

OF REPENTANCE.

Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.—LUKE XIII. 3.

In the former verses you have the occasion and cause of what is said in this.

Verse 1, The occasion, Pilate's cruelty.

Verse 2, The impulsive cause, 'Suppose ye;' to correct, &c., a false and injurious supposition.

Jesus answering. He answered, though not to their intention;—that might be to ensnare him, whether approve or reprove,—but for their advantage. If his answer was not for their purpose, yet for their profit. If not what was expected, yet what was most expedient. He makes excellent use of that relation, and directs them how to improve that sad accident.

Obs. We should labour to make good use to ourselves of God's judgments on others. Why? God expects it; this is the way to prevent the execution on ourselves. How?

1. 'Learning righteousness,' Isa. xxvi. 9; faith, seeing him execute threatenings; fear, beholding his severity; obedience, sure want of that is the cause; love, whilst we escape.

2. Forsaking sin: 'Sin no more,' John v. 14. All sin, because every sin is pregnant with judgment; therefore it summons to search and try, &c., especially those sins which brought wrath on others. Observe providences; use means to discover what is the Achan, &c.

Use. We have great occasion to practise this. Wrath is kindled and burns, &c.; the cup of indignation goes round; the sword has had a commission, &c.; the scars and smarting impressions continue in bodies, estates, liberties. Let us learn to believe, to tremble, to love. Let us forsake sin, our own; the sins that have unsheathed the sword, mixed this bitter cup. What is that? In all probability contempt of, disobedience to, unfruitfulness under, the gospel. This ruined the Jews, ver. 6, 7, 84, 85, captivated before for it, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15–17 with Jer. xxv. 7–9, &c. Probably it is the greatest sin, that brings the severest judgment. But what greater than this, more heinous than the sins of Sodom, therefore more tolerable for them, &c., Mark vi. 11, and if this be not it, what is the reason those parts who enjoy not the gospel escape better, Turkey, Tartary, Persia, &c.? Oh take heed, sure this is the Achan! Bewail it, avoid it!

Make not this warning ineffectual with the Jews' supposition. Rather hear, believe, apply what Christ says, Except I repent, &c.

The words are monitory. In them we have, I., the admonisher, *I*; II., the admonition. In which, 1, an *ἐπαιγέσθωσις*, nay; and, 2, a *διόρθωσις*, except ye repent. Ye must repent if ye would not perish.

I. From the admonisher, Christ, in that he teaches repentance.

Obs. Repentance is an evangelical duty; a gospel, a new-covenant duty. This should not be questioned by those who either believe what the gospel delivers, or understand what it is to be evangelical; but since it is denied, let us prove it. And first from this ground.

1. Christ taught repentance. But he taught nothing but what was evangelical. Is he who was the sweet subject, the blessed end, the great mediator, the glorious preacher of the covenant of grace and gospel, a legal teacher? He begins with this, it was his first sermon, Mat. iv. 17, Mark i. 16; and he ends with this, it was his last sermon, Luke xxiv. 47; leaves this to his disciples as their directory for preaching. Christ indeed answers the young man asking what good things he should do, &c., legally, according to his question, If thou wilt go to heaven by doing, no better rule than the commandments, Mat. xix. 17; but his intent was evangelical. He endeavours to convince him this was not the way to life, shewing the impossibility of fulfilling the law by enjoying* that which he would not, could not do, ver. 21, and so makes use of the law to serve the gospel. All his teachings were evangelical, but he taught repentance.

2. It is excluded by the covenant of works. There is no place for repentance there. Nothing but death after sin; no *tabula secunda post naufragium*. That enjoins not repentance; nothing but perfect obedience. Nor does it admit repentance; it promises nothing but to perfect obedience. It prescribes no means, leaves no hopes for sinners. They understand not the law, what the covenant of works is, who make repentance legal. There is nothing in it, but the mandate and the sanction. But the law neither commands it, nor does it reward the presence or practice; nor does it threaten the absence of repentance. It admits not of pardon; that comes in by virtue of another covenant. And where there is no pardon, there is no place for repentance. It requires only perfect obedience directly and expressly, and offers life to no other condition; but Adam hereby being obliged to obey God in all things, was by consequence and implicitly engaged to obey whatever God should require in any other way or covenant and upon any other terms, and so to repentance, which the gospel commands. These are the privileges of the covenant of grace.

3. It is required in the gospel, Acts xvii. 30. Now, in the times of the gospel, after the Messiah is come; now, when the covenant of grace comes forth in its last and best edition; now, when free grace appears in fairest and largest character; now, when the covenant commences new; even 'now he commands all,' all that will be saved, have any benefit by the Messiah, enjoy any blessings of the new covenant, to repent.

4. It was preached by the apostles. Christ makes it one of their instructions, puts it in their commission, Luke xxiv. 47. And they who found grace to be faithful, observed their instruction. It is the principal point in Peter's first sermon recorded after the ascension, Acts ii. 28, and of his second too, by which we may conclude of the rest, Acts iii. 19. John gives sweet encouragements to it, 1 John i. 9. If ever there was an evan-

* Qu. 'enjoining'?—Ed.

gelical preacher in the world, sure Paul was one; and he solemnly professeth it was his constant practice, Acts xx. 20, 21, and xxvi. 20. It is express of all, Mark vi. 12.

5. It was the end of Christ's coming, Mat. ix. 13, to call sinners. He had no end in coming, but purely evangelical. He came to confirm the covenant of grace, which was established in the room of the covenant of works, by which no sinner could get any benefit. He came not to establish, to require anything legal; therefore, repentance is not legal.

6. It was purchased by Christ's death. But the privileges that he purchased were evangelical: Acts v. 31, 'Him has God exalted,' &c. What he bestows in his exaltation, he purchased by his humiliation. We owe the purchase of evangelical mercies to his satisfaction, the application to his intercession. If he had procured anything legal, he would have purchased life for us upon personal performance of perfect obedience; for this is the sum of the covenant of works. But this he procured not. That which he merited, was the blessings of the new covenant, whereof repentance is one, therefore evangelical.

7. It has evangelical promises. And these are not made to any legal duty: Prov. xxviii. 13, 'Whoso confesseth.' Confession is the sign, and forsaking an essential part of repentance. This is an evangelical promise, though in the Old Testament. As there is something legal in the New Testament, so much that is evangelical in the Old Testament. And these are sure characters, whereby we may distinguish gospel from law. Wherever we meet faith, repentance, confession, forsaking of sin, pardon, or mercy, those are gospel strains. The covenant of works disowns them, Mat. v. 4. Blessedness and comfort entailed upon mourning, a principal part of repentance.

8. It is urged upon evangelical grounds. It would be incongruous so to urge it, if it were legal; this would be to put new wine into old bottles, &c. So John Baptist, Mat. iii. 2, so Christ, Mark i. 14, 15, where is a definition of evangelical preaching. 'Kingdom of heaven,' that is, the heavenly and spiritual kingdom of Christ to be erected, with all the honours, privileges, duties of its subjects, are to be purchased by his satisfaction, and offered and declared in the gospel. The infinite goodness and love of God in sending Christ; and the wonderful love of Christ in undertaking the redemption of forlorn sinners; and the precious fruits of that undertaking, should be grounds of and motives to repentance; but these are evangelical, *ergo*, it is.

9. It is the condition of the prime evangelical mercy. God offers, gives remission of sins, upon condition of repentance. What Christ commands us, himself does practise, Luke xvii. 8. If he repent, forgive him. So Acts iii. 19, and ii. 38. The way Peter prescribes to Simon, Acts viii. 22, hence they are frequently joined, Luke xxiv. 47, Acts v. 31. A condition, not *quoad rigorem*, in point of exact performance, as though he required to repent by our own strength, and would not pardon till the condition were so performed. For such are legal conditions, and proper to the covenant of works; whereas, though he command, requires repentance, yet he promises it, Ezek. xi. 19, and gives it. But largely, and in respect of the necessity of its presence, he does not, he will not, pardon till we repent. No remission without it. In this sense repentance is propounded as the condition of forgiveness, 1 John i. 9; confession is an appendix, if not a formal part of repentance.

10. It is confirmed by the seal of the covenant of grace. Baptism is

the seal of repentance. Hereby God engages himself to begin, or increase and continue it in his elect; and the baptized engage themselves to practise it. Hence it is called 'the baptism of repentance,' Acts xiii. 24; John baptized to repentance, Mat. iii. 11. But baptism being the seal of the new covenant, confirms, signifies, exhibits, nothing but what is evangelical.

11. It is a fundamental of Christianity, Heb. vi. 1. But nothing legal can be such a fundamental. The covenant of works is so far from being the foundation of Christianity, as it is inconsistent with it. True Christians are quite freed from it. 'Ye are not under the law,' Rom. vi. 14, Gal. v. 18.

12. It is the way to life, Acts xi. 18. But there is no other way but that of the gospel. The way by the law, or covenant of works, was shut up by sin. Justice, like the angel, guards the passage in paradise; none can enter, that are sinners, by that old way, nor ever any enter. If the Lord had not found out a new way by the covenant of grace, no flesh had been saved. Repentance is part of this way. The convinced Jews ask the way, Acts ii. 37, he shews this. This is the way not to perish, 2 Peter iii. 9, so in the text.

Nor should this seem a duty of too sour and unpleasing a complexion, to be evangelical. There is more joy in godly sorrow, than in the choicest worldly pleasures. The heart, if not seared and void of sense, even in laughter is sorrowful, Prov. xiv. 13. But in the midst of this sorrow the heart rejoiceth. Those that have had experience will bear witness to this. And what heart so sad and mournful, into which that promise will not convey a stream of joy? Blessed, &c., Mat. v. 4. Godly sorrow not only rejoices the heart on earth, but causeth joy in heaven, Luke xv. 7.

Use 1. It reproves those who reject this duty as legal. Certainly those who find not this in the gospel, have found another gospel besides that which Christ and his disciples preached. But let them take heed, lest, whilst they will go to heaven in a way of their own, that way prove a by-path, and lead to the gates of death, instead of the place of joy. No way but Christ will bring to heaven, and that has three stages, faith, repentance, and obedience. He that will sit down at the end of the first, and never enter upon the other, will never reach heaven. Indeed, he that walks not in all, walks not in any, he is deluded, misled by an *ignis fatuus*, a false fire; and if the Lord do not undeceive him, will fall into the bottomless pit.

Use 2. Exhort. To practise this duty evangelically, that is most congruous. Directions:

(1.) Undertake it for evangelical ends. The end gives nature and name to the action. If your aims be legal, mercenary, the act will be so. Go not about it only to escape hell, avoid wrath, satisfy justice, remove judgments, pacify conscience. Ahab and Pharaoh can repent thus, those who are strangers to the covenant of grace. How then? Endeavour that you may give God honour, that ye may please him, that you may comply with his will, that you may never more return to folly. Confess, to give honour, as Josh. vii. 19, get hearts broken, that you may offer sacrifice well pleasing.

(2.) Let evangelical motives lead you to the practice of it. Act as drawn by the cords of love. The goodness of God should lead you to it, Rom. ii. Horror, despair, terror of conscience will drive Cain and Judas to strange fits of legal repentance. The remembrance of sins against electing, distinguishing love, against redeeming, pardoning mercy, against the free grace of the gospel and offers of it, should lead you to it. So should your deal-

ing unfaithfully in the covenant of grace, sinning against the blood of Christ, wounding him, grieving him, who became a man of sorrows. Piercing, Zech. xii. 10, that you have hated him who loved you; grieved him who would have comforted you with unspeakable comforts; dishonoured him who thought not his own glory too much for you; provoked him who would see his own Son die, rather than you should perish; undervalued him who thought not his life too dear for you.

(3.) In an evangelical manner, freely, cheerfully, with joy and delight; not as constrained, but willingly. As those that are *amici legis*, in love with the duty—for so are pardoned repenting sinners, *justificati amici legis efficiuntur*.* Christ's people in covenant with him are 'a willing people,' Ps. cx. 8, as ready to mourn for sin as for worldly crosses, sufferings; to hate it as to hate a mortal enemy, forsake it as freely as forsake an infectious disease, go against their lusts as David against Goliath: 1 Sam. xvii. 82, 'Thy servant will go fight with this Philistine.'

(4.) Repent that ye can repent no more. This is an evangelical temper, to be sensible of the defects and failings of spiritual duties; be grieved that you can grieve no more for sin; abhor yourselves that you cannot hate it with a more perfect hatred; count it your great affliction that sin and you are not quite divorced; count the relics of sin which you cannot drive out, what the Canaanites were to the children of Israel, Num. xxxiii. 55, as pricks in your eyes and thorns in your sides, continual vexation. It is a repentance to be repented of, as it is defective, though not as it is our duty.

(5.) Think not your repentance is the cause of any blessing: it is neither the meritorious nor impulsive cause; it neither deserves any mercy, nor moves the Lord to bestow any.

To think it moves him to give any mercy is an impious conceit, because it makes him changeable, who is without variableness. To think it deserves anything at God's hands is a legal conceit. Perfect obedience performed by Adam in the state of innocency had not been meritorious, could not deserve eternal life, *suâ naturâ*, in its own nature, for it was but his duty; nor was eternal happiness due to it in justice, as the nature of merit requires, but only by virtue of the promise, *vi pacti*; much less can our imperfect repentance. It does not procure blessings one way or other casually.† The Lord pardons sin, loves us, blesses us *when* we repent, not *because* we repent; it is *via*, not *causa*; a duty, not desert; a means, no merit; a qualification, necessary *ratione præsentiæ*, not *efficientiæ*.

(6.) Think not that your repentance can satisfy God, or make any amends for the wrong sin has done him; do not imagine that it is any recompence for the injury sin has done him, or any reparation of that honour which is violated and defaced by sin. Every old corrupt heart is so far legal as it would have a righteousness, a satisfaction of its own, and not rely upon another for it; so proud is corrupt nature, as it is loth to deny its own, to depend only upon another's satisfaction. And therefore we are apt to think that our acts of repentance do satisfy God and appease him, and thereupon, after the exercise of them, will speak peace to ourselves, and stop the mouth of an accusing conscience with such performances, resting on them as though thereby we had satisfied the Lord.

But we must consider that no satisfaction is sufficient to make amends for sin but that which is of infinite value, since the injury sin has done is infinite, having disobeyed, displeased, dishonoured, an infinite majesty.

* Ambr.

† Qu. 'causally'?—Ed.

And such a satisfaction no finite creature can make, not the most perfect saint, not the most glorious angels ; much less can such vile, weak, sinful creatures as we, by such imperfect acts of repentance.

(7.) Ye must depend upon Christ for strength, ability to repent ; all evangelical works are done in his strength. Repentance is an act above the power of nature, and therefore we cannot practise it without power from above. Ye must depend on, seek to Christ for this power. Adam's condition in innocency required not so much dependence, for he was empowered with sufficient grace to perform all that was required ; but his not improving that sufficiency has left all his posterity destitute of all ability to do anything supernaturally good. We want both habits and acts before we can repent ; Christ must both give us soft hearts, hearts that can repent, and must teach them by his Spirit before they will repent. Except he smite these rocks, they will yield no water, no tears for sin ; except he break these hearts, they will not bleed. Repentance is his gift, his work, Acts xi. 18, 2 Tim. ii. 25. We may as well melt a flint, or turn a stone into flesh, or draw water out of a rock, as repent in our own strength. It is far above the power of nature, nay, most contrary to it. How can we hate sin, which naturally we love above all ? mourn for that wherein we most delight ? forsake that which is as dear as ourselves, right hand, eye ? It is the almighty power of Christ which only can do this ; we must rely on, seek to him for it, Jer. xxxi. 18, Lam. v. 21 ; that which ye do in your own strength you do legally, and so ineffectually, to no purpose. The gospel beats us quite out of self ; live by another life, Gal. ii. 20 ; act by another strength, and satisfy by another's righteousness, Philip. iii. 9 ; and do all that we do graciously, by the grace of Christ. I laboured, 1 Cor. xv. 10. Therefore Bernard prays *quid efficiamus, operare*. And Augustine, *Da domine, &c.*, according to his principle, which is truly evangelical, *Certum est nos facere quod facimus, &c. In nobis, et nobiscum, ut operemur, operatur*. He works our works in us and for us.* Go into your closet, and pour out your requests : Lord, thou commandest me to repent, and I see the necessity ; but I have a hard heart, opposite ; and Satan and the world, &c.

(8.) Ye must expect the acceptance of your repentance from Christ. No evangelical service whatsoever, or by whomsoever performed, can be well pleasing to God, either in itself or as it comes from us, but only in Christ. Not as it comes from us, for our persons must be accepted before our services can be capable thereof. But how can sinful persons please a holy God ? We must either be righteous in ourselves or in another, or else the righteous God will loathe, must punish us. No flesh can be justified in his sight, Ps. cxliii. 2, till Christ cover its deformities, and clothe it with a robe of his righteousness ; nor in themselves, for so the best are sinful, in regard of many defects, &c., not fit to be looked upon by him who is 'of purer eyes,' &c., Heb. iv. 13 ; only acceptable through Jesus Christ, 1 Peter ii. 5, Eph. i. 6.

