

THE SIN, FOLLY, AND DANGER OF MEN'S CALLING CHRIST THEIR LORD, AND NOT YIELDING OBEDIENCE TO HIS LAWS; OR THE SINFULNESS AND HAZARD OF A PROFESSION OF RELIGION, WITHOUT A CORRESPONDENT PRACTICE.

Several sermons preached, at Ettrick, in summer, 1728.

LUKE vi. 46.

And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say ?

THERE was, together with the disciples, a great multitude gathered to hear Christ, and to be healed by him, ver. 17. Many of them pretended a great regard for him; but it went no farther than good words. Our Lord tells them, that such is every man, good or bad, according as his life is, vers. 44, 45, "For every tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes. A good man, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man, out of the evil treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaketh." And he closely applies this to their conscience in the text. Wherein we have,

1. A concession. He grants they made a fair profession; they called him Lord, their Lord. They owned his authority and Lordship over them, as if they were his subjects and servants ready to receive and obey his commands. They addressed themselves to him for his help, one and another crying, Lord, help me, pleading to receive benefit by him as their Lord. And this they did at times with much seeming zeal and concern, Lord, Lord.

2. A charge. He charges them with nothing like this in their practice. Though they called him their Lord, they carried not themselves at all as his subjects and servants. Though they would have him to do for them, they would do nothing for him. In his preaching and life, he laid their duty before them: but though they owned him for their Lord, they shewed no regard in their practice to what he said, no conformity to his doctrine and example.

3. An expostulation. He puts them to consider the inconsistency of these things, and the unaccountableness of yoking together a profession and a practice that destroyed one another. A lord and a subject or servant are relatives; to the one it belongs to command, to the other to obey, Mal. i. 6. Why will ye plead the relation, and

yet throw off the duty of the relation? “If ye call me your Lord, why do ye not what I say or bid you? If you will not do what I say or bid you, why do ye call me your Lord?”

Two doctrines are deducible from the text thus explained.

DOCTRINE I. There are who call Christ their Lord, owning his authority over them, and looking for benefit by him, who yet make not conscience of doing the things which he as a Lord says to them, and requires of them.

DOCTRINE II. It lies on men’s consciences before the Lord, to take it home to themselves, to consider and answer it, how they come to call Christ their Lord, and yet make not conscience of doing the things which he as a Lord says to them, and requires of them.

I shall handle these doctrines in order.

DOCTRINE I. There are who call Christ their Lord, owning his authority over them, and looking for benefit by him, who yet make not conscience of doing the things which he as a Lord says to them, and requires of them.

In discoursing this doctrine I shall,

I. Consider men’s calling Christ their Lord.

II. Consider their not doing the things which he says, notwithstanding of their calling him their Lord.

III. Shew how it comes to pass, that people call Christ Lord, and their Lord, and yet make not conscience of doing what he says.

IV. Apply the doctrine.

I. I will consider men’s calling Christ their Lord.

Under this head, I will shew,

1. How men call Christ their Lord.

2. What they do call Christ, that call him their Lord.

3. What is the import of their calling him Lord.

First, I will shew how men call Christ their Lord. Men call him their Lord,

1. Professing Christianity. Christians is the name of Christ’s disciples who owned him for their Lord and Master: Acts xi. 26. “The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.” As ye are called Christians, ye are called by his name, owning him for your Lord and Master: Matth. xxiii 10. “One is your Master even Christ. Some, that they may take to themselves a liberty, which others may not, will pretend they do not make a profession. Strange! Christians and yet not professors! Can there be a more holy profession, than that of Christianity, whereof Christ is the head! Heb. iii. 1. “Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Nay, at that rate ye take the name, and throw off the thing.

2. Being baptized in his name, Matth. xxviii. 19. They are thereby externally marked for his subjects and servants, and renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh. It is a badge of subjection to Christ, which the members of the visible church have taken on, to distinguish them from the world, whereof Satan is the god; while Christ is the Lord and God of the church.

3. Praying unto him, or to God in his name, Acts. vii. 59. Dan. ix. 17. Every praying person, so far as he prays like a Christian, calls Christ his Lord, and begs his help; though many do little consider what that requires of them in their practice.

4. Attending the assemblies of his people to hear his word, Ezek. xxiii. 31. The Lord Christ has appointed these assemblies for declaring his will to his people, as to what he will do for them, and what he will have them to do: and the very coming thither in a way of outward reverence, is a calling him Lord, from whom we are to learn our duty.

Consenting personally to the covenant, Is. xlv. 5. Thereby they say, he is, and shall be for ever their Lord, and that they shall be his only, wholly, and for ever. And at whatever time any have given such consent, they have no power to retract it after. Whether ever they shall renew it again or not, it stands recorded before God, and they will be judged by him accordingly.

6. *Lastly*, Partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. The very name of that ordinance bears the partakers to call him so, 1 Cor. xi. 23, 26. And it is a very solemn profession before the world, angels, and men, that he is our Lord, and we give up with all other lords. We take Heaven's seal upon it, and in a manner make oath that it is so.

Secondly, I will shew what they do call Christ, that call him their Lord.

1. They call him their Lord God; as Thomas did, John xx. 28, "My Lord, and my God." They own him to be God their Creator, who made them, and preserves and sustains them, to be their Sovereign Lord, the Most High God with his Father and Spirit, unless they declare the contrary. For so the universal church of Christ on earth do understand Christ to be the Lord, Rom. ix. 5, however lightly men let of his commands.

2. Their Lord Proprietor, Master, and Owner, however little regard they show to the will of his providence and precepts, Rom. xiv. 9. For as all things are his by creation, so the Father has by a new title made him heir of all things, Lord of all, which is declared in the gospel, Acts x. 36. And so the head of every man is Christ.

