

THE
STATE AND CHARACTER OF BELIEVERS,

AS

THEY ARE OF GOD, WITH THEIR KNOWLEDGE
THEREOF, ILLUSTRATED; AND A DESCRIPTION OF THE UNREGENERATE
WORLD LYING IN WICKEDNESS.

Several sermons preached at Ettrick, in the end of the year 1728,
and beginning of 1729.

1 JOHN v. 19.

And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

As it was said to Rebekah, Gen. xxv. 23. *Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels—and the elder shall serve the younger*; so it may be said in the text. Two manner of people are here, to one of which all of us do belong, viz. those that are of God, and those that are of the world. The latter is the elder, and shall serve the younger, Psal. xlix. 14. *The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning.*

1. There is a people, that though they are in the world, are not of it, but separated from it: *And we know that we are of God.* Here consider, (1.) The original of that people: *They are of God*; that is, begotten and born of God, regenerate persons, born again. They are a heavenly people in respect of their extract, *born from above*, 2 Pet. i. 4. (2.) Who they are in particular, *We* are they, *we* believers in Christ. Those that having received the call of the gospel to come out of the world lying in wickedness, have by faith embraced the call and come away, John i. 12, 13. 2 Cor. v. 17. (3.) The knowledge they have of their original: *We know that we are of God.* We are not only regenerate, but we *know* that we are so. Not that all of them know so much, but some of them do: there may be children so young, that they know not their father's and mother's names; but the elder children know them very well. This comes in here for the comfort of believers against the sin unto death, ver. 16. which the regenerate cannot fall into, ver. 18.

2. There is another people, who are *not of God*, but are quite

distinct from those that are so. Here consider, (1.) Who they are, *the world*, that is, the unregenerate; these are the people distinct from, yea, in an opposite interest to, the people of God. It is plain, *the world* is taken here, not for the place, but for the men of the place, and these not the strangers and pilgrims in it, but the natives who have no other but a worldly birth, and who are in it as at home in their own country. The phrase is taken from the Old Testament, where the church is called *the sons of God*, Gen. vi. 4. those without the church, *the earth*, Gen. xi. 1. in opposition to heaven; being the earthly men in opposition to the heavenly men; men whose birth, temper, and manner of life are all worldly. (2.) The character of this people: they are *lying in wickedness*, or in *the wicked one*, viz. the devil. They are lying in sin, in the guilt and filth, and under the reigning power of it, and so under the power of the devil. They are not rising and wrestling out of it, but they are lying in it, sleeping, dead, and buried in it. (3.) The extent of this character; it belongs to them all, *the whole world*. There are many differences among those of the unregenerate world; some of them are professors, some profane, but the former as well as the latter are lying in wickedness.

That I may give you some view of this text, in its different branches, I shall essay to open up the three following points of doctrine therefrom, viz.

Doctr. I. All true believers are of God, and so separated from the world lying in wickedness.

Doctr. II. People's being of God, and separated from the world lying in wickedness, is what may be known by themselves.

Doctr. III. The whole unregenerate world lieth in wickedness.

Doctr. I. All true believers are of God, and so separated from the world lying in wickedness.

In handling this point, I shall shew,

I. How true believers are of God.

II. How, as they are of God, regenerate persons, they are separated from the world lying in wickedness.

III. Make improvement.

I. I am to shew how true believers are of God. One is said to be of God two ways:

1. By creation; and so all things are *of God*, Rom. xi. 36. Thus the devils themselves are of God as their Creator, and so is the *world*. But this is not the being *of God* here meant. They may be God's creatures, who nevertheless are the children of the devil.

2. By generation, as a son is of a father. And this is twofold.

1st, Eternal generation : so Christ alone is *of God*, John vi. 46. Psal. ii. 7. He is the Son of God by generation of the person of the Father, having the same numerical divine essence eternally and necessarily communicated to him from the Father. Hence he is self-existent, independent, and equal with the Father, John v. 26. Phil. ii. 6. Neither is this meant here.

2dly, Temporal generation, called *regeneration*, which is a work of God's grace on the souls of men, resembling natural generation. And thus believers, and none else, are *of God*, John i. 12, 13. and viii. 47. We are all born from below naturally ; but we must be born from above spiritually, if we see heaven, John iii. 3. *Except a man be born again* [marg. *from above*] *he cannot see the kingdom of God*. All the elect are born so, sooner or later. They naturally lie in the foul womb of the world with others, but the power of divine grace separates them therefrom.

The work of regeneration is held forth under a double notion, shewing the regenerate to be *of God*.

(1.) It is a being *begotten of God*, 1 John v. 18. *He that is begotten of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not*. God himself is the Father of the new creature : it is of no lower original. The incorruptible word of the gospel is the seed of it, Jam. i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 23, 25. A word is cast into the heart, which by the efficacy of the Spirit changes one into a new nature. It is done by means of the resurrection of Christ, ver. 3. Christ lay in this womb of the earth in the grave, as a public person having satisfied justice, he was raised, came forth of the grave, as the first-born from the dead ; and in virtue thereof the dead elect are raised out of their grave of sin, as the next born from the dead.

And this notion of regeneration speaks the parties themselves to have no hand in it, more than a child hath in its own generation. So that as regenerate, they are wholly of God ; and owe their being in grace to him purely, not to their own free will.

(2.) It is a being *born of God*, 1 John v. 18. *Whosoever is born of God sinneth not*. By his Spirit alone the new creature is formed in all its parts, and brought forth into the new world of grace, John iii. 5. And this notion of it speaks the parties to receive life by the Spirit, and to be brought forth to act that life ; and none other but the Spirit to be the cause thereof, John i. 13.

Now by this means, *viz.* regeneration, believers are of God.

1. As partaking of the divine nature, as the child doth of the nature of the parent, 2 Pet. i. 4. There is a fulness of grace lodged in the man Christ, out of which they receive grace for grace, and so

with him partake of the divine nature, being made one spirit, or of one spiritual and divine nature with him. Even as they received a corrupt nature derived to them from Adam, by which they were originally of the wicked one.

2. As bearing the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. By regeneration they are like him; and if it were perfect, they would be perfectly like him. For in regeneration Christ is formed in them, Gal. iv. 19. that is, they are the image of the man Christ, who is the image of the invisible God.

3. As being of his family, Eph. iii. 14, 15. and that not as servants only, but as children, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18. The new birth is a high birth; by it the sinner is a member of the family of heaven; God is his Father, Christ is his elder brother, and the angels and saints are his brethren.

4. As owing their new being to him only in the efficacy of his grace, Eph. ii. 10. *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.* Our natural being we owe in part to our parents, Heb. xii. 9. but our gracious being to God only. That we are men, we owe it to him, in the efficacy of his creating power; and that we are saints, we owe it to him, in the efficacy of his quickening and renewing grace, Gal. iv. 28. *Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.*

II. I shall shew how believers, as they are of God, regenerate persons, are separated from the world lying in wickedness. Negatively,

1. Not in respect of place, 1 Cor. v. 9, 10. They are still in the world, and must be till the Lord call them home; though they are not of the world. God could, in the moment of conversion, have transported converts into heaven, taken them out of the world for good and all; but he has seen meet for their trial, and the glory of the power of his grace, to keep them in the world a while; and yet to keep them separate from it.

2. Not in respect of gathering them into pure unmixed societies for worship. There are no such visible church-societies in the world, Matth. xiii. 28—30. Separating from the world lying in wickedness is not such an easy thing, as visible church separating; they may be forward enough to that, who are yet with the world lying in wickedness, Jude, 19. and may go from party to party in the visible church, who are still of the world's party, not of God. But positively, the regenerate as such are separated from the world.

1. In respect of their being broken off from that corrupt mass, and become a part of a new lump. Adam falling left all mankind earthly men, bearing his corrupt image; Christ is become a second

Adam, the head of heavenly men, bearing his image, 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48. Now the regenerate are separated from the former society, and become members of the latter, through regenerating grace. They are become members of Christ's mystical body, of the invisible church, a distinct though invisible society.

2. Their being delivered from under the power of the god of this world, viz. Satan, Acts xxvi. 18. Satan is the god of this world; the wicked are led by him at his will; he works effectually in them, and blinds their minds, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. But the regenerate are got out from under his subjection, delivered from his kingdom, Col. i. 13. He is indeed an enemy to molest them, but not their king that reigns over them; his involuntary prisoners they may be for a time, but they are no more his willing subjects.

3. Their having a Spirit, even the Spirit of God dwelling in them, which the world have not, Rom. viii. 9; Jude, 19. When Lazarus's spirit entered again into his body, he was separated from the congregation of the dead; and when a dead sinner gets the Spirit of Christ breathed into him, he is separated from the world, as much as the living from the dead.

4. *Lastly*, Their having a disposition, frame, bent, and cast of heart and soul, opposite to that of the world; so that they are as much separated from the world, as enemies are one from another, Gen. iii. 15. Hence they are in their great designs, affections, course and manner of life, non-conformists, and opposites to the world: as opposite as Caleb and Joshua were to their unbelieving countrymen, Numb. xiv. 24.

From this doctrine, we may learn the following things.

1. This speaks the dignity of believers. They are the truly honourable ones, as being of God; they are the excellent of the earth. What avails it that men can boast of their honourable extract in the world, while it still remains true, that they are of their father the devil? The beggar on the dunghill being of God, is more honourable than the wicked king sitting on his throne, attended with all the majesty of a kingdom.

2. It speaks the privilege of believers. Every one will care and provide for his own: be sure God will then take special concern about believers, Matth. vi. 31, 32. *Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* But many such, ye may say, are sorrily provided for. *Ans.* Ye are too hasty in such a judgment, Heb. xi. 16. *God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.* Every one will protect

his own too; God will then protect believers, and he will avenge all their quarrels. There is never an unkindness done to them, but he will resent it, as ye will see from Christ's procedure with the wicked at the last day, Matth. xxv. There is not a hard word spoken to them, nor a wrong look given them, but he will cause their enemies to pay for it.

3. It speaks the duty of believers. Carry yourselves as becomes your dignity and privilege, as those that are of God. Trust him with all your concerns, in all your straits; walk tenderly before him, remembering that your follies reflect dishonour on him ye belong to; and that ye are to evidence your being of God, by your steering another course than the world lying in wickedness.

4. *Lastly*, It shews the self deceit of unbelievers, pretenders to a saving interest in God, while in the mean time they are lying together with the world in wickedness. How can they be of God, who are not separated from the world, but walking according to the course thereof, in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.

But I proceed to the second doctrine from the text.

Doct. II. *People's being of God, and separated from the world lying in wickedness, is what may be known by themselves.* We know that we are of God, says the apostle. There is a people in the world, yet not of the world, but separated from it; and they may see that they are such.

In treating this subject, I shall shew,

I. What knowledge may be had of this.

II. Make some practical improvement.

I. I am to shew what knowledge may be had of this, That one is of God, and separated from the world lying in wickedness.

There are three ways of coming to the knowledge of a thing.

1. By our senses, as we know fire to be hot, and ice to be cold. But this matter cannot be known that way. The grace of God, and the spiritual privileges of believers, are not the objects of sense. Indeed, if separation from the world were just a separating from one party and joining with another in church-society; we might know it by sense; but it is not so.

2. By extraordinary revelation, visions, voices, or impressions. Such things have been, as in Abraham's case, Gen. xvii. 1, 2. But that dispensation is ceased, the canon of the scripture being completed, and we referred to it, as unto a *more sure word of prophecy*, 2 Pet. i. 19. It was never known to all, though all are required to

know this, ver. 10. Assurance then of one's being in a state of grace, may be attained without extraordinary revelation.

3. By rational evidence, as seeing a house, we know it has been built by some one; seeing the world, we know that it has been created of God; because they could not make themselves. So men may know themselves to be of God, by *giving diligence to make their calling and election sure*, 2 Pet. i. 10. Two things concur here.

1st, Spiritual discerning, a spiritual sight, taste, or feeling of the things of God, in ourselves or others, 1 Cor. ii. 14. It is the total want of this in some, that makes them deceive themselves; they have no spiritual discerning, to distinguish between God's people and the world; so they are like men in the dark, that know not where they are, nor whither they are going. And the weakness of this discerning in many of God's people, robs them of the comfort they might have.