Adam indeed, under the covenant of works, might have been accepted without a mediator ; the purity of his person and perfection of his services would have found acceptance immediately ; but for us so to expect it, is both legal and irrational. We sinful persons, with sinful services, having no speckless righteousness to present to God but that of Christ, must either appear in that, or hide ourselves from the presence of him who sits on the throne. No appearing for us but in and by our advocate. God

* Concil. Arans.

will take nothing well from us unless we take our surety with us. No blessing can be obtained except we come to God in the garments of our elder brother : Isa. lxiv. 6, *De se, non de impiis*, all our righteousness, &c. ; *de bonis operibus, non solum de lapsibus*, till they be cleansed in the blood of the Lamb, Rev. vii. 14, Job xxix. 14. If we put on any other robe but that of Christ's, it is *vestis belli, magis quam pacis, ubi adhuc expugnatur*, &c.*

(9.) Think not your repentance obliges God to the performance of any promise, as though he were thereby bound, and could not justly refuse to bestow what he has promised to the penitent ; for he is not obliged to fulfil it till the condition be perfectly performed. Imperfect repentance is not the condition ; God requires nothing imperfect. If he accomplishes his promise upon our weak defective endeavours, it is not because he is by them engaged, but from some other engaging consideration. No man is obliged to perform a promise but when the condition is perfectly fulfilled. If it be defective in quantity or quality, not so much nor so good as the agreement required, he is not engaged, he may refuse ; *e. g.*, Ephron promises Abraham a field for four hundred shekels of silver, current money, Gen. xxiii. 15. Now if Abraham had but brought him three hundred, and that not current, wanting weight, or mixed with dross, none will say Ephron had been obliged to give him the field, or unjust for refusing.

The Lord promises such and such mercies upon condition of repentance, but it is perfect repentance, for he promises nothing to that which is defective, else he should promise to that which is sinful. But this rather brings us within the compass of threatenings, Gal. iii. Perfect performances are still required. The gospel remitteth no part, no title of the substance of the law, which commands perfect obedience in duties, whether expressly or implicitly, and by consequence contained in it, as repentance is. If it were not still required, why should we strive after perfection, and bewail the want of it ? The obligation is eternal, founded in our natures, due from us as we are creatures, &c. The condition therefore of the promises is perfect repentance.

• Now our repentance is defective, both in quantity and quality, measure and manner, neither so great nor so good as is required. Our sorrow not so hearty, constant, ingenuous, &c., and so does not engage.

Why then does God perform ? How is he obliged ? Why, it is Christ that has obliged him ; he makes good the condition. When we cannot bring so much as is required, he makes up the sum ; he adds grains to that which wants weight. He has satisfied for our defects, and they are for his sake pardoned, and therefore are accepted, as though they were not defective ; *omnia mandata Dei facta deputantur, quando quicquid non sit ignoscitur*.† Christ's undertaking makes good the condition, and so the promise is obliging. Hence, 2 Cor. i. 20, he is so obliged by Christ's undertaking as, except he will be changeable or unfaithful, he must accomplish. Hence he is called the Mediator, Heb. ix. 15, and surety, chap. vii. 22. God had promised an eternal inheritance upon conditions, but we broke the conditions, and were not able to make satisfaction, are all bankrupts. God therefore lays hold on our surety, and gets satisfaction of him, and hereby the agreement is made good, and God obliged. God abates nothing of his first proposal ; perfect conditions are still required, only he dispenses with personal performance. That which we could not do, Christ has done ; his satisfaction is accepted, Rom. x. 4, the end, the accomplishment. His fulfilling is the believer's righteousness. *Per-*

* August.

† Aug. Retract. cap. 19.

*sectionem legis habet, qui credit in Christum.** Christ has procured pardon for all defects. And in this sense our repentance is as it were perfect, because the defect thereof shall not be imputed. Hence it obliges the Lord, not by virtue of our performance, but of Christ's satisfaction. It is not we, but Christ for us; not what we do, but what he did, suffered, that engages the Lord to perform any promise. Even as when one engaged to conditions, fails in performance, if his surety make other satisfaction, it is the surety that obliges to the accomplishment. It is not our defective, imperfect repentance that engages God to perform promise; for he never promised to imperfect performances, but Christ making the Lord satisfaction for our defects and imperfections. And so they being not imputed, are not in themselves, but by virtue of this satisfaction, no less obliging than if they were perfect.

(10.) Expect a reward, not from justice, but mercy. The Lord rewards repentance, and other evangelical services, under the covenant of grace. That the reward is not of debt, but of grace; not *merces debita*, but *gratuita*; not *κατ' ὀφειλόμενα*, but *κατὰ τὴν χάριν*. It is a recompence, but a gracious recompence. He is not obliged *ex debito justitiæ*, but bestows it freely, of mere bounty and mercy.

It is true Adam, under the covenant of works, whilst he kept his integrity, might have expected something in justice; for the eternal life was not due to him *ex dignitate operis*, but *vi pacti*; and so is *debitum improprie*, and not *ex ordine justitiæ*,† because there was no proportion betwixt it and his services; and so far as the reward exceeds the value of the service, so far it is of grace and favour. He deserved not eternal life. Yet perfect obedience, if performed, would have deserved justification. It had been but just, that he who was perfectly righteous, should have been pronounced and declared so, if there had been occasion. This was due, Rom. iv. 4.

But to think that any blessing is due to us for our best services, that our repentance makes God in our debt, is a legal apprehension.

It is much is due in justice to the obedience of Christ, for he is worthy. But nothing due to us. It is mere mercy, that what Christ has merited should be bestowed on us. It is mere mercy that we are not consumed. Oh what mercy is it that we are pardoned, reconciled, saved! It is mercy that our repentance is not punished, much more that it is rewarded. It is mercy that we escape the greatest suffering, much more that the Lord vouchsafes to pardon, bless, enhappy us. All is grace, from the foundation to the topstone.

II. Thus much for the admonisher, 'I tell you.' Proceed we to the admonition. And in it, 1, the correction, 'nay.' Hereby he corrects two mistakes of the Jews: (1.) Concerning their innocency. They thought themselves innocent, compared with the Galileans, not so great sinners, ver. 2. (2.) Concerning their impunity, grounded on the former. Because not so great sinners, they should not be so great sufferers, nor perish as they in the text. From the first.

1. (1.) *Obs.* Impenitent sinners are apt to think themselves not so great sinners as others; to justify themselves, as Pharisees in reference to others; like crows, fly over flowers and fruit, to pitch upon carrion; say as Isa. lrv. 5, 'Stand by thyself,' &c.

[1.] Because never illuminated to see the number, nature, aggravations

* Ambr.

† Vide Baron. p. 388.

of their own sins, how many, how sinful ; examine not their hearts and lives ; judge of sins according to outward appearance, not secret heinousness.

[2.] Self-love. They cover, extenuate, excuse their own ; multiply, magnify others. *ἄλυσμα* for their own, a glass for others.

[3.] Ignorance of their natural sinfulness. In which respect they are equally sinful as others. Seed-plots of sin ; have a root of bitterness, an evil treasure of heart ; a disposition to the most abominable sins that ever were committed, such as they never thought of, nor will ever believe they should yield to, 2 Kings viii. 11, 12 ; want nothing but temptation, a fit occasion. Their heart as tinder ; if the Lord permit Satan to cast but a spark in, they will be set on fire of hell, break forth into the most hellish wickedness, &c. Apt to think natural sinfulness an excuse, whereas it is that which makes us most sinful, odious to God, &c. Would you take it for a good excuse if a servant that has robbed you should tell you he has a thievish nature ? This will make you hate him far more.

Use. Take heed of this. It is a sign of impenitency. Paul counts himself the chief of sinners : ' If you judge yourselves,' &c., 1 Cor. xi. 31.

(2.) From their conceit of impunity.

Obs. Sinners are apt to flatter themselves with the hopes they shall escape judgments. If they can believe they are not so great sinners, they are apt to conclude they shall not perish : ' Put far from them the evil day,' Amos vi. 3, threatened, ver. 7 ; cry Peace, &c. Satan has blinded them. He seeks their ruin, and would have them perish in such a way as there should be no avoiding, and therefore would not suffer them to entertain the least thoughts of their danger lest they should think of preventing, Prov. xxii. 3. Lest they should do so, he puts out their eyes, lulls them asleep, that they may perish unavoidably before they be aware ; uses them as Jael did Sisera, lays them asleep that justice may strike through their souls while they slumber, that they may go down quick into pit, and not awake till in hell.

Use. Beware of this. It has been the ruin of millions. Those perish soonest who think they shall longest escape, Amos vi. 7, 1 Thes. v. 3 ; ' be not deceived, God is not mocked,' &c. Believe the Lord threatening rather than Satan promising. Delude not yourselves with conceits of mercy. There is no mercy for impenitent sinners. To imagine the contrary is a great dishonour to God, an high affront to Christ, makes the gospel a nullity. Satan says, Though thou sin, yet God is merciful, he may save thee. Christ says, ' Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' Now, whether will you believe ? Satan says, Though ye do continue to sin, &c., ye may have peace ; but the Lord says, Deut. xxix. 19, 20, he will not spare him, &c. Think not to say within yourselves, We are not so great sinners ; the least sin, not repented of, is enough to destroy you for ever, to bring the curse of God upon soul and body, Gal. iii. 10. He says not, he that continues in some, or in the greatest, but all. If ye so keep all the precepts of the law, as to fail but in one, that one failing will cause all the curses of the law to fall on you. This is the sad condition of every sinner, whatever his sins be. And there is no relief for any, but by the covenant of grace ; and you can be assured of no relief thereby without repentance ; for Christ, who is truth, has said it, ' Except ye repent, ye shall perish.'

2. So we come to the other part of the admonition, viz., the direction.

Obs. Those that will not repent shall perish. Whosoever. Though as many privileges as these Jews had, and as few sins as they thought they

had, yet without repentance they must perish. No salvation without it. It needs no confirmation, since Christ himself does twice affirm it.

It is implied, 2 Peter iii. 9, they must needs perish that never recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26, and never are weary of treasuring up wrath, Rom. ii. 5.

Repentance has such a relation to, such a connection with, life and salvation, as this cannot be expected without that; for though it be neither merit nor motive, yet consider it as it is, an antecedent and sign, qualification, condition, or means of life and salvation, and the truth will appear.

An antecedent. So there must be no salvation till first there be repentance. Sown in tears before reap in joy.

Sign. A symptom of one being an heir to salvation. And so life belongs as to all, *πάντι*, so only to him, *μόνῳ*, that repents.

Qualification. To fit for life. He that is in love with sin, is not fit for heaven. No unclean thing enters there. Neither will God himself endure him to be there.

Condition. For that is *ἄριστος οὐ ἀνὸς οὐκ*, without it, never see God: 'Except ye,' &c. This is the condition, without which ye shall not escape.

Means and way to life: via regni, Christ's highway. 'Repentance to life,' Acts xi. 18. Peter directs them to this, Acts ii. 38.

1. What is it to repent? 2. Why must they perish that do not? For the 1. To repent, is to turn; to return from former evil ways; Ezek. xiv. 6, 'Repent, and turn yourselves.' One explains the other: Acts xxvi. 20, 'should repent and turn to God.' *μετάνοια* in the New Testament is *תשובה* in the Old Testament, *שׁוּב*.

Now in turning, as in every motion, there are two terms, *à quo* and *ad quem*, *ἀποστροφὴ* and *ἐπιστροφὴ*: something from which, that is sin; something to which, that is God or righteousness. Hence Athanasius gives this account of the word, *quæst. id.*, διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ λέγεται μετάνοια, ὅτι μετατρέψαι τὸν νοῦν ἀπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ πρὸς τὸ ἀγαθόν. Because hereby the mind is turned from evil to good.

I suppose it principally consists in turning from evil, sin; though he be never truly turned from sin, that turns not to God, &c. Yet that belongs properly to another grace. Repentance especially is turning from; and therefore I shall insist on this. In this turning, there are three acts, as it were so many steps: sorrow for sin, hatred of it, resolution to forsake it. He that does not mourn, &c., shall perish. This is Christ's meaning: 'Except,' &c.

1. Sorrow for sin. To repent, is to mourn for sin, 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10. The Lord exhorting Zion to repentance, expresses it thus, Joel ii. 12; and Peter's repentance is expressed by this, Mat. xxvi. 75. Though there may be sorrow without repentance, yet no repentance without sorrow. It is not every sorrow, for there is a sorrow unto death; nor every sorrow for sin, for Judas was sorry he had sinned, Mat. xxvii. 3, 4. What sorrow then? how qualified? It must be hearty and godly sorrow.

(1.) Hearty, such as greatly affects the heart. Not that of the tongue, which is usual, I am sorry, &c.; nor that of the eyes neither, if tears spring not from a broken heart; not verbal, slight, outward, superficial, but great, bitter, cordial humbling; such sorrow as will afflict the soul. The Israelites, in their solemn day of repentance and humiliation, were commanded to afflict their souls, Lev. xvi. 29; and the want of it is threatened, chap. xxiii. 29. Such a sense of sin, such sorrow for it as will be a soul affliction.

When the heart is truly sorrowful for sin, sin is a burden to it ; such penitents they are whom Christ invites, Mat. xi. 28, there will be such pain and anguish in the heart as when it is pricked, wounded. So were Peter's penitents, Acts ii., as if it were rent and torn ; so Joel ii. 18, as if it were broken and crushed. A penitent heart is a broken heart, as David calls it in his penitent Ps. li. 17. He regards no sorrow but this which issues from a contrite heart, Isa. lvi. 2.

It must be a great, a bitter mourning, and therefore is compared to that which is caused by the greatest outward afflictions. So is the sorrow of the Jews at their conversion prophetically described, Zech. xii. 10, 11 ; such sorrow as Sarah would have made for the loss of her first-born, her only son Isaac ; or Hannah for Samuel, the son of many tears, of so strong desires.

Sorrow is proportionable to the cause. Now what more bitter affliction than the loss of a child, especially to the Jews, who counted children a greater blessing, &c. ? To lose a child, a son, an only son, first begotten son, Oh what sorrow, what bitter lamentation would this have occasioned ! Even such should be the sorrow for sin ; a bitter mourning, a great mourning, ver. 11, like that for the untimely death of that blessed prince Josiah ; as the inhabitants of Hadadrimmon for Josiah, slain in the valley of Megiddo.

A hearty sorrow, not confined to the heart, but if the natural temper afford them, breaking forth in tears, sighs, and sad complaints, the ordinary companions of a sorrowful heart. Such must be sorrow in some degree of sincerity, or else perish.

(2.) Godly sorrow, 2 Cor. vii. 9, 10, sorrow for sin, as it is against God ; not as it is against yourselves, prejudicial to you ; as it brings judgments, exposes to wrath, makes you obnoxious to justice, brings within the compass of curses, and in danger of hell. Not as it withholds temporal blessings, so Esau ; nor brings temporal judgments, so Ahab ; nor as it excludes from mercy, so Cain ; nor as it brings hell into the conscience, so Judas. This sorrow is carnal, worldly, unto death. But as it is against God, his authority, mercy, glory, blessedness, holiness, power, sovereignty, truth, justice, being.

His *authority* : as a disobedience of his command, violation of his righteous law, as opposite to his blessed will.

His *mercy* : against him who is unwilling to destroy, willing to pardon, ready to be reconciled, gave his Son, sends his Spirit.

His *glory* : that which dishonours him, casts unworthy reflections on him, crosses his design, and robs him of the glory due to him.

His *blessedness* : displeases, grieves, wearies, burdens ; causes him to complain, repent.

His *holiness* : contrary to his pure nature, the greatest deformity, that which he cannot endure to look upon.

His *power* and *truth* : as that which questions whether he is able to execute his threatenings, or whether he will be as good as his word in executing ; sin is an implicit denial of these.

His *sovereignty* : as open rebellion against him, ' Who is the Lord ? ' &c., and as it makes us unserviceable to him ; treason.

His *being* : as that denies him, would depose, dethrone him, cause the holy one to cease ; ' This is the heir,' &c., Mat. xxi. 38.

His *excellencies* : prefers self, vanity, Satan, sin, before him.

2. Hatred of sin. This is an act of repentance, and that indeed which is

principally essential to it. It is described by this 2 Cor. vii., *ἀγανάκτησις*. Where no indignation, no hatred, there is no repentance. And Job joins these, Job. xlii. 6, so Ezek. vi. 9, chap. xx. 48, and xxxvi. 31, loathe themselves as sinful, for sin; therefore loathe sin more than themselves. They would not be loathsome but for sin.

It is not enough to dislike it, be displeased at it, angry with it, no nor sorry for it. He that repents will hate it. Be so affected to sin as we use to be towards that which we most hate. We may make use of that sinful hatred amongst men to discover the nature of this gracious affection. When you hate one you wish his ruin, rejoice when any evils befall him, and be ready to do him a mischief when occasion is offered, join with any that would undo him. He that repents will so hate sin as to seek its death, to crucify, mortify it, rejoice when it is wounded, love that word which smites it, have his heart rise at the approach of it, manifest an antipathy against it.

(1.) This hatred is *well grounded*. He will hate it, because it is hateful, loathsome in the eye of God, and every eye that is opened. It stinks in his nostrils, therefore would destroy it. So Jacob, Gen. xxxiv. 10, 'Ye have made me to stink,' I shall be destroyed. Hate it, because he looks upon it as a mortal enemy to God, to his soul, to all that is good. David gives this account of his hatred: Ps. cxxxix. 21, 'I count them mine enemies.'

(2.) An *universal* hatred. All sin. He that hates not all does truly hate none at all. He that hates sin, as it is sin, will hate all, and he that does not hate it as sin, does not repent of it. It is not enough to hate some sins, in the sense of others, or those that are commonly hated amongst men, as perjury, murder, nor to hate those sins that you have no great occasion to love, those that are not pleasing, profitable, but even that which ye have most loved, had most delight and advantage in, secret as well as open, spiritual sins as well as carnal, small and great. Repentance is inconsistent with love to any sin, Ps. cxix. 104.

