

believers, you have peace in Christ, when there is little in your own hearts; and your hearts might be filled with peace too, if you would exercise faith upon Christ for that end. It is your own fault if you be without rest in any condition in this world. Set yourselves to study the *fulness* of Christ, and to clear your *interest* in him; believe what the scriptures reveal of him, and live as you believe, and you will quickly find the peace of God filling your hearts and minds.

Blessed be God for Jesus Christ.

SERMON X.

Wherein the general Exhortation is enforced by one Motive drawn from the first Title of CHRIST.

MATTH. ix. 12.

But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

HAVING opened, in the former discourses, the *nature* and *method* of the *application* of Christ to sinners; it remains now that I press it upon every soul, as it expects peace and pardon from God, to *apply* and *put on Jesus Christ*, i. e. to get union with him by faith, whilst he is yet held forth in the free and gracious tenders of the gospel. To which purpose I shall now labour in this general *use of exhortation*, in which my last subject engaged me; wherein divers arguments will be further urged, both from

1. The titles, and
2. The privileges of Jesus Christ.

The titles of Christ are so many motives or arguments fitted to persuade men to come unto him. Amongst which, *Christ, as the Physician of souls*, comes under our first consideration, in the text before us.

The occasion of these words of Christ, was the call of Matthew the publican, who, having first opened his heart, next opened his house to Christ, and entertains him there. This strange and unexpected change, wrought upon Matthew, quickly brings in all the neighbourhood, and many publicans and sinners resorted thither; at which the stomachs of the proud Pharisees began to swell. From this occasion they took offence at Christ, and, in this verse, Christ takes off the offence, by such an answer as was fitted both for their *conviction* and his own *vindication*. But when Jesus

heard that, he said unto them, "The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick."

He gives it, saith one, as a reason why he conversed so much with Publicans and sinners, and so little among the Pharisees, because there was more work for him; Christ came to be a physician to sick souls; Pharisees were so well in their own conceit, that Christ saw that they would have little to do with him, and so he applied himself to those who were more sensible of their sickness.

In the words, we have an account of the *temper* and *state* both of,

1. The secure and unconvinced sinner,
2. The humbled and convinced sinner. And,
3. Of the carriage of Christ, and his different respect to both.

First, The secure sinner is here described, both with respect to his own apprehensions of himself, as one that is *whole*, and also by his low value and esteem for Christ, he sees no need of him; "The whole have no need of a physician."

Secondly, The convinced and humbled sinner is here also described, and that both by his state and condition, he is *sick*; and by his valuation of Jesus Christ, he greatly needs him: they that are sick need the *physician*.

Thirdly, We have here Christ's carriage, and different respect to both; the former he rejects and passeth by, as those with whom he hath no concernment; the latter he converseth with in order to their cure.

The words thus opened, are fruitful in observations. I shall neither note nor insist upon any beside this one, which suits the scope of my discourse, viz.

Doct. *That the Lord Jesus Christ is the only physician for sick souls.*

The world is a great *hospital*, full of sick and dying souls, all wounded by one and the same mortal weapon, sin. Some are senseless of their misery, feel not their pains, value not a physician; others are full of sense, as well as danger: mourn under the apprehension of their condition, and sadly bewail it. The merciful God hath, in his abundant compassion to the perishing world, sent a physician from heaven, and given him his orders under the great seal of heaven, for his office, Isa. lxi. 1, 2. which he opened and read in the audience of the people, Luke iv. 18. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted," &c. He is the tree of life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations: he is *Jehovah Rophe*, the Lord that

healeth us; and that as he is *Jehovah Tzidkenu*, the Lord our righteousness. The *brazen serpent* that healed the Israelites in the wilderness, was an excellent type of our great physician, Christ, and is expressly applied to him, John iii. 14. He rejects none that come, and heals all whom he undertakes; but more particularly, I will,

First, Point at those diseases which Christ heals in sick souls, and by what means he heals them.

Secondly, The excellency of this physician above all others: there is none like Christ, he is the only physician for wounded souls.

First, We will enquire into the diseases which Christ the physician cures, and they are reducible to two heads, viz.

