

Monergism

Holiness

THE ONLY WAY TO HAPPINESS

THOMAS BROOKS

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Holiness, the Only Way to Happiness

by Thomas Brooks

Discovered in 58 sermons, from Hebrews 12:14. Where you have **the Necessity, Excellency, Rarity, Beauty and Glory of Holiness** set forth; with the resolution of many weighty Questions and Cases. Also Motives and Means to perfect Holiness. With many other things of very high and great importance to all people who had rather be blessed than cursed, saved than damned.

Table of Contents

[The Epistle Dedicatory](#)

[I. What this holiness is](#)

[II. The truth of the proposition, that "without holiness, no man shall see the Lord"](#)

[III. Reasons](#)

IV. Practical Application:

[1. Conviction](#)

[2. Sixteen marks of a holy person](#)

[3. Fifteen motives](#)

[4. Sixteen counsels](#)

5. Seven objections

6. Six evidences of the reality and power of holiness

7. Sixteen provocations to increased holiness

8. Degrees of glory

9. Eight means, helps, and directions for progress in holiness

10. Twelve evidences of high degrees of holiness

11. Twelve consolations to all who have real holiness

12. Seven positions concerning holiness

The Epistle Dedicatory

"To him who orders his conduct aright, will I show the salvation of God." Psalm 50:23

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Matthew 5:8.

"God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." 2 Thes. 2:13.

To all who have but the least desire, the least mind, or the least will—to escape hell, and to go to heaven, or to be happy in both worlds.

The philosophers, speaking of happiness, were divided into two hundred and eighty-eight opinions, everyone intending something—yet resolving upon nothing; and therefore the man in Plutarch hearing them wrangle about the 'summum bonum', the chief good—one placing of it in this, and another in that—he caught up all that was good, hoping that among all he should not miss of happiness; and yet he missed it; true happiness being too great and too glorious a thing to be found in anything below real holiness.

All men in the general, desire to be happy—but all men do not desire in this or that particular, or in this or that way—to be happy. Here there is an infinite difference—so many men—so many minds and opinions.

A desire for happiness is planted in all men by the constitution of nature. This is so intrinsic and so innate in nature, that it is so engraved in it, that even the fall of Adam, as great as it was, has not blotted it out.

This desire for happiness is left in man for a stock to graft holiness on. God grafts the plant of grace upon the stock of nature. Indeed happiness, like Rachel, Gen. 29:17, is so fair and so beautiful a thing, that everyone is apt to fall in love with it, and earnestly to desire it, yes, many there are, who would serve twice seven years to enjoy it. But by the standing law of that heavenly country above, the younger sister must never be bestowed before the elder; you can never enjoy fair Rachel—heaven and happiness—except you are first married to tender-eyed Leah—real holiness, Gen. 29:17-28. He who will have heaven, must have union and communion with Christ; and he who will have union and communion with Christ must be holy. "For what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness and what communion has light with darkness? And what concord has Christ with Belial?" 2 Cor. 6:14-15.

Of all the many thousands who have traveled to happiness, there is not one to be found, but has traveled there in a way of holiness. Now

the drift, the scope of this following treatise, is to make men holy, that they may be happy; it is to make men gracious on earth, that they may be glorious in heaven. Now to prevent all mistakes, rash censures, and misconstructions, I judge it very convenient and necessary, before I go any further, to acquaint the reader plainly and honestly with those arguments which have prevailed with me to dedicate this book to all sorts, ranks, and degrees of people, rather than to any single person, or to any one sort or rank of men whatever. And they are these six.

I. First, Because all sorts and ranks of men are fallen from that primitive holiness that once they had, Psalm 14:3; Romans 3:12. There are five things that we have all lost by our fall in Adam.

First, we have all lost that holy image that God had stamped upon us—and so we have become vile.

Secondly, we have all lost our sonship—and so we have become slaves of Satan.

Thirdly, we have all lost our friendship with God—and so we have become enemies to God.

Fourthly, we have all lost our communion with God—and so we have become strangers to God.

And fifthly, we have all lost our glory—and so we have become miserable.

Some say that the naked *body* of man was so glorious in his estate of innocency, that all the beasts of the field admired it, and thereupon did homage to him. Oh, how glorious was his *soul* then! Certainly if the *cabinet* was so glorious, the jewel within it was much more glorious. But however glorious man was in his primitive estate, it is most certain that he is now so sadly fallen from the highest pinnacle of glory—to so low a step of misery, that God sometimes sends him to

the *ant* to learn instruction, Proverbs 6:6-7; and sometimes he sends him to the *stork* and the *swallow* to make a right improvement of precious time, Jer. 8:7; and sometimes he sends him to the *ox* and to the *donkey* to learn knowledge, Isaiah 1:3; and sometimes he sends him to the *fowls* of the air to learn confidence, Mat. 6:25 seq.; yes, and sometimes he sends him to the very *lilies* and *grass* of the field to learn how to live without carking and distracting cares.

It is true, man's **first estate** was a state of perfect holiness, he being made in the image of God, and after the likeness of God, Gen. 1:27. It was an estate of perfect light, knowledge, prudence, wisdom, and understanding. It was an estate of very great honor and dignity, and therefore the psalmist, speaking of man in this estate, brings him in with a crown of glory and honor upon his head, Psalm 8:5, "You have crowned him with glory and honor." Man's first estate was so stately an estate that he was not so much below the glorious angels, as he was above all other creatures. God made him the sovereign ruler of the whole creation, God gave him an absolute dominion and authority both of sea and land, and all creatures in both were subjected to him, Gen. 1:26; Psalm 8:6-8.