(3.) *Irreconcilable*. He doth hate it so, as never to be at peace, amity with it; not fall out with it by fits, in some good mood, but return again to folly, be friends again with sin, and use it as kindly, act it as freely as ever. This is not to repent, but to mock God, and delude your own souls, and make your condition worse than before, Mat. xii. 48-49. When the soul returns to sin, the devil returns to the soul, and brings with him seven worse than himself. Relapses give the devil more possession. He never truly hated sin who hates it not always. It must be perfect hatred, as extensive, and intensive, so persevering.

8. Forsaking sin. In resolution never to sin more. To repent is to turn; and how turn from sin if not forsake it? It is impossible; as to leave a way, and walk in it; a contradiction. All the characters of repentance, 2 Cor. vii. 11, include this carefulness. Fear, vehement desire, zeal, imply strong resolution. Every resolution is not sufficient; not future, weak, partial; it must be *de presenti*, forsake sin presently. Not enough to say, I will do it hereafter, when I have had a little more pleasure, reaped a little more profit by my sins. He that will not forsake it presently, to-day, while it is called to-day, has no true resolution, is far from truly repenting.

Effectual, strong. Such as will put you upon the use of all means to perform it, and make good your resolution to avoid all occasions, company, place, &c.; make you watchful against temptation, stand guarded, careful

to remove the cause, original corruption; stopping up the puddle, the spring; not only lop the branches, but strike at the root; diligent in the use of mortifying duties, &c. Where repentance is, there is *ἰδιότης*, a resolution to be revenged for the wrong sin has done to God, to the soul, &c.

Impartial. Forsake all. He that repents, must not say, I will forsake my former ways, so many, so great; I will forsake all but one; the Lord be merciful to me in this. This is but a little one, let me escape with it, and let my soul live in it. All these things I will do, all these sins I will leave, only let me be spared in this. I know not how to live, how to subsist without this. I shall have no comfort of my life, no credit with my neighbours, if I leave this. This is not the voice of a penitent, but of a hypocrite. The best of the sheep and oxen Saul spared, and destroyed the rest, the vile and refuse, when God had enjoined him to destroy all; and then he comes to Samuel with a justification of himself: 1 Sam. xv., 'I have performed the commandment,' &c. But what says the Lord? how does he resent his partial obedience? See ver. 28. So will the Lord deal with those who, pretending repentance, yet will destroy, forsake none but the vile and refuse, unprofitable, unpleasing sins, &c. He that forsakes not all, forsakes none at all, James ii. 10: *Eādem pāna afficietur, atque si omnia violasset.* If the rest of the body be cured, yet leave but a gangrene in the least part, it will be the destruction of the whole: *Per hujus solius peremptionem, etiam illa integra trahi ad mortem.** Sin is the snare of the devil; by repentance we escape it. *Quomodo passer, etsi non toto teneatur corpore, sed uno solo pede, est in potestate aucupis,†* &c., 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. One leak neglected may sink a ship as well as a thousand. Herod did many things, so he avoided many sins; but Herodias he would not part with, and so he perished. It is not enough to forsake almost all; Agrippa was almost persuaded, &c. They are but almost resolved who are not resolute to part with all, Ps. cxix. 6. ¶ He that has 'respect to all commands' must respect no sin. That repentance which makes not resolute to forsake all sin is a repentance to be repented of, you must be ashamed of; notwithstanding it, you may, you shall perish.

Reas. 1. Christ has said it. There is reason enough in his word. That is the best ground we have, or can have, for any truth in the world. He has said it, and lest we doubt, he speaks it twice, ver. 8. and 5. He speaks it to the Jews. If any people in the world might think to escape without repentance it was they, having received such great privileges, such special favours; yet these he tells, 'Except ye repent, ye shall perish.' He speaks universally, admits no exception, no limitation. Ye shall all, whether your sins be small or great, whether greater sinners than the Galileans or not, 'except ye repent,' &c. He says it, who is truth itself, and so speaks undoubted truths; who is God himself, and therefore cannot lie; who is judge of quick and dead, and therefore cannot err in the sentence; who is the great prophet, of whom it was prophesied many thousand years since, that whoever would not hear, that is, believe him, should be cut off; he whose word is more firm than the foundations of heaven and earth: 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but this word shall not pass away.' They shall be dissolved, turned into nothing, sooner than this saying of Christ shall be convinced of the least falsehood. No firmer truth in the world than this, 'Except ye repent, ye shall perish.'

Reas. 2. Christ never died for impenitent sinners. They must needs

* Aug.

† Chrysost.

perish for whom Christ never died; but he never died for such. Those sins must be punished in hell to eternity which are not expiated by Christ's blood, but it was not shed for final impenitency. Christ gives repentance to all for whom he died, Acts v. 31. Those who do not will, ask, seek, receive it; those who put it off, defer, have no ground to believe that Christ died for them. And till there be some ground to believe this, there is no hope to escape, no way for such, but they perish. Christ only died for those whom his Father gave to him, John vi. 37. But impenitent sinners were not given to Christ; for those who are given to him do come to him, return; those who continue impenitent, run from him.

Reas. 3. Unpardoned sinners must perish. For whom the Lord does not pardon he will punish eternally, but impenitent sinners are unpardoned. Repentance and remission of sins are usually joined in Scripture, and the Lord will never suffer them to be separated. No repentance, no pardon. It is not the cause, but it is the condition, without which no remission. Solomon would not ask pardon but upon this condition, 2 Chron. vi. 26, 27, nor does the Lord answer him but on the same terms, chap. vii. 14, *conditionalis nihil ponit in esse*. Those who turn not from sin while they live, must die in their sins when they die; and who so die, die eternally. The Lord, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity on earth, will not endure it in heaven. Ye shall sooner see the most holy of the saints cast into hell than an unpardoned sinner admitted into heaven.

Reas. 4. Those whom the Lord hates must perish. But he hates impenitent sinners, Ps. v. 5, 'Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.' Now, who are so properly workers of iniquity as those who are so eager at it as they will not leave this work though they be in danger to perish for it? Christ puts it out of doubt. The workers of iniquity must perish, Luke xiii. 27. Those whom the Lord will tear in his wrath must perish with a witness; but those whom he hates, he tears, &c., Job xvi. 8. What more due to such impenitent sinners than hatred! what more proper than wrath, since they treasure up wrath! Rom ii. Will he entertain those in the bosom of love whom his soul hates? No; destruction is their portion, Pro. xxi. 15. If all the curses of the law, all the threatenings of the gospel, all judgments in earth or in hell, will be the ruin of him, he must perish. If the Lord's arm be strong enough to wound him dead, he must die: Ps. lxxviii. 21, 'He will wound,' &c.

Reas. 5. He that is not, cannot be in the way of life, must perish. But can he escape death and ruin who will never leave the paths that lead thereto? Can he come to life who never sets foot in the way? There never were but two ways to life, the covenant of grace, and the covenant of works; and impenitent sinners are out of both. The way by works is quite blocked up to all; for there are three things in that covenant: all, as creatures, are under the precept; all, by nature, are under the penalty; but none of all are under the promise. None can enter into life by virtue of that, because none can perform the condition. No sinner can come to life this way. Lest, therefore, no flesh should be saved, the Lord was pleased to open another way to life; that is, the covenant of grace. Jesus Christ, by virtue of his satisfaction, is become a new and living way; but to whom? To those only who believe and repent: John viii. 24, 'If ye believe not,' &c.; Acts xi. 18, no life now without satisfaction for transgressing the former way. Christ has made satisfaction; but none shall ever have benefit thereby but those that repent; till then, the threatening of the first covenant is in force, nothing but death.

Resolution of some cases :

Case 1. Whether does this belong to those that have already repented ? Whether may this truly be applied to them ? Except ye repent, &c.

Ans. In some respects it may ; in some it may not.

In respect of those sins for which they have repented it belongs not to them.

But in respect of future sins, such as they may commit, or have committed, and not repented of them, to them it must be applied, 'Except ye repent, ye shall perish.' For though those sins be pardoned at first repentance, yet but pardoned conditionally, so that the sentence shall be revoked if the condition be not performed. Now the condition is repentance ; and therefore, in this respect, this is applicable to them, Except ye repent, ye shall perish.

For the understanding of this, observe three proportions :

1. All sins are pardoned upon the first act of faith and repentance. All past, present, to come, are actually pardoned, Rom. viii. 1. If any sin were not forgiven, there would be some place for condemnation ; for the least unpardoned makes liable to condemnation. Hence divines say, *Justificatio est simul et semel* : a sinner is justified, pardoned, but once, and all at once. But though all be then pardoned, yet not all alike. Therefore, observe,

2. Sins past and repented of are pardoned absolutely, because the condition is present ; and where the condition is present, that which was conditional becomes absolute. A thing is only conditional when the condition is not present but future. The guilt of those sins would not return, no, not upon supposition of an impossibility, if the conditions which give or shew his right to pardon should be lost. If a man could lose the grace of repentance he should perish, not for his sins formerly repented of, but for his after-impenitency, which would not be true if former sins were not pardoned absolutely.

3. Future sins, or sins unrepented of, are but pardoned to a believer conditionally. Because the condition of pardon is not in being, is future ; he has not yet repented for those sins ; and if he utterly fail in performing the condition (though the Lord's engaging for performance, by honour and promise, makes this impossible), yet if he should not repent, the former sentence of absolution and general pardon would be revoked, would be a nullity, of no force as to these sins, and consequently he should perish ; so that, in respect of these sins, it may be said to those that formerly have been the greatest penitents under heaven, Except ye repent, ye shall perish.

From hence we see how dangerous it is to conceive that, after we are assured of pardon, there is no need of repentance. They must perish that are not absolutely pardoned ; but these are not absolutely pardoned till they repent ; therefore except they repent, they shall perish.

Case 2. Since we must repent of all sins, then it is necessary for sins of ignorance ; but how can we repent of these ? It seems hard we must perish for not repenting of those acts which we know not to be sins.

Resolution of this will be to shew what sins of ignorance must be necessarily repented of, so as except we repent we shall perish ; and also how we may so repent of them as we may not perish.

To this end observe, 1, some distinctions ; and, 2, some propositions resolving the use.*

1. Ignorance is either voluntary or involuntary.

* Qu. 'case.'—ED.

[1.] Involuntary ; when one is ignorant, because not able, or not obliged to know. Either negative, when one is not bound ; or invincible, when one cannot know such an act is unlawful.

[2.] Voluntary ignorance is either affected, or out of negligence : affected, when one will not know what is sin, because he has a mind to continue in it, unwilling to leave it : *libenter ignorant, ut liberius peccent* ; out of negligence, when one does not know his sins, because he neglects the means of knowledge, when not diligent to find out whether such an act be sinful.

[3.] Repentance is in act or in purpose : actual, when repentance is presently practised, and the acts of it put forth upon present occasion ; in purpose, when there is a disposition, intention, and resolution to exercise repentance, whenever just occasion shall be made known and offered.

[4.] Repentance is implicit and general, or express and particular : particular, when sins in particular are confessed, bewailed, forsaken, every sin punctually and singly by itself ; general, when sin is bewailed, not expressly in particulars, but implicitly and in the gross.

2. This premised, for understanding of what follows, take the resolution in six propositions :

(1.) No man shall perish for not repenting of such ignorances as are altogether involuntary. The Lord expects not repentance for such. For sin only is the object of repentance. But such ignorances as are purely unwilling, that is, such as we neither can nor ought to know, are not sins. It is possible an act may be unlawful in itself, and yet no sin to the actor ; *v. g.*, it is unlawful in itself for a man to know one who is not his wife ; but Jacob knew Leah, who was not his wife, yet sinned not, because he knew not, nor could in an ordinary way discover that she was not his wife. Jacob might be sorry for this as his affliction, but was not bound to repent for it as his sin ; but such ignorances are rare.

(2.) Every man must perish that does not repent of those sins whereof he is affectedly ignorant. He is bound to repent of both ; for the ignorance is a sin no less than the act ; it argues love to sin, unwillingness to leave it, which is a sign of an impenitent heart, of one that gives himself up to live in sin. There can be no true repentance, where such ignorances are not repented of. He that does not repent, both of that ignorance, and of those sins whereof he is so ignorant, must perish.

(3.) He is deservedly in danger to perish who repents not of those sins which he is ignorant of, through carelessness, negligence. For though there may be true repentance, where there is some degrees of negligence, where all possible diligence is not used, for getting the knowledge of those sins which are to be repented of, yet such repentance is dangerously defective, and in that respect must be repented of, except ye will perish.

Therefore, when ye go about this great work of repentance, you must use all diligence in surveying your lives, and searching your hearts, and viewing both in the glass of the law, and desiring the Lord to make clear and full discoveries of sin, that so, if your repentance be defective, it may not willingly be so.

(4.) Because, after all diligence we can use, multitudes of sins will not be discovered, since they are so many as they pass knowledge, Ps. xix. 12 ; though it be required under penalty of perishing, that we repent in particular of every known sin ; though we must confess and bewail particularly, and singly by itself, every sin that we do or may know ; yet for sins that we cannot know, a general repentance will be accepted ; we may wrap up such unknown sins in gross, as David, Ps. xix. 12. But this consideration

that your sins are so infinitely many, that you cannot repent of them in particular, as you should do, must increase your sorrow for, and add to your hatred of, this fruitful monster, and beget resolutions of more watchfulness, &c.

(5.) Though no more be expected for present, than such a general repentance for unknown sins, yet withal there must be a particular repentance in purpose : i. e., there must be an intention, a disposition, a resolution, to repent of every of those now unknown sins, particularly and punctually, when discovered ; and where this is, the general implicit repentance will be accepted, as though it were particular ; for in this case the Lord accepts the will for the deed, according to that 2 Cor. viii. 12. Where there is this purpose of particular repentance, there is a willing mind to repent particularly.

(6.) A man shall not perish that repents of sins altogether unknown, though he do not reform them. Some acts of repentance will be sufficient for these, though all be necessary for known sins. One may truly mourn for these, though he do not usually forsake them ; for a man may bewail unknown sins in general, though he have not a distinct knowledge of them ; but he cannot reform them, except he know particularly that they are sins. Sorrow for all sin, known and unknown, is necessary ; but there cannot be actual reformation of sins altogether unknown ; therefore, instead of actual reformation, a resolution to forsake whatever the Lord shall make known to be a sin, is in this case sufficient. So it was with the holy men before Christ, in reference to polygamy ; they repented for all sin in general, and so for this : but they did not reform this, because they did not know it was a sin.

There must be actual reformation of every known sin, else ye perish ; but for those which ye cannot know, 'repenting in general, mourning, confessing, prayer for pardon of all in general, with a steadfast purpose to forsake, reform, whatever shall be discovered to be a sin, will be sufficient.

Quest. Is repentance necessary after first conversion ? And how ?

Ans. It is necessary in respect of sins before conversion, of sins after, and of that sin which is both before and after, natural corruption.

1. In respect of sins before conversion. That is not denied by any. You may as well deny there is any such thing as repentance, as deny these are to be repented of. Those grant it necessary for these, which deny it for the other.

2. In respect of sin both before and after, natural depravation. I have suggested many grounds why this is to be repented of, and they equally concern all. An abiding sin, so superlatively sinful, is a constant ground of sorrow, hatred, self-abhorrency, and endeavours to be rid of it.

3. In respect of sins after conversion. From the ground formerly expressed, repentance for these is the condition of pardon of these sins ; they are not absolutely pardoned till the condition be fulfilled, and so, not till they be repented of.

That it is the condition of pardon as to these sins is evident, because it has all the ingredients that are in any evangelical condition—all that is to be found in anything which the gospel calls a condition. And therefore, if anything in the gospel be a condition, repentance is so in reference to the remission of these sins. It is,

(1.) *Promissioni annera*, added to the promise of pardon, as a condition, which civilians call *res addita negotio*. Promise of remission runs conditionally, 2 Chron. vii. 14 ; here is a promise to pardon the sins of

God's people (therefore sins after conversion) upon condition of repentance, 'if they humble themselves and turn.'

(2.) *A promittente postulata*. It is required, commanded by God to his people, after conversion; so a condition, for that is *res postulata*, &c. To waive instances in the Old Testament, as those against which the opposites, though most vainly, except, see how often Christ himself requires it of his people in the Asian churches; of Ephesus, after much commendation of her graces, manifested both in doing and suffering for him, Rev. ii. 4, 5; of Pergamos, for tolerating heretics amongst them, ver. 16; of Sardis, for her imperfections, Rev. iii. 3; of Laodicea, for lukewarmness, ver. 19; yet there he intimates his will that they should repent. Paul required this of the Corinthians, and rejoiceth in their compliance therewith, 2 Cor. vii. 8, 9. All commands of repentance concern such sins; *non est distinguendum ubi lex non distinguit*.

(3.) *Necessaria ad impletionem*, necessary to performance. *Conditio est res sine quâ non*. This appears from the premises. If the Lord would pardon absolutely without it, why does he peremptorily command it to converts? Why adds he this, in form of a condition, to the promises of pardon? Prov. xxviii. 13. This must be extended to sins after conversion, because there is no reason to restrain it.

That it is necessary, appears further thus:

It is a part of regeneration, an infused grace: therefore it does not vanish after its first acts; that is contrary to the promise: nor does it continue idle, unexercised in the habit, till death; for that is contrary to the nature of grace: it will be active, fruitful—active, when there is occasion. Sin, when committed, is an occasion to exercise repentance, or else there can be no occasion for it. Can an instance be given of any other grace, whose exercise is never required, but immediately after its first infusion? Must all graces else be exercised all our lives, repentance only excepted? Who can imagine this without evident ground from Scripture?'

