

How soon would the arrival of a skilful steersman, in whom they could confide, and that knew the shelves and rocks upon the coast, calm their disquiets !

Well, then, to sum up all. This very scripture is a letter of comfort, writ only to women in the state of child-bearing ; claim it as your right by faith. What comfort is here to appeal from the threatening to the promise, from God as a judge to God as a father, from God angry to God pacified in Christ ! How comfortable is this, that when God seems to fight against you with his punishments, you can take off the edge of his weapons by the pleas of his promise ! Oh blessed God, who arms a believer against himself, before he arms himself against a believer ! You can never be under the curse if you have faith, as long as God is sensible of his own credit in the promise. In the material part of the punishment, there is no difference between a believer and an unbeliever. Jacob is pinched with famine as well as the Canaanite ; but Jacob is in covenant, and hath a God in heaven and a Joseph in Egypt to preserve him. God directs every pain in all by his providence, in believers by a particular love ; every gripe in all the physic he gives us. He orders even his contendings with his creature in such a measure as the Spirit may not fail before him, Isa. lvii. 16.

A DISCOURSE OF THE SINS OF THE REGENERATE.

*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin ; for his seed remaineth in him :
and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*—1 JOHN III. 9.

THE apostle, having exhorted the saints to whom he writes in the former chapter to abide in Christ, and to do righteousness, ver. 28, 29, follows on this exhortation with several arguments and demonstrations, that a true Christian is not only bound to do so, but that he indeed doth so.

1. From that hope which hath eternal happiness for its object, ver. 2, 3. Where this hope is truly founded, it will inflame us with a desire and endeavour after holiness, which is a necessary means to attain it. There will be an endeavour to be like that head here, which they hope to be perfectly like hereafter.

2. From the contrariety of sin to the law of God. It is not reasonable, neither can there be such a disingenuous disposition in any to transgress the laws of that person from whom only he expects his highest felicity ; and the law of God, being pure and perfect, sin being contrary unto it, must be filthy and unreasonable. A Christian, who is guided by this law, will not transgress it.

3. From the end of Christ's coming, which was to take away sin, ver. 5. And a Christian ought not to endeavour to frustrate the ends of Christ's coming by the nourishment of that which he came to destroy.

4. From the communion they have with Christ. Abiding in him, they sin not. If any man sin, it is an evident sign he hath not the knowledge of Christ, ver 6, nor ever was conformed to that pattern. Where there is a communion with Christ, it is necessary such an one should be righteous, because Christ was so.

5. From the first author of sin, the devil. He that sins hath a communion with the devil, ver. 8, as he that doth righteousness hath a communion with Christ. And to maintain the design and works of the devil is to walk contrary to the end and design of Christ, which was to destroy the works of the devil. Those therefore that indulge themselves in sin, are the seed of the devil.

6. From the new nature of a Christian, which hinders him from sin : ver. 9, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,' &c. Various expositions there are of this. The greatest difficulty lies in those words, *doth not commit sin*, and *cannot sin*.

1. He ought not to sin. *Cannot* indeed is sometimes taken for *ought not*, as Acts iv. 20, 'For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.' They had a physical ability to hold their peace, but morally they could not, because of Christ's precept to them to publish those things. What we cannot lawfully do, we cannot do. *Non possumus quod non jure possumus*, what we cannot honourably do, we are said not to be able to do : Mark vi. 5, 'He could there do no mighty work.' Christ had natural ability to do mighty works there, but morally he could not, honourably he could not, because of their unbelief, which was a moral hindrance ; and according to God's methods there was no hope of doing any good among them. Their unbelief was so strong, they gave him no opportunity to do any mighty work. But this is not the meaning of *cannot* here, *ought not* ; for an unrenewed man ought not to sin any more than a regenerate man. But the apostle attributes here something peculiar to the regenerate, adding the reason, 'because he is born of God.' Though it carry in it something of an obligation in a higher manner than upon a mere natural man, he ought not to sin, not only upon the general obligation which lies upon all men not to sin, but upon the more special one of his state, being a son of God, which ought to be counted a moral impossibility by a righteous man. Regeneration gives a man no advantage to sin, no external licence, no internal liberty or ability to sin ; for the apostle useth this as an argument to them as well as an establishment not to sin, because they are born of God, which was a more special obligation upon them not to sin than what they had by nature.

2. He cannot sin so easily. It is not impossible but difficult for him to sin, because by receiving grace he receives a principle contrary to sin, and so hath a principle of resistance against it ; or because by that grace he is inclined not to sin, and so there is *inchoative*, an impossibility of sinning, which shall hereafter be perfected ; not a simple impossibility, but *secundum quid*. He endeavours to work as one born of God, and follows the motions of the Spirit against the sin to which he is tempted.

He cannot sin, *i. e.* it is a hard matter for him to sin ; for considering the efficacy of grace, and the assistances attending it, it is a difficult thing for a righteous man to be brought under the power of sin. He may sin easily in respect of the frailty of the flesh, but not so easily in regard of the abiding of the seed in him, which helps him to beware of sin. Grace being a divine habit, hath the nature of a habit, which is to incline the person to acts proper to that habit, and facilitate those acts, as a man that hath the habit of an art or trade can with more ease work in it than any other.

3. He cannot sin *in sensu formali*, as he is regenerate, *ex vi talis naturæ*. Grace cannot sin, because it can do nothing but what pertains to the nature of it. As the heat cannot cool, unrighteousness cannot do good. Fire doth not moisten *per se*, nor water naturally heat. But it is not said, 'The seed of God cannot sin,' but in the concrete, 'He that is born of God,

and he that hath the seed remaining in him, cannot sin.' A gracious man, as a gracious man, cannot sin, for grace, being a good habit, is not capable of producing acts contrary to its nature. Sin in a regenerate man proceeds not from his grace, but from his corruption. Grace cannot be the principle of evil; but because his grace is imperfect, dwelling among remainders of sin; therefore a man's sins, though his principle in him keeps sin from attaining a full dominion and superiority, yet though he doth sin, his sin is not the proper fruit of the form whereby he is regenerate.

4. He cannot sin *in sensu composito*, as long as he is regenerate, as long as the seed remains in him, as long as he follows the motions of the Spirit and grace, which are able to overcome the motions of concupiscence, but he may give up the grace; as an impregnable tower cannot be taken as long as it is defended by those within, but they may fling away their arms and deliver it up. Grace, *quantum est ex parte sua*, renders a man impeccable as long as it continues in him, as innocency did render Adam immortal as long as he persisted in it; but we may *ex culpâ nostrâ*, lose it by mortal sin, and so perish, as Adam by his own will lost the integrity of his nature, and was thereby made subject to death. This is founded upon a false hypothesis, viz. that grace may be lost; and the text renders the being born of God and the seed remaining in us to be the reason why we cannot sin, not the condition of our not sinning; for if it remains, and we cannot sin therefore, how can any sin come in to expel that which preserves us from it? A man must cease, according to what the apostle here writes, to be born of God before he can sin in that sense the apostle means.

5. He doth not commit sin, and cannot sin, *i. e. grave peccatum*, the mortal sin, and persist in it. The sin of unbelief, which is called in Scripture, by way of eminency, *sin*, and *the sin*; it is the chief sin the Spirit convinceth of; it is the sin that 'easily besets us:' Heb. xii. 1, 'Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us,' *i. e.* especially unbelief. Though this be true, yet it is not the full meaning and sense of it.

