

S I N N E S

deadly VVound.

ACTS 2. 37.

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts.

Having spoken of the *Prophecie* of the pouring out of the Spirit in the dayes of the Gospell, wee come now to speake of the *accomplishment* thereof, which though it finally intend the Calling of the Jews, yet it is accomplished in the Conversion of those by *Peters* Sermon, expressed in the Text.

The whole Booke of the Acts is a Story or a Register of the Acts of the Apostles, that is, of their Sermons, their doings, their workes, whether their *Institutions and Ordinances* in establishing the Church, or their *Miracles* wrought to confirme them, or their *Journies*, or their *sufferings*. Therefore if you would read with profit this Booke of the Acts, you are to consider in every Chapter of them therein, what is recorded, such Journies, and such Sermons, such Miracles, and

and such sufferings. These are of singular use of direction for the Church of God.

In this Chapter, there are two Acts described. First, their prophecying with new and strange Tongues, from ver. 2. to the end of the 13. amplified by many arguments, as also by a double effect it wrought in those that heard them. First, *amazement* in some, ver. 12. Secondly, others *mocked* and said, *These men are full of new Wine.*

The second Act was a Sermon of *Peters*, upon that occasion, to repell and refute that calumniation of drunkenness, which they put upon the Apostles, described from ver. 14. to 36. In which Sermon the Apostle doth prove, that they did not this by the *spirit of the Buttery, or Wine Cellar*, but by the *power of the Holy Ghost*, by a new Spirit of God come upon them, according to what was prophesied in the Old Testament. Now this spirit thus poured out, the Apostle further amplifies and sets forth the giver of it, the Lord Jesus Christ, as delivered into their hands by the determinate Counsell of God, and by them wickedly crucified and slaine, who yet notwithstanding sets forth the same Christ as rising from the dead, and ascending into Heaven, and having received the Spirit from the Father, hee sheds it abroad to the edification of the Church; from whence (ver. 36.) he concludes. Let the whole house of Israel know assuredly, that this Jesus whom you have crucified, is the Lord Christ, that this is the Messiah, whom they have thus crucified. *Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts.* And see

see then, this Sermon of *Peters* is amplified by a threefold effect. First, the humiliation of the hearers, *They were pricked in their hearts*, ver. 37, 38, 39, 40. Secondly, the Baptizing of 3000. soules, that were converted upon this occasion, ver. 41. Thirdly, the Religious, charitable, comfortable fellowship of those Converts together, ver. 42. to 47.

Wee are now to speake of the first of these effects. And that is the humiliation of the hearers. They were pricked in their hearts; which words containe foure parts.

The kind of spirituall affliction wherewith they were exercised ; pricked at the heart. 1.

The effect of this pricking wrought in them, a resignation of themselves to the Apostles counsell and direction, and an humble and reverend request of them to direct them what to doe ; Men and Brethren , a word they had not wont to expresse. 2.

This humiliation is expressed by the cause of it ; They hearing their particular finnes charged upon their soules, hearing it was Christ they had crucified, then they were pricked in their hearts. 3.

This humiliation is amplified by the subject persons ; those that before were amazed, and mocked, are now pricked in their hearts. 4.

Now of the first ; The kind of spirituall affliction these hearers were exercised with ; pricked in their hearts.

The very first worke of living and saving grace, Doctrine. gives a deadly stroke to the life of sinfull nature.

A

A Note which I never handled heretofore, but you shall find it evident in the Text, and agreeable to the Principles of Christian Religion. In the Text, these men that were thus pricked in their hearts, had they received any saving grace before? No; Some of them were amazed: Now, amazed hearers, are ignorant hearers, for all amazement springs from ignorance; had they beene the sheepe of Christ, they would have knowne his voyce, *Ioh. 10. 27.* They were also scornfull proud hearers; scorning is a fruit of pride; but this was the time that God intended to shew them mercy. Now then, what is the first grace that is wrought in them? After by hearing they understood, *They were pricked in their hearts;* not in their eyes onely, to weepe for their finnes, nor in tongue onely to cry out, but in their hearts; that is a mortall wound to Nature, the least prick of the heart, is the death of nature, be the piercing of it never so little, the sting of a Bee, or the prick of a Needle, the very life of nature runs out, and it cannot possibly be healed: you may prick a man in the tongue, in the eye, and save his life; but once prick the heart, & you give a deadly wound to nature; the vitals waste presently, much adoe to sustaine life for a moment. Seethen, this is the first worke of saving and living grace, *An heart once pricked can never be healed;* and therefore you never reade that God heales mans corrupt nature, He heales not a stony heart, but takes it away, and gives a man a new heart, *Ezek. 36. 26.* Prick the heart, and it will never leave trickling and bleeding,

ding, till the whole life of nature be consumed. I will further open this point. First, let me shew you what is meant by the heart. Secondly, what by pricking of the heart. Thirdly, the Reason, and then the Application.

By the *heart* you must not understand, that fleshly part of the body which is the seate of life, called *Primum vivens, & ultimum moriens*. Godly sorrow doth not kill mans bodily life, it works not death, 2 *Cor.* 7. 10. But it is meant the *will* of a man, which lyes in the heart, for as the *understanding* lyes in the *head* or braine, so the *will* is seated in the *heart*: so as a good frame in the heart, and wisdom in the braine, makes a com-
pleat man.

Now this heart or will of a man, is that where-
by we chuse or refuse a thing, so the heart is taken, *Ezek.* 36. 26. An heart of stone, is a stubborne and obstinate heart or will; an heart of flesh, is an heart that is tractable, and soone pierced; now then this was the piercing of the will of these hearers.

What is it to be pricked in the heart. First, the heart is said to be pricked, when it is *afflicted* with these two principall affections that are said to wound the heart, the one is *sorrow and grieve*, and the other is *care*, 1 *Tim.* 6. 10. Then is the heart pricked, when God afflicts it with sorrow and grieve for sin; *grieve for sin*, and *care for reformation* of it. They were pierced with many sorrowes for piercing of Christ, and care to be delivered from that sinne: there are other affections that
usually

1.

2.

usually follow these, as sometimes *fear and trembling*, *Ezra 9.10*. Sometimes *shame*, *1er. 31.19*. Sometimes *Indignation*, *2 Cor. 7.11*. But *sorrow and care*, these *most pierce*; but these affections never pierce the heart, till first hatred and loathing of sinne bee wrought in a man, *Rom. 7.15*. and this springs from a change wrought in the will, which makes us loath our selves for our sinnes, *Iob 40.3,4. and 42. 6*. And when God gives his people new hearts, they shall *loath themselves*, *Ezek. 36.26,32*. Here is first loathing of sinne, and our selves for sin; from whence springs hatred of sinne, from thence, sorrow, griefe, care, shame and indignation for sin.

Secondly, But piercing also implies something more, as to expresse it from what Surgeons are wont to say; They say, all piercing of a member, is piercing of the body that is compact together; *Dissolutio membri vitalis*, is *dissolutio compositi*, It is a *dissolution of the whole frame of nature*: If a vitall member be wounded, it is not possible to heale it; it is *Dissolutio compositi*. They say true, that the heart and braine are the vessels of life, and as soone as one of these vessels are broken, the life of man runs out like water spilt upon the ground, the liveliest spirits soone evaporated, and the life and blood issues, and cannot possibly continue. And to this estate of a man doth the holy Ghost here allude; They were *wounded* in that part that was most *vitall*, and by this meanes all that sinfull life, that before was laid up in the stubborn will, begins to trickle downe when the heart

heart is prickt, sin is dropping and running out. But which is more, not onely sinfull lusts, but all affections to all outward comforts, they begin now to have no minde to any of them, till God gather up their spirits againe; but for the present the world is crucified to him, *Gal. 6. 14*. Wonder it is to see what little respect a pricked heart hath to the things of this life, as these Converts; *ver. 42. 44.* they layed themselves leuell with their brethren, and now they are for ever at a losse for the world; and all covetous inclinations to the world, they for ever trickle down, that leak is never stopped any more.

3. Look as you see in pricking this bodily heart, a man is presently surpris'd with *anguish and pain*, and knowes not what to doe, so a man pricked in the will or heart knowes not in the world which way to turn him; *Sirs, what must I doe to be saved? Acts 16. 11.* he saw now that there was but a step between him and the nethermost hell; and therefore now, *Sirs, what must I doe?*

Taken from that *fellowship* that we are to have with *Christ* in his *death*, before we can have fellowship with him in his *Resurrection*, *Rom. 6. 3. to 11.* The *old man* must be *crucified*, that henceforth we may not serve sin, but be free to righteousness; we must *dieto sin*, and then to the world, *Gal. 6. 14.* Reas. 1.


Taken from the good pleasure of God in our first conversion, to espouse and marry us unto his Son, which cannot be till our *first husband be dead*, *Rom. 7. 3, 4.* Now because God intends a marriage Reas. 2.

age Covenant betwixt Christ and our soules, in first conversion, he will therefore have sin first mortified in us, our first husband must ly a bleeding his last blood before we can be married to Christ.

Reas. 3. Taken from the sharp opposites which we in our first conversion have to deale withall. As first we have to deale with the *Word of God*, and that is sharper then a two-edged sword, *Heb. 4. 11.* It is called *goads and whyles*, *Eccles. 12. 11.* *Sharp and keen arrows*, *Psal. 45. 5.* Again, we have to deale with our *sins*, and that is a *sting*, *1 Cor. 15. 56.* And these inflame like venome. Another sharp opposite is the *wrath of God*, against which it is hard for a man to kick and spurn, *Acts 9. 5.* this is a piercing sorrow, *Lam. 3. 65.* Having thus to deale with these sharp opposites, we must needs be pricked and wounded.

Pse 1. For triall of our estates, whether God hath wrought in us any first works of saving and living grace: Dost thou finde thy will and inclination to die and decay in thee, so as that thou hast no desire or delight in sin? the liveliest spirit thou hast to this or that sin, is now evaporated and wasted, and thy heart is furnished with graces opposite to those sins; then I say, thy heart is pierced and wounded; thou now refuseth, loathest, and hatest that sin upon which thy heart was most set, thou grieveest for it, and takest care how to be shut of it, abstainest from it, and art ashamed of it: If it be thus with thee, then surely God hath pierced thy heart, and thou art in an estate of salvation; otherwise let me say thus unto thee, A
man

man may be pricked in the *eye to weep* for sin, in the *tongue to cry out* for sin, in the *foot begin to amend his way*, &c yet not have his heart pricked, nor have any living or saving grace; a man may be *fearfull* of sin, grow more *carefull* of good duties, be more *fruitfull* in good wayes, and be not pricked in *heart*, but onely in *conscience* or *understanding*; he may cry out of his sin as *Judas* did, *Mat. 27. 4.* he thought but to have made a jest of betraying Christ, but when he saw it was the houre and power of darknesse that Christ was taken and condemned, then was he pricked in conscience and cried out bitterly, and now would have no reward for his treason; he was pricked in his *hands, feet, tongue, and eyes, and conscience*; But was this any good evidence that he was pricked in his *heart*? No, for he goes on still to choose sin: had his will been pricked, he would never have hanged himselfe; in such a case a man may finde a sin too sharp for him, and yet all be but anguishes of conscience, the heart still ready to choose another sin, but that is an ill signe; a man may sometimes be pricked in his shoulder, as *Herod* was, *Mat. 6. 20.* reforme many things, yet still cleave to an Harlot; *John* shall rather die, then the vitall spirits of his sin shall perish. If this be thy case, then flatter not thy selfe, thou art yet in the gall of bitterness; Thou saist thou art heart-whole, thou thankest God, but the more is the pity; if thou beest heart-whole after so much sicknesse, and crosses, and afflictions, and sins, This is a miserable wholenesse. For had saving grace seized up-

on thy will, thy heart would have been pierced & broken; but if a mans heart come to look at all sin as bitter, he doth not bawke any sin, his heart chooseth sin no more; if he see it is a sin, his heart recoyles back again, and closeth not with it; if there be no sin, but thy heart runs from it, and thy affections are dying and decaying towards them all, then though it may be thou canst not weep so much as some men can doe for the very prick of conscience, nor art so forward in some duties as some are, who are but very hypocrites, and cannot cry out so much as some can, yet if thy heart be dead to all sin, thou takest no pleasure in any, but they are as bitter to thee as gall and wormewood; Then God hath shed abroad the first work of saving grace in thy heart, and it will continue , and this is no small matter of consolation.

