I speak all this to you? to what end? Why,
to let you see how you abuse both God and man by your
delays and disobedience. You cannot possibly do us, that
are your teachers, a greater injury or mischief than by thus
delaying your own happiness. Are our studies and our la-
bours worth nothing, think you? Are our watchings and
waiting worth nothing? Are our prayers, and tears, and groans to be despised? God will not despise them if you do. Believe it, he will set them all on your score, and you will one day have a heavy reckoning of them, and pay full dear for them. Is it equal dealing with us, that when we are watching for your souls, as men that must know we must give an account, you should rob us of our comfort, and make us do it with sighs and sorrow? Heb. xiii. 17. Yea, that you should undo all that we are doing, and make us lose our labour and hopes. And yet do you not think to pay for this? I tell you again, unconverted sinners, we are wearied with your delays. Many years we have been persuading you but to turn and live, and yet you are unturned; you have been convinced long, and thinking on it, and wishing long, and talking of it, and promising long, and yet it is undone, and here is nothing but delays. We see while you delay, death takes away one this week, and another the next week, and you are passing into another world apace; and yet those that are left behind will take no warning, but still delay. We see that satan delays not while you delay. He is day and night at work against you. If he seem to make a truce with you, it is that he may be doing secretly while you suspect him not. We see that sin delayeth not while you delay. It is working like poison, or infection in your bodies, and seizing upon your vital powers; it is every day blinding you more and more; it is hardening your hearts more, and searing up your consciences to bring you past all feeling and hope. And must we stand by and see this miserable work with our people's souls, and all be frustrate, and rejected by themselves, that we do for their deliverance? How long must we stand by with the light in our hands, while you are serving the flesh, and neglecting that which we are sent to call you to? It is not our business to hold you the candle to play by, or to sleep by, or to sin by; these are works that better agree with the dark. But God sent us to you on another message; even to light you out of your sins to him, that you might be saved. Truly, beloved hearers, I must needs say, that the time seems long, and very long to me, that I have been preaching so many years to you for conversion, and for a holy, heavenly life, even since I first knew you, and that yet so many of you are drowned in sin, and ignorance, and are unconverted, when I think your very
consciences tell you that it is a thing that must be done. I tell you all these years do seem to me a long time to wait on you in vain. Blessed be the Lord, that it hath not been in vain with some, or else I would scarce preach any more than one other sermon to you, even to bid you farewell. I pray you deal but fairly with us, and tell us whether ever you will turn or not; if you will not, but are resolved for sin and hell, say so, that we may know the worst; speak out your minds, that we may know what to trust to; for if we once knew you would not turn, we would soon have done with you, and leave you to the justice of God. But if still you say, you will turn, when will you do it? You will do it, and you hope you shall; but when? How long would you have us wait yet? Have you not abused us enough? Nay, I must tell you, that you even weary God himself, it is his own expression; Mal. ii. 17. Isa. xliii. 24. "Thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities;" Isa. i. 14. And I must say to you as the prophet, "Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but you will weary my God also;" Isa. vii. 13. Consider what it is that you do.

46. Consider also, that you are at a constant unspeakable loss every day and hour that you delay your conversion. O how little do you know what you deprive yourselves of every day! If a slave in the gallies, or prison, might live at court as the favourite of the prince, in honour, and delight, and ease, would he delay either years, or hours? Or would he not rather think with himself, 'Is it not better to be at ease, and in honour, than to be here?' As the prodigal said, "How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" All this while I might be in plenty, and delight.' All the while that you live in sin, you might be in the favour of God, in the high and heavenly employments of the saints; you might have the comforts of daily communion with Christ, and with the saints; you might be laying up for another world, and might look death in the face with faith and confidence, as one that cannot be conquered by it; you might live as the heirs of heaven on earth. All this, and more than this, you lose by your delays. All the mercies of God are lost upon you. Your food and raiment, your health and wealth, which you set so much by, all is but lost, and worse than lost, for they turn to your greater hurt. All our pains with you, and all
the ordinances of God, which you possess, and all your time, is lost, and worse. And do you think it, indeed, a wise man's part, to live any longer at such a loss as this, and that wilfully, and for nothing? If you knew your loss you would not think so.

47. Nay more, you are all this while doing that which must be undone again, or you will be undone for ever. You are running from God, but you must come back again, or perish when all is done. You are learning a hundred carnal lessons and false conceits, that must be all unlearned again; you are shutting up your eyes in wilful ignorance, which must be opened again. You must learn the doctrine of Christ, the great Teacher of the church, if you stay never so long, or else you shall be cut off from his people: Acts iii. 22. vii. 37. When you have been long accustoming yourselves to sin, you must unlearn, and break all those customs again; you are hardening your hearts daily, and they must again be softened. And I must tell you, though a little time and labour may serve to do mischief, yet it is not quickly undone again. You may sooner set your house on fire, than quench it when you have done: you may sooner cut and wound your bodies, than heal them again; and sooner catch a cold, or a disease than cure it. You may quickly do that which must be longer in undoing. Besides, the cure is accompanied with pain: you must take many a bitter draught, in groans or tears of godly sorrow for these delays: the wounds that you are now giving your souls, must smart and smart again, before they are searched and healed to the bottom. And what man of wisdom would make himself such work and sorrow? Who would travel on an hour longer, that knows he is out of the way, and must come back again? Would you not think him a madman that would say, I will go on a little further, and then I will turn back?

I know Mr. Bilney the martyr, was offended with this comparison, because he thought it was against free-grace. But comparisons extend not to every respect: there are two things in your sins to be undone; the one is the guilt, the other is the habit and the power of sin; the first indeed is done away when you are converted, but at the cost of Christ, which should not be made light of; and yet some scars may be left behind, and such twigs of God's rod may fall upon
you as shall make you wish you had come sooner in. And
for the habit of sin, though conversion break the heart of
it, yet will it live and trouble you while you live: and those
sins that now you are strengthening by your delays, will be
thorns in your sides, and rebels in your country, and give
you work as long as you live. And thus I may well say,
that you are doing that while you delay, that must be long
in undoing, and will not be undone so easily as it is done;
and you are going on that way, that must be all trod back-
ward.

48. And methinks if it were but this, it should terrify
you from your delays, that it is likely to make your conver-
sion more grievous, if you should have so great mercy from
God, as after all to be converted. There are very few escape
that are so exceeding long in travail; but if you come to the
birth, it is like to be with double pain. For God must send
either some grievous affliction to fire and frighten you out of
your sins, or else some terrible gripes of conscience that shall
make you groan and groan again, in the feeling of your folly.
The pangs and throes of conscience, in the work of con-
version, are far more grievous in some, than in others. Some
are even on the rack, and almost brought beside their wits,
and the next step to desperation, with horror of soul, and
the sense of the wrath of God; so that they lie in doubts
and complaints many a year together, and think that they
are even forsaken of God. And to delay your conversion,
is the way to draw on either this or worse.

49. Consider also, That delays are contrary to the very
nature of the work, and the nature of your souls themselves.
If indeed, you ever mean to turn, it is a work of haste, and vio-
ence, and diligence, that you must needs set upon. "You
must strive to enter in, for the gate is strait, and the way is
narrow, that leads to life, and few there be that find it. Ma-
ny shall seek to enter, and shall not be able;" Luke xxxiii.
24, 25. "When once the master of the house is risen up,
and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without,
and knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, he
shall answer, I know you not whence you are; depart from
me, all ye workers of iniquity;" ver. 27. It is a race that
you are to run, and heaven is the prize. "And you know
that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the
prize; and therefore you must so run, as that you may win
and obtain;” 1 Cor. ix. 24, 25. And what is more contrary to this than delay? You are soldiers in fight, and your salvation lieth on the victory; and will you trifle in such a case, when death or life is even at hand? You are travellers to another world, and will you stay till the day is almost past before you will begin your journey? Christianity is a work of that infinite consequence, and requireth such speedy and vigorous dispatch, that delay is more unreasonable in this than any thing in the world.

And besides, your souls are spirits of an excellent, active nature, that will not be kept idle: and therefore delay is unsuitable to their excellency. The best and noblest creatures are most active: the basest are most dull, and unfit for action. The earth will stand still: you may easily keep clods and stones from moving; but fire and winds that are purer things, and the sun, and such nobler, sublimer creatures, you are not able to keep idle for an hour. Who can cause the sun to delay its course? or who can stay the ascending flames? And therefore to your more excellent, immortal souls, and that in a work that must needs be done, how exceeding unsuitable are delays!

50. If all this will not serve turn, let me tell you, That while you are delaying, your judgment doth not delay; and that when it comes, these delays will multiply your misery, and the remembrance of them will be your everlasting torment. Whatever you are thinking of, or whatever you are doing, your dreadful doom is drawing on apace, and misery will overtake you before you are aware. When you are in the alehouse, little thinking of damnation, even then is your damnation coming in haste; when you are drowned in the pleasures, or cares of the world, your judgment is still hastening: you may delay, but it will not delay. It is the saying of the Holy Ghost, (2 Pet. ii. 3.) “Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.” You may slumber, and that so carelessly that we cannot awake you, but your damnation slumbereth not, nor hath done of a long time, while you thought it slumbered; and when it comes it will awaken you. As a man that is in a coach on the road, or a boat on the water, whatever he is speaking, or thinking, or doing, he is still going on, and hastening to his journey’s end, or going down the stream: so whatever you think, or speak, or do, whether you believe
it, or mock at it, whether you sleep or wake, whether you remember it, or forget it, you are hastening to damnation, and you are every day a day nearer to it than before; and it is but a little while till you shall feel it. "Behold, the Judge standeth before the door!" James v. 9. The Holy Ghost hath told you, "The Lord is at hand;" Phil. iv. 5. "The day is at hand:—the time is at hand:—the end of all things is at hand;" Rom. xiii. 12. Rev. xxii. 10. 1 Pet. iv. 7. "Behold, saith the Lord, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be;" Rev. xxii. 12. And do you, as it were, see the Judge approaching, and damnation hastening on, and yet will you delay?

And withal consider, that when it comes, it will be most sore to such as you; and then what thoughts do you think you shall have of these delays? You are unable to conceive how it will torment your consciences, when you see that all your hopes are gone, to think what you have brought yourselves to, by your trifling; to feel yourselves in remediless misery, and remember how long the remedy was offered you, and you delayed to use it, till it was too late. To see that you are shut out of heaven, and remember that you might have had it as well as others, but you lost it by delay. O then it will come with horror in your mind, 'How oft was I persuaded, and told of this? how oft had I inward motions to return? how oft was I purposed to be holy, and to give up my heart and life unto God? I was even ready to have yielded; but I still delayed, and now it is too late.' Then you shall pay for all your warnings, and all the sermons and motions which you lost.

And now having laid you down no less than fifty moving considerations, if it be possible to save you from these delays, I conclude with this request to you, whoever you be that read these words: That you would but consider of all these reasons, and then entertain them as they deserve. There is not one of them that you are able to gainsay, much less all of them. If after the reading of all these, you can yet believe that you have reason to delay, your understandings are forsaken of God; but if you are forced to confess that you should not delay, what will you do then? Will you obey God, and your own consciences, or will you not? Will you turn this hour without delay? Take heed of de-
nuing it, lest you have never such a motion more. You
know not, but God that calls you to it, may be resolved,
that it shall be now or never. I do beseech you, yea, as his
messenger I charge you in his name, that you delay not an
hour longer, but presently be resolved, and make an un-
changeable covenant with God, and as ever you would have
favour in that day of your distress, delay not now to accept
his favour in the day of your visitation. O what a
blessed family were that, which, upon the reading of this,
would presently say, 'We have done exceeding foolishly in
delaying so great a matter so long. Let us agree together
to give up ourselves to God, without any more delay. This
shall be the day; we will stay no longer. The flesh, and
the world, and the devil, have had too much already. It is
a wonder of patience that he hath borne with us so long.
We will abuse the patience of God no longer, but begin to
be absolutely his this day.' If this may be the effect of
these exhortations, you shall have the everlasting blessing:
but if still you delay, I hope I am free from the guilt of your
blood.

