

SERMON II.

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN'S BURDEN, AND EXERCISE UNDER IT.

ROM. vii. 24.—“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

THESE words present us with a good man in great distress; wounded in spirit; “and a wounded spirit who can bear?” When a Christian sees his foul face, heart and hands, in the glass of the holy law, he is filled with shame and sorrow; and readily gives vent to his grief in the Apostle’s words, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” You and I may be ready to think, that if we had as much grace, as much communion with God, and knowledge of his secrets as Paul had, when he uttered this doleful complaint, we should reckon ourselves the happiest men in the world, and be always praising the Lord. But none of God’s children have any useless talents. Strong grace is commonly yoked with strong corruption. This great man, notwithstanding his high attainments, is in a deep plunge; and out of the depths he cries unto the Lord, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”

1. In the words he complains of his wretchedness, and bewails it from a deep sense and feeling of it; “O wretched man that I am!” Strange! what ails the man? why does he thus groan? what makes the great Christian, the great Apostle and preacher of Jesus Christ, the special favourite of heaven, Paul, to call himself a wretched man? has he lost his health? has he lost his friends? is he imprisoned?

is he under reproach and persecution? No: all these things he could have borne; yea, in all these things he could have rejoiced, and even gloried, that "the power of Christ might rest upon him," (2 Cor. xii. 9. But he was in hot conflict with that great enemy of God, and of all good men, called sin. He had entered the lists with the old man, and the battle was like to go sore against him; therefore he cries out, "O wretched man that I am!" The word here rendered *wretched* or *miserable*, does not denote one in a cursed state, as being out of the favour of God. The Apostle was by this time a regenerated man, and speaks of himself as such. Neither is his calling himself a wretched man, to be understood as the effect of a passionate and fretful spirit. Job, though a good man, has several expressions about the misery of his condition, that were the fruit of his impatient fits: but there is no such thing as sinful passion or bitterness in this expression, or in this text, which may be called the groan of a godly man; and therefore, this expression signifies, one tired and wearied with continual conflicts and strivings against sin. The Apostle here is like a weak man, wrestling under a heavy burden; and at length, being like to faint under the pressure, cries out, Oh wearied, Oh wretched creature that I am, who shall deliver me, who shall rid me of this heavy burden that is like to crush me? or like a champion, who having striven a long time, is at last like to be overcome of his adversary, unless he be helped; and so he cries, Oh, how am I tired and wearied! who shall deliver me, or obtain the victory for me?

2. He shows his earnest desire of deliverance; "who shall deliver?" And this the Apostle speaks, not as being ignorant of Him who should deliver him, nor yet as doubting or despairing of deliverance; but hereby he signifies his earnest desire of it. It is, as it were, the voice of one panting and breathing to be delivered; and withal, he hints his utter inability to deliver himself.

3. He shows what it is he would be delivered from, viz. "the body of this death." Some understand the words,

as if the Apostle had desired to be delivered from his conflicts with sin, by his bodily death. But I choose rather to understand them of the mass and lump of sin, that in part abides in believers, while they are in this life. The body of this death, or this body of death, is the carnal unrenewed part in believers. It is the old man, or the remains of sin in them. Now, this remainder of sin in believers, is called a body, and a body of death. It is called a body, (1.) To show the reality of it. Sin, considered either absolutely, or as it remains in believers, is not a chimera or mere imagination of men's brains. That there is such an abominable thing as sin, God knows, the saints know, the devil knows, and wicked men, who now deride it, shall know at last to their cost. It is not a slight superficial thing; but it is a body of considerable magnitude. Meantime, ye are not to look upon it as if it were a bodily substance, or a creature of God; neither are ye to look upon it as a mere privation of good; but as that which has likewise somewhat positively evil in it. (2.) It is called a body, for it has all the dimensions of a body. It is high "grown up unto the heavens," as Ezra observes, chap. ix. 6. Oh the malignant nature of sin, that dares approach so near the dwelling place of the Most High; yea, and to come within it, as it did when it seized upon the angels that fell. It is deep, for it goes down to hell. It cast the angels down from the highest heavens to the lowest hell. It is long and broad, for it goes to the end of the world, and the whole world over. (3.) It is called a body, because it hath many members, Col. iii. 5, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth," &c. The corrupt heart has divers lusts and pleasures. The seed of every evil thing lurks in it, and is ready to spring up upon every temptation.