Vse 2.

A direction and advertisement to such as yet finde their hearts whole and unbroken; Take heed how you content your selves in such a condition. Consider what our Saviour said to *Saul*; It is *hard to kick against the pricks*, to dash the naked soule against the curse and wrath of God is an hard businesse, and so it is for these men, to persecute the Lord of life to the death; but many a man that goes on in sin, saith, he feeles no such hard work in sin, but thou wilt feele at the last, that it hath been but dashing against pricks, and if not in this world, then with more horreur in another; you little know what anguish of soule for sinne meanes; Can you provoke God to anger, and

and not your selves to confusion ?

Of exhortation to every soule that is in any *vs* 3.
measure pierced in heart with sense of sin ; Think
not thy selfe undone, judge righteous judgement,
or if it be the case of any of thy friends, say not
they are undone, he hath now no misde to the
world ; but not so, if with pricking of conscience,
the heart be pricked too, then feare him not, God
will gather up his spirit to his calling again : If
therefore your hearts be broken, blesse God on
that behalfe, it is the best newes that ever came to
you ; When God comes to redeeme a sinner
from sin, and the punishment of it, he will not
content himselfe with the conscience, or mouth,
or eyes, but the chiefest part of the soule must lie
at stake for it, before him, he will have sin bleed
to the death. When God had threatned *Nimrod*
with destruction, it would not have prevailed with
God to prevent the punishment, if all the Harlots
of the Countrey had come and humbled them-
selves before him, but the *King* must humble him-
selfe to the dust : The heart of a man is the princi-
pall faculty of the soule, it rules all, it sets hand
and tongue, all within, and all without a work.
Now because the will is principal in the soul, then
if God meane we shall be saved, he will have the
principall part of the soule to lie in the dust, the
liveliest corruption must trickle downe upon the
ground ; therefore be content to stoop to it, and be
glad you may.

To teach Ministers not to be afraid sometimes *vs* 4.
of driving nayles to the head, not to the consci-
ences,

ences, but to the hearts of sinners. There are a generation of Preachers that would now have no Law preached, but now onely to draw men on to Christ, by the love of Christ. It is true, this we should labour to doe, but how must we doe it? Doe you think God will marry us to Christ, before our first husband be dead? unlesse the sinfull hearts of men be pricked, unlesse the proud, wanton, and stubborn heart be pierced and wounded to the death? Therefore there is no hope of salvation unlesse it be thus with you. Why, you say, But he did but here preach, and they heare the Gospel. It is true, I grant a man may preach the Gospel, and wound mens souls as much as by the Law; but yet know this, ~~he~~ preached the Gospel *legally*, not the *promises* of the Gospel, but the *duties* of the Gospel, and their sins against the Gospel, convincing them that they had sinned against the Lord of Life, and Glory. This is preaching of the Gospel legally, and a speciall meanes to pierce the hearts of men.

Use 5.

Of consolation to all those soules that have found their hearts pricked. Many a soule is troubled because it cannot weep for sin, but if you can but finde your hearts broken and departing from sin, if your hearts sit loose from sin, and refuse all sin, one sin as well as another, if God give thee a heart to avoid sin, and to doe that which is good in his sight, if the life of thy sin decayes, then blessed art thou of the Lord, Christ hath set his stamp upon thee, and will challenge thee for his owne.

This

Pse 6.

This may serve for an use of exhortation to every soule of us whose soules have been pierced and pricked, that you freely let them run and bleed still ; never daub up the wound, let it for ever be bleeding ; pray not so much to God for the healing of your hearts, as intreat him to create a new heart in you, *Ezek. 36. 26*. By no meanes restrain the issue of sin, but if your heart be once pierced, let it then for ever bleed. So farre as terrours may hinder the peace of your consciences, labour to heale that ; But you that love the Lord hate evil, *Psal. 97. 10*. Bee sure you for ever keep the heart open to any charitable employment, for the refreshment of your poore brethren, as these pierced hearts in the Text did, they distributed what they had according as every man had need, and they were then full of the holy Ghost, and did eat their bread, not with churlishnesse, but with gladnesse and singlenesse of heart. What would it profit a man to win the whole world, and to lose his own soule? Consider it therefore, so much as God hath pricked thy heart, so much it fits loose from the world, an heart once pierced would think it a base part to talk of charges when it comes to lay out its estate for his brethrens necessities ; Therefore let your hearts for ever run freely to all good offices in the behalfe of your brethren.



ACTS 2. 37.

Now when they heard this, &c.



VE E come now to a second point here expressed from the effect of this pricking of the heart, it wrought in the hearers : They said to *Peter* and the rest of the Apostles, *Men and brethren, what shall we doe ?* From whence observe this note :

Doctrine.

That it is a good evidence of an heart pricked and sprinkled with a saving and kindly sense of sin, when we be given to love and respect those Christians, whom we have despised, yea even such as have wounded us, and are willing to enquire of them the way of salvation, and to resign up our hearts to be directed by them.

I put all these together, because they are all included in the effect which this pricking of the heart wrought in these hearers. You see that whereas before they derided them, v. 12, 13. now they have laid aside their scorning, and now come to them with respect and reverence, *Men and Brethren* : See what a sudden change is wrought in them, now they think the Apostles know the way better how to be saved then themselves, and let the Apostles say but what they would have them to doe, and they are willing to be directed by them ;

them; they bid them repent and be baptized, and they did so, and there was added to the Church three thousand soules. See what a worke a pricked heart will reach to; In such a case, a man will lay downe all his *scorning*, and fall to *reverencing* them, whom they had scorned before; now they resigned themselves wholly into the hands of these men, to set them a course to be saved.

Take a man whose heart is pricked, and he presently finds such anguish in his principall vitall parts, that he forthwith cryes out for help; See, my lifelyes a bleeding, what might I do, if it were possible to save life? These men at first, did not a little wonder to heare the Apostles speake with strange Tongues, *ver. 12.* and mee thinks it is as great a wonder to see this sudden change (by a word speaking;) See in them, what a new tongue, a pricked heart will worke. The same men that even now said, the Apostles were full of the spirit of Wine; now they speake the language of Canaan: before debauched Ruffians; now, *Men and Brethren*; A word, they had not beene wonted to: they that before mocked at new Tongues, had now themselves gotten new Tongues; and it was a greater Miracle to have such words in their mouths, then to heare the Apostles speake all the principall Languages in the world. A man may have all gifts of Tongues, and yet his heart as corrupt as ever; but if the heart be pricked, he knowes now how to say, Men and Brethren, what shall I doe to be saved? here is a worke that men may wonder at. The like you see in *Paul*, when
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convinced, *Acts 9.6.* *Who art thou Lord?* Hee could then acknowledge him for a *Lord*; And now *Lord*, *What wilt thou have me to doe?* And though our Saviour tell him not what to doe, he sent one to him; yet before *Ananias* came to him, (for hee came not till three dayes after) *Paul* had learned what to doe: he that had beene a blasphemous wretch, behold now he *prayer*s, and so hath done three dayes and three nights together. What a blasphemer got a tongue and an heart to pray: see what a pricked heart can doe; now therefore stand and wonder at it, *Lord*, saith *Ananias*, *I have heard of much evill that man hath done*; It is true, but talke no more of that, *Now he prayer*s, and I will shew him, what great things he shall suffer for my Names sake: here are the compact vitals of nature dissolved, & grace springs afresh. So the Jaylor, *Acts 16.* He scourged *Paul* and *Silas*, made them full of wounds, put them in the dungeon, set their feet in the stocks, but *ver. 29. 30.* when he thought they had ~~been~~ escaped, and had like to have killed himselfe, *Paul* cryed out unto him, and that word so pierced his heart, that he comes in trembling; and now, *Sirs*, *What must I doe to be saved?* And he beleevved immediately, and was Baptized; and such a wonderfull change doth a pricked heart make; of those very men, whom before he scourged and put in the dungeon, now they are *Kings*, *Lords*; any reverence now little enough to shew them, such worke makes a pricked heart where ever it is.

Reas. 1.

Taken from the glorious presence of God, a
pierced

pierced heart finds in those that have beene the Instruments of their wounding, which binds a man hand and foot, and so dazels him that he knowes not whither to goe from them, nor can he seeke for other helpe, *1 Cor. 14. 3. 24, 25.* Being convinced by you, he will fall downe and say, *God is in you of a truth.* See what a presence of God, a soule discernes to be in them, who have convinced it of sin, hath layed open the secret closet of his soule, they see there is the *gate of Heaven.* These men, though at first they little thought it, yet they now see, God is there of a truth; had not God directed them, they would not have hit our heart so right; Thou hast the word of eternall life, and whither should we goe? *Ioh. 6. 68.* The Woman of Samaria, though at first she scoffed, yet when shee perceived Christ was a Prophet, *Ioh. 4. 17. 20.* then she fell to question him, about the maine point of Religion, and leaves him not, untill she be settled in Gods peace, because she saw Gods presence with him.

Taken from the attractive drawing power that *Reas. 2.* is found in the word of truth, and goodnesse of the Gospell of Christ; what ever it takes hold on, it drawes it after it, and therefore is compared to a *draw Net*, *Mat. 13. Luke 10.* And it is said of our Saviour, the people heard him *attentively*, *Luke 19. 48.* In the Originall it is, They *hung upon his lips*; What he spake, was as so many *drags* to draw them to hearken to him; and especially the Gospell of Christ crucified, *Ioh. 12. 32.* These words have a mighty drawing power, it is the nature

ture of the Word, to draw men neerer to Christ.

Reas. 3. Taken from the secret hope which God doth instill into the hearts of all such as are pierced, that there is a way for their healing, though they know it not; they have an opinion, that those that wound them can heale them, and most likely to supply them with helpe. *Hosea 2. 14, 15. Hee will speake to her heart piercing and sinking words, and will give her the Valley of Achor for a doore of hope.* That was the Valley where *Achan* was stoned to death, *Ioshua 7. 24, 27.* It signifies trouble; so that even *the Valley of trouble*, when God speakes trouble unto his children, hee gives them hope of deliverance from their very troubles; so that when a mans heart is cast downe, and God casts threatnings at us, as stones about our eares, yet this *Valley of trouble*, God gives us as a *doore of hope*. See by the Ninevites, *Who knowes but God may save us? Ionas 3. 9.* They conceived a possibility that God might be content to pardon.

Vse 1. To shew there is a difference betweene a pricked heart, and a pricked conscience. Generally Christians confound these two; and shuffle them up together, as if they were both one, but indeed they much differ; and without a discerning whereof, many a poore soule may be swallowed up, either by dispaire on the one hand, or presumption on the other; it is one of the hardest points in the practise of Christianity. Now therefore observe the passage of Gods grace in the hearts of his people. Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

They

They differ in their

- 1. Effects.
- 2. Causes.
- 3. Objects, about which they are conversant.
- 4. Remedies.

First, See their difference in the effects betwixt a pricked *heart*, and a pricked *conscience*.

There are foure effects in which they differ.