Direct. XII. The last Direction that I shall give you,
for preventing your miscarriage in the work of conversion,
is this, 'Stop not in weak and wavering purposes and faint
attempts; but see that you be groundedly, unreservedly,
and habitually (or firmly) resolved.'

There are many good thoughts and meanings in the soul
before resolution; but you are not truly converted till you
are resolved, and thus resolved as is here expressed. Here
I shall shew you, 1. What this resolution is. II. Why it is
so necessary. III. I shall urge you to resolve. And IV. I
shall direct you in it.

1. Resolution is the firm or prevalent determination of
the will upon deliberation.

In opening this definition, I shall first shew you how we
are led up to resolution by deliberation; and 2. What is
this deliberation of the will.

1. There are several steps, by which the will doth rise up
to resolution, which I shall set before you. And first it is
presupposed, that in the state of corrupted nature, the soul
is unresolved for God, if not (in many that are exceeding
wicked) resolved against him. At first the sinner doth ei-
ther resolve to be as he is, or else he hath no resolution to return. But God breaks many a wicked resolution, or else woe to the ungodly; for there were no hope. Many wicked wretches have not only neglected their souls, but also resolved that they would never lead a holy life, nor ever join themselves to the communion of saints, nor ever leave their drunken company, or be so precise, and make so great a matter of sin as the godly do. When we urge them with the plainest words of God, and the most unquestionable reasons, so that they have not a word of sense to speak against it; when we have told them of the command of God, and told them of the certain danger of their souls, they will plainly tell us that they are resolved never to be so precise. When they have nothing else to say, but nonsense, they will put us off with this, That they are resolved to venture their souls without so much ado. But as resolute as they are, God will break and change their resolution, and make them as much resolved of the clean contrary, if ever he will save them. For woe to them that ever they were born, if he should take them at their word, and resolve as they resolve!

Now in this case there are many degrees that men go through, before they come to be resolved for God.

1. The first thing that usually befalleth such a soul, is, some further light, which shews him that which before he understood not. 2. This light causeth him to begin to doubt whether all be so well with him as he thought it had been; and whether he were so wise in his former resolutions as he thought himself. 3. When light hath bred these doubtings in his mind, these doubtings breed some fears with him, and he begins to be a little awakened, lest evil be nearer him than he was aware of, and lest the threatenings of God and his ministers should prove true. 4. These fears do drive him to consider of the matter, and to deliberate what he is best to do: to consider whether these things be so or not, and what course he must take if they should prove true. 5. Though sometimes God may bless the very first considerations to be the present means of true conversion, yet that is no usual thing; but ordinarily the first considerations do help the mind to some slight convictions, so that the man begins to see a great deal more than he did before; and so much as puts him now past doubt that he was before mistaken, and out of his way. 6. Finding himself in this case
his fears increase, and his grief comes on for his former folly and he finds himself in a miserable case, and at a loss for a remedy. 7. By thus much he is quickened to a purpose or resolution, to hearken to those that can instruct him, and inquire of them that he thinks are in the right, and to use such means as he is acquainted with, to find out what he must do to be saved. And accordingly he goes among good company, and begins to hear more diligently and sensibly, and to mark and regard what he hears and reads, and also to cry to God in prayer for mercy and relief. But all this is but from the natural fear of misery, awakened in him by common preparing grace. 8. In the use of these means of grace, he begins better to understand and relish the doctrine of redemption by Jesus Christ, and the nature and necessity of true sanctification by the Holy Ghost. And though sometimes these evangelical illuminations may be special saving works at the first, yet it is more usual, especially with us that are bred up under the Gospel, to have a more superficial, common illumination, before the saving light come in. And by this common light, men have at first but a general glimmering and confused knowledge of a Saviour, and of redemption, and of mercy to be had by him. And sometimes they have a distinct knowledge of some parts only of the Christian faith, and sometimes a distinct knowledge and belief of every article; but only superficial, and not savingly effectual. 9. By this general or superficial knowledge of Christ and mercy, a kind of hope ariseth in the heart, that yet there is a possibility of escape, and a kind of comfort answerable to this hope. 10. These hopes are accompanied with some desires to understand yet more of the mystery of the Gospel; and to be made partakers of the saving mercy of which he hath a confused light. 11. And here-upon there is further kindled in the will a purpose or resolution, to go further on in learning, and inquiring into the will of God, and using his means. And 12. This purpose is performed, and means are further used. And thus far the soul is but in preparation, and under the common works of grace, and possibly may fall off and perish. The first degree may be so stifled, that it shall not reach unto the second; or the second so stifled, that it shall not reach unto the third: but the most common stop is at the third degree; when men are a little frightened, they will not follow it on to considera-
tion: and they that follow consideration diligently, do usually speed well, and get through all the rest.

But when the soul is brought thus far, if God will save it, he next proceeds to this much more: (1.) He giveth a clearer light into the soul, which giveth a more distinct, or at least a more piercing, convincing, deep and savoury apprehension of the essentials of Christianity, than he ever had before.

Where note, of this special heavenly light, 1. That being usually the consequent of a more common knowledge, therefore most ordinarily the sum of Christian doctrine is in some manner known before. 2. That it doth not reveal only some one point of faith alone, and then another, and so on; as if we savingly knew one essential point of faith, when we have no saving knowledge of the rest; for that is a contradiction. But finding all these truths received in the mind before by a common knowledge, the special light comes in upon them all at once; and shews us the anatomy of Christianity, or the part of God's image in one frame, as to the essentials. 3. For the understanding of which you must further know, that there is such an inseparable connection of these truths, and such a dependance of one upon another, that it is not possible to know one of them truly, and not know all. For example, believing in Jesus Christ, is an act so inseparable from the rest, that (if the essentials of Christianity be not essential to it) certainly you cannot do this without them. For to believe in Christ, is essentially to believe in him as God and man, two natures in one person, by office, the Mediator, our Redeemer and Saviour, to save us from guilt and sin, from punishment and pollution, and to give us by the Holy Ghost, a holy nature and life, and to give us the forgiveness of sin and everlasting life, and so to restore us to the mutual love of God here, and fruition of him hereafter; and all this as merited and procured by his death, obedience, resurrection, ascension, and intercession for his church. Whether here be all that is essential to Christianity, and absolutely necessary to salvation to be believed, I leave to consideration; but sure I am, that all this is essential to saving, justifying faith. And Christ is not taken as Christ, if he be not thus taken; for the ends thus enter the definition of his relation as the Redeemer, and Saviour, and Lord.

So that the love of God as our felicity and end, and the belief in Christ as the way, are both together in the same mi-
nute of time, which soever of them be first in order of nature; (which is a question that I dare not here so unseasonably handle).

(2.) Upon this special illumination of the soul, and the special consideration with which it doth concur, the deliberating soul is presently resolved. And in these two acts which always go together, consisteth the special sanctifying work: even in the illumination and estimation of the understanding, and in the true resolution of the will.

2. The determination of the will is its own free act, performed by its natural self-determining power, procured by the special grace of God, (I mean in this special case) it followeth deliberation. While we are unresolved, we deliberate what to resolve upon; that is, we are considering which is best and most eligible, and which not; and as we practically judge, we use to determine and to choose. And when this choice after deliberation is peremptory and full, it is called resolution.

So that my meaning is to let you understand, that when the matter of our faith is set open to the soul, it is not a wavering, fickle purpose, that is a saving closure with it, but it must be a firm resolution. Much less will it ever bring a man to heaven, to be thinking and deliberating what to do, as long as he is unresolved. And now I shall prove the necessity of this.

11. Till you are resolved, you are not converted, and that appeareth by these evidences: 1. If you are not firmly resolved, it is certain that you do not firmly believe; for such as your belief is, such will be the effects of it upon the will. An unsound opinionative belief, will produce but tottering, languishing purposes; but a firm belief will cause a firm resolution of the will. And if your belief be unsound, you must confess you are unconverted.

2. Moreover, if you do not esteem God above all creatures, and heaven above earth, and Christ and grace above sin, you are certainly unconverted. But if you have such a true estimation, you will certainly have a firm resolution; for you will resolve for that which you highly esteem.

3. If God have not your firm resolution, he hath not indeed your heart and will; for to give God your hearts and wills, is principally by firm resolving for him; and if God have not your hearts, you are surely unconverted.
4. Moreover, if you are not firmly resolved, your affections will not be sincere and steadfast; for all the affections are such as to their sincerity, as the will is, which doth excite or command them. And nothing is more mutable than the affections in themselves considered; they will be hot to-day, and cold to-morrow, if they be not rooted in the firm resolution of the will, which is the life of them.

5. Lastly, without a firm resolution, there can be no faithful obedience and execution of the will of God. For if men be not resolved, they will heavily go on, and lazily proceed, and easily come off; for their hands go to work without their hearts. It is the greatest work in all the world, that God calls you to; and none but the resolved are able to go through with it. Of which we shall give you a fuller account anon.

111. In the next place, let me entreat you in the fear of God, to look after this great and necessary part of your conversion. There are many degrees of good motions in the mind; but all that falls short of resolution is unsound. Many are brought to doubt whether all be well with them, and to have some fears thereupon, that yet will not be brought so far as to consider soberly of the matter, and deliberate what is best to be done, and to advise with their ministers for the furthering of their salvation. Many that are persuaded so far as to consider, and deliberate, and take advice, yet go no further than some cold wishes or purposes, which are all overcome by the love of the world, and the power of their sins. Many that do proceed to some kind of practice, do only take a taste or an essay of religion, to try how they can like it; and begin some kind of outward reformation, without any firm resolution to go through with it: or, if their purposes seem strong, it is but occasioned by something without, and not from a settled habit within. All these are short of a state of special saving grace, and must be numbered with the unconverted.

It is a common and very dangerous mistake, that many are undone by, to think that every good desire is a certain sign of saving grace; whereas you may have more than bare desires, even purposes, and promises, and some performances, and yet perish for want of resolution and regeneration. Do you think that Judas himself had not some good desires, that followed Christ so long, and preached the Gos-
pel? Do you think that Herod had not some good desires, that heard John so gladly, and did many things accordingly? Agrippa had some good desires, when he was almost persuaded to be a Christian. They that for a time believe, have sure some good desires, and more; Matt. xiii. 20. And so had the young man, that went away sorrowful from Christ, when he could not be his disciple, unless he would part with all that he had; Luke xviii. 23. Matt. xix. 22. And doubtless those had more than good desires, "that had known the way of righteousness, and had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21. And so had those, Heb. x. 26. 29. "that had received the knowledge of the truth, and were sanctified by the blood of the covenant;" and those, Heb. vi. 4—6. "that were once enlightened, and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come." And sure Ananias and Sapphira had more than some good desires, when they sold all, and brought half the price to the apostles.