But then it is called a body of death, (1.) Because it is noisome and filthy. A holy God cannot endure it: "He cannot look on it" but with abhorrence, Hab. i. 13. Holy angels and holy men cannot bear it. Nothing is so vile, loathsome and nauseous to them, as sin. It is like a vile

rotten carcass, that has polluted the air of this world, so that all die who breathe in it. (2.) Because it is a deadly thing. As the sons of the prophets said to the man of God, "There is death in the pot," so may we say of sin, there is death in it. Death is said to have "entered by sin," Rom. v. 12. And sin, when it is finished, is said to "bring forth death;" this latter being, as it were, the child of the former. (3.) It tends and binds over to death, Rom. vi. 23. It is the cause of temporal death, or the dissolution of the frame of our nature: for although the original constitution of human nature was such, that man was not absolutely immortal, yet it is not probable he should actually have died, without the intervention of sin as the meritorious cause thereof. And then it tends to eternal death. The regenerate, indeed, are not actually liable unto it, though there be remains of sin in them; but they deserve it: for sin is sin in whomsoever it is; and as such it deserves death. Hence the Apostle, when asserting the privileges of believers, says not, that there is nothing condemnable in them, but that "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus," Rom. viii. 1.

DOCTRINE. The regenerate groan under remaining corruption in them, and earnestly desire a complete deliverance from it.

In discoursing on this subject, I would, I. Make some observations from the text and context. II. Show what is implied in the regenerate man's groaning under the remains of sin in him. III. Consider the reasons of the doctrine. IV. Make improvement of the subject.

I. In the first place, I am to make some observations from the text and context.

1. I observe, that here we have the combat betwixt the flesh and the spirit, exemplified in the person of the chief Apostle of Jesus Christ. Some, I know, doubt whether Paul here speaks of himself as a regenerate man; but I think there are several things in the chapter, which seem to put the matter out of doubt. Thus, verse 9, "For I was alive without the law once," &c. These words seem to

give an account of the preparatives to his conversion, viz. his conviction and humiliation; see also ver. 17, 18, 22. None of these things can be said of an unregenerate man.

Now, it is of great advantage to you who believe, that, in your strugglings with remaining corruption, you have the example of such an eminent saint as Paul set before you. Thus you know that your case is so far from being singular, that it has been the case with saints of the first magnitude.

2. I observe, that Paul makes a distinction here that is peculiar to a regenerate man. He distinguishes betwixt Paul in himself, and Paul in Christ Jesus, ver. 17, 18, "Now then it is no more I."—Paul, in himself, can do nothing, is worse than nothing; but Paul, in Christ, can do all things. It was not Paul in Christ that sinned, but Paul in himself. After his conversion, there was an *I* in him, a new creature, that could clear itself of every sin, saying, it was not I that did it, but the old man. Take heed to this, you that are yet unregenerate: you cannot speak in Paul's style, when you fall into sin. The load of the guilt must lie upon your whole self. You have not an innocent part within you. You are not split into a new man and an old, into flesh and spirit, but you are wholly flesh; you are wholly a lump and mass of sin; but a regenerate man, as such, is born of God; and "whosoever is born of God sinneth not," 1 John iii. 9.

3. I observe, that Paul, in his combat with sin, is not irritated against the law, which forbids sin; but loves and approves every part of it, verse 7, "What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? God forbid." And again, verse 12, "Therefore the law is holy." The natural man's corruptions are irritated by the law, like the water that runs the more furiously by being dammed up; but the spiritual man, amidst his sorest struggles with sin, honours the law in his heart, and cheerfully acquiesces even in that part, which strikes against the sins that more easily beset him. The natural man does, in his heart, and it may be with his lips too, reproach the holy Lawgiver, as if he had, by

his law, made the way so very narrow, that there is no possibility of walking in it without being cramped and pinched; Psal. ii. 3. Whereas, he that is renewed, walks in the way of the law with ease and pleasure.

4. I observe, that the Apostle was a person deeply exercised about the sinfulness both of his heart and life. The expressions, I know, I find, I see, not only import his success in heart-searching work, but likewise his frequency and continuance in it. Had we more of his spirit, we should be more employed in this work; we should be more at home, and less abroad.

II. I come now to show, what is implied in this groaning of the regenerate, under the remains of sin in them.

And here, it is supposed, that believers are freed from the guilt of sin, which is an obligation to eternal wrath. They are in Christ; and there is no condemnation to such as are in him. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?" Their remaining sin may bring them under the guilt of Fatherly anger; but his loving-kindness he will never take away from them.

