

THREE SERMONS

CONCERNING

The Way how a CHRISTIAN ought to keep his HEART.

SERMON I.

PROV. iv. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

WE conceive, if there were a window opened in each one of our bosoms, through which each one of us that are here, might behold one anothers hearts, we would become monsters and wonders one of us to another, and to ourselves likewise, and might cry out, "O! where is the God of judgment, that takes not vengeance on such deceitful hearts?" If our hearts were turned out of us, (so to speak) and we saw the inside of our hearts, we would wonder at his patience. I think, such is the desperate deceitfulness of our hearts, that if all the saints since Adam's days, and shall be to the end of the world, had but one heart to guide, I think they would misguide it. I would only say this to believers, that if your hearts were left one hour to yourselves to keep, ye would commit more iniquity than ye can imagine or dream of. There is only these four things that I would speak to before I come to the words, and I would request you to take notice of them:

And, *first*, There are many of us that have two hearts in our bosom, for such an one is the hypocrite, James i. 8. 'A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways;' that is, a man that hath two hearts, a part of his heart goeth to God, and a part of his heart goeth to the devil. And I think, if we were all well searched, it is to be feared that many of us would be found two-hearted men.

Secondly, That although ye would give Christ all your members, yet if you would not give him your heart, it would be nothing thought of; if you would give him your eyes, so that you would not look to your idols pleasantly, nor yet look with delight upon any cursed or sinful object; and if you would give him your ears, so that you could, nor would not hearken to the voice of any of your temptations, 'but be as deaf as an adder unto them;' and if you would give him your tongue, so

that you should not speak any thing dishonourable to him; and if you would give him your feet, so that you should not walk in any way, but in an approven path of godliness: now, I say, although you would give him all these members of your body, yet if ye give him not your heart, it is all to no purpose, Prov. xxiii. 26. ‘My son, give me thy heart, &c.’

Thirdly, There are many which give their hearts to their idols, and their tongues to Christ, but one day they shall be found to be but deceivers.

Lastly, It is a noble thing for a Christian to be taken up in the keeping of his heart. I may say this of the heart, which the apostle James said of the tongue, ‘It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison,’ James iii. 8. The heart is taken up with whoring from God, and with contriving the way how to satisfy its lusts, and continually forsaking the living God. Our hearts are doing nothing in all our lifetime, (many of us) but profaning his holy name, and blaspheming the God of Jacob.

Now to come to the words, there are four things therein, *First*, the duty imposed upon a Christian, and that is, ‘To keep his heart.’ *Secondly*, That the heart of man hath many seekers, which is imported in that word, *keep*. *Thirdly*, You have the qualification and way how a Christian should keep his heart, which are rendered in these words, *with all diligence*; or, as the words may be rendered, ‘with all keeping.’ And, *lastly*, The reasons why you should do so, ‘for out of it are the issues of life:’ for if you do so, you shall have life; but if not, from thence are the issues of death. Now from the first thing in the words, ye would consider these two things.

First, That it is a duty incumbent on every Christian, ‘to keep his heart;’ this is clear, not only from our text, but likewise in Deut. iv. 9. ‘Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, &c. Prov. xxiii. 26. ‘Guide thy heart in the way.’ Which is, study to keep it diligently in the way of godliness. And it is clear likewise that a Christian ought ‘to keep his heart,’ for the great advantages that are holden out in scripture for so doing; only take one place, in Prov. xvi. 22. ‘Better is he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.’

The *second* thing that I would say to point out the woful disadvantages that wait upon him that rules not his own heart, but gives it leave to rove here and there is, Prov. xxv. 28. ‘He that hath not rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down and without walls.’ And there are these two disadvantages that wait upon not keeping of the heart. 1. There is no temptation that assaults a heart that is not kept, but they become victorious: spiritual strength hath forsaken them that keep not

their hearts. 2. There is no exercise nor duty that a Christian is employed in, which keeps not his heart, but he is like a ruinous city which hath no walls, and in which there is no order.

Now, the next thing that I would speak to is, to shew what it imports to keep the heart, and what are the directions and ways which a Christian ought to have before him in the exercise and duty of keeping his heart.

And, *First*, It imports this, that a Christian should observe the motions of his heart, and should not let his heart nor thoughts go astray, but should have a register of all their motions; as is clear in Luke xxi. 34. "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares."

The *second* thing which keeping of the heart includes is, you must keep all the things that pertain to your hearts; and there are these five things which ye must keep: *First*, Your thoughts, you must keep your thoughts so straitly, that you must not give them any sinful latitude in the least manner. *Secondly*, A Christian, he must keep his eyes, which are the windows through which much wickedness is conveyed to the soul, Prov. xxiii. 26. 'My son give me thy heart,' &c. Prov. iv. 25. 'Let thine eye look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee.' As if Solomon had said, 'It is but foolishness to keep your hearts, if ye keep not your eyes.' *Thirdly*, Ye must keep your tongues, that they speak no evil of the ways of godliness; for so are the words following the text, 'Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee.' Which is, order thy tongue. *Fourthly*, You must keep your feet, that ye walk not in the paths of wickedness: if once you gave a latitude to your feet to go in the way to hell, it shall be but in vain to keep your hearts: therefore keep your feet from running to the murder of your souls. *Lastly*, Ye must keep your ears, ye should delight to speak good of godliness, and should also delight to hear good spoken of it: ye should not be among these that savour of nothing but of sin, but ye should be amongst these that savour of good: therefore, as ye would not be accessory to the murder of your own souls, and as ye would not have the blood of them lying upon your heads, ye must needs keep all these parts that belong to the keeping of your hearts aright.

The *third* thing which the keeping of your heart includes is, to eschew all unclean things that may defile your hearts, Prov. v. 8. 'Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house.' When you see any evil thing approaching, you must depart from it, and eschew it, Deut. xii. 30. 'Take

head to thyself, that thou be not snared. There are many snares that may be accessary to destruction: and there is this that Moses marks as a chief evil, and likewise oftentimes forbids in this book, to have false 'weights and balances,' Lev. xix. 22. Deut. xxv. 15. They are not only sinful of themselves, but because they are an appearance of evil, they should eschew them; therefore he forbids them: and the apostle bids us likewise abstain from all appearance of evil,' 1 Thess. v. 22.

The *fourth* thing which keeping of the heart includes is, to put restraints upon your hearts that so you may not commit iniquity; ye ought first to lay the bond of Christ's love upon yourselves; ye should likewise lay the bond of judgment upon yourselves, knowing that once God shall call you to a reckoning for all your wickedness, which now most wickedly you commit; and you ought to lay the bonds of God's omniscieny upon yourselves, to know and consider that all things are known to him, and that he seeth all things; and ye ought likewise to consider how grievous, and how displeasing a thing sin is to the majesty of God, that man, who is the workmanship of his hand, should rise up against him: we may say that of ourselves which is in Lam. iii. 22. 'It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not, they are fresh every morning,' &c. All these things a Christian ought to lay to heart, and seriously to consider them.

The *second* thing which keeping of the heart includes is, a Christian ought not to slight the opportunities given unto him for the strengthening of his grace: for they which slight opportunities, keep not their own hearts.

The *last* thing which it imports is, that a Christian should be much in the diligent exercise of duties, that the heart may be kept and holden in a notable frame. And there is two exercises which a Christian ought to be diligent in: *first*, The exercise of prayer. *Secondly*, The exercise of watching. There is a fivefold frame which a Christian should be in, which would rightly keep his heart: *first*, In a frame of praying, that he should not be slack and coldrife to go about duties; the command thereof is holden out in that word, 'Watch and pray;' and also in that word, 'Pray without ceasing.' The *second* frame, should be a believing frame; and it is to be feared that there are not many such here; but that there are many walking in such a way and frame, which, alas! I fear, will lead them in the way to hell: if we were sincere, we would hold Christ fast, and would not let him go; and if our hearts were in a right frame, we would avoid any thing that might make him to depart from us. But, alas! we have many clear evidences (now-a-days) that we are not for Christ, we care

not whether we have his presence or want it; the want of his presence is as lightsome and pleasant to us, and as well taken with by many (I will not say all) as the enjoying of his presence: and this is a sure evidence of gross profaneness, ignorance, and estrangement from God, if there were no more to prove it but this, your stoutness of heart to meddle with sin, proves that you are unsound Christians. We would desire you, by all the torments of hell, and all the terrors of that everlasting lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone for ever and ever; by all the joys of heaven, of that higher house, that ye would carry a circumspect walk before God. The *third* frame that we would desire you to walk in is, a tender frame; and if so ye were walking, ye would be loath to commit sin wilfully, and woe shall be to them eternally which do so. We will not (many of us) believe this, although angels would preach it unto us, for our hearts are hard like an adamant stone. I would only say this to you, 'This book, this glorious book, is sealed with seven seals, and our hearts are sealed with fourteen seals.' O! woe be to those hard hearts that many of us have, we will never know until they run us eternally into the bottomless-pit.

