

## SERIOUS AND WEIGHTY QUESTIONS CLEARLY AND SATISFACTORILY ANSWERED.

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THE first question or case is this:—

*1st Quest. What are the special remedies, means, or helps against cherishing or keeping up of any special or peculiar sin, either in heart or life, against the Lord, or against the light and conviction of a man's own conscience?*

Before I come to the resolution of this question, I shall premise a few things that may clear my way.

1. First, *When men's hearts are sincere with God*; when they don't indulge, cherish, or keep up any known transgression in their hearts or lives against the Lord, they may on very good grounds plead an interest in God, in Christ, and in the covenant of grace, though their corruptions prevail against them, and too frequently worst them and lead them captive, as is most evident in these special scriptures, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5; Ps. lxxv. 3; Rom. vii. 23, 25; Isa. lxiii. 16, 17, 19; Jer. xiv. 7-9; Hosea xiv. 1-4, 8.

But now, when any man's heart doth condemn him for dealing deceitfully and guilefully with God in this or that or the other particular, or for connivings or winking at any known transgression that is kept up, either in his heart or life against the Lord, and against the light of his own conscience, which he will not let go, nor in good earnest use the means whereby it should be subdued and mortified; it is not to be expected that such a person can come to any clearness or satisfaction about their interest in Christ and the covenant of grace and their right to the great things of that other world. When a person will dally with sin, and will be playing with snares and baits, and allow a secret liberty in his heart to sin, conniving at many workings of it, and not setting upon mortification with earnest endeavours; though they are convinced, yet they are not persuaded to arise with all their might against the Lord's enemies, but do his work negligently, which is an accursed thing; and for this, God casts such a person into sore straits, and lets him wander in the dark, without any sight, sense, or assurance of their gracious estate or interest in Christ, &c. The Israelites should perfectly have rooted out the Canaanites, but because they did it but by halves, and did not engage all their power and

strength against them, therefore God left them to be as 'thorns in their eyes, and as goads in their sides.' So when men have taken Christ's press-money and are engaged to fight with all their might against those rebels that war against him in their hearts, ways, and walkings, and to pursue the victory to the utmost, till their spiritual enemies lie dead at their feet, and yet they do but trifle and make slender opposition against their sins; this provokes God to stand afar off, and to hide his reconciled face from them.

It is true, when men are really in Christ, they ought not to question their state in him, but yet a guilty conscience will be clamorous and full of objections, and God will not speak peace unto it till it be humbled at his foot. God will make his dearest children know that it is a bitter thing to be bold with sin. Now, before I lay down the remedies, give me leave to shew you what it is to indulge sin, or when a man may be said to indulge or cherish, or keep up any known transgression in his soul against the Lord. Now, for a clear understanding of me in this particular, take me thus:—

[1.] First, *To indulge sin or to cherish it, it is to make daily provision for it*, Rom. xiii. 14. It is to give the breast to it, and to feed it and nourish it, as fond parents do feed and humour the sick child, the darling child; it must have what it will, and do what it will, it must not be crossed. Now, when men ordinarily, habitually, commonly, are studious and laborious to make provision for sin, then sin is indulged by them. But,

[2.] Secondly, *When sin is commonly, habitually, sweet and pleasant to the soul*, when a man takes a daily pleasure and delight in sin, then sin is indulged. 2 Thes. ii. 12 you read of them that had 'pleasure in unrighteousness;' Isa. lxvi. 3, 'And their soul delighteth in their abominations;' Prov. ii. 14, 'Who rejoice to do evil,' &c.

[3.] Thirdly, *When men commonly, habitually, side with sin, and take up arms in the defence of sin*, and in defiance of the commands of God, the motions of the Spirit, the checks of conscience, and the reproofs of others, then sin is indulged. But,

[4.] Fourthly, *When men ordinarily, habitually, do yield a quiet, free, willing, and total subjection to the authority and commands of sin*, then sin is indulged. That man that is wholly addicted and devoted to the service of sin, that man indulges sin. Now in none of these senses does any godly man indulge any one sin in his soul. Though sin lives in him, yet he doth not live in sin. Every man that hath drink in him is not in drink. A child of God may slip into a sin, as a sheep may slip into the mire, but he does not, nor cannot wallow in sin as the swine does in the mire, nor yet keep on in a road of sin, as sinners do: Ps. cxxxix. 24, 'See if there be any way of wickedness in me.' A course, a trade of sin is not consistent with the truth or state of grace: Job x. 7, 'Thou knowest that I am not wicked.' He doth not say, 'Thou knowest that I am not a sinner, or thou knowest that I have not sinned. No! for the best of saints are sinners, though the worst and weakest of saints are not wicked. Every real Christian is a renewed Christian, and every renewed Christian takes his denomination from his renovation, and not from the remainders of corruptions in him; and therefore such a one may well look God in the face and

say, 'Lord thou knowest that I am not wicked;' weaknesses are chargeable upon me, but wickednesses are not chargeable upon me. And certainly that man gives a strong demonstration of his own uprightness, who dares appeal to God himself that he is not wicked.

That no godly man does, or can indulge himself in any course or way or trade of sin, may be thus made evident.

[1.] First, *He sins not with allowance.* When he does evil, he disallows of the evil he does: Rom. vii. 15, 'For that which I do, I allow not.' A Christian is sometimes wherried<sup>1</sup> and whirled away by sin before he is aware, or hath time to consider of it. See Ps. cxix. 1, 3; 1 John iii. 9; Prov. xvi. 12.

[2.] Secondly, A godly man *hates all known sin*: Ps. cxix. 128, 'I hate every false way.' True hatred is *πρὸς τὰ γένη*, against the whole kind. That contrariety to sin which is in a real Christian, springs from an inward gracious nature or principle, and so is to the whole species or kind of sin, and is irreconcilable to any sin whatsoever. As contrarieties of nature are to the whole kind, as light is contrary to all darkness, and fire to all water; so this contrariety to all sin arising from the inward man, is universal to all sin. He who hates a toad because it is a toad, hates every toad; and he who hates a godly man because he is godly, he hates every godly man; and so he who hates sin because it is sin, he hates every sin: Rom. vii. 15, 'What I hate, that do I.'

[3.] Thirdly, Every godly man would *find have his sins not only pardoned but destroyed.* His heart is alienated from his sins, and therefore nothing will serve him or satisfy him but the blood and death of his sins, Isa. ii. 20, and xxx. 22; Hosea xiv. 8; Rom. viii. 24. Saul hated David, and sought his life; and Haman hated Mordecai, and sought his destruction; and Absalom hated Amnon, and killed him; Julian the apostate hated the Christians, and put many thousands of them to death. The great thing that a Christian has in his eye, in all the duties he performs, and in all the ordinances that he attends, is the blood and death and ruin of his sins.

[4.] Fourthly, Every godly man *groans under the burden of sin*: 2 Cor. v. 4, 'For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.' Never did any porter groan more to be delivered from his heavy burden, than a Christian groans to be delivered from the burden of sin. The burden of affliction, the burden of temptation, the burden of desertion, the burden of opposition, the burden of persecution, the burden of scorn and contempt, is nothing to the burden of sin. Ponder upon that Ps. xxxviii. 4, and xl. 12; Rom. vii. 24.

[5.] Fifthly, Every godly man *combats and conflicts with all known sin.* In every gracious soul there is a constant and perpetual conflict. 'The flesh will be still a-lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh,' Gal. v. 17; Rom. vii. 22, 23; 1 Kings xiv. 30, 31. Though sin and grace were not born together, and though sin and grace shall never die together, yet whiles a believer lives in this world, they must live together; and whilst sin and grace do co-habit together, they will still be opposing and conflicting one with another.

<sup>1</sup> 'Toss'd' as in a 'wherry.'—G.

[6.] Sixthly, Every gracious heart is still *a-crying out against his sins*. He cries out to God to subdue them; he cries out to Christ to crucify them; he cries out to the Spirit to mortify them; he cries out to faithful ministers to arm him against them; and he cries out to sincere Christians, that they would pray hard that he may be made victorious over them. Now certainly it is a most sure sign that sin has not gained a man's heart, a man's love, nor his consent, but committed a rape upon his soul, when he cries out bitterly against his sin. It is observable, that if the ravished virgin, under the law, cried out, she was guiltless, Deut. xxii. 25–27. Certainly such as cry out of their sins, and that would not for all the world indulge themselves in a way of sin, such are guiltless before the Lord. That which a Christian does not indulge himself in, that he does not do in divine account. But,

[7.] Seventhly, *The fixed purposes and designs* of a godly man, is *not to sin*: Ps. xvii. 3, 'I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress,' that is, I have laid my design so as not to sin. Though I may have many particular failings, yet my general purpose is not to sin: Ps. xxxix. 1, 'I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me.' Whenever a godly man sins, he sins against the general purpose of his soul. David laid a law upon his tongue. He uses three words in the first and second verses to the same purpose, which is as if he should say in plain English, 'I was silent, I was silent, I was silent;' and all this to express how he kept in his passion, that he might not offend with his tongue. Though a godly man sins, yet he doth not purpose to sin, for his purposes are fixed against sin. Holiness is his highway; and as sin is itself a byway, so it is besides his way. The honest traveller purposes to keep straight on his way; so that if at any time he miss his way, he misses his purpose. Though Peter denied Christ, yet he did not purpose to deny Christ; yea, the settled purpose of his soul was rather to die with Christ than to deny Christ: Mat. xxvi. 35, 'Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.' Interpreters agree that Peter meant as he speaks. But,

[8.] Eighthly, The settled resolutions of a gracious heart is not to sin: Ps. cxix. 106, 'I have sworn, and I will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments;' Neh. x. 28–31, dwell on it; Job xxxi. 1, &c.; Micah iv. 5, 'For all people will walk, every one in the name of his god, and we walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.' So Daniel and the three children.

Blessed Hooper resolves rather to be discharged of his bishopric than yield to certain ceremonies.

Jerome writes of a brave woman, who, being upon the rack, bid her persecutors do their worst, for she was resolved that she would rather die than lie.

The Prince of Conde being taken prisoner by Charles the Ninth of France, and put to his choice—first, whether he would go to mass; or second, be put to death; or thirdly, suffer perpetual imprisonment, answered, 'As for the first, I will never do, by the assistance of God's grace; and as for the other two, let the king do with me what he

pleaseth, for I am very well assured that God will turn all to the best.'

