

THE  
POOR MAN'S FAMILY BOOK.

- I. TEACHING HIM HOW TO BECOME A TRUE CHRISTIAN.
  - II. HOW TO LIVE AS A CHRISTIAN TOWARDS GOD, HIMSELF, AND OTHERS, IN ALL HIS RELATIONS; ESPECIALLY IN HIS FAMILY.
  - III. HOW TO DIE AS A CHRISTIAN IN HOPE AND COMFORT, AND SO TO BE GLORIFIED WITH CHRIST FOR EVER.
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THE FIRST DAY'S CONFERENCE.

*The Conviction of an Unconverted Sinner.*

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**Speakers.**—Paul, a pastor; and Saul, an ignorant sinner.

**PAUL.** WHEN I saw you last, neighbour, I told you, that both my love to you, and my office, do bind me, besides my public preaching, to watch over every person of my flock, and to instruct and help them, man by man, as far as I am able, and they consent: thus <sup>a</sup> Christ himself instructed sinners, and thus must we: you know we cannot speak so familiarly, and come so close to every one's case, in a common sermon, as we may do by conference: and in conference it is not a little rambling discourse upon the by that is fit for so great a business; and therefore I entreated you to allow me now and then an hour's set and sober talk with you, when all other matters might for that time be laid by: and I am now come to claim it, as you promised.

**SAUL.** You are welcome, Sir. I confess to you that, being ig-

<sup>a</sup> John iv., and iii. 1, 2, &c.

norant and unlearned, I am loth to talk with such a man as you about high matters and things of religion, which I do not well understand. But because you desired it, I could not say you nay.

P. You shall see that I come not to dispute with you, or to cavil, or to do you any harm, nor to pose you with any needless questions, nor to try your learning : but only to help you, before you die, to make sure of everlasting life.

S. I have so much reason myself as to know, that Christ's ministers are like nurses, that must cut every child his meat as it is fit for him; and that if I were sick, it is not a long speech of my physician that will serve to cure me; but he must come and see me, and feel my pulse, and find out my disease, and then tell me what will do me good, and how to take it. But to tell you the truth, sir, there are so many busy fellows that love to meddle with other folk's matters, and censure others, and do but trouble men, either to draw them to their own opinions, or else to make themselves teachers, and to seem better than they are themselves, that I was at first unwilling you should trouble me with such matters; till I thought with myself that I am one of your charge; and till I heard how discreetly, and tenderly, and well you speak to those that have been with you. And now I am ready to receive your instruction.

P. But I have this one request to you before we begin, that we may do all with reverence, as in the presence of God, and beg his blessing; and that you will not be offended with me if I speak freely, and come close to you, as long as you know that I have no ends of my own, but only, in love, to seek the salvation of your soul: and it is not flattery that will cure diseases, or save souls.

S. I confess man's nature loveth not to be shamed, or galled, or troubled; but yet God forbid that I should be offended with you for seeking my own good: for I know you are wiser than I, and know by your life and labour that it is nothing but all our salvation that you seek.

P. I pray you<sup>b</sup> tell me what case do you take your soul to be in for another world; and what do you think would become of you if you should die this day?

S. God knows what he will do with us all, I know not. But we must hope the best, and put our trust in the mercy of God.

P. No doubt but God knows; but do you think that we may

<sup>b</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 16.

not<sup>c</sup> know ourselves? May not a man know certainly whether he shall be saved or not?

S. I think not. We can but hope well, but not be sure, for who can tell the secrets of God?

P. Cannot a man know it, if God should tell him?

S. Yes, but God tells nobody his mind.

P. Do you not think the<sup>d</sup> holy Scripture is God's word; and that whatever it tells us, God tells us?

S. Yes, I cannot deny that.

P. Do you believe that there is<sup>e</sup> another life after this, and that man dieth not like a dog, but that his soul goeth either to heaven or hell?

S. Yes, that must not be denied.

P. Seeing heaven is an inconceivable glory, and hell the most inexpressible misery, do you not think but there must needs be a<sup>f</sup> very great difference between those that go to heaven, and those that go to hell?

S. Yes, no doubt; God is not unjust: he would not take one to heaven, and send another to hell, if they were both alike.

P. And do you think that there is so great difference, and yet that it cannot be known? Is a godly man and a wicked man so like that they cannot be known asunder by themselves, if they will?

S. Nobody knoweth the heart but God.

P. Another cannot infallibly know it, further than the life declareth it. But cannot you<sup>g</sup> know your own? Cannot you know what you love and what you hate?

S. No doubt but a man may know his own mind.

P. Very good. And you hear the Scriptures read at church, where there are abundance of promises made to the godly, both for this life and that to come, and terrible threatenings to the ungodly? To what use and purpose were all these, if no one could know whether he were godly or ungodly? Who could take any comfort in the promises, if he could not know that they belong to him?

S. Not unless he have some guess, or hope.

P. And do you not hear, that "We must give all diligence to make our calling and election sure?" (2 Pet. i. 10.) And "Examine yourselves, whether you be in the faith or no

<sup>c</sup> 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

<sup>d</sup> John v. 39; Matt. xiv. 49, and xii. 24; 2 Tim. iii. 16.

<sup>e</sup> Matt. xxv.; Heb. ix. 27.

<sup>f</sup> Matt. xxv.; Psalm i.; Mal. iii. 17, 18; Rom. viii. 5-7, 9.

<sup>g</sup> 2 Cor. i. 5; 1 John iii. 14, 24; iv. 13, and v. 19, 20.

**Prove yourselves.** Know you not your own selves that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) Do you think God would bid men try and examine, and make sure, if it were impossible?

**S.** No, sure, we must do our best. But who can tell who are elected and who are reprobates, which are God's secrets?

**P.** You cannot know, before they are converted, whom God will convert and whom not. But when he converteth a sinner, he sets his name and mark upon him; not outwardly only, as you do on your sheep, or goods; but inwardly,<sup>a</sup> as the parents convey their own nature and likeness to their children. That is, he regenerateth and sanctifieth them: he putteth into them a holy nature, a new mind, and a new will, and turneth them to a new life. And may not all this be known? Cannot God's elect be known to themselves, when he hath given them the Spirit of Christ, and made them new creatures, and set his certain mark upon them? Did you never hear, "The foundation (or obligation) of God standeth sure, having this seal; the Lord knoweth them that are his; and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity?" (2 Tim. ii. 19.) God knoweth whom he will convert and save from eternity. But when men believe in Christ, and depart from iniquity, then they have his seal of election on them, and by it they may know themselves that they are his.

**S.** I cannot deny what you say, for it is plain.

**P.** I pray you tell me further, have you not read, or heard, that one sort are called in Scripture the children of God, and said to<sup>1</sup> have his nature and his image? and therefore are said to be regenerated and born again, and born of God, and begotten by incorruptible seed to a lively hope, and a never-fading crown in heaven, and are made holy as he is holy? And the other sort are called<sup>2</sup> the children of the devil, and said to be of him, and to be ruled as captives by him, and to do his works and will? And dare you think that God and the devil are so like, as that their image, and nature, and works, and children, cannot be known one from another?

**S.** I dare not think so. God forbid!

**P.** And have you not heard in Scripture abundance of particular marks laid down, by which we may know whether we

<sup>a</sup> John iii. 3, 5; Rom. viii. 9; Matt. xiii. 3; Tit. ii. 13, 14; 2 Cor. v. 17.

<sup>1</sup> 2 Pet. i. 4; 1 Pet. i. 3, 4, 15—17.

<sup>2</sup> John viii. 48; 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26; 1 John iii. 8—10; Acts xiii. 10.

are the children of God? And can you think they are all laid down in vain?

S. No; none of the word of God is in vain.

P. And do you not hear expressly, that by these marks we may know that we<sup>1</sup> are the children of God? And that, knowing it, we may rejoice, even with unspeakable, glorious joy; and that believers are commanded to rejoice in the Lord, yea, always to rejoice? And God's word cannot be false, nor doth it command the<sup>m</sup> ungodly thus to rejoice. Therefore, certainly a man may know whether he is the child of God, or not.

S. I never thought of so much before as you have told me: I cannot deny it. But I must confess that I have no such knowledge of myself.

P. Be not offended with me, if I freely proceed upon your own confession. Have you no assurance of your salvation? Nor certain knowledge what case your soul is in? Tell me truly, what care, what<sup>n</sup> diligent labour have you used to have made all sure? Is it because you could not get assurance? or because you would not do your part? Can you truly say that you have set your heart upon the matter, and made it the greatest of your care and labour in this world, and left nothing undone which you were able to do, to make sure of everlasting life?