1. Sin, and,

2. Sorrow.

First, *The disease of sin*; in which three things are found exceeding burdensome to sick souls.

1. The guilt,

2. The dominion,

3. The inherence of sin; all cured by this physician, and how.

First, The guilt of sin; this is a mortal wound, a stab in the very heart of a poor sinner. It is a fond and groundless distinction that Papists make of sins *mortal* and *venial*; all sin, in its own nature is mortal, Rom. vi. 23. "The wages of sin is death." Yet though it be so in its own nature, Christ can and doth cure it by the sovereign balsam of his own precious blood, Eph. i. 7. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." This is the deepest and deadliest wound the soul of man feels in this world. What is guilt but the obligation of the soul to everlasting punishment and misery? It puts the soul under the sentence of God to eternal wrath; the condemning sentence of the great and terrible God; than which, nothing is found more dreadful and insupportable: put all pains, all poverty, all afflictions, all miseries, in one scale, and God's condemnation in the other, and you weigh but so many feathers against a talent of lead.

This disease, our great physician, Christ, cures, by remission, which is the dissolving of the obligation to punishment; the loosening of the soul that was bound over to the wrath and condemnation of God, Col. i. 13, 14. Heb. vi. 12. Micah vii. 17, 18, 19. This remission being made, the soul is immediately cleared from all its obligations to punishment. Rom. viii. 1. "There is no condemnation." All bonds are cancelled, the guilt of all sins is healed or removed, original and actual, great and small. This cure is performed upon souls *by the blood of Christ*: nothing is found in

heaven or earth, besides his blood that is able to heal this disease. Heb. ix. 22. "Without shedding of blood there is no remission;" nor is it any blood that will do it, but that only which dropped from the wounds of Christ. Isa. liii. 5. "By his stripes we are healed." His blood only is innocent and precious blood, 1 Pet. i. 19. blood of infinite worth and value; blood of God, Acts xx. 18. blood prepared for this very purpose, Heb. x. 5. This is the blood that performs the cure; and how great a cure is it! for this cure, the souls of believers shall be praising and magnifying their great Physician in heaven to all eternity, Rev. i. 5, 6. "To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, &c. to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever."

Secondly, The next evil in sin cured by Christ, is the dominion of it over the souls of poor sinners. Where sin is in dominion, the soul is in a very sad condition; for it darkens the understanding, depraves the conscience, stiffens the will, hardens the heart, misplaces and disorders all the affections; and thus every faculty is wounded by the power and dominion of sin over the soul. How difficult is the cure of this disease! It passes the skill of angels or men to heal it; but Christ undertakes it, and makes a perfect cure of it at last, and this he doth by his Spirit. As he cures the guilt of sin by pouring out his blood for us; so he cures the dominion of sin by pouring out his Spirit upon us. Justification is the cure of guilt, sanctification the cure of the dominion of sin. For,

First. As the dominion of sin darkens the *understanding*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. so the Spirit of holiness which Christ sheds upon his people, cures the darkness and blindness of that noble faculty, and restores it again, Eph. v. 8. They that were darkness are hereby light in the Lord; the anointing of the Spirit teacheth them all things, 1 John ii. 27.

Secondly, As the dominion of sin depraved and defiled the conscience, Tit. i. 15. wounded it to that degree, as to disable it to the performance of all its offices and functions; so that it was neither able to apply, convince, or tremble at the word: So, when the Spirit of holiness is shed forth, O what a tender sense fills the renewed conscience! For what small things will it check, smite, and rebuke! How strongly will it bind to duty, and bar against sin.

Thirdly, As the dominion of sin stiffened the will and made it stubborn and rebellious, so Christ, by sanctifying it, brings it to be pliant and obedient to the will of God. "Lord, (saith the sinner) what wilt thou have me to do!" Acts ix. 6.

Fourthly, As the power of sin hardeneth the heart so that nothing could affect it, or make any impression upon it; when sanctification comes upon the soul, it thaws and breaks it, as hard as

it was, and makes it to dissolve in the breast of a sinner in godly sorrow, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. "I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh." It will now melt ingenuously under the threatenings of the word, 2 Kings xxii. 19. or the strokes of the rod, Jer. xxxi. 18. or the manifestations of grace and mercy, Luke vii. 38.