'The heavens shall as soon fall,' said William Flower to the bishop that persuaded him to save his life by retracting, 'as I will forsake the opinion and faith I am in, God assisting of me.'

So Marcus Arethusius chose rather to suffer a most cruel death than to give one halfpenny towards the building of an idol temple.

So Cyprian, when the emperor, in the way to his execution, said, 'Now I give thee space to consider whether thou wilt obey me in casting a grain of frankincense into the fire, or be thus miserably slain.' 'Nay,' saith he, 'there needs no deliberation in the case.' There are many thousands of such instances scattered up and down in history.

[9.] Ninthly, *There is a real willingness* in every gracious soul to be rid of all sin, Rom. vii. 24; Hosea xiv. 2, 8; Job vii. 21. Saving grace makes a Christian as willing to leave his sin as a slave is willing to leave his galley, or a prisoner his dungeon, or a thief his bolts, or a beggar his rags. 'Many a day have I sought death with tears,' saith blessed Cooper, 'not out of impatience, distrust, or perturbation, but because I am weary of sin, and fearful of falling into it.' Look, as the daughters of Heth even made Rebekah weary of her life, (Gen. xxvii. 46;) so corruptions within makes a gracious soul even weary of his life. A gracious soul looks upon sin with as evil and as envious an eye as Saul looked on David when the evil spirit was upon him. 'Oh,' saith Saul, 'that I was but once well rid of this David;' and oh, saith a gracious soul, that I was but once well rid of 'this proud heart, this hard heart, this unbelieving heart, this unclean heart, this earthly heart, this froward heart of mine.'

[10.] Tenthly, Every godly man *complains of his known sins, and mourns over his known sins*, and would be fain rid of his known sins, as might be made evident out of many scores of scripture, Job vii. 21; Ps. li. 14; Hosea ii.

[11.] Eleventhly, Every gracious soul *sets himself mostly, resolutely, valiantly, and habitually against his special sins, his constitution sins, his most prevalent sins*: Ps. xviii. 23, 'I was also upright before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity.' Certainly that which is the special sin of a godly man, is his special burden; it is not delighted in, but lamented. There is no sin which costs him so much sorrow as that to which either the temper of his body or the occasions of his life leads him. That sin which he finds his heart most set upon, he sets his heart, his whole soul, most against. The Scripture gives much evidence that David, though a man after God's own heart, was very apt to fall into the sin of lying; he used many unlawful shifts. We read of his often faltering in that kind, when he was in straits and hard put to it, 1 Sam. xxi. 2, 8, and xxvii. 8, 10, &c., but it is as clear in Scripture that his heart was set against lying, and that it was the grief and daily burden of his soul. Certainly that sin is a man's greatest burden and grief which he prays most to be delivered from. Oh, how earnestly did David pray to be delivered from the sin of lying: Ps. cxix. 29, 'Keep me from the way of lying.' And as he

prayed earnestly against lying, so he as earnestly detested it: ver. 163, 'I hate and abhor lying.' Though lying was David's special sin, yet he hated and abhorred it as he did hell itself. And he tells us how he was affected, or afflicted rather, with that sin, whatsoever it was, which was his iniquity: Ps. xxxi. 10, 'My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighings; my strength faileth, and my bones are consumed,' or moth-eaten, as the Hebrew has it. Here are deep expressions of a troubled spirit; and why all this? Mark, he gives you the reason of it in the same verse, 'because of mine iniquity:' as if he had said, there is a base corruption which so haunts and dogs me, that my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing. He found, it seems, his heart running out to some sin or other, which yet was so far from being a beloved sin, a bosom sin, a darling sin, that it was the breaking of his heart and the consumption of his bones. So Ps. xxxviii. 18, 'I will declare mine iniquity, I will be sorry for my sin.' There is no sin that a gracious heart is more perfectly set against than against his special sin; for by this sin God first has been most dishonoured; and secondly, Christ most crucified; and thirdly, the Spirit most grieved; and fourthly, conscience most wounded; and fifthly, Satan most advantaged; and sixthly, mercies most embittered; and seventhly, duties most hindered; and eighthly, fears and doubts most raised and increased; and ninthly, afflictions most multiplied; and tenthly, death made most formidable and terrible; and therefore he breaks out against this sin with the greatest detestation and abhorrency. Ephraim's special sin was idolatry, Hosea iv. 17; he thought the choicest gold and silver in the world hardly good enough to frame his idols of. But when it was the day of the Lord's gracious power upon Ephraim, then he thought no place bad enough to cast his choicest idols into, as you may see by comparing of these scriptures together, Hosea xiv. 8; Isa. ii. 20, and xxx. 22. True grace will make a man stand stoutly and steadfastly on God's side, and work the heart to take part with him against a man's special sins, though they be as right hands or right eyes. True grace will lay hands upon a man's special sins, and cry out to heaven, 'Lord, crucify them, crucify them; down with them, down with them, even to the ground: Lord, do justice, do speedy justice, do signal justice, do exemplary justice upon these special sins of mine: Lord, hew down root and branch; let the very stumps of this Dagon be broken all in pieces: Lord, curse this wild fig-tree, that never more fruit may grow thereon.' But,

[12.] Twelfthly, *There is no time wherein a gracious soul cannot sincerely say with the apostle in that Heb. xiii. 18, 'Pray for us, for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willingly to live honestly.'* Gracious hearts affect that which they cannot effect. So Acts xxiv. 16, 'And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence towards God, and towards men;' in all cases, in all places, by all means, and at all times. A sincere Christian labours to have a good conscience, void of offence towards God and towards men: Prov. xvi. 17, 'The highway of the upright is to depart from evil,' that is, it is the ordinary, usual, constant course of

an upright man to depart from evil. An honest traveller may step out of the king's highway into a house, a wood, a close; but his work, his business, is to go on in the king's highway; so the business, the work, of an upright man is to depart from evil. It is possible for an upright man to step into a sinful path, or to touch upon sinful facts; but his main way, his principal work and business, is to depart from iniquity; as a bee may light upon a thistle, but her work is to be gathering at flowers; or as a sheep may slip into the dirt, but its work is to be grazing upon the mountains or in the meadows. But,

[13.] Thirteenthly and lastly, *Jesus Christ is the real Christian's only beloved; he is the saint's only darling*: Cant. ii. 3, 'As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons;' ver. 8, 'The voice of my beloved, behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, and skipping upon the hills;' ver. 9, 'My beloved is like a roe, or a young hart;' ver. 10, 'My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away;' ver. 17, 'Turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bether;' Cant. iv. 16, 'Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.' Seven times Christ is called 'the beloved of his spouse' in the fifth of Canticles, and twice in the sixth chapter, and four times in the seventh chapter, and once in the eighth chapter. In this book of Solomon's Song, Christ is called the church's beloved just twenty times. I might turn you to many other scriptures, but in the mouth of twenty witnesses you may be very clearly and fully satisfied that Jesus Christ is the saints' beloved.

1. When the Dutch martyr was asked whether he did not love his wife and children, he answered, 'Were all the world a lump of gold, and in my hand to dispose of, I would give it to live with my wife and children in a prison, but Christ is dearer to me than all.' 2. Saith Jerome, 'If my father should stand before me, and if my mother should hang upon me, and my brethren should press about me, I would break through my brethren, throw down my mother, and tread under foot my father, that I might cleave the faster and closer unto Jesus Christ.' 3. That blessed virgin in Basil, being condemned for Christianity to the fire, and having her estate and life offered her if she would worship idols, cried out, 'Let money perish and life vanish, Christ is better than all.' 4. Love made Jerome to say, 'Oh, my Saviour, didst thou die for love of me, a love more dolorous than death, but to me a death more lovely than love itself. I cannot live, love thee, and be longer from thee.' 5. Henry Voes said, 'If I had ten heads, they should all off for Christ.' 6. John Ardley, martyr, said, 'If every hair of my head were a man, they should all suffer for the faith of Christ.' 7. Ignatius said, 'Let fire, racks, pulleys, yea, and all the torments of hell, come on me, so I may win Christ.' 8. George Carpenter, being asked whether he loved not his wife and children, when they all wept before them, answered, 'My wife and children are dearer to me than all Bavaria, yet for the love of Christ I know them not.' 9. 'O Lord Jesus,' said Bernard, 'I love thee more than all my goods, and I love thee more than all my friends, yea, I love thee more

than my very self.' 10. Austin saith he would willingly go through hell to Christ. 11. Another saith, 'He had rather be in his chimney-corner with Christ than in heaven without him.' 12. Another cries out, 'I had rather have one Christ than a thousand worlds;' by all which it is most evident that Jesus Christ is the saint's best beloved, and not this or that sin.

Now by these thirteen arguments it is most clear that no gracious Christian does or can indulge himself in any trade, course, or way of sin.

Yea, by these thirteen arguments it is most evident that no godly man has, or can have, any one beloved sin, any one bosom, darling sin, though many worthy ministers, both in their preaching and writings, make a great noise about the saints' beloved sins, about their bosom, darling sins. I readily grant that all unregenerate persons have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins; but that no such sins are chargeable upon the regenerate is sufficiently demonstrated by the thirteen arguments last cited; and oh that this were wisely and seriously considered of, both by ministers and Christians! There is no known sin that a godly man is not troubled at, and that he would not be rid of. There is as much difference between sin in a regenerate person and in an unregenerate person, as there is between poison in a man and poison in a serpent. Poison in a man's body is most offensive and burdensome, and he readily uses all arts and antidotes to expel it and get rid; but poison in a serpent, is in its natural place, and is most pleasing and delightful: so sin in a regenerate man is most offensive and burdensome, and he readily uses all holy means and antidotes to expel it and to get rid of it. But sin in an unregenerate man is most pleasing and delightful, it being in its natural place. A godly man still enters his protest against sin. A gracious soul, while he commits sin, hates the sin he commits.