S. I would I could say so, but I confess I cannot. God forgive me! I have had some shallow thoughts of these matters upon the by, but I never laid out such serious thoughts, such earnest labours, upon them as you speak of.

P. Have you not? I am sorry to know it. But I pray you tell me what is it that hath hindered you?

S. Alas, sir, many things have<sup>o</sup> hindered me. One is the cares, and business, and crosses of this world, which have taken up my mind and time: and another is the vain pleasures of the flesh, the delights of sense, and a daily contentedness in the particulars of my prosperity. Something or other so took me up, that my mind had no leisure, nor room, for God.

P. And do you think you have done well and wisely? Will this course serve your turn for ever? What have you now to show of all the pleasures that sin afforded you ever since you

<sup>1</sup> 2 Cor. i. 12; Gal. vi. 4; Heb. iii. 6; Phil. iii. 1, and iv. 4; Palm xxxiii. 1; Rom. v. 2; 1 Thess. v. 16; 1 Pet. i. 6, 8.

<sup>n</sup> Hos. ix. 1.      <sup>o</sup> 2 Pet. i. 10; Isa. lv. 1, 6, 10; Matt. vi. 33; John vi. 27.

<sup>o</sup> Matt. xiii. 22; Luke viii. 14, and xxi. 34; Rom. viii. 6-8; Phil. iii. 19; Psalm x. 3, 4.

were born? What now are you the <sup>p</sup> better for every merry hour that is past; for every sweet, delicious dish; for every pleasant, merry cup; for every playful day, or company; for every wanton lust and dalliance? Tell me now, what good, what sweetness, what inward comfort, is left behind? What the better are you now for all?

S. You need not ask me such a question. The pleasure is gone of all that is past, but I am still in hope of more.

P. And how long will that endure which you hope for? Are you sure to live another week, or day, or hour? And are you not sure that an end will come, and <sup>q</sup> shortly come, and irresistibly come? And where then are all your delights and merriments? Do you think that death is made more safe and comfortable, or more dangerous and terrible, by the remembrance of all the sinful pleasures of a fleshly life? Go, try if you can comfort a dying man, that is not mad, by telling him that he hath had a life of sport and pleasure; or that he had his cups, and feasts, and whores, and honours, for so long a time; and that he <sup>r</sup> hath had his good things here; and that this world hath done for him all that it can do, and now he must part with it for ever. Go, try whether death be more comfortable to Dives, who is clothed in purple and silk, and fareth sumptuously or deliciously every day, than to a Lazarus that waiteth in patient poverty for a better life.

And as for all your possessions and wealth, what will they do for you, more than to be the fuel of these transitory delights, that your fleshly lusts may not lack provision? Will you carry any of it with you? Will it make your death more safe or easy? Or, do you not know that unsanctified wealth and pleasures do all leave nothing but their sting behind, and prepare for everlasting wo?

S. I know all this. And yet this world hath a marvellous power to blind men's minds, and take up their hearts, and turn their thoughts from better things.

P. It is true with those that are blind already, and never had spiritual wisdom, or holy inclination, to mind God, or any thing truly good. But if men were well in their wits, could the beastly pleasures of the flesh for a moment be preferred before holy, everlasting pleasures? Could they be quieted in all their misery with the pride and pelf of a few days, and which they

<sup>p</sup> Eccl. i. 2, 3, &c. "All is vanity and vexation."

<sup>q</sup> Luke xii. 19, 20.

<sup>r</sup> Luke xvi. 25.

know they must shortly leave for ever? Could a life, that is posting so speedily to its end, make men forget an endless life?

But tell me, neighbour, did you not know all this while that you must die; you must certainly die; you must shortly die? And did you not know, that when death cometh, time is gone, for ever gone, and all the world cannot recall it? Did you not know that your \* business in this world was to prepare for heaven, and to do all that ever must be done for your everlasting hope and happiness? And that it must go with all men in heaven and hell as they have prepared here?

S. I have heard all this, but it was with a dull and sleepy mind; it did not stir me up to sober consideration, because I hoped still for longer life.

P. But you know that the longest life must have an end: where now are all that lived before us? And, alas! what are an hundred years when they are gone? What now is all your time that is past? But tell me further; what shift make you all this while with your conscience? Did you never think of the end of all your prosperity, and of your soul's appearing in another world? Do you not pass through the churchyard, and see the graves, and tread upon the dust of those that have lived in the pleasures of the world before you? Have you not seen the graves opened, and the carcasses of your neighbours left there in the silent darkness, to rot into ugly loathsomeness and dust? Have you not seen the boues, the skulls of your forefathers, and the holes where meat and drink went in? And did you not know that all this must be your own condition? And is such a life better than heaven? And such a corruptible body fit to be pampered with all the care and labour of our lives, whilst our souls are almost forgotten and neglected?

S. God forgive us! we forget all this, though we have daily and hourly remembrancers, till death is just upon us, and then we do<sup>n</sup> perceive our folly. I was once sick, and like to die, and then I was troubled for fear what would become of me; and I was fully resolved to mend my life: but when I was recovered, all wore off, and the world and the flesh took place again.

P. But you are a man, and have the use of reason. When you confess that you are unready to die, and have done no more to make sure work for your soul, tell me, what shift make you

\* Matt. vi. 19, 20, 33.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. iv. 7; Luke xii. 19, 20; 2 Pet. iii. 11; Psalm xxxvii. 37, 38, &c.; Rom. vi. 21, 22; 2 Cor. xi. 15; Phil. iii. 19.

<sup>n</sup> Psalm lxxviii. 33-35, &c.

to lie down quietly to sleep, lest you should die, and be past hope, before the morning? Are you not afraid in the morning lest you should die before night, and never have time of repentance more? What shift make you to forget that, if you die unready and unconverted, you are a lost and miserable man for ever? Are you sure at <sup>x</sup> night to live till morning? Are you sure in the morning to live till night? Are you not sure that it will not be long? Do you not know by what a wonder of providence we live? How many hundred veins, and arteries, and sinews, and other parts, our bodies have, which must every one be kept in order? So that if one break, or be stopped, or if our blood do but corrupt or sour, or our other nourishing moisture be distempered, or our spirits be quenched, how quickly are we gone! And dare you wilfully or negligently live one day unprepared for death in so slippery and uncertain a life as this?

S. You say well: but, for all this uncertainty, I thank God I have lived until now.

P. And will you turn God's patience and mercy into presumption, to the hardening of your heart, and the delaying of your repentance? Will he always wait your leisure? As long as you have lived, will not death come, and shortly come? And where are you then? And what will you do next? Have you ever soberly bethought you what it is for a soul to take its farewell of this world, and presently to appear in another world, a world of spirits, good or bad, and to be <sup>y</sup> judged according to our preparation in this life, and to take up a place in heaven or hell, without any hope of ever changing?

S. You trouble me and make me afraid by this talk: but death will not be prevented; and why then should we begin our fears too soon? They will come time enough of themselves. The fear of death is a greater pain than death itself.

P. Alas! is dying all that you look at? Though death cannot be prevented, damnation may be prevented. Dying is a small matter, were it not for what cometh next. But can hell be escaped without fear, and care, and serious diligence? Or had you rather be condemned for ever, than be frightened to your duty, and from your sin and danger? Is hell easier than a little necessary fear and care? If you were either a beast or a devil, there were some sense in what you say. For if you were

<sup>x</sup> Prov. xxvii. 1; Matt. xxiv. 44; Luke xii. 19, 20, 40,

<sup>y</sup> Matt. xxv.



a beast, you had nothing after death to fear; and therefore the fear of death beforehand would do no good, but increase your sorrow: and if you were a devil, there were no hope; and therefore you might desire not to be tormented before the time, for it will come time enough at last. But, God be thanked, neither of these is your case: you must live for ever; and you may live in heavenly joys for ever if you will. And are not these things, then, to be forethought of?

S. Really, sir, I am afraid if I should but set myself to think of another world, and the state of my soul as seriously as you talk of it, it would frighten me out of my wits; it would make me melancholy or mad. I have seen some people moped and melancholy with being so serious about such things; and therefore do not blame me to be afraid of it.

P. God be thanked that you have yet your reason; and seeing you have it, will you study these few questions following?

1. What did God give you your reason for, and difference you from a beast, but to use it in preparation for an endless life? And is it madness to use our reason for that which it was given us for, and which we are made and live for?