The *fourth* frame that a Christian should walk in is, in a loving frame; ye ought to have your hearts burning within you with love towards that glorious, infinite, and mysterious object, Jesus Christ. We shall never be able to comprehend, nor recompense that love which he hath to us, for the furthest we can go, is to be sick of love to him. But O! he died with love for us, for he had so great love to us, that he laid down his life for us.

The *fifth* frame that a Christian should walk in is, a fearing frame; to walk under the fear of the hazard that you are in, if you be left to yourselves, and to your own strength: I may say, cursed be the person that never kept his heart in none of these five things that we have spoken of.

Now the *third* thing we would speak to from the words is, to know the times when a Christian should especially keep his heart; and there are six times when (I conceive) he should watch over his heart carefully and keep it.

1. After he hath met with some enjoyments, then he should keep his heart, and not let it go wrong.

2. The *second* time is, in the time of desertion; for that time is a wandering time from the living God.

3. A Christian should keep his heart, when he perceives his temptations to be very subtile.

4. And the *fourth* time is, to keep your hearts diligent in duties; for when ye are negligent in duties, then the devil is busy to get your hearts.

5. The *fifth* time is under a secure frame, then you should keep yourselves mightily.

6. And the *last* time is, when temptations are like to grow very strong, you should then at that time keep your hearts with a strong guard.

Now, as for the *first* time, viz. to keep it under enjoyments, we should then study to keep our hearts; for then, and at that time, the devil condescends to dandle us upon his knees, (if so we may speak) and for this we would give you some considerations.

The *first* consideration is, the heart of man is never prouder and proner to commit iniquity, than after enjoyments of God, he is never more prone to security, than after enjoyments; when was it that the spouse slept, but when she was full of joy? Song v. 3. 'I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on again?' &c. When was it that the disciples roved, but when they were on the mount, when they said, 'Let us make three tabernacles?' Matth. xvii. 14. And when was it that John committed idolatry? Was it not when he saw these excellent visions of heaven?

The *second* consideration is, that the stroke which is given by the devil after enjoyments, it is a very sad stroke, and hath caused many to say, 'Who can stand before the children of Anak?' And to draw that conclusion, 'I shall once fall by the hands of some of mine enemies.'

The *third* consideration is this, if a Christian embrace a temptation after enjoyments, it will be very hard for him to shake it off.

The *fourth* consideration is, that the embracing of a temptation after enjoyments, is a sin very hardly to be repented of, it will cost him many tears for repenting of it; for it is a hardening thing, which will harden his heart mightily under all sorts of sins which he can commit.

Fifthly, Consider this, that the embracing of a temptation after enjoyments, it is very displeasing to Christ, when ye embrace an idol, and prefer it before an absent Christ. O! that is a most dangerous sin. But when you embrace an idol after enjoyment, that is a damnable sin, for you prefer it to a present Christ, O! that is a fearful sin.

Now the *second* time when ye should keep your hearts is, when ye are going about the exercise of duties, and especially in the duty of prayer, and ye should keep it in four or five respects: *First*, In going about duties, and namely in prayer, ye are letting in vain thoughts, if your hearts be not well kept. *Secondly*, The heart of a Christian is most ready to fall into the

sin of formality, and therefore if ye keep not your hearts well in duties, ye cannot but be formal in the performance of them. *Thirdly*, Our hearts, many times have too low thoughts and up-takings of the incomprehensible Majesty of God: the damnable ignorance which is amongst people, makes them get so little advantage in prayer; do you not speak to him, as to one of your fellow companions? Where is the exercise of fear, and of trembling, which Christians in old times used to have, as Moses, when he appeared and came before God? *Fourthly*, Our hearts are prone to misbelief, and ready always to misbelieve God, and his promises. *Lastly*, Except ye keep your hearts, it is impossible for you to take alongst with you your necessity: if one were standing by and heard your prayers, they would say, that you are not in earnest with God; for you seek such things from a principle of light, and not from necessity. Now, I would pose you with this, whether ever you have been observant in any of these duties or not? There are many whose prayers make them to have more distance with God; therefore I would request you to look to this, that ye be serious in prayer, and to know whether or not this be your frame; for there are some that will come from prayer with far more bonds on them, than when they began; and what is the reason of that, but want of fervency? It is a great mystery of his love, that he sends not fire from heaven to burn our sacrifice, and consume ourselves likewise: for what are many of our prayers, 'but, as it were, the cutting off of a dog's neck. which is an abomination unto the Lord'?

The *third* time when a Christian should especially keep his heart is, under desertion; and I shall give you three reasons why we should watch well at that time. *First*, The devil is busiest to seek our hearts under desertion. *Secondly*, The embracing of an idol under desertion, it is for that why God lengthens out the time of our lying under desertion so long, because we go to the bed of love with an idol when Christ is away. *Thirdly*, Because when a Christian hath least strength, he loseth both much of his faith and of his love. He maketh you then to look on the world, to be as tasteless as the white of an egg: ye must take that as a dispensation of Christ's love, that he makes all things tasteless to you under desertion. That is a noble dispensation, for by it he imposes a necessity upon you, to keep your hearts, till he return unto you again.

The *fourth* time when a Christian should keep his heart is, in a secure frame. I think there are some sleeping in a sleep of conscience, which will never awake till the screechings of the damned in hell awake them. I shall propose these two considerations to keep your hearts in security. 1. Because when ye

are secure, ye have then least strength; and is there not many amongst you that dare say, but that the devil then assaults you bitterly? And when your heart is lying in security, it speaks that ye are in a carnal frame. 2. If ye keep not your hearts when ye are secure, then ye may bid faith, love, and joy, farewell until some other time, as ye may see in the practice of Felix, ‘Go away, and I will hear thee at another time,’ Acts xxiv. 25. I would not desire a more sad case to an enemy, than not to keep his heart when he is under security, for he may bid the graces of the Spirit farewell until another time.

The *last* time when a Christian ought especially to keep his heart is, when strong and subtile temptations appear plausible, honest like, and beautiful, then ye must be upon your watch. O! do not temptations win in upon your hearts, before ever ye be aware? And this speaks much security and unwatchfulness. I would say, it is hard, yea, very hard to a Christian who is not watchful, to take up the ways of the devil, ‘whose ways are more subtile than the way of an eagle in the air, or the way of a serpent upon a rock, or the way of a ship upon the sea. Who can comprehend his ways?’ He tempts us always, both upon our right hand, and upon our left hand, both behind and before, both waking and sleeping, we are never free of his deceitful and unsearchable crafts. I would say this unto you, he is happy, that fears always, and hearkens to Christ’s voice of direction in his word, depending upon him for strength; but many listen more to the voice of temptations, than to Christ’s blessed voice.

Now, the next thing which I would speak to you is, to propose some considerations to press you to keep your hearts, and O! that ye would consider them, and lay them to heart.

The *first* consideration is this, I think many of us may be afraid, that the devil dwells and keeps possession in many of our hearts; and, alas! he is like to be a possessor of some of them perpetually. I will give five evidences of one, that by all appearance the devil hath his heart. And now, I charge you, (O atheists), in the name of our Lord and Saviour precious Christ, that ye would examine yourselves by them. *First*, Was never one of you convinced, to cry out that word in Psalm xxv 11. ‘For thy name’s sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity: for it is very great?’ I say to such persons, that were never convinced of this, and were never convinced of the hard difficulty to win to the right keeping of your hearts, by all appearance, the devil hath your hearts in keeping; for those whose hearts are in the hands of the devil, they are never sensible of their lost estate. *Secondly*, Those who never wan to make use of Christ, that is a token that the devil hath their hearts in keeping; there are many of us,

who are convinced of the vanity of our idols; but yet, alas! many of us drown our convictions with the sin of tipling, and bury them in the sepulchre of drunkenness: but believe it, if ye go on so, and continue therein, God will plead with you for the same. The *third* evidence is, one that hath a silent, hardened, and deceived conscience, and whose conscience is silent, by all appearance, the devil hath that person's heart in his hand; for the devil enticeth many to sin with greediness, and will make their conscience not to reprove them; so that they delight in no better, for he hath taken away the tongue of their conscience, so that they cannot speak; but believe me, the day is coming, when your conscience shall be the greatest foe and enemy that ye can or shall have. And believe it, there are many of you here who have your heart so hardened, as those that are mentioned, Eph. iv. 17. 18. 'Who walk in the vanity of their own mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.' Your conscience, when it is cauterized, it will not speak to you, although ye would commit that damnable 'sin against the Holy Ghost.' And ye think yourselves well enough when it doth not reprove you: but, alas! ye sleep with a false witness in your bosom, it hath many alluring delusions, but one day the words of it will be as sharp as swords; it will cry, 'Peace, peace, when behold sudden destruction!' it will make you sleep sound for all the danger that is hanging above you. Ye walk, (many of you) 'adding drunkenness to thirst.' O athiests! what will ye do, when that day shall come upon you, when these two books shall be opened? *First*, The book of your wanderings and backslidings, in which a huge innumerable troop of sins are written. And, *secondly*, the book of your conscience, and there can be nothing read out of that first book, but thy conscience shall confirm it with *Amen*.