O sirs! there is a vast difference between a special and a beloved sin, a darling sin, a bosom sin. Noah had a sin, and Lot had a sin, and Jacob had a sin, and Job had a sin, and David had a sin, which was his special sin; but neither of these had any sin which was their beloved sin, their bosom sin, their darling sin. That passage in Job xxxi. 33 is observable, 'If I covered my transgression as Adam, by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom.' Mark, in this text, while Job calleth some sin or other his iniquity, he denieth that he had any beloved sin; for saith he, 'Did I hide it in my bosom? did I shew it any favour? did I cherish it or nourish it, or keep it warm in my bosom? Oh, no; I did not.' A godly man may have many sins, yet he hath not one beloved sin, one bosom sin, one darling sin; he may have some particular sin, to which the unregenerate part of his will may strongly incline, and to which his unmortified affections may run out with violence to; yet he hath no sin he bears any good-will to, or doth really or cordially affect. Mark, that may be called a man's particular way of sinning, which yet we cannot, we may not call his beloved sin, his bosom sin, his darling sin; for it may be his greatest grief and torment, and may cost him more sorrow and tears than all the rest of his sins; it may be a tyrant usurping power over



him, when it is not the delight and pleasure of his soul. A godly man may be more prone to fall into some one sin rather than another; it may be passion, or pride, or slavish fear, or worldliness, or hypocrisy, or this, or that, or t'other vanity; yet are not these his beloved sins, his bosom sins, his darling sins; for these are the enemies he hates and abhors; these are the grand enemies that he prays against, and complains of, and mourns over; these are the potent rebels that his soul cries out most against, and by which his soul suffers the greatest violence. Mark, no sin, but Christ, is the dearly beloved of a Christian's soul; Christ, and not this sin or that, is 'the chiefest of ten thousand' to a gracious soul; and yet some particular corruption or other may more frequently worst a believer and lead him captive; but then the believer cries out most against that particular sin. Oh, saith he, this is mine iniquity; this is the Saul, the Pharaoh that is always a-pursuing after the blood of my soul. Lord! let this Saul fall by the sword of thy Spirit; let this Pharaoh be drowned in the Red Sea of thy son's blood. O sirs, it is a point of very great importance for gracious souls to understand the vast difference that there is between a beloved sin and this or that particular sin, violently tyrannising over them; for this is most certain, whosoever giveth up himself freely, willingly, cheerfully, habitually, to the service of any one particular lust or sin, he is in the state of nature, under wrath, and in the way to eternal ruin.

Now a little to shew the vanity, folly, and falsehood of that opinion that is received and commonly avowed by ministers and Christians—viz., that every godly person hath his beloved sin, his bosom sin, his darling sin—seriously and frequently consider with me of these following particulars:—

[1.] First, That this opinion is not *bottomed or founded upon any clear scripture or scriptures, either in the Old or New Testament.*

[2.] Secondly, This opinion that is now under consideration runs *counter-cross to all those thirteen arguments but now alleged*, and to all those scores of plain scriptures by which those arguments are confirmed.

[3.] Thirdly, This opinion that is now under consideration *has a great tendency to harden and strengthen wicked men in their sins*; for when they shall hear and read that the saints, the dearly beloved of God, have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins, what inferences will they not be ready to make! What are these they call saints? wherein are they better than us? Have we our beloved sins? so have they. Have we our bosom sins? so have they. Have we our darling sins? so have they. They have their beloved sins, and yet are beloved of God; and why not we—why not we? Saints have their beloved sins, and yet God is kind to them; and why then not to us, why not to us also? Saints have their beloved sins, and yet God will save them; and why then should we believe that God will damn us? Saints have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins, and therefore certainly they are not to be so dearly loved, and highly prized, and greatly honoured as ministers would make us believe. Saints have their beloved sins, their bosom sins,

their darling sins, and therefore what iniquity is it to account and call them hypocrites, deceivers, dissemblers, that pretend they have a great deal of love to God, and love to Christ, and love to his word, and love to his ways? and yet for all this they have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins. Surely these men's hearts are not right with God: with much more to the same purpose.

[4.] Fourthly, *If Christ be really the saints' beloved, then sin is not their beloved.* But Christ is the saints' beloved, as I have formerly clearly proved; and therefore sin is not the beloved. A man may as well serve two masters, as have two beloveds—viz., a beloved Christ and a beloved lust.

[5.] Fifthly, *Those supernatural graces or those divine qualities that are infused into the soul at first conversion, are contrary to all sin, and opposite to all sin, and engages the heart against all sin;* and therefore a converted person can have no beloved sin, no bosom sin, no darling sin. Seriously weigh this argument.

[6.] Sixthly, This opinion may fill many weak Christians with many needless fears, doubts, and jealousies about their spiritual and eternal conditions. Weak Christians are very apt to reason thus: Surely my conversion is not sound; my spiritual estate is not good; my heart is not right with God; a saving work has never yet passed upon me in power; I fear I have not the root of the matter in me; I fear I have never had a thorough change; I fear I have never yet been effectually called out of darkness into his marvellous light; I fear I have never yet been espoused to Christ; I fear the Spirit of God hath never taken up my heart for his habitation; I fear that after all my high profession I shall at last be found a hypocrite; I fear the execution of that dreadful sentence, Mat. xxv. 41, 'Go ye cursed,' &c. And why all this? O poor soul answer [not]<sup>1</sup> because I carry about with me my beloved sins, my bosom sins, my darling sins. Ministers had need be very wary in their preaching and writing, that they don't bring forth fuel to feed the fears and doubts of weak Christians, it being a great part of their work to arm weak Christians against their fears and faintings. But,

[7.] Seventhly, This opinion that is now under consideration, is an opinion that is *very repugnant to sound and sincere repentance*; for sound, sincere repentance includes and takes in a divorce, an alienation, a detestation, a separation, and a turning from all sin, without exception or reservation. One of the first works of the Spirit upon the soul, is the dividing between all known sin and the soul; it is a making an utter breach betwixt all sin and the soul; it is a dissolving of that old league that has been between a sinner and his sins, yea, between a sinner and his beloved lusts. One of the first works of the Spirit is to make a man to look upon all his sins as enemies, yea, as his greatest enemies, and to deal with his sins as enemies, and to hate and loathe them as enemies, and to fear them as enemies, and to arm against them as enemies. Seriously ponder upon these scriptures, Ezek. xviii. 28, 30, 31; Ezek. vi. 1; 2 Cor. vii. 1; Ps. cxix. 101, 104,

<sup>1</sup> The 'not,' which I place in parenthesis, seems to have been dropped out, inasmuch as Brooks is arguing against any such answer.—G.

128. True repentance is a turning from all sin, without any reservation or exception. He never truly repented of any sin, whose heart is not turned against every sin. The true penitent casts off all the rags of old Adam; he is for throwing down every stone of the old building; he will not leave a horn nor a hoof behind. The reasons of turning from sin are universally binding to a penitent soul. There are the same reasons and grounds for a penitent man's turning from every sin, as there is for his turning from any one sin. Do you turn from this or that sin because the Lord has forbid it? Why! upon the same ground you must turn from every sin; for God has forbid every sin as well as this or that particular sin. There is the same authority forbidding or commanding in all; and if the authority of God awes a man from one sin, it will awe him from all. He that turns from any one sin, because it is a transgression of the holy and righteous law of God, he will turn from every sin upon the same account. He that turns from any one sin because it is a dishonour to God, a reproach to Christ, a grief to the Spirit, a wound to religion, &c., will upon the same grounds turn from every sin.

*Quest. But wherein does a true penitential turning from all sin consist? Ans.* In these six things:—

*First, In the alienation and inward aversion and drawing off of the soul from the love and liking of all sin, and from all free and voluntary subjection unto sin, the heart being filled with a loathing and detestation of all sin, [Ps. cxix. 104, 128,] as that which is most contrary to all goodness and happiness.*

*Secondly, In the will's detestation and hatred of all sin.* When the very bent and inclination of the will is set against all sin, and opposes and crosses all sin, and is set upon the ruin and destruction of all sin, then the penitent is turned from all sin, Rom. vii. 15, 19, 21, 23; Isa. xxx. 22; Hosea xiv. 8. When the will stands upon such terms of defiance with all sin, as that it will never enter into a league of friendship with any sin, then is the soul turned from every sin.

*Thirdly, In the judgment's turning away from all sin, by disapproving, disallowing, and condemning all sin, Rom. vii. 15.* Oh! saith the judgment of a Christian, sin is the greatest evil in all the world; it is the only thing God abhors, and that brought Jesus Christ to the cross, that damns souls, that shuts heaven, and that has laid the foundations of hell! Oh! it is the pricking thorn in my eye, the deadly arrow in my side, the two-edged sword that hath wounded my conscience, and slain my comforts, and separated between God and my soul. Oh! sin is that which hath hindered my prayers, and imbittered my mercies, and put a sting into all my crosses; and therefore I can't but disapprove of it, and disallow of it, and condemn it to death, yea, to hell, from whence it came.

*Fourthly, In the purpose and resolution of the soul; the soul sincerely purposing and resolving never willingly, wilfully, or wickedly to transgress any more, Ps. xvii. 3.* The general purpose and resolution of my heart is not to transgress. Though particular failings may attend me, yet my resolutions and purposes are firmly set against doing evil, Ps. xxxix. 1. The true penitent holds up his purposes and resolutions to keep off from sin, and to keep close with God, though he

be not able in everything and at all times to make good his purposes and resolutions, &c. But,

*Fifthly, In the earnest and unfeigned desires, and careful endeavours of the soul to abandon all sin, to forsake all sin, and to be rid of all sin,* Rom. vii. 22, 23. You know when a prudent, tender, indulgent father sees his child to fail and come short in that which he enjoins him to do; yet knowing that his desires and endeavours is to please him, and serve him, he will not be harsh, rigid, sour, or severe towards him, but will spare him, and exercise much tenderness and indulgence towards him; and will God, will God whose mercies reach above the heavens, and whose compassions are infinite, and whose love is like himself, carry it worse towards his children than men do carry it towards theirs? Surely no. God's fatherly indulgence accepts of the will for the work, Heb. xiii. 18; 2 Cor. viii. 12. Certainly, a sick man is not more desirous to be rid of all his diseases, nor a prisoner to be freed from all his bolts and chains, than the true penitent is desirous to be rid of all his sins.

*Sixthly and lastly, In the common and ordinary declining, shunning, and avoiding of all known occasions of sin, yea, and all temptations, provocations, inducements, and enticements to sin, &c.* That royal law, 1 Thes. v. 22, 'Abstain from all appearance of evil,' is a law that is very precious in a penitent man's eye, and commonly lies warm upon a penitent man's heart; so that take him in his ordinary course, and you shall find him very ready to shun and be shy of the very appearance of sin, of the very shows and shadows of sin. Job made 'a covenant with his eyes,' Job xxxi. 1; and Joseph would not hearken to his bold tempting mistress, 'to lie by her, or to be with her,' Gen. xxxix. 10; and David when himself, would not 'sit with vain persons,' Ps. xxvi. 3-5. Now a true penitential turning from all sins lies in these six things: and therefore you had need look about you; for if there be any one way of wickedness wherein you walk, and which you are resolved you will not forsake, you are no true penitents, and you will certainly lose your souls, and be miserable for ever.