Fifthly, As the power of sin misplaced and disordered all the affections, so sanctification reduces them again and sets them right, Psal. iv. 6, 7. And thus you see how sanctification becomes the rectitude, health, and due temper of the soul, so far as it prevails, curing the diseases that sin in its dominion filled the soul with. True it is, this cure is not perfected in this life; there are still some remains of the old diseases in the holiest souls, notwithstanding sin be dethroned from its dominion over them: but the cure is begun, and daily advances towards perfection, and at last will be complete, as will appear in the cure of the next evil of sin; namely,

Thirdly, The *inherence* of sin in the soul: this is a sore disease, the very core and root of all our other complaints and ailes. This made the holy apostle bemoan himself and wail so bitterly, Rom. vii. 17. because of "sin that dwelt in him." And the same misery is bewailed by all sanctified persons all the world over.

It is a wonderful mercy to have the guilt and dominion of sin cured, but we shall never be perfectly sound and well, till the existence or in-dwelling of sin in our natures be cured too: when once that is done, then we shall feel no more pain nor sorrows for sin: and this our great *Physician* will at last perform for us and upon us. But as the cure of guilt was by our *justification*, the cure of the dominion of sin by our *sanctification*: so the third and last, which perfects the whole cure, will be by our *glorification*: and till then, it is not to be expected. For it is a clear case, that sin like ivy in the old walls, will never be gotten out till the walls be pulled down, and then it is pulled up by the roots. This cure Christ will perform in a moment, upon our dissolution. For it is plain,

First, That none but perfected souls, freed from all sin, are admitted into heaven, Eph. v. 27. Heb. xii. 23. Rev. xxi. 27.

Secondly, It is as plain, that no such personal perfection and freedom is found in any man on this side death and the grave, 1 John i. 8. 1 Kings viii. 46. Phil. iii. 12. a truth sealed by the sad experience of all the saints on earth.

Thirdly, If such freedom and perfection must be before we can be perfectly happy, and no such thing be done in this life, it remains that it must be done immediately upon their *dissolution*, and at the very time of their glorification. As sin came in at the time

of the union of their souls and bodies in the womb, so it will go out at the time of their separation by death; then will Christ put the last hand to this glorious work, and perfect that cure which hath been so long under his hand, in this world; and thenceforth sin shall have no power upon them, it shall never tempt them more, it shall never defile them more, it shall never grieve and sadden their hearts any more: henceforth it shall never cloud their evidences, darken their understandings, or give the least interruption to their communion with God. When sin is gone, all these, its mischievous effects, are gone with it. So that I may speak it to the comfort of all gracious hearts, according to what the Lord told the Israelites, in Deut. xii. 8, 9. (to which I allude for illustration of this most comfortable truth) "Ye shall not do after all the things that ye do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes, for ye are not as yet come to the rest, and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you." Whilst you are under Christ's cure upon earth, but not perfectly healed, your understandings mistake, your thoughts wander, your affections are dead, and your communion with God is daily interrupted; but it shall not be so in heaven, where the cure is perfect: you shall not there know, love, or delight in God in the manner you do this day; for you are not as yet come to the rest, and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you. And so much as to the diseases of sin, and Christ's method of curing them.

Secondly, As sin is the disease of the *saints*, so also is *sorrow*; the best *saints* must pass through the valley of *Bacha*, to heaven. How many tears fall from the eyes of the *saints*, upon the account of outward as well as inward troubles, even after their reconciliation with God? Through much tribulation we must enter into the "kingdom of God," Acts xiv. 22. It would be too great a digression in this place, to note but the more general heads under which almost infinite particulars of troubles and afflictions are found; it shall suffice only to shew, that whatever distress or trouble any poor soul is in, upon any account whatsoever, if that soul belongs to Jesus Christ, he will take care of it *for the present*, and deliver it at last by a complete cure.