Believe it, sirs, there are none of your desires or endeavours that will serve turn, to prove you in a state of grace, unless they be accompanied with firm resolution. Be it known to you, that you are unconverted, if you are not habitually resolved. And therefore I must here entreat you all, to put the question close to your hearts, 'Are you resolved, firmly resolved, to give up yourselves and all to Christ, and to be wholly his, and follow his conduct, or are you not?' The question is not, 'What good meanings, or wishes, or purposes you may have;' but, 'Whether you are resolved, and firmly resolved?' Take heed, sirs, what you venture your souls upon: God will not be dallied with, nor be deceived. He will have no unresolved, false-hearted servants.

Before I proceed to urge you further, I shall here tell you what kind of resolution it must be, that will prove a man converted; and then I shall give you such motives as should persuade you to it.

It is not all kinds of resolution that will serve turn; but it is only that which hath these following properties, that will evidence a state of grace.

1. As to the matter, it must be the whole essence of
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Christianity, that must be resolved on. It must be no less than a closing with God as your chiefest happiness, to be loved above all, and as your chiefest Lord to be obeyed before all; and a closing with Jesus Christ as your only Saviour, your Teacher, and your Lord; to bring your hearts again to God, and reconcile you to him; and a closing with the Holy Ghost as your Sanctifier, to make you a holy people, and cleanse you from all your sin of heart and life, and guide you by the ministry, word and ordinances, to everlasting life. Thus must you resolve to deliver up yourselves to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to be made a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Should you be never so resolute in some point of religion, and as Ananias to give God half, and to become half religious, and half holy, and half heavenly, this is to be but half Christians, and will not bring you half way to heaven. It is entire Christianity that must be resolved on.

2. You must also be resolved for present obedience, and to turn without any more delay; and not only resolve to turn to-morrow, or sometime hereafter. No resolution is sincere in this case, if it be but for the future; if you had rather stay but one day or hour longer in the state of sin, and service of the flesh, you are no true disciples of Christ, though you should be resolved to turn to-morrow.

3. And your resolution must be absolute and peremptory, not only without any secret reserves, but positively against any such reserves. Here it is that hypocrites commonly fall short. They see they must mend, and they are convinced that a holy life is necessary, and they resolve hereupon to change their course, and turn religious, but either it is with this secret reserve, 'Provided always that I look to my credit, or estate, or life, whatever I do; and provided that I go no further in religion than will stand with these; provided that godliness be not my undoing in the world.' Or else, if he have not actually such thoughts, he hath them always virtually and habitually: he is not resolved against such reserves; he hath not considered that Christ will have no disciples that cannot and will not part with all; and that if he hope for heaven, he must not look for a treasure on earth, but only pass through the world as a traveller, or labour in it as the harvest of the Lord, in expectation of a reward and rest hereafter; and so resolved to take Christ on these self-
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denying terms. But he that will be saved, must be thus resolved; even to sell all, to buy the invalu-able pearl; Matt. xiii. 46, 47. To make sure of heaven, though he lose all on earth by it; to lay up his hopes in the life to come, and venture and let go all rather than those hopes; to take Christ absolutely upon his own terms, for better and worse, as being certain that there is no other way to life, and that there is no danger of losing by him. The hypocrite is like a man that when he delivereth up possession of his house, will make his bargain that he will keep this room or that room to himself, for his own use. Or like a servant that will not be hired, but on condition that his master shall not set him to such and such work that he loves not; but Christ will have no such servants; you must deliver up all to him, or he will accept of none; you must give him leave to make his conditions for you, and tell yon on what terms you must serve him, and wholly refer the matter to him, even for life itself, and not offer to put conditions upon him, and think to bring him to any terms of yours. It is not true resolu-
tion unless it be absolute and unreserved, and against all reserves; yea, and that also as to perseverance; that you resolve to give up yourselves finally as well as totally, not only without any reserve of a revocation, but against any such revocation: it must not be a coming to Christ upon essay, or mere trial that if he like it he will stand to it, but he must make an unchangeable, everlasting covenant; it must be part of your covenant, that you will never revoke it.

4. Moreover, your resolution must be well grounded; you must know what the essentials are of that religion which you resolve on, and you must be moved to it by right and weighty considerations; and go upon reasons that will hold up your resolution. For should you resolve on the most necessary work (as this is) upon mistakes, or wrong, or insufficent, as the will of man, the custom of the country, the reputation of Christianity, or only such like; there is no likelihood that your resolution should endure, and it is not sincere while it doth endure.

5. Your resolution must be accompanied with a sense of your own insufficiency, to stand to it immutably, and execute it faithfully by your own strength; as knowing the corruption and deceitfulness of your own hearts. And it must be strengthened and supported by a confidence or de-
pendence on the sufficiency of Christ, on whose grace and Spirit you must rely, both for the continuing, and the performing of your resolutions; as knowing, that without him you can do nothing, but that you can do all things (necessary) through Christ strengthening you.

6. Lastly, your resolution is not savingly sincere, unless it be habitually. It is a very hard question, how far some moving exhortation, or the approach of death in sickness, may prevail with the unsanctified for an actual resolution; undoubtedly very far. But that is a man's mind and will which is habitually his mind and will. When the very inclination and bent of your will is right, then only is your heart right. A bowl may, by a rub, or bank, be turned contrary to the bias; but when it is over the rub, it will follow the bias again. So the soul is, when hindered from ascending a little while, but when it is got over the stop, it will be mounting upward. A stone will move upwards against its nature, while it is followed by the strength of the hand that cast it; but when the strength is spent, it will quickly fall again. It is not an extraordinary act, that you can try yourselves by, but such a free course and tenor of your lives, as will prove that you have a new nature, or a heart inclined and habituated to God. The main business, therefore, is, to prove that you are habitually resolved. Set all these together now, and you may see what resolution it is that must prove you to be converted. 1. It must be a resolution for all the essence of Christianity, and not only some part. 2. It must be a resolution for present obedience, and not only for some distant time to come. 3. It must be an absolute, peremptory resolution, without and against reserves for the flesh, both total and final, without and against any revocation. 4. It must be soundly grounded, and moved by right principles. 5. It must be joined with a humble sense of your insufficiency, and a dependence on Christ, for continuing and performing it. And 6. It must be habitual, and such as sets right the bent and drift of heart and life. All this is of necessity.

Well, sirs, you see now what you must do; the next question then is, What you will do. A great many of motions God hath made to you, to let go your worldliness and wickedness, and become new creatures, and live to God; and never could you be got to resolve and obey them.
Many thoughts you have had of it, I suppose, and long you
have been purposing that, turn you would, but all have come
to little or nothing, because you were never fully resolved.
I am once more sent to you on this message from God, to
see whether yet you will resolve. Whether, after all your
trifling delays, and after all your willful sinning, and abuse
of God's patience, against your own knowledge and conso-
ciences, you will yet resolve. What say you? Shall God be
your Master indeed? And shall Christ be your Saviour and
Lord? Shall heaven be your happiness, and have your
hearts indeed? Shall holiness be your business indeed, and
shall sin be your hatred, and the flesh, and the world be
your enemies indeed; and used accordingly, from this day
forward without any more ado? I beseech you, sirs, resolve,
and fully resolve.

And because I know if we prevail not with you in this,
you are undone for ever; and, therefore, I am loath to let
you go before we have brought you, if it may be, to resolve;
I will give you here some considerations to turn the scales,
and if you will but read them, and soberly consider of them,
I shall have great hope to prevail with you yet, after all.
One would think, that the fifty considerations under the last
Direction, might suffice. But lest all should be too little,
I will add these following:

1. Consider, I beseech you, what leisure you have had to
think of the matter. You have lived many years in the
world already, and you have had nothing to do in it, but to
seek after true happiness. Even your worldly labours ought
to have been all but in order to this; and yet are you unres-
olved? Alas, sirs, have you lived some twenty, some
thirty years and more in the world, and yet are you not res-
olved? What came you hither for, or what have you to do
here? Is it twenty, or thirty, or forty years, since you set
out, and should by this time have been far on your journey,
and are you yet unresolved whither to go, or which way to
go? as if you were newly entering the world, or as if you
had never heard of your business. I think so many years
are a fair time of consideration, and it is time to be resolved,
if you will resolve at all.

2. And I pray you consider, what helps you have had to
to have resolved you before this. If you did not know what
you had to look after, and which way to take, you should have
inquired; you had the word of God to advise with; and
many experienced Christians to advise with. You wanted
not for the wisest, faithfulest counsellors, if you had been but
willing and diligent, certainly you might have been resolved
long ago.

3. And consider, I beseech you, what a case it is that
you are unresolved in. Is it so hard a question, that all this
time, and all these helps cannot resolve you? What! whe-
ther God, or the flesh should be first obeyed, and loved? 
Whether heaven or earth, eternal glory or the transitory
pleasures of sin should be preferred? Whether you should
care and labour more to be saved from sin and hell, or from
poverty and worldly crosses and reproaches? These and
such like, are the questions to be resolved; and are these so
hard, that all the wit, and all the advice you can have from
Scripture and ministers, would not serve turn to help you
to a resolution, no, not in twenty or thirty years' time? O
wonderful! that ever the devil should be able so to be-
fool men! That reasonable creatures should be so phreneti-
cic, that they cannot be resolved whether it be better to be
saved, or be damned? Or whether sin, with hell after it,
be better than holiness with heaven after! The Lord have
mercy upon the poor distracted world, and bring some more
of them to their wits! We have wise men, if themselves
may be judges, very wise in their own conceit, that know
many great matters in the world, and yet do not practically
know whether God or the devil be the better master; whe-
ther sin or holiness be the better work, and whether heaven
or hell be the better wages! If they say they know these
things, judge by their lives whether they know them practi-
cally or not. Resolve they will not for God, and holiness,
and heaven, nor against the flesh, the world, and sin, what-
ever they may be brought to confess to their self-condem-
nation. Is it not a pitiful case, that such points as these
should seem so hard to reasonable men, as to be so long in
resolving of them?