[8.] This opinion that is now under consideration, is an opinion that will exceedingly deject many precious Christians, and cause them greatly to hang down their heads, especially in four days. 1. In the day of common calamity; 2. In the day of personal affliction; 3. In the day of death; 4. In the great day of account.

*First, In a day of common calamity,* when the sword is drunk with the blood of the slain, or when the raging pestilence lays thousands in heap upon heap, or when fevers, agues, gripes, and other diseases carry hundreds every week to their long homes. Oh, now the remembrance of a man's beloved sins, his bosom sins, his darling sins—if a saint had any such sins—will be very apt to fill his soul with fears, dreads, and perplexities. Surely now God will meet with me, now God will avenge himself on me for my beloved sins, my bosom sins, my darling sins! Oh, how righteous a thing is it with God, because of my beloved lusts, to sweep me away by these sweeping judgments that are abroad in the earth! On the contrary, how sweet and comfortable a thing is it, when in a day of common calamity a Christian

can appeal to God, and appeal to conscience, that though he has many weaknesses and infirmities that hang upon him, that yet he has no beloved sin, no bosom sin, no darling sin, that either God or conscience can charge upon him. Oh, such a consideration as this may be as life from the dead to a gracious Christian, in the midst of all the common calamities that does surround him and that hourly threaten him.

*Secondly, In the day of personal afflictions,* when the smarting rod is upon him, and God writes bitter things against him; when the hand of the Almighty has touched him in his name, estate, relations, &c. Oh, now the remembrance of a man's beloved sins, his bosom sins, his darling sins—if a saint had any such sins—will be as 'the handwriting upon the wall,' Dan v. 5, 6, 'that will make his countenance to be changed, his thoughts to be troubled, his joints to be loosed, and his knees to be dashed one against another.' Oh, now a Christian will be ready to conclude, Oh, it is my beloved sins, my bosom sins, my darling sins that has caused God to put this bitter cup into my hand, and that has provoked him to 'give me gall and wormwood to drink,' Lam. iii. 19. Whereas on the contrary, when a man under all his personal trials, though they are many and great, yet can lift up his head and appeal to God and conscience, that though he has many sinful weaknesses and infirmities hanging upon him, yet neither God nor conscience can charge upon him any beloved sins, any bosom sins, any darling sins. Oh, such a consideration as this will help a man to bear up bravely, sweetly, cheerfully, patiently, and contentedly, under the heaviest hand of God, as is evident in that great instance of Job. Who so sorely afflicted as Job? and yet no beloved sin, no bosom sin, no darling sin being chargeable upon him by God or conscience, [Job x. 7, and xxxi. 33,] how bravely, sweetly, and Christianly does Job bear up under those sad changes and dreadful providences that would have broke a thousand of such men's hearts, upon whom God and conscience could charge beloved sins, bosom sins, darling sins! But,

*Thirdly, In the day of death;* Death is the king of terrors, as Job speaks; and the 'terror of kings,' as the philosopher speaks.<sup>1</sup> Oh how terrible will this king of terrors be to that man upon whom God and conscience can charge beloved sins, bosom sins, darling sins. This is certain, when a wicked man comes to die, all the sins that ever he committed don't so grieve him and terrify him, so sad him and sink him, and raise such horrors and terrors in him, and put him into such a hell on this side hell, as his beloved sins, his bosom sins, his darling sins; and had saints their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins, ah, what a hell of horror and terror would these sins raise in their souls, when they come to lie upon a dying bed! But now when a child of God shall lie upon a dying bed, and shall be able to say, 'Lord, thou knowest, and conscience thou knowest, that though I have had many and great failings, yet there are no beloved sins, no bosom sins, no darling sins, that are chargeable upon me! Lord, thou knowest, and conscience thou knowest: 1. That there is no known sin that I don't hate and abhor. 2. That there is no known sin that I

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle: cf. Sibbes, vol. iv. note e, p. 78, and vii. 603, where the original is given—G.

don't combat and conflict with. 3. That there is no known sin that I don't grieve and mourn over. 4. That there is no known sin that I would not presently, freely, willingly, and heartily be rid of. 5. That there is no known sin that I don't in some weak measure endeavour in the use of holy means to be delivered from. 6. That there is no known sin, the effectual subduing and mortifying of which would not administer matter of the greatest joy and comfort to me!' Now, when God and conscience shall acquit a man upon a dying bed of beloved sins, of bosom sins, of darling sins, who can express the joy, the comfort, the peace, the support that such an acquittance will fill a man with?

*Fourthly, In the day of account*, the very thoughts of which day, to many, is more terrible than death itself. Such Christians as are captivated under the power of this opinion, viz., that the saints have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins, such cannot but greatly fear and tremble to appear before the tribunal of God. Oh, saith such poor hearts, how shall we be able to answer for our beloved sins, our bosom sins, our darling sins. As for infirmities, weaknesses, and follies that has attended us, we can plead with God, and tell him, Lord! when grace has been weak, corruptions strong, temptations great, and thy Spirit withdrawn, and we off from our watch, we have been worsted and captivated! But what shall we say as to our beloved sins, our bosom sins, our darling sins? Oh, these fill us with terror and horror, and how shall we be able to hold up our heads before the Lord, when he shall reckon with us for these sins! But now when a poor child of God thinks of the day of account, and is able, through grace, to say, 'Lord, though we cannot clear ourselves of infirmities, and many sinful weaknesses, yet we can comfortably appeal to thee and our consciences that we have no beloved sins, no bosom sins, no darling sins!' Oh, with what comfort, confidence, and boldness will such poor hearts hold up their heads in the day of account, when a Christian can plead those six things before a judgment-seat, that he pleaded in the third particular, when he lay upon a dying bed! how will his fears vanish, and how will his hopes and heart revive, and how comfortably and boldly will he stand before a judgment-seat! But,

[9.] Ninthly, This opinion that is now under consideration, *has a very great tendency to discourage and deaden the hearts of Christians to the most noble and spiritual duties of religion*—viz., 1. Praising of God; 2. Delighting in God; 3. Rejoicing in God; 4. Admiring of God; 5. Taking full content and satisfaction in God; 6. Witnessing for God, his truth, his ordinances, and ways; 7. To self-trial and self-examination; 8. To the making of their calling and election sure. I cannot see with what comfort, confidence, or courage such souls can apply themselves to the eight duties last mentioned, who lie under the power of this opinion, viz., that saints have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins. But now when a Christian is clear, and he can clear himself, as every sincere Christian can, of beloved sins, of bosom sins, of darling sins, how is he upon the advantage ground to fall in roundly with all the eight duties last mentioned! But,

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, This opinion that is now under consideration, has a very great tendency to *discourage multitudes of Christians from coming to the Lord's table*. I would willingly know with what comfort, with what confidence, with what hope, with what expectation of good from God, or of good from the ordinance, can such souls draw near to the Lord's table, who lie under the power of this opinion or persuasion, that they carry about with them their bosom sins, their beloved sins, their darling sins. How can such souls expect that God should meet with them in the ordinance, and bless the ordinance to them? How can such souls expect that God should make that great ordinance to be strengthening, comforting, refreshing, establishing, and enriching unto them? How can such souls expect, that in that ordinance God should seal up to them his eternal loves, their interest in Christ, their right to the covenant, their title to heaven, and the remission of their sins, who bring to his table their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins? But now when the people of God draw near to the table of the Lord, and can appeal to God, that though they have many sinful failings and infirmities hanging upon them, yet they have no beloved sins, no bosom sins, no darling sins that they carry about with them; how comfortably and confidently may they expect that God will make that great ordinance a blessing to them, and that in time all those glorious ends for which that ordinance was appointed shall be accomplished in them, and upon them!

Now, by these ten arguments, you may see the weakness and falseness, yea, the dangerous nature of that opinion that many worthy men have so long preached, maintained, and printed to the world, viz., That the saints have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins; neither do I wonder that they should be so sadly out in this particular, when I consider how apt men are to receive things by tradition, without bringing of things to a strict examination; and when I consider what strange definitions of faith many famous, worthy men have given, both in their writings and preachings; and when I consider what a mighty noise many famous men have made about legal preparations, before men presume to close with Christ, or to give up themselves in a marriage covenant to Christ, most of them requiring men to be better Christians before they come to Christ, than commonly they prove after they are implanted into Christ, &c.

Now, though I have said enough, I suppose, to lay that opinion asleep that has been last under consideration, viz., That the saints have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins, yet for a close of this discourse, premise with me these five things:

[1.] First, *That all unconverted persons have their beloved sins, their bosom sins, their darling sins*. The beloved, the bosom, the darling sin of the Jews was idolatry. The beloved, the bosom, the darling sin of the Corinthians was uncleanness, wantonness, I Cor. vi. 15, 20. The beloved, the bosom, the darling sin of the Cretans was lying, Titus ii. 12. Jeroboam's beloved sin was idolatry, and Cain's beloved sin was envy, and Korah's beloved sin was gainsaying, and Esau's beloved sin was profaneness, and Ishmael's beloved sin was scoffing, and Balaam's beloved sin was ambition; Simeon and Levi's beloved sin was treachery, Manasseh's beloved sin was cruelty, and

Nebuchadnezzar's beloved sin was pride, and Herod's beloved sin was uncleanness, and Judas his beloved sin was covetousness, and the young man's beloved sin in that 19th of Matthew was worldly-mindedness, &c.

[2.] Secondly, Premise this with me, *that the elect of God, before their conversion, had their beloved sins.* Manasseh's beloved sin was cruelty; and Ephraim's beloved sin, before conversion, was idolatry, Hosea iv. 17; and Zaccheus his beloved sin before conversion was worldly-mindedness and defrauding of others; and Paul's beloved sin, before conversion, was persecution; and the jailer's beloved sin, before conversion, was cruelty; and Mary Magdalene's beloved sin, before conversion, was wantonness and uncleanness, &c.