That which is not fruitful, active, is not from the Spirit. There may be some intermission, but no total cessation. It may be sometimes winter, but not all the year, all a man's life.

That is no tree of righteousness which brings not forth fruit in its season; no plant of our heavenly Father's planting, but that which must be cut down.

Is it not absurd to make this rod of God blossom upon our first implantation into Christ; and then immediately wither, and continue in the soul as a dead stick, without leaf or fruit, without act or exercise? Does the Lord give a soft heart to continue always, to shew itself only at first conversion? It is too absurd for any rational mind to close with.

Besides, the acts of repentance are necessary, in respect of sins after conversion; therefore repentance itself. It is necessary we should hate, forsake, bewail sins, after conversion; *ergo*, necessary to repent of them.

1. Hatred of those sins is necessary: for if continuance in the state of grace be necessarily required to the continuance of pardon, then hatred of these sins is required to the pardon of them. But the former all grant, and the consequence is clear, because want of hatred to sin, or, which is all one, love to sin, is inconsistent with the state of grace, Ps. lxxix. 10. He that hates not evil, those evils, loves not the Lord; and he that loves not the Lord is not in the state of grace, 1 John iii. 14. with chap. v. 2.

2. Forsaking of those sins is necessary to pardon, for the same reason.

Pardon is not continued, but to those that continue in the state of regeneration ; and those that live in sin are not in that state, 1 John iii. 9 and v. 18. As he commits not sin like others, so he continues not committing it as others. Where no forsaking of these sins, no regeneration ; and where this is not, there is no pardon ; *ergo*, without forsaking these, no pardon.

3. Sorrow for these sins is necessary to pardon : for he that is not sorry for these sins, takes pleasure in them ; and he that takes pleasure in sin is in a state of condemnation, therefore not pardoned, 2 Thes. ii. 12. Besides, if it were not necessary, why should the saints afflict themselves with it ? Why did Peter weep bitterly ? Why David ? If they were not necessary, they were works of supererogation.

Quest. Whether must sorrow, required to true repentance, be as great as our sorrow for outward afflictions, loss of relations, estate, liberty, credit, hopes, &c. ? If thus much be necessary, I fear I am in an impenitent state, &c. I never felt my heart so sensibly affected, so heavily affected with sin, as with these.

Ans. 1. Not only as much, but more sorrow for sin, is necessary to repentance, than for outward afflictions. He never truly repented, who has not been more grieved for his sins than for his sufferings, Mat. x. 13 ; Luke xiv. 26, hatred, a less degree of love ; he that loves not these less than me, &c. Now sorrow is a sign of love, proportionable to it. He that mourns more for the loss of these than losing, dishonouring Christ, loves these more than Christ. And such are unworthy of Christ, are in a state incapable of any benefit by Christ, an impenitent state. Thus no true repentance, where is not more sorrow for sin, than for any affliction has befallen, or you can imagine may befall. But lest you may mistake it for less, or but equal, when more, observe,

2. There may be a greater sorrow in a soul truly penitent, than sorrow for sin when it is there alone, viz., when sense of affliction and sense of sin both lie upon the soul at once, and the heart is sorrowful for both. This double sorrow may exceed sorrow for sin, when single. When these two streams meet, the tide of sorrow will be higher. Therefore it is no ground to conclude against the truth of repentance, because there has been greater sorrow than sorrow for sin alone ; except when both these have seized upon the soul together, sorrow for the affliction has exceeded the sorrow for sin. David mourned both for his sin and the loss of his child at once ; there was more sorrow in his soul than if there had been but one occasion of grief : yet his repentance was true, because his sorrow was more for his sin than for the loss of the child. There may be greater sorrow in the soul than sorrow for sin alone ; yet sorrow for sin may be the greatest.

3. Sorrow and grief for afflictions may seem greater than sorrow for sin, when it is not really so. It may seem greater, because many times it is more sensible, more passionate, makes greater noise, vents itself more in outward expressions, tears, &c. That sorrow which is most passionate, is not always greatest in God's account. How passionately does David bewail his loss of Absalom ! Yet was his sorrow for sin greater, upon a just account, else he had never been approved as a sincere penitent. There may be true repentance, not where grief for sin is less, but where less outward, less sensible, passionate, &c. It may be greater in other respects, more necessary to repentance, more acceptable to God, though less in these respects. Therefore observe,

4. Sorrow for sin may be greater than sorrow for outward sufferings, though it seem not so in many respects.

(1.) *Objective*. Because this sorrow for sin has more objects. He mourns for more sins than afflictions; therefore this sorrow is more for sin than for sufferings. He is grieved, sorrowful for all known sins, but these infinitely exceed sensible afflictions in number, and therefore his sorrow for these is greater. If his grief for some particular sin should be exceeded by grief for some special afflictions, yet sorrow for all sins, being so many, will exceed sorrow for sufferings, being so few. But supposing that it is not sufficient to true repentance, that sorrow is in this sense greater for sin, &c., because indeed we should be more grieved for any one sin than for all afflictions; yet with others it will be sufficient to it.

(2.) *Subjective*, in respect of the subject. Sorrow for sin takes up more of the soul than sorrow for afflictions, &c. This is a passion, and is principally in the sensitive appetite; but the will and understanding have more influence upon sorrow for sin.

[1.] There is more of the will in grief for sin, &c. *Quoad voluntatem* more; for this is voluntary, that is natural. This is of choice, that seizes upon the heart unavoidably. This is comfortable, that is an affliction, part of the curse. A true penitent would choose this sorrow, rather than freedom from outward affliction.

[2.] Every affection, every act of the will, contributes something to this sorrow for sin, and so makes it more. A penitent desires he could mourn more; wishes his head were waters, and his eyes fountains of tears, &c.; that all sorrow were turned into sorrow for sin; loves a broken heart, and that word which melts it; hates the relics of hardness, counts it the greatest judgment; is ashamed he mourns so little for that which deserves so much; and so is more afraid of a hard insensible heart than of outward affliction; delights in tenderness, when his heart will melt, bleed, &c.; and is sorrowful because sorrow is so small. So it is *quoad affectum* more.

[3.] The understanding makes sorrow for sin more, by several acts.

First, A man judges sin the greatest cause of sorrow; the least sin a better ground, a juster occasion for the greatest sorrow than the sharpest affliction of the least; thinks afflictions a slender ground in comparison of sin.

Secondly, He judges he can never sorrow enough for sin, though too much for afflictions: thinks tears of blood would not be too great an expression of grief for sin; rivers of tears not sufficient.

Thirdly, He judges and censures himself for the defects of this, for the excess of that. Counts it his sin, his misery that he mourns so little for sins, so much for afflictions: so more appropriative. Though sorrow for outward crosses be more passionate, yet if he can find grief for sin greater than it, in respect of will, affections, judgment, according to the tenor of the particulars expressed, no reason to conclude against the truth of repentance, especially if greater.

(3.) *Interpretative*, in respect of endeavours. He that labours to grieve more in God's gracious interpretation, does grieve more. A true penitent will aggravate his sins to the utmost; will entertain such thoughts and considerations as may humble him, and increase his sorrow for sin; will be importunate with the Lord to take away the heart of stone; will be often looking upon Christ crucified; will be diligent in the use of all means which are appointed to break, humble, affect his heart with sin; endeavour to

mitigate his sorrow for afflictions, as that which is unprofitable, dangerous; but to increase sorrow for sin. So it is *quoad conatum* more.

¶ (4.) *Terminativè*, in respect of the termination of his sorrow. When he mourns for afflictions, his sorrow is terminated in sin. He grieves for them, because they are the issues of sin; would not think them worthy of his sorrow, but only because they are the effects of sin. If the effects be so grievous, Oh, what is the cause? If I had never sinned, I had never suffered, therefore I have more reason to grieve for sin. This is the spring, they are but the streams that flow from it. This is that root of bitterness, they but branches. This pulls down God's hand to scourge me, they are but rods. Oh let me not be so foolish as to grieve at the rod, but at that which procured it! He that grieves for afflictions, principally because they come from sin, grieves more for sin than them.

The papists say they do not worship an image so much as God, because they do not terminate their worship in the image; but though this evasion will not excuse them from idolatry, because they should not worship an image at all, yet it is true in this case; he that grieves for afflictions, but terminates his sorrow in sin, grieves more for sin; so that, if when you mourn for crosses, if principally because for sin, and for sin the cause, no reason to conclude against the truth of your repentance.

(5.) *Effectivè*, in respect of the effects. Sorrow for sin in a penitent has this issue, he had rather suffer any affliction than commit the least sin. And this is a sign, an evidence, that sin is more grievous, that his sorrow for it has been greater. He looks upon it as an object more full of sorrow and misery than any suffering. Where sorrow for sin has this effect, there is no reason to conclude that sorrow for affliction has been greater. He that would suffer anything rather than sin in the least, may be assured that he is grieved more for sin than afflictions. Yet this is its effect in true mourners, sincere penitents.

(6.) *Ratione oppositionis*, in respect of the opposition. We find it true in other things, that which seems a little, because much opposed, is really more than what seems much when no opposition. Sorrow for sin is strongly opposed by Satan, the world, sinful nature; it inclines naturally to happiness, and thinks sorrow contrary to it; it loves sin, and will not be brought to mourn for it. But sorrow for affliction has no such opposition. Satan is a friend to it, nature resists it not, for it is natural; and therefore that which may seem no great degree of sorrow for sin, yet if it be sincere, may be accounted greater than passionate grief for afflictions.

(7.) *Habitualiter*, and in respect of continuance. That is the greatest sorrow, which is of longest continuance. What it wants in height of passion and sensibleness is made up in duration, it is permanent. A land-flood fills the banks on a sudden, and more water is visible at that time than all the year; and yet there is more water conveyed there in an ordinary stream, because the current is constant. So sorrow for some unexpected, grievous affliction may make his sorrow rise and swell like a land-flood; yet sorrow for sin, continued in a constant exercise of repentance, is greater than it, though it make not so much noise, because it is of longer continuance, more durable.

Sorrow for affliction is worn out with time, and often quickly over; but sorrow for sin in a true penitent doth never cease, always manifests itself upon occasion.

He that truly mourns for sin will never be comforted in respect of the offence of sin, though is always comforted in respect of the guilt of sin.

He is always grieved when he remembers how his sins have offended, dishonoured God, and so he refuses to be comforted. He need not be sad for the guilt, for the danger of his sin, to which it exposed him, because it is removed; no condemnation in reference to the guilt. The Lord says he sees no iniquity, &c., Num. xxiii. 21. Nor need a penitent any more to see it so as to be afraid, dejected, grieved for the punishment deserved by sin; for he is as safe from that as though he had never sinned, and so may rejoice and be glad in this respect in the midst of his sorrow, be comforted in the midst of his mournings.

But in reference to the offence it is with true penitents as it was with David, Ps. li. 3, his sin ever before him; and whenever it was in his eye, grief was in his heart. Can never consider what injury sin has done to God, but the soul will mourn, the heart grieve. When the Lord has once opened a spring of sorrow in the heart, it is never quite dried up till he come to heaven, if there. So it is more, because it continues longer.

If your sorrow for sin be in these respects greater than for afflictions, it is greater upon all accounts that are necessary, and so no reason to conclude against the truth of repentance.

Quest. Whether may we mourn for sin in reference to those effects of it which concern ourselves? Whether may sin be the object of our sorrow, as it exposes to wrath, makes us miserable, excludes from mercy, brings in danger of hell? Whether do they repent who mourn for sin because of these effects?

Ans. That this may be resolved, we must distinguish the effects of sin that concern us. Some of them concern us only, seem alone prejudicial to us; as that it brings judgments on us, deprives us of outward mercies, exposes us to eternal miseries. Some of them concern both God and us, and so it is injurious to both. Such are its defilement, it makes the soul deformed so as it cannot please God. Impotency makes it unserviceable, so as it cannot obey God; contrariety sets the soul in opposition to God, contrary to his nature, will, designs, so as it cannot honour him; nothing but dishonour, displeasure, and disobey him.

This premised, take the resolution in four propositions.

1. We may mourn for sin in respect of those effects that concern us only. That sorrow is not unlawful in itself which has these for its objects. It is lawful to mourn for things less grievous, for outward temporal afflictions, such as are common to all. The Scripture forbids not this sorrow, but only limits it; bids us mourn moderately, as not without hope, &c. The Lord requires not we should be stocks, without sense of sufferings, 'without natural affections.' No; ἀσώβητοι are reckoned amongst the greatest of sinners, Rom. i. 31. Now, if we may mourn for smaller evils, much more for greater; if for those of this life, then for those that concern eternity; if for bodily afflictions, then for soul judgments; if for loss of estate, friends, then for loss of God, of happiness. It is not unlawful.

2. This kind of sorrow, if only or principally for these effects, is no act of saving repentance. It is rather, if alone, 'the sorrow of the world, which worketh death.' It is not that which worketh repentance unto salvation. The cause of such sorrow may be, and is, self-love, not love to God; the issue may be death, the companion despair; the subject may be a reprobate. Such was the sorrow of Cain, Judas, Ahab, Esau. It is true the Lord often works such sorrow in vessels of mercy before he bestows grace, and therefore it is called by many a preparation for grace; and so it may be called in some sense; but so understand it as that it has

no necessary connection with grace. He that goes no further, as divers do not, shall never arrive at grace. He who sorrows no otherwise for sin, does not 'sorrow after a godly sort,' does not 'sorrow unto repentance,' 2 Cor. 7.

3. Sorrow for sin, in reference to those effects which concern both God and us, is not only lawful, but necessary. It is an act of true repentance to mourn for those sad issues of sin; to bewail sin, because it has made us deformed, impotent, contrary to God. David, when he repented, was affected with the defilement of sin; he was humbled, mourned for sin, in this respect. Hence it is his prayer: Ps. li. 7, 'Purge me,' &c., 'wash me.' Paul bewails his impotency, Rom. vii. 18, 19; and ascribes it to sin dwelling in him, ver. 20; and in sense of both cries out, ver. 24. Such sorrow, since it is for sin, not only as it is prejudicial to the sinner, but principally and ultimately as it is injurious to God, is, and should be, accounted godly sorrow.

4. Sorrow for sin, the more it is for sin as it is against God, the more ingenuous, the more evangelical, the more genuine act of saving repentance. The more it is for sin, as sin is prejudicial to us, the less ingenuous, &c.; and a less evident, a less comfortable, sign of repentance unto life. There are two sure characters of ingenuous, gospel sorrow: when it proceeds from sense of God's love to us, *non potest agere penitentiam, qui non sperat indulgentiam*; and when it proceeds from our love to God, when we mourn for offending him, because we love him. Now, these are not, or not so visible, in any sorrow for sin as that which mourns for sin as it is against God. The other springs rather from self-love, when we bewail sin because it is against us, hurtful, dangerous, damnable, Ezek. vi. 9. This was not the temper of David's sorrow, it was of a more evangelical strain: Ps. li. 4, 'Against thee,' &c. Why, David had sinned against himself, not only against God. He had sinned against his friend, against his own body, soul, estate, family, and involved all these in great dangers, exposed all to grievous sufferings. It is true David knew it, but he takes no notice of that. That which grieved, affected him was, that his sin was against God; and his sorrow so much respects this, as though he had sinned against God alone, as though his sin had been only injurious to him. This is the genuine temper of godly sorrow.

Therefore, though sorrow for the effects of sin may have its place elsewhere, yet when we would sorrow to repentance, we should look at the nature of sin, not at its effects (except such as concern God only, or him principally, him more than us); sin, in its nature, is more against God than in its effects. For the effects of sin are not directly against God, but when one sin is the effect of another.

That is most properly godly sorrow, which is for sin as it is against God. But sin in its nature is most against God, a violation of his law, disobeying his will, contempt of his authority, &c. That sorrow which arises from the consideration of the nature of sin, is most ingenuous, and the most certain evidence of sincere repentance.

Quest. Whether the hatred of sin, which is required to true repentance, may consist with any love to sin?

Ans. 1. All hatred of sin is here imperfect. No perfection in this life, but sense of imperfection. Both graces, and gracious affections, want many degrees of perfection. Grace is but of a child's stature, it has perfection of parts, but not of degrees. A child has all the parts of a perfect man, but wants many degrees of man's perfection. And as with grace, so with

this affection ; it is not perfect, either *ratione objecti* ; sin is not hated as it should be according to its hatefulness ; nor *ratione facultatis*, so much as it is possible for the heart to hate it ; not raised to such high degrees of hatred, as it may be will be.

Ans. 2. A less degree of hatred may be called love. He that hates sin less than he should do, may be said in some sense to love it. A less degree of love is called hatred, Luke xiv. 26. And so a less degree of hatred may be called love, though not properly and strictly. For that imperfect hatred should be called love, as it is not according to the ordinary rules of art, so it is not according to the constant tenor of Scripture expressions. I remember no place but this to ground it, and this but by consequence.

Ans. 3. He that truly hates sin, though but imperfectly, cannot be properly said to love it. He that hates all sin, and hates it above all that the world counts hateful, and abhors himself that he can hate it no more, and mourns for the imperfection of his hatred, and strives in the use of appointed means to perfect it, does truly hate it.