2dly, Spiritual reasoning on scripture grounds, 1 John v. 13. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. The word is the rule, which pronounces of men's state in the general; by spiritual discerning believers see in themselves or others, those things concerning which the scripture pronounces; and by spiritual reasoning they come to know by these means that they are of God, and separated from the world lying in wickedness. Now, by way of rational evidence, one may know this of a two-fold object.

1. Of others. One may know that others are of God, and separated from the world, discerning the image of God shining forth in them, and hence gathering that they are of God, and not of the world. So the apostle in the text speaks of others as well as himself. There is a spiritual discerning in that case, as Barnabas saw the grace of God in the converts at Antioch, Acts xi. 23. And this knowledge is supposed in the command of loving one another, given to God's people; for how can men love others as of God, if they cannot know them to be so?

2. Of themselves. A true believer may know himself to belong to God, and not to the world. So the apostle says in the text, We know that we are of God. There are such marks of distinction betwixt the two societies fixed in the word, that, by spiritual discerning and reasoning, one that is of God may be satisfied, that he is really of God, and needs not be always in the dark in that point.

But betwixt that knowledge concerning one's self and others, there is this remarkable difference.

1st, In the case of others, we can have, by rational evidence, only

a judgment of charity, not of certainty, without extraordinary revelation, such as Ananias had with respect to Paul, Acts ix. 15. This is founded upon probable appearance of the grace of God in them, which yet may be but an appearance. Hence the best of men may be deceived in their opinion of others, as Philip was with Simon Magus. The devil's goats may be taken for Christ's sheep, by very discerning Christians. Of this I would say,

(1.) We should not be rash in giving or refusing that judgment, but hold pace with the appearance or non-appearance of the grace of God in them. We are bid to beware of men; for we are told all men are liars: and many a fair outside there is, where there is a foul inside, that a little trial discovers; therefore we ought not to have the persons of any in admiration. On the other side, the grace of God may dwell with much dross; therefore we are to beware lest we trample the jewel under foot, because it lies in a dunghill.

(2.) The love bestowed on hypocrites is not all lost, and therefore it is safest erring on the charitable side. A man may love Christ in a hypocrite; not that Christ dwells in any such, but that what we bestow on any for Christ's sake, whether they really deserve it or not, will not lose its reward, Mark ix. 41. And by the rule of charity, we are obliged to put the best construction on our neighbour's state and way that they can reasonably bear, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. One had better judge ten hypocrites sincere, for that may be duty, than one sincere person a hypocrite.

(3.) Let us carry our judgment of others no farther than that of charity, and not pretend to a certainty, which is not competent to us in that case, but to God only. He alone is the searcher of hearts, without the knowledge of which an absolute certainty cannot be attained. Keeping within our own bounds, the deceit discovered in the world would brangle us the less, as being not inconsistent with the judgment that we formed.

2dly, In our own case, we may have by rational evidence a judgment of certainty, without extraordinary revelation. We may in an ordinary way, if we really belong to God, be infallibly assured of it. The reason of the difference is plain; we see the open actions and carriages of others, but we cannot know the secret springs of them, the principles, ends, and manner of them, upon which the main stress lies; but we may know these things in ourselves. What moves ourselves so to walk, we can assuredly know; but what moves others, we cannot know that.

This is clear from the following grounds.

(1.) A true child of God may assuredly know his relative state in the favour of God. Though he cannot open the sealed books of the

decrees, and read his name at first hand in the decree of election; yet by comparing the word of God in the Bible, and the work of God in his own soul; he may know himself to be one of the elect, 2 Pet. i. 10. Heb. vi. 11. to be one of those for whom Christ died, and of the family of God, Rom. viii. 16, 17.

(2.) He may discern in himself real grace, and know that he believes in Christ, as sure as he breathes, 2 Tim. i. 12. and loves him, so that he can appeal to Omniscience for the truth thereof, as Peter did, John xxi. 15. And knowing that all who believe in Christ, and love the Lord, are of God, separated from the world, and shall never be suffered to mix with them again, he may conclude so of himself with the greatest certainty.

(3.) All the saints have the Spirit of Christ, Rom. viii. 9. And it is the office of the Spirit to lead them into all truth, and particularly to shine upon his own work in the soul, 1 Cor. ii. 12; and so to be a joint witness with their own spirits to their adoption into the family of God, Rom. viii. 16; to be a seal, which is designed to ensure, Eph. iv. 30; and an earnest too, which is both a part of the price, and a pledge of the whole, 2 Cor. v. 5.

(4.) The effects of faith sometimes produced by it in the saints confirm this. Such is the boldness and confidence they sometimes have with God, Eph. iii. 12. rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, Rom. v. 2. which is sometimes unspeakable, 1 Pet. i. 8. So that they can cheerfully undergo sufferings, Heb. x. 34. All which necessarily presupposeth their knowing themselves to be of God.

(5.) *Lastly*, The examples of the saints make it plain, as Job xix. 25—27. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Psal. xxiii. ult. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever." 2 Tim. iv. 8. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." This knowledge is what has been reached, and therefore yet may be so.

II. For practical improvement of this point, I exhort you to be concerned to know, whether ye are of God, separated from the world, or not. Take that matter under serious consideration. To press you thereto, consider,

1. We are all of us naturally, and by our first birth, of the world lying in wickedness, Eph. ii. 2, 3. No question but we were once

joined to the wicked world, as kindly members thereof; all the question is, Whether we be separated from them, or not? It is by a second birth that we are of God, if at all. What experience have we of that?

2. The world lying in wickedness is the society appointed to destruction, as in a state and course of enmity against God, Eph. ii. 3. Therefore all that are to be saved, are delivered and gathered out of it, Gal. i. 4. Wo to them that are left in it, for they will perish in the ruins of it. David prays, "Gather not my soul with the wicked." But they that are not gathered out of them in life, cannot miss to be gathered with them in death; being eternally left in the guilt and filth of their wickedness, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

3. Many deceive themselves in this matter, as the foolish virgins, Matth. xxv. Christ's flock is certainly a little flock, Luke xii. 32. Matth. v. 13, 14. Yet there are but very few who do not hope to share with them; for a ruining principle obtains, That if we be not notoriously profane, it will be well with us in the end; as if the devil could dwell in none, whose name is not Legion. They that have a form of religion, build on that; and others build on the mercy of God. They consider not, how very unlikely it is, that they shall leap out of Delilah's lap into Abraham's bosom; and therefore they trouble not themselves with separating from the world lying in wickedness.

4. Death is approaching; and if it were come, there will be no separating more from the world. There are two parts of that world, the one within, the other without the line of mercy. The latter lies on the other side of death. And death separates the unregenerate from the former part indeed, but it fixes them for ever among the other part that is quite hopeless.

5. It is uncertain when death comes to us, and how, Matth. xxiv. 42. People of all ages and sizes die, and death fixes all in an unalterable state. A death-bed is not to be trusted to; for death may surprise you without getting one; and though ye get it, it may be very useless for soul business, whether through raving or extreme tossing. At best it is hardly the fit time of being new born, when a-dying.

6. *Lastly*, It is an excellent and useful thing to know our state in this point. For if we find that we are not of God, but of the world, we are awakened to see to it in time. If we find that we are, it is what makes both a comfortable life, in the midst of troubles from the world; and a fruitful life, inflaming the heart with love, humbling the soul, and strengthening it, and fitting both to live and to die.

For your help in this inquiry, consider the following signs, marks, and characters of those that are of God, separated from the world.

CHARACTERS OF THOSE THAT ARE OF GOD.

First, They are such as have fled from the world to Jesus Christ as a refuge, Heb. vi. 18. They have seen danger in it, in a work of conviction; and safety from it in Christ, in a work of saving illumination. Such are of God, and none other, as is manifested from that gospel-call, 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18, "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The secure, and strangers to Christ, are yet in the world lying in wickedness.

1. Seen danger in the world has made them flee from it. They have come out of it, as Lot out of Sodom, under conviction that destruction from the Lord was waiting it. They have heard and believed the report of the word about it, saying, as Rev. xviii. 4. "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." They have got an awakening that has frightened them from staying longer with them, notwithstanding of the multitude abiding at ease therein, the discerning of which makes many easy in their stay in it.

2. Seen safety in Christ has brought them to him, in a way of believing, Acts xv. 11, "But we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved." They have seen him to be the Christ, in whom the fulness of happiness is lodged in opposition to the world, 1 John v. 1. They have discovered in him a glory darkening all the world's glory, and so have made the exchange as of husks for bread, Matth. xiii. 45, 46.

Secondly, They are coming away with Christ from the world in their daily walk, answering his call, Can. iv. 8. "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon." After Israel came out of Egypt, they went not back to it, to the brick kilns, and the flesh-pots; but they marched through the wilderness. Those that are separated from the world in regeneration, are still separating from it, in progressive sanctification, labouring to keep themselves unspotted from the world. They are not of God then, who having once had something like conversion, make that stand for all, and never endeavour to be separating more and more from the world.

There are three things that make them still to be coming away from the world.

1. It grows no better in their eyes, in any of its shapes, whatever it grows worse; so they continue their separation and march, coming

up from the wilderness, Cant. viii. 5. Some people get a fright of the world some time; and the ways of the world appear to them dangerous ways. But that fright goes off, and the ways of the world look more gay to them; and they being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, even go back again, and settle down in the world lying in wickedness in one shape or another, that be like them.

2. There are two contrary principles in them, an earthly one and a heavenly one, grace and corruption, Gal. v. 17. If they had only the earthly principle, they would settle still with the world, they could not come away at all. If they had only the heavenly principle, they would be quite separated from the world, and their march from it would be at an end. But having both, the one puts them in continual hazard of the unclean thing, and the other prompts them to be making away from it.

3. They have peremptorily left their old rest, and are not yet come to their new rest, therefore they must be moving. They have left the city of destruction, but they are not come yet to the city of God, the New Jerusalem, Heb. iv. 9, 11. They are come out of Egypt, but they are not yet come to Canaan; but they are on their wilderness march, minded to hold on, while apostates are for returning to Egypt again.

Thirdly, They are non-conformists to the world, Rom. xii. 2. They do not conform themselves to the course of the world, Eph. ii. 2. Hence they are indeed the world's wonder, and at length the object of their reproach and spite, 1 Pet. iv. 4. Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you. They dare not do what the world makes no bones of; they hate the courses that the world is fond of; and take pleasure in those things that are tasteless and sapless to the world. Being of God, it must be so; for,

1. They are of another country than the world, being heavenly men, born from above. They are pilgrims and strangers here; how then can they miss not to be conformed to the natives? Indeed if they were to settle among them, and to be naturalized, forgetting the heavenly country, they would fall in with their ways and courses, as apostates do. But they are only travelling through the world, and therefore it is not strange they quite differ in their language, habit, and manners, from the natives of the world.

2. They are of another nature than the men of the world, being partakers of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. Some men differ in their natural constitutions so, that what is one man's meat is another's poison. But the new nature in the regenerate differs farther from the old corrupt nature in the world. Grace gives the hearts of men

a new set, hangs a new bias on them, so that they dearly love what themselves before hated, and hate what before they loved. The new nature and the old course are inconsistent. One must quit the latter, or all pretence to the former.

This non-conformity lies not only in not doing what the world does, but in doing another way than the world does in that which they both do. So in those things which they both do, there is still a non-conformity to the world, which is seen in these three things.

1. In natural actions, as eating and drinking, &c. They that are of God must do these as well as they that are of the world; yet the former do not conform to the latter in the way of doing them. The way of the world in these things is merely selfish and carnal, to gratify a lust or appetite, without any eye to God in them, to his command, his glory, or to the fitting of them to serve God in their station, Zech. vii. 6. "When ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did ye not eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?" (Matth. xxiv. 38.) Hence conscience has with them nothing to do in the getting, or in the using of these things.

But they that are of God will take their religion to their bed and to their board, and regulate themselves therein according to the dictates, not of carnality, but conscience, 1 Cor. x. 31. The satisfying the necessities of the body, will not be to them the ends of their living, but the means of living, their end being to live to God; and therefore these things will be cut and carved as they may best contribute to that end, 1 Thess. iv. 4, 5.