First, Christ cures troubles, by *sanctifying* them to the souls of his that are under affliction, and makes their very troubles *medicinal* and healing to them. Trouble is a *scorpion*, and hath a deadly sting, but Christ is a wise *physician*, and extracts a sovereign oil out of this *scorpion*, that heals the wound it makes. By afflictions, our wise Physician purges our corruptions, and so prevents or cures greater troubles by lesser; inward sorrows by outward ones.

Isa. xxvii. 9. "By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin."

Secondly, Christ cures outward troubles by inward consolations, which are made to rise in the inner man as high as the waters of affliction do upon the outward man, 2 Cor. i. 5. One drop of spiritual comfort is sufficient to sweeten a whole ocean of outward trouble. It was an high expression of an afflicted father, whom God comforted, just upon the death of his dear and only son*, with some clearer manifestations of his love than was usual: "O, (said he) might I but have such consolations as these, I could be willing (were it possible) to lay an only son into the grave every day I have to live in this world." Thus all the troubles of the world are cured by Christ. John xvi. 33. "In the world ye shall have trouble, but in me ye shall have peace."

Thirdly, Christ cures all outward sorrows and troubles in his people by death, which is their removal from the place of sorrows to peace and rest for evermore. Now God wipes all tears from their eyes, and the days of their mourning are at an end; they then put off the garments and spirit of mourning, and enter into peace, Isa. lvii. 2. They come to that place and state where tears and sighs are things unknown to the inhabitants; one step beyond the state of this mortality, brings us quite out of the sight and hearing of all troubles and lamentations. These are the diseases of souls; *sin*, and *sorrow*; and thus they are cured by Christ, the *Physician*.

Secondly, Next I shall shew you that Jesus Christ is the only *Physician* of souls, none like him for a sick sinner; and this will be evident in divers respects.

First, None so wise and judicious as Jesus Christ, to understand and comprehend the nature, depth and danger of soul-diseases. O how ignorant and unacquainted are men with the state and case of afflicted souls! But "Christ hath the tongue of the learned, that he should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary," Isa. l. 4. He only understands the weight of sin, and depth of inward troubles of sin.

Secondly, None so able to cure and heal the wounds of afflicted souls as Christ is; he only hath those medicines that can cure a sick soul. The blood of Christ, and nothing else, in heaven or earth, is able to cure the mortal wounds which guilt inflicts upon a trembling conscience; let men try all other receipts, and costly experience shall convince them of their insufficiency. Conscience may be benumbed by stupefactive medicines, prepared by the devil,

* *Nihil corpus sentit in nervo, cum anima sit in celo*, i. e. The body has no feeling when the soul is in heaven.

for that end; but pacified it can never be but by the blood of Christ, Heb. xvi. 22.

Thirdly, None so tender-hearted and sympathizing with sick souls as Jesus Christ; he is full of bowels and tender compassions to afflicted souls; he is one that can have compassion, because he hath had experience, Heb. v. 2. If I must come unto the surgeon's hands with broken bones, give me such an one to chuse whose own bones have been broken, who hath felt the anguish in himself. Christ knows what it is by experience, having felt the anguish of inward troubles, the weight of God's wrath, and the terrors of a forsaking God, more than any or all the sons of men: this makes him tender over distressed souls. Isa. xlii. 3. "A bruised reed he will not break, and smoking flax he will not quench."

Fourthly, None cures in so wonderful a method as Christ doth; he heals us by his stripes, Isa. liii. 5. The Physician dies that the patient may live: his wounds must bleed, that ours may be cured; he feels the smart and pain, that we might have ease and comfort. No physician but Christ will cure others at this rate.

Fifthly, None so ready to relieve a sick soul as Christ; he is within the call of a distressed soul at all times. Art thou sick for sin, weary of sin, and made truly willing to part with sin? lift up but thy sincere cry to the Lord Jesus for help, and he will quickly be with thee. When the prodigal, the emblem of a convinced, humbled sinner, said, in himself, I will return to my father, the father ran to meet him, Luke xv. 20. He can be with thee in a moment.