3. Their Lord Redeemer, Exod. xx. 2. however unsuitably they walk to the redemption purchased by him. For so his people understand him to be our Lord, who bought us with his precious blood, paying our ransom while we were captives of sin and Satan, giving himself for us.

4. Their Lord Husband, however refractory and disobedient they prove to him: Jer. iii. 14, "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you." Is. liv. 5, "Thy maker is thine husband, the Lord of hosts is his name." And so they own their obligation to be subject to him, faithful and obedient till death. For as he is Lord, he is a Lord Head and Husband, to his church.

5. *Lastly*, Their Lord King, however rebellious they be: Is. xxxiii. 22, "The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us." They own him to be King in Zion, having power and royal dominion over them, to command, reward, and punish, as they carry themselves towards him.

Thirdly, What is the import of their calling him Lord? Men calling him so, do in effect own, acknowledge, and profess,

1. His undoubted authority to command and prescribe duty to them: owning him as their Lord Husband, King, and God, they cannot deny but he has authority to bind them with laws. The husband claims authority over his spouse, the king over his subjects; and shall not God claim authority over his own creatures? All these meet together in Christ our Lord; so, by our own confession, he has authority over us.

2. The justice and equity of his commands: Rom. vii. 12, "The law is holy; and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Husbands and kings among men, may require unjust things of their relatives, through their own perverseness or blindness: but he being our Lord God, is essentially just, and can command nothing but what is truly good. Will we venture to attack the holiness of God, to accuse his commands of injustice, for an excuse of our neglect of them?

3. Our absolute obligation to obey him. If he is our Lord, we owe him an illimited subjection, obedience without disputing his commands, Psal. cxix. 4. and a resignation to his providence without reserve, Matt. xx. 15. As the clay is in the hand of the potter, so are we in his. The potsherd of the earth may strive with one another, but shall they strive with their Maker?

4. The strongest ties upon us to be for him. If he is our Proprietor and Redeemer, are we not bound by all the ties of honour and gratitude to be wholly his? Do we say, he redeemed us from

death, and can we deny but we are bound to live for him? Has he redeemed us by dying for us, in our room and stead, and so saved us from dying eternally; what possible stronger incentive can there be to obedience?

5. *Lastly*, The expectation of happiness from him. Calling him our Lord, we expect from him and by him, the pardon of our sin, the favour of God, and a part in the kingdom of heaven, Matt. vii. 21. We know that he is not only Lord of this world, but of the other world; and so we raise our expectation accordingly.

II. I will consider men's not doing the things which he says, notwithstanding all this. We may take it up in three things.

1. Christ as a Lord prescribes duty to his subjects. He has not an empty title of lordship and dominion, but is a Lawgiver: Is. xxxiii. 22, "He is our Lawgiver." And the law of the ten commands, in their spirituality and extent, is his law, binding by his authority on all that call him Lord, Exod. xx. 2, 3, &c. As he is the Lord our God, he claims absolute and illimited subjection and obedience of us; as he is our Proprietor, he claims the absolute disposal of us; as he is our Redeemer, he requires our living wholly to him; as he is our Husband, he demands our being subject to him in love, faithfulness, and obedience till death, yea for ever; and as he is our King, he requires the duty of faithful subjects, and to have no commerce with his enemies.

2. He intimates his will to them as to their duty. He says what he would have them to do. We have his written laws in the Bible. which is God's word to every one into whose hand it comes. His ministers, as his messengers, do in his name proclaim his laws, and require obedience to them. Conscience within men's breasts testifies the necessity of obedience. So that none can pretend ignorance. If they be ignorant of his will, it is affected; they desire not to know it; as those do, Job xxi. 14, who say unto God, "Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways."

3. Yet men neglect it, and regard it not in their practice. They plead the relation to him, but make no conscience of the duty of it. He has laid down their duty in laws and commands, and has intimated it to them: but they take no heed to regulate their practice according to them. He says what things he would have them to do, but they do them not.

1st, They have no due sense of their being absolutely bound up to his will, but fancy themselves to be at some liberty to walk according to their own, as if the government were divided betwixt Christ and themselves: Psal. xii. 4, "Who have said, With our tongue will we prevail, our lips are our own: who is lord over us?"

They do not feel the tie of the yoke of Christ always upon them, but are like bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke, skipping at ease according to their own pleasure.

2dly, They frame not their life according to his will. Their habitual walk and practice is not holy, but loose, licentious, untender, carnal, and like the world, not like the followers of Christ; like the Ephesians in their unconverted state, Eph. ii. 2, who "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." They attend ordinances, and perform some religious duties: but look into the strain of their conversation, it is no wise Christ-like, but world-like; contrary to that exhortation, Rom. xii. 2, "Be ye not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind."

3dly, They never set themselves to do all that he says; contrary to what the Psalmist did, Psal. cxix. 6, who "had respect unto all God's commandments." This one or other thing that he says, they do: but they were never brought to a compliance with the things he says without reserve. They pick and choose out some things, but they reject others: a clear evidence that his authority which is stamped on all his commands, has little weight with them, Jam. ii. 11.

4thly, They habitually do against what he says, making their own lusts and inclinations their law; like those who said, Jer. ii. 25, "I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." They call him their Lord; but Satan and their lusts are really their lords, to whom they yield their obedience, being captives at their pleasure.

Lastly, They do nothing purely because he says it, else they would endeavour to do all. In what they do, they have other ends than to please him: they do it to please themselves, for their own profit, pleasure, or safety.

III. The *third* general head is, to shew how it comes to pass, that people call Christ Lord, and their Lord, and yet make not conscience of doing what he says. The springs of this ruining practice, that so prevails, are many: as,

1. The want of a thorough change in their nature; Luke vi. 43, 44, "A good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit: neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit: for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes." There is some change made on them, therefore they call Christ Lord; it is not carried through, therefore they do not what he says. Hence they are neither cold nor hot; they are neither professed enemies, nor cordial friends;

like the Laodiceans, of whom our Lord said, Rev. iii. 15, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot."