2. In civil actions, as working, bargaining, guiding a family, serving, &c. The way of the world in these things, is to have no respect to the command or honour of God in them, to shuffle out the directions in their Bible from them, as a thing having no concern in these matters, Luke xvii. 28; to have no single eye to seek the good of those they have to do with, but to please themselves; or at best to be men-pleasers, not God pleasers in these things: to count exact truth and uprightness needless nicety.

But those that are of God dare not, will not, nay abhor to conform themselves to that way of the world. They will carry their religion into their callings, worldly business, and relations, 1 Cor. vii. 23, 24. They will look on God as the principle, whoever is the less principle party they have to do with, Prov. iii. 6. The end of regeneration is the restoring of sinners to conformity unto the rule of righteousness, whereof the sum is love to God and our neighbour, shewing itself in sincere endeavours to honour God, and to be beneficial to mankind, 1 John iii. 10. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doth not righte-

ousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother."

3. In religious actions. It is not bare praying, hearing, &c. that will distinguish one from the world lying in wickedness; for all that religion is found among them too. But they have a way of their own in it, holding with the form, but denying the power, 2 Tim. iii. 5. contenting themselves with bodily exercise, while strangers to the spirituality of duties, Matth. xv. 8. seeking themselves in them, not God, Matth. vi. 2. making a shelter of them wherein to sin more at ease, Prov. vii. 14, 15; and putting them in Christ's room, by confidence in them, Rom. x. 3.

But those that are of God conform not to that way of religion. For to the regenerate it is not a piece of art, but of new nature; religion is a thing that their new nature leads them to. And what is natural people will still aim at the perfection of, and so they will study the power of godliness. And being of God, they will natively seek the enjoyment of God, as the infant seeks to suck the breasts of the mother that bare it; and they will seek the destruction of sin by their religion, as being a contrary principle thereto; and it will natively carry them out of themselves to Christ for all, since he is the life of the new creature. See their character, Phil. iii. 3. "We are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Fourthly, They are in a state of opposition to the world lying in wickedness. This is plain from Gen. iii. 15. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." Jam. iv. 4. The two parties are like the company of two armies engaged against one another. When by regenerating grace one comes out from among them, he is not only separated from them, but set up in opposition to them. This says negatively,

1. Those that are of God are not the friends of the world, taking part with them against those that are of God. There are some not without pretences to religion, but as to matters of practice they are still upon the loose side; they will plead for Baal, and give squint strokes at tender holy walking. They will declaim against hypocrisy, being tongue tacked against profaneness; they have a vail to throw over the gross abominations of the licentious, but they will rip up the infirmities of the weak; they have a tongue soft as wool for the credit of the scandalous and profane, but piercing like a sword into the serious. Let these read the sentence of the Spirit of God, excommunicating them out of the communion of saints, James iv. 4. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God; whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.

2. They are not neuters in the quarrel with the world lying in wickedness. There are some who think that they do very well, if they do nothing against the cause of religion; but to act against the cause of wickedness in the world, is none of their business, it belongs not to them, not considering what Solomon says, Prov. xxviii. 4. "They that forsake the law, praise the wicked; but such as keep the law, contend with them." They think to keep peace with God, and with the world lying in wickedness too; but they are mistaken, it will not do. Whoever they be that are not content to list themselves under Christ's banner, to oppose and act against the world lying in wickedness, Christ denounces them enemies to him, Matth. xii. 30. "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad."

How can it be but that those who are of God are in a state of opposition to the world lying in wickedness?

(1.) The object of their love is the object of the world's hatred, which cannot miss to produce this. God in Christ is the principal object of the love of the regenerate, and him the world hates, John xv. 18. and they shew it in their hatred of his image, in his ordinances, his people, and especially in his law, because there it is most lively expressed. And can any thing be more natural, than for a son to be in a state of opposition to his Father's haters and enemies? Psal. cxxxix. 21. namely, to oppose them in their opposition, that is, their sin, not their persons.

(2.) They are under opposite heads, betwixt whom there is an irreconcilable war, Christ and the devil, Michael and the dragon. This war was proclaimed in paradise, Gen. iii. 15. and will never end, but in the destruction of the one party. Nobody can be neuter in such a case, but do make opposition. The arms of the parties are indeed very different. The world acts against those that are of God, by persecutions, reproaches, mockings, contempt and hatred of their persons, looseness of life, trampling on the laws and honour of God; the regenerate act against the world lying in wickedness: by hatred of their ways, loving their persons, testifying against them, endeavouring to reclaim them, rowing against the stream in a tender walk, mourning and praying for them. They that are not so engaged against the world, are not of God.

(3.) The interest of the two societies is downright opposite; so opposite that the one cannot be advanced but on the ruin of the other. The spreading of holiness is the interest that the one is pursuing, the promoting of sin is the interest pursued by the other; these are as opposite as light and darkness. And it is as sure that every man and woman is acting in this life to the promoting of one

of these two in the world, as that every person and thing will act agreeable to its own nature, Micah iv. 5. For all people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever. And therefore those that are of God are in a state of opposition to the world lying in wickedness.

Fifthly, There is a bond of brotherly love, whereby they are knit together among themselves, as children of one family. By this one may know himself to belong to the family of God, 1 John iii. 14. "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren;" and by it as a badge on-lookers may know they belong to it, John xiii. 35. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." So that it is a sign that casts its light both inward and outward. The certainty hereof appears from several considerations.

1. They all love God their common Father, love his image, pressing to be like him as their main aim. Hence, since all the regenerate do bear God's image as begotten of him, they must love them also, 1 John v. 1. "Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." The love of God natively draws after it the Christian love of those that are of God.

They have forsaken the world for the society of the saints; and as the married woman forsakes her father's house, and joins herself into the house of her husband, thenceforth to look upon the interest thereof as her interest; so in the spiritual marriage with Christ and regeneration, the soul comes home to the society of the saints for good and all, in opposition to the world, cordially falling in with the call given, Psal. xlv. 10. "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house."

3. The natural enmity against the seed of the woman that is inseparable from the seed of the serpent, evinceth this, Gen. iii. 15. In every unregenerate man there is a natural enmity against a holy God, his holy Christ, and his holy seed; their natures being as contrary as fire and water, that it is impossible ever they should be, as such, lovely in one another's eyes. And in regeneration, the serpentine nature is changed, the enmity removed, and consequently this love to the saints is fixed in its room, as a necessary consequent of the new nature.

4. As God is love, the devil is a mass of hatred and malice against God and man, so the two parties partake of their natures respectively. God bears a common love to his creatures, so as to do them good, and a special love to the saints; and those that are of God, accordingly have implanted in them a principle of love, of

good will and beneficence to mankind, Luke vi. 35. but a special love of delight in the saints, Psal. xvi. 3. Gal. vi. 10. Satan bears a hatred against men, especially holy men; but most of all he hates God; so his seed hate one another, Tit. iii. 3. and more keenly hate the heavenly seed, and that because of their hatred wherewith most of all they are irreconcilable to God, John xv. 18.

Object. Where are there greater heats and oppositions, than among the different parties in the church? where then is the brotherly love by which all are pretended to be knit? *Ans.* There is a difference betwixt the visible church, and those that are of God. In the visible church are many who are still of the world lying in wickedness, and they bring with them into the church, their natural enmity, hatred, and unchristian spirit, and exercise it in the things of God, to the marring of the purity, beauty, and peace of it. But this hellish fire belongs to the spirit of the world, and the blame of kindling it lies at the door of the world. And if the church, though imperfect were freely separated from the world lying in wickedness, it would be a lovely and loving society far beyond what it is. I own that these things are incident to those that are of God, as in the contention between Paul and Barnabas, Acts xv. 39. and the reason is, the remains of the spirit of the world in them are not yet purged away; but the cause of the quarrel is not what they conceive to be likeness, but unlikeness to God; and notwithstanding all their jarrings, they will still love them as they appear to have the image of God on them; for whatever they differ in, they agree in that. Wherefore we may lay down these conclusions,

1. They that are of God love the society of the regenerate, considered as a holy society, separated from the world lying in wickedness, Heb. xii. 22. The picture of that society drawn in the Bible, is beautiful in their eyes, more alluring to them than the richest, most powerful, and most gay and splendored society in the world; and therefore they desire more to be of it, than of any other whatsoever. The grace in it glisters more in their eyes than gold in the world; and so it is not with others, 1 John ii. 15. Cant. i. 7.

2. They love particular saints of their acquaintance for what likeness to God appears in them, 2 John ii. 2. There are many things about the children of God, that may move love to them in a child of the devil, their relation, usefulness, and agreeableness in several things to them! but their spiritual beauty in conformity to the holy Jesus, is a motive and ground of love to them, not in the unregenerate, but in the regenerate partakers of the same divine nature. Upon that score the serpentine enmity rises in the one, and love in the other.

3. They love all the saints without exception, so far as they can

take them up to be so, Eph. i. 15. They will never confine their love to a party, to whom God has not confined his grace, nor to such as are attended with worldly advantages, despising the rest on whom the world particularly frowns, Psal. cxix. 63. If they should do so, they would evidence that it is not God they love in them, but themselves; that it is not the advantages they have as the darlings of heaven, but, of the world. But whatever defects are about them, the appearance of God's grace in them will supply them all, to the rendering them lovely in the eyes of those that are of God, though not to others, whereby they are tried and cast.

4. The more gracious and holy any are, the more will they be loved of them. For the more of the cause there is in any, the more there must be of the effect. And hence it is, that the most tender and holy Christians are at once the objects of the greatest love of the regenerate, and the world's greatest hatred. Many can endure holiness while it remains dim and obscure in men, that spit venom against it, where it shines clear; so formal hypocrites are like the owl that can come abroad in the twilight, but cannot endure the light of the sun: an eminent instance were the Pharisees to Christ.

5. *Lastly*, The more any have of the world's hatred for their opposition to it, they will love them the more. As fire burns keenest in the sharpest frost, so it has always been observed, that the love of the godly to one another was strongest, when the world's hatred of them was most keen. So dangerous it is to be found joining the torrent of the world against serious godly ones.

Sixthly, Their hearts are kindly disposed towards the holy law. As the old corrupt nature reigning in the unregenerate fills them with enmity against it, Rom. viii. 7. so the new nature in them kindly plies and bends towards it, Psal. cxix. 97. The reason is, the image of God expressed in the law is begun to be drawn on their souls, so that their new nature and the holy law point both one way, Heb. viii. 10. It is true, there is a resistance and aversion of the unrenewed part; but that is not total, and there is a gracious principle that condemns it, Rom. vii. 22, 23. Hence,

1. They willingly take on the yoke of obedience, and go under it, because it is agreeable to their new nature, 1 John v. 3. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." Christ's yoke is a galling yoke to the necks of the men of the world, because their is no suitableness of their nature to it: they spurn it, their hearts rise against it; fain would they be quit of it, that they might take their swing according to their lust. But it is not so to those who are of God, Matth. xi. 29, 30. Fain would they be rid of their lusts, but not of the law, Rom. vii. 24.

2. they are universal in their obedience to their knowledge, Psal. cxix. 6. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." When there is an artificial bending towards the law, upon a particular design, there is a picking and choosing of the parts thereof most agreeable to one's circumstances; hence some fall in with duty to God, but make no conscience of their duty to men; others fall in with personal duty, but make no conscience of relative duties; they comply with duties of commanding, but make no conscience of duties of subjection: for the one they can digest, but not the other. But where the bent is new and natural, there will be a falling in with the whole, since the whole is agreeable to the new nature, and is of a piece, and laid on by the same authority, James ii. 10, 11.

Lastly, They overcome the world, 1 John v. 4. "Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world; and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." Having separated from the world, it will pursue them, as the Egyptians did Israel, and it will have a war with them, encountering them with its smiles and frowns; but whatever way it attacks them they overcome; though they may lose in particular battles, yet they are the overcomers in the main. And,

1. They overcome its smiles, holding fast by their God, religion, and duty, in the face of a smiling world, Job i. 1—5. Many a man that sometimes seemed to be separated from the world, is brought by the warm sun of worldly prosperity to drop off his garments of religion and a tender walk, and plunge himself into the way of the world lying in wickedness. And there is no question but worldly prosperity is given to men for their trial, as well as adversity; and many come foul off in it, Prov. i. 32. But those who are once truly separate will overcome.