In the same subject there cannot be contrary affections to the same object. We count it impossible to love and hate the same thing or person. In immediate contraries, *positio unius* is *sublatio alterius*. He that hates does not love, &c. It is as impossible, as for the same thing to be both black and white ; the same water to be at once both hot and cold. It may be neither, but it cannot be both ; if one, not the other. So here, and though hatred be but in us in a remiss degree, imperfectly, and it may be supposed the imperfection arises from the mixture of the contrary affection, yet that which is predominant gives the denomination. He that hates sin more than he loves it, may be said simply absolutely to hate it. We say not water is cold if it be hot above lukewarmness, though it be not hot in the utmost extremity. We say not that he loves sin who hates it truly, though not perfectly. If he be overpowered to act it, surprised with some pleasure in it, this argues not love. For he abhors himself acting, mourns bitterly for delight in it, as Paul, Rom. vii.

Ans. 4. He that truly repents, does truly hate sin ; so hate it, as he gives no occasion, upon any just ground, to say he loves it. And by consequence true repentance is inconsistent with love to sin, it may be without perfect hatred, but it cannot be with any degree of that which may be properly called love, &c.

Quest. Whether must we repent of original sin ?

That this may be more clearly propounded and resolved, observe a distinction, the non-observance of which occasions much darkness, both in men's apprehensions and discourses of this subject.

Original sin is, 1. Imputed, 2. Inherent.

1. *Imputed*, is Adam's sin, that which he actually committed in eating the forbidden fruit. Called original, because it was the first sin, and committed at the beginning of the world, when the first foundations of man's original were laid. Imputed, because Adam representing us and all mankind, what he did, we did in God's account, he looks upon us as sinning by him, Rom. v. 19, 20.

2. *Inherent*, is that natural corruption which cleaves to us, dwells in us, consisting in the privation of original righteousness, and propensity to all unrighteousness ; the sad issue and effect of the former sin. Adam receiving this original holiness for himself and his posterity, lost it for himself and them ; and holiness being gone, a proneness to all sin necessarily

followed. It is called *sin*, because it is a state opposite to the will and law of God ; the absence of that which it requires, the presence of that which it forbids. *Original*, because we have it from our birth, from our original. *Inherent*, because it is not only accounted ours, but is really in us. Of this Gen. vi. 5, and viii. 21, Job iv. 5, Ps. li. 7.

Quest. Whether must we repent of Adam's sin, that which is but imputed to us, that which was committed so many years before we were born ?

Ans. This must be repented of with such acts of repentance as it is capable of, confessed, bewailed, hated. As to avoiding, forsaking of it, we need not be solicitous, because there is no danger it should be recommended. But we must acknowledge, aggravate, mourn for it, abhor it, hate the memory of it. So I conceive (though I meet not with any that determine this), on this ground.

1. We are bound to repent and mourn for the sins of others, much more for those that are any ways our own. This *à fortiori*. This has been the practice of holy men formerly : David, Ps. cxix. 158, so Jer. xiii. 17. Sins of fathers, Jer. xiv. 10, many hundred years committed before. It is prophesied of the Jews, that when the Lord shall convert them, they shall mourn for the sin of their forefathers who pierced him ; so Dan. ix. ; and Moses's ordinary practice. If repentance prevent judgment, then it might prevent those that are inflicted for sins of others, progenitors. The Lord often punishes for their sins ; if we would not suffer for them, we should repent of them. And if of others' sins, then of that which is ours ; and this is ours by imputation. And justly is it imputed to us. For by all human laws, children are charged with their fathers' debts, the father's treason taints his posterity.

2. We are bound to rejoice in imputed righteousness, and therefore to mourn for imputed sin. Adam's sin is ours, the same way as Christ's righteousness, viz., by imputation, Rom. v. 19, and *contrarium contraria sunt consequentia*. If we must rejoice in Christ's righteousness, we should bewail Adam's sin. And indeed great cause of joy in that it is the marrow, the quintessence of the gospel ; the most gladsome part of those *εὐαγγέλια*, those glad tidings which are published in the gospel ; the sweetest strain of that message, which, the angel says, was ' good tidings of great joy to all people,' Luke ii. 10. Imputed righteousness is that blessed design which the Father from eternity contrived, which Christ published and performed, into which the angels desire to pry, that lost man, who could not be saved without righteousness, who had no righteousness of his own to save him, should have a righteousness provided for him, whereby he is freed from wrath, and entitled to heaven. Sure this is, this will be, an occasion of eternal joy ; and if so, imputed sin is a just ground of sorrow.

3. As long as the Lord manifests his displeasure against any sin, so long we are called to mourn for it. The Lord is highly provoked, if, when his hand is stretched out against any place or person for sin, they will not see it, so as to repent of it, and be humbled under it. He interprets this to be a contempt, and this highly exasperates. It has been the practice of holy men, when wrath was either executed, or threatened, to mourn for the sins that occasioned it, though committed by others, and long before. See it in Josiah, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31. There he takes notice of forefathers' sins ; and see how he is affected therewith : ver. 27, ' his heart was tender, he humbled himself.'

We are called to mourn for sin, whenever wrath is manifested against it ; but the wrath of God is still revealed from heaven against that first

unrighteousness; his displeasure is still legible in the effects of this sin, the dreadfullest effects that ever any act produced, no less than all sin, and all misery. That threatening, Gen. ii. 17, is still in execution, and the execution is terrible; every stroke is death, spiritual, personal, temporal, eternal, take it in the most extensive sense. Adam's soul was struck dead immediately; and by virtue of that sentence, all his posterity are dead men, born dead in trespasses and sins. Personal death, death of afflictions; all the sorrows and sufferings of this woeful life, they flow from this cursed spring. Temporal, in Adam all died; it he had not sinned, all had been immortal. Eternal, all must die for ever that repent not. Great cause then to repent of this sin.

Quest. Whether must we repent of that original sin, which is inherent; that natural corruption, the loss of original holiness; and that innate propensity to evil? It may seem not to be any just occasion of sorrow, because it is not voluntary, but natural; having, without our consent, seized upon us unavoidably.

Ans. This is principally to be repented of, as that which is the mother sin, the cause of all actual sins. Nor should the supposed involuntariness of it hinder us from making it the object of our sorrow.

For, 1, every sin is to be repented of. But this is a sin exceeding sinful, indeed, all sins in one. For, what is sin, who can better determine than the Lord himself? And he in Scripture determines, that whatever is a transgression of the law is sin, whether it be voluntary or no; not only that which we actually consent to, but that which he peremptorily forbids. The apostle's definition of sin is unquestionable, 1 John iii. 4, *ἀμαρτία ἵστιν ἡ ἀνομία*; but no greater transgression than this, since it transgresses all at once. We are commanded to be holy; so the want of holiness is forbidden, which is the privative part of this sin. We are commanded to love the Lord with all our hearts; so the heart's inclination to hate God is forbidden, which is the positive part. Was not the apostle Paul more able to judge what is sin, than any papist, Socinian, &c.? He calls it sin five times, Rom. vi., six times, Rom. vii., three times, Rom. viii., yea and his sin, though he then consented not to it.

2. Suppose (that which is false) no evil is to be repented of, but what is consented to, this should not hinder any from repenting of this sin; for all that are capable of repentance have actually consented to their natural corruption, have been pleased with it, have cherished it by occasions of sin, have strengthened it by acts of sin, have resisted the means whereby it should be mortified and subdued, which are all infallible evidences of actual consent. That which was only natural, is to us become voluntary; and so, by consent of all, sinful; and therefore necessarily to be repented of.

3. The necessity of it is grounded upon unquestionable examples of saints, both in the Old and New Testament. Instance in two of the holiest men that the Scripture mentions. David, in that psalm, which is left as a public testimony of his repentance, to the world, he bewails, acknowledges this, Ps. li. 5. Paul does acknowledge, aggravate, bewail it, as one heavily afflicted with it, Rom. vii. His description of it is very observable: as that which is *not good*, ver. 18; *in me*, i.e., in the unregenerate part, that which is not good, that which is evil, ver. 20, sin, six times; the greatest evil, a condemned forbidden evil, ver. 7; a sinful evil, ver. 18, *καὶ ὑπερβολὴν ἀμαρτωλός*; a private evil, ver. 20, hinders him from doing good; a positive evil, ver. 17, *no more I that do it, but sin*; perverse evil, grows worse by that which should make it better, ver. 8; debasing evil,

made and denominates him carnal, ver. 14 ; intimate, inherent evil, sin in him, ver. 17, in his members ; a permanent evil, *ολοῦσα ἐν ἡμοῖς*, ver. 17 ; a fruitful evil, ver. 8, all manner of lust ; a deceitful evil, ver. 11, *ἐξηπάτησέ* ; an imperious evil, a law, ver. 23, gives law, commands as by authority ; a tyrannical evil, *αἰχμαλωτίζοντά*, ver. 23 ; sold, ver. 14 ; a rebellious conflicting, war-like evil, *ἀντιστρατεύμενον*, ver. 23 ; an unfortunate, unreasonable evil, ver. 15, forces him to do that which he hates ; a watchful evil, ver. 21, is present, *παράκειται* ; a powerful evil, ver. 24, ‘ who shall deliver ? ’ &c. ; a complete evil, ver. 24, a body furnished with all members of unrighteousness ; a deadly evil, ver. 24, body of death, *θανατώδες*, ver. 11 ; slew me, ver. 9, I died ; a miserable evil, ver. 24, above all things made him wretched.

Paul suffered as many calamities in the world, as any we read of in it ; see a catalogue, 2 Cor. xi. 23–28. But all these sufferings could never extort such a passionate complaint from him, as this corruption. He could glory in those ; but sighs, complains, exclaims, in the sense of this. You see how large he is in aggravating this. Here is above twenty aggravations of this. His sorrow was proportionable. No sin, no suffering, for which he expressed so much soul-affliction. And if he saw so much reason to bewail it, it is our blindness if we see it not. The more holy any man is, the more sensible of natural corruption. The more they get out of this corrupt element, the more heavy it is. Those who feel it not, are drowned in it. *Elementum non gravitat in proprio loco*. Sin is their proper element, who are not burdened with natural sinfulness.

If it was such an intolerable evil in him who was regenerate, how much more in the unregenerate ! If it made him account himself wretched who was so happy, how much more miserable does it make those who have no title to happiness ! If it was such an impetuous evil in him who had extraordinary powers of grace to weaken it, how prevailing in us, in whom grace is so weak ! If he had cause to complain, bewail, repent of it, much more we !

Quest. Who are impenitent sinners ? How shall we know them ? How may I discern whether I be in that number, in that danger ?

Ans. I shall propound several things whereby ye may know this.

1. He is an impenitent sinner, who does not leave sin at all. Repentance is a turning from sin ; he that doth not turn from it at all, does not repent at all. He who lives in sin, does so act it, as he makes it evident that he is a worker of iniquity ; does not only *ἀμαρτάνειν*, as a true penitent may do, sin sometimes by surprisal, without deliberation, full consent, unwillingly, &c., but *πῶτεν ἀμαρτίαν*, sins constantly, when he has occasion, as though sin were his trade ; is constant in sinning ; not that he is always acting it visibly, but that he always acts it, seldom forbears when he is tempted ; will swear when provoked, be drunk when he meets with company, profane the Sabbath when he has business, though not necessary, disobey the word when it doth not please, revenge injuries when he has opportunity, lie when advantage, deceive when unperceived. When the chief reason why he sins not is because he wants occasion, temptation, opportunity, he is impenitent. He who acts sin in every scene of his life,—in his particular calling, is covetous or careless, negligent of God, to think of, depend on him ; in his general calling, frequent omissions, or heartless performances ; in his family, ignorance or profaneness, not instruct, not pray for and with them ; to neighbours, envious, contentious ; in discourse, profane or graceless ; in dealings, deceitful, disingenuous ; when some sin

reigns in every part of his conversation,—if thus, it is clear as the day, if there be any light in the Scripture, he is impenitent.

2. He that leaves not all sin. Repentance is a turning from all sin. He that turns not from all does not at all repent. Where true repentance is, there is an equal respect to all commands. Leaving off sin must be like the Israelites' departure from Egypt, there must not a hoof be left behind, *Exod. x. 26*, the least sin must not be retained, reserved. That is hypocritical repentance, which, like Saul's obedience, kills only the vile and refuse. It is not enough to reform one part of your conversation, to make clean one corner; the whole will be reformed where true repentance is. If carriage to others be reformed, it is well, but not sufficient, except thou amend thy deportment to God. It may be thou wilt not be drunk, but if thou swear, that is enough to shew thee impenitent. It may be not swear, but profane the Sabbath, &c., it may be attend the ordinances; well, but if not obey, if not pray with heart; if conform to public worship, it is well; but if serve him not in family; it may be left many sins that formerly reigned; but if there be any thou thinkest too pleasing, too profitable to part with, thou art not a true penitent. Turn from all, *Ezek. xviii. 21*.

3. He that leaves sin only outwardly, excludes it out of his conversation, not out of his heart. Repentance is a turning with all the heart, *Joel ii. 12*; it is not only a turning from all sin, but a turning of all the man, the whole man, inward and outward, from all sin. He that abstains from all sin outwardly and visibly may pass for a penitent with men, but it is not so in God's account, unless sin be turned out of the heart as well as out of the life. Man judgeth according to outward appearance, but the Lord judgeth of repentance by the heart. There is no true repentance where the life is not reformed; but there may be an unblameable conversation, a life outwardly reformed, where there is no true repentance. Paul professes that he had lived in all good conscience, &c., until that day, *Acts xxiii. 1*; and therefore, since he lived so all his life till that day, he lived so before he repented, unblameably, in good conscience outwardly before God, in the account of others, and in his own account; he lived so before he had truly repented, as neither others nor his own conscience could accuse him for outward sinful acts, *Philip. iii*. Therefore abstinence from sin outwardly is not sufficient. If sin be regarded in the heart, there is no true repentance though the life be freed from it. Men judge of the heart by the life, but God judges of the life by the heart. He hears every prayer of a penitent soul, *Isa. lvii. 15*; yet David says, *Ps. lvi. 18*, 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.' Whatever his life was, God would not respect, regard him as a penitent, if he did regard it in his heart. If ye do not break out into gross acts of sin, yet if your hearts entertain them, if you act uncleanness, revenge, covetousness in your thoughts, you are in a state of impenitency.

4. He that leaves sin because he cannot commit it. Repentance is a voluntary forsaking of sin; but sin rather forsakes him than he it. He that is not unclean, because his strength is spent; is not contentious, because he wants means to prosecute suits; wrongs not his neighbours, because he sees them wise to prevent, or able to hinder him; gives not himself to drunkenness, voluptuousness, because not rich enough to maintain himself in such intemperate courses. The heart may be most desperately hard and impenitent, and yet may these abstain from sin; nay, there is such a forsaking of, and abstinence from sin in the devil himself, he can forbear when he cannot help, when there is necessity.

He that sins not because he cannot would sin if he could; and because he would sin, it argues him as much impenitent as if he did. He that rewards the will for the deed in that which is good, condemns and will punish the will for the deed in that which is evil.

5. He that leaves sin only out of sinister respects, by-ends, because it would deprive him of some advantage, or expose him to some loss, if committed, of friends, credit, profit, in respect of God or men; gives not himself to intemperance, because it is expensive; to uncleanness, because it is a sin shameful in the account of the world; avoids oppression, revenge, because civil laws lay penalties; wholly omits not ordinances, lest he should be accounted an atheist; he that leaves sin only thus does not repent; for true repentance is 'repentance toward God,' Acts xx. 21. It makes a man forsake sin out of respect to God, because it offends, dishonours him, as Joseph, Gen. xxxix. 9; but this is to abstain from sin out of respect to himself.

6. He that leaves one sin for another; divorces one and engages himself to another; puts away one, and entertains another in the room of it; will not be prodigal as formerly, but grows more covetous; will not be superstitious, but grows profane; not omit duties, but is hypocritical in performance; runs away from one extreme to another; such a reformation is no act of repentance. It is but like Jehu's, 2 Kings x., who destroyed Ahab's Baal, but set up Jeroboam's calves, ver. 29; this is not a turning from, but unto sin; as the Pharisees, casting out devils by Beelzebub, one cast out another.

7. He that leaves sin but for a time; leaves sin, and resolves to leave it while some judgment lies upon him, whilst under affliction, when upon a bed of languishing, in fear of death, apprehensive of hell and the last judgment. This, in discourse, could make Felix tremble, and almost persuade Agrippa. Many at such times will resolve to abandon such and such sins, and to reform their lives if God will prolong them; but when God's hand is removed, they prove the same men, by following their former courses. When life is restored, hopes of life revive, they return with the dog to their vomit, &c. This is not to repent, but to mock God, and delude your souls; this is not to escape out of the snare of the devil, but to ensnare your soul ten times more. Ephraim in affliction would seek God, but after-revolts made their case desperate, Hosea vi. 4.

True repentance is never repented of. But those that return to sin hereby shew they are sorry, repent of their shows of repentance, Hosea vii. 16. This is returning, but not to the most High. Such are like a deceitful bow, break, or return to their unbent posture before they have delivered the arrow; unbend their resolutions before they come effectual. God looks upon such as guilty of impenitency in a high degree; such as are so far from repenting of sin heartily, as they are sorry they entertained any thoughts of it; for this is the language of after-returns. This was Pharaoh's repentance; while the judgment of locusts was on Egypt, he confesses his sin and desires pardon, Exod. x. 16, 17, but the locusts and his repentance vanish both together.