Sixthly, None so willing to receive and undertake all distressed and afflicted souls as Jesus Christ is; he refuses none that come to him. John vi. 37. "He that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." Whatever their sins have been, or their sorrows are; however they have wounded their own souls with the deepest gashes of guilt; how desperate and helpless soever their case appears in their own or others eyes, he never puts them off, or discourages them, if they be but willing to come, Isa. i. 18, 19.

Seventhly, None so happy and successful as Christ; he never fails of performing a perfect cure upon those he undertakes; never was it known that any soul miscarried in his hands, John iii. 15, 16. Other physicians, by mistakes, by ignorance, or carelessness, fill church-yards, and cast away the lives of men; but Christ suffers none to perish that commit themselves to him.

Eighthly, None so free and generous as Christ; he doth all *gratis*; he sells not his medicines, though they be of infinite value; but freely gives them; Isa. lv. 1. "He that hath no money, let him come." If any be sent away, it is the rich, Luke i. 53. not the

poor and needy: those that will not accept the remedy as a free gift, but will needs purchase it at a price.

Ninthly, and lastly, None rejoice in the recovery of souls more than Christ doth. O! it is unspeakably delightful to him to see the efficacy of his blood upon our souls; Isa. liii. 11. "He shall see the travail of his soul, (i. e. the success of his death and sufferings) and shall be satisfied." When he foresaw the success of the gospel upon the world, it is said, Luke x. 21. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in Spirit." And thus you see there is no physician like Christ for sick souls.

The uses of this point are,

For information and direction.

First, From whence we are informed of many great and necessary truths deducible from this: As,

Inference 1. How inexpressible is the grace of God, in providing such a physician as Christ, for the sick and dying souls of sinners! O blessed be God that there is a *balm in Gilead, and a Physician there!* that their case is not desperate, forlorn and remediless, as that the devils and damned is. There is but one case exempted from cure, and that, such as is not incident to any sensible, afflicted soul, Matth. xii. 31. and this only excepted, all manner of sins and diseases are capable of a cure. Though there be such a disease as is incurable, yet take this for thy comfort, never any soul was sick, i. e. sensibly burdened with it, and willing to come to Jesus Christ for healing; for under that sin the will is so wounded, that they have no desire to Christ. O inestimable mercy! that the sickest sinner is capable of a perfect cure! There be thousands, and ten thousands now in heaven and earth, who said once, Never was any case like theirs; so dangerous, so hopeless. The greatest of sinners have been perfectly recovered by Christ, 1 Tim. i. 15. 1 Cor. vi. 11. O mercy, never to be duly estimated!

Infer. 2. What a powerful restraint from sin is the very method ordained by God for the cure of it! Isa. liii. 5. "By his stripes we are healed." The Physician must die, that the patient might live; no other thing but the blood, the precious blood of Christ, is found in heaven or earth able to heal us, Heb. ix. 22, 26. This blood of Christ must be freshly applied to every new wound sin makes upon our souls, 1 John ii. 1, 2. every new sin wounds him afresh, opens the wounds of Christ anew. O think of this again and again, you that so easily yield to the solicitations of Satan. Is it so easy and so cheap to sin as you seem to make it? Doth the cure of souls cost nothing? True, it is free to us, but was it so to Christ? No, it was not; he knows the price of it, though you do not. Hath Christ healed you by his stripes, and can you put him under fresh sufferings for you so easily? Have you forgot also your own

sick days and nights for sin, that you are careless in resisting and preventing it? Sure it is not easy for saints to wound Christ, and their own souls, at one stroke. If you renew your sins, you must also renew your sorrows and repentance, Psal. li. title. 2 Sam. xii. 13. you must feel the anguish and pain of a troubled spirit again, things with which the saints are not unacquainted; of which they may say, as the church, "Remembering my affliction, the worm-wood and the gall, my soul hath them still in remembrance," Lam. iii. 19. Yea, and if you will be remiss in your watch, and so easily incur new guilt, though a pardon in the blood of Christ may heal your souls, yet some rod or other, in the hand of a displeased father, shall afflict your bodies, or smite you in your outward comforts, Psal. lxxxix. 23.