2. Is not that man actually mad already, who hath a God to serve, and a soul to save, and a heaven to get, and a hell to escape, and a death to prepare for, and spends his life in worldly<sup>r</sup> fooleries that all perish in the using, and leaveth all this work undone? Is he not mad, and worse than mad, that setteth more by these trifles than by his God? And setteth more by a little meat and drink, and beastly pleasure, for a few days, than by an endless, heavenly glory? That careth more for a body, that must rot in the earth, than for a never-dying soul? That spareth no pains to avoid shame, and poverty, and sickness; and will do little or nothing to avoid everlasting shame, and pain, and horror, in hell? Tell me, if your wife and child should behave themselves but half as madly about the things of this world, would you not send them to Bedlam, or to a physician, presently, or bind them, and use them as the mad are used? And is it not a pitiful hearing, to hear one that is thus mad for his poor soul, neglect it still, and cast it away, and say he doth it for fear of being mad? More pitiful a thousand times, than to hear one in Bedlam say, 'I dare not take physic.

<sup>r</sup> Luke xii. 20; Psalm xiv. 1, and xcii. 6; Jer. xvii. 11; Prov. xiv. 9; Eccl. v. 1, 4; Luke xxiv. 25.

lest it make me mad.' Were such madness a disease, it were but like a fever, or another sickness, for which God would not punish us, but pity us: if you should fall into diseased madness, or melancholy, though it is a sad disease, it would not damn you; for it is no sin. But when men have reason for trifles and none for their salvation, and are wise in nothing but unprofitable vanities, and cunning to cheat themselves out of all their hopes of heaven, and to go to hell with ease and honour; God bless us from such wit as this!

3. But I ask you further, What is there in God, in Christ, in heaven, or in a holy life, that should make a man mad to think of it? I beseech you, neighbour, consider what we are talking of. Is not <sup>a</sup> God better than your house, and land, and sports? Is he not a better friend to you than any you have in the world? And will it make you mad to think of your house, or land, or pleasures? Do not all men confess that we should love God above all? And if it make you not mad to love your friend, or your riches, or yourself, why should it make you mad to live in the love of God? Is not love, and the noblest love, the sweetest delight? And will delight, and the highest delight, distract you? Tell me, do you think that heaven is a desirable place, and better than this miserable world, or not? If you say 'No,' you bear witness against yourself; that you are unfit for heaven, who do not love it, or desire it; and God will deny you but that which you had no mind of. But if you say 'Yea,' then tell me why the hopes of everlasting, heavenly joys, and the forethoughts thereof, should make one mad? Alas! man, we have no other cordial against all our calamities in this world, but the hopes and forethoughts of the joys of heaven. What have I to keep me from being melancholy, or mad, but the promise and belief of endless glory? If God and heaven be not our best, what are we but beasts, or worse? And what do we live for in the world? And what have we, for one day, to keep up our hearts under all our crosses, but the comfortable forethought that we shall for ever be with the Lord, and all his holy ones? Take away this, and you will kill our comforts. Our hearts would sink and die within us. And do men use to go mad for fear of their felicity, and with delightful thoughts of the only good?

S. All this is true, if a man were sure of heaven: but when he must think of hell too, and his fears are greater than his hopes, the case is otherwise.

<sup>a</sup> Psalm iv.; xliii. 3; and lxxiii. 25, 26, 28; Phil. iii. 7, 8.

P. Now you say something. But I pray you consider, that it is one thing to think of hell despairingly, as those that have little or no hopes to escape it: this might make a man mad indeed; but this is not your case. But it is another thing to fear hell as that which you<sup>b</sup> may most certainly avoid, and withal attain eternal life, if you will but consent to the offers of that Saviour who will freely save you. No man shall be damned that is truly willing to be saved; to be saved, I say, from sin and hell.

S. I pray you tell me, then, what maketh the thoughts of the world to come so terrible to us? And what maketh so many that are troubled in conscience to be melancholy, or to live so sad a life?

P. I will tell you what. I have had to do with as many melancholy, conscientious persons as any one that I know of in England; and I have found that, 1. There is not one of many of them, but it is some<sup>c</sup> worldly cross which makes them melancholy; and then it turneth to matters of conscience afterwards, when they have awhile had the disease. 2. And for the most part it befalleth very few, but either weak-spirited, tender women, whose brains are so weak, and their fancies and passions so strong and violent that they can bear no trouble, nor serious thoughts, but their reason is presently disturbed and borne down; or else some men, that by natural distempers of body, either from their parents, or contracted by some disease, are specially inclined to it.

2. And when I have known it befall some few in their first repentance, it hath usually been some very heinous sinners, who have lived so debauchedly in drunkenness or whoredom, or committed perjury, or murder, that conscience did more terrify them than they were able to bear. But this was not from any harm that they apprehended in a godly life, but because they had been so ungodly. This was but the fruit of their former wickedness, and partly God's justice, that will not pardon heinous sinners till he hath made them perceive sin is evil, and that they must indeed be beholden to his mercy, and to Christ. But, usually, when God hath broken the hearts of such men by his terrors, he tenderly binds them up with comforts, and maketh those terrors very profitable to them as long as they live. O

<sup>b</sup> Isa. lv. 1—3, 6, 7; Matt. xi. 28; Rev. xxii. 17; Mark xvi. 10; John iii. 16, 18, 19.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

how precious is Christ to such ! How sweet are the promises of pardon and salvation ! How odious is sin to them all their lives after ! But if it should fall out, that such a wicked man, repenting, should never recover from his melancholy sadness, it is a thousand times better, and a more hopeful state, than he was in before, when he went on in sin with presumption and delight.

3. And there is another case too common ; like the case of some women that, in travail, are hurt by an unskilful midwife. Every poor, repenting sinner is not so happy as to fall into the hands of a wise, experienced counsellor to direct him : but some do distract men's minds about different opinions in religion, and talk to a poor sinner for this side, and against that side, or about matters that are past their understandings. And some do not clearly and fully open the nature of the covenant of grace, which giveth Christ and life to all true consenters ; nor seek sufficiently, by opening the riches of grace and glory, to win men's hearts or love to God ; but bend themselves much more to raise men's fears, and tell them more of what they deserve, and what they are in danger of, if they repent not, than of what they shall enjoy with God, through Christ, when they come home. The first must, in its time and place, be done ; but the <sup>d</sup> latter is the great work that must save the soul. For a man is not converted and sanctified indeed, by any change that is made by fear alone, till love come in, and win his heart, and repair his nature.

S. You have said so much as doth convince me that I must not, for fear of the trouble, cast away the thoughts of my soul and eternity ; but, truly, sir, I have thought of these things so little, that I am but puzzled and lost, and know not what to do. And, therefore, you must help to guide my thoughts, or I can do nothing with them.

P. You have now hinted yourself another cause that so many are puzzled about religion, and turn it to a melancholy life. When a sinner hath lived ignorantly, carelessly, and sinfully, all his days, and cometh at last, by the mercy of God, to see his misery, it cannot be expected that he should presently be acquainted with all those great mysterious things which he never did seriously mind before. And so is like a man that hath a way to go that he never went, and a book to learn that he never learned before. And all young scholars do find the easiest lessons hard, till they have time to be acquainted with them. They are

<sup>d</sup> Tit. iii. 3—5 ; Rom. v. 5, and viii. 28 ; 1 Pet. i. 8, 9 ; read Luke xv. ; John v. 42 ; 1 Cor. xvi. 22, and ii. 9 ; Eph. vi. 24 ; Jam. i. 12, and ii. 5.

like a man that was born and bred in a dungeon, where he had only candle-light; who, when he first cometh into the open world, and seeth the sun, is astonished at the change, but must have a time before (by all that light) he can be acquainted with all the things and persons which he never before saw. Long ignorance \* will not be cured in a day: and darkness naturally feedeth fears; but time and patience in the light will overcome them.

But to answer your desire, I will direct your thoughts: and I think that now the next thing you have to think on is to look into your heart, and look back upon your life, and come to a clear resolution of this question, whether you are yet a truly converted sinner, and are forgiven and reconciled to God, or not? And whether you are yet in the way to heaven or no? I pray you tell me now what you think of yourself. If you die this night in the case you are now in, do you think you shall be saved, or not?

S. God knows; I told you that I do not know, but I hope well, for no man must despair.

P. To despair of ever being converted and saved, is one thing that you must not do. And to know that a man is not yet converted, and to despair of being saved without conversion, is another thing; that is your duty, if you are yet unrenewed. But as for your hoping well, I must tell you that there is a hope of God's giving, and there is a hope of our own, and of the devil's making. And you must not think that God will make good the devil's word, nor our word, but only his own word. To a repenting believer, God promiseth forgiveness and salvation; and such a one must hope for it; and God will never disappoint his hopes. But to unbelievers, ungodly, impenitent persons, the devil and their own deceitful hearts only do promise forgiveness and salvation. And they that do promise it must perform it, if they can; for God will not. Do you think that God hath promised that all men should be saved, any where in his word?