4. And I pray you consider, how horribly by this you
disgrace your understandings. You that cannot abide to be
derided as sots and fools in the world, do yet abuse your-
selves thus grossly, as if there were never greater sots upon
the earth. We have proud men that are so high in their
own eyes, that they can hardly endure contempt from others,
and love almost none that think but meanly and dishonourably of them; and yet what a horrible contempt and dishonour do they cast upon themselves. If one of these, our wise neighbours, should study seven years to know whether the sea be fire or water; whether a mountain be heavy; whether the fire be hot or cold; and could not be resolved after so many years consideration, what would you think and say of these wise men? Why, sirs, it is far grosser folly, I tell you again, it is far grosser folly to be unresolved whether you should be holy or unholy; which is, in plain English, whether it be better to go to heaven or to hell. For faith and holiness is the way to heaven; and an unholy life is the way to hell. And if you will needs forsake the way to heaven, you may hope to come thither as long as you will; but you may as well hope to touch the moon with your finger, or run up and down with a mountain on your backs. And if you will hold on in the way to hell, that is, in an unsanctified state, you may say you hope for all that to escape hell, even as wisely as to leap into the sea, and say, 'I hope to escape drowning me, as well as you.' Sirs, I beseech you, do not abuse God, and abuse Christ, and the Spirit, and Scripture, and withal abuse your immortal souls for I know not what; for a stinking sin; for a thing of naught. Your souls are noble creatures, and your understandings are noble faculties. Why will you expose them to be the scorn of satan, and make them so base and sottish as you do? You can see the folly of a poor drunkard, that will make a beast of himself, and go reeling and talking nonsense about the street for the boys to hoot at him, and make himself the laughing-stock of the town. And, I pray you, why do you not understand, that till you are resolved for a holy, heavenly life, you are all drunk, while you think yourselves to be sober. You are as miserable as the other, and more in this, that yours is in your natures, and theirs is but an accident; yours is continued, and theirs (in that particular) but by fits. In the name of God, sirs, bethink you, whether you can possibly more disgrace your wits, than to be unresolved of a case as plain as the highway, and which your everlasting salvation or damnation lieth on. If one of you could not, in twenty years, be resolved whether the sun be light or dark, or the day or the night be fitter for rest; or whether it be better to plough and sow, or let all alone, and hope God will
give you a crop without labour; would you take this for a wise man? Again I tell you, your folly is more gross, that cannot all this while be resolved, whether you should cast away your wilful sins, and give up yourselves to Christ, and a holy life, to obtain the glory, and escape the misery that is hard at hand. If you stood up to the neck in water, or stood but in a storm of rain, you would not be so long in deliberating, whether it were better for you to stay there longer or come out. If your finger were but in the fire, you need not so long a deliberation, whether you should take it out. And yet these wise men are under many thousand unpardoned sins, and under the curse of the law of God, and within a step of everlasting fire, and have no way possible to escape, but by conversion, faith, and holiness; and this God hath told them, as plain as the tongue of man can speak, and yet they are considering of it, whether it be best to come out of it; and yet they cannot be resolved. Did I say they are considering? Nay, the Lord be merciful to them, they are so dead-hearted and besotted, that they do not so much as seriously consider of it, but even run on without consideration. Ah, poor wretches! they are ready to go to another world, and may look every day when the bell tolls for them, and when death will bring them to their endless life, and yet they have not wit enough to resolve whether they should make ready; no, nor wit enough in their most careless, worldly state, to know that they are unready. Death is coming, and judgment is coming, and the burning wrath of God is coming, and are even at the door; and yet these wise men are unresolved of that only way that is of absolute necessity to their safety; they must have more time yet to consider of the matter, whether it be best for them to turn or no. They stand at the very brink of hell; and yet they must further consider of it, whether it be better to turn back or go on. Nay, they will go on without consideration! And yet these men would take it heinously, if one should lay hands on them, and carry them to Bedlam, or but tell them of the hundredth part of the sottishness that they are guilty of.

5. And it is further considerable, that these men that are all this while unresolved about their conversion and sanctification, have wit enough to resolve of more doubtful and less necessary matters, without any such advising or delays:
and they are men of ordinary parts and capacities for the matters of this world. They can eat when they are hungry, and drink when they are thirsty, without a twelvemonth’s time to advise first on it. They can resolve to go to bed at night, and to rise in the morning, without a year’s or a day’s deliberation. If they have any thing to buy or sell, they will not deliberate upon it till the market be past; if they have land to plough, or their corn to sow, or reap, or mow, they will not take a twelvemonth’s time to pause upon it. They can quickly resolve upon every day’s business, their travels, their labours, and all their ordinary affairs. And yet these same men cannot resolve in seven years’ time, and seven to that, whether heaven or earth should be more loved and laboured for? Or whether a corruptible flesh, a wicked fancy, a greedy throat, should be pleased before the God of heaven, though the pleasing of them cost them the loss of their salvation?

Why, sirs, a man that is well in his wits, would think that these matters should be more out of doubt than the former, and more speedily resolved on. One would think it should be an easier question, whether you should turn to God and a holy life, for the saving of your immortal souls? than whether you should eat or drink, or sleep, for the preservation of your bodies? For I can, in many cases, bring some reason that should persuade you to forbear eating or drinking, or sleeping for a considerable time. But no man breathing can speak a word of reason (except men’s folly should be called reason) that should persuade you to forbear your conversion for a minute. And if you mistake about these bodily matters, the loss may be repaired, at least in the world to come. But if you die before you are resolved, and firmly resolved, to give up your soul and body to Christ, and live a holy, heavenly life, you are undone, body and soul for ever, and all the world can never save you.

O what a strange and horrible thing is it, that a man that hath the wit to manage his affairs as plausibly as any of his neighbours, that can overwit others in the matters of the world; that can govern towns and countries; that is learned in his profession, in law, in physic, in merchandise, in navigation, or any the like: I say that a man of so deep a reach, so plodding and active a wit as this, should yet be unresolved, yea, at thirty or forty years old be unresolved,
whether to be sanctified or unsanctified, whether to be holy and be saved, or be unholy, though God hath expressly said, that such shall not see the face of God; Heb. xii. 14. These are our wise men, these are too many (besides the ignorant countrymen,) of our gentlemen, our worshipful and honourable men, our great scholars, and men of noble or reverend esteem; that yet are unresolved, whether to be saved or to be damned. Though God hath written a Bible to resolve them, and a thousand books are written to resolve them, and preachers are studying and preaching to resolve them; and a thousand mercies are cast into the scales that one would think should help to turn them; and some sharp afflictions are helping to resolve them, and twenty or forty years' certain experience of the vanity of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and honour, and pleasure, and the unprofitableness of sin, one would think should resolve them; yet after all this they are unresolved whether they should presently let go their sin, and whether God or the flesh should be pleased or displeased? If this be the wisdom of these men, the Lord bless me and all his chosen from such wisdom!

6. Nay consider further of your unreasonable wickedness: are not many of your judgments resolved, when yet your hearts and wills are not resolved? I am confident, nay, I am certain it is so: you are at once both resolved and unresolved. What a confusion and war do you thus make in your own souls? The judgment is for one thing, and the will and affections are for another thing. What, are you not led by reason? Will you let out your affections, and lead your lives quite contrary to your knowledge? Would not most of you give it me as your judgments under your hands, that it is a thousand times better to cast away your drunkenness, your filthiness, your worldliness, and your known sins, than to keep them any longer? What say you? Are you not convinced that it were your wisest course to part with them this very day and hour? Undoubtedly many of you are. And yet for all this, will you not resolve to do it? Are you not persuaded in your own consciences, that it is better to die in a holy, and heavenly state, than in a loose, and careless worldly state? And that it were your safest and wisest course to become new men, and lead a holy, heavenly life without delay? Dare you deny this? Is it not your judgment? And yet will you not do it? Are you re-
solved that it should be done, and must be done, and yet
will you not resolve to do it? Why, what is this but to be
condemners of yourselves? To carry a judge about with
you in your own breasts, that is still passing sentence against
you? "Happy is he," saith the Spirit of God, (Rom. xiv.
22.) "that condemneth not himself in that which he allow-
eth." If your judgments be resolved, let your wills re-
solve, or else you are wilful adversaries of the light, and
fight against reason, and unman yourselves, and sinning wil-
fully against your knowledge, shall be beaten with many
stripes.

7. Methinks also, it should somewhat quicken you to
resolve, when you consider what a case you had now been
in, if death had found you unresolved. For if you are un-
resolved, you are unsanctified; and if not sanctified, you
are not pardoned, or justified; and, therefore, undoubtedly
you had been past all help, in endless misery, if you had
died all this while, before you were firmly resolved for God.
O what a dangerous, ticklish condition have you stood in
all this while? What wise man would live an hour in such
a case for all the world, for fear lest that hour should be his
last? And yet would you stay longer in it? and still are
you unresolved?

8. Believe it, Christ will not own you as his servants,
nor trust you, whatever promises you may make him, as long
as you are unresolved.

Who will take a servant that is not resolved to do any
service? Who will take an unresolved person if he knows
it, as a wife, or a friend, into his intimate love? And in-
deed you are not truly Christians till you are resolved to
take Christ for better and worse. Whatever state is short
of this, is also short of true sanctification, and will fall short
of heaven. Christ is resolved to stick to his servants, and
he will have no servants that be not resolved to stick to him.

9. And indeed if you be unresolved, as you are false-
hearted at the first setting out, so it is certain that you will
never go well on, nor endure to the end in case of trial, nor
can you do the business of a Christian's life, without reso-
lution. If you will be Christ's disciples, you must reckon
upon persecutions; you must take up your cross and follow
him; you must be hated of all men for his sake and the
Gospel's; and you must prepare for prison, and fire, and sword: there is no hope of being saved, while you purpose to save your pleasures, riches, liberties or lives; Matt. xvi. 25. Mark viii. 35. Luke ix. 24. And will a man that is unresolved forsake his friends, estate, and life for the sake of Christ and the hopes of glory? He cannot do it. I know that a carnal, ungrounded resolution may deceive a man in the day of trial, when the self-suspecting, fearful Christian may hold out; but yet without a humble, self-denying resolution, joined with an adherence to Christ for strength, there is no man will hold out. "If thou be a wavering-minded man, thou wilt be unsteadfast in all thy ways;" James i. 8. If thou be not resolved, the words of a man's mouth will turn thee out of the way; the very mocks and scorns of a drunkard, or a fool that hath no understanding in the matters of salvation, will make thee shrink and hide thy profession, and be ashamed of Christ, in whom alone thou hast cause to glory. If thou be not a resolved man, what better can be expected, but that thou turn as the weathercock with every wind, and fit thy religion to thy worldly ends, and as another Judas, sell thy Lord for a little money. If thou fall not away, it will be but for want of a trial to procure it; and therefore in God's account thou art gone already; because thy resolution was never with it.

When you turn to God, there will remain within you the remnants of your corruption, a body of death, a rebelling flesh; and this will be still tempting you, and drawing you from God. O how strong do these temptations seem to the soul that is unresolved! Yea, without a firm habitual resolution, it is impossible to overcome them. Your whole way to heaven is a continual warfare; you have enemies that will dispute every foot of the way with you. There is no going a step forward, but as the ship doth in the sea, by cutting its way through the waves and billows; and as the plough doth in the earth, by cutting through the resisting soil. There is self, which is your principal enemy, and there is satan, and the world, and almost all that you meet with in it, will prove your hinderers; and you must make your way by valour and holy violence through all: and will an unresolved man do this? You will scarce ever bow your knee to God in secret prayer, nor set yourselves upon serious meditations, but the flesh and the devil will be drawing you off;
you will never attempt a faithful reproof, a liberal work of charity, a hazardous confession of Christ, or any dangerous or costly duty, but the flesh and the devil will plead against it, and put you to it. And in these and in many such cases of your lives, you will never break through, nor do any good on it, without resolution. Do I need to tell you how hard the way of salvation is, that fly from it on mistake, because you think it harder than it is? Do I need to tell you how false you will prove to Christ, if you have not resolution; that you know it by your ordinary, miserable experience, that a poor temptation will make you sin against your knowledge? How many good wishes and purposes have you had already, in sickness, or at a lively sermon, that are all come to nothing, for want of a firm habituate resolution! What abundance of timeservers, and of chaffy professors are lately fallen off to the way of rising and riches in the world, or to the pride and giddy levity of dividers, that oppose the truth of God, and their teachers, and trouble the church, and all because they were never well rooted by a sound resolution! They that take Christ but upon liking, do usually dislike him when he calls them to self-denial; for they had never that conatural principle that should effectually dispose their souls to like him; nor had they ever the inward experiences of power and sweetness, which are proper to the sincere, and should increase their liking of him. Either resolve therefore, or stand by and perish.

