

3. No wonder God's anger go out against us, and the land wherein, and the generation amongst whom we live: For heinous are our sins beyond those of many, and a frightful look may we get of them in this glass. Magistrates, ministers, parents, the aged, professors, sons and daughters of the Lord, have corrupted their ways, as well as others. Our sins have struck immediately against God, and against those who are vested with his authority in the state, in the church, and in families, against his people, and the common good. Sins against the letter of the law, scandalous offences abound, over the belly of light, mercies, and judgments, covenants national, sacramental, and personal; and these continued in obstinately, in a time when the Lord's hand has oft been stretched out and drawn in again, in a land of light.

4. Repent, and flee to the blood of Christ for pardon, if so be our heinous sins may not be our ruin.

5. The means of grace which we enjoy will either promote our salvation, or they will aggravate our damnation.

6. When ye examine yourselves, and think on your sins, consider the several aggravations of them; and lie deep in the dust before the Lord on account thereof; and, through the grace of God, abstain from every sin, and all appearance of evil.

OF THE DESERT OF SIN.

GAL. iii. 10.—*It is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*

THOUGH some sins be greater than others, yet there is no sin but deserves damnation, which we can no where better learn than from the voice of the law, which is the verdict of a just God upon the demerit of sin. This verdict in the text is found written, Deut. xxvii. ult. 'Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.' And herein consider,

1. The party condemned by the law; *every sinner*. The law condemns him for omissions as well as commissions, for breaking off from obedience as well as never entering upon it; for every sin, even the least sin, the least breach of the law; as well as the greatest: *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things, &c.*

2. The doom pronounced in all these cases, is God's wrath and curse; *Cursed is he that continueth not in all things, &c.* This curse binds over to wrath in this life and that which is to come. It is

God's own voice in his law, whose justice will not allow him to fix a punishment on sin greater than it deserves. Hence the doctrine is, Doct. 'Every sin deserveth God's wrath and curse, both in this life and that which is to come.'

Here I shall shew,

I. What is God's wrath and curse, which every sin deserves.

II. What this wrath and curse is.

III. That there is no sin which does not deserve God's wrath and curse.

IV. Deduce some inferences.

I. I shall shew, what is God's wrath and curse which every sin deserves.

First, God's wrath is no passion nor is there any perturbation in God, though an angry God. His wrath is a fire without smoke, and may be taken up in these two things.

1. God's displeasure against the sinner, Psal. v. 4, 5. 'For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.' Sin makes the soul loathsome and hateful in God's sight, kindles a holy fire in his heart against the sinner. Were the sun continually under a cloud, and the heavens always covered with blackness, none of these would be comparable to the state of a sinner under wrath, Psal. xc. 11. 'Who knoweth the power of thine anger?'

2. God's dealing with sinners as his enemies, whom he is incensed against, Neh. i. 2. 'God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth, the Lord revengeth and is furious, the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries: and he reserveth wrath for his enemies.' Isa. i. 24. 'Ah! I will ease me of my adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies.' The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion; what then must the wrath of God be, an enemy, whom we can neither fight nor flee from, neither outwit nor outbrave? Of this wrath it is said, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'

Secondly, His curse is his separating one to evil, Deut. xxix. 21. 'And the Lord shall separate him unto evil, out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses that are written in this book of the law.' It is a devoting the sinner to destruction, to all the direful effects of the divine wrath. It is the tying of the sinner to the stake, setting him up for the mark of God's vengeance, that a broken law and offended justice may disburden all their arrows into him, and that on him may meet together all miseries and plagues, flowing from the wrath of God.*

* See a more particular account of the curse, in the author's *View of the Covenant of Works*, part 4, published in 1772.

II. I shall shew, what is God's wrath and curse in this life and that which is to come.

1. In this life they comprehend all the miseries of this world which one meets with on this side of time, miseries on the body, relations, name, estate, employment; miseries on the soul, as blindness, hardness, vile affections, horrors of conscience, &c. and, finally, death in the separation of soul and body. Thus they make a flood of miseries in this life.

2. In the life to come, they comprehend eternal death and damnation, and an eternal being under the punishment of loss and sense in hell. So they make a shoreless sea of miseries in the life to come. But of both these I spoke largely in a former part of this work. [Vol. i.]

III. I proceed to shew, that there is no sin which does not deserve these, but that every sin deserves this wrath and curse.

1. The wages of every sin is death, Rom. vi. 23. that is, eternal death, as is clear from the opposition to eternal life, Rom. v. 12. 'As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.' Job xxiv. 19. 'The grave consumes those which have sinned.'

2. Every sin is a breach of the law; and he who breaks it in one point, is guilty of all, Jam. ii. 10. He who is guilty of all deserves the wrath of God both in this life and that which is to come. The commands of the law have all one author, whose majesty is offended by whatsoever breach; they all meet in one command, viz. love, and every sin is against that; the law requires universal obedience.

3. Christ died for all the sins of all his elect, 1 Pet. iii. 18. 1 John i. 7. Wherefore, since he suffered God's wrath and curse for them, they certainly deserve it.