1st, Good education and religious company embalms some dead souls; but still they want the principle of the Spirit of life; like those of whom the apostle says, Jude ver. 19, "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit. So they continue dead in sin still, and their course of life becomes abominable with dead works, till in end they are twice dead, ver. 12.

2dly, The gospel being new to some, makes a reel among their affections; as it did among the stony-ground hearers, Matt. xiii. 20, 21, "He that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it: yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. So that they have some liking of the gospel, and begin to look kindly towards the way of God: but it changes not their hearts, ver. 21. And the newness going away, these affections wear off, and they begin to appear in their own colours of black nature. Hence we have many, who, while they were springing up in youth, blossomed fair, and solemnly gave their names to Christ at sacraments: but being grown up, turn stark naught.

3dly, They get some new light into their heads, but no new life into their hearts. This was the case of many of John's hearers, who afterwards withered away; concerning whom Christ said, John v. 35, "He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light."

4thly, Many get awakening grace, that never get converting grace. Their convictions bring them to call Christ Lord; but they living strangers to the work of conversion, cannot do the things which he says.

2. Entertaining wrong notions of religion. They form to themselves such notions of religion, as leave them at liberty in the course of their walk. (1.) They think that is religion to call Christ Lord in performing duties of worship, praying, &c. and consider not that the substance of religion lies in holy, tender walking: Tit. ii. 11, 12, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Hence having done these duties of worship, they are at no more care to keep their hearts in the Lord's fear all the day long; but, on the contrary, can take the greater liberty to themselves in loose walking; as the whore did, Prov. vii. 14, 15, "I have peace-offerings with me; this day have I paid my vows.

Therefore came I forth to meet thee, diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee." Hence publicans and harlots enter into the kingdom of heaven before such persons. (2.) They think that faith will save them, though it be dead, idle, and unactive; contrary to what the apostle saith, James ii. 14, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? ver. 26, "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." They do not consider, that that faith is not saving faith, which is so. Hence they can take a great deal of liberty in the way of sin, and put off repentance from time to time, even to a death-bed, upon the confidence that their faith in Christ will save them. Such have been of old, and still are, Jude ver. 4, "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." There is no true faith but what purifies the heart, Acts xv. 9. and sanctifies the whole man; and the salvation by faith, is salvation from sin.

3. Reigning unbelief. Of this our Lord complained, John v. 40, "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." Whatever pretences there are to believing in Christ, the unholiness of the lives of men is a convincing evidence, that unbelief is reigning at bottom with most of us: Is. liii. 1, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" The holiness of God, the spirituality of his law, his hatred of sin, and how severely he punisheth, are not believed. The report concerning Christ, another world, heaven and hell, sinks not deep into the hearts of many. If these things were truly believed, it is not possible that men could be so easy in a way of sin.

4. Want of consideration, Luke xv. 17. People dream away their lifetime; and however deep they can enter into the consideration of other things, they have no power to consider their soul's state and case: Is. xlv. 20, "He feedeth of ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" Self-examination is utterly neglected; so there is no due reflection made on their souls' state, and the course of life they are leading: Is. i. 3, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his masters crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."

5. The natural enmity of the heart prevailing against conviction; Rom. viii. 7. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Hence is rebelling

against the light, keeping the truth prisoner in the head, that it may not get into the conversation to rule there, Rom. i. 18. There are notions of truth that force their own way into the mind, especially under a clear gospel-ministry: the natural enmity yoking with these, fights against them; and getting over them, runs with a stronger current than otherwise, Rom. vii. 13.

6. *Lastly*, Unmortified lusts still keeping the rule and dominion over the soul, though Christ has the name of their Lord. Many call Christ Master, who are still servants to sin, serving diverse lusts and pleasures. Hence these hurry them into sinful courses, that they must do what their impetuous lusts drive them to, and cannot do the things that Christ says.

USE 1. Of Information. Hence we may see,

1. That ungodly sinners after the dropping of the gospel, are self-condemned, and will be condemned out of their own mouths. They own Christ's authority over them, which Jews and pagans do not; and yet they regard it not in their walk, Mal. i. 6.

2. They are unreasonable and foolish in their expectation of benefit from Christ, and shall be disappointed: Matth. vii. 21. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven." O how can we expect salvation from Christ, who have no regard to what he says! Ye will not do his will to honour him, but dishonour him by trampling on his commands! will not be saved from sin.

3. A profession of subjection to Christ, and bearing the external badges of it, is common to many of the devil's goats with Christ's sheep. Nobody needs value themselves upon it; for though we say well for Christ as our Lord, yet if we do not accordingly, we but deceive ourselves.

4. *Lastly*, No man has reason to be stumbled at religion itself, because of the unsuitable lives of some professors of it. Many such stumbling-blocks are laid down this day in the way of the blind world; they that lay them shall bear their judgment: but why should it be improven against the truths or practice of religion itself, since our Lord plainly forewarns that it will be so?

USE 2. Of Exhortation. Ye do all call Christ your Lord, profess Christianity, have been baptized in his name, &c. Consider calmly and seriously, how your life answers your profession, whether ye do what he says or not, what regard ye shew to his commands in your practice. Consider,

1. It is expected that they who own Christ for their Lord, should carry themselves as his subjects and servants, that his will should be

their law, his commands the rule of their life. To call him Lord, and yet cast his laws behind your backs, is to mock him with those, Matth. xxvii. 29, 30. "And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail King of the Jews. And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head."

2. If he is your Lord, as he has power and authority to command you, so he has power to revenge your disobedience, and to reward your obedience. His obedient children may be sure their labour shall not be in vain, 1 Cor. xv. ult; and the disobedient will find the weight of his hand, that will grind them to powder, 2 Thess. i. 7, 8.