6. He doth not commit sin, and cannot sin, as the devil doth, or as one that is of a diabolical nature, as one that is acted by the devil, which is clear by the antithesis: ver. 8, 'He that commits sin is of the devil, for the devil sins from the beginning.' He cannot set himself against Christ, as the devil doth, as the pharisees did, in which respect our Saviour calls them the children of the devil, for their remarkable and constant opposition to him. He cannot make a practice of sin, and persist in it, as the devil doth, who began to sin presently after the creation, and continueth in it ever since. *He sins*, the present tense noting the continued act of the devil. Sin may be considered two ways, viz., as to,

1. The act of sin. Thus a believer sins.

2. The habit of sin, or custom in it, when a man runs to sin freely, willingly, and is not displeased with it. Thus a believer doth not commit sin, nor cannot sin; he commits it not: *potius patitur quàm facit*, he gives not a full consent to it; he hates it while he cannot escape it. He is not such a committer of it as to be the servant of sin: John viii. 34, 'He that commits sin is the servant of sin,' because he serves with his mind the law of God. He bestows not all his thoughts and labour upon sin, in making 'provision for the flesh,' Rom. xiii. 14, in being a caterer for sin; he yields not up his members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; he doth not let sin reign in his mortal body, nor yield a voluntary obedience to it in the lusts thereof, Rom. vi. 12, 13, for, being God's son, he cannot be sin's servant; he cannot sin in such a manner, and so absolutely, as one of the devil's children, one born of the devil.

‘His seed remains in him.’ *His*, refers to God, or the person born of God. God’s seed efficiently, man’s seed subjectively.

‘Born of God.’ Twice repeated : in the first is chiefly intended the declaration of the state ; in the second, the disposition, or likeness to God.

Observe, 1. The description of a Christian : ‘born of God.’

2. The privilege of this birth, or effects of it.

(1.) Inactivity to sin : he ‘doth not’ commit it.

(2.) Inability to sin : he ‘cannot.’

3. The ground and reasons of those privileges.

(1.) The inward form or principle whereby he is regenerate, which makes him unactive.

(2.) The efficient cause, which makes him unable : ‘born of God,’ or likeness to God, makes him unable.

4. The latitude of them in regard of the subject : ‘whosoever,’ every regenerate man. I intend not to run through all the parts of this text, having only chose it as a bar to presumption, which may be occasioned by the former doctrine, upon men’s false suppositions of their having grace. There needs not any doctrine from the text ; but, if you please, take this :

Doct. There is a mighty difference between the sinning of a regenerate and a natural man. A regenerate man doth not, neither can, commit sin in the same manner as an unregenerate man doth.

That I may not be mistaken, observe, when I use the word *may* sin, I understand it of a *may* of possibility, not a *may* of lawfulness. And when I say a regenerate man *cannot* sin so and so, understand it of a settled, habitual frame ; distinguish between passion and surprise, a sudden effort of nature and an habitual and deliberate determination. The sense of this *cannot*, I shall lay down in several propositions.

1. It is not meant exclusively of lesser sins, or sins of infirmity. There are sins of daily incursion, and lighter skirmishes ; there are some open, some secret assaults, a multitude of secret faults, Ps. xix. 12, undiscernible and unknown. Every good man is like Jacob ; though he hath one thigh sound, he hath another halting. I do not find that ever God intended to free any in this life from the remainders of sin. What he hath not evidenced to have done in any, we may suppose he intended not to do. It is a total apostasy, not a partial fall, that the covenant provides against. Christ, in his last prayer, prays for believers’ preservation, and gradual sanctification, not for their present perfection. The very office of advocacy erected in heaven, supposeth sins after regeneration, and during our continuance in the world : 1 John ii. 1, ‘My little children, I write unto you, that you sin not ; and if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.’ ‘In many things we offend all,’ James iii. 2 ; not only you that are the inferior sort of Christians, but we apostles. *We* is extensive ; all offend in many things. It is implied in the Lord’s prayer, the daily standing pattern. As we are to pray for our daily bread, so for a daily pardon, and against daily temptations, which supposeth our being subject to the one, and our commission of the other. The brightest sun hath its spots ; the clearest moon, her dark parts. The church, in her highest comeliness in this world, hath her blackness of sin, as well as of affliction, because, though sin be dismounted from its throne by grace, it is not expelled out of its residence. It dwells in us, though it doth not rule over us, Rom. vii. 20 ; and it cannot but manifest itself by its fruits while it remains. Yet those sins do not destroy our adoption. Christ, in his sermon on the mount to his disciples, supposeth the inherency of sin, with the continuance of the relation of children : Mat. vii. 11, ‘If,

then, you being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?' He doth acknowledge them evil while he calls God their father, and gives them the title of children. To sin is to decline from that rectitude in an act which the agent ought to observe. In this respect we sin, according to the tenor of the law, in everything we do, though not according to the tenor of the gospel.

2. A regenerate man cannot live in the customary practice of any known sin, either of omission or commission.

1. Not in a constant omission of known duties. If a good man falls into a gross sin, he doth not totally omit the performance of common duties to God. Not that this attendance on God in his ordinances doth of itself argue a man to be a good man; for many that walk in a constant course of sin may, from natural conscience and education, be as constant in the performing external services as he is. It is a proper note of an hypocrite, that he will not always delight himself in the Almighty, nor always call upon God, Job xxvii. 10, *i. e.* not customarily. Whence it follows, that a delight in God in duties of worship is a property of a regenerate man. An act of sin may impair his liveliness in them, but not cause him wholly to omit them. We need not question but David, in the time of his impenitency, did go to the tabernacle, attend upon the worship of God. It is not likely that for ten months together he should wholly omit it, though no doubt but he was dead-hearted in it, which is intimated when he desires a free spirit, Ps. li., and prays for quickening, Ps. cxliii. 11, one of his penitential psalms. A total neglect of ordinances and duties is a shrewd sign of a total apostasy, and that grace was never in such a man's heart, especially a total omission of prayer. This is an high contempt of God, denying him to be the author of our mercies, depriving him of the prerogative of governing the world, disowning any need of him, any sufficiency in him, declaring we can be our own gods, and subsist of ourselves without him, and that there is no need of his blessing. Grace, though sunk under a sin, will more or less desire its proper nourishment, the milk of the word, and other institutions of God. Nature, though oppressed by a disease, will require food to keep it alive. A good man, in this case, is like the planets, which, though they be turned about daily from east to west, by the motion of the *primum mobile*, yet they still keep up their proper motion from west to east, either slower or quicker.

2. Not in a customary commission of any known sin. To work iniquity, is the proper character of natural men, hence called workers of iniquity: Ps. v. 5, 'Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.' And by the same title are they called by Christ at the day of judgment: 'Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity,' that contrive, lay the platform of it, and work at it as at a trade, or as a curious piece of art. It is one thing to sin, another to commit or do a sin: Ps. cxix. 3, 'They do not iniquity, they walk in his ways;' their usual, constant course is in the way of God; they do not iniquity, they settle not to it, take not pleasure in it as their work, and way of livelihood. So it is the character of an ungodly man to walk in the ways of sin. Walking according to the course of the world, and fulfilling the desires of the flesh, are one and the same thing, Eph. ii. 2, 3. A good man may step into a way of sin, but he walks not in it, to make it either his business or recreation. So walking in sin, and living in sin, are put together. What is called 'walking after the flesh,' Rom. viii. 1, is called 'living after the flesh,' ver. 13, which is the same with committing sin in the text. So ways and doings are joined together, Zech. i. 6. To make sin

our way or walk, is when a man chooses it as a particular trade and way of living. A good man in sin is out of his way; a wicked man in sin is in his way; a good man will not have so much as one way of sin; a wicked hath many ways, for he seeks out many inventions. Not one example of the gross fall of a good man in Scripture will countenance any pretence for a course in sin; for either they were not in a course of sin, or it was not a course of known sins.

Noah was drunk but once, yet that was not a sin of the same hue with that among us. He first found out the fruits of the vine, Gen. ix. 20, knew nothing of the strength of the grape, and therefore might easily be overcome by an unusual liquor.

Lot's incest was but twice, and that unwillingly. He knew not his daughters' lying down or rising, neither time, Gen. xix. 33, 35. And for his daughters, some think that they thought there was no man left upon the earth but their father; but that is not clear, for Lot had been in Zoar, and departed thence to the mountain where their fact was committed. His drunkenness admits of some aggravations; it was no fit season for him to swill after so sharp a judgment upon Sodom, so severe a remark of God upon his wife, and so great a deliverance to himself. Yet this was not a course of sin; you read no more of it. There is difference between a man's being drunk, and being a drunkard: the one notes the act, the other the habit and love of it.