Inf. 3. If Christ be the only physician of sick souls, what sin and folly is it for men to take Christ's work out of his hands, and attempt to be their own physician.

Thus do those that superstitiously endeavour to heal their souls by afflicting their bodies; not Christ's blood, but their own, must be the plaister: and as blind Papists, so many carnal and ignorant Protestants strive, by confession, restitution, reformation, and stricter course of life, to heal those wounds that sin hath made upon their souls, without any respect to the blood of Christ: but this course shall not profit them at all. It may, for a time divert, but can never heal them: the wounds so skinned over, will open and bleed again. God grant it be not when our souls shall be out of the reach of the true and only remedy.

Inf. 4. How sad is the case of those souls, to whom Christ hath not yet been a physician? They are mortally wounded by sin, and are like to die of their sickness; no saving, healing applications have hitherto been made unto their souls: and this is the case of the greatest part of mankind, yea, of them that live under the discoveries of Christ in the gospel. Which appears by these sad symptoms.

First, In that their eyes have not yet been opened, to see their sin and misery; in which illumination the cure of souls begin, Acts xxvi. 18. To this day he hath not given them eyes to see, Deut. xxix. 4. but that terrible stroke of God which blinds and hardens them, is too visibly upon them, mentioned in Isa. vi. 9, 10. No hope of healing, till the sinner's eyes be opened to see his sin and misery.

Secondly, In that nothing will divorce and separate them from their lusts; a sure sign they are not under Christ's cure, nor were ever made sick of sin. O if ever Christ be a physician to thy soul, he will make thee loathe what now thou lovest, and say to thy most pleasant and most profitable lusts, *Get ye hence,* Isa. xxx. 22.

Till then, there is no ground to think that Christ is a physician to you.

Thirdly, In that they have no sensible and pressing need of Christ, nor make any earnest enquiry after him, as most certainly you would do, if you were in the way of healing and recovery. These, and many other sad symptoms, do too plainly discover the disease of sin, to be in its full strength upon your souls; and if it so continue, how dreadful will the issue be? See Isa. vi. 9, 10.

Inf. 5. *What cause have they to be glad, that are under the hand and care of Christ, in order to a cure, and who do find, or may, upon due examination, find their souls are in a very hopeful way of recovery!* Can we rejoice when the strength of a natural disease is broken, and nature begins to recover ease and vigour again? And shall we not much more rejoice, when our souls begin to mend, and recover sensibly, and all comfortable signs of health and life appear upon them? particularly, when the understanding, which was ignorant and dark, hath the light of life beginning to dawn into it; such is that in 1 John ii. 27. When the will which was rebellious and inflexible to the will of God, is brought to comply with that holy will, saying, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Acts ix. 6. When the heart, which was harder than an adamant, is now brought to contrition for sin, and can mourn as heartily over it, as ever a father did for a dead son, a beloved and only son; when its aversations from God are gone, at least have no such power as once they had; but the thoughts are now fixed much upon God, and spiritual things begin to grow pleasant to the soul; when times of duty come to be longed for, and the soul never better pleased than in such seasons: when the hypocrisy of the heart is purged out, so that we begin to do all that we do heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men, Col. iii. 23. 1 Thess. ii. 4. when we begin to make conscience of secret sins, Psal. cxix. 113. and of secret duties, Matth. vi. 5, 6. when we have an equal respect to all God's commandments, Psal. cxix. 8. and our hearts are under the holy and awful eye of God, which doth indeed over-awe our souls, Gen. xvii. 1. O what sweet signs of a recovering soul are these! Surely such are in the skilful hand of the great Physician, who will perfect what yet remains to be done.

Second use for direction.

In the last place, this point yields matter of advice and direction to poor souls that are under the disease of sin; and they are of two sorts, which I will distinctly speak to: viz. *First*, Such as are under their first sickness of spiritual sorrow for sin, and know not what course to take: or, *Secondly*, Such as have been longer in the

hands of Christ the Physician, but are troubled to see the cure advance so slowly upon them, and fear the issue.