3. As he is a Lord, he is Lord and Saviour, Lord Redeemer. And what is it that he redeems from, and saves from? Is it not sin? Tit. ii. 14. "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Matth. i. 21. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins." He gave his life for that end, Eph. v. 25, 26. What horrid injury must it then be, to pretend he is your Lord, to save you, and yet ye will live in your sin, directly contrary to what his precious blood was shed for?

4. *Lastly*, Though we are not saved by our doing, but by believing; yet faith and holiness are inseparable: James ii. 14. "What doth it profit though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" Where there is not holiness of heart and life, there is no true faith in Christ there. Faith if it be true, unites the soul to Christ, works by love, purifies the heart, carries the soul heavenward in its conversation. Doing in perfection what Christ says, is reached by no believers here; but doing in sincerity, is what differences them still from unbelievers.

Consider well then what regard ye show to what Christ says. And let your consciences answer these questions.

1. Can ye say before the Lord, appealing to his omniscience, that ye have renounced your own will, lusts, and inclinations, to follow whatsoever the Lord discovers to be his will for you to do; and ye sincerely endeavour to stick by that renunciation, to conform yourselves to his will? Acts ix. 6. I doubt most of us have never been brought that length yet; and that many who have said it at some times have resiled from it, and follow their own will more than Christ's to this day.

2. Do ye really so far comply with whatsoever God has dis-

covered to be your duty, that ye dare not neglect it, but must endeavour it? Psal. cxix. 6. Can you think ye show an upright regard to the Lord's commands, when there are some of them that you can cast behind your back? No; if you regard them not all, ye regard none of them as ye ought. Say not, There is none can do all. It is true, none can do all perfectly; but there is no upright man, but he will put hand to all that he knows to be his duty, and do his endeavour in every one of them.

3. Do ye sincerely set yourselves to oppose and fight against every thing the Lord discovers to be sin, and are ye longing to have the victory over it? Rom. vii. 24. Are there not some sins that are your bosom-idols, which ye cannot be brought to part with? Are there not such sins with many who indulge themselves in sins, of the vileness of which none can be ignorant, that are not given up to a reprobate sense, as lying, filthiness, dishonest dealing, &c.?

4. Do ye really lie open to discoveries of sin and duty from the Lord's word? Job xxxiv. 31, 32. An upright servant desires to know his master's will; but the refractory and rebellious servant, having no mind to do it, cares not for knowing it, Job xxi. 14. Do ye read the Bible, or care for hearing it read, and attend to it as that from whence ye are to learn your duty? When ye do read or hear the word, do ye embrace it as the rule you are to regulate your practice by?

5. What weight has Christ's saying a thing with you, when a multitude of the world says against it? The world says there is no ill in many things, that the Bible says there is much ill in. It says, there is no harm, where the word says there is. In a word, the Bible says, the way to heaven is the way of strictness or straitness; the world says, there is no need of that strictness of life. Now, when the world's opinion carries it in your practice against Christ's decision in his word, do ye do the things which Christ says?

6. Do ye, in every part of your life and conversation, endeavour to approve yourselves to Christ as your Lord? 1 Pet. i. 15, "As he which hath called you is holy, so are ye holy in all manner of conversation?" Do ye look on him as the party with whom ye have to do in all; not only in your religious duties, but in the common affairs of life, or worldly business? not only in your personal walk, but in the several relations wherein ye stand, as husbands, wives, children, and servants? 1 Cor. vii. 24. Alas! most men shuffle out any regard to Christ's commands, out of their worldly business, and their relations, confining their religion to their religious duties of praying, &c.

7. *Lastly*, How do ye take any intimations of the Lord Christ's

will made to you, to discover your duty or your sin in particular cases? Have they a silencing weight with your consciences, or do they but irritate your passions? Is. xi. 6. So the Psalmist shewed his regard, Psal. cxli. 5, "Let the righteous smite me, it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." Those that cannot bear an admonition, reproof, or to be told of a fault, but presently are up in their own defence to ward off conviction, shew they have more regard to their credit, than their conscience, the authority of Christ the Lord, and any thing he says, Hos. iv. 4.

DOCTRINE II. It lies on men's consciences before the Lord, to take it home to themselves, to consider and answer it, how they come to call Christ their Lord, and yet not make conscience of doing the things which he as a Lord says to them, and requires of them.

In discoursing this doctrine, I shall only shew the import of the expostulation in the text, and then conclude with a word of application.

I. will shew the import of this expostulation. It imports,

1. That Christ is in earnest for our obedience. He is not indifferent what regard we shew to what he says as our Lord: Psal. cxix. 4, "He hath commanded us to keep his precepts diligently." He is a jealous Lord, and will not endure your baulking of any of his commands: Exod. xxiii. 21, "Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not: for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him." Though we are not to lay the weight of our acceptance with God on our obedience, yet there is a weight of evidence lies on it. And,

1st, The evidence of our belonging to Christ, in a saving relation, lies upon it: John xv. 14, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." If ye do not what he says, he will disown you as none of his, Luke xiii. 28, pretend what ye will. Christ sets his seal on all that belong to him, as soon as they become his; whereby they may be distinguished from the world lying in wickedness, 2 Tim. ii. 19, "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." If ye want that seal, he will reject you as none of his.

2dly, The evidence of your right to heaven lies on it: Rev. xxii. 14, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they might have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." And therefore, at the great day, the works of the saints, and of the wicked, are brought out before the world in judg-

ment; the former as evidences of their title to heaven, the latter as grounds of the sentence of damnation. If ye baulk any of the least of his commands, ye thereby baulk your evidence for heaven, and so perish: Matth. v. 19, "Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven."