8. He that leaves sin, but does not endeavour to subdue it, will be content it should be confined, but not crucified; restrained, but not put to death; will have the fury and rage of it curbed, that it do not break out so openly, but will not starve it; kept under, not rooted out. He that will not avoid the occasions of sin, those that nourish it, have drawn him on to act sin formerly. He that truly repents of drunkenness will avoid that

company which has tempted him to it. He that repents of uncleanness, will, as Job, make a covenant with his eyes. He that repents of profaneness in words, will set a watch before his mouth. He that repents of Sabbath breaking, will so dispose of his affairs before, as he may have no occasion to profane it, to absent himself from the public worship. He that repents of wanderings in prayer, will be watchful against distractions, drive them away. He that turns not from occasions turns not from sin, and so is no true penitent. He that is not diligent in the use of mortifying duties to weaken sin, will not apply that word to his conscience which wounds his sin; casts off searching words, words of reproof and terror, as too sharp, painful corroding plasters for his sore; rather be exasperated against him that speaks them, as one that rails, is too strict.

He, the strength of whose prayers is not against the strength of sin, can pray affectionately for worldly blessings, removal of afflictions, and it may be for pardon of sin, but wants heart, feels an ebb, a coolness in his affectionateness, when he should pray against the strength of sin, either leaves this out of his prayer, or his heart leaves his prayer when he should desire this; can be content to set apart days for private fasts, when some judgment is near or upon him, but never looks upon the power of sin within him as a sufficient, a necessary occasion to humble himself before God by extraordinary mourning and fasting. When such means are not used constantly, as are appointed by God in ordinary for subduing of sin, and extraordinary too, when there is occasion,—a dangerous sign of impenitency.

The heathens, many of them, went far in a way of outward reformation, but came short of repentance, because they endeavoured not the destruction of the inward power of sin.

Without this there is no true repentance; for that is a turning from sin wholly, with the whole heart, not only in respect of sin in its guilt and outward acts, but power and dominion. There is an *ἐξδίκησις*, which is the companion of repentance, 2 Cor. vii.

9. He that so turns from sin as he does not turn to God. This motion cannot be perfect without its *terminus ad quem*. If it be not essential to, it is inseparable from repentance, Isa. lv. 7. So forsake sin, as embrace Christ; so hate sin, as love holiness; so grieve for it as delight in God's ways; steer the conversation to a quite contrary point. Not only cease to do evil, but learn to do good, Isa. i. 16, 17. It is not sufficient not to profane God's name; he that repents will glorify it; not only not omit holy duties, but perform them in a holy manner; not only not pollute the Sabbath, but sanctify it; not only not dishonour profession, but adorn it; not only abstain from sin, but exercise grace. There are fruits of repentance which John requires, Mat. iii. 8, and Luke iii. 8. That repentance which brings not forth fruit is not sound, no plant of God's planting; the doom of it you may see, ver. 9.

Would you think it a sufficient evidence of a good vine, that it brings forth no wild grapes? No; if it be an empty vine, though it have no bad, if it bring not forth good grapes, it is good for nothing. Negative righteousness will never evidence true repentance. It is not enough to say with the Pharisee, Luke xviii. 11, 'I am not as other men,' &c.

The apostle joins these, repent, turn to God, do works, &c., Acts xxvi. 20. Those that would approve themselves clear in this matter, who would give clear evidences to the world and their own consciences that their repentance is to salvation, and that they sorrow after a godly sort, must produce all

the effects of repentance which he inquires after, 2 Cor. vii. 11 ; not only indignation against sin, clearing themselves from vice, but carefulness to express the contrary virtues ; not only fear of offending God, but vehement desire to please and honour him ; not only revenge for dishonouring God by wicked courses, but zeal for his glory in all the ways of holiness. A fruitless repentance is rejected.

10. He that never had a full, clear discovery of sin. Repentance begins here. The first step is illumination ; the Lord causes a light to shine in the soul to discover the hidden things of darkness, sends the Spirit to convince of sin, makes him believe those acts, &c., to be sins which he accounted innocent.

Discovers sin in its number, multitude of abominations ; carries him, as the Spirit carried Ezekiel, from one part of his life, from one corner of his soul to another, and still shews him greater and greater abominations, brings those sins to his remembrance which it may be he never thought of since they were committed. Though the work begin at some master sin, and the heart may be affected with one more than the rest, yet it is sensible of all, each adds something to increase sorrow.

In *weight*. Makes him feel the burden of sin, shews how they are gone over his head, Ps. xxxviii. 4.

In the *aggravations*. Such a sin against mercy, under affliction, after conviction, reproof, when conscience checked, &c.

In the *effects*, what it has done, and what exposed to.

In the *evil* of it. The sinfulness of it. More evil in it than ever he imagined, than ever he thought he could have believed ; more evil in it than in anything he ever acted or suffered.

There must be first knowledge of it before repentance. How can ye repent of that ye never knew ? When God gives repentance he first 'opens the eyes,' Acts xxvi. 18, 'turns from darkness to light.' As a man who has walked through a way in the dark, full of serpents, snares, pits, when he passes through it again with a light, and sees his danger, he wonders that every step was not his death. He that wondered before that any should make so much ado about sin, that so much sorrow, so much mourning should be pressed ; he that was apt to think that they were hypocrites, who talked of their humiliation, tears, and secret mourning for sin, to imagine that whatever was pretended, there was no such thing in reality, will now change his opinions ; sees so much evil in sin as he can never sufficiently bewail ; wishes he could command back all that sorrow which he has misspent upon his sufferings in the world, that he might spend it upon sin as that which most deserves it ; thinks all his time little enough, his constitution cannot afford tears enough to bewail it ; so many, so sinful enormities, he wonders that any sin should be counted small, *ποῶν ἀμάρτημα*, &c.

11. He that has not some sense of the corruption of his nature. He that repents, bewails actual sins, and he that sees and feels the evil of the members, will have some sense of the body. He that tastes bitterness in the fruits, will disrelish the root of bitterness. Those who are persuaded their natures are good, will be angry at any that shall tell them they have wicked, perverse, naughty natures ; never saw cause to complain, as David, of their birth-sin ; nor to cry out with Paul, 'O wretched man !' Those that think themselves innocent enough, but for some outward gross acts, find no other reason why God should be displeased with them, why they should be excluded from heaven or communion with God ; take no notice

of inward averseness to God, proneness to evil, so as to make it an occasion of sorrow, humiliation, self-abhorrency; are apt to excuse sinful acts from their natures. Where there is not in some degree a sense of inbred corruption, there the heart is hard, impenitent.

12. He that is loath his sin should be discovered.† A penitent is thankful to those that will convince him of any sinful practice. He desires the Lord to search him if any way of wickedness. It is his petition to God: Job xxiv. 32, 'That which I see not, teach thou me; if I have done iniquity,' &c. He would not hide his sins from God; he knows this is opposed to repentance, Prov. xxviii. 13; nor would have the Lord hide his sins from him. As he would have the Lord discover them, so he is not unwilling men should manifest them. He that repents looks upon sin as a close traitor; and who would not be glad to have a close traitor discovered? If an enemy lance the imposthume of his heart, whatever be the intention of the actor, he will be glad at the event of the act. He that would have sin hid, is in love with it. He that is unwilling to have sin detected in any practice, delights in it. None hide wickedness under their tongue, but those in whose mouth it is sweet, Job xx. 12, 13, he would spare it. He counts them his best friends who will discover such a dangerous enemy. How thankful was Saul to the Ziphites for a discovery of a supposed enemy? 1 Sam. xxiii. 21. He will be as thankful for discovering sin, as David was to Abigail for preventing sin, 1 Sam. xxv. 32. He will be so far from taking this for an occasion of enmity, as he will make this a motive to friendship, and consult with the discoverer how he may destroy that which is discovered.

It is a sign he has no mind to turn to God, who will not endure to be told when he is out of the way.

13. He that will not endure a reproof. Those that cannot abide their sins should be reprov'd, either by public ministry or private, will be ready to 'lay a snare for him that reproveth,' Isa. xxix. 21, and count him their enemy who tells them of sin, though he tell the truth, as Paul complains. Be ready to do him a mischief, as wicked Ahab did Micaiah, 2 Chron. xviii. 25. Whatsoever Joash was, the Holy Ghost leaves an eternal brand upon him for his severity against Zechariah reprov'ing his sin, 2 Chron. xxiv. 22. Those who break out into reproaches against those that reprove them, say as those against Jeremiah, chap. xviii. 18; or if they break not out into acts, words, yet boil inwardly with rancour and malice. Those who, instead of reforming the sin reprov'd, fall upon an inquiry after the failings of the reprov'or, that they may retaliate. Hatred of reproof is a sign of a scorner, Prov. ix. 7, 8; and scorers are placed in the highest rank of sinners, Ps. i. Those are furthest from repentance. Hatred of reproof and repentance are two such contraries as can never meet in the same subject; quite contrary things are ascribed to them. Repentance leads to life, this to death, Prov. xv. 10. That is to salvation, this to destruction, Prov. xxix. 1. You may as well say the same man shall both go to heaven and hell, as say that man is a penitent who hates reproof. You may know the temper of a humbled soul in David, Ps. cxli. 5. He is in love with sin who will not endure reproof, says to ministers, as David to Joab concerning Absalom, 2 Sam. xviii. 51, 'Deal gently for my sake,' &c. He that hates it will have it roughly handled, will penitently bear all the evil that can be spoke against it; and not only against sin in general, but against his sin. That word pleases him best which represents it most hateful, most dangerous. He desires not the ministers should speak soft

and pleasing things, to flatter him in his evil ways, but welcomes reproof for sin, though they be like the words of David's enemies, sharp as swords; the sharper the better, the more healthful. He would not have this dangerous sore skinned over, before it be thoroughly searched. He knows reproofs for sin, how sharp soever, are 'the reproofs of life,' Prov. xv. 81, 82.

Use 1. Terror to impenitent sinners. Hear the doom in the text: 'Except ye repent,' &c. Those that do not, will not repent, must perish, shall perish. There is no way without repentance to avoid perishing, and these will not repent, mourn, hate, forsake sin. What will become of them? Christ, the righteous judge, gives sentence, they shall perish, certainly, universally, eternally.

1. *Certainly.* For Christ has said it. He speaks peremptorily; not they *may*, but they *shall*. Here is as much assurance that they shall perish, as any saint ever had that he should be saved—the word of Christ. It is as certain as if one from the dead should affirm it; and Dives desired, though an unbeliever, no more certainty. It is more certain than if an angel from heaven should speak it; for, behold, one greater than the angels, higher than the heavens, has said it. As sure as Christ is true, as sure as Christ is God, if there be any truth in truth itself, then this is certainly true, those that repent not shall perish. *Si Christus loquatur*, &c.

2. *Universally.* All, and every one, without exception, whatever he be, have, do, or can do, 'Except,' &c. Christ speaks to the Jews, and to all without exception—all perish. If any people in the world had any ground to plead exemption, sure it was the Jews; no people ever in greater favour, none ever had greater privileges. Whatever you can plead why this should not concern you, they had as much ground to plead.

Are you outwardly in covenant with God? So were they; to them belonged the promises: Rom. ix. 4, 'To whom pertain the covenants and promises.'

Do ye profess yourselves to be the children of God? So might they; to them pertained 'the adoption,' a peculiar people.

Do ye enjoy those inestimable pledges of his favour, the gospel and ordinances? So did they; 'to them were committed the oracles of God,' Rom. iii. 2.

Are you baptized, sealed to be his? So were they circumcised, received circumcision, &c., Rom. iv.

Has the Lord vouchsafed you such privileges as no people under heaven enjoy besides; so did he to them, Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20; but all these would not secure them from perishing without repentance. Even them Christ tells, 'Except ye repent,' &c. No more will they secure you; except you repent, you shall perish; all, every of you.

Nay, these are so far from exempting you from repentance, as these should lead you to it. The impenitent heathen, that never knew God, shall more easily escape than you. 'Except you repent, you shall perish.'

3. *Eternally.* Soul and body, here and hereafter, now and for ever, must perish without redemption: For who shall redeem from it but Christ? and Christ cannot do it except he will act against his own word, except he will deny himself. The sentence is passed, and none in heaven will, none in earth can, recall it. Men and devils cannot; angels and saints dare not; God himself will not. This sentence is like the decrees of the Medes and Persians, that can never be recalled. Christ has pronounced it, and he will not fail to be as good as his word, except his power fail. Nothing shall save impenitent sinners from perishing eternally, if Christ have power

to punish them with everlasting destruction. And is not Christ able to destroy you? Why, all power is given to him, Mat. xxviii. 18; power to save and power to destroy. And how he will exercise this power he here tells us; viz., by saving eternally those that repent, and by the eternal destruction of the impenitent: 'He that has the keys of hell and death,' Rev. i. 8; Rev. iii. 7, 'shutteth, and no man openeth.' That which Christ has here spoke with his mouth, he will at the last day execute with his hand; he will thrust impenitent sinners into hell, and lock them there for ever: for when he shuts, no man, no angel, no, God himself will not open. What his hand doth, none will undo for ever, and he will do what he has spoken; and that which he speaks is plainly this, impenitents shall perish eternally. It cannot be meant of temporal ruin only (though that also be included) for divers of the Jews to whom he spoke (as we may presume) did not perish, like those Galileans, temporally; therefore either eternally, or else not at all, which cannot be if Christ be true. Perish eternally; eternal torments is the proper portion of such, it is only theirs. Who are those that must 'suffer the vengeance of eternal fire,' but those who have been 'treasuring up wrath'? &c., Rom. ii. And who are they but impenitent sinners? Who is he that must be 'cast into outer darkness,' &c., but the 'unprofitable servant'? Mat. xxv. 80. And who more unprofitable than he who will neither do his Master's will, nor shew himself truly sorry for not doing it? And who is this but an impenitent sinner? Who are they that must 'depart into everlasting fire'? &c. Christ tells, Matt. xxv. 41, 'ye cursed;' and who are these but impenitent sinners? Other sinners are cursed by the law, but these are cursed both by law and gospel; and this is it which makes their misery eternal. He whom the gospel curses can never be blessed. If the law only cursed, if God only, there might be hopes in the gospel, in Christ; but he whom Christ curses shall be eternally cursed. But Christ curses the impenitent, therefore they shall perish eternally.

Use 2. Exhortation 1. To the practice of this duty.

Christ urges it, and under such a penalty. These should be sufficient enforcements. But there are many more considerations to stir up to this duty. I shall reduce them to three heads; some concerning, 1. Sin to be repented of; 2. Christ that urges repentance; 3. Repentance itself, the duty urged. 1. Concerning sin.

(1.) No creature ever got, nor can get, any advantage by sin. Whatever gain seems to be in sin, is but an imagination; and that conceit is put upon men by a cheat, viz., by the deceitfulness of sin, the deceitfulness of their hearts, and the cunning device of Satan. There is neither pleasure, profit, nor credit to be got by sin, nor ever was. Satan, when he presents sin, makes a show of these; but he merely cozens poor sinners, that he may ruin them. There is no sinner in the world that can pass a right judgment, take a true estimate of his incomes by sin, but must say his losses are real, great, many; his gains a mere show, an empty delusion.

Men seem to gain by sin, when they get or increase their estates by lying, oppression, immoderate cares, with neglect of their souls; but let such consider, the curse of God accompanies whatever is so gotten. And while they gather some heaps of earth, they treasure up wrath, and lose their souls; and then let them tell me what they gain. 'What will it profit,' &c.?

Men fancy pleasures in uncleanness, drunkenness, &c. But this will be bitterness in the end, and such bitterness as will raze out the memory of all former imaginary delight. Such pleasure in sin ends in the bitterness

of death, when it brings hell into the conscience, or brings the soul into hell ; it is like poison taken in a sweet potion, pleases the palate, but conveys death into the inward parts ; it inflames, swells, tortures, and destroys the soul.

Ask Daniel* what advantage he got by sin. He might fancy delights in those unclean, unfaithful enjoyments ; so he might think, while Satan's witchcraft prevailed. But when he is come to himself, then ask him, and he will tell you it was an act as full of bitterness as ever man acted ; it broke the bones of his comfort, and made him go with sorrow to his grave.

Ask Saul what he gained by disobedience. He imagined no small advantage in reserving the best spoils of Amalek ; but really what did he gain ? Why, for a few sheep and oxen, he lost a kingdom, 1 Sam. xv. Indeed, this is all the gain in sin : lose a kingdom for some cattle.

Ask Ananias and Sapphira what advantage they got by sinning. They thought to have gained a part of their estate by a lie ; but did they gain by it ? No ; they lost their estate, and their lives, and their souls too. Oh woeful gain !

Nay, ask the devil himself what he got by it. If he would tell the truth, he must say he is the greatest loser in the world by sin. It tumbled him down from the height of glory into the nethermost hell. Sin cast him out of the glorious ennobling presence of God into everlasting burnings, where he is reserved in chains of darkness.

This is confirmed by a general suffrage of all creatures : none ever was a gainer by sin. And this consideration may be a sufficient motive to repent.

(2.) The least sin is infinitely evil. When I say *infinite*, I say there is more evil in it than the tongue of men or angels can express, than their largest apprehensions can conceive. When I say infinite evil, I understand it is a greater evil than the greatest in the world besides it. A greater evil than any poverty, greatest torment, loathsome sickness, dreadfulest death, nay, than hell itself. Gather up in your thoughts whatever on earth or in hell you count evil, and put them all together, and the evil that is in the least sin will far outweigh them all. It is inconceivably more evil than all in the world together. To be infinitely evil, is to be evil above all we can speak or think. Infiniteness is not ascribed usually to any but two : God, the greatest good, and sin, the greatest evil. God is infinite essentially ; sin is infinite objectively : infinitely evil, because against him who is infinitely good, because injurious to an infinite God ; an offence of infinite majesty, a contempt of infinite authority, an affront to infinite sovereignty, an abuse of infinite mercy, a dishonour to infinite excellency, a provocation of infinite justice, a contrariety to infinite holiness, a reproacher of infinite glory, an enemy to infinite love.