S. No; I dare not say so.

P. Do you think, then, that if all men shall hope to be saved, that this would save them ever the more?

S. No; but yet there is some comfort in hoping well.

P. But how little a while will deceitful comfort last. Do

\* John iii. 4, 6—8; Heb. v. 11—14; Acts viii. 30, 31.

† 1 Cor. vi. 9, and iii. 18; Gal. vi. 7; Eph. v. 6; 1 John i. 8; Jam. i. 22, 26.

you not know that there are some men that God hath told us that he will not save? As Luke xiii. 3, 5, "Except ye repent ye shall all perish?" "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven?" (Matt. viii. 13.) "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die?" (Rom. viii. 13.) The text is plain, you cannot deny it. Tell me, then, if any one of these shall hope to be saved, in such a condition in which God saith, that no man shall be saved, should such a man do well to hope for the contrary? Is not this to hope that God's word is false? And should a man hope that God will lie? Or will God go contrary to his word?

S. But may we not hope that God will be better than his word? There is no harm in that.

P. That which you call better is not better, but worse. The king hath made laws for the hanging of murderers: if he should pardon them all, they would call it better to them; but the commonwealth would call it worse. For no man could have any security for his life; but every one that had a mind of his money, or that hated him, would kill him if he could. And where, then, were justice? What is the law made for, but to be the rule of the subject's life, and of the judge's sentence, and to tell men what they must expect? And if it be not fulfilled, it is vain and deceitful, and showeth that the law-maker either had not wit enough to make it well, or had not power enough to execute it. A benefactor or friend, indeed, may give more than he hath promised, if he see cause; but a<sup>s</sup> righteous governor must rule according to his laws, or else he deceiveth men by them, which is not to be imputed to God. At least, he will not<sup>b</sup> lie, and falsify his word.

S. But for all that, the king may pardon an offender.

P. That is, because that weak man can make no law so perfect, but on some occasions there will be need of a dispensation. But it is not so with God. And a righteous king will never pardon crimes, but in some rare, extraordinary case, which shall be no disparagement to his law, nor hurt to his subjects; which is no comfort to all the rest of the malefactors.

But I doubt you do not understand that God did at first make a perfect<sup>l</sup> law, which forbade all sin on pain of death: and man did break this law, and we all still break it from day

<sup>s</sup> Job viii. 3; Psalm lxxxix. 14; Heb. xii. 28, 29.

<sup>b</sup> Tit. i. 2; Heb. vi. 18; Rom. iil. 4; 1 John v. 10.

<sup>l</sup> Rom. iii. 21, &c., and v., throughout.

to day, by every sin ; and God, being merciful, hath given us a Saviour, and by him the forgiveness of all our sins. But how ? not absolutely ; but he pardoneth us all by an act of oblivion, a pardoning law : and this law maketh our faith and true repentance (or conversion) to be the condition of pardon. And in it God affirmeth and protesteth, that he will pardon and save<sup>k</sup> all that believe and are converted ; and that he will never pardon or save them that continue unconverted in their sin and unbelief. God hath already given out a pardon to all the world, if they will but take it thankfully on his terms, and cease their rebellion, and turn to him : and hath resolved, that they that continue to refuse this pardon and mercy shall be doubly punished, first for their common sins, and then for their base unthankfulness and contempt of mercy. And now bethink you whether it be not foolishness for any to say, ' I hope God will forgive me, and be better than his word ? ' He hath already forgiven you, if you repent and turn to him ; but if you will not, it is impudence for a man, at the same time, to refuse forgiveness and yet to hope for it ; to despise mercy, and say ' I hope for mercy.'

What if the king make an act of pardon to the Irish rebels, forgiving them all, on condition they will thankfully take his pardon, and lay down their rebellious arms, were it not impudency in them to continue in arms, and refuse these conditions, and yet say, ' We hope the king will pardon us ?'

There are two things that may fully resolve you that God will pardon and save no unconverted sinner: the first is, because that, in his pardoning law itself, (that is, the gospel,) he hath said and protested that he will not ; and it is impossible for God to lie. The second is, that the thing itself is incongruous and unfit for the wise, holy, and righteous God to do. For a pardoned person is reconciled to God, and hath communion with him. And what communion hath light with darkness, or God with the devil and his works ? It is blasphemy to say, that God can be actually reconciled to ungodly souls, and take them into his complacency and kingdom. Yea, what if I said, that it is a thing impossible, and a contradiction for a man to be forgiven and saved, that is unholy and unconverted ? If you knew what sin is, you would know that it is a self-punishment, and the sorest evil ; the sickness and misery of the soul : and to forgive a man is to deliver him from this misery ; and to save

<sup>k</sup> Mark xvi. 16 ; John iii. 1, 16, 18, 19 ; 1 Thess. ii. 7—10 ; Heb. ii. 3, 4 ; iv. 1, and xii. 27—29.

him, is to<sup>1</sup> save him from his sin. For it is, as it were, a spark of hell fire kindled in the soul, which is not saved till it be quenched. And what is heaven itself but the perfect light and love of God? And to say that a man is saved, that loveth not God above his sin, and is not holy, is to say that he is saved and not saved.

S. I understand these things better than I did; but I can hardly digest it, that you thus seem to drive men to despair.

P. You greatly mistake; I am driving you from despair. There is no hope of the salvation of a sinner that continueth unconverted; flatter not yourselves with foolish hopes of the devil's making; as sure as God's word is true, there is no hopes of it. Everlasting despair in hell is the portion of all that die unconverted and unsanctified. They will then cry out for ever, 'All our<sup>m</sup> hope is past and gone; we had once hope of mercy, but we refused it, and now there is no hope.' This thought, that there is no more hope, will tear the sinner's heart for ever. This is the state that I would keep you from, and do I not then seek to keep you from despair?

Suppose you met a man riding post towards York, and thinketh verily he is in the way to London, and tells you, 'I ride for life, and must be at London at night;' you tell him that he must turn back again, then, for he is going the quite contrary way, and the further he goeth, the further he hath to go back again; He answereth you, 'Alas! I hope I have not lost all this time and travel; I hope I may come this way to London.' Will not you tell him that his hopes will deceive him? there is no hope of coming to London that way, but he must needs turn back; and if he answer you, 'You would drive me to despair; I will hope well, and go on;' what would you say to this man? Would you not take him for a fool? and tell him, 'If you will not believe me, ask somebody else, and know better, before you go on any further.'

So say I to you, if you are out of the way to heaven, you must despair of ever coming thither,<sup>n</sup> till you turn; but this is not to despair of conversion and salvation, but despair of being saved in the devil's way, that you may be saved in God's way, and not despair for evermore. Changing false hopes for sound

<sup>1</sup> Matt. i. 21; Tit. iii. 3, 5.

<sup>m</sup> Job viii. 13, 14; xi. 20, and xxvii. 8; Prov. xi. 7, and xiv. 32; Isa. lviii. 10; 1 Pet. i. 3, 21, and iii. 15; 1 John iii. 3.

<sup>n</sup> Luke xiii. 3, 5.



hopes is not to cast away all hope. There is nothing more hindereth men from repenting and being saved, than hoping to be saved without true repentance. For who will ever<sup>o</sup> turn to God, that still hopeth to be saved in the worldly, ungodly way that he is in ? who will turn back again that hopeth he is right and safe already ?

Tell me, I pray you, must not every wise man have some ground and reason for his hope ? And should a man's soul and everlasting state be ventured upon unsound and uncertain hopes ?

S. No, if we can have better.

P. Tell me freely, then, what are the grounds and reasons of your hopes ? Heaven is not for all men. What have you to show that will truly prove your title to it ?

S. I ground my hope on the great mercy of God.

P. But God's mercy saveth none but by conversion ; devils nor<sup>p</sup> unconverted men are not saved by it. It is the refusing and abusing of mercy that condemneth men : the question is, whether this mercy will save you ?

S. I place my hope in Jesus Christ, who is my Saviour.

P. I say as before, Christ saveth not all men ; what hope have you that he will save you more than others ?

S. Is it not said, that he is the Saviour of all men, and that he is the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world ?

P. That is, because<sup>q</sup> saving is his office, for which he is all-sufficient, and by his sacrifice he hath pardoned all the world, on condition that they believe and turn to God, but till they believe and repent they are not actually pardoned. He may be the physioian of all the city or hospital, who undertaketh to cure all in the city or hospital that will trust him, and take his remedies ; and yet all may die that will not trust him, and be ruled by him.

S. But I do believe in Christ, and believers are forgiven.

P. If you truly believe, you have good reason for your hopes : but I am loth you should be mistaken in so great a business. I must first tell you, therefore, what true believing is : every true believer doth at once believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. And he believeth all God's word to be true, and he heartily consenteth that God be his only God, and that Christ be his only Saviour, and the Holy Ghost his Sancti-

<sup>o</sup> Jam. iii. 40 ; Ezek. xxxiii. 9, 11, 49 ; xviii. 21, 30, 32, and xiv. 6.