2. It is possible for us in this life to get the things that Christ says, done acceptably, in all the parts thereof. If it were not so, then, by the text, no body at all would be allowed to call him Lord; which is certainly false: Matth. vii. 21, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven." So there are two sorts that call him Lord; some that do, some that do not what he says; the former allowed, the other rejected. The doctrine of the imperfection of the saint's obedience, is a stone of stumbling to many a blind soul. To prevent your stumbling.

1st, Distinguish between doing the will of Christ in all its parts, and in all its degrees. The latter no man in this life can do at any rate; but in every part of his obedience he fails in some degree: James iii. 2, "For in many things we offend all." But the former every true believer actually does: Psal. cxix. 6, he has "respect unto all God's commandments." A whole family hears so many particular pieces of work prescribed to them all by the father and master of the family. His grown children do them all exactly to his mind: the younger children, who are but learning to work, put hand to every one of them, and baulk none of the pieces; but they do none of them exactly. Refractory servants do some of them, but others of them they never notice. Just so it is with the saints in heaven, true believers on earth, and hypocrites.

Now, here lies the snare: none, say you, in this world can do all that is required of them, but they come short in many things: and so do but we. ANSWER. They come short of the degrees of every part, it is true; but if they are believers indeed, they do not come short of the parts themselves, as ye do. The whole parts of the will of God known to them, they do, and dare not but fall in with: and this will distinguish between them and you, that baulk any part of his will made known to you, as betwixt David and Saul, Acts. xiii. 22. See Col. iv. 12.

2dly, Distinguish between doing the will of Christ perfectly, and acceptably. No man in this life can do the former, Philip. iii. 12. But every true believer does the latter, Acts x. 25. Ye that are masters know very well to make this distinction in your own work. If a child of yours, or a pliable servant, shew a real good-will to

obey your orders, you accept of their work, though it is not every way as ye would have it. So does the Lord: 2 Cor. viii. 12, "For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." But if a servant say, I cannot do it every way as he would have it done, and therefore I will let it alone altogether; how take ye that? And how will Christ take such treatment off your hand, in plain instances of duty which ye quite neglect, and of sin which ye indulge yourselves in?

Here is your share: none do the will of Christ perfectly; and I do many things, though not all. ANSWER. Ay but true believers, though they do not do it perfectly, yet they do it so as God for Christ's sake accepts of their doing it: and that ye do not, and that ye are not careful about; but can be easy, whether he accept of it or not: and since ye are not universal in your obedience, ye are not sincere, nor are accepted in any thing.

3dly, Distinguish between ability in ourselves, to do the will of Christ acceptably, and ability for it in Christ, offered to us in the gospel, and to be brought in by faith. No man, saint nor sinner, has the former: 2 Cor. iii. 5, "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves." But all true believers do get the latter: Phil. iv. 13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." You bid a servant do such a piece of work, and he neglecting it tells you, I wanted instruments for it: How take ye that? Will ye not say, Why did ye not come in and get the instruments for it? Did not my bidding you do it, suppose I allowed wherewith to do it?

Here is your snare: We can do nothing of ourselves, say ye: and thereupon the sluggard puts his hands in his bosom; and many a poor sinner lies down in his bed of ease and sloth, laying his head on this soft pillow, and sleeps full sound till the flames of hell awaken him. But that will not excuse you from doing the will of Christ; but it will bring you under a double guilt, one of not doing what he says, another of slighting his offered grace that might have enabled you: and so ye will be condemned, not because ye could not, but because you would not do the things he said.

In the covenant of works perfect obedience only could be accepted, and there was strength for it allowed to Adam in that covenant, which he lost. In the covenant of grace sincere obedience, though imperfect, may be accepted; and there is strength allowed in this covenant for it, whereby every piece of obedience that he requires may be done, though not as it should be, yet so as it may be accepted: 2 Cor. iii. 5, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to

think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God." Chap. xii. 9, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Phil. iv. 13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Only this strength is lodged in Christ, and must be fetched in by believing the promises, Psal. xxviii. 7; Jer. xvii. 7, 8. Now, the commands of Christ to sinners that hear the gospel, import an allowance of sufficient grace and strength for them thus to be fetched in: 2 Tim. ii. 1, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." Exod. xx. 2, &c., "I am the Lord thy God," &c. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." The little noticing of this weakens believers in their obedience, and the total neglect of it by others ruins them.

3. Notwithstanding the things that Christ says may be got done acceptably, yet many that call him Lord will not do them: Tit. i. 16, "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him," &c. He has made his yoke easy, but yet they will not let it come on their fair necks: they say, as Luke xix. 14, "We will not have this man to reign over us." The devil and their lusts get leave to ride them, but they will not be led by Christ. They say, they cannot help it; but the truth is, they will not help it, for they will have none of his help for it; as the Lord complains the Israelites did, Psal. lxxxi. 11, "My people would not hearken to my voice, and Israel would none of me." So their ruin is lodged upon a twofold score,

1st, Obedience to sin, and disobedience to Christ, is their choice. The way of life and death are set before them, and they choose the latter: Prov. viii. 36, "He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me, love death." Ezek. xviii. 31, "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Christ calls them to a holy, serious, humble, modest, and pious life. That they cannot endure; but cost what it will, they must have a light, proud, unclean, sensual, and loose life, wherein they may think, talk, and carry themselves at liberty from the strictness of a holy walk, and tender conscience.

2dly, They have neither heart nor use for the grace and strength that is in Christ Jesus, John v. 40; Psal. lxxxi. 11, "And therefore they can live without him, John vi. 67, 68. They may have use for it, that really desire to have their lusts mortified, temptations resisted, their hearts and lives truly sanctified: but that is not their case. How then can they have a heart for it? What

heart can they have for cleansing and purifying things, that love rather to be wallowing in the mire? Therefore the opened fountain of Christ's blood and Spirit is neglected. For as the Lord saith, Jer. xiii. 27, "I have seen thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, and thine abominations on the hills in the fields: woe unto thee, O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?"