First, As to those that are in their first troubles for sin, and know not what course to take for ease and safety; I would address to them these following counsels.

First, Shut your ears against the dangerous counsels of carnal persons, or relations; for as they themselves are unacquainted with these troubles, so also are they with all proper remedies: and it is very usual with the devil to convey his temptations to distressed souls, by such hands; because, by them, he can do it with least suspicion. It was Augustine's complaint, that his own father took little care for his soul; and many parents act, in this case, as if they were employed by Satan.

Secondly, Be not too eager to get out of trouble, but be content to take God's way, and wait his time. No woman that is wise, would desire to have her travail hastened one day before the due time; nor will it be your interest to hasten too soon out of trouble. It is true, times of trouble are apt to seem tedious; but a false peace will endanger you more than a long trouble: a man may lengthen his own troubles to the loss of his own peace, and may shorten them to the hazard of his own soul.

Thirdly, Open your case to wise, judicious, and experienced Christians, and especially the ministers of Christ, whose office it is to counsel and direct you in these difficulties; and let not your troubles lie, like a secret, smothering fire, always in your own breasts. I know men are more ashamed to open their sins under convictions, than they were to commit them before conviction: but this is your interest, and the true way to your rest and peace. If there be with you, or near you, an interpreter, one of a thousand, to shew you your righteousness, and remedy, as it lies in Christ; neglect not your own souls, in a sinful concealment of your case: it will be the joy of their hearts to be employed in such work as this.

Fourthly, Be much with God in secret, open your hearts to him, and pour out your complaints into his bosom. The cii. Psalm bears a title very suitable to your case and duty; yea, you will find if your troubles work kindly, and God intend a cure upon your souls, that nothing will be able to keep God and your souls asunder: whatever your incumbrances in the world be, some time will be daily redeemed, to be spent betwixt God and you.

Fifthly, Plead hard with God in prayer for help and healing. "Heal my soul, (saith David) for I have sinned against thee," Psal. xli. 4. Tell him Christ hath his commission sealed for such as you are: he was sent to "bind up the broken-hearted," Isa. lxi. 1. Tell him he came into the world, "to seek and save that which

“ was lost,” and so are you now, in your own account and apprehensions. Lord, what profit is there in my blood? Wilt thou pursue a dried leaf? And why is my heart wounded with the sense of sin, and mine eyes open to see my danger and misery; Are not these the first dawnings of mercy upon sinners? O let it appear, that the time of mercy, even the set time, is now come.

Sixthly, Understand your peace to be in Christ only, and faith to be the only way to Christ and rest; let the great enquiry of your souls be after Christ and faith; study the nature and necessity of these, and cry to God day and night for strength to carry you to Christ in the way of faith.

Secondly, As to those that have been longer under the hands of Christ, and yet are still in troubles, and cannot obtain peace, but their wounds bleed still, and all they hear in sermons, or do in the way of duty, will not bring them to rest; to such I only add two or three words for a close.

First, Consider whether you have rightly closed with Christ since your first awakening, and whether there be not some way of sin, in which you still live: if so, no wonder your wounds are kept open, and your souls are strangers to peace.

Secondly, If you be conscious of no such flaw in the foundation, consider how much of this trouble may arise from your constitution and natural temper, which being melancholy, will be doubtful and suspicious; you may find it so in other cases of less moment, and be sure Satan will not be wanting to improve it.

Thirdly, Acquaint yourselves more with the nature of true justifying faith; a mistake in that hath prolonged the troubles of many; if you look for it in no other act but assurance, you may easily overlook it as it lies, in the mean time, in your affiance or acceptance. A true and proper conception of saving faith would go far in the cure of many troubled souls.

Fourthly, Be more thankful to shun sin, than to get yourselves clear of trouble: it is sad to walk in darkness, but worse to lie under guilt. Say, Lord, I would rather be grieved myself, than be a grief to thy Spirit. O keep me from sin, how long soever thou keep me under sorrow. Wait on God in the way of faith, and in a tender spirit towards sin, and thy wounds shall be healed at last by thy great Physician.

Thanks be to God for Jesus Christ.