[3.] Thirdly, Premise this with me, *viz., that after conversion there is no sin that the heart of a Christian is more seriously, more frequently, more resolutely, and more perfectly set against than that which was once his beloved lust.* The hatred, detestation, and indignation of a converted person breaks out and discovers itself most against that sin which was once a beloved sin, a bosom sin, a darling sin; his care, his fear, his jealousy, his watchfulness is most exercised against that sin which was once the darling of his soul. The converted person eyes this sin as an old enemy; he looks upon this sin as the sin by which God has been most dishonoured, and his own conscience most enslaved, and his immortal soul most endangered, and Satan most advantaged, and accordingly his spirit rises against it, Hosea xiv. 8; Isa. ii. 20, and xxx. 22. And all Christians' experience confirms this truth; but of this more before.

[4.] Fourthly, *After conversion, a Christian endeavours to be most eminent in that particular grace which is most contrary and opposite to that sin which was once his beloved sin, his bosom sin, his darling sin.* Zaccheus his beloved sin was worldliness and defrauding; but, being converted, he labours to excel in restitution and liberality; the jailer's beloved sin was severity and cruelty, but, being converted, he labours to excel in pity and courtesy; Paul's beloved sin was persecution, but, being converted, how mightily does he bestir himself to convert souls, and to edify souls, and to build up souls, and to strengthen souls, and to establish souls, and to encourage souls in the ways of the Lord—he gives it you under his own hand, 'That he laboured more abundantly than they all,' 2 Cor. xi. 23; Austin's beloved sin, his bosom sin, his darling sin, before his conversion, was wantonness and uncleanness; but, when he was converted, he was most careful and watchful to arm against that sin, and to avoid all temptations and occasions that might lead him to it afterwards. If a man's beloved sin, before conversion, has been worldliness, then after conversion he will labour above all to excel in heavenly-mindedness; or if his sin, his beloved sin, has been pride, then he will labour above all to excel in humility; or if his beloved sin has been intemperance, then he will labour above all to excel in temperance and sobriety; or if his beloved sin has been wantonness and uncleanness, then he will labour above all to excel in all chastity and purity; or if his beloved sin has been oppressing of others, then he will labour above all to excel in piety and compassion towards others; or if his beloved sin has been



hypocrisy, then he will labour above all to excel in sincerity, &c.  
But,

[5.] Fifthly, Though no godly man, though no sincere gracious Christian hath any beloved sin, and bosom, darling sin, *yet there is no godly man, there is no sincere gracious soul, but has some sin or other to which they are more prone than to others.* Every real Christian hath his inclination to one kind of sin rather than another, which may be called his special sin, his peculiar sin, or his own iniquity, as David speaks in Ps. xviii. 23. Now the main power of grace and of uprightness is mainly seen and exercised in a man's keeping of himself from his iniquity. Now that special, that peculiar sin, to which a gracious soul may be most prone and addicted to may arise—1. From the temperament and constitution of his body. The complexion and constitution of a man's body may be a more prepared instrument for one vice rather than another; or, 2. It may arise from his particular calling. Christians have distinct and particular callings that incline them to particular sins. For instance, the soldier's calling puts him upon rapine and violence: Luke iii. 14, 'Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages.' And the tradesman's calling puts him upon lying, deceiving, defrauding, and overreaching his brother. And the minister's calling puts him upon flattering of the gallants and great ones of his parish, and upon pleasing the rest by speaking of smooth things, Isa. xxx. 10, 'and by sewing of pillows under their elbows,' Ezek. xiii. 18, 20. And the magistrates', judges', and justices' employments lays them open to oppression, bribery, injustice, &c. If Christians are not very much upon their watch, their very callings and offices may prove a very great snare to their souls; or, 3. It may arise from his outward state and condition in this world, whether his state be a state of prosperity or a state of adversity, or whether he be in a marriage state or in a single state. Many times a man's outward state and condition in this world hath a strong influence upon him to incline him to this or that particular sin as best suiting with his condition; or, 4. It may arise from distinct and peculiar ages; for it is certain that distinct and peculiar ages do strongly incline persons to distinct and peculiar sins. Youth inclines to wantonness and prodigality; and manhood to pride and ambition; and old age to covetousness and frowardness. Common experience tells us that many times wantonness is the sinner's darling in the time of his youth, and worldliness his darling in the time of his age; and without controversy, Christians' distinct and peculiar ages may more strongly incline them to this or that sin rather than any other; or, 5. It may arise from that distinct and particular way of breeding and education which he has had. Now to arm such Christians against their special sins, their peculiar sins—whose sins are advantaged against them, either by their constitutions and complexion, or else by their particular calling, or else by their outward state and condition, or else by their distinct and peculiar ages, or else by their particular way of breeding and education—is my present work and business; for though the reigning power of this or that special peculiar sin be broken in a man's conversion, yet the remaining life and strength that is still left in those corruptions, will by Satan be improved against the growth,

peace, comfort, and assurance of the soul. Satan will strive to enter in at the same door; and by the same Delilah, by which he hath betrayed and wounded the soul, he will do all he can to do the soul a further mischief. Satan will be still a-reminding of the soul of those former sweets, pleasures, profits, delights, and contents that have come in upon the old score, so that it will be a hard thing, even for a godly man, to keep himself from his iniquity, from his special or peculiar sin, which the fathers commonly call, though not truly, *peccatum in deliciis*, a man's special darling and beloved sin. Well, Christians, remember this once for all, viz., that sound conversion includes a noble and serious revenge upon that sin which was once a man's beloved, bosom, darling sin: 2 Cor. vii. 11, 'Yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge.' You see this in Cranmer, who when he had subscribed with his right hand to that which was against his conscience, he afterwards, as a holy revenge, put that right hand into the flames; so Mary Magdalene takes that hair of hers. Of all sins, saith the sound convert, I am resolved to be avenged on my once beloved, bosom, darling sins, by which I have most dishonoured God, and wronged my own precious and immortal soul, and by which I have most endangered my everlasting estate.

Having thus cleared up my way, I shall now endeavour to lay before you some special remedies, means, or helps against cherishing or keeping up of any special or peculiar sin, either in heart or life, against the Lord, or against the light and conviction of a man's own conscience.

1. First, Cherishing or keeping up of any special or peculiar sin, either in heart or life, against the Lord, or against the light and conviction of a man's own conscience, will *hinder assurance* these several ways:—

[1.] First, *It will abate the degrees of our graces, and so make them more undiscernible.* Now grace rather in its degrees than in its sincerity, or simple being only, is that which gives the clearest evidence of a gracious estate, or of a man's interest in Christ. Sin, lived in, is like a vermin to the tree, which destroys the fruit. Grace cannot thrive in a sinful heart. In some soil, plants will not grow. The cherishing of sin is the withering of grace. The casting of a favourable eye on any one special sin hinders the growth of grace. If a man has a choice plant or flower in his garden, and it withers and shrivels and is dying, he opens the ground and looks at the root, and there finds a worm gnawing the root; and this is the cause of the flower's fading: the application is easy.

[2.] Secondly, The cherishing of any special peculiar sin, or the keeping up of any known transgression against the Lord, and against the light of a man's own conscience, *will hinder the lively actings and exercise of grace*; it will keep grace at an under, so that it will hardly be seen to stir or act; yea, it will keep grace so down that it will hardly be heard to speak. When a special or peculiar sin is entertained, it will exceedingly mar the vigorous exercises of those graces which are the evidences of a lively faith, and of a gracious state, and of a man's interest in Christ. Grace is never apparent and sensible to the soul, but while it is in action; therefore want of action

must needs cause want of assurance. Habits are not felt immediately but by the freeness and facility of their acts; of the very being of the soul itself, nothing is felt or perceived, but only its acts. The fire that lieth still in the flint, is neither seen nor felt; but when you smite it and force it into act, it is easily discernible. For the most part, so long as a Christian hath his graces in lively action, so long he is assured of them. He that would be assured that this sacred fire of grace is in his heart, he must blow it up and get it into a flame. But,

[3.] Thirdly, The cherishing of any special sin, or the keeping up of any known transgression in heart or life against the Lord and against the light of a man's own conscience, *so blears, dims, and darkens the eye of the soul, that it cannot see its own condition, nor have any clear knowledge of its gracious state, or of its interest in Christ, &c.* Sometimes men in riding raise such a dust that they can neither see themselves nor their dearest friends, so as to distinguish one from another: the application is easy. The room sometimes is so full of smoke that a man cannot see the jewels, the treasures that lie before him; so it is here. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Cherishing of any special or peculiar sin, or the keeping up of any known transgression against the Lord or against the light of a man's own conscience, *provokes the Lord to withdraw himself, his comforts, and the gracious presence and assistance of his blessed Spirit;* without which presence and assistance the soul may search and seek long enough for assurance, comfort, and a sight of a man's interest in Christ, before it will enjoy the one or see the other. If by keeping up of any known transgression against the Lord, you set the Holy Spirit a-mourning, which alone can comfort you, and assure you of your interest in Christ, you may walk long enough without comfort and assurance, Lam i. 16. 'The Comforter that should relieve my soul, is far from me;' so in that 1 John iii. 21, it is supposed that a self-condemning heart makes void a man's confidence before God. The precious jewel of faith can be holden in no other place, but in a pure conscience; that is the only royal palace wherein it must and will dwell: 1 Tim. i. 19, 'Holding faith and a good conscience:' Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.' He that comes to God with a true, honest, upright heart, being sprinkled from an evil conscience, may draw near to God in full assurance of faith; whereas guilt clouds, clogs, and distracts the soul, that it can never be with God, either as it would or as it should. *Conscientia pura semper securo*, a good conscience hath sure confidence. Conscience is *mille testes*, a thousand witnesses for or against a man. Conscience is God's preacher in the bosom. It is better, with Evagrius, to lie secure on a bed of straw, than to have a turbulent conscience on a bed of down. It was a divine saying of Seneca, a heathen, viz., 'That if there were no God to punish him, no devil to torment him, no hell to burn him, no man to see him; yet would he not sin, for the ugliness of sin, and the grief of his own conscience.' But,

[5.] Fifthly, Cherishing of any special or peculiar sin, or the keeping up of any known transgression, in heart or life, against the Lord,

and against the light of a man's own conscience, will greatly hinder his *high esteem and reputation of Jesus Christ, and so it will keep him from comfort, assurance, and sight of his interest in him*, so that sometimes his dearest children are constrained to cry out, 'God is departed from me, and he answereth me not, neither by dream nor vision, neither this way nor that,' 1 Sam. xxviii. 15. But,