4. Christ is highly displeased with the disobedience of those that call him Lord, who will not do what he says, Psal. l. 16—22. Men will not believe this: they think little of their neglect of what he says, and they think that he looks on it as they do. He is their Saviour; but they consider not, that he is, and will be their Judge. But to persuade you of it, consider,

1st, His infinite purity and holiness, Is. vi. 3. He is the Holy One of Israel. He is of the self-same numerical essence or nature with the Father; all the attributes of God, and particularly his holiness, are in him, Exod. xxiii. 21, "Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not: for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him." Therefore whatever is in Scripture of the holiness of God, belongs to him. And his willingness to receive sinners is, not to save them in their sins, but to cleanse them from them.

2dly, The dreadful strokes he has brought on such as called him Lord, for not doing the things that he says. He has in all ages of the church set up some monuments of this his displeasure. Whence came the fire that devoured Nadab and Abihu; came it not from before the Lord? Lev. x. 1, 2, and was not that the Lord Christ? Acts vii. 38. Who struck Ananias and Sapphira dead for lying unto God? Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, Uzzah, &c.? was it not Christ? John v. 22, "For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."

3dly, Does he not refuse communion with such persons in holy ordinances, and thereby testify his displeasure against them? Hos. v. 15, "I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face." What will it avail to attend, ordinances, to come to a communion table, while we continue in such a case? There can be no communion with Christ, Psal. xxiv. 3, 4; Is. i. 15, 16. Even particular pieces of unrepented-of guilt and untenderness, may be a controversy on which he will refuse communion with those that are habitually holy: Psal. lxvi. 18, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." What then can others expect? Amos iii. 3, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

Lastly, Consider how he will treat them at the last day: Luke xix. 27, "Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." He is the Lamb of God, to take away the sins of the world; but he will be as a lion to them that will not do what he says, when he cometh in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. In vain will they then call him Lord, and plead their eating and drinking in his presence, Luke xiii. 25, 26, 27.

5. There is a great evil in calling Christ Lord, and not doing what he says; an evil that highly provokes him, as casting dishonour on him in a very special manner. There is something in it, that, so to speak, touches to the quick, beyond the dishonour done to him by others: Rev. iii. 15, 16, "I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."

1st, Their sins and looseness of life reflect a peculiar dishonour on him, as pretending a relation to him: Rom. ii. 24, "For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, through you." How do ye think yourselves touched and affronted with the miscarriages of your children and servants? Learn from that, how Christ takes with your sins and looseness of life. They are a blaspheming of his name and doctrine, calling him, in effect, the minister of sin, 1 Tim. vi. 1; Tit. ii. 4, 5. It is not in the power of open enemies to reach him such a blow.

2dly, They do Satan a peculiar pleasure. If there is any of the dust that is the serpent's meat, that relishes better with him than the rest, it is the sins and miscarriages of those that call Christ Lord: that is a feast for him; he will do more for it than for other ten, Job i. 7, 8. As there is joy in heaven at a sinner's repentance, there is a joy in hell among the devil and his angels at the falls of those that call Christ Lord. The enemy takes a peculiar pleasure and pride, in having not only his own professed servants, but others in Christ's livery following and serving him. In that, he can vie with Christ for a good master before the blind world, when he can shew them so many at his back; that sometimes gave their names to Christ.

3dly, They wound the heart of the real children of God, and make the whole family sigh more heavily, than the sins of others would do, Psal. lv. 12. Where the sins of open enemies do but

scratch like a pin, theirs will pierce like a sword, Cant. i. 6. It covers them with shame, fills them with sorrow and indignation, and makes them weary of their post; as it did the prophet, Jer. ix. 2, "Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfar-ing men, that I might leave my people, and go from them: for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men." What wonder then, that Christ the master of the family resent it dreadfully?

6.* Christ will disown them for his servants, that in their practice disown him for their Lord, not doing what he says. They count the duty of servants grievous to them, and therefore he will divest them of the honour and privilege of his servants. They secretly loath him and his service, however fair they carry it, calling him Lord; and he will let all the world see that his soul loaths them, Rev. iii. 16. "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." And this he doth two ways.

1st, Spuing them out of his mouth unto the earth; whereas before they were exalted unto heaven, in respect of hopefulness of their souls' case, and of external church-privileges. In Scripture style, the church is called heaven, professors the sons of God: the devil's kingdom, or the world lying in wickedness, is called the earth, the children of men, Gen. vi. 2; and xi. 1; Rev. xii. 4. The gospel is Christ's call to sinners to come out of the world lying in wickedness and be separate from them, joining themselves to the church, the family of God. Many profess to come away, and join so, and solemnly declare it by the partaking of the Lord's table: but though they so call him Lord, they do not the things that he says. And our jealous Lord being provoked with it spues them out, and in the sight of the world throws them back unto the earth they said they came from; and there they lie again amidst the world lying in wickedness.

Three things concur in this awful dispensation.

(1.) They are let fall into the mire of some gross pollution of the outward man: 2 Pet. ii. 22, "It is happened unto them, according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and, The sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire." Cain turns a murderer, Judas a betrayer of his master, Ananias and Sapphira liars, Demas a lover of the world, Jezebel and her children in Thyatira fall into adultery and fornication, &c. Rev. ii. 20, 21, 22, 23. (2.) Their leaf of appearance in religion falls. Though they get space, they get no grace to repent and cover, Rev. ii. 21;

* The author, after recapitulating what he had delivered on the second doctrine, delivered what follows to the end of this discourse on a fast-day before the communion at Ettrick, August 14, 1728.

but they are from that time blasted, wither, and fade away: John xv. 6, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." And they turn just the hue of the rest of the world lying in wickedness; spiritual death is painted in their faces; whereof this generation affords many frightful instances: Luke viii. 18, "Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have." (3.) Hence they lose their new name, and get their old one back again. What credit or reputation they had for religion and seriousness, is blown up. Their name stinks in that case among the serious godly, and they look upon them as none of theirs, Is. lxxv. 15, "And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen: for the Lord shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name." This is an awful case, Zech. xi. 8. "Three shepherds also I cut off in one month, and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me."