<sup>p</sup> Isa. xxvii. 11 ; 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, &c., and ii. 10, 12 ; Rom. i. 20, to the end.

<sup>q</sup> John iii. 16 ; 2 Cor. v. 19, 20.

fier, and he trusteth himself wholly to God alone, for happiness, and for justification, and sanctification, and salvation. Do you do this ?

S. I hope I do ; I believe in God, and trust him.

P. Let us a little consider all the parts of faith, and try whether you thus believe or not. 1. Do you truly believe that without regeneration, repentance, conversion, and holiness, none can be saved and see God ? (John iii. 3, 6 ; Luke xiii. 3, 5 ; Matt. xviii. 3 ; Heb. xii. 14.) And that if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (Rom. viii. 9.) If you do not, you believe not the word of God.

2. Do you take the<sup>r</sup> love of God and the heavenly glory to be your only happiness, and trust to nothing in this world, neither health, life, wealth, or pleasure, for your daily comfort, and greatest content.

3. Do you desire and trust that Christ will save you from all your sins, and will teach you all the will of God : and that he will sanctify you by the Holy Ghost, that you may live a<sup>r</sup> holy and heavenly life in the love of God ; and may forsake, not only lust, and wantonness, and gluttony, and drunkenness, and pride and ambition, and deceit and covetousness, but also mortify all fleshly desires, and destroy all your own will, which is against the will of God, and bring you up to the greatest holiness ?

S. You put me hard to it now. I know not what to say to this.

P. You may know whether you believe and trust in God and Christ, or not, if you will but consider these three things. 1. What you must believe and trust him for. 2. What word of his it is that you believe. 3. What are the effects which are always brought forth by a serious-faith.

And, I. You must trust in God for that which he hath promised to give, and you must take all together, or else it is not trusting God : as you trust a physician to cure you, and trust a schoolmaster to teach you, and trust a lawyer to counsel you in his way, and so you trust every man in his own undertaken work : so must you trust in God to be your only everlasting joy, and better to you than all the world, and to be the Law-giver and Ruler of your life : and you must trust<sup>t</sup> Christ to justify you, and save you from your sins, and you must trust

<sup>r</sup> Psalm lxxiii. 25 ; lxiii. 3, and iv. 6, 7.

<sup>o</sup> Rom. viii. 1, 6—8, 13 ; Heb. xi. 6 ; 2 Tim. ii. 4 ; 1 Thess. iv. 1 ; Isa. lvi. 4 ; Col. i. 10.

<sup>t</sup> Acts xxvi. 18 ; Tit. ii. 14.

the Holy Ghost to kill your sins, and to illuminate, sanctify, and quicken you, and, by degrees, to make you perfectly holy : for these are the things that God is to be trusted for. But, if any should trust God to save them from hell and not from sin, or from the guilt of sin, and not from the power of it ; or to let them keep their fleshly lusts while they live, and then to give them heaven at death, this is not to trust God, but to abuse him, not to trust his mercy, but to refuse it. How doth he trust in Christ to save him, that is not willing to be saved by him ? And he that will not be saved from his sin, will not be saved by Christ. And how can he trust the Holy Ghost to sanctify him, who is not willing to be sanctified, but thinketh a holy life to be an intolerable toil and misery ?

II. To believe God is to believe his word. And what word of God have you to believe, but that he will save converted believers, and condemn all ungodly unbelievers ? If now you will believe that God will save any unconverted, ungodly sinners, this is, to believe the devil and yourselves, and not God ; for God never said any such word in all the Bible, but protesteth the contrary. And what a self-deceit is it to hope to be saved for believing a lie, and fathering it upon God ! And what blasphemy is it to call it a believing God, when you believe the devil that contradicteth him !

III. Believing and trusting will be seen in their effects. Is it possible for a man truly to believe that he shall have a life of joys in heaven for ever, if he will turn from the flesh and the world to God, and value and seek heaven more than earth, and yet not do it, but be a carnal worldling still ? Is it possible truly to believe that the wicked shall be turned into hell, (Psalm ix. 17,) and yet to go on still in wickedness ?

If you were a beggar or a slave in England, and the king should promise you a kingdom in the Indies, if you will but trust yourself in the ship with his own son, who undertaketh to bring you thither, I pray you tell me now, what is the meaning of this trusting his son, and how may it appear whether you trust the king's promise and his son's conduct, or not ? If you trust him, you will pack up and be gone ; you will leave your own country, and all that is in it, and on ship-board you will go, and venture<sup>u</sup> all that you have in the voyage, in hope of the kingdom which is promised you. But if you fear that the king deceiveth you, or that his son wanteth either skill, or

<sup>u</sup> Luke xi. 22, 23, and xiv. 26, 33 ; Matt. xiii. 45, 46.

will, or power, to bring you to the promised place, and that the ship is unsafe, or the waves and tempests like to drown you, then you will stay at home, and will not venture.

So when God offereth you a heavenly kingdom, if so be you will, in heart, forsake the world, and all its pomp and pleasures, and all the sinful desires of the flesh. If now you trust this promise of God, you will forsake all and follow a crucified Saviour as a cross-bearer; you will take shipping with Christ and his servants, and let go all in hope of heaven. But if you do not forsake all (in heart) and follow him, resolving to take heaven instead of all, you do not trust him, whatever you may pretend.

S. I cannot deny but what you say is the plain truth.

P. Suppose that you were sick, and only one physician could cure you, and he offereth to do it freely if you trust him, that is, will trust your life to his skill and care: and some give out that he is but a deceiver, and not to be trusted, and others tell you that he never failed any that he undertook. If you trust him now, you will commit yourself wholly to his care, and follow his counsel, and take his medicines, and forsake all others. But if you distrust him you will neglect him. And if any should say, 'I trust this physician with my life,' and yet stay at home, and never come near him, nor take any of his counsel, or, at least, none of his medicines, would you not count him mad that looked to be cured by such a trust?

S. I confess this helpeth me better to understand what trusting in God, and believing in Christ, is. I doubt but many\* say they trust him, that keep their sins, and hold fast the world, and never dreamt of forsaking all for the hopes of heaven.

But I thought, sir, that this command of forsaking all, and taking up our cross, had been spoken only to such as lived in times of persecution, when they must deny Christ or die, and not to us that live where Christianity is professed. God forbid that none should be saved but martyrs.

P. But do you not find, 1. That it is the very covenant and common law of Christ, imposed on all that will be saved, that they deny themselves, and forsake all, and take up the cross, and follow him, or else they cannot be his disciples? (Matt. x. 37, &c.; Luke xiv. 24, to the end, and xviii. 21, 22, &c.) 2. And doth not every one that is baptised covenant and vow to forsake the world, the flesh, and the devil; and to take God

\* Tit. i. 16.

for their only God, which is their all? For if he be not enough for them, and taken as their portion, and loved above the world, he is not taken for their God. But it is well that you confess that you<sup>v</sup> must forsake life and all for Christ rather than deny him: for if a man must do this actually in persecution, then he must do it before, in affection and resolution. Can you die for Christ, then, unless your heart be prepared for it now? Can you, then, leave all this world for God and heaven, unless you beforehand love God and heaven better than all the world, and resolve to forsake it when you are called to do it?

S. No man is like to do that which his heart is not disposed to before, and which he is not purposed to do.

P. Why then you see the case is plain, that every one that will be Christ's disciple must forsake the world in heart and resolution, and be a martyr in true preparation and disposition, though no one must cast away his estate or life, nor be a martyr, by suffering, till God call him to it. "He that loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John ii. 15.)

By this time you may perceive, if you are willing, whether your faith in Christ, and trust in God, have been true or false: and now tell me what else you have to prove that you are a justified Christian, and that your hope of salvation is built on God?

S. My next proof is, that I repent of my sins; and God hath promised to forgive them that repent.

P. Repentance is a good evidence, as well as faith. But here, also, you must take heed of that which is counterfeit; and therefore you must be sure to understand well what true repentance is.

S. Repentance is to be sorry for my sins when I have committed them, and to wish I had never done them.

P. If you know repentance no better than so, you may be undone by the mistake. True repentance is the same with true conversion;<sup>z</sup> and it is such a settled change of the mind, will, and life, from fleshly, worldly, and ungodly, to spiritual, heavenly, and holy, as maketh us hate all the sin which we loved, and heartily love a holy life, and all those duties to God and man which before our hearts were set against. And this change is so firmly rooted in us, as that it is become as a new nature to us; so that all the same temptations which before prevailed

<sup>v</sup> Rom. viii. 16—18; 2 Tim. ii. 12; Matt. x. 33, and xvi. 24—26; Luke ii. 9.  
<sup>z</sup> Matt. xviii. 3; 1 Cor. vi. 11; 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11; Tit. iii. 3, 5.

with us, would not draw us to the same sins again, nor turn us from a holy life, if we were exposed to them as we were.