Peter denied Christ, yet but three times together; not three times with considerable intervals for a full deliberation. It is probable Peter's faith was so stupefied (as well as the faith of those disciples that were going to Emmaus: Luke xxiv. 21, 'We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel,' who, and indeed all the disciples in several passages, seemed to expect a temporal kingdom to be erected by him), as therefore not to judge it fit to hazard himself for a person he thought himself so much mistaken in. Howsoever it was, it was not a course of sin, and his repentance overrules the plea for any customary transgression.

And though the Corinthians were charged with fornication, and eating things sacrificed to idols, yet it seems to be out of a corrupt judgment, as appears by the apostles' disputing against the one, 1 Cor. vi. 13-15, and against the other, 1 Cor. viii. And that neither of those were generally judged to be sins by the converted Gentiles, as appears by the decree of the apostles, Acts xv. 28, 29, where they determine against both these; though this was a course of sin, yet not a course of known sins. And after they were informed by the apostle of the sinfulness of them, they abstained; therefore in the second epistle,* writ the year after to them, he charges them not with those former crimes, but comforts them for their being so much cast down with sorrow.

David's sin, though lying upon him for about ten or twelve months, yet it was not a course of sin; and we find a signal repentance afterwards; but of that after. To walk in a road of known sins is the next step to committing sin as sin, and manifests the habit of sin to have a strong and fixed dominion in the will.

I shall confirm this by some reasons, because upon this proposition depend all the following.

1. Regeneration gives not a man a dispensation from the law of God. As Christ came not to destroy the law, but to establish it, so grace doth not dispense with the law, but confirms the authority of it. Habitual grace is

* The first epistle was writ the twenty-fifth year after the death of Christ, and the second epistle, the twenty-sixth year, according to Baronius.

not given us to assist us in the breaches of it, but to enable us to the performance of it. As the grace of God, which hath appeared to all men, teaches the doctrine of holiness, so the grace of God in us enables us to walk in the way of holiness. Grace in a believer embraceth what the grace of God teaches. The moral laws of God are indispensable in themselves, and of eternal verity. Therefore as no rational creature, much less can a regenerate person, be exempted from that obedience to the law, which, as a rational creature, he is bound to observe. The grace of God justifying is never conferred without grace sanctifying. It is certain, where Christ is made righteousness, he is made sanctification. It is not congruous to the divine holiness, to look upon a person as righteous, who hath not a renewed principle in him, no more than it is congruous to the divine justice and holiness to look upon him as righteous, merely for this principle so imperfect.

2. It is not for the honour of God to suffer a custom and course of sin in a renewed man. It is true, a renewed man should not voluntarily, nor doth commit willingly, even sins of lighter infirmities; but God suffers those, because they do not wound the honour of Christianity, though they discover a remoteness from a state of perfection. But they do not customarily fall into great sins; for it seems not congruous to permit such courses commonly in any one which would disgrace religion, and make that despicable in the eyes of the world which God hath designed in all ages to honour. Since he hath delivered his Son to death, to preserve the honour of his law, it seems not to consist with his wisdom to let those who enjoy the fruits of his death walk in a customary contempt of his law. Neither can we think that God would permit that in a believer which is against the very essence of grace, though he may permit that which is against the beauty and accidental perfection of it.

3. It is against the nature of the covenant. In the covenant, we are to take God for our God, *i. e.* for our chief good and last end. But a course of sin is an adoration of the sinful object as the chief good and last end, because a man prefers the creature before God, and loves it supremely, contrary to the will of God. It is essential for one in covenant with God to have an high valuation of God and his will. But a custom of known sins evidenceth that there is not a worthy and practical esteem of God. How can any condition of the covenant consist with a constant practice of sin? How can there be faith, where the precept is not believed? How can there be love, if the pleasure of God be not regarded? How can there be fear, if his authority be wilfully contemned? How can there be a new heart, when there is nothing but an old frame and a diabolical nature? It is a renouncing those conditions upon which a right to heaven is founded; for a worker of iniquity walks in those ways which are prohibited upon pain of not entering into that place of glory, and so doth wilfully refuse the acceptance of the conditions on God's part, and the performance of the conditions on his own part, which are necessary to God's glory and his own interest. It is an invasion of God's right, whereby he refuseth God for his God and Lord, and sets up himself as his own governor; an affecting virtually an equality with God, and independency on him, which, in the common nature of sin, is virtually the same with that of the devil, who sinned from the beginning; and, therefore, a course of sin one that is born of God doth not continue in. Perhaps the apostle, in the text, might have some such respect upon his opposing the believer's not committing sin to the sin of the devil from the beginning, *viz.*, such a course of sin whereby a man declares, as the devil did, that he will be his own governor, as indeed, in every course of sin, a man doth practically declare.

4. It is against the nature of our first repentance and conversion to God. True repentance is 'a breaking off iniquity by righteousness,' Dan. iv. 27, a turning from sin to holiness, from ourselves to God, from our own wills to the will of God; from everything else, as the chief good and last end, to God as both these. Now, though a particular act of sin be against the watchfulness which attends repentance, yet a course of sin is against the nature of it; * the one is against the liveliness of repentance, the other against the life of it. A delightful walking in any known sin, though never so little, is a defiance of God, and therefore contrary to the nature of conversion, and is a virtual embracing of all sin whatsoever; because he that, in his ordinary walk in sin, hath no respect to the will and pleasure of God, though he knows it, and will not be restrained from his delight by any such regard of God, would be restrained from no other sin whatsoever, if he did conceive them as pleasant, advantageous, and suitable to him, as he doth that which is his darling. As he that 'breaks one point of the law is guilty of all,' James ii. 10, because he shews thereby a will and disposition to break all, if the same occasions were offered; so he that commits one known sin wilfully, much more he that walks in a course of sin, is guilty of all sins virtually. For he would boggle at no temptations upon a respect to God; because, if a regard to God doth not prevail upon him against a course in one kind, it will not detain him from a course in all other kinds of sin, if he come under the same circumstances for it. Let me add this too: if he that offends in one point of the law be guilty of all, *i. e.* as much delight and eagerness as he hath in the breach of that one, it is to be supposed that he would have in the breach of all the rest upon the former reason, can then such a disposition, which is in every course of known sin, be consistent with the nature of repentance and conversion?

5. It is against the nature of habitual grace, which is the principle and form of our regeneration. If he doth not commit sin because the seed of God remains in him, then such a course of sin is against the nature of this seed, inconsistent with the birth of God. A crooked and perverse spirit in sin is a sign of a putrefied soul, a spot of a different nature from that of God's children: Deut. xxxii. 5, 'They have corrupted themselves; their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation.' It is a stain peculiar to the children of the devil, not the sons of God. A trade in sin is an evidence of a diabolical nature: 1 John iii. 8, 'He that commits sin is of the devil.' It is not, therefore, consistent with grace, which is a divine nature. The reign of sin is inconsistent with the reign of grace, though the rebellion of sin be not. It is against the nature of regeneration for sin to guide our wills, though it be not against the nature of it for sin to reside in our flesh. To 'walk after the flesh,' Rom. viii. 1, is an inseparable character of a natural man. The apostle, Rom. vii. 25, had been complaining of the law of his members, the serving sin with his flesh. He comforts himself with this, that he obeyed it not, and that they were in Christ, whose ordinary walk was as the Spirit led, not as the flesh allured.† And, indeed, every tree brings forth fruit suitable to its nature. A vine brings not forth thorns; and he that hath the seed of God is under an impossibility of bringing forth the fruits of sin with delight, since he hath a root of righteousness planted in him.

1. It is against the nature of a renewed understanding. A regenerate man hath a new light in his mind, whereby he hath a fairer prospect of God, and a fouler of sin. He was an enemy to God in his mind before, Col. i. 21. He had dishonourable opinions and conceits of God and goodness, and

* Taylor of Repentance, p. 188.