First, The pricking of the heart doth *soften and sweeten the heart, to a wise amiableneſſe, and loving reſpect unto thoſe that have pierced them*, and to all ſuch as they bee; and drawes them to an earneſt deſire of fellowſhip with them. Theſe men in the Text, they were pricked in their hearts, and to whom did they goe for remedy? not to the great Rabbins of their times; ſhould not the Priests lips preſerve knowledge? *Mal. 2. 7.* Were they not better ſtudied men; and better read in *Moses* and the Prophets, then theſe new Diſciples were? No. But they rightly diſcerned theſe were not the men that could any way helpe them, theſe men had ſet them a worke to crucifie Chriſt; the Priests had perſwaded them to aſke *Barabbas*, and to crucifie Jeſus. Now they ſeeing their hearts pierced, for doing what the Priests bad them do, it was not likely they ſhould heale that wound, but ſhould rather daube with them, and tell them, Chriſt was but a deluder, and that they had done well to hang him up out of the way; therefore now, they will not come at them: and there is not indeed a more evident ſigne that a man dallies with his ſoule, then when he goes away from thoſe

those Ministers that have wounded him, and advise with others that will deale more favourably with him, and take counsell of them who are guilty of the same sinne themselves; but these poore men wisely discerned, that the Scribes and Pharisees are not for their purpose, but these men that wounded them, were the most likely to heale them; they looke not at them as their enemies, nor doe they contest with them; what meant they to be personall in their application, but these looke not at it, as the wound of an enemy, but as a brother, *Men and Brethren*. But now in case the conscience alone had beene pricked, why then a man, by his good will, would come no more to such men as have wounded him, and it will be a burden to him, if by his calling he be forced to live under such a Ministry: *Eliab* his Ministry wrought upon *Ahab*, to cause him to humble himselfe, 1 *King*. 21. 29. but did he now love *Eliab* the better, or any such as *Eliab* was? No; he never met him, but with some base salutation; *Art thou he that troubles Israel?* 1 *King*. 18. 17. and chap. 22. 8. *Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?* And when he had a weighty businesse in hand, did he send for *Eliab* to counsell him? No; when he calls a solemne Syllod of foure hundred Prophets, *Eliab* is none of them I warrant you: and if but one *Michaia*, he hates him; and why so? because *he never prophesies good of him*. So that when *Ahab* is onely pricked in conscience, he will not send to *Eliab* for counsell, but if any man wound him, he shall be the man of his hatred, he looks

lookes at such as wound him, as if hee stabbed daggers at his heart, and foure hundred men shall be sent for, before one of them. *Saul* was often pricked in his conscience, and therefore when an evill spirit of bondage came upon him, and vexed his conscience, and *David* came into play before him, to mitigate the sense of anguish, he thought with a Javelin to have nayled him to the wall; a prick of conscience is fierce and furious, full of folly and desperate madnesse. *Felix* is content to heare *Paul* Preach, and trembles to heare him presse such arguments, *Acts* 24. 25. A wound there was in his conscience, but what came of it? Why, *Go thy way*, saith he to *Paul*, and when I have convenient time, I will send for thee; but he never heard him more: This is the manner of conscience struck with feare, and grieve; *A rotten heart, and a pierced conscience ever goe together.*

A second difference in the effect is this. Take you an heart that is pricked, and it is wrought to a *weaned affection*, from not onely *inordinate affections*, to the profits and pleasures of this world; but in truth sometimes, from the *lawfull use of lawfull things*; it will take off the largenesse of a mans heart from any outward comfort, *Psal.* 102. 4. His heart was so smitten, that he *forgot to eat bread*; so as if his Wife and Children should not come and pray him to eat, he would neglect to eat; his heart is smitten, he knowes not what to doe: as these men here in the Text, no minde to any worldly thing, now sell all they have, and be help-
full!

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full to their poore brethren, weaned from all the comforts of this life. But take a man with a pricked conscience onely, and he is so far from being weaned from this thing, as that he will plunge himselfe deeper into them; he thinks that if he fill himselfe with businesse, or merry company, it will drive away heart qualmes; as *Cain* to marrying, and then to building of Cities, *Gen.* 4. 17. *Saul* to Musique, *1 Sam.* 16. 17. A pricked conscience for the most part, leaves a man more eager after the world, which a pierced heart dare not meddle with; he finds he hath sinned bitterly against God, and now God hath forsaken him, and therefore unlesse he can see Gods favour vouchsafed to him, hee can finde no relish in any thing under Heaven, he goes about any businesse like a man without an heart. And as a pricked heart is thus weaned from outward comforts, to especially from sin, which a pierced conscience will never weane a man from: A pierced heart lets out the heart blood of sin; *Hos.* 14. 3. *What have I to doe any more with Idols?* Yea a pierced heart so far falls out with his sin, that he hates the very *occasion* that may bring sin into his mind, it is loathsome to him; as a man that hath drunke a cup of poyson that almost killed him, he ever hates, not onely the *poyson*, but the very *cup* in which it was brought to him: so is it with a man that hath beene pierced in heart for sinne, he not onely throwes away the *Idols*, but the *costly coverings*, *Esay* 30. 22. How pleasant soever such things were to him before, yet now he loathes and hates them all.

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But now take a man that is but pricked in conscience onely, it makes him more desperately sinfull. *Ier. 2. 25.* They have loved strangers, and *after them they will goe*; as men sometimes wounded in conscience, he finds plainly, such whoredome and drunkenness is the way to damnation; but well, if I must be damned, let me be damned for something; if I must be damned for hating God and his Ordinances, I will hate them yet more. *Saul* was sometimes wounded with *David's* kindnesse, *1 Sam. 14. 16.* He melts (as sometimes a pricked conscience will doe at a Sermon) and wept, so as you would have thought his heart had melted, but it was but onely his conscience that was pricked; *David* durst not trust him for all that: And shortly after that, *Saul* went out with three thousand chosen men to take him; *David* againe had him in his hand, *1 Sam. 26. 1, 2.* then his bowels melted againe, and he was wounded, and tels *David* he would not hurt him, but it was no trusting of him notwithstanding; This *David* feared, that he should one day perish by the hand of *Saul*, *chap. 27. 1.* So that a man may be pricked in conscience, and daube it over againe, and be never a whit the more weaned from sin by it; whereas now these men that are pricked in heart, will they ever crucifie Christ againe, or joyne with hypocrites against the people of God more? No; They will rather sell all they have, and give to the poore members of Christ, seeing they have pierced their head and Master, now let all goe, We must take another course: But a pricked

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conscience will close with sin again upon the next occasion. It may be he will vomit all out, confesse it all, but when once conscience is quieted upon this confession, he will take up the same wickednesse again.

A third difference in the effect is this; The pricking of the heart *humbles* a mans spirit, so as now he is content to stoop to his underlings, though contemptible to him before, yet now willing to be taught by them; These men in the Text enquire of the Apostles the way to salvation. *Apollos* doubtlesse was a man pricked in heart, when he stoopes to learn of a poore Tent-maker and his wife, *Acts* 18.26. But take you a man pricked in conscience, he is like the Scribes and Pharisees, when the blinde man answered them with a mighty power of a gracious spirit, and set them to the wall, that they knew not what to say, they said, *Thou art altogether borne in sin, and wilt thou teach us?* And thereupon they excommunicate him, *Ioh.* 9.34. When a poore Christian is able to teach great Scholars their owne experiences, they will not endure to be taught by them; A prickt conscience is *proud and stubborn*, and will not stoop to deny it selfe so much, or stoop so low, as to be taught by such Leather-coats & sawcy Trades-men; These are proud conceited men; onely a prickt heart can tell how to come to poore men, with a *Men and Brethren*; You are acquainted with sorrow for sin, and have known the terrours of the Lord; What shall such a one as I doe, that I might be saved?

4. Ano-

4. Another difference in the effect is this : These men being pricked in heart, it did *open and enlarge their hearts*, to be willing to doe or suffer any thing, that these Apostles shall direct them to. They knew them not to be Apostles, they knew they were Fishermen, poore meane men; yet to these men they come, and that with an enlarged heart, *Men and Brethren, what shall we doe?* Set us but a course, and we will follow your direction ; Say but what we shall doe, and we are for you ; So it was with *Paul*, he was a man that had great priviledges, a Pharisee, an Hebrew of the Hebrewes, a man unrebukable, touching the righteousnesse which is of the Law ; but when once his heart is pricked, *I count them all but losse and dung* ; he was not at a losse to part with any thing for Christ, *Phil. 3. 8. and Acts 20. 21, 22. I passe not at all, though I knowe bonds and afflictions abide me every where* ; They shall neither hinder his course, nor his joy in his course ; See the frame of a pierced heart, there is nothing to be done, nothing to be suffered ; he passeth not if he doe any thing, if it shall be to *labour and suffer more abundantly then they all*, *1 Cor. 15. 10.*

This is the case of a pierced heart ; but will a pricked conscience doe as much ? A conscience *only* pricked ? For so you must understand, conscience lies in the judgement, as the will doth in the heart ; if the heart be prickt, then the judgement and conscience is pricked also ; but the judgement and conscience may be wounded, and

yet not the heart ; you may lead a wounded conscience a good way, but not farre enough. There comes a rich young-man to our Saviour, and he would know *what he might doe to inherit eternall life*, Matth. 19. 17. to 22. *The Commandements he had kept from his youth*, a signe he had made conscience of his wayes. But now *Goe sell all that thou hast, and give to the poore*; and our Saviour calls not every rich man to this, but he was pleased to try him, had he offered it, as a man whose heart had been pricked, he would have let all goe, had it been thousands for his hundreds, but his conscience being onely pierced, he was sorely put to it, *and went away sorrowfull*; had his heart been pricked, he would have neglected his daily bread, his estate, wife, children, and all he had : *Matthew the Publicane*, he suddenly *leaves all, and followes Christ*, Luke 5. 28. *Zaccheus* gives away half his goods, Luke 19. 28. But this young-man having but onely his conscience pricked, see how strait he is, see how closely he girts to himself the comforts of this life. So *Ananias and Sapphira*, doubtless they were pricked in conscience, for otherwise they would not have given up their names amongst the Disciples, but because their hearts were not pierced, they kept back part of their estate, they could not tell how to live upon the Almes-basket wholly : Consider therefore of this thing, they are points you doe not usually reade or heare of, and yet of due and serious consideration, and such as unlesse you wisely distinguish in the particulars of them, you will be much deceived

ved in the estate of your own hearts ; take heed you rest not in bare *conscience work*, without *all heart work* ; here are new foundations and principles to be laid ; you have heard many precious differences between worldly and godly sorrow, but this is somewhat a distinct sorrow from worldly, for this is spirituall sorrow : though you have spirituall sorrow, and spirituall paine, yet this is not it you must satisfie your selves in, for by reason of the piercing of your conscience, your spirits may be put to much exercise, and yet the heart not so much as touched, and leave thy condition very dangerous.



ACTS 2. 37.

And when they heard this, &c.

Now we come to speak of the difference by a pricked
betwixt a pricked heart, and a pricked heart, he means
ed conscience, as they differ in their spiritual
causes. The pricking of the heart is Conviction
the immediate work of God him-
self; He keeps that in his own hands to temper by a pricked
the hearts of the sons of men, especially in this conscience
kinde when it comes to piercing and wounding.
Hosea 13. 8. You would think it were the stroak of he means
an enemy; *I will meet thee as a Bear robbed of her legal con-*
whelps, and I will rend the caul of thy heart; and *sciences.*
lest you should think God did this in wrath with-
out The diff-
ference between them should be strictly
observed. The first wounds in life, the last in death

out mercy, reade *ver. 9. Oh Israel thou hast destroyed thy selfe, but in me is thy help.* God goes about a work of salvation, even then when he teares and rends the heart: so that look what ever lies most close and nearest a mans heart, when God comes to save, he will make a man fit loose from that which before he could not be reclaimed from; he will not suffer any thing to harbour there, that shall lift up it self against him, *Ezek. 36. 26. & Pro. 21. 1.* He turneth the heart which way soever it pleaseth him; Men may change our minds, by giving us better reasons for things then we discerned before, and may alter our *judgements* and opinions by strength of Reason, or affection to the contrary, but no man is able to change the *heart* but onely God: *He hath his chaire in Heaven, that speakes to mens hearts;* but for pricking the conscience, the Devill can reach that, and so can his Instruments. Notable is that place, *Revel. 9. 1. to 6.* It is a lively description of the Friars & Priests of the Church of Rome, being let out of the bottomlesse pit of ignorance and darknesse, in which their Religion was hatched; they had a mighty power, by pressing the terrors of the Law, to worke terror upon the consciences of their hearers, who thereby were so stung with feare of hell, that they longed for death rather then life, and willingly gave away all that ever they had, under pretence of saving their soules by the merit of their good workes; this was nothing but a worke of Satan, setting on their Ministry upon the consciences of the people: it was Satan, I doubt

doubt not, that vexed the conscience of *Iob*, *Iob* 13. 14. 26. *Iob* applies it to God, as if he had spoken bitter things against him; but the truth is, had God done it, it had beene by a spirit of bondage; now the children of God receive not the spirit of bondage to feare again, after they once know God to be their Father, *Rom.* 8. 15. If therefore *Iob*, or any other true Christian, as *David*, or *Hezekiah*, complaine of their estates, it is not from God, but from Satan; It is usuall with *Iob* to ascribe that to Gods hand, which indeed was Satans, at least immediately, as the losse of his children and cattell; & so it is in this case: It is true, Satans worke was directed by God; but otherwise it is possible for Satan so to buffet our minds, by representing to us the number and burden of our sins, and so to hide the face of God from us, and the promises and former experiences, as that wee can see nothing but wrath and enmity in the presence of the Lord, though even then Gods favour was towards *Iob* as much as ever; He is one and the same and changeth not, onely he suffers Satan to cast a mist betweene the face of God, and the conscience of *Iob*. Conscience may be stung when the heart is not, but be still as it was before, and neither better nor worse for this worke of Satan.