2. They overcome its frowns, holding fast by their God, religion, and duty, as sweet, though the world turn never so sour, Hab. iii. 17, 18. "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." The sour world gets the day of many, by sucking the sap out of religion to them, rendering the word of promise and spiritual comforts tasteless to them; so that though when the world gave them comfort, they had some comfort in religion too; yet when the world's comforts are dried up, the comforts of religion are gone too, Exod. vi. 9. That says the world was the main pillar on which their comfort stood. But though the

world may prevail to brangle thus with them that are of God, yet they will not be quite overcome, but will be overcomers in the case; shewing that they are in hope of something better than what they have lost, that there is something for which they can part with all to obtain it, and that there is a fountain running while the world's cisterns are dry.

I proceed now to consider the last doctrine, namely,

Doct. III. The whole unregenerate world lieth in wickedness.

In handling this subject, we shall,

I. Shew why the society of the unregenerate is called the world.

II. Offer some description of the unregenerate world.

III. Make improvement.

I. I am to shew why the society of the unregenerate is called the world. It is plain here, that though the regenerate really are in this world, as well as the unregenerate; yet the unregenerate are by the Spirit of God called the world, in contradistinction to the regenerate, as if they possessed the earth alone, and no other were mixed with them in it. The reasons are,

1. They are the main body of the world; and so few of the other sort are mixed with them, that they alter not the denomination, John i. 10. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. The regenerate are but here one and there one, but the unregenerate appear in multitudes; the former are but as gleanings, the latter as the harvest. What safety can men propose then in the way of the multitude, the course of the world?

The scripture is plain in this, Matth. vii. 13, 14. "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Luke xiii. 24. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Christ's flock is a very little flock, in comparison of the devil's herd, Luke xii. 32. And it is, alas! demonstrable beyond contradiction. Dividing the world into thirty parts, nineteen of them are possessed by Pagan idolaters, who know not the true God; six by Jews, Turks, and Saracens; so five only remain which profess Christianity. Thus Christians by profession are but five to twenty-five. Of these five two are reckoned to be of the Greek church, much sunk in ignorance, and the other three idolatrous Papists and Protestants. And among Protestants, how many are openly profane or grossly ignorant, having no tolerable shew of

piety? how many are mere formalists, strangers to the work of grace, and exercises of godliness?

2. They are the natives, others are but strangers among them, and such are not counted in a general denomination of a society. They are in the scripture-style, the inhabitants of the world, Isa. xxvi. 18. of the earth and sea, Rev. xii. 12. as being the natives of it, having their birth and breeding only of the world. The regenerate are sojourners among them, pilgrims and strangers among them, Heb. xi. 13.

3. Their spirit, temper, and disposition, chief aims and designs, are all worldly, there is nothing heavenly in them, Psal. xvii. 14. Their souls are indeed of heavenly original; but they are sunk, like a pearl in a mire, in the profits, pleasures, vanities, and cares of the world. Hence they are called flesh, as if they had no spirit in them, John iii. 6. and are said to be in the flesh, Rom. viii. 8. For they can relish nothing but what is fleshly or worldly; their views are confined within the compass of the present world; on these things they value themselves; and in effect their souls have resigned themselves slaves to their bodies, and their consciences to their senses; being an effect in their bodies as salt only to keep them from rotting.

4. They are the lower part of the rational kind, the dreggy part of the creation. Therefore, whereas the church is called heaven, and the regenerate sons of God, heavenly men; they are called the earth, children of men, earthly men, Gen. xi. 1. and vi. 2. 1 Cor. xv. 48. For as when the Spirit moved, and the divine word passed upon the shapeless mass at the beginning, the finer parts went upward, or off from the dreggy gross part, which remaining lowest was called earth; so the word and Spirit passing on the mass of mankind, that part thereof which is thereby regenerate gets a new nature, ascends in their designs and aims, and at length become equal with the angels, Luke xx. 36; and the unregenerate part that is left below, being earthly, sensual, devilish; for the time are like the beasts, following their fleshly appetite, as dogs and swine the grossest of them; and in the end are thrust down into the place of devils.

5. *Lastly*, Because all in the world without exception are originally of their kind, unregenerate, John iii. 6. Even the elect themselves are once unregenerate; they who are now of God, were sometime of the unregenerate world, Tit. iii. 3. So that irregeneracy is the state of all the world originally, in which state all lie in wickedness, Psal. xiv. 3. Only those that are of God have heard Heaven's voice, as saying, Come up hither, and so have been separated from the world. But the society they come from is still the world lying in wickedness.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE UNREGENERATE WORLD.

II. The second head proposed was, to offer some description of the unregenerate world. We have seen some of the characters of those that are of God, I shall now lay before you a view of the world lying in wickedness. That world is (as it were two hemispheres) twofold.

1. The lower world lying in wickedness. That is the region of death, eternal death; the lake of fire; the pit, the abyss of hell. The inhabitants thereof are the devils, and the souls of the damned, who have lived and died in their unregenerate state, and will continue for ever in it.

2. The upper world lying in wickedness. That is the land of the living, this present evil world, made up of all those who are living in their unregenerate state, the black state of nature, strangers to Christ and the power of godliness. It is the upper unregenerate world we are to speak of, not the lower, when we have observed that they are but one world in different circumstances.

1st, The lower and upper unregenerate world are indeed one world, one kingdom of Satan, one family of his. As it is but one family of saints that is in heaven and earth, Eph. iii. 15; so it is but one family of sinners that is in hell and on earth. Therefore those here are declared children of hell, as well as those that are there, Matth. xxiii. 15. of the devil, John viii. 44. So men dying unregenerate, go to their own place, Acts i. 25; and though they change their place, they change not their society, being gathered with those in death, in society with whom they lived.

2dly, But only they are in different circumstances.

(1.) The state of the one is alterable, as of those who are upon a trial; of the other unalterable, as those on whom a definitive sentence is passed; this is held forth in the case of the rich man and his five brethren, Luke xvi. 25—28. Those of them here are upon their way in their travel, and may change their route, and go heaven-ward; the other are at their journey's end, and can move no more from their place.

(2.) So the case of the one is not without hope, but that of the other absolutely hopeless. They are both prisoners; but the one are prisoners of hope, Zech. ix. 12; but the earth with her bars is about the other for ever. There is a gulf fixed between heaven and them, impassable. Here they are in darkness indeed, but it is not outer darkness, as in the case of the damned. Here the voice of the turtle is heard, but there nothing but yelling.

(3.) And *lastly*, Here they lie in wickedness with some ease and

pleasure: there they lie in it with none at all. Their pleasurable sins are there at an end, Rev. xviii. 14. Nothing of them remains with them, but the guilt of them, and cutting remorse for them; the sweet of their cup is drunk out, and nothing remains but the bitter dregs. One encourages another here, and men please themselves with the multitudes going their way; but there the throng is far greater; for whereas there are some constantly dropping off here, the wicked of all generations are there, and none return; yet the more the worse, Luke xvi. 28.

But now as to the upper unregenerate world, we shall first consider the parts, and then the state thereof.

I. The Parts of the Unregenerate World.

First, The religious part of it, that is as the heavens in that world. Wonder not that we speak of the religious part of the world lying in wickedness; for there is some religion, but of the wrong stamp, in that world, and one part of it is exalted above another, as the heaven above the earth, Matth. xi. 23. This makes them appear like the regenerate, in the outward man, having a form of godliness, and imitating the saints in their outward actions and behaviour, 2 Tim. iii. 5.; being formalists, hypocrites, tares among the wheat, but still strangers to a work of grace; and so much the farther that they have a shew of it, Matth. xxi. 31. Two things bring religion into the world lying in wickedness, where there is no regeneration.

1. A natural conscience, which dictates that there is a God, a difference betwixt good and evil, rewards and punishments after this life, Rom. ii. 15. Though this is wrestled down in some of that world, that it has very little power with them; yet with others that are no more regenerate than they, it is improved, by the light of the gospel in the word, by good education, consideration, and thought; so that they prove morally serious, regular in their lives, embracing the external parts of religion, though unregenerate.

2. Interest, which sways the men of the world to it several ways. In some times and places religion is fashionable, gains men credit and reputation; so they embrace it for their credit, as the Pharisees did, Matth. vi. 2. In some cases worldly advantages and profits attend it, and that bait draws many worldly men to it, as it did the multitude to Christ for the loaves, John vi. 26, 27. And then its declared eternal advantages follow it, salvation from the wrath of God, and heaven's happiness; and a carnal sight of these things draws many, who are merely selfish in their pursuit, as was the case of that multitude, who said, ver. 34. "Lord, evermore give us this bread."

Secondly, The moral part of it, who are like the air in that world, not rising so high as the former, nor sunk so low as the other in immorality and profaneness. These are they who keep off from religion and the profession of it and from gross profanity too. They are civil and neighbourly men; just, honest, and upright in their dealings between man and man; and despise religion from the fraud and deceit of some whom they see profess it, Matth. xviii. 7. Some such there have been among Heathens, and some among Christians. Two things, besides natural conscience and interest, bring in morality into the world lying in wickedness.

1. Civil society, by which means men may live at peace in the world, and be protected from injuries; for this cause men combine together in societies, appoint government, governors, and laws over themselves, which must establish morality, without which society cannot consist. And for this cause government is a great mercy, external order being kept among men by that means. Without it there would be no living in the world, but the weak would be swallowed up, and all filled with violence, rapine, and outrage.

2. Natural modesty and temper, in respect of which there is a great difference among even worldly men. Whatever internal or external cast it be owing to, it is evident, there is a certain simplicity, candour, integrity, and benevolence in some, whereby they differ, from others that have a cast of a spirit to fraud, disingenuousness, pride, imperiousness, and violence, and yet the former are of the world, as well as the latter; and so in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.

Thirdly and lastly. The immoral part of it. These are the earth and sea in that world, the grossest part of it all, whose conversation is neither bounded with religion or morality, but is just vile, irreligious, and immoral as occasion serves. This is the far greatest part of that world, and in it abound gross abominations, which bring God's wrath on lands and churches. The abominations, therein appearing are innumerable. See 1 Cor. vi. 9; Gal. v. 19—21; Tit. iii. 3. Two things concur to fill the world with immorality.

1. The corruption of human nature, the natural bent of which lies to all enormities. This was the spring of the flood of wickedness, and of water, that overflowed the old world, Gen. vi. 5. The heart of man is a depth of wickedness, that casts it forth as a fountain doth its waters; and then it gets leave to run freely without restraint, it sends forth plentifully, Mark vii. 21, 22. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

2. Occasions of sin and temptations thereto, which offer themselves thick in this evil world ; because the multitude is of that sort, Matth. xviii. 7. Snares are strowed every where, and every temptation going in the world has a lust in the heart akin to it, that tends so natively to unite, that it is hard to keep them at meeting from closest embraces.

And there are two sorts that are most exposed to temptations, the rich and the poor, which make them generally speaking to be of the immoral part of the world, though there want not some of both sorts that are not so. This Agur observed long ago, Prov. xxx. 8, 9. "Remove far from me (says he) vanity and lies ; give me neither poverty nor riches, feed me with food convenient for me ; lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord ? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

1st, The wealth of the rich makes immorality abound among them. It swells the heart in pride, and fills them with admiration of themselves ; it ministers much fuel to their lusts, and affords them occasions of fulfilling them. The natural vanity of the heart and mind, has a broad field to rove about in, so that they are apt to forget themselves and think their circumstances give them an allowance to make themselves vile, and that the laws of God and man are not made but for to hold the poorer sort, Prov. xxx. 9. Hence our Lord says, Matth. xix. 23, 24. "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." "And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." And says the apostle, 1 Cor. i. 26. "Ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." They are to be pitied for their snares and temptations.

2dly, The poor, those who are in extreme poverty. Among them also immorality remarkably abounds. Their condition deprives them of many advantages others have. They are generally neglected in their education, all their care being to get to put in their mouths. They have rarely the advantage of good company. Their pinching circumstances embitter their spirits, that they relish not the things of God, and afford many snares and temptations to dishonesty, lying, falsehood, and all manner of wickedness, whereby they may think to better their outward circumstances. And when they turn idle, and vague up and down, their case readily turns most hopeless, Prov. xxx. 9. forecited, Jer. v. 4. "Therefore have I said, Surely these are poor, they are foolish ; for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God."