† Amyraut. in Joh. viii. 9.

honourable thoughts of sin above its merit ; he thought ill of the one and well of the other. But now he is 'renewed in the spirit of his mind,' Eph. iv. 23 ; and he hath the 'spirit of a sound mind,' 2 Tim. i. 7. His judgment is regulated by the law of God ; he judges of sin as it is, in its nature, a transgression of the law. Can we imagine that a man restored to a sound mind, and that hath his natural madness and folly cured, should act, after this cure, as much out of his wits as before ? If he hath his constant frenzies and madness as much as before, where is his cure ? Can any man in the world act always against his judgment ? Though he may be overpowered by the importunity of others, or overruled by a fit of passion, to do something against his judgment, can you expect always to find him in the road of crossing the dictates of his understanding ? An unregenerate man hath a natural light in his mind and conscience, and so a judgment of sin ; but he hath not a judgment of sin adequate to the object, he doth not judge of sin in the whole latitude of it, he hath not a settled judgment of the contrariety of his beloved sin to God. He looks not upon it in the extent of it, as, *malum injucundum, inhonestum, inutile*. If he looks upon sin as dishonest, he regards it as profitable ; if neither as honest or profitable, yet as pleasant ; so that the natural light, which is in the understanding when it dictates right, is mated and overruled by some other principle, the pleasure or profit of it, and swayed by the inherent habits of sin in the will. The devil that works in them hath some principle to stir up, or dim this natural light and cast a mist before the eye ; and so they direct their course according to that particular judgment which is befriended in its vote by sense.

2. It is against the nature of a renewed will. Grace is the law of God in the heart, and is put in to enable us to walk in the ways of God ; and shall it endure such wilful pollutions in the creature, when it is the end of its being there to preserve from them ? The Spirit is given in the heart, 2 Cor. i. 22, sent into the heart, Gal. iv. 6 ; the law put into the heart, Heb. x. 16. Since, therefore, there is an habit of grace in the will, a man cannot frequently and easily launch into sin ; because he cannot do it habitually, the remainders of sin being mated with a powerful habit, which watches their motions to resist them. Doth God put such a habit there, such a seed, an abiding seed, to no purpose but to let the soul be wounded by every temptation, to be deserted in every time of need ? Grace is an habit superadded to that natural and moral strength which is in the will. Man, by nature's strength merely, or with the assistance of common grace, hath power to avoid the acts of gross sins ; for he is master of his own actions, though he is not of the motions tending to them. The devil cannot force a man's will. And when grace, a greater strength, comes in, shall there be no effects of this strength, but the reins be as stiff in the hands of old lust, and the will as much captive to the sinful habit of it, as before ? Grace being a new nature, it is as absurd to think that a gracious man should wallow in a course of sin, as it is to think that any creature should constantly and willingly do that which is against its nature. A gracious man 'delights in the law of God': Ps. i. 2, 'His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night.' If he delights in it, can he delight to break it ? Do men fling that which they delight in every day in the dirt, and trample upon it ; or, rather, do they not keep it choicely in their cabinets ? If it be also the character of a good man to 'meditate in the law' of God, he must have frequent exercises of faith, reflections upon himself, motions to God, which cannot consist with a course of sin. Grace doth essentially include a contrariety to sin, and a love to God in the will. It is a principle of doing good and eschewing evil ; and these being essential properties of grace, are essen-

tial to every regenerate man, and in every one. As a drop of water or one spark of fire hath the essential properties of a great mass of water or a great quantity of fire, so every renewed man hath the same love to God and the same hatred to sin essentially as the most eminent saint, though not in degree; yea, which those in heaven have, though not in the same degree. As a spark of fire will burn, a drop of water will moisten, though not in so eminent a measure. Now, upon the whole, consider whether it is possible to bare reason that a regenerate man should customarily do those things which are against the essential properties of that which is in him, in his will, and doth denominate him a new creature?

Prop. 3. A regenerate man cannot have a fixed resolution to walk in [such a way of sin, were the impediments to it removed. Though unregenerate men may actually, as to the outward exercise, abstain from some sins, yet it is usually upon low and mean conditions. If it were not for such or such an obstacle in the way, I would do such and such an act. This temper is not in a good man; he cannot have a fixed and determinate resolution to commit such an act if such bars were taken away. Such resolutions are common in unregenerate men: Jer. xlv. 25, 'We will surely perform our vows which we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven;' and Isa. lvi. 12, 'We will fill ourselves with strong drink, and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant;' we will have as merry a meeting as we had to-day. The same character is ascribed to such an one: Ps. xxxvi. 4, 'He deviseth mischief upon his bed. He sets himself in a way that is not good. He abhorreth not evil.' He models out his sinful designs with head and heart; he settles himself as an army settles in their ground when they resolve to fight, **נִצְּחָה**; he abhors not evil; he starts not at such motions, but by a *meiosis*, he hugs and caresseth them with a wonderful delight. Regenerate men fear to sin, wicked men contrive to sin. One would starve it, the other makes provision for it. This temper cannot be in a regenerate man.

1. It is diabolical, and so falls under that in the text. He cannot commit sin as the devil doth. It is a stain of the devil, who is resolved in his way of malice to God, and mischief to man, but for the strait chains God holds him in. His resolution is fixed, though the execution restrained: 'He goes about seeking whom he may devour,' 1 Pet. v. 8, *καταπίνῃ*, to drink at one draught; seeking both for an opportunity and permission. Unwearied searches manifest fixed resolutions. His throat is ready to swallow, if he had a morsel for it.

2. It is a sign of habitual sin, a state of sin. This temper manifests that the will is habituated in sin, though the hand doth not outwardly act it. The inherent power of sin must be great, when a man is greedy to commit that to which he hath no outward allurements, or when those allurements are balanced with contrary considerations; when he hath either no outward temptation to it, or the cross impediments are as strong, or stronger, than the temptation. When men, in the midst of such bars, long for a temptation, it is such a kind of desire in one way as the creature hath in another for the manifestation of the sons of God: Rom. viii. 19, 'For the earnest expectation of the creature waits for the manifestation;' it is *ἀποκαταδοκία*, a putting out the head to see if he can find any coming to knock off the fetters, not of his sin, but of his forced morality. In this case take two men; one commits a great sin upon a temptation, even as it were overpowered by it, and had no thoughts, no inclinations, before that temptation appeared which began first to spirit him; another commits a lighter sin, or would fain commit it, upon a weak temptation, and many bars

lying in the way, and his heart was hankering and thirsting for some opportunity to commit it; which do you think really is the greater offence in point of heart and affection? The first appears blacker, but it is an invasion; the other is really blacker, because it is an affection, and shews sin to be rooted in the heart as its proper soil, wherein sin delights to grow, and the soil delights to nourish it. The one shews sin to be a stranger and a thief, which hath waylaid him, the other evidenceth sin to be an inmate and intimate friend. Such a man is not obliged to his will for his abstinence from sin, but to the outward hindrances; and the resolving act of the will to commit it, were those impediments removed, is as real an act of sin in the sight of God as any outward act can be in the sight of man, because God measures the greatness of sin by the proportion of the will allowed to it; therefore many sins which may be little in our account may be greater in God's account than the seemingly blacker sins of others, because there may be a greater ingrency of the heart and affection in them than in the other.