S. There is a great deal in this. I pray you open it to me more fully in the particulars.

P. By this you may see what goeth to make up true repentance, and how many sorts of repentance are counterfeit.

1. True repentance is a change of the whole soul,<sup>a</sup> the judgment, the will, and the life, and not of any one of these alone. It is a counterfeit repentance which changeth only a man's opinion, and not his heart and his conversation; and it is counterfeit repentance when men pretend that their wills are changed, and they are willing to live a godly life, when they do it not, and their lives are not changed.

2. True repentance doth not only turn a man's heart and life from this or that particular sin, but from a fleshly, worldly, ungodly state;<sup>b</sup> so that he that before did seek, above all, to fulfil the desires of his flesh, and to prosper in the world, doth now strive as hard to kill those desires as he did to satisfy them, and now taketh the world for vanity and vexation, and turneth it out of his heart. It is counterfeit repentance which reformeth only some open, shameful sin, as drunkenness, prodigality, fornication, deceiving, or the like, and still keepeth up a worldly mind, and the pleasing of the flesh in a cleaner way. No one sin is rightly killed, till the love of every sin be killed.

3. True repentance is a turning to God, and setting of our hearts and hopes on heaven;<sup>c</sup> so that we now love holiness, and seek God's kingdom above this world. It is counterfeit repentance, or mere melancholy, when men, by affliction, or conviction, cry out of the vanity of this world, and set not their hearts upon a better, and seek not after the heavenly felicity.

4. True repentance is a settled and an effectual change. It maketh a man<sup>d</sup> love that which is good, as if it were now natural to him, and not only to do some good for fear, which he had rather leave undone; nor only to forbear some sins for fear, which he had rather he might keep: and therefore the very heart and love being changed, temptations, even the same that before prevailed, would not now prevail again, if he were under them. It is but a counterfeit repentance, when men are sorry for sinning, but amend not, or are sorry to-day and sin again to-

<sup>a</sup> 2 Cor. v. 17; Acts xxvi. 18; Rom. viii. 30.

<sup>b</sup> John iii. 6; 1 John ii. 15; Rom. viii. 1, 8, 13, and xiii. 12—14.

<sup>c</sup> Phil. iii. 18—20; Col. iii. 1, 3—5; Matt. vi. 21, 33.

<sup>d</sup> Psalm i. 2, 3; xix. 7—9, cxix., &c.

morrow; and that by such gross and wilful sin, which they might forsake, if they were truly willing.\* By this time, then, you may try whether you have repented indeed, as you supposed.

S. But (Luke xvii. 4) Christ bids us forgive those that seven times in a day trespass, and seven times in a day return and say they repent: and will not God then do so?

P. 1. Christ speaketh of true repentance, as far as we can judge, and not of saying, 'I repent,' when it is an apparent lie, or mockery. 2. And he speaketh of such trespasses, the oft committing of which is consistent with true repentance: for instance, it is possible that a man may seven times a-day think a vain thought, speak a vain word, or, if he pray seven times a-day, he may have, every time, some coldness or imperfections in his prayers; and such like infirmities oft returning, may stand with true repentance, because the sinner would fain overcome them if he could. And so, if a man often wrong you through infirmity, and oft repent, you must forgive him. But, tell me truly, if one of your own servants or children should, seven times a day, or but once a week, or once a month, spit in your face, and beat and buffet you, or wound you, and set your house on fire, and as oft come and say, 'I repent of it,' would you take this for true repentance, or think that this is it that Christ here meant? Or, if your servant should every night come to you and say, 'Master, I have done no work to-day, but I repent; I wish I had done it;' and so hold on from day to day, will you take this for repentance? Do you think it possible for an ungodly, worldly, fleshly man, to repent truly of such a life to-day, and turn to it again to-morrow, and so on? It cannot be. A man may repent of an angry look, or a vain word, to-day, and, through infirmity, commit the same to-morrow; but a man cannot repent of an ungodly, sensual life, and turn to it again to-morrow.

I do not think that there is one wicked man of many, but when he hath been guilty of fornication, drunkenness, or any such sin of sensual pleasure, doth repent of it when the pleasure is gone, and wisheth that he had not done it, when yet he goeth on, and is a lover of such beastly pleasure more than of God; for there needeth no saving grace to such a kind of repentance; sense and experience may serve the turn. For when the pleasure of the sin is gone, it is nothing: and therefore is no matter for the sinner's love, (unless it be the fanciful remembrance

\* Matt. vii. 20—23; 2 Tim. li. 19.

of it, which is another thing.) But it is the future pleasure which is still desired. When the drunkard is sick, and findeth the next day the sweetness all gone, and nothing left but shame, or poverty, or a wounded conscience, no thanks to him to say, 'I am sorry, and wish I had been sober : ' but still he loveth the sin, and will not leave it, and therefore hath no true change of heart and life, which is the true repentance. And now consider well what I have said, and judge yourself whether you have ever truly repented of a worldly, a fleshly, and an unholy heart and life.

S. You put me so hard to it that I know not what to say. I know not well what to think of myself: and therefore, sir, as you have examined my case, I shall entreat you to help me to pass a right judgment of it, for you are wiser in these things than I. And though the patient feel the pains, yet the physician can better judge of the cause, and nature, and danger of the disease.

P. You say well: but then the patient must tell what he feeleth, and you must answer me these few questions.

1. Hath your soul and everlasting state had your more deep and<sup>f</sup> serious thoughts and regard than your body and your worldly welfare?

S. I cannot say so, though I have often thought of it.

P. 2. Do you verily believe that your sins are so odious, as that if God should condemn you to hell,<sup>g</sup> he should do worse by you than you deserve?

S. I know you would not have me lie. I have been taught, indeed, that so it is; but my heart never perceived my sins to be so great as to deserve hell. I should think it unjust to be so used as I would not use my greatest enemy.

P. 3. Have you not only heard, but believed, and perceived that you have as much need of Christ to be your Saviour, as a condemned malefactor hath of a pardon; and is Christ more precious<sup>h</sup> to you than all the riches of the world, his ransom and mediation being your hope, and his grace your earnest desire?

S. I know that we cannot be saved without Christ: but I cannot say that I have so much desired him.

P. 4. Have you perceived at the heart, that the love and

<sup>f</sup> Matt. vi. 23—25.

<sup>g</sup> Rom. vi. 23; iii. 23; vii. 24, and viii. 1; Eph. ii. 3; 1 Thess. i. 10.

<sup>h</sup> Phil. iii. 7—9; 1 Pet. ii. 4, 6, 7.



favour of God is far <sup>l</sup> better than all the treasures and pleasures of this world? And do you verily believe that all the blessed shall see his glory in heaven, and perfectly love, and praise, and serve him, and be filled with perfect joy for ever, in this blessed sight and love of God? And do you set more by the hope of this heavenly glory than by your life and all this world? And do you prefer heaven before earth, in your esteem, your desire, and heartiest labour and diligence to make it sure?

S. I would I could say so: I doubt there be but few that reach so high as that.

P. 5. Have you truly believed, that all <sup>k</sup> that will come to heaven must be a regenerate, sanctified people, in mind, and will, and life; and that this must be done by the Holy Ghost? And have you earnestly desired that he would sanctify you thoroughly, and kill all your sins, and make you fervently in love with God, and all that is good, and fully obedient to his will? And have you given up yourself to Jesus Christ, in a well-considered, resolved covenant; consenting to be taught and governed by him, and willing to imitate him, and to receive his Spirit?

S. I cannot say so; though I desire to amend.

P. 6. Do you feel the <sup>l</sup> evil and odiousness of a worldly, carnal, unrenewed heart, and of an unholy life? Yea, of your own want of faith and love to God, as well as of outward, shameful sins? And are these sins of heart and practice the greatest trouble and burden to you in the world?

S. I would it were so; but I do not find it so.

P. 7. Can you truly say that you <sup>m</sup> live not wilfully in any known gross sin, and that you have no sin, no, not the least known infirmity, which you had not rather leave than keep? And that you had rather be perfectly holy (in perfect knowledge, love, and obedience) than to have all the riches, and pleasures, and honours of this world?