Thirdly, As they differ in the effects and causes, so also in the object about which they are conversant. When the conscience is onely prickt, you shall heare him expresse himselfe on this wise; O will the conscience say, What, honourable here, and miserable for ever hereafter? Rich

here, and forever rejected hereafter ? Beautifull here, and burning for ever hereafter ? pleasant and cheerefull here, and for ever in torment hereafter ? such burthens the conscience layes upon the soule of such a one ; All the complaint of conscience will never looke farther then the wrath of God, present anguish, and feare of future wrath in another world. *Did you ever know any sorrow like my sorrow? Lam. 1. 12.* This is the complaint of a pierced conscience ; Never saw you creature in such anguish as I am. But take a pierced heart, he rests not in these complaints, (though these he have) but it will turne the course of these complaints quite another way : He complains after this sort ; Did you ever know (will he say) a soule followed with so many mercies, so much honour, and wealth, and peace, that ever was so unthankfull as I am ? whom God hath followed with so many crosses and sicknesses as I, and yet continue to this day so stubborne as I have done ? Did you ever know any that ever had such experience, and made a profession so long, and yet no more assured of salvation then I am ? Did you ever know any that was redeemed by the blood of Christ, that yet to this day lives a slave and servant to so many strong and noysome lusts ; such pride and prophanenesse, and senselesnesse of heart ? Did you ever know any that hath beene called to grace, so carried captive to the things of this life, as I am ? Did you ever know any fall againe and againe into the same sinnes, as I have done ? Did you ever know a poore creature that to
this

this day can pray no more feelingly, nor receive no more beleevingly, then I doe? So as there is a broad difference in the object of their griefe, a pierced conscience grieves for sense of anguish, but a pierced heart, chiefly for fulnesse of sin, and weaknesse, and want of grace. If complaints be onely in regard of the terrors of God, it is to bee doubted there is nothing but a pierced conscience; a pierced heart issues out more sensible exhortations to God, & confessions to their brethren.

Again there is this difference in their complaint for their sinne, as well as for their griefe. If a pierced conscience complaine of sinne, it onely complains of such sinnes as puts him to present anguish, as it was with *Judas*, *Mat. 27. 4. 5.* had it beene any more, he would have complained of murder, and despaire of mercy &c. but he rushes upon selfe murder, and despaire. Now had a pierced heart complained, it would not onely have complained of treason, but of the pride of its heart, that would not suffer him to be patient under Gods hand; a pierced heart complains of one sin as well as another, and eschewes one sin as well as another, *Psal. 119. 128. I hate every false way;* He counts all the words of God to be most pure, and what ever crosses the word of God, that he hates.

Finally, they differ in their cures and remedies, a pierced conscience may be cured sundry wayes, by which a pierced heart cannot.

First, a pierced conscience may be cured by
floure of worldly businesse and cares, and sensuall lusts,
 the

the Thorny soyle went beyond the stony : the thorny soyle was pierced, *Ier. 4. 3.* A man may be humbled in conscience, so as you would think he made conscience of all his wayes, but in the end the world choakes him, *Luke 8. 14.* But all the blessings of this world cannot choake an honest and a good heart, *Cant. 8. 7.* Though he be compassed about with abundance of honors and pleasures, he can find no comfort in them, till God have healed his heart.

2. Sometimes prickes of conscience will bee healed by *tract of time.* *Ahab* for three yeares durst not undertake any warre, because of the threatning of the Prophet, *1 King. 21. 29.* and in the first warre he made, he dyed, *1 King. 22. 1.* His conscience was now daubed and smothered; tract of time wil sometimes heale such anguishes. So *Saul*, *1 Sam. 24. 17, 18.* and chap. 26. 2. but it is not so with a pierced heart, it never leaves braying after the Lord, *Psal. 42. 1, 2.* and 84. 3. and 34. 5, 6. My soule is athirst for God, *He will wait, till his day come,* *Job 14. 14.*

3. Againe, conscience may be healed by the *performance of some duties*; sometimes conscience checks a man for such and such sinnes, and for the neglect of such duties; now it will not let him rest till such sins be laid aside, and such duties performed. *Herod* revered *Iohn*, and heard him gladly; but yet the pierced heart is not satisfied in any duties, though sometimes of humiliation, seeke him in every Ordinance, in season and out of season; yet the good soule will still seeke Christ,

Christ, and never leave till she find him, *Cant.* 3. 1,2,3. An heart wounded will never be healed, but by the same hand that wounded it; not so a prickt conscience. But when I say a prickt conscience will be healed, I speake not properly; its true; sometimes a man is said to heale a man that kills him out-right, he feels no more paine; so a man while conscience is dead, lyes wounded with the sting of sin, in sence of the displeasure of the most High. Conscience may fall into the hands of such worldly businesse, &c. as may kill a man out-right, and conscience stirs no more; onely a pierced heart is sensible, into whose hand soever it falls; it is not healed by any thing, but by the blood of the blessed Redeemer, and the life of the Spirit of grace, enabling him in some measure to walke before God in the land of the living.

Of exhortation, to every Christian that knows what it is to be pierced in heart, to pity the estate of such poore soules, as know not in the world what to doe; if you see the bodily heart wounded, and the man swoounding and dying, how ready will every one be to run any way to helpe him? when we see his countenance changed, his spirit sinking, and the whole man falling flat downe, every one would gladly take any course to helpe him: Truly there is not any poore Christian, but when he comes home to God, is in this very case; heart dejected, spirit cast downe, much adoe to cry for mercy, ready to complaine to any; How should this stir us up in such a case, to be helpfull to them to our best endeavours? If wee saw our enemies

Vse 1.

Job 19.21.

enemies Asse falling under his burthen, we ought to help him, *Deut. 22. 4.* and shall wee see our brethren and sisters fall under the burthen, not onely of an accusing conscience, but of a wounded heart: the Lord speakes terror and wrath, and layes the burthen of a mans sinne upon his back; then *Have pity upon me oh my friends, for the hand of God is upon me;* In such a case, the complaint of the soule may be more then ordinary, for his pain is more then ordinary, for he considers the hand of the God of all grace against him. Now alas, where shall I find grace, if the blessing of God bee turned against me? Where should a poore soule looke for blessednesse? so as *Job* had good cause to call for pity; how barbarous is the practise of such, as in stead of helping up such poore Christians, will reproach them and say, See now what you have got by gadding to Sermons, and keeping such company; you should have pitied your selves; Could not you have regarded your owne welfare, and have lived neighbour-like; but you must fall a praying, and a pondering; but see what it comes to now. Oh wretched creatures, if the Devill himselfe were clad in flesh and blood; what more desperate words could hee use then these: Consider you that fearefull place, *Psal. 69. 22. 23. to 26.* It is a fearefull curse the holy Ghost denounceth against such men. *Let their table become a snare, and that which should have bene for their welfare, let it be a trap; Add iniquity to their iniquity, and let not them come in thy righteousness; And wherefore is all this? why, ver. 26. They have*

have persecuted him whom thou hast smitten ; If God have wounded a poore soule, and thou addest to his griefe, it brings an heavy curse of God, not onely upon thy selfe, but upon all thy goods, lands, and estate, and soule too ; Take heed therefore how you speake to the griefe of such wounded soules. Reade also Deut. 25. 17, 18, 19, 20. Remember what Amaleck did to thee in the day when thou camest out of Egypt, how he spoyled them that were feeble and weake with thee, therefore blot out his remembrance from under Heaven, Exod. 17. 16. All things fell out to them in Types ; Amaleck was the first that fell upon the people of God, and because he fell upon the feeblest and weakest, therefore the Lord will have warre with him for ever ; Israel his comming out of Egypt, is but a Type of Gods people comming out of sin, and passing through the red sea of Christs blood, and going through the wildernesse of temptations ; and if Amaleck was so cursed for hurting the weake amongst them ; If then you see any fall soule upon a weake hearted Christian, while he is yet raw and greene, the Lord will have war with such a man and his posterity, and will cut him quite off.

Of reproofe to such as were never yet pricked in heart or in conscience ; If they that are pricked in conscience fall short of truth of grace, what will their case be that never yet were so much as pricked in conscience : you have many men so far off from being pricked in either with sense of sin, as that they take pleasure in sin, they spend their dayes

Ps 2.

dayes in pleasure, and never felt prick in either heart or conscience for sin; some say, let us fill our selves with sin, for to morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant; Come let us eat and drink, for to morrow we shall dye, *Esay 56. ult.* Others there are that are so wholly taken up with the businesse of this life, that they thanke God they never knew what scruple of conscience meant, but they have kept a constant tenor of cheerfulnesse all their dayes. How lamentable is the case of such men, when as many a poore soule by remorse of conscience hath been knocked off from many sins, and yet fall short of salvation; it may be by the Lawes of the Land, or for sinister respects they refrained a little, or for conscience sake, not many times one of a thousand can say, he hath refused any sin, *2 Thes. 2. 12. That they all might bee damned that had pleasure in unrighteousnesse*; It is a sad and a heavy speech, hee saith not, that all unrighteous men shall be damned, for who is he but is unrighteous in some passages; but he that *takes pleasure in unrighteousnesse*, it is the comfort of his soule, to riot in all manner of excesse, and commits all sin with greedinesse, this is their doome, that all might be damned.

There are another sort here to be reprov'd, that have sometimes beene pricked in conscience; and when they should have come on to timelier healing, have left quite off, and are come to this resolution; They thanke God they are now got out of such heart qualmes, and they will now blesse themselves from such company and occasions,

sions, as might put such trouble of conscience upon them, but will this prove a safe course think you? If you see a woman with child come to her travaile, and her pangs grow strong, if afterwards she leave off, and settle her selfe, you conclude her child is dead, and it will much indanger the mother; so if God have sometimes given us to come to pangs of new birth, and to feele many piercings of conscience, and give great hopes that the Lord Jesus is forming in such a soule, and might it ~~come~~ ^{continue}, doubtlesse so it would be, if you give over and desire to settle, when it is high time you should be delivered in such a case, not one soule of a thousand ever comes to live in Gods sight. Let therefore no man thinke himselfe in a safe condition, if he have neither come to heart nor conscience piercing.

And yet another sort is reproveable, who have some pricks of conscience, and so continue some pretty time, by some duties of humiliation, and onely rest there, and goe no farther. Conscience stings bitterly, and it must needs fall to such duties, as fasting, and prayer, and this a man is willing to stoop to, and thereupon he continues in such duties, and makes account that will serve the turne to stop the mouth of conscience: and what will this doe? If afterwards a man take as much liberty to sin as ever before, and walke in no more feare of God, and love of the brethren then before; this is the most fearefull delusion the poore soule can be exposed unto, that a man should set up his rest here to stay, and never consider, whether

ther his heart loath sinne more then ever before, and therefore take heed wee rest not in any such works as these.

Vse 3.