3. It is against the nature of our repentance and first closing with God. Repentance is a change of the purpose of the heart not to commit the same iniquity again, nor any other: Job xxxiv. 32, 'If I have done iniquity, I will do no more.' It is the property of converting grace to make the soul cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart, Acts xi. 23. This is essential to it, though there may be some startings out by passion and temptation, A pilot's intention stands right for the port, though, by the violence of the wind, he may be forced another way. It alters not his purpose, though it defer his performance. This purpose is a perpetual intent: Ps. cxix. 112, 'I have inclined my heart to keep thy statutes always, even to the end.' It was an heart-purpose and inclination. It regarded all God's statutes, not for a fit, but perpetually, which he manifests by two words, *always, even to the end*, to shew that the perpetuity of it doth difference it from the resolutions of wicked men, who may indeed have some fits to do good, but not a fixed purpose to cleave to the Lord. These flashy purposes are like the flight of a bird, which seems to touch heaven, and in a moment falls down to the earth; as Saul resolved not to persecute David, but we soon find him again upon his old game and pursuit. Where there is true grace, there is hatred of all sin, for hatred is *πρὸς τὸ γένος*. Can a man be resolved to commit what he hates? No; for his inward aversion would secure him more against it than all outward obstacles. As this inward purpose of a good man is against all sin, so more particularly against that which doth so easily beset him. David seems in several places to be naturally inclined to lying, but he takes up a particular resolution against it: Ps. xvii. 3, 'I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress;' וְכִמְתִּי, I have contrived to waylay and intercept the sin of lying when it hath an occasion to approach me. A good man hath not only purposes, but he endeavours to fasten and strengthen those purposes by prayer; so David, ver. 5, 'Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.' He strengthens himself by stirring up a liveliness in duty, and by avoiding occasions of sin; ver. 4, 'I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer;' whereas a wicked man neither steps out of the way of a temptation, nor steps up to God for strength against it. Now if all this be true, that in conversion the heart hath a fixed resolution for God and his ways, and that perpetually, against all sin, and particularly against the sin of our natural inclination, and all this backed with strong cries, how can it have a fixed resolution to commit it, if the way were outwardly fair for it?

4. It is absolutely against the terms of the covenant. God requires in

that a giving up ourselves to him to be his people with our whole heart and soul, as he gives himself to us with his whole heart. He will not be a sharer of the heart with sin, much less an underling to it. God will not endure a competitor in the affections. To serve God and mammon are inconsistent, by the infallible axiom of our Saviour, Luke xvi. 13. Now as God cannot be true to his covenant if he had purposes against the articles of it on his part, so neither can we be true to our covenanting with him if we have settled purposes of heart against the conditions of it. Therefore the instability in the covenant ariseth only from the falseness of the heart: Ps. lxxviii. 37, 'Their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant.' The iniquity of our heels may compass us about, and make us stumble in our walk, yet our fears of being out with God may receive no establishment: Ps. xlix. 5, 'Wherefore should I fear, when the iniquity of my heels shall compass me about?' Whether he means by iniquity the sins of his ordinary walk, or the punishment of them, is all one. But yet if purposes of iniquity settle their residence in the heart, though we never act it, by reason of obstacles, it is a sign we never sincerely closed with God in covenant, nor God with us. The very regards of iniquity in the heart put a bar to the regards of God towards us. It hinders all covenant acts on God's part, because it is a manifest breach of it: Ps. lxvi. 18, 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me,' ראייתי; if I have curiously and intently looked upon iniquity with pleasure in my heart.

5. It is against the nature of regeneration. Regeneration is a change of nature, and consequently of resolutions. A lion chained up hath an inclination to ravage, but a lion changed into the nature of a lamb loses his inclinations with that change of his nature; so that it is as impossible a regenerate man can have the fixed and determinate resolutions that a wicked man hath, as it is impossible that a lamb should have the ravenous disposition of a lion. You know the Scripture makes the change as great. How can any man resolve to do a thing against that law which at the same time he hath an habitual approbation of as holy, just, and good? against a law natural to him, viz. the law of the heart? If a delight in the law of God be a constitutive part of regeneration, then any settled purpose to sin is inconsistent with regeneration, because such a purpose, being a testimony of an inward delight in that which is contrary to the law of God, cannot consist with a delight in that which forbids what his heart is set upon.

Prop. 4. A regenerate man cannot walk in a way doubtful to him, without inquiries whether it be a way of sin or a way of duty, and without admitting of reproofs and admonitions, according to his circumstances. This consists of two parts.

1. He cannot walk in a way doubtful to him, without inquiries whether it be a way of sin or of duty. If the nature of conversion be an inclination of the heart to keep God's statutes always, even to the end, Ps. cxix. 112, the natural result then will be an inquiry what are the statutes of God which the soul is to keep. A natural man, for fear of being disturbed in his sinful pleasure, refuseth to understand the way of the Lord, and delights to be under the power of a wilful darkness: Job xxi. 14, 15, 'We desire not the knowledge of thy ways: what is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray to him?' This unwillingness to know the ways of God arises from a contempt of the Almighty and his service. They judged it not profitable to serve and worship God, and therefore were loath to receive any instruction, for fear any light should spring up in them, by way of conviction, to disturb them. Men love sin, and therefore hate any knowledge which may deprive them of the sweetness of it: Prov.

i. 22, 'The scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge.' They delight in sin, and therefore hate any knowledge which may check their delight. And this unwillingness to choose the fear of the Lord is the ground of their hating the knowledge of it: ver. 30, 'For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.' They are afraid to be convinced that the way of their delight is a way of sin; they would have no gall in their conscience to embitter the honey of their lusts. This hatred of knowledge is inconsistent with true conversion, because conversion is an election or choice of the fear of God, and therefore cannot resist any means tending to promote that which is chosen. It is essential to true grace to inquire into the mind and will of God, to understand what is pleasing to him: Job. xxxiv. 32, 'That which I see not, teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more.' Inform me in what I know not, and if I understand it is iniquity which I have walked ignorantly in, I will do it no more. He will not return to folly when he shall hear what God the Lord shall speak. It is certainly incompatible to the new nature to act in a contrariety to God. Grace is always attended with an universal desire to know his will, and pleasure him in performing it; hence will follow an inquiry, what behaviour and what acts are most agreeable to him: John xiv. 21, 'He that hath my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me; *ἑστὶν ὁ ἀγαπῶν ἐμέ.*' The antithesis is, He that hath no mind to have my commandments, because he would not keep them, hath no love to me. *He it is*, emphatically, exclusively, that is the man, and none else, that loves me. Now if a man be afraid of making inquiry into the lawfulness of a course he is wedded to, for fear his beloved object should appear to be a sin, it is a sign he abstains from what he knows certainly to be a sin out of a servile fear, not out of a generous, divine love, a principle as essential to the new nature as fear is to an enlightened carnalist.

2. A regenerate man cannot despise admonitions and reproofs, which would inform him and withdraw him from a sinful course. If he be in the way of life that keeps instruction, then he that refuseth reproof is in the way of death: Prov. x. 17, 'He is in the way of life that keeps instruction: but he that refuseth reproof erreth.' It is put in a milder expression, but if you observe the opposition, it amounts to the inference I make: so, Prov. xv. 9, 10, 'The Lord loves them that follow after righteousness. Correction is grievous unto them that forsake the way: and he that hates reproof shall die.' Here is a plain opposition made between them that follow after righteousness, which is the character of a regenerate man, who is therefore the object of God's love; and that person that accounts correction grievous, and hates reproof, he is not one that follows after righteousness (to pursue is to embrace it), and therefore not the object of God's love, but the mark of death; so that it is impossible a righteous man should hate reproof. Nay, the hating of reproof, whereby a man might be informed of his duty, is a sign, not of a bare unregeneracy, but of one at the very bottom of it, wallowing in the very dregs and mud of it, farthest from the kingdom of heaven; one that scarce looks like a rational creature: Prov. xii. 1, 'Whoso loves instruction, loves knowledge: but he that hates reproof is brutish.' Whereas Solomon's wise man, which is a regenerate man, will love the reprover for the reproof's sake, and grow wiser by instruction: Prov. ix. 8, 9, 'Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.' Just men change their intentions upon a discovery of the sinfulness of their way; and though it may not at the first assault of an admonition appear to be a sin, yet it will check somewhat their

violence in it. But where sin hath a dominion, every check and discovery of it doth rather inflame than quench it ; and the heart, like a stream, rises the higher for the dam. Judas had an admonition from Christ that informed him of what wickedness he was about, and the danger of it, Mark xiv. 21. He pronounceth a woe against him. Compare this with John xiii. 27, 30, when he gives him the sop, which was at the same time he informed him of the danger, Satan entered into him, and he went more roundly to work to accomplish it ; he went immediately out. Observe, by the way, that the Spirit of God enters into a man's heart often upon admonitions from friends, and the devil also more powerfully upon the same occasions than at other times. A good man cannot habitually hate the reprover. There is one example of a good man dealing hardly with a prophet for reproving him in the name of the Lord : 2 Chron. xvi. 10, 'Then Asa was wroth with the seer, and put him into a prison-house ; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing ;' and partly for the judgment of war against him. But the Scripture gives an allay to it ; 'for he was in a rage ;' he was in a passion, because of the threatening and the plainness of the speech, 'thou hast done foolishly.' To say such a word to an inferior, would ordinarily now a days swell many a professor to a fury, much more a prince. This very proposition will discover that there are many more pretenders to a regenerate state than possessors of it, so strangely is not only human nature, but the Christian religion, depraved among us.