The *second* consideration is, that if ye were to live eighty years, and though ye should weep and mourn forty of these years perpetually, if it could be possible, and pray other forty of these years, yet all that would be for nought, if ye will not give him your hearts. Believe me, if ye give not him your hearts, that sentence shall be pronounced upon you, *Depart*. O! will ye not give him your hearts, who ought to have them, both by creation and redemption?

The *third* consideration is, did ye never find any difficulty to believe, or to pray, or to love God? Ye may be persuaded of it, that ye are sleeping under a dangerous delusion, that ye think ye are going, and shall go to heaven, when ye shall be thrust down to hell. I would say this, "There hath been much joy

" amongst the devil and his angels, for the success which he hath " had in Glasgow:" he hath purchased many harpers to himself, who sing that cursed song, " I am not far from victory." I think we may turn that word into another way, which Christ said to his disciples, ' There is one of you twelve that shall betray me.' I think he may say otherwise of us, ' Eleven of each twelve that are here shall betray me.' O! it is sad, that the Son of God, even precious Christ, should have so many betrayers amongst us. O! therefore give Christ your hearts. Did ye never read that of Matth. xxv. 2. there were five wise virgins, and five foolish? And if there be of professors that shall be rejected, alas! what shall become of you that never knew him? ' And if the righteous scarcely be saved, O! what shall the ungodly and sinners do?

The *fourth* consideration is, I would propose these three things to you: *First*, What is the cause, O atheists! that ye cannot endure hypocrisy, why ye cannot look upon Christians? The cause is, they have not only the image and picture of Christ, but the very substance of Christ. Why hate ye not the rest of sins, as well as hypocrisy? It is, because the rest of sins look rather like the devil, and therefore ye love them; but hypocrites seem to have something of God in them, therefore ye hate them. *Secondly*, O atheists! do you believe that there is a heaven, and a hell, and an eternity of pain, and a day of judgment? If ye believed those things, ye would not be so profane. *Thirdly*, Did ye never find any delight in praising and commending of him? Your hearts saith, No; and your practice saith, No. O! woe, woe to you eternally.

The *fifth* consideration is, the day is approaching, when the least iniquity shall be preached in the hearing of angels and men, that every one committed, there shall not one jot of sin be passed by; and of all sinners, the hypocrites shall have the saddest countenance, because they shall be disappointed of a joyful end, and lose the opinion of the saints, which will make them to look with a sad countenance in that day. A hypocrite will be more moved for the loss of the approbation of the saints, than for the loss of the Divine approbation. O! know and consider these three things: *First*, Know that all your iniquities shall be read in the hearing of angels and men: the very thoughts which ye have had at midnight shall be known. What will be your thoughts then, O atheists! in that day? *Secondly*, Know that hypocrisy may win easily through the world under the name of grace, but in that day there shall be a clear distinction made. It is hard to rid marches betwixt hypocrisy and grace; but God shall take your vizard off your face, and let you be known, and ye shall get the name which ye deserve, O hypocrites. *Thirdly*, Know that

woe shall be to such who shall not be found in Christ at that day. O! will ye ask him, and that with your hearts? "I take all the angels in heaven, and all the saints about the throne of God, to witness; yea, I take the very stones of these walls, and the timber of this house, and this book in mine hand, to witness against you, that ye were invited to give your hearts to Christ."

The *last* consideration is, he that will not give his heart to Christ, believe it, these four things are coming upon him: *First*, He shall be no more intreated to keep his heart, neither shall he be intreated to give his heart to Christ any more, for the devil shall have it. *Secondly*, O atheists! these four things shall overcome you: *First*, Sin, it shall have dominion over you; you once delighted mightily in sin, but, alas! it shall be a heavy burden to you in that day. *Secondly*, The wrath of God shall overcome you; O! that shall be a mighty prince. *Thirdly*, The devil. And, *lastly*, the lusts of your own hearts; all these shall tread you in the mire. *Fourthly*, There is this which is coming upon you, O atheists! there shall be a sentence of eternal excommunication pronounced against you, who would not give your hearts to Christ, these blessed and gracious lips that always did delight in speaking good to lost sinners, shall then pronounce that sad and woful sentence against you, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, I know you not.' The *last* thing which is approaching unto you is, the day is coming, when ye shall be sent away to that prison, out of which there is no redemption; ye shall be a number of miserable comforters one to another in that day. Ye shall not have a grain weight of comfort for all the joy and pleasure which many of you have had in a world; 'You shall be physicians of no value, and gnash your tongues for pain.' We would say this unto you, O! let the torments of hell, or let the joys of heaven, persuade you to give him your hearts; let the one constrain you, or let the other terrify you, to this noble duty of giving him your hearts; and if ye give him not your hearts, ye shall curse the day that ever ye were born, or that ever there was a prophet amongst you; and ye shall lament that ever ye heard tell of Christ, if ye make not use of him. Now, I would only read the text over again, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.' But if ye do not keep it with all diligence, out of it shall be the issues of death, ye shall get eternal torments for your reward.

Now to him who can persuade you to give your hearts in keeping to him, and who can anoint your eyes with eye-salve, to see your lost estate, to his blessed name we desire to give praise.

SERMON II.

PROV. iv. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

THERE are two great books which a Christian ought mainly to study, there is God, and his own heart; and he would study to know the unspeakable goodness of the one, and the desperate wickedness of the other. And we may say, the first time that a Christian turns over the first page of his heart, and looks upon that desperate wickedness that is therein, he might be constrained to cry out, 'Woe is me, I am undone:' yea, there is as much wickedness in every one's heart who is here, as might be a quarrel to destroy a whole world, if God would contend with us in his just judgment. I think, Christians can never trust their hearts too little, and they can never trust God too much. And have we not received many proofs of both these? I may say as Jeremiah said, 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?' O! but a sight of the evil temper of our hearts, and a sight of the goodness of God, would make many of us renounce our self-righteousness, and our spiritual pride, and admire his transcendent righteousness. I think, a Christian ought to be as these four beasts, which are mentioned in Rev. iv. 6, 7, 8, where the four beasts that are spoken of there, may relate to the ministers of the gospel, and may also be taken for every real Christian: *First*, We should be full of eyes before, to wait on Christ, and to depend upon him, 'as an hand-maid upon her mistress,' and not reflect upon these things that are behind, as to rest upon this, according to that word of the apostle, 'I press hard toward the mark, forgetting the things that are behind,' &c. *Secondly*, A Christian should look to those things that are behind, to guard against enemies, and to be much in searching his former ways, to see how much of them hath been given to God, and how much of them hath been given to the devil. *Thirdly*, Christians should be full of eyes within, to examine themselves, and to see their own corruptions. There are many who have eyes without, to take notice of other people's carriage; but they have no eyes to look within to themselves. O! would to God that there were fewer markers and observers of other people's carriage, and more of examiners and lookers to themselves, 'Purifying ourselves, even as he is pure.' *Fourthly*, We should be as a lion in our walk, to point out our boldness against the devil and his temptations. *Fifthly*, We should be like a calf, or an ox, to point out our laboriousness. *Sixthly*, We should be like the 'face of a man,' to point out our

understanding and knowledge. *Lastly*, We should be like a flying eagle, to point out our heavenly-mindedness; and our conversation should be directed by the law of God; all our thoughts, and all our actions, and all our words, should be conformable to his mind; and as the eagle hath wings, so also ought we to have wings; even as they had six wings; we should have two of them to cover our face, to point out the reverence we ought to give to God; and we should have two wings to cover our hands, to show out the readiness to obey God's commandments; and we should have two wings to cover our feet, to point out our imperfections, and the crooked paths that we walk into. O Christians! will ye study these three following things, and ye will not have so high thoughts of yourselves, as oftentimes ye have? *First*, It is through the restraining grace of God that those grievous sins which ye committed come not up to perfection of adultery, sodomy, and incest. *Secondly*, There is no sin which ye commit, but there is some secret inclination to it, although ye think ye hate it much.

Thirdly, It is impossible for you to comprehend, take up, and remember those iniquities that ye have committed since ye were born, as David is convinced, Psalm li. 2. 'Cleanse me from my sin,' &c. Which we conceive to be not only from his known sins, but from his sins which he hath forgotten: and I would say this unto you, David 'who was a man according to God's own heart,' he knew not the number of his sins; and O! how much less can we, that never came the hundred part so far? And also, you may see it in the practice of Job, 'How many are mine iniquities and sins, make me to know my transgression and sin.'

Now we come to the words, and there are four things which we spoke to from them at the last occasion: *First*, The duty commanded, 'Keep thy heart.' *Secondly*, The qualification, how this duty of keeping the heart should be gone about, and it is, 'with all diligence.' *Thirdly*, That the heart of man hath many temptations seeking it, which is likewise presupposed in that word, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence.' *Lastly*, The reasons why we should keep it, 'for out of it are the issues of life.' Now for the first thing in the words, we spoke to two things from it: *first*, That it was a Christian's duty to keep his heart. *Secondly*, What was comprehended under this, for a Christian to keep his heart, and likewise of these disadvantages which a Christian hath from the not keeping of the heart. Now, for the first thing, viz. that it is a Christian's duty to keep his heart: we shall speak yet to some considerations to persuade you to this duty.