VOL. V.

I

Hence may be seen the reason why the greatest regularity of life is found among those of the middle sort, though some of them are immoral too. They want the snares and temptations of the rich on the one hand, and of the poor on the other. They have neither the full idleness of the one, nor the poverty and idleness of the other.

If we compare the immoral part of the world lying in wickedness with the other two, though it is true they are all of the same world, and will perish if they be not separated from it; yet the religious and moral have the advantage of the immoral.

1. In this life, in many respects. They walk more agreeable to the dignity of human nature, than the immoral, who are more akin to the brutes, being led by their brutal passions and affections even as they. They are more useful and beneficial to mankind; whereas the immoral are the pests of human society, working mischief to one or other. They have more inward quiet, and are not put on the rack that immorality brings on men, to compass their mischievous designs, to cover their deeds, and defend them. And so they have more outward safety, their regular lives being a fence to them, both from danger without and within.

2. In the life to come. Though the world, the unregenerate world's religion and morality will not bring them to heaven, yet it will make them a softer hell than the immoral shall have, Rev. xx. 12, 13. And no man can doubt but works of morality are not so ill as works of immorality; unsanctified soberness is not so bad as revelling and open profaneness. It is true, hypocrites shall have a hot part in hell; but can one imagine that their throwing off the mask, and giving themselves the swing, will make an easier part? No; Rev. xxi. 8. "The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death." No doubt the more light men sin against, their condemnation will be the more aggravated; but certainly it will be sorer for immoral Pagans than moral ones, for immoral Christians than moral ones, where the worm never dieth, and the fire is not quenched. Conscience will have less guilt, and not so deep, to charge on the one as on the other.

II. *The State of the Unregenerate World.*

Having seen the parts of that world, we are next to view the state of these parts; and that is, the whole world lieth in wickedness, the moral as well as immoral part, and the religious as well as the other. It is the common state of the whole unregenerate world; whatever differences are among them, they all agree in this, they are lying in wickedness. In speaking to this, I shall,

1. Confirm and evince the truth of it in the general.

2. Explain this state of the unregenerate world, their lying in wickedness.

FIRST, I am to confirm and evince the truth of the doctrine in the general.

First, Satan is the god of the whole unregenerate world; how can it miss then to be wholly lying in wickedness? 2 Cor. iv. 4. It is the honour and advantage of the regenerate, that God is their God, Heb. viii. 10; but the unregenerate world is apostate from God, and have taken Satan in his room, giving him the homage they owe to God. Now Satan is the god of the unregenerate world lying in wickedness,

1. In respect of his god-like power over them; which we may take up in these particulars.

(1.) The sovereignty of it. The unregenerate world is Satan's dominion, whereof he is prince, John xii. 31. and xiv. 30. Though he is under check and control of heaven, and the most fearful vengeance is abiding him from the Lord, yet he is a sovereign prince among them, ruling more absolutely than any prince in this world doth his subjects, 2 Tim. ii. 26. None of them all have their subjects so much at their beck, as he has the men of the world.

(2.) The rivalry of it, being set up and managed just to confront the kingdom of God among men. Though Satan is the most miserable thing of the whole creation; yet, by a peculiar pride and spite against God, he sets up directly, and immediately against God and his Son Jesus Christ, whose kingdom the regenerate are. And his rival kingdom is the unregenerate world. Between these is the lasting enmity, Gen. iii. 15. and these are the opposite kingdoms that can never mix, Psal. xii. 7; and the design of the gospel is to pull down Satan's kingdom, Acts xxvi. 18; Col. i. 13.

(3.) The extent of it, reaching over the whole world, from one end of the earth to the other. All the power that ever the Chaldean, Persian, Grecian, and Roman monarchs had, never reached but over a part of the world; but the power of the devil reaches over all countries, wherever unregenerate men are.

(4.) The nature of it. He receives external worship from many in the world, having many whole nations at his devotion. But from the whole unregenerate world he receives the subjection, homage, and obedience of the inner man; and that is peculiarly due to God; Eph. ii. 2. "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." Men of greatest eminency over others can only pretend to rule their out-

ward man; the soul, the inner man, must be left to God; and that Satan usurps in the unregenerate world. He entered into Judas moving him to betray Christ, filled the hearts of Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Ghost, &c.

2. In respect of his prime origination of their corruption. As from God men have their nature, whereby they are men, and their new nature whereby they are regenerate men; so from the devil men have all the corruption and sin of their nature, whereby they are unregenerate men; wherefore as men owe themselves to God, as men and Christians; so they are owing to the devil, as they are unregenerate men lying in wickedness, See John xiv. 30. He hath of his own in them. Hence,

(1.) The devil is the common father of the unregenerate world as such. It is owing to him as the procreating cause thereof. It was the spawn of the old serpent conveyed by the first sin into human nature, that corrupted all mankind. Hence men are said to be of him, 1 John iii. 12. and of him as a child is of a father, John viii. 44. So the world lying in wickedness is called our father's house or family, Psal. xlv. 10. And not only are notoriously wicked persons, but all the unregenerate called children of the devil, 1 John iii. 10; as bearing his image, John viii. 44. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

(2.) Their continuation in that their state, they have from him also. God preserves by his providence all that his own hands made, and the divine preservation is in effect a continued creation. But since the corruption of the world is originally from the devil, not from God; the maintenance of it comes the same way. So Satan upholds that world by his power, and he is incessant in his working for that end.

This gives a very dismal view of the unregenerate world; it is not God's world, but the devil's world, deriving its original from him, and over which he has the power of a god. Whence we must see, that it is surely,

(1.) The mire of sin, in which the miserable inhabitants must be continually wallowing; for nothing doth so much please the god of that world. He is an enemy to all good, and as far as his power reaches, no good can have place. The dust is his meat, and so a life of sin is a wallowing in the mire.

(2.) The region of death and destruction, which God will certainly destroy, if once he had his own out of it. For Christ came to destroy the works of the devil.

Secondly, Spiritual darkness, thick darkness, is over the whole of that world, Eph. v. 8. how can any thing but works of darkness be

found in it? The Egyptian darkness was an emblem of this, they had a thick darkness, only in Goshen there was light; so the Egyptians rose not from their place to do business, Exod. xx. 22, 23. Consider,

1. The sun went down on all mankind in Adam's transgressing the covenant; the light of God's countenance was then withdrawn, and so there was a terrible eclipse, witness Adam's hiding himself from the presence of God, and all men naturally following his footsteps in that.

2. The unregenerate world remains as Adam left them, the Sun of righteousness Jesus Christ is not yet arisen to them, Mal. iv. 2, 3. Though he has spread abroad his light in the world, it is not yet come into their hearts. They know him not, they have not yet received the saving illumination of his Spirit.

Their state in point of darkness concludes them under sin, far from all good.

(1.) They are in darkness, Acts xxvi. 18. Every unregenerate man sits in darkness, Matth. iv. 16. He is like a captive or prisoner in a dark dungeon, where no light comes. The smoke of the opened pit that was let into the world by sin, makes thick darkness there, and that is round about every man till converting grace scatter it.

(2.) They are under the power of darkness, Col. i. 13. They are not like those that are in the dark, but can come out when they please into the light; but they are under the power of it, as in chains of darkness. No human art can remove the darkness of a natural state, nay it retains its power over them in the midst of gospel light. God alone can dispel it, 2 Cor. iv. 6.

(3.) The powers of hell rule in that darkness, Eph. vi. 12. When the night comes on, the wild beasts come out of their dens, and range abroad; and so the dark world is Satan's walk, where he goes about like a roaring lion. Hence it comes to pass, that if any light begin to peep in, Satan presently stops it, 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4. Thus convictions are stifled, and resolves of reformation fly up as dust.

(4.) It is a darkness of blindness; they really have not eyes to see with, Dent. xxix. 4. A child of God may be in the dark at a time, but then he will come forth at length into the light, and will see; but every unregenerate man is spiritually blind, Rev. iii. 17. the darkness has blinded him, 1 John ii. 11. He wants a faculty of discerning spiritual things in their true natures, 1 Cor. ii. 14. Their understanding is darkened.

(5.) The light in the unregenerate world is darkness, Matth. vi. 23. That is, it is a false light which quite misrepresents things, so they call good evil, and evil good. Hence to them the vanities of

a present world are substantial, and the treasure hid in the field of the gospel is but a trifle. And because they think they see, their case is more hopeless, as Christ said to the Pharisees, John ix. 41, "If ye were blind ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

(6.) *Lastly*, There is a continual night in the unregenerate world, 1 Thess. v. 5. There is an eternal day in heaven, no night there; with the regenerate the day is broken; but with the unregenerate the black and dark night still remains, Isa. viii. 20. From all which it appears, that they lie in sin, as prisoners in a dungeon; and that an unconverted state is the suburbs of hell, where there is outer darkness.

Thirdly, They are all lying under the curse, Gal. iii. 10. For not being in Christ, they are under the law as a Covenant of works, Rom. iii. 19. It is the regenerate only that are delivered from it, Rom. viii. 1. "There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Hence all the unregenerate are declared out of Christ, 2 Cor. v. 17. and debarred out of heaven, John iii. 3. And whatever differences may be among them as to their way and walk, the curse goes over their whole world. Now this proves that they are lying in wickedness two ways.

1. In that the curse always implies wickedness. A holy God will lay none under the curse of the law, but such as are lying under sin. It is wickedness that draws the curse after it; and the latter could have had no place in the world, till once the former made way for it. So being children of wrath by nature, proves us to be in a state of corruption by nature.

2. While it lies on, sin and wickedness retain their strength, 1 Cor. xv. 56. "The strength of sin is the law." The reason is, the curse on a sinner effectually bars all sanctifying influences from heaven; so that it is not possible that the sinner can rise up from his state of sin, while in that case. When the fig-tree was cursed, it withered away; and so does the world in wickedness under the curse. Therefore faith is the only way to holiness; for by it alone the sinner is united to Christ, and justified, whereby the curse is removed; and then he is sanctified, or brought out of his state of wickedness.

Fourthly, They are all dead in sin, Eph. ii. 1. There was a great cry in Egypt, when there was one dead in every family; but the unregenerate world is all dead together. God, the life of the soul, is departed from them; they are alienated from the life of God, their speech is laid, and their spiritual senses are bound up. So that world is the region of the shadow of death. There is this difference indeed,

1. Some are dead and rotten ; these are the immoral part of the world, who by their profane lives are as intolerable to sober men, as a stinking carcase ; whose conversation, by reason of their profanity, is like the opening of an unripe grave, Rom. iii. 13. therefore compared to dogs and swine.

2. Some are embalmed dead ; these are the moral and religious part of the world. A form of godliness, the study and practice of moral virtue, is to them as the embalming of the dead corpse, though they cannot put spiritual life in a soul. So that these also are dead still, and lying dead in sin, though they smell not so rank as the profane and immoral.

Lastly, They are all destitute of every principle of holiness, and there cannot be an effect without a cause of it ; there can be no acts of holiness without a principle to proceed from. They are destitute,

1. Of the Spirit of God ; he dwells not in them, Jude, 19. compare 1 Cor. ii. 14. All true sanctification according to the scripture is by the Spirit ; it is his taking possession of the soul that looses the bands of sin and death, Rom. viii. 2. and he dwells in all that are Christ's, ver. 9. But they are possessed by the spirit of the world, which is opposite to the Spirit of God, and has contrary effects, 1 John iv. 5. They are of the world ; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

2. They are destitute of the new nature ; it is by regeneration the new man is framed ; in the Unregenerate is the old man alone, which is corrupt with his deeds, Eph. iv. 22. Since then the tree is not good, how can the fruit be good ? If the new nature is totally wanting, how can there be the actions, life, and conversation of the new frame ?

3. They are destitute of faith. And without that there can be nothing acceptable to God, Heb. xi. 6. Feigned faith they may have ; but true faith they have not ; for that unites with Christ, and makes a new creature.

4. *Lastly*, Love, the immediate principle of all acceptable obedience, is wanting in them ; for that proceeds from faith, and faith works by it. They cannot love God, they have not believed in him, for these go together. And where no love is, there can be no holy obedience.