S. I should dissemble if I should say so.

P. 8. Can you truly say, that when a temptation cometh to your most beloved sin, God's authority, which forbiddeth it, is

<sup>l</sup> Matt. vi. 20, 21, and vi. 33; Col. iii. 1, 3, 4, &c.; Psalm lxxvii. 25, and lxxiii. 3; Phil. iii. 20, 21; John vi. 27; 2 Pet. i. 10, and iii. 11.

<sup>k</sup> 2 Cor. v. 19, 20; Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, and xi. 28, 29; Rom. viii. 9; Gal. v. 17, 21; Acts iii. 22, and vii. 37; Luke xix. 27; Heb. xii. 14.

<sup>l</sup> Rom. vii. 14, 24; Ezek. vi. 9; xx. 43, and xxxvi. 31.

<sup>m</sup> 1 John iii. 4, 8, 9; Mal. vii. 21; Psalm v. 5; Rom. vii. 17, 24; Luke xiv. 26.

more <sup>a</sup> powerful to keep you from it than the temptation and your lust to draw you to it ?

S. I would it were : I should then sin less.

P. 9. Are you truly willing to <sup>o</sup> wait on God to obtain his grace, in the constant use of hearing, prayer, meditation, and the company and counsel of the godly ; even in the strictest means which God appointeth you to use for your salvation ?

S. I think they are happy that can do so ; but I cannot.

P. 10. Can you truly say that you are at a <sup>p</sup> point with all this world, resolving to let go estate, honour, liberty, and life, rather than let go your faith and obedience ; or, by wilful sin, to turn from God ?

S. I know I should do so ; but I am not come to that.

P. In a word : if you were now to be <sup>q</sup> baptised first, and understood what you did, would you take God for your only God and Father, and Christ for your only Saviour, and the Holy Ghost for your Sanctifier ; to save you from lust, and sin, and hell, and to bring you to perfect holiness and glory ; forsaking the world, the flesh, and the devil, and totally giving up yourself to God : and this by a solemn, sacred vow ; which, if you keep not, you are lost for ever ? Would you, thus considerately, be baptised, if it were to do again ?

S. I should promise, and be baptised : but whether I should consent to all this heartily, I doubt.

P. By all these answers set together, you have enabled me how to judge of your condition. If all this be so as you have answered, I must needs tell you, that I think you are yet unconverted and unjustified, and under the guilt and power of your sins, even in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and that if you should die as you are, without conversion, you are lost for ever : you must be made a new creature, or you are undone. I know this judgment may possibly seem harsh, and be displeasing to you, but it is foolish to flatter our friends or ourselves, when we stand so near the world of light.

But withal I tell you, 1. That your case is not remediless, and that you may be saved from it whenever you are truly willing. 2. And that you are not so far from grace and recovery, as many hardened sinners are, for I perceive that you deal

<sup>a</sup> Gen. xxxix. 9 ; Rom. xli. 21 ; 2 Pet. ii. 19, 20 ; 1 John v. 4, 5 ; Rev. ii. 7, 11, &c.

<sup>o</sup> Psalm i. 1, 2 ; Matt. vii. 13 ; Prov. ii. 1—4 ; Luke x. 42.

<sup>p</sup> Luke xiv. 26, 33, and xviii. 22, 23 ; Matt. x. 38, 39.

<sup>q</sup> Matt. xxviii. 18—20 ; Mark xvi. 16 ; Luke xiv. 29, 30.

openly, and are not so desperately set against conviction and conversion as too many are.

S. I thank you for dealing plainly with me: but what makes you judge so hardly of my case?

P. Out of your own mouth I pass my judgment; for you confess that it is not yet with you as it is with all that have the Spirit of Christ. And if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (Rom. viii. 9.)

And I will here take the boldness to add some observations of my own, which have long made me fear that yet you have not the Spirit of Christ, nor true repentance unto life. For, 1. I have never perceived that you did seriously mind the case of your soul. One might be often in your company, and hear nothing but of common, worldly things, (which may be talked of in due time and measure,) not a word of heaven, nor that savoured of any care of your salvation. And sure one cannot truly believe, and mind, and regard so great a matter as life everlasting, and never show it, by any serious inquiries, or<sup>r</sup> discourse.

2. And I have observed that you were very indifferent for your company,<sup>u</sup> and were more with ignorant, worldly men, or merry sensualists, than with those that set their hearts on heaven, and might have helped you thitherward, by their counsel and example.

3. And I never heard that you<sup>t</sup> set up the worship of God in your family. You seldom prayed with them at all, unless now and then that you said over hastily a few cold words, without any fervency. You never<sup>u</sup> instructed or catechised them, nor took care of the souls of children or servants, but only used them like your beasts, to eat and drink, and do your work. And you are often from the church assemblies, and seem not much moved with what you hear: and neither neighbours or your family hear a word of it from you, when you are once out of the church.

4. And you can now and then drop a petty oath, and curse when you are angry. And you spend the Lord's day almost all in common talk and business, except just while you are at church. And though I never took you for a drunkard, nor whore-monger, nor heard you scorn or rail at godliness, you can sit by them that do it, and easily bear it, as if it were but a small matter. And I heard of one that you once overreached by an

<sup>r</sup> Psalm xxxvii. 30—32.

<sup>t</sup> John xxiv. 15.

<sup>u</sup> Psalm i. 1, 2, and xv. 4.

<sup>v</sup> Deut. vi. 7, 8, and xi.

unconscionable bargain, but you never made him any restitution. And I perceive that you are all for yourself, though you are a quiet and good neighbour. You speak best of those that do you any good, be they what they will in other respects: and you have always an ill word for those that you are fallen out with, and that you think have wronged you, or that think ill or meanly of you, let them be never so honest in all other respects. In a word, the love of God, and a heavenly mind, is a thing that will, in some measure, show itself, by preferring God and heaven still before all: and I could never perceive any such thing by you, which made me fear your case was as bad as you now confess it.

I do not name these things as if each one of them by itself were a certain sign of an ungodly person. How far an honest-minded man may be carried in a passion to a curse, or railing speech, or an oath, or, through disability, may omit any family duty, or, through a wrong opinion of it, may neglect the Lord's day, I am not now determining. But sure I am, that God saveth none but those that love, honour, and obey him above all others, and make him their trust, and hope, and happiness; and that Christ saveth none but those that value him as their Saviour, and give up themselves to be taught and ruled by him, and sanctified by his Spirit; and that heaven is a place for no carnal worldling, that loveth the world above it, and seeketh this world before it, and that mindeth most the things of the flesh, and had rather<sup>\*</sup> satisfy than mortify his sinful lusts and will. And as far as I could perceive by your conversation, this is your case, though you are not so grossly wicked and unconscionable as the debauched sort.

S. I confess I never made the saving of my soul so much of my care, and so serious a business as you talk of; nor hath my heart been so sensible of the need that I have of Christ, or of the greatness of God's love and mercy to sinners in our redemption; nor have I had such believing and serious thoughts of the life to come, as to make it seem more desirable to me than this world; nor can I say, and not lie, that I loved God better than my money, and estate, and fleshly pleasure: nor that I ever made so great a matter of sinning as to avoid it at the rate of any great suffering or loss; or that ever I was very desirous to lead a holy and a heavenly life; nor that I had any great delight in the thoughts or practice of such things, much less that ever

<sup>\*</sup> John viii. 34.

I made the pleasing of God, and the obtaining of perfect and everlasting holiness and happiness with him in heaven, to be the chief care, and end, and labour of my life. But yet I thought that all being sinners, and God being merciful, I might be saved if I believed in Christ, and put my trust in him alone. But now you have made me better to understand what it is to believe and trust in Christ, I perceive that I did not indeed believe and trust in him when I thought I had.

P. I pray you tell me : do you not think there are such sins as presumption, carnal security, false believing, and false hope, whereby the devil undoeth souls ?

S. Yes ; I have heard preachers often say so.

P. What do you think presumption is ?

S. Presuming or thinking that God doth accept us,<sup>r</sup> and we are in a state of grace, when it is not so.

P. What do you think carnal security is ?

S. To be<sup>s</sup> careless about the state of our souls, when our danger calleth for our greatest care.

P. What is false believing ?

S. To believe ourselves, or <sup>a</sup> bad men, or the devil, against God, or instead of God ; or to believe that God hath promised that which he hath not promised ; or to trust that Christ will give heaven to such as he hath told us shall not have it.

P. And what is false hope ?

S. To hope for heaven or mercy<sup>b</sup> without any such ground, upon terms that God never promised to give it on, or hath plainly said, he will not give it.

P. You have answered very well and truly. And do you not think that all these have been your sins ?

S. I am now afraid so : but I am loth to think that it is so bad with me, and therefore I would fain hope still that it is better. But if it should be so, I pray you tell me, what would you yet advise me to do ?