10. I beseech you consider also, what abundance of clear undeniable reasons doth God give in to thee, to turn the scales, and cause thee to resolve. He fetcheth reasons from his own dominion and sovereignty. Should not a creature obey the Lord that made him? He reasoneth with you from his daily preservations. Do you live upon him, and should you not obey him? He reasoneth with you from his almightiness: you are all at his mercy, and wholly in his hands; and yet dare you disobey him? He reasoneth with you from his love and goodness; never did evil come from him; nor did he ever do any wrong; never was there man or angel that was a loser by him; it is not possible to have so good a master, and yet will you not obey him? He fetcheth reasons from all his mercies; every bit of bread is from him, and should be an argument with thee to obey him: every day's health, and strength, and comforts, and every
night's rest and ease; thy mercies at home, thy mercies abroad, in private, and in public; all should be so many arguments with thee to resolve. You cannot look upon a plant or a flower under your feet, upon the sun or a star that is over your heads, or upon any creature, but you may see so many reasons that should move you to resolve. If all these will not serve, he fetcheth yet stronger reasons from the incarnation, example, and blood of the Son of God: canst thou look on God incarnate for sin, combating with satan, and conquering for thee, and dying, and bleeding, and buried for thy sin: and yet be unresolved to leave that sin, and turn to him that hath bought thee by his blood? If all this will not serve, he reasoneth with thee from thy own benefit. If thou care not for God, dost thou care for thyself? Dost thou regard thy own soul? If thou dost, it is high time to resolve. He reasoneth with thee from everlasting glory. Is a certain kingdom, and everlasting glorious kingdom nothing to thee? Art thou content to be thrust out of that eternal inheritance? Is the filthy pleasure of the flesh for a few hours, better than the endless joys of the saints? He pleads also with thee from the danger that thou art near. Poor soul! thou little seest what others see, that are dead before thee. Thou little knowest what they feel, that died before they were resolved for God. He fetcheth his reasons from the certain and everlasting flames of hell; and is there not force enough in these for to resolve thee? Good Lord! what a thing is a senseless sinner! Dost thou believe heaven and hell as thou takest on thee to do? If thou dost believe them, is it possible for thee believingly to think of heaven and its eternal glory, and yet to be unresolved whether to turn or not? Or canst thou think of the endless miseries of the damned, and yet be unresolved whether to turn or not? Can any heart be so senseless or deluded?

Moreover, he pleadeth with thee from the equity and sweetness of his service. It is but to love him, and to seek his kingdom, and forbear those things that hurt thy soul. His commands are not unreasonable or grievous. Darest thou speak out and say, that sin is better, and that satan hath provided thee a better work than God hath done? He reasoneth with thee also from his wisdom and his justice. He tells thee, that as satan hath nothing to do with thee, and
as he is none of thy friends, and meaneth thee not so well as God doth, so he is not able to prescribe thee a more just and perfect law than God hath done. Follow God, and thou art sure thou shalt never be deceived or misled; for he wanteth not wisdom, or power, or goodness to be a meet lawgiver and guide: but if thou follow the devil, the world or the flesh, thou followest a blind and deceitful guide. And yet after all these reasons, art thou not resolved?

He reasoneth with thee also from thy own experience: What good hath sin done thee? and what hurt would holi-ness do thee? Yea, he reasons with thee from the experience of all the world. Who was ever the better for sinning? and who was ever the worse for holiness? How long will thy fleshly delights endure? What will this do for thee in thy extremity? Was ever man made happy by it? Thou knowest well enough thou must shortly leave it; and that it will forsake thee in thy greatest need; but so would not God, if thou hadst resolvedly given up thyself to him. All men that refuse a heavenly life, do sooner or later wish that they had chosen it.

Abundance of such reasonings God useth with thee in his word, and by his ministers; and dost thou think indeed that there is not weight enough in these to give thee cause immediately to resolve? How little or nothing canst thou say against them! Canst thou bring any reason, that is reason indeed, against these or any of these reasons of the Lord? Darest thou say, that ever a one of them is false or insufficient? And what are the reasons which you have on the contrary to hinder you from resolving? Forsooth, be cause your sins are sweet, you would fain have the pleasure of them a little longer yet. O wretched souls! that find more pleasure in the abusing of your Maker and Redeemer, than in loving, honouring, and pleasing him: that delight more in serving the flesh and the devil, than in serving God, and seeking after his favour and your own salvation! You are a hundred times madder than a man that lieth tumbling himself in his dung, and will not rise out of it to receive a kingdom, because it is so soft and so sweet that he is loath yet to leave it: you are more foolish than Nebuchadnezzar had been, if he had been loath to return again to his kingdom, because he would fain stay longer among the beasts of the field, among whom, in his distraction, he had betaken
himself; Dan. iv. 31—33. And what other reasons have you against resolving? Forsooth you shall be mocked or jested at by others; by whom I pray you? Not a man, but a miserable fool will do it. Yea, but you are told you must forsake all, and be ready to die for Christ, if he call you to it. Very true, and can you keep that which he calleth you to forsake? How long will you keep it? Silly souls! do you not know that you forsake it by not forsaking it, and lose all by saving anything, and that you have no way to save it, but by losing and forsaking it? Suppose you were by enemies banished out of England, and upon pain of death you must be gone within a twelvemonth; and a king that loveth you, inviteth you to his country, and tells you for the poor livings that you have lost, he will make you lords and princes, so you will bring with you the little goods that you have, and leave nothing behind you; hereupon one man takes the next wind, and ships over all his riches, that he may have it when he comes there; another saith, 'I am loath to leave my goods, I have a while longer to stay here, and what shall I do without them? I am loath to see the habitation of my ancestors impoverished;' and so when his time is expired, he is fain to leave them all behind him, and hath none that will receive him in the country where he is to abide. Which of these think you is the wiser man? Which of them was it that lost his goods, and which did save them? I speak to you but such another parable as Christ used to you himself, Luke xvi. 2—4. 9. where you are advised to send your riches before you; and to make you friends of the "mammon of unrighteousness, that when you die, you may be received into the everlasting habitations."

I know that there are other vain delusions that hinder you from resolving; I will not call them reasons, for they are unreasonable. I shall only say this to you, that if there be ever a man of you that heareth his words, that dare be such a blasphemer as to reproach the laws and image of his Maker, and say, That he hath made you too strict a law, and laid too heavy a task upon you, and a heavenly life is troublesome and unnecessary: if there be a man of you, that is so devilish, as that you dare plead the devil's cause, and justify his work before the Lord's, and say, that it is better to please the flesh; let that man prepare himself to make good these words before the Lord, and his holy angels; and be
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sure that he shall be there put to it in another manner than he is here by me. And if you have such reasons as you will stand to before the bar of God, to prove the devil the better master, and an unholy life to be better than a heavenly; see then that you look them up, and there make your best of them; and expect to live with the master that you served, and to reap as you sowed, and eat the fruit of your fleshly ways which you took to be the best. But if you have no such reasons, but your consciences are convinced that God should be served, and sin should be speedily forsaken, and heaven should be provided for above all; resolve then to do it before you stir: or else say plainly, I have no reason to be wicked, but because I will be wicked, I will forsake God, and damn my own soul without any reason, because I will do it. And if you are at this pass, you may take your course.

11. Another thing that I would entreat you to consider of, is this, It is a most base and treacherous abuse of God, to make any question of this which you are so long unresolved of. I confess, when a blind mind hath raised such a question, it is lawful for a reasonable man to answer it. But in him that makes a doubt of such a thing, as it is a shame to himself, so it is a heinous indignity to God. If you had a chaste and modest woman to your wife, I think she would take it for an injury, if you would but make a question of it, Whether she or a common whore be the honester woman? If your wife or children should bring before you a hobbyhorse or an ass; and make a great question of it, Whether you or the ass be the comelier or the wiser? how would you take this of them? If you should bring an idiot or a madman before your prince, and make a question, Whether he or they be the wiser man? Or if you set a rebel before him, and make a question, Which of them hath the better title to the crown? what entertainment might you expect? I tell you it is ten thousand thousand times a baser affront and wrong to God, to set the pleasure of sin before him, and make a question, Which of them is the better? And to set your riches, and your sports, and your drunkenness, and gluttony, and your whoredom, and your revenge, in competition with your Redeemer, and everlasting glory, and to make a question, Which of them is to be preferred? To make once a question, Whether God or the flesh should be pleased? Whether Christ or the world should be loved and
followed? Whether the Holy Ghost or the devil should dwell in us, and guide us? Whether the saints of God, or the servants of the devil should be our chosen company? Whether the word and ministers of Christ, or the examples and words of wicked men, should more prevail with us? Whether heaven or earth should be more carefully sought after? Whether a holy, or a careless, wicked life be more to be desired? Or whether it be better to turn to God or not? I say, to make such a question as this, or one of these is little better than to put a scorn upon the God of heaven; and savoureth of such malice as is more like a devil, than a reasonable man; or else of such folly as is below the devil, and as none of you would be guilty of in the matters of this world. If one should but make a comparison between you and some deformed monster, or between your house and a swinestye, though he gave you the better, I think you would take it as a scorn, that he should make such a comparison or question; much more may God so take it, when you make a question betwixt sin and him. There is but one infinite, unconceivable, perfect God, and shall he be abased by such a question? There is but one thing that is contrary to God in all the world, that is worse than the devil himself, and that is sin; and shall this be put in question or comparison with God? There is but one that hath loved us to the death, but with a matchless, unconceivable, saving love, and that is Jesus Christ; and there is but one thing that is a deadly enemy to us and him, and that would damn us, when he is endeavouring to save us, and that is sin; and must there be a question or comparison between these? There is one sanctifying Spirit, that would cleanse, and heal, and save us; and there is a malicious spirit that would deceive us, defile us, and destroy us; and must there be any question or comparison made between these? There is but one eternal happiness, and one holy way to it; and there is but one everlasting misery, and fleshly, filthy, sinful way to it; and must there be made any question which of these should be preferred? Consider I beseech you, what you do: and if it be so vile a thing to make any question of it, what is it then to be still unresolved? Yea, and to choose the worse part, and stick to it in your heart and life?

12. Consider also, that present resolution would put an end to a great many fruitless, troublesome deliberations and
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delays. If a man had but a weighty business of the world upon his hand, that his estate or life lieth on, it is a perplexity to him as long as he is unresolved what course he should take. It will be troubling him when he should rest, and break his sleep. It will fill him with musings, and disturb and distract his mind, and even make him melancholy. And how can it choose but be a troublesome, distracting thing to your mind, to be unresolved what course to take for your everlasting state? I know some hearts are so desperately hardened and past feeling (Ephes. iv. 19.), and some men's consciences so seared as with a hot iron (1 Tim. iv. 2.), that they can throw away all thoughts of resolution, and never be much troubled. But I hope that many are not so desperate. It is not thus with all that are unconverted. How long have some of your minds been troubled whether to turn or not? Resolve man, if thou love thy soul, and put an end to such troubles.

13. Consider also, that resolving will put an end to a great many of troublesome temptations that do assault you, and will break the heart of satan's hopes. As long as you are unresolved, he hath still possession of you, and is still in hopes to keep possession. And as long as he hath any hope, he will never give over, but will be repairing his garrison, and making up all the breaches that the ordinances of God had made. When one temptation takes not, he will be offering you another, and will be following and disquieting you day and night. But if once he see you firmly resolved, his hopes will fail him, and you may be much freer from his temptations than you were before. I do not say he will give over. For even when you are broken away from him, he will make after you again. But it is a greater advantage to you to fight against him in the open field, under such a captain as Jesus Christ, that will assure you of the victory, than to be in his own prison with his fetters on your heels. You know the way to be troubled with an unwelcome suitor, is to delay your answer, and take time to consider of it; and the way to be eased of him, is to give him a peremptory resolute answer. And when he seeth you resolved, he will cease.