It is here also supposed, that they are delivered from the reigning power and dominion of sin, Rom. vi. 14. Sin reigns in unbelievers like a king upon his throne; it absolutely prevails over them; but it is not so with believers. Christ is enthroned in their hearts, and sin is dethroned, and they are not from thenceforth subject unto it, nor do they serve it. Howbeit, by reason of the imperfection of sanctification, there are remains of sin in believers; and that is the cause of their groaning and longing for deliverance. Now, this implies,

1. Their feeling the motions of sin in them. Paul felt them; and O how feelingly does he speak of them, Rom. vii. 21, 23. No man will groan under an unfelt burden; and hence it is, that the unregenerate do not groan under sin, though it absolutely prevails over them. Let the heaviest load be laid upon a dead man, yet he will not groan: he will not cry, or make the least motion; and

why? Even because being dead, he has no sense or feeling. So the chains and fetters of guilt, lying on natural men, do not make them groan, because, being dead in trespasses and sins, they are void of all sense and feeling. But the remains of sin in believers, are like the bolts about the prisoner's legs after he is let out of prison, which, although they do not absolutely hinder their motion upwards to the hill of God, yet they retard it; they cramp, pain, and pinch them so, that they groan for deliverance.

Now, there are three things which contribute to the believer's feeling those motions of sin, which cause groaning. These are, *first*, the quick sensation of the new creature. Among men there is a great difference as to the quickness of sensation. Some are more sensible than others of the least touch. And so it is among irrational creatures. Now, although some of the old man's motions are greater, some lesser, and some least of all, yet the new creature, God's spiritual workmanship, is such a very delicate creature, that it presently feels them, and falls to resisting, wrestling, and groaning. The eye, and especially the apple of the eye, being the tenderest part of the body, feels the least touch. So the new creature is a tender creature; and therefore feels the first risings of the old man.

Secondly, The frequency of these motions causes them to be felt. The old man is only evil, and continually evil. He is never at rest, but is always plotting mischief. If he is overcome, he endeavours to gather strength again, and to rally his broken forces. If he overcomes, then he triumphs, and leads the soul captive for a while, Rom. vii. 23. Whatever way the soul is employed, either in religious duties, or in civil affairs, in public, or private, or secret, the old man ceases not to fight against him; and his motions being so frequent, the soul cannot miss feeling them.

Thirdly, The violence of them causes them to be felt. Sin sometimes fawns and flatters; sometimes it foams and rages, and has such an impetuous force with it, that it is

like to carry all before it. That was a violent effort of the old man, which almost threw the good man Asaph into the gulph of atheism, Psal. lxxiii. 13. He could not resist the first onset, it was so very fierce; but he did not lie where he fell; he wrestled to his feet again, and at last could say, "Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou has holden me by thy right hand." Thus the motions of the old man in believers are frequent and violent, and therefore cannot but cause pain; and they who feel pain are allowed to groan.

2. This groaning implies, the intense sorrow of believers on the account of sin, Zech. xii. 10. 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11. Deep sorrow in the heart makes the countenance heavy, and is the cause of sending forth heavy groans. Yea, sometimes the hearts of the saints are so filled with godly sorrow for sin, that they cannot utter words, but only sighs and groans; and this, not because they cannot get words, but because they cannot get vent for them: like a crowd of people thronging to get out at a door, they stick so fast together, that none of them can get out before the other. When the prophet Nathan was sent to convict David of his murder and adultery, after the prophet has laid before him the heinous nature and aggravations of his sin, all that David says is, "I have sinned against the Lord," 2 Sam. xii. 13. At first view, we might think that short speech showed little sense of sin or sorrow for it; but it was not so. David's heart was then so filled, as we say, that he could not express himself; and he had at that time the seeds of the 51st Psalm working in his breast, in which he falls to searching and mourning afresh. And that this was the frame of the man's spirit, seems plain from the pardon that Nathan, in the Lord's name, intimates to him: "And Nathan said unto David, the Lord also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die." The like may be observed of the poor publican, who smote on his breast, and cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The Lord knew that these few words proceeded from an heart humbled and full of sorrow; and therefore they were acceptable unto him; while the

Pharisee's many words, flowing from an heart proud and void of sorrow, were an abomination unto him.