2dly, Spueing them out of his mouth into the pit, at the last day: Luke xiii. 27, 28. "He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out." In vain will they then cry, "Lord, Lord open to us: Matth. xxv. 11, 12, "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not." In vain will they plead their eating and drinking in his presence. They called him Lord; but they walked with the workers of iniquity, and they will be led forth with them: Psal. cxxv. 5, "As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity." They will see that he will count it inconsistent with his honour to own them: Mark viii. 38, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." They got their names enrolled in the visible church, among his servants; but he will blot them out publicly: Exod. xxxii. 33, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." Compared with Rev. iii. 5, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels."

7. Men are ruined in this way, because they do not consider it.

It is want of consideration that leaves them at ease, calling Christ Lord, and yet not doing what he says: Is. xlii. 20, "He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?" They are out of their place, like a wandering bird, Prov. xxvii. 8; and they are easy in it, because they are out of themselves, out of their wits, like the prodigal, Luke xv. 17. They consider not this matter.

1st, They call Christ Lord, and so bribe and soothe their blind and sleepy consciences. If they should give up with all pretensions to Christ and religion, they could have no peace with their consciences: therefore they will attend ordinances; hear the word, though they will not do it; pray in secret or in their families, though perhaps out of the same mouth come forth blessing and cursing; they will partake of the Lord's table, though they will not give up with the table of devils. These things flatter their consciences to be easy; as was the case with Micah, Judg. xvii. 13, "Then said Micah, Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest."

2dly, They do not the things that he says however, and so satisfy their unmortified lusts. Thus they please both parties within them. Their saying fair pleases their conscience; and their not doing what Christ says, pleases their lusts. They have no more ado with Christ, but to be called by his name. For the rest, they will "eat their own bread, and wear their own apparel," and will not make their religion burdensome to their lusts by mortification and tender walking; and so they are easy on that side.

But there are three things they do not consider.

(1.) What inconsistency is in this course: 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial?" It is made up of contradictions. Their profession condemns their practice as abominable; and their practice condemns their profession as horrid juggling and dissembling with God. Ye pray for pardon of sin as a crime, and yet return to it with delight: that God would make you holy; and yet ye will not part with your lusts, but have a horror of being bound up to a holy walk: that God would at length receive you into heaven; and yet if you were there even now in the temper ye are in, you would flee out of it as from a hell, because ye have not relish of either person or thing that is there, and for nothing but what is not there.

(2.) How heinously the Lord Christ takes it, that men should yoke Satan's service with his, 2 Cor. vi. 15, forecited. He looks on it as highly dishonourable to him, and after a sort more than if

they should profess themselves none of his, Rev. iii. 16, forecited. That is an awful word of great indignation, Ezek. xx. 39, "As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord God, Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me : but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols." It bears, that their duties are but a polluting of his name. Your praying, hearing, and communicating will not cleanse the abomination of a loose life : but looseness of conversation will defile all these, Hag. ii. 12—14.

(3.) What the end of such a course will be, what it will issue in at length : Dent. xxxii. 29, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end !" It cannot miss of a fearful issue : Is. l. 11, "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks : walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow." Psal. cxxv. 5, "As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity." See it in the parable of the foolish builder, the foolish virgins, the tares among the wheat, the man at the marriage-supper without the wedding-garment, &c. It is pity men should not consider timely.

8. *Lastly*, People ought to consider it, see what account they can make of it, and how they will answer it. And,

1st, How they will answer it to their own consciences. Conscience may be asleep now, but it will certainly awaken : and the longer it be in awakening, it will be the more severe when it is roused, as in the case of Belshazzar and Felix. Ye cannot shun a reckoning with your conscience. As silent as it is, ye will find it has marked your ways in its book : Prov. xx. 27, "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly." And if conscience condemn you as hypocritical pretenders to Christ, what will come of you ? 1 John iii. 20, "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." And if ye die with an ill conscience, it will be a gnawing worm for ever.

2dly, How they will answer it to the Lord Christ in the judgment. There will be a day of judgment, wherein the tribunal will be set, the books opened, and men's whole lives will be called over : Eccl. xii. 14, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." And every one will be judged according to his works : 2 Cor. v. 10, "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath

done, whether it be good or bad." Then men's calling Christ Lord, will be tried by their doing or not doing the things that he says. And what will men then say to the question in the text, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" and to that question, "How camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment?"

II. I come now to a word of Application.

First, Let me examine into this matter, and ask and put it to every one's conscience before the Lord, Why call ye Christ Lord, and do not the things that he says? You are rational creatures; ye will not allow that you are fools, that have no reason for what you do, or not do. Therefore "produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the King of Jacob, Is. xli. 21. What is your plea? Is it,

1. We are saved by faith, and not by good works? **ANSWER.** I have answered that already, that though the weight of our acceptance with God, lies not on good works, yet the weight of our evidence does. I add, that though we are not saved by, yet we are saved to, good works and obedience: Eph. ii. 10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them, 1 Pet. i. 2, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," &c. So if you are not brought to do what Christ says, you are not saved. But perhaps you will insist, and say, O but we will be saved after death. **ANSWER.** If ye be not saved while ye are in life, ye will never be saved after death. The notion of salvation begun after death, is unknown to the Bible: Eph. ii. 8, "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God," 2 Tim. i. 9, "Who have saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began," Tit. iii. 5, "Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

2. We have no strength in ourselves. **ANSWER.** That also I have answered at large. If the law came to you with its commands without the gospel, there would be something in this, though not so much but the law would overthrow it; as in the case of pagans, Rom. ii. 12, "For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law." But since the gospel comes with the law, telling you there is ability for it in Christ, which you may have by faith; your

plea is rejected, and you are condemned, not only for not doing what Christ says, but for refusing strength to do it with.