SECONDLY, I come now to explain this state of the unregenerate world, there lying in wickedness. And we shall consider,

1. What of wickedness they lie in.

2. How they lie in it.

1. I am to consider what of wickedness they lie in. All the unregenerate world lies,

FIRST, In a state of sin and wickedness, Acts viii. 23. I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Their state before the Lord is a sinful and wicked state; they have never been washed, nor purged from their sin. They are all over sinful and wicked, as over head and ears in the mire, Rev. iii. 17. This we take up in two things.

First, Their nature is wholly corrupted with sin and wickedness, Matth. vii. 18. Some of them may have a fair shew outwardly, but inwardly they are all overspread with the leprosy of sin, wholly corrupt, John iii. 6. The infection by the first sin has gone over the whole man, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot. And the cure has never yet been begun in them, as having never been touched with regenerating grace. Even the saints' nature is corrupt, but they are renewed in part; but the unregenerate are wholly corrupted in the whole man, Isa. viii. 10; there is not the least stroke of purity in them, Tit. i. 15.

I. Their souls in all their faculties are overspread with sin, and wholly corrupted.

(1.) Their mind and understanding is wretchedly vitiated. It is overwhelmed with gross darkness as to spiritual things, Eph. iv. 17, 18. Darkness is over all that region; it is the land of darkness and shadow of death, where the very light is darkness; so that they cannot receive the things of God, more than a blind man the light of the sun, 1 Cor. ii. 14. So unbelief reigns there, they cannot believe, for they cannot see, Eph. ii. 2.

(2.) Their will is wholly perverse and rebellious against God, neither plying nor able to ply to the will of God, Rom. viii. 7. The wrong set it got by the fall, it keeps; and nothing less than creating power can give it a new set. What God wills not, that they will, and what he wills, they will not; so that the holy law has an irritating effect on them. It is called a stony heart; break it may, but bow it cannot, till melted down by regenerating grace.

(3.) Their affections are all in disorder, Jer. xvii. 9. There is no moderating of them, by religion and reason, but they are turbulent and unmanageable, Jer. ii. 23, 24. They are wretchedly misplaced; they love what they should loath, and loath what they should love. They can keep no measure, they run to evil, and what is good is against the grain with them. They are monsters in spiritual things; their hearts are where their feet should be, on the world; and their heels lifted up against heaven.

(4.) Their conscience is in miserable plight. Tit. i. 15. It is unfit to do its office truly for want of saving illumination. Hence it is a lax conscience, that lets many evils pass without any check at all,

being silent and senseless; but as to gross sins, in checking which it becomes through custom in them very remiss and easy. And if at any time it be awakened, it is easily bribed or boasted to silence.

2. The body partakes of that corruption, by communication with the sinful soul. It incites to sin; is a house wherein the soul finds many a snare spread for it; so that many, to gratify their senses and bodily appetites, make shipwreck of their souls. Therefore the apostle says, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway," 1 Cor. ix. 27. It serves the soul in much sin, with the members thereof instruments of unrighteousness, Rom. vi. 13. The eyes and ears are windows whereat death comes into the soul; the tongue an unruly evil; the lips unclean, the throat an open sepulchre; the feet swift to mischief; and the belly made a god, not only by them that feed delicately, but those that live on coarse fair, Zech. vii. 6.

Secondly, Their lives and conversations are wholly corrupted. Psal. xiv. 3. For the fountain being poisoned, no pure streams can come forth from thence, Matth. xii. 34. The conversation of unregenerate men is one continued course of error, and wandering out of the way of God's commandments. Some of them are nearer the way than others of them, but all of them are quite off it, Psal. xiv. 3. Whether they move slow or fast, they are out of course, Eccl. x. 15. For many of their actions are ill in themselves, in the very matter of them condemned by the law of God, and which they never truly repent of. All of them are wrong in the manner, the best of them are marred in the making, through the want of right principles, motives, and ends.

SECONDLY, The whole unregenerate world lies under the dominion and reigning power of sin and wickedness, Rom. vi. 17. Even in the regenerate sin dwells, as a troublesome guest; but it has lost the throne in the heart. But in the unregenerate, it has full sway, and is the sovereign commanding principle in them. There are two things that evidence this.

1. Sin is in them in its full strength and vigour, and therefore rules and commands all. The strength of sin is the law, 1 Cor. xv. 56. and they are under the law, under it as a covenant of works, and therefore under the curse. And wherever the curse lies, there sin remains in its strength and power; and there is no cutting off the locks of sin, and breaking the power of it, but by removing the curse, and delivering from the law as a covenant, Rom. vi. 14.

2. It possesses them alone without an opposite principle. The old man of sin has not only the possession of every part, but of the

whole of every part, there being no principle of grace brought in upon it to counteract it. In the regenerate there is a corrupt principle indeed, called the flesh ; but it reigns not, because there is an opposite principle brought in upon it to resist it, Gal. v. 17. But the unregenerate are wholly flesh, John iii. 6. So they are like the dead man, where death bears full sway ; in the other death and disease are struggling for the mastery.

THIRDLY, They lie in the habitual practice of sin and wickedness, Psal. xiv. 1. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God ; they are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good." Where sin reigns in the heart, one's course of life cannot be otherwise ; if the eye be evil, the whole body must be full of darkness. Where the old corrupt nature remains in its vigour, it is impossible but the life and conversation must be corrupt too. It is true, there is a great difference of life and practice among the men of the world ; but that all the unregenerate lie in the practice of sin and wickedness, however they differ in the kinds of it, is clear from the following considerations.

First, The bent, strain, and course of their life is quite wrong, Eph. ii. 1, 2. They are off from the mark ; Adam led us all off the road, and they are not brought to it again. However quickly they move at any time, they are always like an arrow shot beside the mark, a traveller that is off his road, Eccl. x. 15. They are a company of wanderers, straying sheep, wandering on the mountains of vanity, 1 Pet. ii. ult. though they go their sundry ways, Isa. liii. 6 ; some wandering in the wilderness of formality, others in the mires and bogs of profanity. But all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, Rom. iii. 23.

Secondly, Any good they do is accidental, even as a wanderer in his course of wandering may stumble sometimes on the road ; but it is not the product of their main scope and aim. So the Danites consulted God as to their way, not that they were seeking an occasion of it, but an occasion met them, Judges xviii. 5. So some expound that passage, Lev. xxvi. 23. If ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary to me, &c. Unregenerate men may do good ; but it is by the by only, as it happens to suit with their particular humours and interests ; for self is the dead sea with them, wherein all is swallowed up ; and they are unconverted.

Thirdly, The best things they do are sin, unapproved, unaccepted of God, Prov. xv. 8. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, Isa. lxvi. 3. "He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man ; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck ; he

that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swine's blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol." They reckon wrong, dividing their actions into good works and ill works; they are entirely divided into glistering sins, and black and dark sins; and what they call their good works, are but glistering sins. For they are not done in faith; and whatsoever is not of faith, is sin, Rom. xiv. ult. Their sinful unregenerate state corrupts all, as a tainted vessel doth the liquor poured into it, Hag. ii. 11—14. Their actions materially good, are really evil, as wrong in the principles, manner, and end.

Lastly, Whatever good an unregenerate man does, he still lives in the allowed practice of some sin without repenting or forsaking it. Let him have never so many good things about him, there is still one thing lacking, that mars all, Mark x. 21. This will be evident, if ye consider,

1. That an universal and impartial respect to the commands of God, is a mark of the regenerate, Psal. cxix. 9. "Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments." This bears that in the case of others there is always some exception, they never go along with the holy law without reserve. There is always something in Christ that offends them, that they stick at, and cannot go down with them, Matth. xi. 6.

2. Sin's reign being still entire in them, it must have some lust or other for its sceptre to command by, Rom. vi. 12. The current or channel of a water may be altered; but as long as the fountain is not dried up, it will have some channel to run in. A man's particular predominant may alter; but while unregenerate, he will always have some predominant, that shall command all.

3. The heart of man must needs hang on at one door or other for rest to itself. Faith carries the soul to take up its rest in God, Heb. iv. 3. But the unregenerate being unbelievers, do not make God their rest: therefore without controversy they will be found about the creature's door, seeking their rest there. So the heart has still some secret haunt of lust or other, that it can never be driven away from.

That haunt of the heart will be found in one of two.

- 1st, In the desires of the flesh, Eph. ii. 3. There the grosser part of the world do nestle, who live as if they were nothing but flesh, and had nothing but the body, and a present life, to care for. And here one of two things will readily be found the reigning sin of the unregenerate.

1. Covetousness and worldly mindedness. There is in the world the lust of the eye, the gains and profits of a present world; and

there many an unsanctified heart has its secret haunt, ever minding earthly things, Phil. iii. 19. Here is the bait for the rich and the poor, the main stream of their cares runs there, the one for increasing, the other for getting : some by lawful means, but immoderately used, others right or wrong. But that is instead of God to them, 1 John ii. 15 ; and therefore it is called idolatry, Col. iii. 5.

2. Sensuality. There is in the world the lust of the flesh, the pleasures of sense, and carnal appetite ; and there many an unrenewed heart has its secret haunt, that it can by no means be kept out of. There may be many good things about them ; but their running issue there can never be stopt. The pleasures of sense are better to them, than all the pleasures of communion with God ; and they are instead of it to them, 2 Tim. iii. 4, 5. Hence some are voluptuous epicures, whose belly is their god ; some fleshly slaves, abandoned to, and wholly in the power of their fleshly lusts.

2dly, Or in the desires of the mind, Eph. ii. 3. There is in the world the pride of life too ; and there the more refined part of the unregenerate world do nestle. And here are several things that will be found reigning sins of the unregenerate, the haunts of their unrenewed hearts.

1. Reigning pride and self-conceit, 2 Tim. iii. 2. Having never had a kindly work of humiliation wrought on them, the natural height of their spirit is unbroken. If they have any natural or acquired excellencies about them, they admire themselves in these, and take it very ill if others do not do so too. If they happen to obtain any religious or moral excellences, their case then becomes most hopeless, that publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before them : for their unrenewed hearts have no ballast for that sail.

2. Bitterness of spirit, showing itself in malice and revenge against those they think have injured them. The unregenerate world is the region of malice and bitterness, as peopled by the seed of the serpent, Tit. iii. 3, " For we ourselves also, (saith the apostle Paul,) were sometimes foolish,—living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." This temper of spirit is more the nature of the unregenerate than generally we are aware of. The contrary disposition is the badge of the family of God, Matt. v. 44, 45. " But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." An unforgiving disposition is a sign of an unforgiven state, Matth. vi. 14,

15. Therefore there were none more spiteful and malicious than the Pharisees, because there were none farther from a state of pardon with God. When grace comes, it turns lions into lambs, Isa. xi. 6; and has a benign influence to the good of mankind, Rom. xiii. 10.

3. Reigning vanity of mind, Eph. iv. 17. All the unregenerate world having left God, follow after vanity; for there is no mids, 1 Sam. xii. 21. They are all in the dark, groping here and there for rest to their hearts among the creatures; they find it not, but a thousand disappointments cause them not to give over. They are like a sick man on his bed, turning every where for ease, and tossing; only never turning to God in Christ. The sick heart has this and the other fair promise made to it, to give it ease; for that end the world makes a mighty stir about meat, clothes, building, planting, doing and undoing again, turning upside down, changing and tacking about; and all in vain, without finding rest.

4. Natural enmity against God, Rom. viii. 7. The unregenerate world is, in the language of the Holy Ghost, a generation of vipers, Matth. iii. 7. And the seed of the serpent have all their venomous nature unchanged in them, whatever shapes or form of religion, or morality has cast them into. And this their natural enmity against God appears in two things.

(1.) A reigning enmity against the power of godliness, wherever it appears, Acts xiii. 10. Unrenewed professors of religion may very well like religion of the stamp of their own, and may have as much zeal as could burn up others that are not of their way; but to heaven shall hell be as soon reconciled, as they to real godliness in the power thereof, as it expresseth the image of Christ. And therefore there are none more virulent against the most serious godly than they, against those whose life is likest Christ's on earth.