To every soule of us that hath found his heart come to a better frame, if ever God hath brought your hearts to any kindly pricking for sin, rest not till you may truly say, there is no Christian man but you count him your brother, rest not till you can looke at all the children of God as thy ~~chie-
f~~ brethren and sisters, who have most wounded and pierced thee, let thy heart most esteeme of them, give not over till thou hast struck a Covenant with every soule, that knoweth what it is to be pricked in heart, and be willing to consult with thy brethren about thy spirituall estate; It is true, sometimes a child of God may keepe his conception long very close, the Prodigall had none to consult with, but he said *within himselfe*. You have some Christians, especially such men as have knowledge and parts, have not need to complaine so much, nor to aske such counsell, as those that are ignorant, they know their unworthinesse of any mercy from God, and they goeto God, and fill heaven and earth with cryes and groanes; but you rest not till you find God answering you with the testimony of his favour, but if you doe not know what to doe, then rest not till you have got some to advise you. Take up this example from these ignorant people, and the Gaoler, *Acts 16. 19, 20.*

And further come unto God, and Christian friends with a resolution and purpose of heart, that

that whatever God calls you to doe, or suffer for his names sake, you will not faile to doe it, but set your selfe about it.

If you bee come thus far; then it is a word of everlasting consolation to such as can find in this manner their hearts bowed to this gracious frame of spirit; If God hath thus kindly pierced thy heart, it is a good signe that he will finish this worke in thee. You say, But may not a man have his heart pierced, and yet sit loose from his brethren, and sometimes looke at those as his enemies, that are his neereſt friends? and may he not sometimes start back from doing or suffering that which God calls for? is it not possible a man pierced in heart may doe thus? *Yſe 4.*

Anſw. It is, but it is ever true, that those men whose hearts are pierced may be too blame sometimes herein; Such a thing is not impossible, and would it were not over usuall; for many times the issues of corruption are stopped and they cease bleeding, and then it is wonder to see, how they can forget their brethren and sisters, and they are now toyled and tumbled in the world, that they are not able to do and suffer the will of God; and though such may have comfort in their hearts that have beene pierced, yet they ought to keepe the issue of their corruption alwaies open: It is therefore for such to renew the piercing of their hearts, and that by wisely applying every word of God to them. Learne to know your brethren and sisters, and to follow after God in the use of every Ordinance; you shall not finde a

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more comfortable evidence of your good estates before God, then when you keepe afresh within you the love of your brethren, and finde your hearts inwardly cleaving to every good duty, and to be ready to doe and suffer any thing for God; keepe this frame in you, and then feare not, you will have comfort in your way in the end.



ACTS 2. 37.

Men and brethren what shall we doe, &c.



EE now come to the third Argument by which this humiliation is described. *When they heard this; that is, When they heard Peter particularly apply the Doctrine he had delivered; Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, &c. Then they were pricked in their hearts.*

Doct. 3. The pricking of the heart is wrought by hearing the word of God, applied to the convincing of our soules, both of our particular sins, and of the greatnesse and goodnesse of that God, against whom wee have committed them.

This may be of use to us all, that desire to have our hearts pierced effectually and savingly, *When they heard this word of the Gospell that Peter had preached touching Christ, and heard Peter touch their particular sinne against Christ, they so heard the Word, that they were convinced of their*

their particular sins against Christ, and they were also convinced of his greatnesse and goodnesse; God hath made him *Lord*, advanced him to sit at his owne right hand, and so his goodnesse, they have killed and crucified the anointed one of God, this *Iesus* whom you have crucified, God hath made him *Lord* for his greatnesse, and *Christ* for his goodnesse. And when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts. So then, there are three things goe to the kindly piercing of a mans heart; First, Hearing the word; Secondly, Conviction of a mans particular finnes; and Thirdly, A sight of the greatnesse and goodnesse of that God whom we have pierced.

First, Hearing the Word; It hath pleased the Lord much to delight in this Ordinance, and to make it onely a principall soveraigne means for the piercing of the hearts of his people; Hence it is, that the Word is called *Goads and Nails*, *Eccles. 12. 11.* God hath set an edge upon the Word, and given it a piercing power; the Word is called a *two-edged sword*, *Heb. 4. 12.* A sharpe and a keene Arrow; God hath given the Word a piercing nature. But how is it, or why doth God make his Word so piercing?

By ordaining the breath of the word, to be the *Reas.* breath of the Spirit; when ever his word is dispensed he will accompany it with the breath of his owne Spirit, which sets an edge upon it, so as they shall sinke deeply; It is the Spirit of God that gives it a point, and this God hath vouchsafed to his whole word, both Law and Gospell,

and therefore the *Gospel* is called the *ministration of the Spirit*, 2 *Cor.* 3. 8. and the *Law*, the *ministration of condemnation*, ver. 9. So that if a man speake Law, he not onely *tels* a man of condemnation, but hee *ministers* it unto him; so as a man sees plainly, he is in no better case, then in an estate of condemnation; and so the ministration of the Gospel by the Spirit of holinesse, assures a man of his righteousness by Jesus Christ, *Gal.* 3. 5. God hath ordained, that together with the word, the Spirit should be dispensed, whether a man preach Law or Gospel.

And this upon a threefold ground.

First, By this meanes God doth most suitably answer the creation of the world, in the new creation of decayed corrupt nature; *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made*, *Psal.* 33. 6. What, will the speaking of a word make a World? No; A vanishing word will not; but if God put in the breath and worke of his Spirit, then the world is made; *Gen.* 1. 1, 2, 3. and God hath ordained, that when he would come to repaire decayed nature, by the same meanes by which he made the world, by the same will he repaire it, and therefore in his name must the word bee spoken, and by the breath of the Lord, a Congregation is gathered together, & Christians established in grace, and all the host of them, & now all things are become new; *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.* How comes it to passe, that the word lights on me, first to wound me, and then to bind me up? Why, the Lord hath *created the fruit of the lips* to bring

bring it to passe; Here was a small worke, the breath of a Fisherman to convert three thousand soules, a thing unlikely by the power of nature; but if God set in with him, then there is a creating worke of God, and now such soules cannot rest, till they find rest and peace in God.

Secondly, God by this meanes doth convey an Antidote or preservative into the hearts of men, by the same meanes which Satan at the first did infuse his venome into our first Parents; Did not he seduce them by the hearing of the eare, the breath of the Serpent poysoning their hearts, with unbeleeve? God therefore that sent Christ to dissolve the cursed works of Satan, untwists this worke againe by a savoury and wholesome worke of his Spirit, by conveying it into our minds, and judgements, and consciences, and so dissolve the cursed worke of Satan.

Thirdly, God therefore doth it, that he might confound all the wisdom of the Orators, and Philosophers, and wise men of the world, 1 Cor. 1. 21. *It pleased God by the foolishnesse of Preaching to save them that beleeve*; all the learned Philosophers could never convince a man of a sin, they could sometimes perswade men by morall perswasions, but they could never pierce their hearts, nor teach them the knowledge of Christ; God hath made them all fooles in that behalfe, that so the faith of Gods people might not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of Gods grace.

Rom. 10. 14, 17.

But have not men sometimes beene pierced by
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the workes of God ? what say you to *Iosephs* brethren ? *Gen.* 42. 21. and so the Jaylor, *Acts* 16. 26. to 29.

Answer. The works of God doe sometimes work especially to the piercing of the conscience, but not so usually to the pricking of the heart; but if they doe, yet they doe it *as sanctions of the word*, as they are *confirmations* and *seeds of the word*, they may drive in some word wee have heard closer and neerer to the heart: *Iosephs* brethren could not be ignorant of their sin against the life and liberty of their brother ; now they comming into a distresse, it sets on what they knew before. So it is likely the Jaylor had heard *Paul* speak something, else how came he so readily to aske the way to salvation ? Sometimes indeed where ordinary meanes faile, God his Spirit can do it alone, without the breath of the word, but this is the ordinary way.

But secondly, There was more then hearing the word; the word was applyed to the conviction of their particular sinne, by which meanes their hearts came to be prickt: it is the nature of the word applyed to convince a sinner, that thou art the man; so these hearers, they knew assuredly, that they were guilty of that sinne. *2 Sam.* 12. 7, 13. *Samuel* would convince them of that very sin above the rest, of chusing them a King, *1 Sam.* 12. and thereupon they confessed it. So *Judges* 2. 2, 4. when they saw they had gone against Gods charge, in that particular sin, that wounded them to the heart. So when our Saviour would take off the

the Woman of Samaria from scoffing, he convinced her of her particular sins, *Iohn 4. 14, 15, 16.* this made her say, *Sir, I perceive thou art a Prophet,* and then questions with him about Religion, had free beene prickt in conscience onely, she would have quarrelled with him, what had he to doe with who kept her company, but a pierced heart is of another temper.

The reason of this is taken from the confusion of heart and face which is wrought in a soule by convincing it of its particular sinne, as to expresse it thus, *Iosephs Butler charged Iudah* and his brethren, that they had done ill to take away his Masters cup; why, say they, with whom soever it is found, let him die the death, *Gen. 44. 6, 12, 16.* now when he searched and found the Cup in *Benjamin's* sack, then say they, *What shall we speake unto my Lord? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants, behold we are my Lords bondmen; here is the Cup found amongst them; Benjamin he is guilty; and now they know not what to doe or say: Just thus hath God purus to the stand, and finds the Cup in our sacks mouths; this or that very wickednesse is found in the mouth of my sack; in my soule, and in my hand; then we are set to the wall, and our hearts blush within us, What shall we now say to the Lord, or how shall we excuse our selves: now wee see wee are sons of wrath, children of death: As a thiefe is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel, being found pilfering the glory of God, and giving it to the Syrians, and Egyptians, Jer. 2. 26.* This prepared the woman that was

taken in Adultery, to receive a word of comfort, *John* 8. 4. Hee seeing her face and heart so ashamed of the businesse, had no heart to speake an ill word to her; now he was not wont to daub up any in sin, but it is to shew you, that particular application puts a mans hand in his bosome, and takes him just in the very act of some sin, this puts such confusion of heart and face upon him, as that it makes him very fit for a word of comfort.

3. All this will not yet worke, unlesse it be applied to a mans particular sin, as against that *great* and *good* God, against whom they are wrought. The Lord hath made him whom you have crucified, a *Lord* for *greatnesse*, a *Christ* for *goodnesse*. Now that the knowledge of sin against the greatnesse of the Lord, doth so pierce the heart, it is evident by the paines that God takes to pull downe the heart of *Iob*, when he would have him to renew his repentance, *chap.* 38, 39, 40, 41. and convinces him, that hee hath beene quarrelling against God, and God followes that argument, to shew the glory of his mighty works, and that wrought upon him, for saith he, *Behold I am vile, once have I spoken, yet twice, but I will proceed no farther*, *chap.* 41. 1, 2, 3, 4. and *chap.* 42. 6. When he remembers the word of God to him, and God had convinced him of his glorious Majesty; now saith he, I repent and abhor my selfe; and when God would pierce *Sauls* heart, how doth he it? *Acts* 9. 5. 4. *Why persecutest thou me?* He shewes him his glorious Majesty, and then all astonished, he

he fell downe and said, *Lord, what wilt thou have me doe ?*

And as thus his greatnesse, so his goodnesse is of mighty power to convince: *I delivered thee*, sayes God to *David*, *out of the hands of Saul*, and gave thee a Kingdome, and if that had beene too little, *I would have given thee more; and why hast thou then despised the commandment of the Lord ?* 2 Sam. 12. 7, 8, 9. This so wonderfully wrought upon him, that thereupon he penned the 51. Psalme. So Deut. 32. 6. *Doe you thus requite the Lord, O yee foolish people and unwise; Is not he the God that hath nourished and brought thee up ? It pierces the heart to consider that we have sinned against so good a God.*

Why his greatnesse ?

There is a double worke in this. First, terrifying the conscience, and shewing us the fearefull danger of sin. Secondly, it discovers to us our owne vilenesse. So was it with *Ioseph* his brethren, when they saw him whom they had sold for a slave, was now advanced to this greatnesse, they could not answer a word; they were terrified at his presence; and that made *Saul* tremble, Acts 9. 3, 4, 5, 6. So *Iob* he was struck in the like sort. But secondly, it works in a man sense of his owne vilenesse, I abhorre my selfe in dust and ashes, *Iob* 41. 2. and 42. 6. The greatnesse of Gods glorious Majesty doth so affect us, that wee are sensible of our own vilenesse, that we should offer to exalt our selves against the most High; this will so confound a man with sense of his owne vilenesse,

nesse, that his heart is much pricked within him.