The *first* consideration is, take notice of the bad qualifications of the heart, and there are six or seven bad qualifications of it;

First, The heart is exceeding deceitful, Jer. xvii. 9. 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?' And likewise Isaiah speaks of a deceived heart, which leads people aside, Isa. xlv. 20. The heart of man is a deceitful thing, it will preach 'peace, peace,' when there is none. O! it is deceitful, it will make us commit sin, when there is no outward pleasure therein. *Secondly*, That 'the heart is desperately wicked, who can know it?' that is, if there were threatenings, commands, promises and convictions of sin, yet your heart will cause you to sin; if hell were put in your way, yet, for the pleasure of an idol, ye would run to sin. *Thirdly*, That there is a cursed union betwixt the heart and idols, Hosea iv. 8. 'And they set their hearts on their iniquity.' Verse 17. 'Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone.' And that word is thrice repeated, Ezek. xxiv. 3, 4, 5. 'They have set up their idols in their hearts.' Keep your hearts with diligence, I say, lest that union be entertained. *Fourthly*, There are many of our hearts that are exceeding mad, Eccles. ix. 3. "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead." Alas! there is nothing but madness in our hearts, according to that word, "The land is full of images, and they are mad upon their idols." Certainly the hardness of our hearts, speaks that we keep not our hearts. *Fifthly*, Our hearts are divided, as is in Hosea x. 2. 'The heart is divided,' &c. which speaks a great necessity of keeping our hearts. *Sixthly*, Our hearts are exceeding whorish, Ezek. ix. 6. 'Because I am broken with their whorish hearts, which have departed from me,' &c. *Lastly*, Our hearts are exceeding dull and ignorant in the ways of godliness, as in Eph. iv. 18. "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts." There is such an Egyptian hardness upon our hearts, that we cannot know sin; there is some of us, that, I fear, knows not good by evil.

The *second* consideration is, there is such a difficulty to keep our hearts, therefore we ought strongly to guard them. Adam had his heart but a short time in keeping, and yet he could not keep it; which shews the difficulty of keeping of it. Psalm xxv. 20. "O keep my soul, and deliver me, let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee." 1 Peter iv. 19. "Wherefore, let them that suffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator." I would say to you, pray that prayer that Christ prayed, when he was upon the cross, 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.' O pray that prayer every day; for, I say, if God forsake us but

one hour, O what a great multitude of sins would we commit? Acts. v. 4. 'Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.' Yea, even to God, who is the Judge of all. As if he had said, "It was conceived in thine heart, and then it was brought forth."

The *third* consideration is, that the heart is the mother and original of all evil; and if this were believed, no doubt we would watch with much watchfulness and serious self-examination: likewise I would say, that the not keeping of our hearts, is the cause of many of our walking so profanely as we do. It is impossible for you to walk with God aright, if ye have not your hearts well kept. If you would keep a good conversation, then keep your hearts; for ye must never at any time trust your hearts, for either one time or other they will turn enemies unto you.

The *last* consideration is, that it is a most excellent thing for a Christian to keep his heart; would ye win to that commendation that Solomon hath, Prov. xvi. 32. 'He that ruleth his spirit, is better than he that taketh a city?' O then, keep your hearts: as if he had said, "It is better to conquer that *modicum*, and little thing, the heart, than it is for one to conquer a city."

Now the *second* thing that I would speak to for the keeping of the heart is, to these disadvantages, which is waiting upon the not keeping of it, Prov. xxv. 28. "He that hath no rule over his own spirit, is like a city that is broken down, and without walls." And I would give you these disadvantages, which will attend upon these that do not keep their hearts: *First*, A temptation will soon overcome that person with little difficulty; the devil will not need to use many arguments for the gaining of that person's heart. Alas! our hearts (many of them, by all appearance) are in the devil's hands, and he hath a surer grip of them, than we ourselves have. O that the devil should have so many of our hearts, and that so many of them should be at his command. O believe it, he is the hardest master, and he is the worst master that ever we served; and if he once get us within his grips, it will be hard getting out again. These hearts that are not kept, are all put through other with confusion, like a ruinous city, that wanteth government. Believe it, ye cannot do God a greater service than to keep your hearts well; and the devil would count it a greater courtesy done to him, if ye would resign them to him, therefore, see which of them ye will obey. *Fourthly*, If ye would consider and look what a thing the heart of man is, O ye would guard more than ye do: for it is always besieged with the lusts which the devil sets before your eyes. And there are three lusts which the devil doth besiege you

with, and be sure they shall overcome you, if ye keep not your hearts. *First*, 'The lust of the eye.' O, but that lust hath brought many to his obedience. *Secondly*, 'The lust of the flesh.' O! that hath overcome many. And, *thirdly*, 'The pride of life.' O! to think how these three enemies have taken many captives.

Now, the next thing which I shall insist a little upon is, to point out some marks and evidences, whether ye have kept your hearts or not.

First; If ye have kept your hearts aright, ye will endeavour to crucify vain thoughts. Are there not some here that never knew what it was to crucify and crush vain and idle thoughts? This was an evidence that David kept in his heart, Psalm cxix. 13. 'I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love.' There is some that repents for outward breakings out of sin, but not for secret sins in their hearts, and be sure these never keep their hearts. Did ye never read that, Matth. v. 8. 'Blessed are the pure in heart?' Your sanctification shall never grow so long as ye lodge vain thoughts within your breast. 'O Jerusalem, how long shall vain thoughts lodge within thee? saith the Lord.' Be careful to think upon such thoughts as ye may answer for one day unto the Lord, for your midnight thoughts shall be read in the hearing of angels and men. O! would you not be ashamed and lothe yourselves, if ye would consider these vile and vain thoughts that lodge within many of you?

Secondly, These hearts that are not kept, they embrace temptations so soon as they are assaulted by them, and they do not take notice that they are temptations; and that is a mark of one that keepeth not his heart, and that takes no notice of the devil till he hath shut his temptations within his breast: this 's clear, that David kept not his heart, when the devil's temptations did so assault him, 2 Sam. xi. and got such a victory over him: and it is also clear in the practice of Peter, when he denied his Master thrice, it was a token that he kept not his heart well.

The *third* evidence of one that keepeth not his heart is, he will commit sin with much deliberation; many of us commit sin, after we have been thinking long upon it. Hence it is spoken, 'That there are some that study iniquity upon their beds, and when it is light they put it in practice,' Micah ii. 1. And likewise in Prov. vi. amongst these heinous sins that are odious and hateful to God, wicked imaginations are reckoned amongst the midst of them, verse 8. I say, ye who sin with much deliberation, ye have lost much of the fear of God; for to sin with deliberation or advisement, is more than to sin against light.

The *fourth* mark of these that do not keep their hearts is, they sin with much willingness and pleasure. Ephraim willingly

worshipped the calves of Dan and Bethel. Are there not some here, whose hearts are following their idols, and posting hard after them? But, O! can your idols do you any good, and purchase pleasure to you one day? And be sure of this, these who sin with much willingness and pleasure, that is a clear evidence that they keep not their hearts well.

The *fifth* evidence of a heart that is not kept is, when a Christian's heart can misregard opportunities: in which opportunities, communion with God may be attained; it is a token that the bride's heart was not kept, when she would not rise and open to Christ.

The *sixth* evidence is, when the heart takes not up the motions of God towards it; that is a token that that man's heart is not well kept, who cannot take up God's motions: but a Christian, whose heart is kept, he can take up the motions of the Spirit: this is clear, if you compare the second and third chapters of the Song together.

Lastly, Ye may know whether your hearts be kept or not, and that is, when ye do not discern the decays of the graces of the Spirit within you. There are four graces by which a Christian may know whether he keeps his heart or not. 1. If the grace of prayer decay. 2. Tenderness. 3 Faith. 4. Love. O therefore, I would desire you to try your graces, what condition they are in, lest ye go down to the grave with a mistake in your bosom. Now I shall shut up our discourse with speaking these four things:

First, A Christian ought to keep his heart constantly: the hypocrite hath a sort of keeping his heart, but he keeps it not constantly, as a real Christian. And there are five times when he especially keeps it. The *first* time is, when he is under afflictions and crosses, then he will not let his heart wander from the ways of God's commandments, and he will keep his heart mightily at that time. *Secondly*, He will keep his heart at that time, when convictions are sharp and strong upon him, Acts ii. 37. "When they were pricked in their hearts, they cried out, men and brethren, what shall we do?" Amongst which we may conceive, there are sundry hypocrites; the hypocrite thinks to win through the world under the notion of a real saint: but believe it, although ye would win through the world under this notion, (as many do) yet the day is coming, when ye and your practice shall be put to the touch-stone. The *third* time when the hypocrite will keep his heart is, when he is going to the sacrament of the communion; but when he is come from it, he will take no notice of his heart any more; and the only reason that he keeps his heart then is, that he may have peace with a natural

conscience. Yea, I fear, if we were all searched, it would be known, that the most end we pray for is, to satisfy a natural conscience, and not to please God. The *fourth* time when a hypocrite will keep his heart is, under sickness and diseases; yea, any gross one will keep his heart in sickness; they who never prayed, (almost) will pray at that time. The *last* time when he will keep his heart will be, when he is called to some public holy work, as if he were called to pray amongst Christians. O then, he will keep his heart diligently: and if he be in a minister's sight, he will keep the sabbath-day; but, alas! the man doth not remember that a greater one than a minister sees him, even God the Lord. A hypocrite will keep his outward man, but not his inward man: he will not swear, but in his heart he will curse God; he will keep his feet outwardly, but inwardly he will commit adultery in his heart: if you would be sincere, you must mortify your invisible idols, as well as your visible idols.