(2.) An irreconcilable enmity to the law, and the holiness it requires, Rom. viii. 7. The image of God was most lively expressed on the man Christ, and in his holy life when on earth the world saw it; and it no sooner appeared, than the natural enmity of the unregenerate world appeared against God, in the treatment they gave to him, until they had him persecuted to the death. Now the most lively expression of the image of God, to be seen on earth, is in the holy law; but darkness and light may as soon be reconciled, as the unregenerate heart to the law. This appears, if ye consider,

(1.) There is never an unrenewed heart for the whole law, but at most to pick and chuse in it. Their shoulders can never away with the whole yoke of Christ. Seek all the unregenerate world, ye shall no sooner find one that is for fulfilling all God's will, than one after

God's own heart, Acts xiii. 22. Some or other of his commands are always grievous to them, and that they can by no means bear.

(2.) The law brought close home to the unregenerate has an irritating power on them, Rom. viii. 9. The more they are girded with the holy commandment, the more they sting against it; the closer it is applied to them, the farther they flee from it. It is like the stirring of the ant's nest, and the fretting of the serpent, that causes it spit its venom. Hence the more means of grace many have, they are the more vile; as the more the sun beats on the dunghill, its stench is the greater.

(3.) Akin to this is the enmity of the world against the ministers of Christ, which all ages and places have given pregnant instances of. The true reason of it is their office, an office ungrateful to the world, to declare the laws of Heaven, John xv. 20, 21. "Remember that word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me." Hence the current of spite against them, as against stewards who are to execute in a family the orders of the head thereof which are very unacceptable. Thus men being touched in their sore places, are irritated; yea, if providence frown upon men, their ill nature is ready to appear against them; because the unhumbled heart frets against the Lord, and so it rebounds on his servants standing in that relation to him.

5. Selfishness, 2 Tim. iii. 2. Men shall be lovers of their own selves. It is among the first lessons Christ puts in the hands of his scholars, to deny themselves; importing that all unregenerate men are overgrown with selfishness. Man falling off from God, set up himself as his chief end; and hence comes no due concern for the honour of God, nor for the good of others; but all swallowed up in concern for themselves; driving forward to that end over both the one and the other. Now grace corrects this disposition, bringing men out of the circle of self in which they were confined. This selfishness appears.

(1.) In their worldly management, where it swallows up neighbour-love, as in a devouring gulf, Phil. ii. 20, 21. Hence no due sympathy with the afflicted, their sorrows no allay to their joys; yea a secret satisfaction in the crosses, losses, and afflictions of others, that the sorrows of others are matter of joy and triumph to them, Prov. xxiv. 17, 18. Envy and grudging at the prosperity of others, undermining them in their affairs, not standing to drive on their own interest on the ruin of their neighbours; a scandalous cruel practice, which God is this day visibly contending for.

(2.) In their religious management, where it swallows up the love of God in Christ, like a devouring gulf, Phil. ii. 21. Hence no due concern for the honour of God in the world, no mourning for the sins of others, but a careless Gallio-like temper whether the interests of religion sink or swim. No rejoicing in the glorifying of God, where they themselves cannot pretend to a share; an ill eye on the good of others, and hardly a good word to spare for it, but a readiness to detract from it and sully it, unless they be of their party and way; in that case they find room for it, because there is room for self there, Phil. i. 15—18.

6. *Lastly*, Unbelief. This is the common sin of all the unregenerate world (John iii. 18, 19.) that hear the gospel. They may escape a mire of pollution, that others fall into, who are yet sunk over head and ears here. It is a sin that is the need-nail to all others, John vii. 24. and yet such a spiritual sin, that it is hardly discerned; it not being of the nature of those sins that a natural conscience boggles at. But all the unregenerate live in it.

(1.) They do not truly believe the gospel, Isa. liii. 1. There is a report sent from another world, of life and salvation for sinners through Christ; they do not contradict, they say they believe it, nay they think they believe it; but in reality they believe it not. For to quit the enjoyment of their lusts, and the pursuit of the vain world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is in their eyes to quit certainty for uncertain hope. Any faith they have of it is but superficial; for it is risen without the root of saving illumination, and the demonstration of the Spirit, 1 Cor. ii. 4, 5. Matth. xvi. 17.

(2.) They have never been brought freely away to Christ, in the way of believing, for all, John i. 12, 13. All the proposals of the gospel made to them, have never prevailed farther than to make them almost Christians, they have not felt the day of power to make them willing, Psal. cx. 3. Men have drawn them, conscience has pressed them; but they have not felt the Father's drawing yet. Two things evince this.

(1.) They are not yet come freely away out of themselves, to Christ, for a rest to their consciences, Phil. iii. 3. They have never yet died to the law, and therefore cannot be married to Christ, Rom. vii. 4. They are not poor in spirit, Matth. v. 3. There is something left them still of their own, which though they cannot trust to before God for altogether, yet they can in part. They are never brought freely out of their own righteousness, Rom. x. 3.

(2.) They are not come freely away from the creature into Christ, for a rest to their hearts, Heb. iv. 3. They have never seen the

fulness in Christ, that he should be the one thing desired by them; but in their way Christ may bear the weight somewhat for a rest to their consciences, but the heart can have no rest but in the creature; for they say, as Isa. iv. 1, "We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." He is not the one pearl to them, for which all is to be sold.

(3.) They do not live by faith, which is the only true Christian life, Gal. ii. 20. So far from it, that,

(1.) Sense, and not faith, is their guide in their way, quite contrary to the Christian course, 2 Cor. v. 7. "We walk by faith, not by sight." The constant cry of the unregenerate world is, "Who will shew us any good?" Psal. iv. 6. and nothing is good in their eyes but sensible good. So the things that are seen, and present, are valued and pursued; things that are not seen, and future, are alighted as uncertain.

(2.) Self, and not Christ, is what they lean to for carrying them on their way. The life of faith is a leaning on Christ, Cant. viii. 5. But instead of that, the unregenerate lean on their own stock, their self-wisdom for management, their self-strength for performance, and their self-worth for acceptance.

Thus it appears, that they still live in the allowed practice of some sin or other. Now,

1. The effect thereof is, that that one thing mars all to them, in point of acceptance; and keeps them in a state of death, Mark x. 21. While one sin is allowedly kept, no good they do can be accepted of God, Psal. lxxvi. 18. It is as poison poured into a cup, which goes through all. And it effectually concludes them in a state of death; for an offending right eye or right hand puts the whole body in hazard of perishing, Matth. v. 29, 30. One leak may sink the ship. Abimelech the son of Gideon's concubine, slew his seventy brethren the sons of the wives.

2. The reason hereof is, that one sin is kept in the allowed practice thereof, evidenceth that any good done by such a one, is not done out of love to God, and regard to his holy law, but from some self end. For if the authority of God upon any command were sufficient to recommend the obedience of it to a man, it would recommend all the commands to him, because all bear the same impress of divine authority, James ii. 10, 11.

FOURTHLY, The whole unregenerate world lies under the guilt of sin, the guilt of revenging wrath, Rom. iii. 19. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may

become guilty before God. By the sanction of the law, guilt follows sin; the creature sinning becomes liable to wrath; there is a bond wreathed about their neck, by which they may be drawn to suffer. Hence sin is called a debt, because as it is the taking away of obedience due, it binds to suffer punishment accordingly. That we may have a view of their state under the guilt of sin, consider,

1. It is the guilt of eternal wrath they lie under, being bound over thereto by the curse, Gal. iii. 10. The regenerate may be under guilt too; but it is only the guilt of fatherly anger; there is no curse, no revenging wrath in their case, Rom. viii. 1. But the unregenerate are under a bond of guilt binding them to suffer in hell to the complete satisfaction of justice.

2. The guilt of their original sin they were born with, is still lying on them, Eph. ii. 3.—And were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. They came into the world condemned men; and not being in Christ, the sentence is never reversed, though the execution is delayed. They have not the king's pardon, though they are yet spared, and easy as if there were no quarrel.

3. Every actual transgression, in heart, lip, or life, by omission, or commission, brings on new guilt of that kind on them, Gal. iii. 10. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." So the guilt of their sins is added to the guilt of their original sin; and as many actual sins as they are chargeable with, so many plights there are of that cord of death on them. As they repeat their sins, the law repeats its curse.

4. An unregenerate man can do nothing but what is sin, Matth. vii. 18. Accordingly God testifies of them that there is none that doeth good, no not one, Rom. iii. 12. His nature being wholly corrupt, all his actions are corrupt too; his natural actions, Zech. vii. 6. his civil actions, Prov. xxi. 4. and his religious actions, Prov. xv. 8. So that in all they do, they contract new guilt, Hag. ii. 14.

5. Man is a busy creature, still doing. And none are more busy than the unregenerate that can do no good, Isa. lvii. 20. "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." The heart of man is like the wheel, that may go as fast going wrong, as when going right: it is still employed about vanity or vileness; and every imagination is evil, Gen. vi. 5.

6. *Lastly*, All their guilt sticks with them, nothing of it goes off, being out of Christ, Eph. ii. 1. Believers are daily contracting guilt, it is true; but then they are daily getting it removed too, through daily application of the blood of Christ by faith, as the liv-

ing man is putting off nastiness from him; whereas all abides with the unregenerate world, as the vermin on the dead corpse that can put off none.

Now put all these together, and what a dreadful lair has the unregenerate world in the guilt of sin! Floods of guilt are still rolling in on them, as the waters are running continually into the sea; but whereas the sea lets out of its waters that it receives in, they keep all the floods of guilt that roll in on them. So the longer they live, they are the more miserable, because the more guilty.

LASTLY, The whole unregenerate world lies in the filth and pollution of sin, Tit. i. 15. Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving, is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. Sin is a defiling evil, it pollutes the sinner in the sight of God, defacing his image in the soul, and rendering him unlike God. God is glorious in holiness, this holiness he has expressed in his law, and sin is the quite contrary of that holiness. So that God can no more cease to abominate it, than to delight in his own image, Hab. i. 13; Jer. xlv. 4.

1. Their natural defilement and pollution which they were born in, still remains, Psal. li. 5. for they are not born again of the water and the Spirit. An emblem of their case ye have in Ezek. xvi. The whole soul of their frame is unclean, polluted, and unlike God, Tit. i. 15.

2. Every actual transgression, or omission, or commission, leaves a new stroke of pollution on them, rendering them more unlike God, Rom. iii. 13. So that their spiritual uncleanness is ever increasing, and the longer they live, they do but contract the more defilement.

3. *Lastly*, All sticks on them, nothing of their old or new defilement is removed; because they were never washed in the laver of regeneration, Ezek. xxii. 24. And what a wretched case must that be, where new filth is still coming on the soul, but none going off?

II. I shall now shew how the unregenerate world lies in wickedness. They lie in it in the most hopeless case; which we may take up in three things. They lie,

1. Bound in it, Acts viii. bound in it like prisoners, Isa. lxi. 1. They are in chains of guilt, which they cannot break off; there are fetters of strong lusts upon them, which hold them fast. Satan has overcome them, and brought them into bondage; and though they see their case is wrong, though a natural conscience witnesseth their hazard; yet they cannot leave it, but go on like an ox to the slaughter, and a fool to the correction of the stocks.

2. Asleep in it, Eph. v. 14. They have drunk of the intoxicating cup, and are fast asleep, though within the sea mark of vengeance.

Though some times they are made to start in their sleep, by passing convictions like a stitch in the side; yet there is no awakening of them, by all the alarms they get from the word, from providence, and their own conscience. If they are at any time moved by these, yet they quickly fall over asleep again.

3. *Lastly*, Dead in it, Eph. ii. 1. A natural life, through the union of a soul with their body, they have; but their spiritual life is gone, the union of their souls with God being quite broken, Eph. iv. 18. The image of God on the soul, the principal of vital holy actions, is away from them; so they lie in wickedness, breathless and motionless, ready to be buried out of God's sight.

The Doctrine of the Unregenerate world lying in Wickedness, applied.

USE I. Of information. See here,

First, The spring and fountain of the abounding sin in our day: The whole world lies in wickedness; and wickedness proceedeth from the wicked, 1 Sam. xxiv. 13. What but wickedness can be expected in a wicked world? The unregenerate bear the far greater bulk in the land, as in the world; and they are lying in wickedness. Here then is the opened fountain of the great deep, that has brought on a deluge of wickedness. Hence,

1. The apostacy in principles, men departing from the faith, and bringing in damnable heresies. The infidelity of this generation has gone to a monstrous height; contempt of revealed religion has fearfully spread. The doctrine of the grace of Christ is despised; and the doctrine of the person of Christ is rudely attacked; the foundations that were left in safety in the time of Prelacy, yea under Popery, are now overturned.* So has the wickedness of the world lying in wickedness broke out in our day.