Secondly, So Gods goodnesse.

Reas. 1. Because it shewes us the desperatenesse of our danger; to sinne against a *great* God, is great *danger*, but yet there may be a remedy, but to sinne against a *good* God, that makes our case *desperate*, as thus, When a mans heart is convinced that he hath sinned against a good God, he sees he is now separated by his sinne, from the goodnesse of that God in whom all his helpe lay. *Esay* 59. 2. and *Ier.* 5. 24, 25. If a man sinne against God his preserver, who shall then preserve him? if hee sinne against the God of grace and peace, where shall he find grace? *2 King.* 9. 22. Thou hast sinned against the God of grace, and what hast thou now to doe with grace?

2. It convinceth us of the more vilenesse of our sins, to consider that we have sinned against a good God. These things chiefly make sinne vile; The *folly*, the *unkindnesse*, and the *dishonesty* of sinne.

First, *Folly* will shame a man much, *2 Sam.* 24. 10. *Deut.* 32. 6. Now when a man sees he hath sinned against a good God, he sees himselfe a notorious foole; foolish creature I, thus to sin against a good God!

Secondly, The *unkindnesse*, the ingratitude, and the unmannerlinesse of a sinne, it makes a man blush, and to be inwardly confounded, *Ezra* 9. 6, 9, 10. Have not we cause for ever to be confounded, and hast not thou cause to be angry with us, till there be no remedy? *ver.* 13, 14.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The *dishonesty* of a sinne, shames us much, *Ier. 2. 26.* Two things are dishonest, theft, and whoredome; now both these we have committed against a good God, *Ier. 3. 20. to 25.* These doe all pierce the heart,

First, it shews how farre off they are from salvation, and their desperate condition, that despise to heare the word of God, and seeke not to him that they might be saved. Thou dost not love to heare the word, then thou lovest not to have thy heart pierced; *Salvation is farre from the wicked, because they seeke not thy Law, Psal. 119. 155.* They love to be farre from the word of salvation, and then salvation is far from them; *The word is the power of God to salvation, Rom. 1. 16.* And he that turnes away his eares from hearing the Law, even his prayer shall be abominable, *Prov. 28. 9.*

Vse 1.

Suppose we liye under the word and heare it; then we must desire that the word may be applied particularly, and personally, against our particular and personall corruptions, *Psal. 141. 5.* Let a righteous man apply the word particularly unto me, and pierce my heart, it will not kill my soule, nor hurt my body, but will heale both soule and body, to immortality and glory; Many men could willingly heare a Minister flourish out a Sermon, but they care not for the word to come neare them; but consider, you cannot more manifest to God and your brethren, that your hearts are naught, then when you will not be convinced of your particular sins. The sword of God, take it as it lyes in the word, and it is like a sword in the

Vse 2.

the scabberd , and the exposition is but the branding of it; but when application is made, that thou art the man that hast done this , not to endure this, is an argument of a carnall heart, though sometimes even Gods owne people, doe not love to be particularized; when you are in this temper, you are sinking downe to hardnesse of heart, it was *Asa* his case, 2 *Chron.* 16. 9, 10. an evident forerunner of hardnesse of heart and unbelieve: it is a wonder to see the loose corruption of our hearts, yea faith one , Such an one was met with to day; we can tell where the word hits another, but take nothing to our owne particulars ; but if another man was hit in his right veine , and thou escape, what comfort can that be to thy soule? his corruptions by that meanes issue out, and they are healed, and thou camest as deadly sick as he, and thou not once looked at ; and wilt thou gratifie thy selfe in this , that God should think good not to speake one word to thee ? Wee all come to the word, as to heare the Testament of our heavenly Father ; now if a man read his Fathers Will, and find so much given to such an one, and so much to another, and to them particularly by name, and he not so much as named; would any man gratifie himselfe in the forgetfulnesse of his Father, and would not rather be sorry ? Now this is one part of Gods people their inheritance, that in the Law and Gospel , God should tell us as it were by name, Thou art the man or woman; then say, we have cause to blesse God that he should care for such a soule as mine is, and name me in his Testament.

ment. If a man be invited to anothers Table, but the dish I only want, is carved all away from me; would I not be troubled at it? and so, suppose you sit here in the Church, & heare such and such doctrines, carved out to such and such Christians, would not you say, when will something reach me, and fit my purpose? you should desire, oh that God would convince me of something, wherein I have sinned against his greatnesse, and his goodnesse, and be so far from taking it in ill part, as to blesse God for it; if it be threatning, say, Good is the word of the Lord; say it is a good commandment that strikes downe my lust, a good promise, that binds up my soule in life and peace.

To help us all, if the Minister should forget to be helpfull to us, and not light on us, wisely to apply the word to our owne hearts, every threatning, commandment, and promise, according to our severall conditions, help the Minister to hold the plough, acquaint him with our need, and if not, be sure to *mixe the word with faith, Heb. 4.2.* Consider of all the sinnes you have committed, you must not beare off the weapon, as the manner of some is, or looke at him that strikes as our enemy, but lay we downe all quarrelling contestation against the word, and stand not fencing against God, but keepe it close to your hearts, till your liveliest corruptions be issued out. Vse 3.

If after application you still finde your hearts stubborne; then lay them close to the word, and call to mind the sins you have committed against the Vse 4.

the great God of Heaven and earth, *Esay 37.28.* Sleight it not off with saying, God dwels in heaven, and regards not such small matters: Thy chiefest sins thou sayest are but thoughts; let me tell thee, they are in some sort worse then actions; A man commits whoredome it may be but once, but thou in thy thoughts mayest daily, with all the beauties in the Towne. Thus labour to bring your hearts to godly sorrow, that they may be bruised to dust before God.



ACTS 2. 37.

Now when they heard this, &c.



WE come now to speake of the subjects of this humiliation: Who were these? They that thus hearing the word, were thus wrought on, and thus wounded by it; that you may know who they were, looke back into the 12. and 13. verses: some of them were amazed at the Apostles prophesying with new Tongues; they were ignorant, for ignorance is the cause of amazement and admiration; they were never before acquainted with any way to eternall life; yea, these were also mockers, and now to convince these men, the Apostle takes all this paines in this Sermon.

Doctrin. *The ignorance and scornfulnesse of carnall hearts doth*

doth not, nay, cannot hinder the Lord, from piercing or pricking of them.

What was in these mens hearts before? Ignorance, they were masked at spirituall doctrine, yea mocked and scorned the Apostles, so little did they discern the power of the Spirit, as that they thought it was no more then the spirit of Wine, and yet this doth not hinder the Lord from piercing of them. For opening of this Point, take notice of three things.

First, the danger of such a frame of spirit, for ignorance is such a frame of heart, as is not onely dangerous, but in any mans view and reason, desperate. *Esay 27.11. It is a people of no understanding, therefore he that made them, will have no mercy on them*; What shall I say in this case, when God that formed them will shew them no favour? I had almost said, now the Lord be mercifull to them; but then I had spoken contrary to the word: though ignorant men thinke, God that made them, will save them; yet he himselfe saith, he will not have mercy on them, how then shall any man pray for mercy to them? should we so pray, we should thwart the words of Scripture; So that, if when these ignorant persons stood amazed at this strange doctrine, should he have looked downe upon them, and said, because they are a people of no understanding, therefore I will shew them no mercy; Where then had all these poore creatures beene? So *Hosea 4.1. The Lord hath a controversie with you, because there is no knowledge of God in the Land: and ver. 6. My people are*

are destroyed for lacke of knowledge. Reade also *Ephes. 4. 18.* *Alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them*; a most fearfull description of ignorant minded men; their understandings are darkened, and what followes upon that: they are disfranchised from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them. *Psal. 95. 10, 11, 12.* *Because they have not knowne my wayes, therefore have I sworne in my wrath they should not enter into my rest*; a fearfull word indeed. God hath sworne it, and there is no revoking the oath of God; he never sweares upon condition; hee may ordaine a Priesthood of *Aaron*, by a word of promise; but if they reject the Covenant, he can tell how to turne the house of *Aaron* out of doores: but if he sweare he hath ordained Christ a Priest for ever, then his Priesthood shall never be shaken; had God onely threatned ignorant people from entring into his rest, they might have hoped upon repentance; had he sworne, within forty dayes, and Ninive shall be destroyed, then a stone had not beene left upon a stone, within forty dayes; but he onely threatned it, and threatnings are many times understood with condition, but in this case, God hath sworne, and that in his deepe displeasure, (and will not repent, *Psal. 110. 3, 4.*) and then this case must needs be very dangerous: and though sometimes you have ignorant men, whom you take to be just wel-meaning men, with whom you might trust untold gold, and they are forward, according to their knowledge, yet notwithstanding, if they be ignorant,

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for all this, the wrath of God may lie upon them to the utmost. Compare *Rom. 10. 1, 2.* he desires their salvation, for they have a zeale of God, though not according to knowledge; but yet see what he saith of these men, *1 Thess. 2. 16. They killed the Lord Jesus, their owne Prophets, and persecuted us, therefore the wrath of God is come upon them to the uttermost.* Now though these men had zeale, yet because their zeale was not guided by saving knowledge, the wrath of God was come upon them to the uttermost; and if God have sworne they shall never enter into his rest, then judge you what a dangerous case these hearers were in; yet notwithstanding even these hearers are they, of whom it is here said, *They were pricked in their hearts.*

Now see something of the danger of scorning, *Prov. 3. 34. God gives scorning to scorers, but hee gives grace to the humble.* Now what is it to scorn? Scorning is the sporting of a mans selfe, with another mans contempt and disgrace; it is not meerly speaking dispightfully, but it is such an injury, as makes it selfe sport with the disgrace and misery of another: So the children scorned the Prophet, for in their eyes his baldnesse was a blemish, *2 Kings 2. latter end,* and he cursed them in the name of the Lord, and forty two of them were destroyed presently; see the sin and the punishment together. But now when God saith he scornes the scorers, that he should comfort himselfe in putting disgrace and contempt upon the creature, that is a most fearfull condition: *He that*

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sits in heaven will laugh them to scorne, he will have them in derision, Psal. 2. 3, 4. He will mock when their calamity comes upon them of a sudden like a whirlwinde, Prov. 1. 26. He will take pleasure in their confusion, as they have made themselves pastime with his Ordinances and servants, he will put contempt upon such persons, Prov. 9. 12. & Prov. 14. 6. If a scorner would learn to be a wiser man, he shall not be able; and therefore in such a case, God is wont to forbid his servants to have any thing to doe with such men: *He that rebukes a scorner, gets himselfe a blot*, Prov. 9. 7, 8. As if God would not pity his own servants, as if they should cast pearles before such scornfull spirits, and get blots to themselves for their labour. They despise and reject me, and think you to doe any good of them by rebuking them: and if God exclude such men, and would not have so much as a wholesome word tendered to them, then let you them alone, God will take a time to scorne with them. Now if Gods people have no warrant to dispense a word of counsell to them, their condition must needs be dangerous; See the reason of their danger:

First, ignorance shewes you the blindnesse of their mindes; A man is not more capable of understanding heavenly things, when his minde is blinde, then a blinde man is to judge of colours. And for a scornfull hearer, he is hardned in heart unto proud rebellion against God; such as expresseth it selfe in scorning of every word and Ordinance of God: But yet notwithstanding in the second

second place, (and you may stand and wonder at it) these ignorant scornfull hearers, even these are prickt in their hearts : God sometimes effectually blesses a call to such, and he will have wisdom to cry unto them, saying, Even yee simple ones and scornors; *turn you as my reproofe, and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, Prov. 1. 22, 23.* Would you ever think it possible, that when God had sworne that such men should never enter into his rest, that now he should send *Solomon* to cry unto them to turn unto him; yet see here this word made good, and so *Prov. 8. 5. Ye simple, be of an understanding heart* : The Lord Jesus there uses a creating word, *Be of an understanding heart*; So *Acts 26. 18.* I have sent thee to be a Minister to the Gentiles, *to turn them from darknesse to light.* For a man to be in the dark, and to have no eyes, is a double misery; yet so is it with any man in the estate of nature : Yet I send thee to give such men light, *and to turne them from the power of Satan to God.* And scornors are expressly called, *Esay 28. 14. 10 22.* Heare you this ye scornfull men; Will God ever call such men, as can tell how to make a scorn and jest of the Devill and hell? He makes use of this, *ver. 22. Now therefore be ye no more mockers, lest your bonds be made strong.* Thus he gives them counsell. And in expresse termes read two examples of mockers, partly that in the Text, and *Acts 3. 19.* and the very same men when they heard this, were converted, *Acts 4. 4.* And *Paul* expresseth thus much of himselfe, *1 Tim. 1. 13. I was likewise, A scornfull oppressor,* one that put scath and

and scorn, together upon the people of God, yet I was received to mercy.