Oh consider what ye do by continuing impenitent. You harbour an evil in your souls that is unspeakably worse than hell ; and act that frequently which it was better ye should die ten thousand times than act once. What greater occasion of sorrow, than sin the greatest evil ! What fitter object of hatred, than that which is infinitely hateful ! Eternity is little enough to bewail such an infinite evil. Oh think not much to employ some of your time in bewailing it.

(3.) The least sin deserves infinite punishment, *i. e.*, greater than any can endure, express, or imagine. The Lord has engaged himself never to let any sin go unpunished, Ex. xxxiv. 7, and his justice requires that the punishment should be equal to the offence : render to every one according

* Qu. 'David'?—ED.

to his deserts. But the offence is infinite ; and therefore God's justice is obliged to punish every sin infinitely, to inflict as much as is consistent with the creature's being ; and what wants in degrees, to make it up in duration. Eternal punishment is the wages of every sin, Rom. vi. 23 ; eternal death (as the opposition betwixt death and eternal life does evidence) is as due to every sin as wages to a hireling, as a penny to those who wrought all day in the vineyard.

Oh then, what do ye, while ye continue impenitent ? By every word, thought, act, draw down eternal vengeance on your heads, and treasure up infinite wrath ; such wrath as, though it will be expending to eternity, will never be quite spent, nay, will never be diminished. After a thousand millions of years' expenses of wrath upon sinners that are impenitent, this treasury will be as full as when first opened.

Oh then, make haste to repent, that your sins may be blotted out ; for if the Lord come to reckon with you, and find any one sin on the score unblotted out, your payment must be eternal torments.

(4.) The least sin cannot be expiated without infinite satisfaction. Nothing can satisfy God for the injury of the least sin, but that which is infinite, *i. e.*, such as no creature, no man, no angel, can tender to him ; no, nor all the creatures together, by all that they can do or suffer while the world endures. God is not satisfied till sufficient amends be made. No amends is sufficient, but that which is equal to the injury. The injury is infinite ; therefore, nothing can satisfy for it, but that which is infinite.

He that will satisfy the Lord for the least sin, must bring him that which is of more value than heaven and earth, than men and angels, than all the creatures.

'Without blood there is no remission,' Heb. ix. 22. No remission without blood of an infinite value. If all the creatures on earth, if all the glorious saints in heaven, if all the glorious angels in the presence of God, should offer to sacrifice their lives for the expiation of one sin, it would not be accepted, it could not be sufficient ; for their lives, being finite creatures, are but of a finite value. Only the blood of him who, being God, derives an infinite value upon his blood.

(5.) It is the cause of all the evils that we count miseries in the world. Whatsoever is fearful, or grievous, or hateful, owes its birth to sin. Were it not for sin, either no evil would be in the world, or that which is now evil would be good.

Is poverty a burden ? Sin should be much more burdensome ; for there had been no poverty but for sin.

Is the cruelty of men, the crossness of friends, the contention of neighbours, the unkindness of children, an affliction ? We should be much more afflicted with sin ; for there had been no such grievance, no self-seeking, revengefulness, jars, &c., were it not for sin.

Is there vanity and vexation of spirit in all outward employments ? Oh how then should you be vexed at sin, which has embittered all !

Do ye complain of pains, languish under bodily distempers, sicknesses, &c. ? Oh rather complain of sin, for this breeds all such miseries ; it is the sting and anguish of pain ; sickness had never seized on the body, but that sin seized on the soul.

Is the wrath of God a terror to you ? Oh let sin be more terrible ; for we had never known any such thing as wrath in God had it not been for sin, nothing but smiles, promises, mercies.

Are you afraid of death, that the king of terrors should apprehend you ?

Be more afraid of sin ; the sons of men had never known, had never feared death had it not been for sin.

Do ye tremble at the apprehension of hell, those everlasting torments ? Tremble more at the approach of sin ; for there had been no hell, no devil, but for sin. It was sin that prepared both tormentors and torments ; it was sin that digged that bottomless pit, and overshadowed it with darkness, and filled it with tortures ; it was sin that kindled the wrath of God, which, like a river of brimstone, nourishes, continues those torments to eternity. There had been no poverty, crossness, vexation, sickness, &c., but for sin. We hate, we avoid, we mourn for these ; much more should we hate, avoid, and mourn for sin, which is the cause of them.

(6.) It is the soul's greatest misery. Those evils which sin has brought into the world are lamentable, but the miseries wherein it has involved the soul are much more grievous.

[1.] It consumes the soul, weakens it, eats away its strength insensibly ; a dangerous consumption, leaves no power to act, suffer, bear, resist, move, help. So the state of sin is described to be a state of impotency, Rom. v. 6.

[2.] It impoverishes the soul, steals away its riches, its ornaments, those riches which are more valuable than all the treasures of the earth, those which make the soul rich toward God. When sin broke into the soul it robbed, spoiled, ransacked it, left it poor, empty, naked. The state of sin is a state of poverty, nothing to cover it, nothing to feed it, nothing to lay out for its own necessities. No such beggar on earth as one poor in soul ; nay, after the Lord has in part repaired these losses by communicating the riches of grace, yet even then the more sin the more poverty, Rev. iii. 17.

[3.] It defiles the soul, deprives it of its beauty, lustre, comeliness, deforms it with ugly spots, besmears it with loathsome pollutions, such as make it hateful in the eye of God, angels, &c. : ' Ezek. xvi. 6, ' polluted in blood.' Hence sin is called ' uncleanness,' Zech. xiii. 1 ; and ' filthiness,' 2 Cor. vii. 1 ; Ezek. xxxvi. 25, compared to things most filthy in the world. Hence, before the Lord will suffer sinners to come near him, he bids them ' wash,' &c., Isa. i. 16. *Corruptio optimi est pessima.*

[4.] It enslaves the soul to the body, to Satan, to itself, a worse, a viler tyrant than either ; no galley-slave in the world so miserable as a soul enthralled to sin, led captive by Satan, &c. No thralldom so woeful as spiritual soul slavery.

[5.] It confines the soul to itself, to the dungeon of the world, gives no liberty to have any converse with God, Ps. cxix. 82 ; it loads it with chains of darkness ; those invisible irons enter into the soul, the weight of them presses it down to the earth, yea, towards hell. It is bowed down under the pressure of them, so as it cannot lift up itself to God ; and thus it lives till Christ set it free ; and even then sin is ready to entangle it with new yokes of bondage, to encompass it with new fetters, Heb.*

[6.] It straitens the soul, contracts it. As it deprives it of what it had, so it makes it incapable of receiving what it wants, blocks up the passages whereby grace, comfort, &c. should be conveyed ; so that nothing but infinite mercy will relieve a sinful soul ; so nothing but infinite power can make it capable of relief, Acts xvi. 14.

[7.] It blinds the soul, deals with it as the Philistines with Samson ; not only fetters it, and makes it grind in the prison-house, but puts out its eyes, Judges xvi. 21.

* Qu. ' Gal. v. 1 ' ?—ED.

[8.] It wounds it, makes wide gashes, deep and bloody furrows in it, and in every part of it, the pain whereof, when felt, is intolerable, Prov. xviii. 14, and when not felt is most dangerous; leaves it as the thieves left the man, Luke x. 30.

[9.] It murders the soul: it was so from the beginning, has murdered all mankind; all are 'dead in trespasses,' &c., Eph. ii., i. e., dead of this. This is that mortal disease which never seized upon any soul but it deprived it of spiritual life. What the pestilence is to the body, that sin is to the soul, a deadly plague.

Oh look into your souls, see what a lamentable spectacle sin has made them, and you will need no other motive to mourn! If you would avoid misery, and hate that which makes you miserable, sin above all things is to be hated, to be avoided, as that which involves in greatest, i. e., in soul miseries. Every sinner may cry out, Have you no regard, &c.? 'See if there be any misery like my misery,' wherewith sin has afflicted me. And the sorrow for sin should be answerable to the miseries of sin; no misery like that, no sorrow like this.

(7.) It is God's greatest adversary; it has done much against the world, more against man's soul; ay, but that which it does against God is most considerable, as that which should move us to hate, bewail, abandon it, above all considerations. It has filled the world with fearful evils, the soul with woeful miseries; but the injuries it does to God are most horrible.

The injury of one sin is equal to the ruin of heaven and earth. Christ says it is better these should pass away than that his law should not remain inviolable; but sin violates it, and would have it quite abrogated.

It is so injurious as the Lord complains of it. We never find he complains of anything but sin; but of this he complains as a burden to him, an oppressing burden, that which wearies him, Isa. xliii. 24, Amos ii. 13; and shall not that be a burden to us?

It provokes, angers, highly offends, kindles his wrath, &c. And why, but because it is unspeakably injurious to him?

In sin there is some *contempt* of God, low unworthy thoughts. No man durst sin if he did apprehend God to be what he is.

Some *sacrilege*. Sin robs God, and robs him of that which is dearest to him, as precious as the apple of his eye, more dear to him than our lives to us, his honour.

Some *idolatry*. The heart gives more respect to something else than God.

Something like *witchcraft*; an implicit compact, an agreement with Satan, for some pleasure or profit, &c., and to do that which is most injurious to God, 1 Sam. xv. 28.

Some *treason*. Sin is high treason against the most high God, a conspiracy with the Lord's greatest enemies against him.

Some *rebellion*; making use of members and faculties as weapons of unrighteousness to fight against God.

Some *blasphemy*. Sin has a secret language which the Lord hears, though we take no notice of it. It speaks proud and blasphemous things against God; denies him to be what he is, so holy, just, severe, true; makes him to be what he is not, ignorant, careless; ascribes that to others which is only his, goodness, happiness, pleasures, &c.

And is sin thus injurious? &c. How should this consideration make us tremble, that we deferred repentance so long! and ashamed, that our sorrow for, hatred of sin, is no more. A wonder the Lord will grant any

time for repentance after the commission of such a provoking act as sin is ! Great reason to make haste to break it off by repentance.

(8.) Consider the multitude of your sins. If any one sin be so infinitely evil in itself and in its effects, oh how evil is he, what need to repent, who is guilty of a multitude of sins ! And indeed so many, so numerous are our sins, as it will be hard to find an expression which may help you to conceive how many they are. I cannot better shew how numerable they are, than by shewing they are innumerable.

And this will be evident, if ye consider that before repentance, every act, word, thought, is a sin ; you can do, speak, think, nothing but sin. A bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit. A soul, till implanted into Christ, can bring forth nothing that is good, nothing but sin. And one of the first-fruits after this implantation is repentance ; till then nothing but wild grapes. Now if every act you did since you were born be sin, put all those acts together, and into what a multitude will they swell ! They are without number, beyond knowledge. He that takes the strictest survey of his life and actions that is possible, cannot give an account of ' one of a thousand,' Job ix. 8. Let him be as diligent as can be, yet where he takes notice of one, a thousand will escape his observation. Those that we know are not the thousand part of those we know not. The stars in the heavens, the hairs of our head, are far more easily numbered than our sinful acts. They are like the sands on the sea-shore, which cannot be numbered. And if sinful acts be innumerable, what account can we take of our words ! They are more than innumerable, as being innumerable more than our actions ; ay, and our thoughts more than both. What then ? How many are all put together ? Ask man, ask angels ; both will be nonplussed : Ps. xix., ' Who knows the errors,' &c., Ps. xl. 12.

We lose ourselves when we speak of the sins of our lives. It may astonish any considering man to take notice how many sins he is guilty of any one day ; how many sins accompany any one single act ; nay, how many bewray themselves in any one religious duty. Whensoever ye do any thing forbidden, you omit the duty at that time commanded ; and whenever you neglect that which is enjoined, the omission is joined with the acting of something forbidden ; so that the sin, whether omission or commission, is always double : nay, the apostle makes every sin tenfold, James ii. 10. That which seems one to us, according to the sense of the law, and the account of God, is multiplied by ten. He breaks every command by sinning directly against one, and so sins ten times at once ; besides that swarm of sinful circumstances and aggravations which surround every act in such numbers, as atoms use to surround your body in a dusty room ; you may more easily number these than those. And though some count these but fractions, incomplete sins, yet even from hence it is more difficult to take an account of their number.

And, which is more for astonishment, pick out the best religious duty that ever you performed, and even in that performance you may find such a swarm of sins as cannot be numbered. In the best prayer that ever you put up to God, irreverence, lukewarmness, unbelief, spiritual pride, self-seeking, hypocrisy, distractions, &c., and many more, that an enlightened soul grieves and bewails ; and yet there are many more that the pure eye of God discerns, than any man does take notice of.

And besides, every one of these many sins manifest themselves in every duty many several ways, and every way sinful.

Now if so many sins be discernible in the best duty, and many more in

every unlawful act, and the acts themselves be innumerable that have such a numberless multitude of sinful attendants, what do ye think will the total arise to? Even such a sum, as all the arithmetic of men and angels cannot give an account of. If one sin, being so infinitely evil, deserve infinite punishment, being so horridly injurious to God, being so dangerously mischievous to the soul, call for shame, sorrow, indignation, hatred, &c., oh what then does such a multitude of sins, numberless even to astonishment, call for!

2. Considerations from Christ, who enjoins repentance.

If our sins were occasion of sorrow to him, great reason have we to mourn for them. But so it is; our sins made him a man of sorrows. The cup which he gives to us, he drank himself; he drank out the dregs and bitterness, the wormwood and gall, wherewith this sorrow was mixed. That which he left to us is pleasant. The cup which Christ gives us, shall we not drink it? Nay, the cup which Christ drank, shall we refuse to taste?

Our sins made him weep and sigh, and cry out in the anguish of his spirit; and shall we make a sport of sin?

Made him weep, express his grief in tears, Heb. v. 7; disfigured by sorrows, and made him a reproach, Isa. liii. 2-4; shall not we grieve?

Made him sigh. The weight of our sins made his soul heavy, heavy unto death, Mat. xxvi. 37, 38. Why? Isa. liii. 6, 1 Pet. ii. 24, our sins were that deadly weight, &c.

Made him cry out to heaven, 'My God,' &c., Mat. xxvii. 48. To earth, 'Have ye no regard, all ye,' &c. He was afflicted by our sins, and shall not our souls be afflicted? 'He was wounded for our transgressions,' and wept not only tears, but blood; Oh, shall neither our eyes nor hearts shew sorrow?

3. Considerations from repentance, the duty enjoined.

That is the time when all happiness begins, when misery ends, the period of evils; the time from whence ye must date all mercies. Till then, never expect to receive the least mercy, or have the least judgment, evil, removed without repentance. Till then,

(1.) Whatever ye do is sinful. 'Without faith it is impossible to please God;' and where no repentance, no faith. Whatever ye think, speak, act, is a provocation. Every thought; for what is said of the old world is true of every unrenewed man, not renewed by repentance, Gen. vi. 5. Every inward act, every word; for 'out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks,' Luke vi. 45. Now there is nothing in the heart but wickedness; therefore the words must be so; good words cannot be brought out of the evil treasure. Every action: as soon gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles, as good actions from an impenitent: Luke vi. 44, 'He that is born of God, sinneth not'; but till then, he does nothing but sin. Till repentance, no man is born of God; for that is one of the first vital acts.

(2.) All your enjoyments are cursed. All the curses of the law are the portion of an impenitent sinner; and there are curses for himself, and every thing that belongs to him, Deut. viii. 16, 17, &c.; Deut. xxix. 19, 20.

A penitent has an undoubted title to all the promises; but to an impenitent sinner the curses belong. He that repents not is not within the covenant of grace, and therefore under the law; which, since it was broken, speaks nothing but curses to all under it. The penitent hear nothing but from mount Gerizim, the impenitent nothing but from mount Ebal, Deut. xi. 29.

(3.) All sin is unpardoned. The handwriting of ordinances, which is against sinners, is not cancelled till then, Acts iii. 19. They remain in God's sight, as writ with a pen of iron, Jer. xvii. 1. The Lord will never speak of pardoning till then; and then, though their sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, &c., Isa. i. 18. Sin remains, John ix. 41. Impenitence makes other sins unpardonable; that which is small, shall never be pardoned.

(4.) All ordinances ineffectual, uncomfortable, hurtful, damnable. The word, the savour of death: till the heart be broken, the seed is rejected in stony ground. The sacraments, seals of damnation, 1 Cor. xi. 26. Death in the pot, poison. Prayer an abomination, Prov. xxviii. 9. No sacrifice acceptable without a broken heart, Isa. i. 15.

(5.) God is an enemy. No communion with God till agreed; no agreement without repentance. Will God count them friends who fight against him, will not lay down their arms, their weapons of unrighteousness? He dwells in a penitent heart, Isa. lxvi., Isa. lvii. 15. But he is so far from dwelling in an impenitent heart, as he will not endure his word should be in their mouth, Ps. l. 16, 17. 'He will wound the head of his enemies,' &c., Ps. lxviii. 21. Never expect smile, promise, mercy, till you repent.

(6.) Justice is unsatisfied. No satisfaction without compensation; none can make that but Christ: nothing will be accepted but his *λύτρον*, that which he paid as the price of redemption. But to whom is he a redeemer? Isa. lix. 20, to them that turn from transgression. Justice is your adversary; no agreement without repentance; nothing but such a dreadful process, Mat. v. 25, to be cast into prison.