2. Apostacy in practice. There is a deluge of profanity gone over the land; men have loosed the bridle to their lusts, opened the sluice to their wickedness, and there is no stopping of it by men's endeavours, Psal. cxix. 126. "It is time for thee, Lord, to work; for they have made void thy law." All ranks have corrupted their ways in church and state; that they are like to wear out serious godliness, and the saints of the Most High. And the generation is remarkably worse than their father's, more loose, and regardless of all that is good.

Secondly, The spring of all the miseries that are lying on us, and we are threatened with. The world is lying in wickedness, and there-

* The author refers to the revival of Arianism in England by Doctor Clarke, and in Scotland by Professor Simpson.

fore lies in misery ; for God is a sin-hating and sin-revenging God. It is the sin and wickedness of the generation, that has brought on the decay of trade, and is impoverishing the country, for a witness against the misimprovement of a thriving condition. To that is owing the present straitness, and diminishing of our ordinary food ; for the abuse of fulness in luxury, sensuality, and lasciviousness ; the desolating of the flocks, for men's oppressing one another ; the great sickness and death in families wherewith the Lord is afflicting us. And these look but like the beginning of sorrows, for there is no turning to the hand that smiteth.

Let not men harden themselves in the case, because it seems to fare as ill with saints as sinners. For,

1. It is God's ordinary way in his proceedings against a land, to begin with his own house and family, Ezek. ix. 6. For though they are not of, yet they are in the world, and contract infection, so that with them also there are sins against the Lord. And because the Lord has a kindness for them, they get the brim of the cup, Zech. i. 11, 12.

2. But it is a sign for ill to the world lying in wickedness. And of a long time we have had that sign, of particular strokes directed against those that are the most serious, 1 Pet. iv. 17, 18. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God ; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God ? and if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear ? If God's own people drink of the cup of judgment, the world lying in wickedness shall pledge them, and drink after, Jer. xxv. 27, 29. And the former getting the brim, the dregs will fall to the latter, Psal. lxxv. 8. And thus God's own prophets have been signs to a people with whom God had a controversy, Ezek. xxiv. Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign ; according to all that he hath done, shall ye do ; and when this cometh, ye shall know that I am the Lord.

3. *Lastly*, Though in the outward course of providence all falls alike to all, yet the cross of the saint is better than the crown of the sinner, Isa. liii. 10, 11. "Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with them, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Wo unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him ; for the reward of his hands shall be given him," Rom. viii. 28. "And we know that all things work together for good, to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose," Prov. i. 32. "The prosperity of fools shall destroy them."

Thirdly, It is not strange to find men of the world lying in the habitual practice of some abomination ; for the whole world lieth in

wickedness. Men will carry themselves agreeable to their state of regeneracy or irregeneracy; and to find unregenerate men lying in this and the other wickedness, is no more strange than to find fish swimming in the water, and birds flying in the air; it is their element.

1. Accordingly some lie in open wickedness, declaring their sin as Sodom, Isa. liii. 9. For where men cannot restrain them, they are at liberty, because they have no fear of God before their eyes. Their lust is their law in these things, and they go so far in the road as their feet will carry them, doing evil as they may or can.

2. Some lie in some secret wickedness, which they get kept secret from the open view of the world, and for the eye of a jealous God that mars them not, Ezek. viii. 12. "Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery? for they say, The Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth." This evil world has a loathsome aspect as it is, for all the covering of abominations in it; but were the secret abominations in it brought out to men's knowledge, the secret frauds and cheats, whoredoms, adulteries, and lasciviousness, murders, thefts, &c. set in the light, how much more loathsome would the world appear? Eph. v. 12. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. But two things are certain,

(1.) Where the fountain of sin is not stopt by regenerating grace, it must needs have its main stream running in the practice of some one wickedness or other, Rom. vi. 12. An unregenerate man's predominant sin may indeed be changed; but he shall sooner cease to breathe, than to have some one running issue or other. And that will always be his neckbreak here, that will part betwixt Christ and him, Mark x. 21, 22; and that will be the most terrible gnawing worm in the conscience hereafter.

(2.) Whether it be an open or secret wickedness, it will be called at length before a tribunal, where there will be no shifting of countenance, defeating of probation, nor stopping execution, Acts xvii. 31. "He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." Rom. xiv. 10. "We shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ." There the most secret pieces of wickedness shall be discovered before all the world, Eccl. xii. ult. "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. Prov. xxvi. 26, "Whose hatred is covered with deceit, his wickedness shall be shewed before the whole congregation." And the most daring transgressor shall be made to stand trembling, Eccl. xi. 9. "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and

let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

Fourthly, The world must be an infectious society; it must be a pestilential air that is breathed in it, and wickedness in it must be of a growing and spreading nature. For the whole world lieth in wickedness. Hence,

1. Unregenerate men, if they get not a cast of saving grace to change their nature, will undoubtedly grow worse and worse, 2 Tim. iii. 13. As that which lies in the dunghill, rots the more the longer it lies; so men lying in irregnecacy, in wickedness, the longer they live their case is the more hopeless. How evidently is this seen, in there being some hope of some while they are yet young, yet not being converted then, they grow at length to a pitch that there is no dealing with them?

2. Unregenerate men are snares and neckbreaks one to another, serving to advance the growth of wickedness in one another, Matth. xviii. 7. As in a dunghill one part serves to rot another, so is it in the world lying in wickedness. The ill example of some encourages others, and so the elder corrupt the younger, especially when they go about to train them up in the ways of wickedness.

3. They are snares even to the godly. It is hard to come near a mire or dunghill and not be defiled. There was a suffocating vapour arose from the high priest's hall, that made Peter fall a denying his Master. This made the Psalmist say, "Wo is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar," Psal. cxx. 5.

Hence we may learn,

(1.) They have a hard task in hand, whose business it is to deal with the world lying in wickedness, in order to their reformation; for the longer they lie in their wickedness they are the more strengthened in it, their hearts are the more hardened, their consciences more seared, and the bands of wickedness grow stronger. And then one helps another in an ill course, they unite and combine to strengthen one another in wickedness. So that it is a heavy task.

(2.) The danger of ill company, 1 Cor. xv. 32. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." The wicked world is a dangerous society, and has been ruining to many. How many have been ruined, by their being educated and living amongst those of the world lying in wickedness, never having an opportunity of good company, where they might see or get good? How many have been ruined by their falling into ill company, after hopeful beginnings? The stream of our nature runs the wrong way, so the world lying in wickedness

rows with the stream, and so is successful in working sinners' ruin, Prov. xiii. 20. "He that walketh with wise men, shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

Fifthly, This accounts for the uneasy life that the serious-godly have in the world. The whole world lieth in wickedness. Our Lord Jesus had an uneasy life in it, and so will all his followers have to the end. The church in the world is like a lily among thorns; however the world may caress its own, the serious-godly will not get leave to forget that they are from home while in it; strangers and pilgrims; that they are in a wilderness. How can their life in it miss to be uneasy? For unto them,

1. It is a loathsome world, where their eyes must behold abominations that they cannot help, Hab. i. 3. "Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me; and there are that raise up strife and contention." However the swine of this world may delight to wallow in their own mire, and to lie in their own dunghill; yet to heaven-born souls, the stench arising from that dunghill must needs be noisome. Hence says the prophet, Jer. ix. 2. "Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of way-faring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them; for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men."

2. It is a vexatious world; the temper of the parties is so different, so opposite, that they can never hit it, but must needs be heavy one to another. As the way of the godly is uneasy to the world, so the way of the world is uneasy to them, makes them many a sorrowful day and heavy heart, and draws many a sigh and groan from them, as in Lot's case, 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8. And the uneasiness arising from that quarter makes heaven more desirable, as to burdened men groaning.

3. It is an ensnaring world, wherein snares of all sorts are going, and they are many times caught in the trap ere they are aware, 2 Tim. iii. 1, 2. This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, &c. The world lying in wickedness lays snares for them, that by drawing them into their courses, they may make them like themselves. And at all times they are in hazard by them, either by omission of necessary duty, or commission of sin.

4. It is a world wherein wickedness thrives apace as in its native soil, but any good has much ado to get up its head, Jer. iv. 22. "For my people is foolish, they have not known me, they are sottish children, and they have none understanding; they are wise to

do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." The ground being cursed, thistles and thorns grow up of their own accord; but after much labour for the seed-corn, the husbandman has but a sorry increase. So the work of wickedness goes on with speed; but O how hard is it to make a good work take! The most prudent management can hardly carry a good work, but one sinner destroyeth much good, Eccl. ix. ult.

Sixthly, This accounts for the frightful end this visible world will make, by the general conflagration, 2 Pet. iii. 10. There is a curse on it, for the wickedness in it, that once deluged it, it will in the end burn it up. It has been a stage of wickedness, and will be pulled down; a sink of abominations, and will be overthrown. The creatures groan in it, under the abuse of them to the serving of the lusts of men; they must be delivered.

Lastly, This shows the dangerous state of the unregenerate world; they lie in wickedness. Therefore,

1. They now lie under wrath, hanging in the threatening and curse which is over their heads, Eph. ii. 8. Being in the region of wickedness, it is the region of wrath, John iii. ult. They are in a state of wrath, it is on them and theirs.

2. They will perish under that wrath, whoever continue and come not out from among them. For the world now lying in wickedness, will sink down into the pit, and lie eternally under their guilt and filth, Matth. xxv. ult. Rev. xx. 14, 15.

USE II. Of exhortation.

1. To all I would say, Search and try what society ye belong to, whether ye are still of, or separated from, the world lying in wickedness. It is certain, we are all naturally of the world; there is no coming out of it, but by regenerating grace; and being come, ye will have taken another route. What has been already said, particularly on the first clause of the verse, touching the marks and characters of those that are of God, and so separated from the world, may serve to discover your state in this point.

2. To saints separated from the world, I would say,

- (1.) Do not much wonder at the harsh entertainment ye meet with in it. Value not the frowns of the world lying in wickedness; and think not strange of frowns of providence on you while ye are in it. For it will never be quite well with the family of God, while they are here in the same place with the world.

- (2.) Watch against it while ye are in it, as being in hazard of sins and snares in a world lying in wickedness. Be not secure; knowing that your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour, 1 Pet. v. 8.

(3.) Look homeward, and long to be with Christ; where you shall be for ever out of the reach of all evil, and enjoy such peace and freedom as your enemies can disturb no more.

3. *Lastly*, To sinners of the world lying in wickedness, I would say, Come out from among them, and be separated, as ye would not be ruined with them, and perish eternally in their destruction. But of this in the next discourse.

THE DIVINE CALL TO SINNERS TO COME OUT FROM AMONG THE
WORLD LYING IN WICKEDNESS, EXPLAINED AND URGED.

Several Sermons preached at Ettrick, in 1729.

1 JOHN v. 19.

The whole world lieth in wickedness.

2 Cor. vi. 17.

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

YE have had a frightful description of the world lying in wickedness. We come now to press the exhortation to come out of it, in the words of this compared text. In which we have,

1. The gospel-call to sinners, *Come out from among them*. For whereas the words are taken out of Isa. liii. 11. it is plain the prophet there speaks of the days and preaching of the gospel, though with an eye to the deliverance from Babylon, ver. 7—10. In it we have,

(1.) The substance of the duty that sinners are called to, *Come out from among them*, viz. the world lying in wickedness, whereof Babylon was an emblem, as the Jews were of the elect. Babylon was the mother of abominations, and devoted to destruction; so the world lying in wickedness is. To come out from among them, is to come out of your natural state, unto Christ by faith; that is the only way to come out from among them. And that the text aims at no less, is evident,—that adoption into God's family is thereupon promised.

(2.) The touchstone of sincerity in it. *Be ye separate*. Right coming out from among the world lying in wickedness, is a coming out from among them freely and for altogether. A withdrawing for a time, the relation standing will not do; nor a halting between two;