Prop. 5. A regenerate man cannot have a settled, deliberate love to any one act of sin, though he may fall into it. Thus the devil sins ; he loves what he doth. Though a good man may fall into a sin, and even such a sin, which he was much guilty of before his conversion, and which he hath repented of, yet never into a love of it, or the allowance of any one act of it ; for by regeneration the soul becomes like God in disposition, and therefore cannot love anything which he hates, whose hatred and love being always just, are unerring rules to the love and hatred of every one of his children. He can never account a sin his ornament, but his fetter ; never his delight, but his grief. I add this proposition, because there may be a love of an act of sin where there is not a constant course in it ; as a man that hath committed a murder out of revenge, may love afterwards the very thoughts of that revenge, though he never murder any more. And a man that hath committed an act of adultery, may review it with pleasure, though he never commit an act again ; but a good man cannot. David is supposed to be inclined to the way of lying and dissembling ; though he may falter sometimes, and look that way, and perhaps fall into it, yet never into a love of it ; therefore observe, Ps. cxix. 163, 'I hate and abhor lying ; but thy law do I love.' A single hatred would not serve the turn ; but, 'I hate and abhor.' I have not the least affection to this of any, though I have the greatest natural inclination to it. What was the reason ? 'Thy law do I love.' There was another affection planted in his soul, which could not consist with a love to, or allowance either of the habit, or any one act of lying. A good man hath yielded his soul up to the government of Christ, his affections are fully engaged ; he cannot see an equal amiableness in any other object, for he cannot lose his eyes again ; his enlightened mind cannot be wholly blinded and deceived by Satan ; he walks not by the inveiglements of sense, but by the unerring rule of faith ; so that, though by some mists before his eyes, he may for a while be deluded, yet as he cannot have a settled false judgment, so he cannot have a settled affection to any one act of sin. It is one thing for a city to surrender itself to the enemy out of affection, and another thing to be forced by them : under a force they may

retain their loyalty to their lawful prince. There may be some passionate approbations of an act of sin. Jonah was an advocate for his own passion against God, and made a very peremptory apology for it: Jonah iv. 9, 'I do well to be angry, even to the death.' Yet, if we may judge by his former temper, we cannot think he did afterwards defend it out of judgment, as he did then out of passion; for when the lot fell upon him, Jonah ii. 9, 12, he made no defence for his sin; he very calmly wishes them to cast him into the sea. Where there is a passionate approbation, it cannot be constant in a good man; for when he returns to himself, his abhorrences of the sin, and himself for it, are greater, as if by the greatness of his grief he would endeavour to make some recompence for the folly of his passion.

Observe, by the way, a good man may commit a sin with much eagerness, and yet have a less affection to it in the very act, than another who acts that sin more calmly; because it may arise, not from any particular inclination he hath in his temper to that sin, but from the general violence of his natural temper, which is common to him in that action. This seems to be the case of Jonah, both in this and the former act. But if a man be more violent in that act of sin than he is in other things by his natural temper, there is ground both for himself and others to think, that sin hath got a great mastery over his affections.

Peter seems to be a man of great affections, and of a forward natural temper; he was very hasty to have tabernacles built in the mountain for his Master, Moses, and Elias, and have resided there. He hastily rebukes his Master; he flung himself out of a ship to meet our Saviour walking upon the water; and after his resurrection he leapt into the sea to get to him; so that Peter's denying his Master was not such an evidence of disaffection to him, or love to the sinful act he was then surprised by, as it would have been in John, or any other disciple of a more sedate temper. But this only by the way, as a rule both to judge yourselves by, and to moderate your censures of others; and consider, that such acts of sin are not frequent. The violence of a man's temper, if godly, cannot carry him out into a course of sin, or a love to any one act. As a wicked man may hit upon a good duty, and perform it, but not out of a settled love to God, or habitual obedience to his law; so a good man may by surprise do an evil work, not out of obedience to the law of sin, or any love to the sin itself. What considerations may move a wicked man to a good duty, may in some respect move a good man to a sinful act; yet it is not to be called a duty in the one, no more than it is to be called a sin in the other of the same hue, of the same hue, I say, with that in a natural man.

Prop. 6. A regenerate man cannot commit any sin with a full consent and bent of will. A man may consent to that which he doth not love. Hereby I distinguish it from the former proposition. I mean not that he cannot commit any sin wilfully as sin, for so I believe no man doth; it being against the nature of the creature to do evil, as evil *formaliter*, but under some other notion of it. Some consent of the will I do acknowledge, because the will, as well as the other faculties, is but in part regenerate. As there is not a triumphant light in the understanding, so neither is the grace of the will at present triumphant, but militant; yet it may be rather called the will of sin, than a man's own will. Sometimes a good man is by some sudden motion hurried on to sin, before he can consult law and reason, before he hath his wits well at liberty, before he can compare the temptation or sin with the prohibition of it by the divine law. But generally there is a resistance in him, as well as a provocation in sin; for the two contrary principles exert themselves in some measure. Grace resists, and sin provokes, whereas

another, that hath no grace, sins with a full consent, because he hath no spiritual resisting principle in him ; for he is flesh, and not spirit, and whatsoever is born of the flesh, is flesh, and wholly flesh. There is a resisting indeed in a natural man, but it is a resistance of natural light, not of grace ; a resistance not of the will, but of the conscience ; the will is bent to sin, but natural conscience puts rubs in the way. Neither is this resistance in spiritual sins (which is the greatest character I know whereby to distinguish a resistance of natural conscience from a resistance by a principle of grace), which natural conscience doth not so much trouble itself about, as not having light without a spiritual illumination to discern them, but only in gross sins, such as are condemned by common reason ; so that if he hath any resistance, it is not in the will of the man, but the will of his interest, will of his credit, or the will of his conscience ; not in the rational will, complying with and delighting in the will of God.

A regenerate man cannot commit any sin with,

1. An habitual consent, because he hath a principle of grace within him which opposes that tide of nature which did forcibly carry him down before. This opposite principle doth remain, though the present opposition may not be discerned by reason of the prevalency of the temptation. As in a room warmed by the fire in winter, there is a principle in the air doth resist that heat, and reduce it after the fire is out to its former rawness and coldness. A renewed man being passed into another nature, it cannot be supposed he can do anything with an habitual bent of will against his nature. Grace hath put a stop to that. Paul distinguisheth himself from sin in the acts of it ; it is not 'I,' or my will, but 'sin': Rom. vii. 20, 'Now, if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwells in me.' *Κατεργάζομαι* signifies to perfect and complete a work, to work industriously and politely. Had I my will, I should not do thus. There is a divorce made between will and sin, so that sin acts upon a single score. Now, 'it is no more I': a divorce is made between my will and sin. The law of sin is therefore called a law *in* the members, not *of* the members ; a law found working there : ver. 21, 'I find a law in my members' ; I did not enact it, I placed it not there, I consent not to its being there, but there I find it, and know not how to be rid of it, but it shall never have my will. But the law of grace is called a law *of* the mind, not *in* the mind, a law which is settled there by the consent of the soul, and to whose sovereignty and guidance it yields itself. The law of sin is in the members ; the vigour of it is seen in the inferior faculties of the soul, not in the higher, the mind and will ; it is a law imposed upon me, not embraced by me ; a law of disturbance, not of obedience ; a law that troubles me, doth not delight me, ver. 21, 22. It resides as an enemy warring, but hath no intimacy with me as a friend, ver. 23, yet it is an enemy driven to the outworks, to the members ; so that where all this is, you cannot suppose an habitual consent to sin when the will is formed into another nature. As the will of the wicked is possessed by habits of sin under the restraints from it, so the will of the godly is possessed by habits of grace even under the rape of a prevailing temptation.