14. Moreover, till you are resolved of your conversion, you cannot rationally resolve of any one word or action of your lives. Nay, till then they are all misemployed to their
hurt. For no man can resolve of the means till he is resolved of the end. You must resolve whither to go, before you can resolve which way to go. Before conversion men's end is wrong. Their intention and business is to please the flesh, and all their thoughts, and words, and actions, that have such an end, are wicked and pernicious. Till you are resolved by conversion to be for God, you have never a right end (in a prevailing sense), and, therefore, you cannot order one thought, nor word, nor deed aright. I tell you, every thought you think, and every word you speak, and every deed you do while you are unconverted, are so many steps towards hell, except only those that tend towards conversion, and some way further it. Resolve, therefore, of this, or you can resolve of nothing.

15. Moreover, if you would presently and firmly resolve, you would ease your friends and the ministers of Christ of much of their sorrows, and fears, and cares for you; and of much of the most troublesome part of their work. As long as you are unconverted, they can look on you but as the heirs of hell, that will be quickly in those torments, if conversion prevent it not; and, therefore, their hearts are full of sorrow for you, when you sorrow not for yourselves; and their care is, how they might prevent your damnation, which they know, without conversion, can never be done. Many a groan doth your misery cost them, and many a thought have they of your danger, which you are not aware of. O what a grief is it to believing ministers, to see so many of their people in the power of satan, and the highway to hell, after all their care and labour for their recovery. We cannot say that the unconverted shall certainly perish, because we have yet hopes that they may be converted, though they be not. But we know that if they die in the case that they are in, there is no hope of them at all, and we know they are uncertain to live an hour. And, therefore, as long as they are in this condition, how can we choose but be filled with fear, and grief, and care for them? All the troubles that befal a faithful minister in his worldly affairs, by crosses and persecutions, are nothing to the trouble that your sin and misery bringeth to their minds. O what a comfortable life were it for a minister to live with bread and water among a people that would obey the Gospel, and give us hopes that we should live with them in heaven! O how cheerfully may
we study for them, and preach to them, when we see that it is not lost upon them! How willingly should we prepare them the bread of life, when we see they feed and live upon it! How joyfully may we pray and praise God with them, when we think how much they must join with us in the celestial praises. O, sirs, I beseech you, grudge not your ministers this comfort. Do not destroy yourselves to grieve and trouble them. O put them once out of their fears and grief for you, by your resolving and speedy return to God. That they that have many a time thought in their hearts, 'I am afraid this poor sinner will never be recovered; I am afraid he will be a firebrand in hell,' may now rejoice with you when they see you coming home, and may meet you as the Father himself doth meet his prodigal children, and weep over you for joy, as they were wont to do in sorrow. You would ease our hearts of abundance of sad thoughts, if we could but perceive you once resolved, and see you come home. Now you think our preaching harsh to you, because we tell you so much of sin and damnation; and you think our discipline more harsh, when we refuse to have communion with you. But if you would once resolve and turn, how gladly should we open our doors and our hearts to you; and how gladly should we turn the stream of our preaching, and tell you of nothing but Christ, and heaven, and peace, and comfort, further than your own necessities should require it. What say you, sirs, to this reasonable request? Will you resolve without any more ado, and ease us of our grief and fears, and give us but leave to preach more comfortable doctrine to you?

16. Moreover consider, that you have much work to do when you are resolved and converted, and a great way to go when you have begun your journey towards heaven. And till you are resolved, none can be done. You can go no farther, till conversion have set you in the right way. Till then, the farther you go, the farther you are out of the way. Will you be unresolved till the night come on? Shall all the rest of your work be undone? Will you begin your race when you should be at the end? Alas! you should be able to say as Paul: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness;" 2 Tim. iv. 8. when as you cannot yet say, 'I have begun my course; I am set in the right way.'
17. Consider also, that resolution maketh work easy and successful. The resolute army is seldom conquered. A resolute traveller will go through with his journey, and it is easier to himself: his spirits are excited; and doing it with vivacity, he findeth less trouble in it. A slow and lazy pace doth sometimes soonest weary us. A slow motion is most easily stopt, when a swift one bears down that which would resist it. A man that resolutely sets himself to the work of God, and is past any further deliberating of the matter, and is at a point with all the world, will make a pleasure of that which will stop and stall an unresolved professor. Resolve therefore, for your own success and ease.

I tell you, by resolving it is that you must conquer, and by conquering, you must obtain the crown. The unresolved are wavering at every assault, like cowardly soldiers, even ready to run before they fight. They will not be at the cost or labour; they are soon weary; they cannot say nay to an old companion, or a tempting bait. But the resolved breaks through all, and treads that under his feet as dirt, which another sells his soul for. If he meet with reproaches and scorns from men, he remembereth that Christ foretold him this, and suffered much more of the like before him. If his friends turn enemies for the Gospel's sake, he saith, 'I was told of this before, even that I must be hated of all men for Christ.' If he be enticed by lewd and wanton company, he saith as David, "Depart from me, ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God;" Psal. cxix. 115. If he be tempted with rewards and honours in the world, he will not stand wavering and longing after it, as Balaam; but he will say the same Balaam was forced to do: "If you will give me a house full of gold and silver, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord." And 'let their money perish with them, that think all the gold in the world worth the peace of a good conscience, and the favour of God.' If he be threatened by men to move him to forsake his duty, he saith, "Whether it be better to obey God or man, judge ye." If he hear seducers, he is rooted in the Spirit, and the infallible word, and is not shaken by every wind. If he see never so many fall off by backsliding, he saith, 'It was not only for their company that I chose the holy way: God is still the same, and heaven and earth is the same; and Scripture is the same; and, therefore, I am resolved to be the
same.' If God afflict him by poverty, sickness, or other trials, he saith, 'I did not become a Christian to escape affliction, but to escape damnation. If he kill me, yet will I trust in him. Shall I receive good at the hands of God, and not evil? Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked must I return to dust. The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away; blessed be his name.' If oppressing enemies insult over him, he can say, as Mich. vii. 8, 9. "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light to me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute judgment for me. He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness." If the wicked cast in his teeth his profession, and the name of his God, "He rejoiceth that he is counted worthy to suffer for that name;" and yet "he will hope to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living." And if he must go to heaven through poverty and a mean estate, "he hath learned to want, as well as to abound; and in what estate soever he be, therewith to be contented." And so in the work of conversion itself, for want of resolution, many stick long in the birth, and they are hanging so long between heaven and hell, that it is a wonder of mercy that God doth not cut them off, and let them perish. But the well-resolved soul doth deal more faithfully with the light that is revealed to him, and doth not stand struggling so long against it, nor hold Christ and his Spirit so long in hand; but is glad to make sure work in so great a business, and take so good a match while it is offered. And being engaged once, he is firm as Mount Sion, that cannot be moved. Resolve, therefore, that your work may be the more easy and successful, and conquer by resolving.

18. I suppose you dare not resolve against conversion, and a heavenly life; and why then will you not resolve for it? What purpose you to do for the time to come? Is it your resolution to live and die as you are? Have you not purposes in your mind to repent hereafter? Dare you say, 'I am resolved never to be converted?' Some may be so desperate; but I think it is but few, even of the ungodly. Why, this shews that there is a secret conviction in your consciences... O do not stifle it. Neutrality never saved...
soil. Seeing you dare not resolve against it, resolve for it.

19. Consider, I beseech you, how much it doth concern yourselves, to have this question well and speedily resolved. God asked you, Whether you will be converted and sanctified or not? Resolve this question, and you resolve yourselves of a great many more that depend upon it.

The answer to this must be the answer to the rest. If the question were, Whether you will be pardoned or no? Whether you will live in heaven or hell for ever? Whether you will dwell with God and angels, or with devils? You would not be long in answering this. You would resolve without an hour's delay. Why, this is the question, sirs! but the answer to it must be the answer to the first question. For without sanctification, there is no salvation. If you will not be converted, you shall be condemned, whether you will or no; for God hath resolved of this already, and there is no resisting the resolution of God. The true state of the question is, Whether you will turn or burn? Choose you whether, for it must be one. O, therefore, if you will but resolve Christ and us this one question, that you will be converted, Christ will resolve you the principal questions that concern you in the world: even whether you shall be pardoned or saved; and where, and with whom you must live for ever.

20. Lastly, consider, that if you stay till you receive the sentence of death, it is two to one but that will force you to resolve. But a forced resolution will not serve turn. And then it will be very hard for you to discern whether it be any better than merely from your fears. You put off all till sickness come, and you see once that you must die, there is no remedy; and then you will cry, 'O if the Lord would but recover me, and try me once again with life, I would delay no longer, but I would become a new man, and live a holy, heavenly life; I am resolved of it by the grace of God.' Yea, but who knows whether these last resolutions be sincere. We hear abundance speak this in their sickness, that never turn when they come to health, but forget all, and live in a manner as they did before. Is it not most likely to be only the fear of death that makes you take up these resolutions? If it be so, they will never save you if you die, nor hold you to your promise if you live. For it is not bare
fear that is true conversion; but it is a changed heart, that is fallen in love with God and holiness, and into a settled hatred of former sins. No late repentance and resolutions but these, will be any thing worth as to the saving of your souls. And, therefore, if you will have true resolutions at the last (which is too rare) you cannot choose but be much in doubt of them, when you find so much of fear upon your spirit, and consider that you would never resolve till then. And, therefore, if you would have a comfortable change, resolve now in your prosperity, before the face of death affright you to it, and those fears, and the lateness do make you question the truth and soundness of it, and so deprive you of the comfort which you have so much need of at a dying hour.

And thus I have given you twenty Considerations to persuade you, if it may be, presently to resolve. I am sure there is truth, and reason, and weight in them; but what good they will do you, I am not sure, because I know not how you will receive them.

iv. And now I come to the last part of my task, which is to direct you how to perform the work that I have persuaded you to. But because it is merely the determination of the will, it is persuasion that must do more to the work than direction; and therefore I shall only desire you to look back upon the qualifications of sound resolution, which I before laid down to you, and then take heed of the hindrances in your way, and to set yourselves to do your duty.

Remember that I before told you, That it is not a holy, saving resolution, unless it be,

1. Entire for the matter of it, comprehending all that is essential to Christianity.
2. And unless you resolve upon present obedience without delay.
3. And also unless it be absolute and peremptory, taking Christ for better and worse, without any reserve.
4. And unless it be well-grounded.
5. And unless it be built on the strength of Christ, and not only a carnal confidence of your own.
6. And unless it be habitual and firm, and become your ordinary frame and bias, and, as it were, the new nature and inclination of your souls.
By this much you see already what manner of resolution it is that you must have.

The next thing is, to advise you of the hindrances that you may avoid them.

1. The principal hindrance of resolution is secret unbelief; when everlasting life is taken but as an uncertainty, or men have no more but a slight opinion of it. The cure of this disease, I have often, and a little before delivered to you.

2. Another thing that hindereth resolution is inconsiderateness, of which also I have spoken purposely before.

3. Another hindrance is a sleepy insensibility, when the heart is hardened, and men are past feeling. We cannot tell how to awaken these men to be sensible of the things that should move them to resolve. Of this also I have spoken by itself.