How then will this hang together? God swears he will never shew mercy to such an ignorant scornfull People; and yet that now he should come and beseech them to be reconciled to him?

Answer. For clearing this you are to understand, there is a double kinde of ignorance, and a double kinde of scorning; Some distinguish only between simple, and affected ignorance; but I conceive it is not all affected ignorance that God protests against, for *Prov.* 1. 22. they loved simplicity, and yet God calls upon them to return unto him, & therefore against such he swears not; but in case they be both simple, and love their ignorance, and yet have means of grace & knowledge offered unto them, & such as are sufficient to convince and perswade them, and yet they wil not be convinced & perswaded, but remain obstinate after God hath taken long pains with them, and will not heare, as they *Acts* 28. 27. When it comes to such a *froward obstinate ignorance*, when God hath wrastled with them forty yeares, *Psal.* 95. 10, 11. and they yet stubborn, then let them alone, *He that made them, will not save them.*

And so there is also a double kind of scorning; The one is a scorning through ignorance; Many a man scornes God and his Word, as *Paul* scorned the people of God, he scorned he knew not what. Now in such a case, there is a possibility a man should be healed, and such you may admonish, but *if after the receiving the knowledge of the truth, a*

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man doe willingly scorne the waies of grace, there remains no more sacrifice for that mans sin, Heb. 10. 26, 27. When a man knowes this is the way of grace, and these be the servants of Christ, and yet scorne them, then you may not say, Father forgive them, for they know not what they doe: These men in the text, they scorned they knew not whom; but being convinced, they scorne no more; but now, Men and brethren, &c.

Taken from the prayer of Christ, *Luke 23. 34.* *Reas. 1.* though they mock, and scoffe, and spit upon him, though they made themselves merry with pouring contempt upon him, the Holy One of God, yet saith he, *Father forgive them, they know not what they doe*; here were many of the common people, (as generally there is at executions) and they put all despite upon him that could be, yet for them he prayed, and he saith, Father, I know thou hearest mee alwaies, *John 11. 42.* and this prayer will alwaies take place in the like subjects.

Taken from the end of his death, His blood *Reas. 2.* was shed, to make atonement, for the *ignorance and error of the people*, Heb. 9. 7. There was sacrifices in the Law, for the errors of ignorance, which is effectually to heale the people of such sinnes.

Hence it comes to passe, because the word of *Reas. 3.* God is mighty, not onely to give light to the simple, but makes the thing we should see, cleare and evident, *Psal. 119. 130.* and this springs from the former reasons; There is that in the word, which will soften the most hard and scornfull heart,

heart, *1st. 23. 28. 29.* and so to subdue scornfull high thoughts, great and disdainfull high thoughts, *2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.* His word is like to an Iron Mace, to crush them in pieces that stand against it.

Vse 1.

To reprove the Papists of their merit *ex congruo*; They say when men are converted, they are prepared for it, by some good fore-going works, some merit of congruity, for which God shews them mercy: But what preparation is there in a blinde man to see, or in an ignorant man to understand? here are men as much unprepared for mercy, as ever you knew any, scorned Christ, made themselves merry to pour contempt upon the Apostles gifts, yet came to have pricked hearts: What preparation was there in *Paul* when he went to *Damascus* to do mischief? The people of God can tell, when God first looked into their hearts, they were most drowie at such a Sermon, and their hearts more wandring that day then ordinary, and so unfit for mercy in themselves.

Vse 2.

To teach all ignorant scornfull persons to take heed, how you take pleasure in so doing, for the best that can come of it, is to have your soules prickt to the heart for it; but you that have lived long under meanes of grace, consider what you doe, it is a most fearfull thing to live in an estate of ignorance so many yeares together. I tell you as long as you live in ignorance, and can make jests of Religion, you cannot say, But for ought you know, God will shew you no mercy, for all this while

while you are without understanding, and God saith, his people are destroyed for want of knowledge, and if that be your portion, are you not in a poore case? you are outlawed from the life of God. Tell not God, that you are not book learned, if you live under meanes of grace; Gods word gives knowledge, and you have understood the meaning of a good bargain, and of an almes, and yet if a man tell you what an estate you are born in, and likely to die in, you will not understand it; you know how the Lord sware against the people of Israel, after forty yeares provocation; It is true, God hath limited himselfe to forty yeares, he can stay till 60. or 80. yeares, yet it is much for God to stay 40. yeares. Flatter not your selves in your ignorance, lest the wrath of God come upon you to the uttermost, it is no dallying with ignorance, no nor with scornfulnesse. Though we can tell how to jibe at the duties of the profession of Religion, yet take heed of it: if a man can make himselfe pastime with the honour of God, and the duties of his worship, it will be heavy in the end. The honour of a man is more to him then his goods or life, it is more dishonour to God to vilifie his name, then (if it were possible) to take away his life; therefore scorn not: if God begin once to scorne you, he can tell how to laugh at your destruction; It is not therefore for you to dally with such things, and if any of you have been bold this way, doe so no more.

To all simple, ignorant, and scornfull mockers, *Vse 3.*
if you have not growne forward therein, if so,
then

then I would get my self a blot; but I hope if any of you have scorned wife, or children, or brethren, I willingly hope, it was but of Ignorance; or else I should think my labour lost, and they that are filthy should be filthy still, and the scornfull perish in his scornfulnesse.

This is therefore to exhort and charge you, that since God may, and doth sometimes, shew mercy to ignorant scornfull creatures, now to lay aside your scorning; How long will you scornors delight in scorning, and make it your glory that you can put flouts upon Religion? hath not God staied for some of you forty or fifty yeares, and will you stay till he swear in his wrath, you shall never enter into his rest? since there may be a possibility of pardon, now yeeld up your hearts to God. Say to your selves, because I am one of no understanding, therefore the Lord will have no mercy on me; Now Lord, what a poore condition am I then now in? have I scorned others, and doth God say, he will scorn scornors? have I lived here in a congregation where I have been followed with meanes of grace almost these eighty yeares, and knowes not to this day in what estate my poore soul stands before God? Now take it to heart, and see how you will answer this to God; never rest and sleep in such a condition, lest in the end you be past remedy. You say, suppose we would now turne to God, what would you have us doe?

Solomon gives this counsell, *Prov. 2. 1. to 7.* First hearken to the word of God, *ver. 1.* and your soules

soules shall live, *Esa* 55. 2, 3. Our Saviours hearers fastened their eyes upon him, *Luke* 4. 20. but wonder to see how instead of fastening our eyes upon the Preacher, we can looke every way, as if we came to a Faire or a Market, and mind any thing rather then the word.

Secondly, Apply the word unto your hearts, suffer not your heart to say, such an one was let blood in the right veine to day, but lay your own estate to the word.

Thirdly, Cry after wisdom, *ver.* 3. that is, pray heartily to God, moorne before him, that thou shouldst be such an ignorant scornful wretch all this while; that thou shouldst live so long, and have so little grace, and all for want of asking; The blind man cryed after our Saviour, *Mar.* 10. 51. and though the people rebuked him, yet he cryed till he received sight; what though others rebuke you and say, You have knowledg enough, will you be a foole now: but alas, thou art a poore ignorant creature, cry hard that you may receive sight.

Fourthly, Seeke after knowledge as for hidden treasure, *ver.* 4, 5. make account you doe not seeke for trifles when you seeke for knowledge, but looke at the knowledge of God and his grace as precious things, and reverence the Ordinances. It is irreverence, especially for yong men, to sit with their hats on, when the word is read in the Congregation, *Levit.* 26. 2. and *Psal.* 93. *ult.* And though the Sanctuary and our Churches doe differ, yet when the people are there assembled,

bled, then God is greatly to bee revered,
Psal. 89. 7. Come therefore reverently, and seeke
 for knowledge, as for hidden treasure, seeke it in
 the fellowship of Gods servants, *Prov. 13. 20.* and
 see the works of God, *Psal. 107. ult.* Scoffe no
 more against the *Holy one of Israel*, *Esay 37. 23.*
Stand in awe and sin not, *Psal. 4. 4.*

Vsc 4.

Of eternall thankfulnesse, to them that are now
 called to Gods wayes, who have beene ignorant
 and scornfull; let such learne to blesse the name
 of his grace, and patience towards all them yet
 uncalled, and blesse his name that hath found out
 a way to heale, and save, and shew mercy to
 them.



ACTS 2. 27.

Now when they heard this, &c.

WEE now come to the last Doctrine,
 which ariseth by comparing this
 verse with verse 23. and repeated
 againe in the verse before the text; shewing, that
 however *Peter* had told them, that what was
 done against Christ, was done by the foreknow-
 ledge and determinate counsell of God; yet that
 doth neither extenuate their sin nor their sorrow,
 but rather aggravate both; This was a principall
 passage in this Sermon, and may not be left out;
 this reflected upon their hearts, to the aggravati-
 on,

on, both of their sin and sorrow, whence observe this note.

That the determinate counsell, providence, and Doct. ult. foreknowledge of God in giving us up unto sinne, doth neither extenuate the hainousnesse of sinne, nor lessen the godly sorrow of an honest heart, for the committing of it.

It is a truth most evidently springing from this verse, compared with the 23. *Him being delivered by the determinate counsell and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands crucified and slaine:* Whereby he would have them understand, that the counsell and foreknowledge of God did not excuse them from sin in this kind; God by his determinate counsell, and just, and wise hand delivered him; but you tooke him with wicked hands; and now when they heard that God had such an hand in it, it did not extenuate their sin, nor their sorrow, but this wounded them to the very heart, that they so wickedly had crucified him; they take not advantage to excuse themselves by *Peters* words, as to say, God had purposed Christ should dye, and in his providence hee let all things concur to the putting him to death, by delivering him into the hands of secular power, God had ordered every thing that was done, and we can doe neither more nor lesse then serve his providence, therefore what need we be so troubled about it? No, they doe not thus; But they saw they had tooke him by wicked hands and slaine him, and this pierced them to the heart; and this very point is held out unto us, *Acts 4.*

25, to 28. Gods wise purpose inwardly, and strong hand outwardly, had determined this should be done, that the Rulers tooke counsell to doe against Christ; yet compare it with *Psal. 2. 2, 3, 4.* from whence it is fetched, and see what the Lord saith, *The Lord shall have them in derision*, and that is a most fearefull judgement. So that God is the more provoked against the sonnes of men, when they rise up against him, though they doe no more then he before had determined to be done; See this from some other Scriptures, *Iohn 19. 11.* As our Saviours words to *Pilate*, *Thou couldest have no power over me, except it were given thee from above; therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sinne*: though neither *Iudas* could betray him, nor the high Priest deliver him, nor *Pilate* condemne him, except they had power given them from above; yet this excuseth none of them, but they therefore have the greater sinne, in abusing their authority and opportunity; for a man to take an advantage by Gods providence, this aggravates his sinne. It is a notable Scripture, *Ioh. 12. 39, 40.* *They could not beleewe, because he had blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, &c.* Why, but may not this excuse them? No; *Now have they no cloake for their sin*, *Iohn 15. 22.* An heavy judgement of God now then lyes upon them. It is a grievous reproofe the Prophet takes up against the Chaldeans, *Esay 47. 6, to 10.* These two shall come upon thee in one day, losse of children and widowhood, &c. and yet compare that

that with *Ier. 25. 9.* The Chaldeans did no more then the Lord said they should doe; *You shall have no pity, no mercy upon them;* So that what the King of Babel did against the people, it was but as a staffe in Gods hand, yet *thou hast layed an heavy yoke upon them, and hast not spared neither young nor old.* This God complains of bitterly, as an horrible cruelty, and will take vengeance upon them in like measure, *Psal. 137. 2. last.* So that this no whit the more extenuates mens sins, though they doe no more but execute Gods counsells, yet they are still said to doe it *with wicked hands.* And so also doth it neither extenuate the godly sorrow of an honest heart for these finnes. These honest hearted hearers have not their sorrow lessened, because they have done no more, but what Gods hand did, yet this pierced their hearts, that they by wicked hands had taken him out of Gods just and wise hand, and had crucified him. So *Peter* works upon the same occasion, *Acts 3. 17, 18, 19.* *What thing God before had shewed, he hath fulfilled, &c.* And what use doth he make of that? Doth he say, it was Gods will it should be so: & therefore you need not trouble your selves about it; no, *But repent ye therefore;* because ye have so fulfilled, what was fore-prophecied, repent ye, that is no ground for you to please your selves in this practise, but repent ye therefore. In such cases as these, you shall heare the servants of God expresse themselves in much brokennesse of heart, *Esay 63. 17, 18.* They doe not please themselves in erring from Gods wayes, because

God

God hath hardened their hearts, no, but are therefore the more humble and ashamed of it, that they should provoke God so farre : Mistake me not, I speak not now of controversall points ; but it is a Doctrine with one consent universally allowed by Divines both Protestant and Papist.