3. We do several things, and there is no body but has failings. *ANSWER.* Ye may do many things, as Herod, Mark vi. 20 : but if ye set not yourselves to do all the parts of Christ's will known to you, without reserve, ye do nothing : James ii. 10, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Sound believers fail of degrees, but not of the parts : Psal. exix. 6, David said "I have respect unto all thy commandments," Acts xiii. 22, "I have found David the son of Jesse ; a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will."

4. God is merciful, and Christ is our gracious Saviour ; we trust he will not be severe on us for our sins. *ANSWER.* That is a trust in God and Christ, not upon his word, but over the belly of his word ; so that either it must fail and disappoint you, or God's truth must fail : Heb. xii. 14, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord," Psal. cxxv. 5, "As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity," "But his confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors," Job xviii. 14. Is that the use ye have for the mercy of God ? Psal. cxxx. 4. and for the grace of Christ ? See the character of such, Jude 4, "There are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

5. What needs all that strictness of life in our case : we are neither ministers nor elders, to have any character of that sort to support ? *ANSWER.* It is evident, that many take a liberty in sinful practices from this ; practices which they would condemn in them, though they allow them in themselves. Ministers and elders untender and loose in their life and practice, shall bear their judgment, as betrayers of the cause of religion to an ungodly world. But it will be no comfort to you to go to hell with unholy ministers and elders. And therefore ye must either take the strait way with godly and tender ministers and elders to heaven ; or else, in the first place, find out in your Bible, where the strait way to heaven is only for ministers and elders, but there is a wide way to it for others. Ye must seek another Bible for it ; for this mentions but one strait way to heaven, for you and them both : Matt. 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 that

leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." But if ye belong to Christ, ye bear a character as venerable as that of a minister: ye are priests, 1. Pet. ii. 9. Rev. i. 6. Heb. xii. 23. If ye say, Ye are not so much as professors: ANSWER. Are ye Christians or not? If ye be, set yourselves to answer that profession, and no more is required of you; or else why do ye profess so much?

6. *Lastly*, But we hope to repent, reform, and find mercy, ere we die. ANSWER. When? The young when they grow old, and the old when they come to a death-bed. And who has secured you that ye shall see another day? Not God, I am sure: Heb. iii. 7. "The Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice." And if ye should be old, and get a death-bed to lie in a while, how know ye that ye will get grace to repent? Truly it is not God's ordinary way: Job. xx. 11. "His bones are full of the sin of his youth, which shall lie down with him in the dust."

Secondly, Let me expostulate this matter with you, how ye come to call Christ Lord, and do not the things that he says.

1. Do ye think that religion is just a matter of form and fair shew, to say prayers, and come to the kirk on the sabbath, &c. not carrying it through the whole of your walk? If ye do, ye will shew yourselves void of it, 2. Tim. iii. 5. Gal. vi. 12. Is. lviii. 5, 6, 7.

2. Do ye not mock the Lord Christ by this, and, like Judas, betray him with a kiss, Matt. xxvi. 49. But "be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," Gal. vi. 7.

3. Have ye no regard to the honour of Christ? If he is your Lord and ye expect salvation by him, what hearts have ye that cannot be moved thereby, to live to his praise, and be useful for him in the world? They who have no use for holy walking, after salvation is secured by Christ, are surely far from salvation.

4. Is not the cause of Christ and religion much the worse of you? Rom. ii. 24. "For the name of God is blasphemed through you." Do ye call him Lord, that ye may have the more access to affront and dishonour him? Do ye join yourselves to the church and kingdom of Christ, that ye may by such compliance advance the interests of Satan's kingdom?

5. Has Christ's character as a Lord no weight on your consciences? Do ye think it is a mere empty title? You will find it otherwise: Mal. i. 6. "If I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts." Luke xix. 27. "But those mine enemies which would that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me."

6. *Lastly*, How will we answer it at the great day? If ye think it

is long to that, it will be longer after, that it will sit in your consciences and gnaw, that you called him Lord, and did not the things that he said: and it may be a very short while, that it might be in your power to get things put in better case for that day.

I shall conclude with a few advices.

1. Examine yourselves, and search out your sins sincerely, as in the sight of God: Hag. i. 7. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways. Look into the several parts and periods of your life, and see how they have been led. Look into your public and private walk; into your relations, how ye have carried as a husband, wife, &c.; into both tables of the law, how ye have behaved towards God, and towards man; into your sins of omission and commission, your secret sins that are hid from the eyes of the world, the sin that is your particular bias. Look into your heart-sins: and trace up all to the sin of your nature.

2. Seeing yourself a sinful, ruined creature, solemnly take hold of the covenant of grace, personally entering into it by embracing Christ offered to you in the gospel, trusting in him as your Saviour, for his whole salvation from sin, and from wrath, on the ground of God's faithfulness in the promise; thus going to Christ for your sanctification, as well as justification; to purge you from the filth as well as the guilt of sin, 1 Cor. i. 30, receiving and eyeing him in all his offices.

3. *Lastly*, Lay down an honest purpose and resolution, in the faith of the grace and strength in Christ Jesus, offered and exhibited to you in the gospel, and provided in the covenant, to comply henceforth with the whole will of Christ declared to you in his word, without exception or reserve; to subject your souls wholly to the authority of his word, to comply with every duty therein made known to you, and to fight against every sin there discovered to you. So shall you call him Lord, and he call you his servants, Acts xi. 23; Psal. cxix. 112.