4. Another great hindrance is the natural strangeness and averseness of the mind of corrupted men, to these high and spiritual things. So that we drive men by all our arguments against the bias of their sinful habits: and those habits plead against us more forcibly without a word of reason, than all the reason in the world could do. See, therefore, that you keep under changing means till your hearts be changed; and the perusing of such weighty arguments as we offer you, may be of use to the changing of your hearts: for God useth to work on the will by the understanding; and therefore light hath an aptitude to change the will itself.

5. Moreover, the rooted interest of this world doth much hinder men from resolving to turn. It is always drawing them another way, or putting objections and cavils into their minds; and if they will needs resolve, it is this that secretly enticeth them to reserves, and to resign themselves to God but with conditions and exceptions; and so makes them hypocrites, when they think themselves converts; and cheats them with a half-deceitful resolution, instead of one that is absolute and firm. Against this impediment also I have spoken before.

6. Another hindrance is, the nearness of fleshly, enticing objects. When the covetous man seeth his houses and lands, his goods and money, the very sight of them breaks the heart of all his better resolutions. The drunkard seems to be resolved, till he sees the cup, and then his resolution is broken. The whoremonger seemeth to be re-
solved, till the bait is brought near him, and then he goes as "an ox to the slaughter, and as a fool to the correction of the stocks." Certainly if these resolutions were sound, they would either cause men to fly from the bait, and not come near it, or else to refuse it when it is presented them. In the course of their lives, their resolution would govern them if they were sincere.

7. And satan himself will do all that he can to hinder you when he sees you ready to resolve. He knows that he must bestir him now or never. You never put him to it indeed till you are resolving to forsake him. One block or other he will be sure then to cast in your way: either he tells you, it is but folly and melancholy to trouble yourself with these matters; or that you may be saved without all this ado; or that God is more merciful than to cast away all that be not sanctified; or that godliness doth but trouble and distract people, and that the professors of it are secretly no better than others, and that it is but hypocrisy for them to make such a stir with religion, and that we must be moderate in our godliness, and take heed of being godly overmuch. A hundred such foolish suggestions as these, the devil hath at hand to cast in your way, when he seeth you ready to resolve.

If these will not serve, he will set some of his wicked disciples on railing or deriding you; and perhaps some cunning fool a cavilling with you, to see if they can overwit you, and draw you back.

If that will not do, perhaps he will open the falls of professors to you, and labour to persuade you that all are such: or he will shew you what divisions and differences are among them; or he will take advantage of some difficulties in religion, or some controversies in which he sees you already engaged to a party; or he will tell you of some false doctrine that some forward professors may be tainted with, to make them, and consequently godliness itself, more odious, or at least suspected to you. If all this will not do, he will endeavour to set your very parents or natural kindred against you, that those that should most promote your salvation, and on whom your livelihood much dependeth, shall become your enemies, and hate you for offering to give up yourselves to Christ. If that will not do, he will endeavour to
entice you with the baits of fleshly pleasure, or of preferments, or much business, or merry company, or some great matters that you may hope for in the world. And usually this snare is the strongest of all. Or else he will tell you that if needs you will resolve, it is time enough hereafter: you may yet take more of your pleasure or commodity before you leave it; yet you may suck the breasts of the world a little drier, and then turn to God and cast it off. If all this will not prevail with you, he will tell you it is now too late, you have sinned so long, or such heinous sins, that God will not have mercy on you; he will make you believe that God hath utterly forsaken you, and there is no remedy; and you may as well spare your thoughts of turning now, for Christ will not receive or welcome you; and therefore it is even as good to go on, and take up the rest that the world can afford you, for there is no hope of better. But the most desperate temptation of all the rest, is to put some blasphemous, unbelieving thoughts into your mind; especially if you fall into company with infidels, that will draw you to question the word of God, and the immortality of the soul, and the truth of Christianity, or the life to come, whether there be any such things or not. Where these once take, and are received with approbation, the soul is in a miserable case. Though I know many tempted, melancholy Christians are haunted with such temptations, who yet abhor them, and do well at last, for all this. Sometimes also, when he cannot take you off from resolving, he will lead you among some disputing opinionists, and they shall entice you to take up with their opinionative religiousness instead of true sanctification, of which I have spoken in the eighth Direction. By these and many such wiles as these, doth the old serpent do all that possibly he can, to hinder you from sound resolution and conversion. And therefore you must be armed against his temptations, and meet them with abhorrence; and if you feel them too hard for you, go daily to Christ by faith and prayer for renewed strength, and call to your faithful friends and ministers for help. Open your case to some one that is able, experienced, and faithful; that he may help you with arguments to resist those temptations which you know not how yourselves to deal with. God hath appointed pastors in his church to be spiritual fathers in the Lord, and when they have sowed in you the seed of
eternal life, they watch over it till they see the blade and fruit: they travail as in birth of you, till Christ be formed in you. It is their office to help you, and God giveth to them that are faithful, abilities and affections agreeable to their office. And therefore lean upon the hand of your faithful guides, and think not to break through temptations alone, and get to heaven without the means that God hath appointed you.

Having told you the hindrances, and what to do against them, I shall add but these two words more of direction.

1. When you are resolving, give up yourselves to God with a holy covenant or vow. I mean not any rash vow, nor any unnecessary vow, but the same that you made in baptism, which your age itself doth call you to renew, but your sins against it do call you more.

Perhaps you will say that you are not able to perform it by your own strength, and you are uncertain of God’s assistance, and therefore how can you promise or vow?

To this I answer, 1. You may be sure that this objection is frivolous, because it makes against the frequent and express commands of God, the practice of his church in all ages, and the nature of Christianity itself. God hath in all ages been pleased to receive men into his service and church in a covenant way, and baptism itself is our solemn covenanting with him, and the Lord’s supper is appointed for a solemn renewing of it. And indeed it is implicitly and virtually renewed by a true Christian every day of his life. In every duty he gives up himself to God: and if he should cease this heart-covenant, he would cease to be a Christian, for the very essence of his Christianity consisteth in it. It is his faith itself.

2. And when you covenant for the time to come, you do not take on you to foretell infallibly your own perseverance, but you profess your present consent to be Christ’s, and to continue his, and you engage yourselves thereto. And should you not choose the strictest engagements?

(1.) Where there is the greatest need of them, because of the looseness of the heart, and the strength of temptations, that would draw us away.

(2.) Where there is the most absolute necessity, because if we miscarry we are undone.
(3.) And where you are already obliged by God's commands, whether you vow or not.

(4.) And where God hath made your consent to the obligation of necessity to salvation. He that intends to keep covenant, and knows that he must keep it, or be condemned, hath little reason to be loath to make it.

(5.) And for God's assistance, you have much more cause to expect it in the way of covenanting, which himself hath appointed you, than in the neglect of his appointed means.

Object. 'But I am afraid of breaking my vows again, and it is better to forbear them, than not to perform them.'

Answer. 1. This reason makes as much against the inward vow and resolution of the heart, so that by this rule you would never be Christians, for fear of falling away, and being worse.

2. There is an absolute necessity of your resolving and covenanting, and of keeping your resolution, and covenants. And when it must be kept, or you are utterly undone, it is but a madness to refuse to make the covenant for fear of breaking it; for this is but to make choice of an easier place in hell, for fear of having a worse, if you should resolve for heaven, when as heaven is set open before you, and you thus wilfully cast away your hopes. Nay, your place in hell is not like to be the easier, when you thus deliberately and wilfully refuse the covenant.

3. Your resolutions and holy vows are means of God's appointment to keep you from breaking his imposed covenant. Is not a resolved, engaged, devoted Christian more likely to be accepted, and to persevere, than a waverer that saith, 'I dare not vow, for fear lest I perform not?'

In unnecessary matters, I had rather you were too backward to vow. Some will vow poverty, and some a single life, and some will vow that they will never drink wine or strong drink more; such vows as these may be good for some in cases of special necessity, as the last remedies of a dangerous disease; but they are not for all, nor rashly to be made. But the resolution and vow of cleaving unto God in faith and holy obedience, and of renouncing the flesh, the world, and the devil; this is for all, and must be made and kept by all, that will be saved.

2. Direct. And as I would have you second your resolution by a covenant with God, so I would advise you ordi-
narily to go further, and openly profess the resolution and covenant that you have made. "For as with the heart men believe unto righteousness, so with the mouth confession is made unto salvation;" Rom. x. 10. Christ will confess those that confess him, and disown, and be ashamed of those that are ashamed of him. When you have escaped the greatest misery in the world, and obtained the greatest mercy in the world, the greatness of it calleth you to acknowledge and give glory to God. Go to your old companions in sin, and tell them what God hath revealed to you, and done for you. Tell them, 'O sirs, I see now that which I never saw before! I wonder how I could venture so madly upon sin! and how I could make light of God, of Christ, of death, of judgment, and everlasting life. I have been hitherto your companion in sin, but I would not take the same course again for all the world. I see now there is a better portion hereafter to be obtained, which I was mindless of. I see now we were all this while making merry at the brink of hell, and there was but a step between us and death. Now I see that the course that we have taken is wicked and deceitful, and will not serve turn. If I serve the flesh, it will reward me but with rottenness. I will, therefore, hereafter, serve that God, that will certainly reward me with everlasting life. I beseech you, sirs, come away with me, and see and try what I have seen and tried. I have lived with you in sin, O now let us join together in repentance, and a holy life! I shall be glad of your company to heaven; but if you will not do it, take your course. For my part I am resolved, by the grace of God, I am fully resolved, to be from this day forward a new man, and never to join with you more in a fleshly and ungodly life. Never tempt me or persuade me to it, for I am resolved.'

Thus if you will declare your resolutions to others, and seek to win them, you may possibly do them good; but however, you will be the deeper engaged to God yourselves.

Yea, though I would have no ostentation of conversion, nothing done rashly in public, nor without the advice of a faithful minister beforehand; yet with these cautions, I must say, that it is a shame that we hear no more in public of the conversion of sinners. As baptism is to be in public, that the congregation may witness your engagement, and pray for you, and rejoice at the receiving of a member; so the
solemn renewing of the same covenant by repentance after a wicked life, should ordinarily be in public, to give warning to others to avoid the sin, and to give God the honour, and to have the prayers of the church, and to satisfy them of our repentance, that they may have communion with us. The Papists do more offend (of the two) in so much confining confession and penitence to the priest’s ear in secret, and not bringing it before the church, than they do in making a sacrament of it. I wonder that people should every day thrust into our hands their request to pray for them when they are sick, and that it is so rare a matter to have any to desire our prayers, for the pardon of all the sins of their natural, unconverted state.

I would here seriously advise all those that it concerneth, that when God hath shewed them so great a mercy as to convert them and make them new creatures, they would go to their faithful minister, and by his advice put up such a bill as this: ‘Such a man, of this parish, having long lived in blindness, and deadness, and ungodliness, (and name the particular sins if they were publicly known) and being by the great mercy of God convinced of his sin and misery; and sustained with some hopes of mercy by the blood and merits of Jesus Christ, and being now resolved by the grace of God, to forsake this fleshly, worldly life, and to give up himself to Christ and holiness, doth earnestly entreat the church to pray for him, that his many and heinous sins may be all forgiven, and that God would again receive him into mercy, and that he may hold on in faith and holiness to the last, and never turn again to the course of his iniquity.’

And if the minister think it meet, refuse not to make yourselves an open confession of your former life of sin and misery, and to profess openly your resolution to walk with God for the time to come.