The *second* thing that I would say, is this, if ye keep your hearts, and not resign them freely to God, although ye were to live eighty years, and if you would pray the one forty, and weep the other forty of these years, (if such a thing could be possible) yet all that pains should be for nought, if ye do not freely first give him your heart; for you shall get that fearful sentence pronounced against you, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, I never knew you.' O therefore, while it is called to-day, give God your hearts, Psalm lxxviii. 56. "Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies. Psalm xxxiv. 16. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth." If ye had the tongue of an angel to speak and pray, yet if ye give him not your hearts, all your prayers shall return back empty to you.

The *third* thing which I would say to you, is this, the heart of man is a thing which ye will find a great difficulty to keep; and this is a proof of it, that a Christian will even sometimes change in prayer. He will sometimes change four times. *First*, When he begins, he will be in a flame of love to God. And *secondly*, He will fall secure. And *thirdly*, He will have terrible thoughts of God. And *lastly*, Before he hath done, he will speak to God as to his companion: and I would pose all of you that are here, if ye have not been in all (or most part) of these frames when you have been praying. Now I would charge you (as ye will answer to Christ one day) that you would give him your hearts. There are two words which I would say to you; and O that ye would consider upon them, Christ comes and says to us first, 'Take up thy cross, and deny thyself, and follow me.' That is Christ's first word unto a believer, and O! but that be

a great mystery to flesh and blood. And the devil comes and says the second word, which is, 'Fall down and worship me, and I will give thee a kingdom.' The first word of the devil is ever the fairest word that ye shall get; and the first of Christ is the sharpest. Now which of these two offers to you do ye choose? I would only say these two words to you: *First*, Think ye not shame to refuse Christ so openly as ye do? *Secondly* That answer which ye gave him, is not the answer which he seeks. I say, one day ye shall be brought before his throne, waiting for your condemnation: if ye give not precious Christ your hearts, ye shall stand before his tribunal to receive your last and fearful doom: O man, and O woman, with what face wilt thou stand? And what wilt thou have to say when thou stands before him? I remember the word of a cursed emperor, who had made defection from Christ, he was forced to breathe out his last words thus sadly, 'Thou hast overcome me at last, O Galilean.' So he is too strong a party for thee to contend with, and at length he will overcome thee.

Now the *last* thing that I would say unto you is, if you do not give him your hearts, I (as the ambassador of Christ) declare to you, that Christ and you shall fight together. Put on your harness, put on your steel coat, (for Christ will be ready for you) and boast when you put it off again. And I would say this unto you, that it is impossible for you to take Christ, except ye get a sight of Christ and his beauty; and if ye saw him in his beauty, ye would say, I will take him though I get not a kingdom: O! the angels and glorified spirits of just men now made perfect, may wonder at us, why we stand out so long? Oh! will ye give to another your hearts and not to precious Christ, who hath given you his heart, and who is worthy of all your hearts? Can you look upon that noble Plant of Renown, and not give him your hearts, who had a hole made in his side, through which ye might see his heart? Oh man, and oh woman, why will ye not give Christ your hearts? What shall ye say, when Christ shall say first to you, 'Why would ye not sincerely give me one day in your lifetime?' *Secondly*, 'Why would you not give me your hearts?' I will tell you three things which will be very terrible for you, O atheists! in that day when you shall appear before God's tribunal. *First*, The hearing of the gospel. *Secondly*, Which is more terrible, the resurrection of Christ. *Lastly*, Which is terriblest of all, when that fearful sentence shall be pronounced against you, 'Depart, depart.' O then, you shall curse the day that ever you was born in Glasgow, or in Scotland. Now, O you inhabitants of this place, I charge you, (as ye shall answer one day to God) that ye would

give him your hearts in keeping, and in so doing ye shall have life eternal. O therefore, 'kiss the Son by the way, lest his anger break out, and ye perish for ever.' Now to him who can persuade your hearts to embrace him, we desire to give praise,

SERMON III.

PROV. iv. 23. *Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*

THERE is a great and vast difference betwixt the heart of a Christian while he is on earth here below, travelling in these tents of mortality, and the heart of a Christian when he shall be above, taking up his eternal possession in those blessed and everlasting tents of immortality. And O! it is a mystery for you to believe, that such a day is approaching, when those hearts of yours which have been so unstedfast in the way of godliness, that they shall once be 'made as pillars in the house of your God, and no more to go out.' We may compare the heart of a Christian (while he is here below) unto Reuben, it is 'unstable as water, which doth mar its excellency; for a Christian, (while he is here below) he is like the moon, changeable, and subject to many vicissitudes, but when he shall be above, he shall be as the sun, 'having the light of seven days;' and is not this a mystery for you to believe, that such a day is approaching, when these hearts of yours, that have wearied so much in the service of God, to whom prayer hath been a cross, to whom the worship of God in the public ordinances hath been a burden? I say, is it not a mystery for you to believe, that such a day is approaching, 'when ye shall serve God night and day without any wearying?' There is not such a voice heard in heaven as this, 'this is a hard saying, who can bear it?' If it were possible that ye could ask that question at Abel, if he desired to change his estate, or his wearying to do God service? (he, who of all the lost posterity of Adam, was the first inhabitant of heaven) he would disdain to return an answer to such a question, it being without all ground and reason. And is not this a mystery for you to believe, that such a day is approaching, when these hearts of yours, that are now under so much darkness, such misconstructions of God, such misconceptions of the holy Majesty of God, and of the great mysteries of the kingdom of heaven? I say, is it not a mystery for you to believe, that such a day is approaching, when your hearts shall be fully taught to comprehend these depths and profound secrets of the kingdom of God, when the most brutish and darkest understanding shall

be made to resolve that question and mystery, how three can be in one, and how one can be in three? They shall then be able to resolve that profound mystery of the two natures in the person of the blessed Lord Jesus Christ: and in that day your hearts shall be able to comprehend that blessed union that is amongst the Persons of the blessed Trinity; and likewise in that day, ye shall be able to take up that blessed knot of union, which is betwixt Christ and believers; and is not this a mystery for you to believe, that such a day is approaching, when your hearts, that have been under such exercise of sorrow, that they shall be clothed with the garment of joy and praise? And I must ask at you, O, what a robe must that be, to be clothed with the garment of praise? It is a more excellent and glorious robe, than all the robes of the great kings and emperors of the world. Did your eyes ever see such an excellent garment, as the garment of praise? There is a threefold clothing which a Christian shall put on, when first his heart shall enter into heaven, in that blessed day of the resurrection: *First*, He shall be clothed with the robe of the righteousness of Christ; and O! what must such a robe as this be? *Secondly*, He shall be clothed with the robe and garment of immortality; and O! what a robe and resplendent garment shall this be? And *thirdly*, In that day, when first a Christian shall enter into heaven, he shall be clothed with the garment of praise; and O! what excellent and glorious robes shall all these be? 'When ye shall be brought to the King in raiment of needle work, and shall be made all glorious within.'

At the last occasion when we spake upon these words, we told you there were four things contained in them; and the *first* was a duty imposed upon Christians, that they should keep their hearts. The *second* thing was, that there were many spiritual enemies, who study to gain and conquer our hearts, which is presupposed in these words, 'Keep thy heart.' The *third* thing is, the qualifications which should be annexed to this precious and soul-concerning duty, holden forth in these words, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence;' or, as the words may be rendered, 'With all keeping, or, above all keeping.' The *last* thing which was contained in the words, was the spiritual advantages which attend the exercise of that duty, or the reasons enforcing the duty, 'for out of it are the issues of life;' that is the ground on which a Christian should walk in persuading himself to the doing of this duty. Now, as for the *first* thing, viz. the duty commanded, that we should keep our hearts, we have spoken several things from it: now there are only five things which we would speak to.