3. This groaning speaks the believer's wrestling against sin, Ephes. vi. 12. Gal. v. 17. Fighting and wrestling cause weariness; and weariness causes groaning and longing for rest. The exclamation in the text was the issue of a hot conflict that the Apostle had with sin remaining in him. Could the difference betwixt the old man and the new man be compounded, there would be no more wrestling betwixt them; and so the one would not groan, and the other would not grudge; or, if either of them possessed the house alone, there would be no wrestling and groaning. But matters stand quite otherwise: there is no possibility of reconciling the contending parties. You may as easily bring east and west, light and darkness together, as reconcile them. Christ, by his death, reconciled God and man; but he put enmity between the old man and the new. And if there be no struggle occasioned thereby in your breast, this death is not yet made effectual unto you. And as to either of them possessing the house; I say, if ye are not yet renewed, but are wholly flesh, then the old man is sole possessor; and then no wonder you do not groan, for you are dead. Now, groaning proceeds from life, and is a sign of it. And as for the new man possessing the house alone, that is not to be expected: he will still have a competitor till he get to heaven, his own country, from whence he came; and then and there he will reign "through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Therefore, my brethren, fighting, wrestling, and groaning, is the best that can be made of it, in this imperfect state. And this consideration serves to obviate an objection that believers are often making against themselves. They feel so much atheism, unbelief, carnality, formality, pride and hypocrisy in themselves, that they conclude they have no grace at all. Why, my brethren, I grant the premises may be true; but the conclusion is ~~not~~. Do not you feel all this whereof you complain? do

not you groan under it, and wrestle under it? Yea, surely. Well, then, I ask, Is not feeling, fighting, groaning, wrestling, the work of a living man? Yea, is it not the work of the new man which God has created in you, to bear down, and at length to break down and cast out for altogether, that atheism, and other evils whereof ye complain?

4. This groaning includes the sense of believers, as to their utter inability to deliver themselves. Paul was a strong Christian, yet he saw this Philistine to be too strong an enemy for him. He saw he could not, of himself, master this old man; therefore he cries out, "Who shall deliver me?" And presently he spies out the deliverer, even Jesus Christ, and gives him solemn thanks, ver. 25. Thus also is it with all believers: they are in themselves weak, unable to resist the smallest temptation. Every one of them has a greater or lesser sense of this; as David said upon the death of Abner; "And I am this day weak, though anointed king, and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, be too hard for me." So every believer may say, though I be anointed with an unction of the Holy One, yet I am in myself but weak; and my lusts, these sons of Satan, these children of hell, be too hard for me.

5. This groaning intimates to us, the believer's earnest desire of deliverance from the body of death. The men of the world cry, "Who will show us any good?" But the righteous cry, Who shall deliver us from the body of this death? O how different cries are these! and this is the believer's constant cry; this is the habitual desire of his soul. All the endeavours of believers are bended this way. For this end they pray, they praise, they read, they hear, they communicate. They exercise all their graces, and perform all their duties, with a view to get their old man brought lower and lower, till at last they be altogether delivered from him. Nay, so earnest is their desire of deliverance, that they welcome two things, which are most unwelcome to the unbelieving world: these are afflictions and death. They welcome the cross, as it is a mean in the hand of God for subduing sin in them, and making them

partakers of the divine holiness. They welcome the hot furnace, in the hope of getting their dross purged away by it: for though they feel it painful, they find it profitable. They welcome death itself, as that which completes their deliverance from the body of sin. We that are in this body groan earnestly, that "mortality may be swallowed up of life." Death, absolutely considered, is not desirable,—“We groan,” says Paul, “not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon,”—but considered as a mean of complete deliverance from the body of sin.

6. This groaning signifies, the believer's hope and expectation of deliverance from the body of death. Thus, the Apostle, after groaning, immediately subjoins a word which implies hope; “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” And it were well, if believers would learn of the Apostle here, to mix their complaints with hope, and their groans with thanksgiving. The old man may prevail far, but he shall not prevail finally. The new man shall at length be more than a conqueror over him. Let the groaning soul, then, lift up his head with joy, for “the day of his redemption draweth nigh.” And let the believer in Christ expostulate with himself, as David does, “Why art thou cast down, O my soul?”