This course should be more ordinary with us; and if conversion itself were not so rare, or else so defective, that it doth too little quicken men to a sense of duty, and sin, and mercy; or so doubtful, and by slow degrees, and that it is scarce discerned by many that have it, were it not for some of these, more ordinary would it be, to the great rejoicing and benefit of the church.

The Conclusion. And now I have given you Directions in the most great and necessary businesses of the world:
they are such as I have received of God, and if faithfully practised, will put your salvation past all hazard. But what they have done, or what they will do, I cannot tell, but must leave the issue to God and you. It is pity eternal glory should be lost, for want of yielding to so holy, and sweet, and reasonable a course. It is lamentable to observe, what ignorant, base, unworthy thoughts the most have of the very office of the Holy Ghost, who is the Sanctifier of all that God will save. The very name of regeneration and sanctification, is not understood by some, and is but matter of derision to others; and the most think that it is another kind of matter than indeed it is. To be baptized and come to church, and to say some cold and heartless prayers, and to forbear some gross, disgraceful sins, is all the sanctification that most are acquainted with; (and all have not this;) and thus they debase the work of the Holy Ghost. If a prince have built a sumptuous palace, and you will shew men a swinestye, and say, 'This is the palace that the prince hath been so long a building;' were not this to abuse him by contempt? If he built a navy, and you shew a man two or three pig-troughs, and say, 'These are the king's ships;' would he not take it for a scorn? Take heed of such dealing with the Holy Ghost. Remember what it is to believe in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and remember that you were baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: and do you not yet know why, nor know the meaning of your baptismal covenant? It is not only to believe that there are three persons in the Trinity, but to consent to the relations and duty to them, in respect to their several relations and works. If the Father had not created you, how could you have been men? The Lord of nature must be acknowledged as the End and Governor of nature, and accordingly obeyed: and this is to believe and be baptized into the name of the Father. If the Son had not redeemed you, you had been as the devils were, forsaken and given over to despair. The Purchaser, Procurer, and Author of grace, of pardon, and salvation, must be acknowledged to be such, and himself and his salvation accordingly accepted, and his terms submitted to: and this is to believe in the name of the Son; and in baptism we make profession hereof. And certainly the work of the Holy Ghost is as necessary to your salvation. Without the sanctifying work
of the Spirit, could you never be delivered from sin and sa-
tan, nor restored to God's image; and consequently could
never be the members of Christ, nor have any saving benefit
by his sufferings. Would you not think him unworthy to live,
that would reproach the Father's work of nature, and say,
That the whole creation is but some poor contemptible work!
And would you not think him unworthy the name of a
Christian, that had contemptible thoughts of the Son's re-
demption, as if we could be saved as well without a Saviour:
or as if it were some poor and trivial commodity that Christ
had purchased for us? I know you would confess the mi-
sery of that man, that believeth no better in the Father and
the Son: and how comes it to pass that you think not of
your own misery, that believe no better in the Holy Ghost?
Do not you debase the sanctifying office of the Holy Spirit,
when you shew us your knowledging and parts, and outward
duties and civility, and tell us that these are the works of
sanctification? What! is sanctification but such a thing as
this? Why, holiness is a new life and spirit in us; and
these that you talk of, are but a few flowers that are stuck
upon a corpse to keep it awhile from stinking among men,
till death convey it to a burial in hell. O sirs, sanctifica-
tion is another kind of matter than the forsaking of some of
our fouler vices, and speaking well of a godly life; it is not
the patching up of the old man, but the creating of a new
man. I give you warning therefore from God, that you
think not basely of the Holy Ghost; and that you think no
more to be saved without the sanctifying work of the Spirit,
than without the redeeming work of the Son, or creation,
government, or love of the Father. Sanctification must
turn the very bent and stream of heart and life to God, to
Christ, to heaven; it must mortify carnal self, and the world
to you; it must make you a people devoted, consecrated,
and resigned up to God, with all that you have: it must
make all sin odious to you, and make God the love and de-
sire of your souls; so that it must give you a new heart, a
new end, a new master, a new law, and a new conversation.
This is that noble, heavenly work which the Holy Ghost
hath vouchsafed to make the business of his office; to slight
and despise this, is to slight and despise the Holy Ghost:
to refuse this, is to refuse the Holy Ghost, and not to be-
lieve in him: to be without this work, is to be without the
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Holy Ghost: and "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his;" Rom. viii. 9. The holy Catholic church is composed of all through the world that have this work upon them, and therefore it is called holy. The communion of saints, is the blessed vital fellowship of these sanctified ones; for these only is the resurrection unto blessedness, and the life everlasting with the Lord of life: for all others is the resurrection of condemnation, and the everlasting punishment.

But if the other two articles of our faith have been so denied by the blind, it is less wonder if this be so. Some heretics denied God to be the Creator of the world, and because they saw so much evil in the world, they said that it was made by devils or evil angels (who indeed made the sin, but not the world). So dealt the Jews by the Son, and the second article of our faith. The sacrifice of bulls and goats, and such beasts, was all the sacrifice for sin that they believed in. And thus deal the multitude of the Ungodly by the Spirit. Indeed they know not themselves sufficiently, to know the need and worth of sanctification. They are too whole to need the skill and care of Christ or the Holy Ghost. The insensibility of spiritual death and misery, and thinking too lightly of original corruption, and too well of our depraved nature, is both the cause of many of the heresies of the learned, and of the common contempt of Christ and the Spirit, and recovering grace, in all the unregenerate. For it is not possible that men should have any deeper sense of the need or worth of the remedy, than they have of the greatness of their sin and misery.

O sirs, did we not come upon this great disadvantage to you, that we speak to dead men, that have indeed a natural life, which doth but take pleasure in their spiritual death; how confidently should we expect to prevail with all! But while you think lightly of your disease, we can expect no better, but that you think as lightly of Christ and holiness, and all the means that tend to your recovery; and think of the new man, as the poets fabled of the Promethean race, that it grows out of the earth (of your poor, sorry purposes and performances) like ordinary plants.

Truly sirs, I have led you even as far as I can; and what more to say to you, or what more to do for you to procure your conversion, I do not know. If it had been in my power
to have shewed you heaven and hell itself, that you might better have known the matters that we speak of, I think I should have done it. But God will not have men live by sense in this life, but by faith. If I could but help you all to such a knowledge and apprehension of these invisible things, as the worst of you shall have as soon as you are dead, then I should make but little doubt of your conversion and salvation. Sure if you had but such a sight, the force of it would so work upon you, that before I went out of the congregation, you would all cry out that you are resolved to be new creatures. But though this be beyond my power, and though I cannot shew you the great and wonderful things that every eye here must shortly see; yet I come not to you without a glass of God’s own making, and in that glass you may see them. There, if you have but an eye of faith, you may see that God that you have so long offended, and that now so earnestly inviteth you to return: there you may see that crucified Christ that hath opened you a way for repentance by his blood, and pleadeth that blood with you for the melting of your impenitent, obstinate hearts. There you may see the odious face of sin, and the amiable face of holiness, which is the image of God. There you may see both heaven and hell, for all that they are invisible; and may know what will be, and that to all eternity, as well as what is.

And will not such a sight in the glass of God’s word serve turn to move thee presently to give up the trade of sinning, and to resolve before thou stir, for God? I am now come to the end of this part of my work; if the reading of it have brought thee to the end of thy ungodly, careless life, it will be happy for thee, and I shall so far attain the end of my labour. I have purposely put this Direction of the necessity of resolution in the last place, that I might leave upon thy spirit the reasons for resolution, that here I have laid down. And now I beseech thee reader, whoever thou art, with all the earnestness that I am able to use with thee, as ever thou wouldst escape the fruits of all thy sin, as ever thou wouldst see the face of God with comfort, and have him thy reconciled Father in Christ; as ever thou wouldst have a saving part in Christ, and have him stand thy friend in thy extremities; as ever thou wouldst have hope in thy death, and stand on the right hand, and be jus-
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tified at judgment; as ever thou wouldst escape the day of vengeance prepared for the unconverted, and the endless misery that will fall upon all unsanctified souls, as sure as the heaven is over thy head; see that thou resolve and turn to God, and trifle with him no more. Away with thy old transgressions, away with thy careless, worldly life, away with thy ungodly company, and set thyself presently to seek after thy salvation with all thy heart, and mind, and might. I tell thee once more, that heaven and hell are not matters to be jested with, nor to be carelessly thought of, or spoken of, or regarded. The God of heaven stands over thee now while thou art reading all these words, and he seeth thy heart, whether thou art resolved to turn or not. Shall he see thee read such urgent reason, and yet wilt not resolve? Shall he see thee read these earnest requests, and yet not resolve? What! not to come home to thy God, to thy Father, to thy Saviour, to thyself, after so long and wilful sinning? What! not to accept of mercy, now it is even thrust into thy hands, when thou hast neglected and abused mercy so long? O let not the just and jealous God stand over thee, and see thee guilty of such wickedness. If thou be a Christian shew thyself a Christian, and use thy belief, and come to God. If thou be a man, shew thyself a man, use thy reason, and come away to God. I beseech thee read over and over again the reasons that I have here offered thee, and judge whether a reasonable man should resist them, and delay an hour to come in to God. I that am now writing these lines of exhortation to thee, must shortly meet thee at the bar of Christ. I do now adjure thee, and charge thee in the name of the living God, that thou do not thyself and me that wrong, as to make me lose this labour with thee, and that thou put me not to come in as a witness against thee, to thy confusion and condemnation. Resolve therefore presently in the strength of Christ, and strike an unchangeable covenant with him; get thee to thy knees, and bewail with tears thy former life, and deliver up thyself wholly now to Christ, and never break this covenant more.

If thou lay by the book, and go away the same, and no persuasion will do any good upon thee, but unholy thou wilt still be, and sensual, and worldly still thou wilt be; I call thy conscience to witness, that thou wast warned of the evil that is near thee; and conscience shall obey this call,
and bear me witness whether thou wilt or not: and this book which thou hast read, which I intended for thy conversion and salvation, shall be a witness against thee: though age or fire consume the leaves and lines of it, yet God and conscience shall bring it to thy memory, and thou shalt then be the more confounded to think what reasons and earnest persuasions thou didst reject in so plain, so great and necessary a case.

But if the Holy Ghost will now become thy tutor, and at once both put this book into thy hand, and his heavenly light into thy understanding, and his life into thy heart, and effectually persuade thee to resolve and turn, how happy wilt thou be to all eternity? Make no more words on it; but answer my request, as thou wouldst do if thou wert in a burning fire, and I entreated thee to come out. Thou hast long enough grieved Christ and his Spirit, and long enough grieved thy friends and teachers: resolve this hour, and rejoice them that thou hast grieved; and now grieve the devil, that thou hast hitherto rejoiced; and hereafter grieve the wicked, and thy own deceitful flesh, whose sinful desires thou hast hitherto followed: and if thou also grieve thyself a little while, by that moderate sorrow that sin hath made necessary for thee, it will be but a preparative to thy endless joys, and the day is promised, and coming apace, when satan that thou turnest from, shall trouble thee no more, and God that thou turnest to, shall wipe away all tears from thy eyes. And if the reading of this book may be but a means of so blessed an end, as God shall have the glory, so when "Christ cometh to be glorified in his saints, and admired of all them that do believe," (2 Thess. i. 10.) both thou and I shall then partake of the communication of his glory; if so be that I be sincere in writing, and thou and I sincere in obeying the doctrine of this book. Amen.

July 5, 1657.

END OF DIRECTIONS AND PERSUASIONS TO CONVERSION.