First, A Christian should study to keep his heart from the predominant lusts which dwell in it; it is of the concernment of

a Christian to keep himself from all iniquities, but it is the special concernment of a Christian to keep his heart from his predominant sins; this was the practice of David, Psalm xviii. 23. 'I have kept myself from mine iniquity.' Which we conceive to be understood of his predominant lusts. There is not an idol or lust which a Christian hath in his heart, but he ought to offer it up to God, and to put a knife to the throat of his most pleasant Isaac. I will tell you of five great idols which a Christian hath no will to quit, and it is impossible for him to keep his heart till he quit them. *First*, A Christian hath no will to quit his religious idols; that is, those idols, the loving of which is a commanded duty, but the immoderate love of which is an idol. As, for instance, it is a great difficulty for a tender Abraham to put a knife to the throat of his only son Isaac; or for parents to be denied to their children, and for an husband to be denied to his wife, the loving of which is their duty, but the immoderate love of them is sin. *Secondly*, A Christian hath ill will to quit his advantageous idol, that idol, in pursuit of which he conceives there is outward advantage to be waiting upon it; as, for instance, it is a great difficulty to persuade a covetous man to be denied to his riches; O! but that divinity which is in Prov. xxiii. 4. it is the divinity which the most part (or at least many) of the Christians now-a-day do not study to close with or obey, 'Labour not to be rich,' &c. There is a greater easiness and facility for one to quit his pleasant idols, than to quit his advantageous idols: as, for example, a covetous person will sooner forsake his idols, than his riches. *Thirdly*, A Christian hath ill will to quit his invisible idols, these idols that do lodge within his heart; there is a greater easiness for a Christian to quit his visible idols, than to quit his invisible idols. Sometimes a person will forsake his drunkenness and cursing, who will not forsake his pride and lust. But it is of your concernment, to be as much taken up in the mortification of invisible idols, as in the mortification of visible idols. *Fourthly*, A Christian hath much difficulty to quit these idols, which he hath a natural inclination unto; besides the love which we have contracted to some predominant idols, by the reason of the constitution of man's body. There are some that have a natural inclination unto one idol, more than to another. And to clear this, I would say this unto you, I presuppose some under these three predominant lusts. 1. That there are some under the predominant idol of love to the world. 2. That there are some under the predominant idol of pride. 3. That there are some under the predominant idol of lust; that is, of the idol that you have most natural inclination unto; assuredly you have greatest unwillingness to mortify that idol. *Fifthly*, A Christian

hath much difficulty to mortify that idol, the forsaking of which hath great outward disadvantages waiting upon the forsaking thereof; as that young man in the gospel, he could not endure that doctrine, 'Go and sell all that thou hast, and give it to the poor, &c. That was an idol which had much disadvantage (as he conceived) attending upon the forsaking of it, so that he could not embrace such a doctrine; but it is said, 'he went away sorrowful,' &c. Cursed be that person which goeth away sorrowful when Christ and an idol is put in the balance together, and whose heart consents rather to take the idol than Christ: I would only say this by the way to you, are there not many here, that if they would tell that which is their practice, they might condemn themselves for this, that absence and distance with Christ was never so great a burden to their spirits, as the want of the actual enjoyment and fruition of an idol? And doth not this speak, that ye prefer your idols before Christ? 'Not this man, but Barabbas,' is the cursed divinity of many of your hearts.

The *second* thing which I would speak to you, is this, a Christian should not delay to give obedience to this precious and soul-concerning command of keeping his heart. I know that there are somethat do not simply deny the obedience to this command, but they postpone the giving obedience unto it until another time. I would only say this to such, 'boast not of to-morrow, for ye know not what a day will bring forth: if ye keep not your hearts to-day, it will be a great difficulty for you to keep them to-morrow; therefore follow the practice of David, 'I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments, Psalm cxix. 60. Amongst which we conceive, he made haste to keep this commandment of keeping his heart.

Thirdly, We would say this unto you of the duty of keeping your hearts, if ye would keep your hearts aright, ye must entertain these four noble and excellent guests within your hearts. otherwise there will be great difficulty for you; yea, an impossibility for you to keep them. The *first* guest that must be dwelling in your hearts is, 'Our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, he must dwell in your hearts by faith. *Secondly*, The word of God must dwell in our hearts by love; and if once he hide his word in your hearts, then ye would be helped to keep your hearts, and that with much advantage and gain. *Thirdly*, If ye would keep your hearts, the love of God must dwell in them; and if these were indeed your attainments, then we might pronounce that sentence upon you, 'The peace of God, that passeth all understanding, shall keep (as in a garrison) your hearts and minds in Jesus Christ.' *Fourthly*, Ye should keep the fear and dread of God within your hearts. Study to live under the divine appre-

hension of the omnipotent majesty of God. We conceive, the little taking up of the omniscieny of God, of the omnipotency of God, and of the terrors of God, is both a great and special influence upon your neglect of the duties of keeping your hearts.

Fourthly, There is this which we would speak to from this duty of keeping the heart, and it is this, we would propose several things that ye would endeavour by all means to keep your hearts from them. *First*, A Christian should study to keep his heart from the deceit thereof, and from these strong delusions that it speaks. This is the great mystery of iniquity, that even our hearts will deceive our own hearts, and study to bring them to ruin: Take heed ye deceive not yourselves, &c. saith Jeremiah; or, as the words may be rendered, "Take heed ye deceive not your souls, 1 Cor. iii. 18. Let no man deceive himself, &c. And Gal. vi. 7. Be not deceived, God is not mocked; for what a man soweth, that shall he also reap." It is certain, that there are many soul-destroyers, and self-deceivers among us, their hearts seek peace to them, when there is no peace to them from God; and in speaking to this, that a Christian should keep his heart from the deceivings of his own heart, I shall speak a little to two things. 1. What are these deceits that lodge in the heart of man?

And there is this *first* deceit of the heart of man, the most sinful thing that can be, we can put a favourable title and name upon it; and there are few sins which any are lying under, but they can put a favourable title upon them; do not many call their presumption faith? Are there not many that call security, peace? Are there not many that call passion, zeal? Are there not many that call their lurk-warmness and indifferency in the things of godliness, their spiritual wisdom? And are there not many that call their misbelief, humility? Are there not many who call their vain prodigality, mortification to the things of a world? And likewise, are there not many which call their worldly-mindedness, frugality? This was the deceit of Jehu, that called his proud loving of a kingdom, zeal; 'Come see (saith he) 'and behold my zeal for the Lord;' whereas, if he had spoken the language of his own heart, he might have said, "Behold my zeal for myself."

Secondly, There is this deceit of the heart of man, that the most excellent and choice things of God, our heart can put an unpleasant name and construction upon them: as, for instance, are there not many that call tenderness, hypocrisy? Are there not many that call humility of spirit, stupidity? And are there not many who call zeal for God, rashness? This was the cause that caused Ahaz to fall, he called believing in God, tempting

of God, 'I will not tempt God,' saith he. While in the mean time he was pressed to faith in God. It is a cursed practice in the hearts of many, they put a false robe upon godliness, and study then to flee from it; just like the practice of the Jews, they put a 'scarlet robe upon Christ, and then mocked him.'

There is this *third* deceit of the heart of many, that it doth present impediments and diversions to hinder us from the exercise of duty. I would pose you, O Christians! when went you to duty, but there was something that your hearts proposed a diversion from the exercise of that duty. This is clear, Prov. xxvi. 13. "The slothful man saith, there is a lion in the way, a lioness in the streets:" he presents to himself an imaginary impediment to divert him from his duties. Which words point out the folly of the excuse, seeing there uses not to be lions in the streets, nor in the high ways, they frequenting more in the solitary and desert places. This is also clear in Song v. 3. where the carnal and secure heart of the spouse, when she is called to open to Christ, she presents this impediment, 'I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?' I shall only, in speaking of these impediments, which our cursed hearts do propose to divert us from duty, instance them in the exercise of prayer, that our hearts do propose several impediments to divert us from that precious and soul-concerning duty of prayer; and I shall name five impediments, which our cursed and carnal hearts do present to hinder us from that duty, after God hath presented to us a golden opportunity for doing of the duty.

First, Our carnal heart doth propose this impediment, O say ye, I am not in a praying frame, and so I must desist from this duty of prayer at this time. I would say to such that desist from prayer, because they are not in a praying frame, these two words: 1. Do ye suppose the way to attain to a praying frame, is to desist from prayer? Should ye not go to prayer, that ye may be helped to win a praying frame? 2. Do ye never go to prayer, but when ye are in a praying frame? I suppose ye pray not once in a week then, and it is much if ye pray once in a month, if ye pray not but when ye are in a praying frame.

The *second* impediment is, our hearts will tell us, it will be more advantage not to pray, than to pray. Sometimes a Christian will be under that conviction, that he doth offend God more in prayer, than in desisting from prayer: and upon that account we do fold our hands, and neglect this duty. 1. I would say this to such, it is indeed a sad and afflicting thing, the offending of God so much in prayer, but it is far sadder to give over prayer. 2. I would say this to such, I can hardly believe that ever ye can

offend God so much in prayer, as by the total neglect of the duty.