P. God knoweth, I have no desire to trouble you, nor to put you into any needless fears, much less to drive you into despair ; nor would I have you conclude that your state is bad, upon my word alone : but I will here cite you some texts of Scripture, by which you may certainly judge yourself, and I will entreat you, when you come home, to bestow a few hours in secret, as in God's presence, in a true and impartial examination of yourself

<sup>r</sup> John viii. 39, 41, 44, and ix. 40.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. xxiv. 23, 26 ; 1 John iv. 1.

<sup>s</sup> Matt. xxiv. 39 ; 1 Thess. v. 3.

<sup>b</sup> Prov. xi. 7.

by them, and tell me when I next see you how you find the case yourself.

S. But if I do find it bad, I pray you tell me now what I must do to be pardoned and saved ?

P. I will now only tell you these generals. 1. That you must well consider how bad and sad an unconverted man's condition is, that you may not delay to seek for mercy, and to come out of such a miserable state. 2. That yet you need not despair or be discouraged, for Christ is a sufficient Saviour and remedy.

And for the first, believe it, till you repent and are converted, you are void of the holy image of God, and have the image of the devil in ignorance, unbelief, and averseness or enmity to God and holiness, in pride, sensuality, worldliness, disobedience, and carnal selfishness. Your heart is against the holy laws and ways of God : you have a fleshly will and concupiscence of your own, which is your idol, and the great rebel against God, which will still be striving against his will, and will draw you to be still pleasing it, though it displease God. You will be a slave to the devil, by your slavery to this fleshly mind and appetite ; and you will spend your little time in the world, in pleasing that<sup>c</sup> flesh, if God convert you not. You will never truly love God and heaven, nor make him your end, nor take him for your God, and so you will live in enmity and rebellion against him : you are yet unreconciled, unpardoned, unjustified, unsanctified : all your sins that ever you committed are yet upon you in their guilt. And, in a word, (pardon my plain dealing,) if you die as you are, you will be certainly damned ; and as you have departed from God's grace, he will judge you to depart for ever from his glory also. And it will go much the worse with you in hell, because that you might have had the grace of a Redeemer, and you refused Christ, and resisted his Spirit, and neglected his great salvation. So that to deal freely with you, I would not be in your case one day for all the riches in the world, for you have no assurance of your life a minute, and you are certain it cannot be long, and you are still in the power of that God whom you offend : and if you thus die before a true and sound conversion, you are lost for ever, and all your time, your mercies, your comforts, and your hopes, are gone for ever, past all remedy. This is as sure the state of every unregenerate, unholy, impenitent sinner, as the<sup>d</sup> word of God is true. And,

<sup>c</sup> Gal. v. 21, 22 ; Rom. viii. 5, 6, 8, 9 ; Eph. ii. 1—3, &c. ; Mark iv. 12.

<sup>d</sup> John lii. 3, 5 ; Heb. xii. 14.

therefore, as you love yourself, and as ever you care what becomes of your soul, when it must shortly leave your body, go presently try, and truly try, whether you are a regenerate, holy person or not?

S. Alas! sir, I know not how to do it, for I have left my soul hitherto carelessly to a venture, thinking that this had been trusting Christ with it, and now I am unskilful in such matters, and know not how to examine myself. Therefore, I pray you give me your directions.

P. With all my heart, if you will but promise me to do your best. Will you set yourself some time apart for the business, and do it as a man would cast up an account with your most serious thoughts? And will you examine yourself as you would do another man, with an unfeigned willingness to know the truth, be it better or be it worse?

S. Alas! what good will it do me to flatter and deceive myself, when God knoweth all, and will not be deceived? I desire to know what case I am in, and that I may know what course to take hereafter?

P. Indeed, till you know that, you know not well whether comfort or sorrow best become you, nor whether the promises or threatenings should be first applied by you, nor how well to use any text you read, or sermon you hear. And methinks that a mere uncertainty, what shall become of you when you die, and whether you shall be in heaven or hell for ever, should mar your mirth, and make you sleep with little quietness, till at least you had done your best to make your calling and election sure, and get some good, well-grounded hopes.

I will put you to no longer work than is necessary. 1. Take the Scriptures, especially these texts here transcribed, and set them before you, and well consider them as the word of God. 2. Fall down on your knees, and earnestly beg God's help and mercy to convince you, and show you the truth of your condition. 3. Look back upon all your life, and look into the inwards of your soul, and let conscience compare your heart and life with the word of God, and urge it to speak plainly, and to judge you truly as you are. 4. Do not only try and judge yourself by some few actions which have been extraordinary with you; but by the main design, and scope, and tenor of your heart and life; for there is some good in the worst of men, and some evil in the best: and if you will judge of a good man by his worst actions, or of a bad man by his best, you will be unright-

eous and misjudge them. Simon Magus, when he was professing his faith at his baptism, seemed better than Simon Peter when he was denying Christ. And judge not your heart by some good thoughts, or some bad thoughts, which have been rare; but judge it by that which hath had your chief esteem, your chief love, or choice, and been the main design which you have driven on, and had your chiefest care and diligence in seeking it. Be sure find out what it is, whether God or the flesh, that hath been uppermost, that hath had your heart and life, and been that to which the other hath stooped, and subserved.

These are all the directions that I will trouble you with, saving that I would have you, 5. To follow on the search till you know the truth; and what you cannot do at once, come to it again, till you are resolved. And come and tell me how you have found the case to stand with you, and the Lord assist you.

The texts which I set before you are these.

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit.” (John iii. 3, 5, 6.)

“God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.—He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already.—And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” (John iii. 16, 18—21.)

“Go and teach (or disciple) all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you.” (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. So Mark xvi. 16.)

“Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. xviii. 3.)

“To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among the sanctified, by faith that is in me.” (Acts xxvi. 18.)

“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” (Luke xiii. 3, 5.)



“There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.—For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then, they that are in the flesh, cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. (13, &c.) For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if by the Spirit, ye mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live: for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God.—Ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness to (or with) our spirit, that we are the children of God.” (Rom. viii. 1, 2, &c.)

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.—They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law; and they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts thereof.” (Gal. v. 19, &c.) “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.” (Gal. vi. 14.)

“Now if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.” (2 Cor. v. 17.) “Know ye not the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” (1 Cor. vi. 9—11; so Ephes. v. 3—11.)

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.” (Heb. xii. 14.)

“For the grace of God, which bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and

worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." (Tit. ii. 11—14.)

"Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (John ii. 15.)

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Luke xvi. 13.)

"Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world—And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith." (1 John v. 4, 5.)

"The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth who are his. And, Let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. ii. 19.)

"By this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil. Whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death." (1 John iii. 10, 14.)

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful: but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night." (Psalm i. 1, 2.)

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts or wills thereof." (Rom. xiii. 13, 14.)

"He shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sin." (Matt. i. 21.)

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, (that is, love them not so much less than me, that he can cast them by, as we do things hated, when they stand against me,) he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.—Whosoever he be of you that biddeth not farewell to, or forsaketh, all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke xiv. 26, 33.)

“ Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.” (Rev. iii. 12.)

“ He that overcometh shall inherit all things ; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone ; which is the second death.” (Rev. xxi. 7, 8.)

“ There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which God the Righteous Judge will give me, and to all them that love his appearing.” (2 Tim. iv. 8 ; read Matt. xxv.)

## THE SECOND DAY'S CONFERENCE.

### *Of the Conversion of a Sinner, what it is.*

Speakers.—Paul, a teacher ; and Saul, a learner.

PAUL. Well, neighbour, have you examined yourself by the word of God, since I saw you, as I directed you ?

SAUL. I have done what I can in it.

P. And what do you think now of your case, upon trial ?

S. I think it is much worse than I had hoped it was, and as bad as you feared. When I first read the promises to all that believe in Christ, I was ready again to hope that I was safe ; but when I read further, I found that it was as you had told me ; and that I had none of Christ's Spirit, and therefore am none of his ; and that I am not a penitent convert, and am not in a state of life. But I now beseech you, sir, upon my knees, as you pity a poor sinner, tell me<sup>e</sup> what I must do to be saved.

P. Are you willing and resolved to do it if I tell it you, and prove it to you fully by the word of God ?

S. By the grace of God I am resolved to do it, be it what it will, for I know it cannot be so bad as sin and hell.

P. You say well. I will first tell you this again in the general, 1. That your case is<sup>f</sup> not remediless, but a full and sufficient salvation is purchased, and tendered in the gospel to you as well as to any others.

2. That Christ and his grace is this remedy ; and<sup>g</sup> that God

<sup>e</sup> Acts ii. 37, and xvi. 30.

<sup>f</sup> Matt. xi. 28.

<sup>g</sup> 1 John v. 11, 12.