For further clearing the point, take these Reasons.

Reas. 1.

Taken from the just desert of wicked men, and godly men to be thus dealt withall, when God gives us up so far to fulfill any of his counsels by our sins ; observe it duly. There is a five-fold distemper ordinarily in the sons of men, and I remember no more, which occasioneth God to deliver them up to become the Instruments of evill in his hands ; and that is unthankfulnesse, unfruitfulnesse, hypocrisie, security, and pride.

You have the two first at large expressed in *Rom. 1. 21. to 26.* when they knew God, speaking of the Gentiles before Christ, they did not glorifie him as God, neither were thankfull, &c. *Therefore God gave them up to vile affections ;* because they did not walk answerably to that light they had, but *turned the glory of God into the similitude of a beast that eateth hay*, therefore God gave them up to beastly lusts ; such as were against nature, things not meet to be named in such assemblies, yea even to a reprobate minde, to a minde that could not discern of palpable and grosse wickednesse : Thus because they were unthankfull and unfruitfull, God in just judgement gave them up to such wickednesse. So *Psal. 81. 11, 12. They would*

would have none of me, so I gave them up to their own hearts lusts. See 2 Thess. 2. 10, 11, 12. Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, God gave them up to strong delusions, When God sets men wayes of righteousness, and gives them the light of his Ordinances, and men love darknesse, then God gives them up to strong delusions, that they might believe lies.

In the third place, for hypocrisie, such as turne aside to crooked wayes, the Lord shall lead them forth with workers of iniquitie, Psal. 135. 5. When a man hath an hypocriticall spirit, and looks not straight forward at the glory of God, but hath by wayes of his owne, the Lord will take such as it were by the hand, and lead them forth to work iniquity, to wit, they shall have a faire doore of providence and opportunity set open unto them, and what courses they have a mind to take, they shall have opportunity to embrace them.

And for security and pride, which are the two last, see it in Peter, and in the rest of the Disciples; Peter expresseth his pride, when he said, Though all men deny thee, yet will not I; and so they were all secure and sleepey, when they should have prayed, Mat. 26. 33, 34, 40, 41. but then were they given up to the most fearfull evils. Thus God left Hezekiah, 2 Chron. 32. 25, 31. This then is one reason why the counsell and fore-knowledge of God concerning our sins, doth not extenuate our sins, nor ought to extenuate our sorrow. God never gives us up to such sins, but in such cases as you have heard. And is not there then just cause,
that

that men should be the more humble, that there is no way for God to doe me good, but by suffering me to fall into such evils, that I may see the fearfull estate I am in.

Reas. 2.

Taken from the holy purity of God, even when he leaves men to most desperate courses, even then he is most holy and pure; It is plainly described in the vision which the holy Angels declared to the Prophet *Esay*, 6.3. What makes them to cry out, *Holy, holy, holy, &c*? Why, the Prophet was now to be sent about this very business we have now in hand, he was to goe to the people, *ver. 9, 10, 11 to make their hearts fat, and their eares heavy, lest they should be converted*: God is proclaimed to be most holy, when men are most wicked, for God doth not by an Almighty power make the hearts of men hard, nor doth he encline them to sin, he tempts no man to evil, nor puts any habits of wickednesse into any mans heart, *Psal. 12. last. Psal. 5. 4*. But this he doth:

First, he leaves men to themselves, he gives them up to the hardnesse of their hearts, and that is a just hand of God upon them.

Secondly, he leaves them to Satan, *1 Kings 22. 21, 22*. because *Ahab* would not love *Elijah* nor *Mishaiah*, therefore God justly gave them up to a lying fancy.

Thirdly, sometimes God so farre leaves men to themselves, as onely to propound to them good objects, yet such as he knowes they will make an ill use of, as sometimes his patience and long-suffering, *Rom. 2. 4, 5. Eccles. 8. 11. Pharaoh* when he

saw

saw that he had rest, he hardned his heart, *Exod.* 8.15. Thus God can tell how most holily, though most fearfully, to execute the good pleasure of his will in the sins of men.

Taken from the liberty which is left unto the *Reas.* 3. hearts and wils of men to doe what they doe with pleasure and delight, committing sin with much greedinesse, *Rom.* 1.28,32. *Eph.* 4.18,19. When men are *past feeling*, and given up to a *reprobate sense*, then they commit all licentiousnesse with greedinesse, yea (which is more then so) when they are left to sin, they grow so ready in it as that they cannot but sin, *Iohn* 12.39. *Therefore could they not beleieve because God had hardned their hearts*; and whence came this? why, first they would not beleieve, they had *winked with their eyes, lest they should see, &c.* *Acts* 28.27. So as that though they could doe no otherwise; yet they did it most freely; when they were unthankfull, unfruitfull, hypocriticall, proud, and secure, it was just with God to leave them to such a spirit of hardnesse that they could not beleieve.

To reprove the prophane blasphemy of such as doe excuse their sins by Gods predestination, and providence, as he in *Plautus* being examined about his Adultery, Surely (saith he) God compelled me to it, and his will was that I should doe it, it would else never have been done. O wretch! little doe such soules know what wickednesse hath been in their hearts; that hath given God just occasion to give them up to such vile affections; it was not the will of Gods command, for therein he forbids

O

it;

Vse 1.

it ; indeed thus farre it was his will, as not to hinder it, and to leave a man to himselfe, or to Satan, or to opportunity to do it ; It was not the will of God to command or allow, but to permit and to punish by so doing. When *David* had committed Adultery, God threatned he would give his wives to his son, and how would God give them to him ? why, so farre he went in it, as to leave him to Satan, to leave him to fit opportunity, and the wicked counsell of *Achitophel*, yet this doth not extenuate, but aggravate his sin, for *Ab-salom* was then a proud vain-glorious wretch ; and when a man is thus wicked, how just is it with God to give him up to such courses ? The Apostle answers to this point, *Rom. 9. 19.* Thou wilt say, *Why doth God complain ? who hath resisted his will ?* he would not vouchsafe an answer to such a question. Alas ! you are but poore pot-sheards of the earth ; *What if God will shew his wrath, and make his power known ?* and when men have filled themselves with filchinesse, if he give them up to Satan, and suffer them with long patience, and fit them for destruction, despise not thou the patience and wisdom of God ; let this therefore repressse all such as dare lift up their soules against God in this kinde.

Ps 2.

Of much helpfulnesse to all the servants of God, that have any desire to humble their soules before him for their sins. Alas ! (will a poore soul say) I have a proud and a stubborn heart, full glad would I be, if I could be humbled for my sins, but what meanes should I use to get my heart kindly humbled

humbled for my sins? Why, here is one notable meanes: Doe but consider all the great sins you have committed, and if you finde your heart untoward to break for such wickednesse, then let this one meditation take place in your hearts, and you little know what a blessing may come of it; say, Behold all this wickednesse that I have done in Gods sight, it is such as God in justice hath given me up unto: It will lead you by the hand to consider, Hath God forsaken me, and given me up to such base vices? Is it nothing for a Master to set that servant who had wont to serve at his Table, to feed swine? is it not apparent that that servant hath provoked his Master very deeply? The consideration of this will lead you by the hand, will cause you to think, How came I to be thus left to Satan, and to work so much wickednesse as I have done? In what a desperate, hypocriticall, proud, and carnall case was my heart in at such a time? and God finding my heart in such distempers, no wonder that he should give me up to such sins. The consideration hereof, how would it humble a mans soul in the sight of God? there is no meanes in the world so effectually to break the heart of a man kindly, as this is; it was the last meanes God used with *Pharaoh*, *Exod. 9. 16, 17*. I have raised thee up, saith God, to shew my power, and doest thou yet exalt thy self against me? art not thou yet humble, for all this that God hath left thee to such base courses? Then the next thing you heare of him, is the overwhelming of him in the deep Seas, never to rise more.

Vse 3.

It is an Use of instruction to all the people of God, and to other men, to stand in awe before God, and to feare him, because he is onely able not to kill the body, but to cast both body and soule into hell, yea, and I say a greater word then that, feare him that is able to deliver both body and soule into the temptations of the Devill, into such vile and dissolute courses, that it were better for your bodies and soules to bee frying in hell, then to fall into such sinfull courses, and yet hee himself most pure and innocent in so doing, therefore let this humble us all, before the Lord our God.

Vse 4.

Of comfort to all the servants of God, when they finde their hearts humbled in any measure for sin; You say, alas, what comfort can I take in such a case? I have committed wickednesse in the pride and hypocrisie, in the unthankfulnesse, and unfruitfulnesse, and security of my heart, and is there any hope of any good to me? Why, though thou didst it foolishly and rashly, yet a wiser then thou did it by counsell; God had a wise and good end in it, and he will have thee to make a good use of it, if thou belondest to him, and therefore though thou must grieve; yet bee not overmuch grieved; It was the counsell of wise Ioseph to his brethren, Gen. 45. 5. Now bee not you grieved that you sold me hither; Why, had they not sold him out of envy? Yes, and he had brought them to be humbled for it, and though they did it wickedly, yet God had a wise and a good hand in it: When once the Disciples

These words
merit the
greatest atten-
tion. Mr Cotton
was an expe-
rienced Divine
Humility is a
very precious
fruit of the
Holy Spirit.
Comfort, peace
& joy always
attend humility.

To this man will I look says God of
even to him that is poor, & of a contrite spirit to troubleth
my word Isaiah 66-2.

of Christ had beene humbled, and wept for denying and forsaking of Christ, why, then *let not your hearts be troubled*, for, now that he is crucified, salvation is come to Israel by that meanes. When we see a Physitian tempering and giving his Patient deadly poyson, we conceive the Patient hath a very unsound body, whilst there is not other meanes to heale them; yet the Physitian knows how to keepe his hand cleane, and to doe the Patient good by it at length, though it make him deadly sick for the while, yet it may bring much sound health afterward; So make account, if God give us a cup of humbling, if he suffer us to fall into blindnesse of minde, or hardnesse of heart, or the like, he saw we were in deadly distempers; and know that he that hath had an hand in all our wickednesse, he knows for what end he did it, to make us more humble, and holy, and gracious for ever after, which if we finde in our selves, we may for ever be comforted.

O how gracious is God to sanctify the heavy afflictions he sends upon us & by them to humble us

bring us to the footstool of mercy with language of the Psalme saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." In his own time he raises up the broken hearted sinner & brings him to sit with his saints & to rejoice in his electing love O 3^o grace. THE Reader humbly pray God for his Holy Spirit to sanctify every temptation, trouble & cross & by them to increase every grace & fruit of the holy Spirit which he has given you. By these things we become conformed to Christ.