2. Nor an actual consent both antecedent and consequent. The interest of sin may seem to be actually higher and stronger in the soul than the interest of God, though this latter is habitually stronger than the interest of sin. Though there may be an antecedent delight in the motion, a present delight in the action, yet there is not a permanent consequent delight after it ; yet the two first are rare. It is seldom that a renewed soul and sin do so friendly conspire together without any spiritual reluctance. Suppose he may have by the suspension of grace a whole actual consent of will to one particular sin

upon some strong provocation, yet he gives not up himself to the will or way of that sin. He is only under a temporary, not a perpetual power of it, as a man in a fight may by a fall be under the power of his enemy, yet in the struggle get up again and reduce him to the same necessity. Though there be not an express dissent at the motion nor in the action, yet there is always after, for it is as much against the terms of the covenant to have a perpetual delight in any sin committed as to commit it often, because this delight in it is an approbation of it, and every act of delight is a new act of approbation, and consequently a recommission of it, and a making a man's self a perpetual accessory to that first act.

(1.) Sometimes he hath an antecedent dissent. A renewed man is troubled and displeased at the first motion to a sin; he is sometimes troubled that any sin should so much as ask him the question to have entertainment in him. It is so many times with a natural man, much more with a regenerate man; yet afterwards, that displicency abating, the sin creeps upon him by degrees and ensnares him. Paul had an act of will against that which he did before he did it; he did that which was preceded by an act of his will nilling it, as there was an act of his will for the doing good preceding his not doing it: Rom. vii. 19, 'The good that I would, I do not, but the evil which I would not, that I do.' The act of his will was present: ver. 18, 'To will is present with me; I have that standing in a readiness to do good, but the executive power is at a distance, I know not how to have it; but how to perform that which is good I find not.' He speaks as a man that was searching for something which he had a great desire to find, and could not meet with it. Many times a good man is tired out with the importunity of a temptation, and is fain to fling down his weapons and sink under the oppression, till he receive a new recruit of strength by exciting and assisting grace.

(2.) Sometimes concomitant in the very commission of a sin. Peter seems to have had some resistance in the very act of denying his master. The Spirit of God blew up some sparks of shame in him at that very time, for after the very first denial he went out into the porch, Mark xiv. 68. By his retirement he discovers some willingness to have avoided a further temptation. There is many times an exercise of displeasure against it while a man cannot avoid it: Rom. vii. 15, 'That which I do, I allow not; that which I hate, that I do.' I hate it even while I do it, and my hatred is excited against it in the very act; he means it of sins of infirmity. The seed of God in the heart cannot consent to sin, but will many times in the very acting of it be shewing its displeasure, weakly or strongly, against it. As a needle touched with a loadstone, if it be disturbed in its standing to the north pole, will shake and tremble while the impediment is upon it.* Some demurrers were made in Peter's heart, but fear overruled the plea; and it is probable his heart was not wholly asleep even in the very act, else it is not likely he should have been so suddenly roused. There is a voice in him: grace speaks for God, but it is overruled and oppressed by a temptation; there are some pull-backs, some spiritual whisperers, even when it presses hard. 'Why art thou cast down, my soul?' Ps. xliii. 5; there is the carnal part stirring in distrust: 'hope thou in God;' there is a spiritual part rising in faith. A neat person may by stumbling be bemired in a dirty hole, but while he stumbles there is a natural impetus which endeavours to keep him upright; and if he doth fall, he struggles till he be delivered; but when a swine falls into a puddle, he lies grunting with pleasure, and grumbles at any that will drag him out. Which leads me to a third thing:

(3.) But there is always a consequent dissent after the fall. He hath many

* Smith on the Creed.

rebukes in his conscience, whereas a natural man's sin is brought up and nurtured with him : Eccles. v. 1, 'They consider not that they do evil ;' they lay it not to heart, especially if it break not out in some foul and notorious manner. A renewed man is displeased at the very first motion that clambered up into his heart to entice him to sin : not only the fruit but the root that bears it is odious to him : Ps. li. 5, 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity. By the same reason that he directs his hatred to the sin of his nature, by the same reason he will do it to the first motion that immediately brought forth that bitter fruit, which a natural man doth not. It is the character of a wicked man to rejoice that he hath done evil, Prov. ii. 14, which I think is never found in a renewed man, for this is indeed to be under the power of Satan, and like their father the devil. But he condemns what he hath committed, and the greater his delight in it the greater will his abhorrency be of it, and the more earnest his cry to be rid of his burden. When he comes to see what contrariety there was in his act to the law of God, it is impossible but his heart should smite him. It cannot be, but that delight in the law of God, which is a constitutive part of a regenerate man, Rom. vii. 22, must revive when the weights which did suspend it are removed, and according to the degrees of his revived delight there will be suitable degrees of displeasure with what was contrary to the object of it, for since a delight in the law of God is essential to a renewed nature, that delight must needs produce an aversion from everything contrary to that law, otherwise it is not a delight. If there be not such workings after a review of sin, I dare pronounce that such a man is not regenerate. But how long he may lie in a sin without acting consideration about it, I cannot determine. He must needs have torment in his soul and a high disaffection to his sin and himself for it, because upon a review he cannot but see how unlike to God it hath made him, how much it hath defiled his soul, and impaired the divine image. No disease can be more grievous to the body than a sin fallen into is to the new nature ; it grieves and pains the new creature, which is restless till it be rid of the disease. The new nature is a tender thing. Though he be assured of its pardon, he is in anxiety till he finds it purged : Ps. li. 7, 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.' David had been assured of the pardon of his sin by Nathan : that would not quiet him as long as the filth remained ; he would not only have the guilt removed, but the stain washed off, as a man fallen in the dirt is desirous not only to be raised up, but to be washed clean from any remainders of the mire. A good man hath a disquietness in his heart, and is as much troubled at his sin as at a stinking wound or a loathsome disease, Ps. xxxviii. 5-8, and his 'sorrow is continually before him,' ver. 17. He is more displeased with that sin than he is pleased at present with all the grace he hath. David's sin was ever before him, Ps. li. 3. Peter brought forth no other fruit immediately after the review of his sin but sorrow, and exercised more grief for that than he did joy at the present for the not failing of his faith, as a man is more troubled with a pain of the tooth or a fit of the gout than pleased with all the health in his vital parts, which is far greater than his pain. Here then is a difference ; regenerate men have pain in their sins, natural men pleasure ; the one is ashamed of his sin, the other at best but ashamed of his discredit ; he condemns himself for it with so much severity, rips his heart open before God, that if a wicked man should hear him praying in his closet after some sin, he would think he did belie himself, or else that he were the vilest villain in the world. He will study no excuses, and present no pleas to God for his sin. If he hath not strength to conquer it, he hath a voice to cry against it : prayers are doubled, one mes-

senger goes to heaven upon the heels of another, and so moderation, which was in his requests before, is turned to an unsatisfied importunity; so that, you see, there is not a plenary consent of will, but the dissent is habitual and actual; if not antecedent or concomitant, yet always consequent.

What, then, doth the regenerate man's sin arise from? It ariseth,

1. Either from a strong passion, which many times bears down the bars both of grace and reason. That is not wholly voluntary which is done by the prevalency of passion, which suspends the determination of the understanding, and consequently the regular and free motion of the will. Such was the accusation of God in his prophet, which David was guilty of: Ps. cxvi. 11, 'I said in my haste, All men are liars.' 'I said,' it is true: 'all men are liars,' even the prophet too, but it was in 'my haste.' And in his haste he accuseth God of the breach of his promises: Ps. xxxi. 22, 'I said in my haste, I am cut off from before thy eyes': God hath either forgot his promise or changed his resolutions, for not one of them will be made good unto me. It was a passion in Moses which made him guilty of that act of unbelief that cost him his exclusion from the land of promise, Num. xx. 8, 10, 11, 12. God commands him to use his tongue, not his rod, on the rock, but the passion the good man was in by the provocation of the people transported him beyond his bounds. Peter's heart was not so full of courage as of loyalty: his zeal was put out of countenance by his fear. A strong fit of passion may make a man as good and meek as Moses fling away both the tables of the law, which otherwise would be as dear to him as the apple of his eye.