III. I proceed now to consider the reasons of the doctrine; or, to show whence it is, that believers long so much to be delivered from sin remaining in them. And,

1. The body of sin is that which God hates; so that “he cannot look upon it” without abhorrence. How then can the saints but groan for deliverance from it? One person may have so great love to another as to overlook his faults; but though God loveth the righteous with an unchangeable and everlasting love, yet he cannot but hate sin in them, and, in the way of fatherly anger, chastise them for the out-breakings thereof, Amos iii. 2, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” This is a way of reasoning worthy of God, who must needs abhor sin wherever and in whomsoever he sees it. It is the very reverse of his holy nature

and perfections. It is a state of enmity to his interests, and strikes at his very being. It would even dethrone the Most High. Oh, then, what an evil and a bitter thing must it be! The Apostle, not knowing, as it were, how to express the malignant nature of it, calls it exceeding sinful. And it is observable, that the Spirit of God, all along through the Bible, gives it and its servants the worst of names. Sometimes it is compared to poison, and sinners to serpents. Sometimes to mire, and sinners to swine. Sometimes to a tyrant, and sinners to slaves. These are the names by which God, who misçalls none, calls sin and sinners. Though sin be his greatest enemy, yet he will not slander it. No wonder, then, though the saints groan and are heavy of heart, that the least lith or limb, root or branch of God's greatest enemy, should be within their breast.

2. It is the body of sin which pollutes and defiles their souls. It is the most filthy thing. And hence it is, that our sanctification is compared to washing, cleansing, and purifying. It defiles instantly and universally; and the stain it leaves upon the soul is so deep and inveterate, that all the waters on earth cannot wash it away. There was once a deluge of water let in upon the world, which washed away the sinners indeed; but it neither did nor could wash off one sin. And at the last day, that dreadful fire which will burn up the sinful world, and the sinners therein, will not be able to purge away sin. Howbeit, there is one thing, and but one thing that can carry it off; and that is the blood of Jesus Christ. This bears up the saints. Were it not for this, they would sink altogether under the pressure of sin.

3. It is the body of sin, that so often interrupts their communion and fellowship with God, Isaiah lix. 2. This communion is the saint's heaven upon earth. It is the one thing which they desire above all things under the sun: and therefore, when it is suspended, you hear them crying with Job, "O that it were with me as in months past!" And then they cry, "Wo unto us, for we have

sinned!" They suspect the hand of Joab to be in this suspension of their comfort. Sin is of a quarrelsome nature; it deals in whispering and creating jealousies, in order to cast out and separate chief friends. It cast the angels out of heaven; Adam out of paradise; Cain out of the church; the Jews out of their dwellings; and it oftentimes casts the saints under God's fatherly displeasure. When they are taken into the presence chamber, and enjoy sensible communion and manifestations of the love and glory of God, their pride, security, carnality, or some other sin, creeps in upon them, which provokes God to withdraw the light of his countenance; and then they go mourning in the bitterness of their souls. Now, since the old man is such a fire-brand, need we wonder that believers send forth groans for deliverance from it?

4. It is the body of sin, that indisposes them for the service of God: yea, it vigorously opposes them in all their motions toward God and Christ, Rom. vii. 21, 23, "I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me. But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members." My brethren, this is the thief which robs you of your lively frame; which takes away the living child you are so fond of, and puts a dead one in its room. It is this which occasions deadness and inactivity for duties, public, private, and secret. It is this which makes you apt to weary in well doing. It is this same old man, whose office and interest it is to fight against the new man created by Christ Jesus.

The holy angels are swift in doing the will of God; for "he maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire." The saints in heaven never err, or weary in his service: and why? because sin had never any place in the former, and is utterly expelled in the latter. But the saints below are in the dust; the blood and the noise of the battle. Sin, in part, cleaves unto them. It is like the prisoners' bolts upon their legs, that makes them to halt in walking up the hill of God; therefore they groan.

5. It is the body of sin, that not only indisposes them for that which is good, but likewise drives them on to that which is evil. Of this the apostle complains heavily, Rom. vii. 15, "For that which I do, I allow not; for what I would, that do I not, but what I hate, that do I:" and to the same purpose he complains in the nineteenth verse. It is a very malignant influence, which the old man has, when he indisposes the saints for doing good: but O how deplorable is their case, when he pushes them forward into sin; when he not only indisposes them for the great duties of believing, hoping, rejoicing, and patient bearing the cross, but likewise runs them upon the dreadful rocks of misbelieving, desponding, and murmuring against God. Moreover, all the out-breakings, small and great, in the lives of the saints, which give scandal unto others, are the effects of this old man, which is corrupt. These furnish another reason why believers groan for deliverance.

6. It is the body of sin, that is the cause of their slow advances in sanctification. Believers, what is the reason, that when the means of grace are so rich, and your opportunities so great, your progress in the good ways of God is so slow and so small? What is the reason of this languishing, meagre face of yours, when you have such plenty of heavenly manna? why so little conformity to Christ? why so little of his spirit and way to be seen about you? is not all this owing to the body of this death? Well, therefore, may you cry out with the Apostle, Who shall deliver you from it?