[6.] Sixthly, The greatest and most common cause of the want of assurance, comfort, and peace, is *some unmortified lust, some secret, special, peculiar sin, unto which men give entertainment, or at least, which they do not so vigorously oppose, and heartily renounce as they should and might.* *Hinc ille lachrymæ*, and this is that which casts them on sore straits and difficulties. And how should it be otherwise, seeing God, who is infinitely wise, holy, and righteous, either cannot or will not reveal the secrets of his love to those who harbour his known enemies in their bosoms? The great God either cannot or will not regard the whinings and complainings of those who play or dally with that very sin which galls their consciences, and connive and wink at the stirrings and workings of that very lust for which he hides his face from them, and writes 'bitter things against them.' Mark, all fears and doubts and scruples are begotten upon sin, either real or imaginary. Now, if the sin be but imaginary, an enlightened rectified judgment may easily and quickly scatter such fears, doubts, and scruples, as the sun doth mists and clouds, when it shines in its brightness; but if the sin be real, then there is no possibility of curing those fears, doubts, and scruples arising from thence, but by an unfeigned repentance and returning from that sin. Now, if I should produce all the scriptures and instances that stand ready pressed to prove this, I must transcribe a good part of the Bible; but this would be labour in vain, seeing it seemeth to have been a notion engraven even on natural conscience, viz., that sin so defiles persons, that till they be washed from it, neither they nor their services can be accepted; from whence arose that custom of setting water-pots at their entrance into their temples or places of worship. Let him that wants assurance, comfort, peace, and a sight of his interest in Christ, cast out every known sin, and set upon a universal course of reformation; for God will not give his cordials to those that have a foul stomach. Those that, against light and checks of conscience, dally and tamper with this sin or that, those God will have no commerce, no communion with; on such God will not lift up the light of his countenance: Rev. ii. 17, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and in that stone, a new name written.' These are all metaphorical expressions, which, being put together, do amount to as much as assurance; but mark, these are promised, τῷ νικῶντι, 'to him that overcometh,' to him that rides on conquering and to conquer. Oh that Christians would seriously remember this! The dearer it cost any one to part with his sins, the more sweet and comfortable will it be to call to mind the victory that through the Spirit of grace he has got over his sins. There is no comfort, joy, or peace to that which arises from the conquests of sin, especially of special sins. When Goliath was slain, what joy and triumph was there in the camp! So here.

[7.] Seventhly, Cherishing of any special or peculiar sin, or the keeping up of any known transgression, either in heart or life, against the Lord, and against the light of a man's own conscience, will hinder the soul from that *warm, lively, fervent, frequent, seasonable, sincere, and constant way of duty, as contributes most to the increase of grace, peace, comfort, and assurance, &c.*

[8.] Eighthly, *Seriously consider of the several assertions and concurrent judgments of our best and most famous divines in the present case.* I shall give you a taste of some of their sayings.<sup>1</sup>

*First,* 'A man,' saith one, 'can have no peace in his conscience that favoureth and retaineth any one sin in himself against his conscience.'

*Secondly,* Another saith, 'A man is in a damnable state, whatsoever good deeds seem to be in him, if he yield not to the work of the Holy Ghost for the leaving but of any one known sin which fighteth against peace of conscience.' But,

*Thirdly,* 'So long,' saith another, 'as the power of mortification destroyeth thy sinful affections, and so long as thou art unfeignedly displeas'd with all sin, and dost mortify the deeds of the body by the Spirit, thy case is the case of salvation.' But,

*Fourthly,* Another saith, 'A good conscience stands not with a purpose of sinning, no, not with irresolution against sin.' This must be understood of habitual purposes, and of a constant irresolution against sin.

*Fifthly,* 'The rich and precious box of a good conscience,' saith another, 'is polluted and made impure, if but one dead fly be suffered in it. One sin being quietly permitted, and suffered to live in the soul without being disturbed, resisted, resolved against, or lamented over, will certainly mar the peace of a good conscience.'

*Sixthly,* 'Where there is but any one sin,' saith another, 'nourished and fostered, all other our graces are not only blemished, but abolished; they are no graces.'<sup>2</sup>

*Seventhly,* Most true is that saying of Aquinas, 'That all sins are coupled together, though not in regard of conversion to temporal good, for some look to the good of gain, some of glory, some of pleasure, yet in regard of aversion from eternal good, that is God; so that he that looks but towards one sin is as much averted and turned back from God as if he looked to all; in which respect St James says, "He that offendeth in one is guilty of all,"' James ii. 10. Now, that ye may not mistake Aquinas, nor the scripture he cites, you must remember that the whole law is but one copulative, Exod. xvi. 18; Ezek. xviii. 10-13. Mark, he that breaketh one command habitually, breaketh all; not so actually. Such as are truly godly in respect of the habitual desires, purposes, bents, biases, inclinations, resolutions, and endeavours of their souls, do keep those very commands that actually they daily break. But a dispensatory conscience keeps not any one commandment of God. He that willingly and wilfully and habitually gives himself liberty to break any one commandment, is guilty of all; that is, 1. Either he breaks the chain of duties, and so breaks all the

<sup>1</sup> Most of these quotations, with many more of like sort, will be found in Spencer's fine folio of 'Things New and Old,' (1658.) Cf. under 'conscience' and 'sin.'—G.

<sup>2</sup> Dyke, 'Of the deceitfulness of the heart,' c. 16.

law, being copulative ; or, 2. With the same disposition of heart, that he willingly, wilfully, habitually breaks one, with the same disposition of heart he is ready pressed to break all. The apostle's meaning in that James ii. 10, is certainly this, viz., that suppose a man should keep the whole law for substance, except in some one particular, yet by allowing of himself in this particular, thereby he manifests that he kept no precept of the law in obedience and conscience unto God ; for if he did, then he would be careful to keep every precept. Thus much the words following import, and hereby he manifests that he is guilty of all. Some others conceive that therefore such a one may be said to be guilty of all, because by allowing of himself in any one sin, thereby he lies under that curse which is threatened against the transgressors of the law, Dent. xxvii. 26.

*Eighthly*, 'Every Christian should carry in his heart,' saith another, 'a constant and resolute purpose not to sin in anything ; for faith and the purpose of sinning can never stand together.' This must be understood of a habitual, not actual ; of a constant, not transient purpose. But,

*Ninthly*, 'One flaw in a diamond,' saith another, 'takes away the lustre and the price.' One puddle, if we wallow in it, will defile us. One man, in law, may keep possession. One piece of ward-land makes the heir liable to the king. So one sin lived in, and allowed, may make a man miserable for ever. But,

*Tenthly*, One turn may bring a man quite out of the way. One act of treason makes a traitor. Gideon had seventy sons, but one bastard, and yet that one bastard destroyed all the rest, Judg. viii. 31. 'One sin,' as well as one sinner, 'lived in and allowed,' may destroy much good,' saith another.

*Eleventhly*, 'He that favoureth one sin, though he forego many, does but as Benhadad, recover of one disease and die of another ; yea, he doth but take pains to go to hell,' saith another.

*Twelfthly*, 'Satan, by one lie to our first parents, made fruitless what God himself had preached to them immediately before,' saith another.

*Thirteenthly*, A man may, by one short act of sin, bring a long curse upon himself and his posterity, as Ham did when he saw his father Noah drunk : Gen. ix. 24, 25, 'And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him, and he said, Cursed is Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.' Canaan was Ham's son. Noah, as God's mouth, prophesied a curse upon the son for his father's sin. Here Ham is cursed in his son Canaan, and the curse entailed not only to Canaan, but to his posterity. Noah prophesies a long series and chain of curses upon Canaan and his children. He makes the curse hereditary to the name and nation of the Canaanites : 'A servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren,' that is, the vilest and basest servant ; for the Hebrews express the superlative degree by such a duplication as 'vanity of vanities ;' that is, most vain : 'a song of songs ;' that is, a most excellent song. So here, 'a servant of servants ;' that is, the vilest, the basest servant. Ah, heavy and prodigious curse, upon the account of one sin ! But,

*Fourteenthly*, Satan can be content that men should yield to God in many things, provided that they will be but true to him in some one thing; for he knows very well, that as one dram of poison may poison a man, and one stab at the heart may kill a man; so one sin unrepented of, one sin allowed, retained, cherished, and practised, will certainly damn a man. But,

*Fifteenthly*, Though all the parts of a man's body be sound, save only one, that one diseased and ulcerous part may be deadly to thee; for all the sound members cannot preserve thy life, but that one diseased and ulcerous member will hasten thy death; so one sin allowed, indulged, and lived in, will prove killing and damning to thee.

*Sixteenthly*, 'Observe,' saith another, 'that an unmortified sin allowed and wilfully retained will eat out all appearance of virtue and piety. Herod's high esteem of John and his ministry, and his reverencing of him and observing of him, and his forward performance of many good things, are all given over and laid aside at the instance and command of his master-sin, his reigning sin. John's head must go for it, if he won't let Herod enjoy his Herodias quietly.' But,

*Seventeenthly*, Some will leave all their sins but one; Jacob would let all his sons go but Benjamin. Satan can hold a man fast enough by one sin that he allows and lives in, as the fowler can hold the bird fast enough by one wing or by one claw.

*Eighteenthly*, Holy Polycarp, in the time of the fourth persecution, when he was commanded but to swear one oath, he made this answer: "Four-score and six years have I endeavoured to do God service, and all this while he never hurt me; how then can I speak evil of so good a Lord and Master who hath thus long preserved me! I am a Christian, and cannot swear; let heathens and infidels swear if they will, I cannot do it, were it to the saving of my life.'

*Nineteenthly*, A willing and a wilful keeping up, either in heart or life, any known transgression against the Lord, is a breach of the holy law of God; it is a fighting against the honour and glory of God, and is a reproach to the eye of God, the omnipresence of God.

*Twentiethly*, The keeping up of any known transgression against the Lord may endanger the souls of others, and may be found a fighting against all the cries, prayers, tears, promises, vows, and covenants that thou hast made to God, when thou hast been upon a sick-bed, or in eminent dangers, or near death; or else when thou hast been in solemn seeking of the Lord, either alone or with others. These things should be frequently and seriously thought of by such poor fools as are entangled by any lust.

*Twenty-firstly*, The keeping up of any known transgression against the Lord, either in heart or life, is a high tempting of Satan to tempt the soul; it will also greatly unfit the soul for all sorts of duties and services that he either owes to God, to himself, or others; it will also put a sting into all a man's troubles, afflictions, and distresses; it will also lay a foundation for despair; and it will make death, which is the king of terrors, and the terror of kings, to be very terrible to the soul.