There is this *third* impediment, which our hearts do propose to divert us from duties, and especially from the exercise of the duty of prayer, we argue thus with ourselves, we are not under the sensible necessity of what we need, and so we say, we will not go to God at this time; for if we pray under such a case, we will but turn complimenters with God, we will but 'flatter him with our mouth, and lie to him with our tongue.' I would say this to such, the best way to bring up our hearts to the sensible convictions of your necessity is, to be much in the exercise of prayer. A Christian must pray for sorrow for sin, if he wants it; a Christian must pray for sense of necessity, if he wants it; and a Christian must pray for tenderness, when he wants it. Prayer is the universal messenger, which we must constantly send to God for supply of all our necessities: there is not a case which a Christian can be in, but prayer may go to God as a messenger for a remedy to such a case, when he stands in need.

The *fourth* impediment, which our carnal hearts propose to divert us from prayer is, our hearts are not under a right majestic apprehension of God, and so ye say, if we go to prayer at this time, we will be guilty of the third command, 'in taking his holy name in vain.' If we go to prayer at this time, saith our deceiving hearts, we will but put ourselves into that sin, 'to speak to God as our companion.' I confess, it is a sad thing to go to God without some divine impression of his Sovereignty and Majesty. And I would say this to you, I think it is one of the most sad and undeniable evidences of the little grace of God, which is in the hearts of many, that constantly in their prayers, they speak to God as to their companion. But I would ask this question at you, when went ye to prayer, but ye might find your hearts short-coming in the due apprehension of the Majesty of God.

The *last* impediment, which our carnal hearts doth propose, to divert us from the exercise of prayer, is this, we say (many of us) that it is an inconvenient time for the exercise of that duty, therefore our hearts say, that we should delay the time of praying, till a more convenient season, according to that practice in Hag. i. 2. 'The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.' It is the cursed practice of our hearts, that when God presents an occasion to pray, we delay praying at that time, under the expectation of a more convenient season for going about that duty; just like that word which Felix spoke to Paul, we speak that to our occasion, O occasion, that is presented to me to pray in, 'Go away at this time, and at a more convenient season I will call for thee again.' I would say this to these which do so much slight the opportunities presented to them.

to pray, I would only say these three words unto you who do so: *First*, What know ye, even ye which slight the call of God to go about prayer, what know ye, I say, but that may be the last call from heaven that ever ye shall get to pray? I would have Christians, and all of you that are here, meditating upon this, that when occasion is presented to you, ye might argue thus with yourselves, I must embrace this occasion, for I know not but this may be my last occasion. *Secondly*, I would say this to you, which slight your occasion to pray, when the next occasion is presented to you, ye will be more unfit for the exercise of prayer; and when the convenient time that ye did propose to yourselves is come, ye will then defer it to another time. *Thirdly*, I would say this unto you, who slight these golden opportunities that are presented to you to pray in, know this for a certainty, the slighting of occasions is a disobedience to the commandment of God. Would you know what are the occasions to pray? They are even God's call inviting you to go about that duty; and if you slight that occasion, the call of God is slighted by you.

There is this *fourth* deceit of the heart of man, which we would press you to study to eschew, and it is this, the heart of man studies by all means to extenuate sin, and to make it seem little, when it is not so; this is one of the great deceits of the heart, according to that of Solomon, 'So is the man that deceiveth his neighbour;' and he will add that as an excuse, 'Was not I in sport?' I will tell thee three great faults which are incident to Christians. *First*, There are some that look upon their perfections through a multiplying glass, their perfections appear to be more than they are. The church of Laodicea was guilty of this fault, supposing herself to have attained to much perfection, and to great length in duties, when indeed she had attained to nothing. *Secondly*, There are some who look upon their sins through an extenuating glass; they are like the unjust steward, when they owe an hundred talents, they go and write down fifty. *Thirdly*, Their iniquities, which they are convinced of, and are forced to charge upon themselves, they study to extenuate them, and say, Is it not a little one? And so they desire it to be spared.

The *last* deceit of the heart is, the heart doth oftentimes preach peace, when there is no peace from God. I am persuaded of this, let all the persons that are within these doors be asked of that question, 'Whether or not they have faith in God, or peace with God?' I suppose there are not many, but their hearts would say, 'They have peace with God.' O! that is a damnable deceit of the heart, that oftentimes it preaches peace to a man or woman

where there is no peace to them from God. I shall only, to make this deceit appear more lively in its native colours, say this of it. *First*, That it is a most mysterious and strong deceit of the heart, that will so speak peace to a man. Sometimes the word will speak war to a man, and yet his heart will speak peace to him: and O! is not that a mysterious deceit, that I suppose, if an angel from heaven would preach that doctrine to you, 'That there is no peace betwixt God and you;' many of your hearts would (for all that) preach and speak peace to yourselves? And *secondly*, This makes it a most mysterious deceit that sometimes your consciences do declare and preach to you, 'That you are not at peace with God;' yet over the belly of that assertion, your hearts will preach *peace to you*. *Thirdly*, This makes it a most mysterious deceit, that notwithstanding your lives and conversations, that they testify to yourselves and others, 'That you are at enmity with God;' yet your hearts will preach *peace to you*.

Now the *second* thing that we would say to you from this is, viz. that a Christian should keep his heart from the deceivings of his own heart, and it is this, ye should mainly guard against discouragements; this our blessed Lord Jesus pressed, John xiv. 1. 'Let not your hearts be troubled, &c. And it is clear, this is dehorted, Philip. iv. 6. 'Be careful for nothing,' &c. And in Psalm xlii. 5. David doth, as it were, expostulate with his own soul for being discouraged and cast down. Now, in speaking to this, that a Christian should guard against discouragements, I shall speak unto two things; and the *first* shall be to the rise of discouragements, and from whence it doth spring. And, *secondly*, I shall speak to some considerations to press this upon you, that ye would keep yourselves from discouragements.

And, *first*, We conceive, that discouragement it arises from this, when a Christian hath no visible victory over his idols, then his discouragement comes apace upon him: a Christian, after long wrestling with his idols, lusts, and corruptions, and hath little victory over them, he is prone and ready to draw that sad conclusion, 'there is no hope,' but that once he shall fall by the hand of some of his idols.

The *second* rise of discouragement is, from Christ's withdrawing of the sensible manifestations of his love and of his patience, Psalm xxx. 7. 'Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled.' And it is clear in the practice of the disciples, the withdrawing of Christ's bodily presence, 'it made sorrow to fill their hearts.' I confess, there are not many which are sick of the disease of discouragement under absence from Christ; but however, it hath been the reason of his disciples discouragement, when Christ for many days absented himself from them.

Thirdly, This is the rise and discouragement when a Christian hath no returns of his prayers, Lam. iii. 8. compared with verse 18. where, in verse 8. he cries out, 'When I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer.' And verse 18. he draweth that sad conclusion, 'My hope and my strength is perished from the Lord.' The not getting returns of prayer hath been an occasion of much disputing the good will of God, and a foundation of much discouragement to his own people.

Fourthly, This is the rise of discouragement, when a Christian doth interpret the sad and afflicting dispensations of God, and he conceives that there is nothing but wrath speaking to him therein, then he falleth into a great fit of discouragement, as in Lam. iii. 17. compared with verse 18. where the rise of his discouragement was the misinterpreting of the sad dispensations of God.

Fifthly, This is the rise of a Christians discouragement, when he is made to possess the iniquities of his youth, and all the terrors of God seem to be called, as in a solemn assembly, round about him, O then, he taketh on a great fit of discouragement.

Now that which, *secondly*, we shall speak to is, to propose some considerations unto you to guard against discouragements.

The *first* shall be this, those that have a heart that is under the spirit of bondage and discouragement, they cannot pray as they ought; discouragement makes prayer a most unpleasant duty; as is clear, Psalm lxxvii. 4. 'I am so troubled, that I cannot speak.' Discouragement, as it were, hinders and obstructs the exercise of prayer. *Secondly*, Discouragement doth exceedingly interrupt the exercise of faith, as in Psalm xlii. 5. 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou discouraged within me? trust in God, for I will yet praise him for the health of his countenance. The Psalmist, as it were, speaks a difference (if not an opposition) betwixt the disquieting and faith. If ye would not interrupt the lively acting of faith, ye would study to guard against discouragement, that ye do not sit down and draw desperate conclusions against yourselves. I know ye may call a Christian Marah now, because he is indeed under bitterness; but the day is approaching when ye may call a Christian Naomi, when he shall be comforted with the consolations of God.

The *third* consideration to press you to guard against discouragement is, there is no duty that a Christian is called to, when he is under discouragement, but it makes it a burden to him; according to that word, Jer. xx. 9. Discouragement brought forth that resolution, 'Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name,' &c. A soul that is under

the exercise of faith, moves swiftly, as the chariots of Aminadab; but a soul that is under the exercise of discouragement, moves as the chariots of Pharoah, heavily.

Lastly, There is this consideration to press you to guard against discouragement, and it is this, misbelief and discouragement, is the mother of apostacy; as is clear, Lam. i. 8. 'She sighed;' and what followed upon that? 'and turneth backward.' And it is no wonder discouragement grow big with child of apostacy, because it makes duties become tasteless.