2. From inconsiderateness. There cannot be a full consent of will where a deliberate judgment doth not precede. Many a man, through an inconsiderate indulging his appetite, eats that meat which foment his humours into some dangerous disease. Sin creeps upon a good man when the liveliness and activity of his spirit in former duties is in a slumber; but another hath as great inclinations to sin when his understanding is in its strength. Peter had the grace of faith, but he fell into his sin for want of acting it. Upon his repentance it is said, Luke xxii. 6, 'And Peter remembered the words of the Lord.' He had forgot Christ's words, and that made him forget himself and his Master in that act of sin. If our Saviour had cast his eye upon Peter, and excited his slumbering grace before the maid had spoken to him, he might have prevented Peter's fall as well as afterwards recovered him. If God had sent Nathan with a message to David when his corruption began first to put on its arms, to have shewed him the vileness of his intentions, and excited him to a stout resistance, he might have prevented the loss of his innocency, as well as restored him after he had lain in the dust so long. David might have kept his standing, and dismissed those inclinations, as he did his inconsiderate design of murdering Nabal and his family upon Abigail's admonition, for which he blesseth God, 1 Samuel xxv. 32, 33. In short, the motion of a regenerate man to sin is violent, like a stone upward; the motion of an unrenowned man is natural, like a stone downwards. The godly are violently pursued, but the wicked sottishly infatuated by a temptation. And certainly when the strength of the passion is abated, and the free exercise of reason recovered, there will be the exercise of grace again; for it is not conceivable that the habit of grace and repentance should be without the actual exercise of it, when the impediments are removed, and an occasion presented; so that he that doth not recover himself to his former exercise, never had this true seed of God infused into him.*

Prop. 7. Though a regenerate man may fall, and sin have a temporary

* Greenham.

dominion, yet he recovers out of this state, and for the most part returns to his former holiness, and an increase of it, though not always to his former comforts. There are none whose sins are recorded in Scripture, but there are some evidences of their repentance for it, or the acting the contrary grace. David's sin was gross, and his repentance remarkable; he was more tender afterwards in point of blood, 2 Samuel xxiii. 16, 17. When he desired water out of the well of Bethlehem, and it was brought him by three valiant men with the jeopardy of their lives, he would not drink it, because it was the blood of the men that ventured their lives to satisfy his curiosity. Peter's repentance is eminent, his affection is hot, for the truth of which he could appeal to his Master's omniscieny: John xxi. 17, 'Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.' His courage is illustrious in asserting his Master's honour in the face of the greatest dangers, in which exercise you find him the foreman of that jury of the twelve apostles before every assembly, Acts ii. 3-5, &c. Though Abraham had discovered a distrust of God in Pharaoh's and Abimelech's courts, yet his faith afterward, in his readiness to sacrifice Isaac, was as glorious as his unbelief had been base, which gave him the title of the father of the faithful. Noah, who was drunk, and thereby exposed to the derision of his son, could not so well have cursed him had he not abhorred the sin as well as the reproach. And Lot, whose righteous soul was vexed with the filthiness of others, could not have a less vexation at his own when he came to know of it. Those that affirm that mortal sins expel grace, yet doubt whether they expel the gifts of the Spirit, one end whereof, say they, is to render the soul pliable and flexible to the motions of the Spirit. If they do not expel the gifts, I know not why they should expel the grace, which is under the manutenance of the Spirit of God in a particular manner.* The spirit lusts against the flesh, as well as the flesh against the spirit; and the lusting of the spirit will prevail as well as the lusting of the flesh, and more, Gal. v. 17. All natural things that are removed out of their proper place, are restless till they are reduced to their right station. A good man is as water, that though it be turned into a mass of ice, wholly cold in the ways of God, yet still there is a principle in him (as there is in ice) to return to his former form, figure, and activity, upon the warm irruptions of the Spirit of God. There is a powerful voice behind him that brings him back, when he turns either to the right hand or to the left from the ways of God, Isa. xxx. 21. By virtue of this seed within him, and the Spirit of God exciting it, that word which comes home to the soul after a sin becomes efficaciously melting, and raises up springs of penitential motions, which could not arise so suddenly were the spiritual life wholly departed; for a man that hath no habit of grace in him, cannot so suddenly concur with God's proposals, and exercise a repentance. In such an one we see first a stupefaction of mind and an unaptness to faith; no motions of a true repentance, though some preparation to it. But with a regenerate man it is otherwise: David, being admonished by Nathan, was struck to the heart; and Peter, presently upon our Saviour's look, melted into tears. Their grace, like tinder, took fire presently upon those small, but powerful, occasions. Though it did not act at the time of their sin, yet it had an aptness to act upon the removal of the impediments. Though Jonah seems to cast off all regard of God and his command, yet upon the first occasion, in the whale's belly, he brings forth excellent fruits of faith in a moment, Jonah ii. Grace in an instant, upon the first motion of the Spirit, will rise up, and take its place from whence it seems to be deposed. As a natural man under some

* Suarez. de Gratia. lib. xi. cap. iii. num. x. p. 415.

sting of conscience, and flash of a lightning conviction, may be restrained from sin, yet his natural inclination to it remains, though suspended at the present, and may be carried the quite contrary way. As the stream of a river, by the force of the tide, is carried against its natural current, yet slides down its channel with its wonted calmness upon the removal of the force, so a good man, under the violence of some lust, hath not his new nature changed, though at present it is restrained by an extrinsic force. So that as the one, upon the taking off his conviction, returns to his sin, so the other, upon the removal of his fetters, returns to his holiness with a greater spirit and delight. A wicked man may sometimes do a good action, but he continues not in it; as a planet is sometimes retrograde, but soon returns to its direct course. When their conscience pinches them, they awake out of their trance. So a good man may sin through infirmity, but he will revoke it by repentance. The seed of God remains in him, as the sap in the root of a tree, that recovers the leaves the next return of the sun at the spring. He may sink by nature and rise again by grace; but the devil, who sinned at the beginning, fell and never rose more.

Use, of examination.

If you find yourselves in these cases, in a course of known sin, resolution to commit it, were it not for such bars—unwillingness to know God's pleasure and injunction; despising admonitions and reproofs; a settled love of it; a full consent of will, without any antecedent, concomitant, or consequent dissent; tumbling in it without rising by repentance; a circle of sinning and repenting without abhorrence of sin—you may conclude yourselves in an unregenerate state; you sin like the devil, who sinned from the beginning.

A DISCOURSE OF THE PARDON OF SIN.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputes not iniquity.—Ps. XXXII. 1, 2.

THIS psalm, as Grotius thinks, was made to be sung upon the annual day of the Jewish expiation, when a general confession of their sins was made. It is one of David's penitential psalms, supposed to be composed by him after the murder of Uriah, and the pronouncing of his pardon by Nathan, ver. 5, and rather a psalm of thanksgiving. It is called *Maschil*, a psalm of understanding. *Maschil* is translated *eruditio, intelligentia*, and notes some excellent doctrine in the psalm, not known by the light of nature. Blessed, *אַשְׁרֵי*, blessednesses. *Ex omni parte beatus*. Three words there are to discover the nature of sin, and three words to discover the nature of pardon.

פֶּשַׁע, *Transgression*. Prevarication. Some understand by it sins of omission and commission.

הַטָּמֵה, *Sin*. Some understand those inward inclinations, lusts, and motions, whereby the soul swerves from the law of God, and which are the immediate causes of external sins.

עֵץ, *Iniquity*. Notes original sin, the root of all. Three words that note pardon.

נָשָׂא, *Levatus, forgiven, eased*, *נָשָׂא*, signifies to take away, to bear, to carry away. Two words in Scripture are chiefly used to denote remission, *כָּפַר*, to expiate; *נָשָׂא*, to bear or carry away: the one signifies the manner whereby