*Twenty-secondly*, The keeping up of any known transgression against

the Lord, either in heart or life, will fight against all those patterns and examples in Holy Writ, that in duty and honour we are bound to imitate and follow. Pray, where do you find in any of the blessed Scriptures, that any of the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, or saints are ever charged with a willing or a wilful keeping up, either in their hearts or lives, any known transgression against the Lord?

*Twenty-thirdly*, The keeping up of any known transgression against the Lord will highly make against all clear, sweet, and standing communion with God. Parents use not to smile, nor be familiar with their children, nor to keep up any intimate communion with them, in their neglects and disobedience. It is so here.

*Twenty-fourthly*, The keeping up, either in heart or life, of any known transgression against the Lord, will fight against the standing joy, peace, comfort, and assurance of the soul. Joy in the Holy Ghost will make its nest nowhere but in a holy soul. So far as the Spirit is grieved he will suspend his consolations, Lam. i. 16. A man will have no more comfort from God than he makes conscience of sinning against God. A conscience good in point of integrity will be good also in point of tranquillity. If our hearts condemn us not, 'then have we confidence towards God'—and I may say also towards men, Acts xxiv. 16—oh, what comfort and solace hath a clear conscience! he hath something within to answer accusations without. I shall conclude this particular with a notable saying of one of the ancients. The joys of a good conscience are the paradise of souls, the delight of angels, the garden of delights, the field of blessing, the temple of Solomon, the court of God, the habitation of the Spirit. [Bernard.]

*Twenty-fifthly*, The keeping up of any known transgression, either in heart or life, against the Lord, is a high contempt of the all-seeing eye of God, of the omnipresence of God. It is well known what Ahasuerus, that great monarch, said concerning Haman, when coming in, he found him cast upon the queen's bed on which she sat; 'What,' saith he, 'will he force the queen before me, in the house?' Esther vii. 8. There was the killing emphasis in the words, 'before me;' 'will he force the queen before me?' What! will he dare to commit such a villany, and I stand and look on? O sirs! to do wickedly in the sight of God is a thing that he looks upon as the greatest affront and indignity that can possibly be done unto him. What, saith he, wilt thou be drunk before me, and swear and blaspheme before me, and be wanton and unclean before me, and break my laws before my eyes! This, then, is the killing aggravation of all sin that is done before the face of God, in the presence of God; whereas, the very consideration of God's omnipresence, that he stands and looks on, should be as a bar, a remora, to stop the proceedings of all wicked intendments, a dissuasive rather from sin than the least encouragement thereunto. It was an excellent saying of Ambrose, 'If thou canst not hide thyself from the sun, which is God's minister of light, how impossible will it be to hide thyself from him whose eyes are ten thousand times brighter than the sun.'<sup>1</sup> God's eye is the best marshal to keep the soul in a comely order. Let thine eye be ever on him whose eye is ever on thee. 'The eyes of

<sup>1</sup> O'flie. l. i., c. 14.



then where obedience is indeed, it is not partial, but universal; for he that doth any one thing that is commanded because it is commanded, he will be careful to do everything that is commanded, there being the same reason for all. They that are only for a partial obedience, they do break asunder the bond and reason of all obedience; for all obedience is to be founded upon the authority and will of God, because God, who hath authority over all his creatures, doth will and command us to obey his voice, to walk in his statutes. For this very reason do we stand bound to obey him; and if we do obey him upon this reason, then must we walk in all his statutes, for so hath he commanded us. And if we will not come up to this, but will walk in what statutes of his we please, then do we renounce his will as the obliging reason of our obedience, and do set up our own liking and pleasure as the reason thereof. God has so connexed the duties of his law one to another, that if there be not a conscientious care to walk according to all that the law requires, a man becomes a transgressor of the whole law; according to that of St James, chap. ii. 10, 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all.' The bond of all is broken, the authority of all is slighted, and that evil disposition, that sinful frame of heart, that works a man to venture upon the breach of one command, would make him venture upon the breach of any command, were it not for some infirmity of nature, or because his purse will not hold out to maintain it, or for shame, or loss, or because of the eyes of friends, or the sword of the magistrate, or for some other sinister respects. He that gives himself liberty to live in the breach of any one command of God, is qualified with a disposition of heart to break them all. Every single sin contains virtually all sin in it. He that allows himself a liberty to live in the breach of any one particular law of God, he casts contempt and scorn upon the authority that made the whole law, and upon this account breaks it all. And the apostle gives the reason of it in verse 11; for he that said, 'Do not commit adultery,' said also, 'Do not kill.' Now, if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law; not that he is guilty of all distributively, but collectively; for the law is copulative, there is a chain of duties, and these are all so linked one to another, that you cannot break one link of the chain, but you break the whole chain. No man can live in the breach of any known command of God, but he wrongs every command of God. He hath no real regard to any of the commandments of God, that hath not a regard to all the commandments of God. There is one and the same lawgiver in respect of all the commandments; he that gave one command gave also another. Therefore he that observes one commandment in obedience unto God, whose commandment it is, he will observe all, because all are his commandments; and he that slightens one commandment is guilty of all, because he doth contemn the authority of him that gave them all. Even in those commandments which he doth observe, he hath no respect to the will and authority of him that gave them; therefore, as Calvin doth well observe upon James ii. 10, 11, 'That there is no obedience towards God, where there is not a uniform endeavour to please God, as well in one thing as in another.'

[3.] Thirdly, Partial obedience tends to *plain atheism*; for by the

same reason that you slight the will of God in any commandment, by the same reason you may despise his will in every commandment; for every commandment of God is his will, and it is 'holy, spiritual, just, and good,' Rom. vii. 12, 14, and contrary to our sinful lusts. And if this be the reason why such and such commandments of God won't down with you, then by the same reason none of them must be of authority with you.

[4.] Fourthly, God requires *universal obedience*: Deut. v. 33, &c., and x. 12, and xi. 21, 22, &c.; and Jer. vii. 23, 'Walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you;' Mat. xxviii. 20, 'Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you,' &c.

[5.] Fifthly, Partial obedience is *an audacious charge against God himself, as to his wisdom, or power, or goodness*; for those statutes of God which you will not come up unto, either they are as righteous as the rest, and as holy as the rest, and as spiritual as the rest, and as good as the rest, or they are not. If they be as holy, spiritual, just, righteous, and good as the rest, why should you not walk in them as well as in the rest? To say they are not as holy, spiritual, righteous, &c., as the rest, Oh what a blasphemous charge is this against God himself, in prescribing unto him anything that is not righteous and good, &c., and likewise in making his will, which is the rule of all righteousness and goodness, to be partly righteous and partly unrighteous, to be partly good and partly bad.

[6.] Sixthly, *God delights in universal obedience, and in those that perform it*: Deut. v. 29, 'O that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always.' Upon this account Abraham is called the friend of God in Scripture three times, Isa. xli. 8; 2 Chron. xx. 7; James ii. 3. And upon the very same account God called David 'a man after his own heart': Acts xiii. 22, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will,'—*πάντα τα θελήματα*, all my wills, to note the universality and sincerity of his obedience.

[7.] Seventhly, *There is not any one statute of God but it is good and for our good*; ergo, we should walk in all his statutes: Deut. v. 25, 'Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you, that you may live, and that it may be well with you.' What one path hath the Lord commanded us to walk in, but as it concerns his own glory, so likewise it concerns our good?

Is it not good for us to love the Lord, and to set him up as the object of our fear, and to act faith on him, and to worship him in spirit and in truth, and to be tender of his glory, and to sanctify his day, and to keep off from sin, and to keep close to his ways? But,

[8.] Eighthly, *Universal obedience is the condition upon which the promise of mercy and salvation runs*: Ezek. xviii. 21, 'If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all his statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.'

[9.] Ninthly, *Our hearts must be perfect with the Lord our God*: Deut. xviii. 13, 'Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God;' and Gen. xvii. 1, 'Walk before me, and be thou perfect.' Now, how can

our hearts be said to be perfect with God if we do prevaricate with him; if in some things we obey him and in other things we will not obey him, if we walk in some of his statutes but will not walk in all his statutes, if in some part we will be his servants and in other part of our lives we will be the servants of sin. But,

[10.] Tenthly, *If the heart be sound and upright, it will yield entire and universal obedience:* Ps. cxix. 80, 'Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I may not be ashamed;' and verse 6, 'Then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect to all thy commandments.' By these verses, compared together, it appears that then the heart is sound and sincere, when a man has respect unto all God's commandments. Without a universal obedience, a man can never have that 'hope which maketh not ashamed.' But,

[11.] Eleventhly, *Either we must endeavour to walk in all the statutes of God, or else we must find some dispensation or toleration from God to free us, and excuse us and hold us indemnified, though we do not walk in all of them.* Now, what one commandment is there from obedience whereunto, God excuseth any man, or will not punish him for the neglect of obedience unto it? The apostle saith, 'That whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all,' James ii. 10. If he prevaricates with God, as to any one particular commandment of his, his heart is naught; he is guilty of all, he hath really no regard of any of the rest of God's laws. But,

[12.] Twelfthly, *The precious saints and servants of God, whose examples are recorded, and set forth for our imitation, they have been very careful to perform universal obedience.* Will you see it in Abraham, who was ready to comply with God in all his royal commands? When God commanded him to leave his country, and his father's house, he did it, Gen. xii. When God commanded him to be circumcised, though it were both shameful and painful, he submitted unto it, Gen. xvii. When God commanded him to send away his son Ishmael, though when Sarah spake to him about it, the thing seemed very grievous unto him, yet as soon as he saw it to be the will of God, he was obedient unto it, Gen. xxi. When God commanded him to sacrifice his son Isaac, his only son, the son of his old age, the son of the promise, the son of his delight; yea, that son from whom was to proceed that Jesus in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and though all this might seem to cross both nature and grace, both reason and religion, yet Abraham was willing to obey God in this also, and to do what he commanded, Gen. xxii. So David was 'a man after God's own heart,' which fulfilled all his wills, as the original runs in Acts xiii. 22. And it is said of Zacharias and Elizabeth, that they walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, &c., Luke i. 6; 1 Thes. ii. 10, 'Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe.'

[13.] Thirteenthly, Universal obedience speaks out *the strength of our love to Christ, and the reality of our friendship with Christ*, John xv. 14, 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' That child shews most love to his father, that observes all his precepts; and

that servant shews most love to his master, that observes all his master's commands, and that wife shews most love to her husband, that observes all he requires in the Lord. So here, &c.