7. It is the body of sin, that makes believers so often a prey to Satan and the world. Hence our Lord bids his disciples "watch and pray." And poor Peter, who had been almost destroyed, out of hand, by the roaring lion, sounds the alarm unto all believers, that they be upon their watchtower, 1 Peter v. 8, "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Satan and the world may offer and urge the temptation, but unless something within us comply with it, we are safe. They, indeed, bring the

fire, but the stubble, fully dry, is within our breast, which causes the flame. They shoot the arrows; and we, by reason of sin remaining, are like a thin soft partition wall, easily pierced, and in which the arrows stick, not like the flinty rock, which beats them back in the face of those who throw them. How natural, then, is it to groan for deliverance from that which betrays them so often into the hands of their greatest enemies?

IV. I shall now pass on to a word of application. And,

1. From what has been said, we may in general see the malignant nature of sin. It has disturbed the beautiful order which God established in this world, and changed everything for the worse. From whence come wars and tumults? what has turned the once beautiful garden of this world into a wilderness of nettles, and thorns, and briars? what has turned it from a palace to an hospital, and filled it with groanings, howlings, and complaints of various kinds, so that few but fools laugh in it? Why, all this is produced by sin. Sin, alas, has poisoned all our springs of comfort, and made them run with bitterness, lamentation, and woe. Above all, it is the founder of Tophet; the adequate cause of all the misery in the world to come.

2. Here we see, what sort of life believers may expect in this world. It is not a life of ease, or of profane mirth and jollity, but a life that resembles the life of Christ in the world, who "was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." The true Christian must be a runner, a fighter, a wrestler, a labourer, a groaner: and if these characters be consistent with the profane, careless, easy and useless life which many professors lead, let conscience judge. Alas! how many are there among us, who instead of daily groaning under the body of sin, have never to this day had one hour's serious reflection upon their lost state by nature. This alarming condition never robbed them of one night's rest; never blew up any of their worldly projects; never stopped their sinful mirth, or damped their proud spirit: and yet, amazement! such persons will hope for heaven!

3. Here is comfort to real believers, who are groaning under the remains of sin in them. My brethren, there has no temptation befallen you, but what is common to men; yea, and to the most holy of mere men that ever were. The great Apostle presents himself, in this chapter, as your companion in tribulation. If he, with all his gifts and graces, was a groaner, what can you expect? But believers may object, Alas! unrenewed men may struggle against sin and groan under it, as well as we. How then shall we know the difference?

I shall conclude the subject in answering this.

It is allowed, that both have strugglings against sin; but the difference is great. For, (1.) A natural man's struggle against sin arises from a natural conscience; whereas, a regenerate man's struggle arises from the new nature in him. In the latter, there is a holy principle, that strives against all sin; whereas, in the former, there is nothing but an old corrupt principle, which, upon some defective considerations, strives against some sins. Which leads me to observe,

(2.) They differ in their motives. The unrenewed man struggles against sin, because it is damning; the renewed man, because it is also defiling. The former considers sin as it disturbs the conscience, as it exposes to eternal wrath, or as it is inconsistent with some particular profit which he has in view. Hence his struggles arise. But the latter considers sin also, as it is an abomination to God, a transgression of his law, and a defilement of the soul. Hence he bends all his force against it.

(3.) There is a difference also in the extent of the struggle. The renewed man, although his sorest struggles are with the sins which more easily beset him, yet he struggles against every known sin, and against the first appearances of it: but the unrenewed man struggles only against some particular sins, which, from constitution, custom, education, or some other circumstance, he can more easily abstain from. As for some others, he rolls them as a sweet morsel under his tongue. There are certain favourite

lusts, which he still harbours and gratifies, according to their respective cravings. Examine yourselves in this point, my brethren. See if your struggle be universal. See if there be any Achan in the camp, which you have no will to bring forth that he may be stoned. If it is so, be assured your struggle is not the struggle of the new creature, but of the natural conscience.

In the last place, There is a difference also in the continuance of the battle. The renewed man continues the struggle till he obtain the victory. It is not a war for a day or two about the time of a communion, when the arrows of the word are flying thick about his ears; but it is a war kept up till death; whereas, in an unrenewed man, the cause of the war being the clamours of natural conscience, it comes to an end upon the proclamation of false peace in the soul.