(7.) Wrath is unavoidable. That is the attendant of unsatisfied justice. No way to escape without this. Who has warned? Mark iii. 7, 8; Rev. xvi. 11, vials are poured out on those that repented not. Jer. xv. 7, destroy, because they returned not.

(8.) Death is terrible. Better to die than live impenitent; but better never live than die impenitent. Death comes to them like the king of terrors, not as a messenger of peace; armed with a sting, repentance only charms it; comes as an officer of justice, to drag the soul to execution; Christ's pursuivant, to bring before the dreadful tribunal of an incensed judge, before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive the sentence of eternal condemnation. The penitent long for his appearance; these will call to mountains to fall on them, &c.

(9.) Hell is certain. It was prepared of old for these. Every tree that brings not forth the fruits of repentance shall be cut down, &c. They cumber the ground, are unfruitful, and hinder others: Rom. viii. 13, 'If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die.' It is, as was said of Judas, *ῥέσος*; none but they, and all they, have that place for their portion.

(10.) Hopes of heaven are delusions, expectations of happiness dreams, vain groundless fancies, which Satan begets and nourishes, that he may more securely ruin impenitent sinners. The apostle asserts it peremptorily, Gal. v. 21. Though it be long since you did these, yet till repentance, you are still doing, still continue in them. There is not only the word of an apostle, but the oath of God; he swears, hardened sinners shall not enter into his rest, Heb. iv. 8.

Obj. God is merciful, infinitely so; will not be so strict as many make him. He may save me though I be not so penitent, though sorrow be not so great, &c.

Ans. This is an ordinary conceit, suggested by Satan ; and the matter of it is unreasonable, false, blasphemous, perverse.

1. It is infinite mercy that God will save any sinner that repents, that he will vouchsafe life upon such terms. It is infinite mercy that any one is saved, that all are not cut off in the height of sin. It would be infinite mercy that sinners might be admitted to life upon terms more harsh, chargeable, difficult. Oh what mercy to have life upon terms so easy, equal ! Would not that traitor think himself graciously dealt with, who, having acted treason a great part of his life, should be admitted to favour, honour, if but sorry and reform ? Who would expect such easy terms for rebellious sinners ? Oh, what would the damned do and suffer to have such an offer ! It is unreasonable to think God will save without repentance because merciful, whenas it is mercy we may be saved upon our repentance.

2. Infinite mercy will not save an impenitent sinner ; it is a false conceit, and very dangerous to entertain it. It has been the ruin of millions to presume on mercy without ground. The Lord does plainly exclude all such from all hopes of mercy, Deut. xxix. 20.

3. To think mercy will save impenitents is a blasphemous conceit, that which makes God unjust, untrue, unfaithful. He has said, and sworn ; he has engaged justice, truth, faithfulness for the ruin of impenitent sinners. To think he will be so merciful as to save them, is to make God a liar, think he will deny himself to save you, trample upon his own glory to advance you, and so make an idol of God.

4. Mercies should lead to repentance, and not be turned into perverse disputes.

Obj. I will repent hereafter, it is time enough ; I am so full of business, I cannot attend it now.

Ans. The matter of this objection is groundless, false, and desperately dangerous ; for,

1. This is the devil's suggestion, which he proposes with a cruel intention to destroy your soul. He would have you defer repentance that you may perish. It is the great design which he now drives on amongst you ; by yielding thereto you join with your greatest, most deadly enemy, against God, Christ, the Spirit, your own souls. He is loath you should escape out of his snare.

2. You presume without ground that you have time enough. You know not how soon death may seize on you, how soon Christ may summon, what watch the Master will come. You have no security for one hour, for the time is uncertain, and comes upon most when they expect it not ; and why not so to you ? And if so, if death come before repentance, oh it will be a sad hour, a day of blackness and thick darkness ! You would be loath to leave anything you value in the world at such uncertainty, and will you leave your souls so ? Will you leave that in continual danger every moment to drop into hell ?

3. If your lives should be prolonged, yet you will have time little enough to repent though you should begin presently. Man's life, if longer, affords not time sufficient to bewail sin, if sorrow should be proportionable to what sin calls for. No pardoned sinner can ever think he bestows too much time in mourning for sin. Besides, there are daily occasions for continual exercise of repentance. The work is long, and life is short ; no room therefore or reason for delay.

4. Business and designs in the world should not hinder ; for if they be

worth following, repentance will not hinder them. No man ever lost anything by obeying God in this. This is the way to make the business succeed, your designs prosper. Repent, and all things shall be well, those which seem worst; but till then, never expect but all will be either crossed or cursed. You should rather argue thus: I have much business in the world, therefore I will make haste to repent, because I have so little time. It is a perverse inference, and savours of hell, where all such are forged, I am too busy to repent.

5. When you say you will repent hereafter, you imagine you may repent when you will; but herein you delude your souls; it is not in your power to repent. It is the gift of God; 'If so be,' &c., Acts v. 31. He gives it when and to whom he pleases. You can never hope to have it till he give; and when have you any ground to hope he will give it, but when he calls for it? But now he calls for it, 'now he commands all men to repent,' Acts xvii. 30. 'This is the accepted time,' &c., 'To-day, if ye will hear his voice,' &c., Heb. iii. 15. To-day is the Lord's time, to-day is your time; who knows what to-morrow may bring forth? To-morrow the door of mercy may be shut, the Lord's hand may be closed, the Lord's patience may be terminated. To-morrow it may be too late, and then, alas! where are you? You may defer it till it be too late; for there is a time when the Lord will not be found, when repentance will not be found, though ye seek it with tears, Heb. xii. 17; and if you now neglect to learn to obey the Lord's voice, you may swear that hereafter will be too late. God will not hear them hereafter, that will not hear him now, Prov. i.

6. The longer ye defer repentance, the harder it will be to repent. You will be every day the less able; the longer you neglect to get your hearts softened, the more will ye be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, Heb. iii. 13; the longer ye live in sin, the more ye will be in love with it; the longer ye continue in the snare, the faster you will be entangled. Oh, make haste while there is hope to escape. It must be done, it is necessary; either repent, or perish. Resolve to do it then, while ye may do it with most ease, before it become too difficult, impossible.

7. Ye judge such delays madness in outward things, much more is it here; nothing of greater consequence, of more present necessity. You apprehend a present need of rain, and would censure him as void of sense or reason, that would say rain will come time enough a month, a year hence. But, oh, is there not more need of relenting hearts! You may lose a year's fruits by the intemperate drought of the season; ay, but you may lose your soul's happiness, not for a year, but for eternity, by hardness of heart. If your house should be on fire, would any but a madman say, it will be time enough to quench it to-morrow? For why? It may be consumed to ashes before to-morrow. The least delay may undo you: Why, so it is here; your souls are on fire though you feel it not, the wrath of God has kindled on them, and it will burn to the bottom of hell, burn and not be quenched till repentance be. Oh, make haste, while there is hope, before it be too late, before your souls be quite consumed. The Lord, to impenitent sinners, is a consuming fire.

If one be stung with a serpent, will he say it will be time enough to mind the cure hereafter? None but a mad, a desperate man will say so. The poison is diffusive, will spread, and, if not prevented, seize upon the vitals, and so become incurable. No poison like the poison of sin; it is like the cruel venom of asps. This serpent has bit the soul; if it be not prevented, it will be mortal to the soul; no cure for it but the balm of

Gilead, the blood of Christ ; and this is never applied without repentance. Oh, defer it not, delay is dangerous, it may cost the life of your souls.

8. This has been the ruin of thousands. Ask those wretched souls that are cast into outer darkness, what is the reason they are now in that place of torment ? They will tell you, because they deferred repentance. It is this that shipwrecked so many souls in that lake that burns with fire and brimstone ; and will you run your souls upon the same rock ? You have a whole world of warnings in one. Ask the old world why the Lord brought the flood upon them ? why, by a deluge of waters he swept them into a deluge of fire, and destroyed them in such a terrible manner, twice at once ? They will tell you, it was because they repented not at the preaching of Noah. If the men of Nineveh had no more regarded the preaching of Jonah, calling them to present repentance, they also had been certainly destroyed here and hereafter.

Use. Exhort. Does the Lord command it, and presently ? Take heed of deferring repentance. Disobedience will be like the sin of witchcraft. You have had warning for some years together ; you have had sin discovered, and the danger of it ; ignorance, drunkenness, profaneness, Sabbath-breaking, neglect of worship, resisting holiness, contemning the gospel ; sins of place and persons. If you will still continue in these sins, when the Lord commands now to repent ; take heed he who now commands do not the next moment threaten, do not next moment execute.

Take heed, if there be any regard of your souls ; take heed of continuing in any sin, of hardening your hearts in any evil way ; take heed of it, it infinitely, eternally concerns you. It is matter of life and death, and that of your souls, and that eternal. This is it I have been doing, and which the Lord employs his messengers to do. Take it in Moses's words, and mind it, as if it were the last thing ye should hear : Deut. xxx. 19, If ye repent, turn now when the Lord requires, you choose life ; but if you will live in sin, scorn holiness : I call heaven and earth to record this day, and the God of heaven and earth will call me to witness against you at the last day.

Obj. The thief on the cross repented when he was dying ; and so may I. Why should I then trouble myself with repentance, while I have health, strength, &c. ?

Ans. His repentance at death, is no ground to defer repentance till death. It is dangerous to rest upon it. For,

1. It is but an example, and that is no ground of hope, that you either shall or may find place for repentance then. If you had either permission or precept to defer it till then, or promise that the Lord would then give or accept it, you might defer, in hopes you might then repent. But it is quite contrary. He is so far from tolerating such delay, as he declares against it, commands it now ; so far from promising, &c., as he threatens, Luke xxi. 34, 35, and xii. 19, 20, and xvii. 27 ; 1 Thes. v. 2, 3 ; Mat. xxiv. 38. An example added to these would be an encouragement ; but without these, is no ground at all. Your hopes, without other ground, are delusions ; and this example will prove a broken reed, break under those that lean upon it, pierce their souls, and suffer soul and body to sink. It is desperate madness, to leave your souls without any hopes for eternity, but what this will afford.

2. It is but one example. The Bible, a history of near four thousand years, affords but one instance of one saved by repentance at death. Whereas, if we could search the records of eternity, we might find many

thousands instead of those, who have eternally ruined their souls, by deferring repentance till death.

All that can be argued from this one example is, that it is possible to repent when dying. Nay, if there were a multitude of examples, they would but make it probable. A probability might satisfy in matters of small concernment; but in that which concerns the eternal state of your souls, nothing less than certainty is sufficient. But here is no certainty, here is no probability! If you defer repentance till then, it is ten thousand to one you will never repent. And what then? It is ten thousand to one you will perish. It is deperate madness to be satisfied with a possibility; whereas, if for anything in the world, certainty is here necessary.

It is astonishing, to have your souls in such a state, which will not afford so much as a probability of being saved. You should make your salvation sure; but, relying upon one example, you make it not probable.

Roman history affords us one instance of Horatius Cocles, who maintained a pass against a whole army; but will any state therefore trust their safety with one man? Will any, invaded by a numerous army, employ none but one man to resist it? Would not all that hear of such madness, judge such a people besotted, that they might be ruined? Yet there is as good ground to do this, and expect victory, as for any to defer repentance, and expect salvation. Here is but one example for this, and no less for that.

Mithridates affords an instance of one that could take poison without danger; will any therefore eat deadly poison, and hope for life, because he did? You may as well hope for long life, though ye eat poison, as hope to be saved by repenting at death; there is as good ground for the one as the other; one example.

Jonah was cast into the sea, and was preserved by a whale; but will any cast himself overboard, in hopes of such an escape? You may as well cast yourselves into the sea, with hopes of such a preservation, from the example of Jonah, as defer repentance, in hopes of repenting on your death-bed, from the example of the thief.

8. It is an extraordinary example. Now there is no reason to draw a rule from an extraordinary instance. This was little less than miraculous, we see it placed in a crowd of miracles; would you have the Lord work miracles to save you? It is high presumption, to expect the Lord should save you at your death, if you wilfully neglect the ordinary means of salvation all your lives.

Would not you think it strange madness for one to expose himself to death, in hopes to be raised again to life by the wonder-working power of Christ, because Lazarus was so raised. And why? But because that was extraordinary. It is no less madness to defer repentance till death, in hopes you shall then repent, because the thief did then repent and was accepted. For this was extraordinary. The Lord will rather shew extraordinary severity in punishing such mad presumption.

4. It is an impertinent example. It was not intended it should, and it cannot in reason be used to that purpose for which you apply it. It may be he never heard of Christ before. It may be he did not enjoy the ordinary means of repentance in his life. It is probable he never deferred it, in hopes to repent at his death. The case is not alike. However, it is certain the Lord never intended it to be an encouragement for any to live impenitently. He left such an example, that no penitent should despair; not that any impenitent should presume. They may fear, the Lord

never intends them mercy, who abuse this to that purpose that he never intended it.

Obj. But repentance is harsh and displeasing; if I should take notice of sin, to mourn for it, crucify it, I should make my life sad and uncomfortable.

Ans. 1. Suppose there be something displeasing in repentance, as there is to corrupt nature; yet there is infinitely more bitterness in impenitency.

What is there in repentance so grievous as slavery to sin and Satan; so burdensome as Satan's yoke and tyranny? But while you continue impenitent, you are his slaves.

What evil so lamentable as madness? But impenitents are, in Scripture phrase, in God's account, madmen. The prodigal, when he returned to his father, *i. e.*, repented, it is said, he 'came to himself.' He was besides himself before, and so are all impenitent sinners. *Μεράνεια* comes from *ἀνοια*, *amentia*; he that turns not from sin is a madman.

What so terrible as death? What bitterness in repentance comparable to the bitterness of death? But impenitents are dead in sins and trespasses.

What in repentance like the curse of God! What like the guilt of sin, so much, of so many! What like to the wounds of a terrified conscience! What like the lashes of vengeance, revenging justice! What like the scorplings of incensed wrath! What like to hell, everlasting fire, the gnawing worm that never dies, weeping and gnashing of teeth to eternity!

He that will expose himself to these miseries, rather than displease his corrupt nature by the practice of repentance, is like one who had rather continue all his life in a burning fever, than endure a chirurgeon to breathe a vein. Or like one who, having drunk poison, will rather die a painful death, than take an displeasing potion to prevent it. If there were any bitterness in repentance, there is incomparably more in impenitency.

Ans. 2. It is false that repentance is displeasing. It is not so in itself; it is not so to any but those whose palates are distempered; to those whose minds the god of this world has blinded, so as they cannot judge; call bitter sweet, and sweet bitter. It is not so to those who have had experience of it, and none else are competent judges. Oh if ye would but practise it, if ye would but taste and see what joys, what comforts, what delights are in repentance, you would soon change your judgment, and cry out upon Satan as an impostor, and your hearts as deceitful, for representing it displeasing. How can that be but comfortable upon which the Lord has entailed so much comfort, to which he has made so many sweet promises: 'Blessed are they that mourn,' Mat. v; 'Those that sow in tears shall reap in joy,' Ps. cxxvi. 6, and cxvii. 11. No great distance between seed-time and harvest. Who can think that displeasing on earth which occasions joy in heaven? Luke xv. 7. While your hearts mourn, bleed for sin, bemoan it, Jer. xxxi. 18, the Lord's bowels yearn toward you. While your spirit is sad in the remembrance of sin, the Spirit of joy and glory rests on you. When you are confessing sin, Christ is speaking peace: John xvi. 20, 'Sorrow shall be turned into joy.' While you are returning, nay, but resolving to return, to repent, the Father is running to embrace you. And oh what joy will there be in such embraces! What joy to see the Father falling upon your neck and kissing, giving such sweet intimations of his love, as men use to do by such affectionate expressions! Oh, let the world judge what they will, let Satan suggest what he will of repentance, those that have had experience of it will count it pleasing, comfortable, delightful.

Ans. 3. It is not so only positively, but comparatively. There is more

sweetness in repentance than in all the pleasures of sin. All the ways of Christ are 'ways of pleasantness,' Prov. iii. 17; *i. e.*, most pleasing, superlatively so, beyond comparison. And this is one reason why Moses chose rather affliction, Heb. xi. 25. And why but because more desirable, and really more delightful, whatever they seem? The pleasures of sin are short, like the light of a candle, quickly spent if it burn till consumed, but often put out, Job xxi. 17. The pleasures of repentance are like the sun that shines more and more, Prov. iv. 18. Those are mixed; the heart is sad in the midst of laughter, Prov. xiv. 13; like John's little book, Rev. x. 9, 'sweet in the mouth, but bitter in the belly;' like Belshazzar's feast, Jael's entertainment. These are ure,pspring* in heaven.

Those are brutish, sensual, have little pre-eminence above the pleasures of a beast; these are spiritual, heavenly, glorious, 1 Peter i. 8.

Those are groundless; in fancy, when there is real cause of sorrow; like joy in a frantic man, or a malefactor led to execution; lamentable joys, such as deserve pity; joy when most cause of sorrow. The end in sorrow, will be bitterness in the end; for a moment's joy, eternal sorrows; for a few pleasures, many sorrows, Ps. xxxii. 10.

This sorrow ends in joy; a moment's sorrow, endless joy, everlasting joy; it is a well of water springing up to eternal life; a small stream, but leads to the ocean.

Now, judge what ground for this objection, what reason to be hindered by a conceit of unpleasantness, since the hardest part of repentance has such comfort attending it here, and such joys rewarding it hereafter.

* So in text; perhaps 'These are re-upspringing.'—Ed.