[14.] Fourteenthly, Universal obedience will give *most peace, rest, quiet, and comfort to the conscience.* Such a Christian will be as an eye that hath no mote to trouble it; as a kingdom that hath no rebel to annoy it; as a ship that hath no leak to disturb it: Ps. cxix. 165, 'Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.' But,

[15.] Fifteenthly, *Man's holiness must be conformable to God's holiness:* Eph. v. 1, 2, 'Be ye followers of God as dear children;' Mat. v. 48, 'Be ye perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.' Now 'God is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works,' and so ought all to desire and endeavour to be, that would be saved: 1 Pet. i. 15, 'As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye also holy in all manner of conversation; ver. 16, because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.' But,

[16.] Sixteenthly, *The holiness of a Christian must be conformable to the holiness of Christ,* 'Be ye followers of me, as I am of Christ,' 1 Cor. xi. 1. Now Christ was holy in all things. 'It behoveth us,' said he, 'to fulfil all righteousness.' And this should be the care of every one that professeth himself to be Christ's, to endeavour 'to be holy as Christ was holy:' 1 John ii. 6, 'He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself to walk even as he walked.' But,

[17.] Seventeenthly, *Servants must obey their earthly masters, not in some things only, but in all things, to wit, that are just and lawful:* Titus ii. 9, 'Exhort servants to be obedient to their own masters, and to please them well in all things.' What master will be content that his servant should choose how far forth he will observe and do those things which he doth require of him? much less may we think that such arbitrary and partial performances will please that God who is our heavenly Master.

[18.] Eighteenthly, *The promises of mercy, both spiritual and temporal, are made over to universal obedience,* 1 Kings vi. 12, 13; Deut. xxviii. 1-3; Ezek. xviii. 21, 22, 27, 28. Turn to all these promises and dilate on them, &c.

[19.] Nineteenthly, *One sin never goes alone, as you may see in the falls of Adam and Eve, Lot, Abraham, Noah, Jacob, Joseph, Job, David, Solomon, Peter, Ahab, Judas, Jeroboam.* One sin will make way for more; as one little thief can open the door to let in many great ones. Satan will be sure to nest himself, to lodge himself in the least sins, as birds nest and lodge themselves in the smallest branches of the tree, and there he will do all he can to hatch all manner of wickedness. A little wedge makes way for a greater; and so do little sins make way for greater.

[20.] Twentiethly, *The reasons of turning from sin are universally binding to a gracious soul.* There are the same reasons and grounds for a penitent man's turning from every sin as there is for his turning from any one sin. Do you turn from this or that sin because the Lord hath forbid it? why! upon the same ground you must turn from every sin; for God has forbid every sin as well as this or that

particular sin. There is the same authority forbidding or commanding in all; and if the authority of God awes a man from one sin, it will awe him from all, &c. But,

[21.] Twenty-firstly, *One sin allowed and lived in will keep Christ and the soul asunder.* As one rebel, one traitor, hid and kept in the house, will keep a prince and his subjects asunder; or as one stone in the pipe will keep the water and the cistern asunder; so here. But,

[22.] Twenty-secondly, *One sin allowed and lived in will unfit a person for suffering;* as one cut or shot in the shoulder may hinder a man from bearing a burden. Will he ever lay down his life for Christ, that can't, that won't lay down a lust for Christ? But,

[23.] Twenty-thirdly, *One sin allowed and lived in is sufficient to deprive a man for ever of the greatest good.* One sin allowed and allowed in will as certainly deprive a man of the blessed vision of God, and of all the treasures, pleasures, and delights that be at God's right hand, as a thousand. One sin stripped the fallen angels of all their glory; and one sin stripped our first parents of all their dignity and excellency, Gen. iii. 4, 5. One fly in the box of precious ointment spoils the whole box; one thief may rob a man of all his treasure; one disease may deprive a man of all his health; and one drop of poison will spoil the whole glass of wine: and so one sin allowed and lived in will make a man miserable for ever. One millstone will sink a man to the bottom of the sea, as well as a hundred. It is so here. But,

[24.] Twenty-fourthly, *One sin allowed and lived in will eat out all peace of conscience.* As one string that jars will spoil the sweetest music; so one sin countenanced and lived in will spoil the music of conscience. One pirate may rob a man of all he has in this world. But,

[25.] Twenty-fifthly and lastly, *The sinner would have God to forgive him, not only some of his sins, but all his sins; and therefore it is but just and equal that he should turn from all his sins.* If God be so faithful and just to forgive us all our sins, we must be so faithful and just as to turn from all our sins. The plaster must be as broad as the sore, and the tent<sup>1</sup> as long and as deep as the wound. It argues horrid hypocrisy, damnable folly, and wonderful impudency for a man to beg the pardon of those very sins that he is resolved never to forsake, &c.

*Objection.* But it is impossible for any man on earth to walk in all God's statutes, to obey all his commands, to do his will in all things, to walk according to the full breadth of God's royal law.

*Solution.* I answer, there is a twofold walking in all the statutes of God; there is a twofold obedience to all the royal commands of God.

(1.) *First, One is legal, when all is done that God requireth;* and all is done as God requireth, when there is not one path of duty, but we do walk in it perfectly and continually. Thus no man on earth doth or can walk in all God's statutes, or fully do what he commandeth. 'For in many things we offend all,' James iii. 2. So Eccles. vii. 20, 'There is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.' 1 Kings viii. 46, 'For there is no man that sinneth not.'

<sup>1</sup> 'A roll of lint used in searching or cleansing a deep wound.'—G.

Prov. xx. 9, 'Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?' Job xiv. 4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.' 1 John i. 8, 'If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.'

(2.) *Secondly, Another is evangelical, which is such a walking in all the statutes of God, and such a keeping of all the commands of God, as is in Christ accepted of, and accounted of, as if we did keep them all.* This walking in all God's statutes, and keeping of all his commandments, and doing of them all, is not only possible, but it is also actual in every believer, in every sincere Christian, and it consists in these particulars:—

[1.] First, *In the approbation of all the statutes and commandments of God.* Rom. vii. 12, 'The commandment is holy, and just, and good.' Ver. 16, 'I consent unto the law that it is good.' There is both assent and consent. Ps. cxix. 128, 'I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right.' A sincere Christian approves of all divine commands, though he cannot perfectly keep all divine commands. But,

[2.] *Secondly, It consists in a conscientious submission unto the authority of all the statutes of God.* Every command of God hath an authority within his heart, and over his heart. Ps. cxix. 161, 'My heart standeth in awe of thy word.' A sincere Christian stands in awe of every known command of God, and hath a spiritual regard unto them all. Ps. cxix. 6, 'I have respect unto all thy commandments.' But,

[3.] *Thirdly, It consists in a cordial willingness and a cordial desire to walk in all the statutes of God, and to obey all the commands of God.* Rom. vii. 18, 'For to will is present with me.' Ps. cxix. 5, 'O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes!' Ver. 8, 'I will keep thy statutes.' But,

[4.] *Fourthly, It consists in a sweet complacency in all God's commands.* Ps. cxix. 47, 'I will delight myself in thy commandment which I have loved.' Rom. vii. 22, 'I delight in the law of God after the inward man.' But,

[5.] *Fifthly, He who obeys sincerely obeys universally.* Though not in regard of practice, which is impossible, yet in regard of affection, he loves all the commands of God, yea, he dearly loves those very commands of God that he cannot obey, by reason of the infirmity of the flesh, by reason of that body of sin and death that he bears about with him. Ponder upon that: Ps. cxix. 97, 'O how I love thy law!' Such a pang of love he felt, as could not otherwise be vented, but by this pathetic exclamation, 'O how I love thy law,' vers. 113, 163, 127, 159, 167. Ponder upon all these verses. But,

[6.] *Sixthly, A sincere Christian obeys all the commands of God; he is universal in his obedience, in respect of valuation or esteem.* He highly values all the commands of God; he highly prizes all the commands of God; as you may clearly see by comparing these scriptures together, Ps. cxix. 72, 127, 128, xix. 8–11; Job xxiii. 12. But,

[7.] *Seventhly, A sincere Christian is universal in his obedience, in respect of his purpose and resolution; he purposes and resolves, by divine assistance, to obey all, to keep all.* Ps. cxix. 106, 'I have

sworn, and will perform it, that I will keep thy righteous judgments.' Ps. xvii. 3, 'I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. But,

[8.] Eighthly, A sincere Christian is universal in his obedience, *in respect of his inclination*; he has an habitual inclination in him to keep all the commands of God, 1 Kings viii. 57, 58; 2 Chron. xxx. 17-20; Ps. cxix. 112, 'I have inclined my heart to perform thy statutes always, even to the end.' But,

[9.] Ninthly and lastly, Their evangelical keeping of all the commands of God consists *in their sincere endeavour to keep them all*; they put out themselves in all the ways and parts of obedience; they do not willingly and wittingly slight or neglect any commandment, but are striving to conform themselves thereunto. As a dutiful son doth all his father's commands, at least in point of endeavour, so your sincere Christians make conscience of keeping all the commands of God in respect of endeavours. Ps. cxix. 59, 'I turned my feet unto thy testimonies.' God esteems of evangelical obedience as perfect obedience. Zacharias had his failings, he did hesitate through unbelief, for which he was struck dumb; yet the text tells you, 'That he walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless,' Luke i. 6, because he did cordially desire and endeavour to obey God in all things. Evangelical obedience is true for the essence, though not perfect for the degree. A child of God obeys all the commands of God, in respect of all his sincere desires, purposes, resolutions, and endeavours; and this God accepts in Christ for perfect and complete obedience. This is the glory of the covenant of grace, that God accepts and esteems of sincere obedience as perfect obedience. Such who sincerely endeavour to keep the whole law of God, they do keep the whole law of God in an evangelical sense, though not in a legal sense. A sincere Christian is for the first table as well as the second, and the second as well as the first; he doth not adhere to the first and neglect the second, as hypocrites do; neither doth he adhere to the second and contemn the first, as profane men do. O Christians, for your support and comfort, know that when your desires and endeavours are to do the will of God entirely, as well in one thing as another, God will graciously pardon your failings, and pass by your imperfections. 'He will spare you as a man spareth his son that serveth him,' Mal. iii. 17. Though a father see his son to fail, and come short in many things which he enjoins him to do, yet knowing that his desires and endeavours are to serve him, and please him to the full, he will not be rigid and severe with him, but will be indulgent to him, and will spare him, and pity him, and shew all love and kindness to him. The application is easy, &c.

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