4. The least sin will condemn a man, if it be not forgiven, Matth. v. 19; even idle words, Matth. xii. 36, 37; and all must be forgiven graciously, Psal. ciii. 2; wherefore God might in justice not forgive them; and if never forgiven, they may be ever punished.

IV. I come to shew, why every sin deserves so much. The reason is, it is a kind of infinite evil; and therefore, since the punishment is deservedly proportioned to the offence, it deserves infinite punishment. Sin is an infinite evil in two respects.

1. In respect that the guilt and defilement of it is never taken away, but endures for ever, unless the Lord himself in mercy do remove it. The party offended is the eternal God, whose being never comes to an end; The sinner never being able to expiate and put away his offence, Rom. v. 6. it ever remains, unless the Lord himself do remove it, as in the elect by his Son's blood; wherefore the

party offended, and the offence ever remaining, the punishment must needs be eternal; for no unclean thing can ever enter heaven, therefore the sinner must be for ever excluded and punished.

2. In respect it wrongs an infinite God. It is evident among men, that the demerit of a crime rises and falls according to the quality of the person against whom it is committed; so that a crime against one's prince is punished with death, that would not be so, if against a person of meaner condition. Since God, then, is of infinite dignity and majesty, the offence against him deserves infinite punishment. And because the creature, being finite, is not capable of punishment infinite in value, therefore it is necessarily infinite in duration. There is a manifold wrong to God in the least sin.

(1.) It wrongs his infinite sovereignty, Jam. ii. 10, 11. He is Sovereign Ruler of his creatures; his will must be their law, since by his will they were created. But every sin casts off the natural yoke of his sovereign authority, and sets up the sinner's will against it. So that it is accounted a fighting against God, Acts v. 39.

(2.) It wrongs his infinite goodness, Exod. xx. 1, 2. All the good natural, moral, or spiritual, which the creature has, it has it from God, who is the fountain of all good. So that sin is a doing ill for good, the worst of ills for all the good one ever at any time enjoyed. Yea, it is a turning of the good received from God against him; as if one advanced from the dunghill by his prince, should use all his favours in rebellion against him.

(3.) It wrongs his holiness, Hab. i. 13. He cannot endure unholiness. He is omniscient and omnipresent; so sin brings into the presence of the great King, that which by all things he cannot endure to look at. It sets up the worst of defilement before his spotless holiness; and does in its own nature tend to deface the glory of it.

(4.) *Lastly*, It breaks his law, the eternal rule of righteousness, 1 John iii. 4. It is all right, and of perpetual equity, and is the hedge which God has set about his rational creatures: but sin breaks down that hedge, and breaks over it. And the sinner is a rebel against the King's law, 1 Sam. xv. 23; and in effect sets God at defiance, inasmuch as it breaks the law, to which such a penalty is annexed.

I shall now deduce some inferences.

Inf. 1. Let this commend the love of Christ in dying for sinners, Rom. v. 8. O matchless love, which made him willing to be made a curse for us, that we might be delivered from the curse of the law! Every sin deserves God's wrath and curse. What a flood of wrath behoved then to come on him, when he stood in the stead of a whole elect world!

2. Let this convince you of the ill that is in sin. There is more ill in the least sin than the greatest sufferings. Therefore never say, in compliance with a temptation, It is but a little one; for the least sin will make you eternally miserable in hell: and can ye account that a little evil which exposes to God's curse here and hereafter?

3. Inexpressibly terrible is the deserving of many sins, and gross sins, when the least of them deserve God's wrath. If one do so, how great must that wrath be, which thousands and millions deserve? If an idle word deserves God's wrath and curse, what must deliberate lying words deserve, but a deep footing in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

4. Let believers admire free grace, pardoning mercy, and atoning blood, Psal. xxxii. 1; that secures them from bearing the desert of their sin. Let them live to the Lord, by whom they live. Think not little of your sins, O believer, though there be now no condemnation for you, being in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 1; for every one of your sins deserves, though they cannot bring on, God's wrath and curse. Yet tremble at the thoughts of sin; for ye are like the three children in the fiery furnace, compassed with a fire of sin that would burn you up, but the effect of it is stopped by the mediation of Christ.

Lastly, Sinners, be convinced of your absolute need of Christ. Ye must be in him, else ye are ruined for ever. Can ye bear that wrath which incensed justice will inflict on all that are out of Christ? Can ye get free of it without him? Wherefore be alarmed, and exhorted to flee from the wrath that is to come, by fleeing to the Lord Jesus who delivereth all his people from it.

OF THE MEANS OF SALVATION IN GENERAL.

HEB. ii. 3.—*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?*

A SINNER having heard that sin deserves God's wrath and curse, the question that natively follows is, What way one may escape them? This is answered by the weighty question in the text, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* Which we may take up in these two things. (1.) There is no escaping for sinners, if they neglect the great salvation; they perish without remedy. (2.) They that do not neglect it, shall surely escape. Here let us consider,

1. The danger sinners are in by their sin. They are in hazard of