Now the rest of the things which we would have a Christian keeping his heart from, we shall only but name them briefly unto you. The *third* frame that a Christian should keep his heart from is, from an impatient frame; he should study to make his heart keep silence to any cross that comes to him from the hand of God. *Fourthly*, He should keep his heart from a lusting frame, not to be taken up in an immoderate pursuit after the things of the world. *Fifthly*, He should keep his heart from an untender frame; he should study always to keep his heart tender, that he may have that divine softness, that his heart may melt: likewise he is to keep his heart from an unpraying frame, to be at every occasion in a fit temper of spirit for the duty of prayer. *Lastly*, He is to keep his heart from a secure frame, always to be upon the watch tower, and wait for the motions of Christ. And there are three things, the motions of which a Christian should take up. *First*, He should take up the motions of Christ, to hear if he can take up the motions of the sound of Christ's feet coming over the mountains of Bether. *Secondly*, He should take up the motions of his conscience, that he may not be sleeping when sin awakes. *Thirdly*, He should take up the motions of his heart, to see what frame it is in: a Christian should be able to write a diary of his own heart, that in such an hour of such a day, I was in a believing frame; and in such an hour of such a day, I was in a discouraged frame; and in such an hour of such a day, 'I sought him whom my soul loveth,' and in such an hour of such a day, 'he brought me to the banqueting-house, and his banner over me was love.' The sum of all is, if ye would keep your hearts, ye must give them to Christ to keep, for that is the best way to keep them well; it is only to Christ ye must commit the keeping of them. Ye know, man had but his heart a short time in keeping, and he lost it. And I shall, before I close, because it is the great design of the preaching of the gospel, give you five considerations, that may provoke you to give your hearts to Christ.

The first consideration is, will ye consider the matchless and transcendent excellency which is in precious Christ? O! doth

not that transcendent beauty preach, 'My son, give me thy heart?' Psalm xxiv. 7. the Psalmist presseth opening to Christ upon this account, 'Lift up your hearts, O ye everlasting doors and gates.' And what is the argument wherewith he presseth it? 'And the King of glory shall come in.' I would only ask this at you, (O! ye hard-hearted) is it not marvellous presumption for you to refuse the precious offers of such a glorious King?

The *second* consideration to press you to give your hearts in keeping to Christ is, take a view and a comprehensive look of the precious acts of the infinite condescensions of Christ: doth not his coming down from heaven preach that doctrine, 'My son, give me thy heart?' Doth not his being born under the law, preach that doctrine, 'My son, give me thy heart?' And doth not his being born in so low a condition, preach that doctrine, 'My son, give me thy heart?' And if nothing will persuade you to give your hearts to Christ, ye would take a look of these five wounds which he received in his blessed body: *First*, Doth not the wound that he received in his right hand, preach this, 'My son, give me thy heart?' *Secondly*, Doth not the wound that he got in his left hand, preach this doctrine, 'My son, give me thy heart?' *Thirdly*, Doth not the wound that he received in his precious side, preach this soul-concerning doctrine, 'My son, give me thy heart?' And likewise, doth not the wounds which he received in his blessed legs, preach this doctrine, 'My son, give me thy heart?' O! were ye never constrained to wish for ten thousand hearts, to ware and bestow upon him? Oh! what hearts have ye, which refuse the offers of so noble and condescending a Prince?

The *third* consideration is, if ye will look upon these things which intreat you to give Christ your hearts, ye cannot but give them unto him. Christ cries, O! come and give me your hearts: necessity cries, O! go, and give Christ your hearts: and we say likewise, O! give Christ your hearts to keep.

The *fourth* consideration is, will ye look upon these unspeakable disadvantages which attend those that will not give their hearts to Christ. I would say this by the way, there are two balances upon which we weigh our hearts. *First*, Some weigh their hearts in the balance of the sanctuary, and they are found light. *Secondly*, Some weigh their hearts in the balance of deceit, and they are found without fault. But now, I say this to the persons which will not give their hearts to Christ, I defy all the angels in heaven to speak forth their unspeakable disadvantages, yea, sense shall be the best preacher of it in that day. And I shall name these three inexpressible disadvantages to you. *First*, if ye give not Christ your hearts, Christ shall be your eternal enemy.

And, on the contrary to that precious doctrine which he once preached, 'Come unto me,' he shall pronounce that sad sentence against you, 'Depart from me;' and therefore, as ye would not engage Christ to be your eternal enemy, ye should give him your hearts. O! the gospel-vengeance of a crucified Saviour will be more terrible, sad and fearful, than the vengeance of the law; Christ is the best friend, and the most terrible foe. The *second* disadvantage is, ye shall be eternally shut out from the enjoyment of the blessed company of angels, and from the souls of just men made perfect; and O! therefore, meditate and consider upon this, what it is to be separated from the Father, the first Person of the blessed Trinity; and from the Son, the second Person of the blessed Trinity; and from the Holy Ghost, the third Person of the blessed Trinity; and from all the blessed society which are in heaven. And the *last* disadvantage is, ye shall be kept under these everlasting chains, even all of you which will not give your hearts to Christ. If ye be not under this everlasting chain of love, ye shall be under these everlasting chains of wrath. I suppose the most stout-hearted sinner here, if he could but a moment hear the screechings of the damned, (if it were granted to him) he would not delay to give his heart to Christ.

The *last* consideration is, O consider these infinite, eternal, and unchangeable advantages that those have which give their hearts to Christ: we conceive, if all the angels in heaven would preach together upon the unspeakable blessedness of the saints in heaven, they would always close their sentences with this, "It is unspeakable joy which attends those that are admitted to that blessed life." There are five things which are unchangeable to Christians, and five things which are unchangeable to reprobates; there is this which is unchangeable to the saints: *First*, Their communion with God shall be unchangeable; for after they shall win to heaven, they shall be under a continual and blessed emanation of Christ's presence. *Secondly*, They shall have an unchangeable love. A Christian's love, while he is here, is like unto the moon, subject to many vicissitudes and alterations, but afterwards, when they shall be in heaven, their love shall be unchangeable. *Thirdly*, His holiness shall then be unchangeable, when once he shall put on the robe of Christ's righteousness, he shall then sing that song, 'O death! where is thy sting? And O grave! where is thy victory?' *Fourthly*, His praise to God shall then be unchangeable; O! what a pleasant sight shall it be, to see the souls of just men made perfect, with harps in their hands, singing these pleasant songs unto God most sweetly, 'Hallelujah to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, which lives for ever?' Their tongue is made like the pen of a ready writer:

there is not such a complaint uttered by Moses in heaven, 'I am a man of slow speech:' neither doth Jeremiah now complain, 'I am a child, and cannot speak.' *Fifthly*, Their desires after God shall then be unchangeable: a Christian, while he is here below, he will desire God now, and within a little while, he will desire his idols: but then, when he shall be above, his desires after God shall be unchangeable.

And, upon the contrary, there are five things unchangeable in the lot of a reprobate, and of those that will not give Christ their hearts. *First*, their separation from God shall be unchangeable: when once they shall go down into the pit, there shall be no hope of coming up again. Oh! would ye think upon this, what a life it shall be, to be under eternal excommunication from Christ's presence? O! but if ye knew Christ, and believed what an one he were, ye would close with him. *Secondly*, The reprobate shall have an unchangeable sorrow. O! he may be sad, when the vengeance of God shall be squeezing the marrow out of his bones, and when he is eternally shut up in these horrible flames, and out of them to have no redemption. *Thirdly*, Reprobates, they shall have an unchangeable hatred against God, and God shall have an unchangeable hatred against them; and I cannot wish a greater misery to any, than for Christ to have an unchangeable hatred against them. *Fourthly*, Ye that are aliens from God, ye shall sin unchangeably, ye shall never cease to sin, and ye shall never cease to be tormented: on these two eternity shall be spent. *Lastly*, Your inward anxiety, and torturing of conscience, shall be unchangeable; that worm shall never die, but shall eternally gnaw your conscience.

Now what shall we say more? We have set life and death before you, and whether of them will ye embrace? O that ye would embrace Christ, even precious Christ, and give over your hearts to that blessed Lord. It is like, in these days, that the devil hath purchased many harpers to himself, to sing that song, 'I am not far from victory.' The curse of a crucified Saviour shall eternally come down upon the heads of these that will not give their hearts to Christ; and to you that will give, or have given your hearts to Christ, the eternal blessing of Christ shall come upon your hearts. Behold the day is coming, (O atheists!) when you would give ten thousand worlds for one invitation of the gospel again; and we would be content to bide ten thousand years in hell for one preaching, and it shall be denied to you. O therefore, do not withstand Christ's offers: take him, ye will get him for a look; and know, that if ye will not love him now, his heart shall burn with hatred against you; and one day he shall curse your cursed hearts, for that hatred ye bare to him. Now to him who intreats you to embrace his offer, be praise.