Such was the exquisite beauty and perfection of his *body*, that from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet there was not the least blemish. His outward man was clothed with all such requisite beauties and abilities that might render him lovely and attractive to every eye. In a word, man's first estate was a state of perfect happiness. All within him, and all without him, and all about him, spoke him out to be completely blessed. There was nothing within him—but what was very sweet and desirable; there was nothing without him—but what was very delightful and amiable; neither was there anything about him—but what was serviceable and comfortable.

Oh—but now by his **fall**, his crown has fallen from his head, and from the heads of all his posterity, Lam. 5:16; for Adam was a public person. He was the prince of all mankind; and though all mankind

was not actually in his loins when he fell—yet they were all potentially in his loins when he fell. If two kings make a league, and the one breaks it, he makes not only himself but all his subjects liable to all the calamities and miseries that shall follow thereupon. Adam was our common father, and we are all his sons and daughters. Now Adam forfeited his lease, as I may say, and divine justice took the advantage of the forfeiture, and so has turned all his posterity out of doors. So that there is now no way under heaven to be happy—but by being holy. All sorts and ranks of men are fallen in Adam, and there is no way to rise but by Christ and holiness, etc.

II. A second reason why I dedicate this treatise to all sorts and ranks of people, is—because the matter contained in this book is of the greatest and highest concernment imaginable, to all ranks and degrees of men, from the greatest emperor that ever sat upon a throne, to the meanest and the poorest wretch that ever lay upon a ash-heap. And doubtless that which is of such a marvelous importance to all, may very justly and reasonably be dedicated to all.

III. A third reason why I dedicate this treatise to all sorts and ranks of people, is—because God intends to save some of all sorts, ranks, and degrees. Though greatness and godliness do not always meet—yet greatness and godliness do sometimes meet; and though riches and religion do not always meet—yet riches and religion do sometimes meet. Though not many wise—yet some wise shall be called, sanctified, and saved, 1 Cor. 1:26; though not many mighty—yet some mighty shall be called, sanctified, and saved; though not many noble—yet some noble shall be called, sanctified, and saved. Look, as the sun in the sky does cast his light and warmth upon all sorts, ranks, and degrees of men, Mat. 5:45; so does the Sun of righteousness shine upon the understandings and consciences of all sorts, ranks, and degrees of men, and by his secret and spiritual influences, he warms and cheers the hearts of high and low, rich and poor, noble and ignoble.

Abraham was very great and very gracious: *Joseph* was very high and very holy: *Job* was very rich and very righteous. Though most of those kings and princes that we read of in Scripture were bad, very bad—yet some of them were godly, yes, very godly. [It is a strange saying in Lipsius. "The names of all good princes," says he, "may easily be engraved or written in a small ring."] Some of them were as famous for grace, righteousness, and holiness: witness David, Asa, Josiah, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, etc., as Saul, Jehoram, Jehu, Ahab, and others of them were infamous for all unrighteousness and wickedness. God, for the glory of his own grace, and the honor of his Son's blood, will have some of all sorts, ranks, and degrees sanctified and saved: and upon this very ground he engages his servants to pray for all sorts, ranks, and degrees of men, in 1 Tim. 2:1-4.

Now where God is resolved to *save*, there he is resolved to *sanctify*: where he is resolved to make happy, there he is resolved to make holy. And therefore I look upon myself as many ways obliged to have so large a heart for God, as to do all I can to help on the salvation of all sorts, ranks, and degrees of men in the world. My heart's desire and prayer for England is, that her princes and nobles may be sanctified and saved, and that her gentry may be sanctified and saved, and that all the people of the nation may be sanctified and saved. [Romans 10:1.—Paul's copy is not to be despised—but imitated.] I look upon myself as engaged to do all I can, by my pen and prayers, to help make England *holy*, that so England may be truly *happy*. For of this I am most certain, that if God will but make England a holy nation, it is not all the powers on earth, nor all the powers of hell, that shall ever make England a miserable nation.

IV. A fourth reason why I thus dedicate this treatise as you see, is—because my former poor labors and endeavors have been acceptable to some of all ranks and degrees, and they have been blessed to some of all ranks and degrees; and I have been encouraged, whetted, and stirred up by some on all hands, once more to cast in my net. And now I have done it, oh that it may issue in the drawing of many souls to Christ! and in the making of the

graceless—gracious, the profane—holy! and in the making of those who are holy, to be yet more holy! etc.

V. A fifth reason why I thus dedicate this treatise as you see, is—because though all men are bound to be holy—yet the great, the rich, the noble, and the honorable of the earth are bound above all other men in the world to be holy. God has laid upon them greater obligations and ties to holiness, than he has upon any other men under heaven; and this you may see so clearly and so fully proved in this book—that neither the world nor the devil, as cunning and as learned a devil as he is, will ever be able to disprove. This reason alone is sufficient to justify my present practice.

VI. My sixth and last reason why I thus dedicate this treatise as you see, is—that it may be a blessed testimony and a standing witness for Christ in this day of blasphemy, profaneness, looseness, and wickedness, against all sorts and ranks of people into whose hands it may fall, who, notwithstanding all that is here said, shall continue obstinate and impenitent in their ungodly courses and practices, as men resolved rather to go to hell than to heaven, and to be forever unhappy rather than they will be holy, Isaiah 43:10, 12, and 44:8. Woe, woe to them forever, that had rather be Satan's bond-slaves than Christ's free-men, who had rather be "vessels of wrath" than vessels of honor, and that had rather be firebrands of hell than glorious saints in heaven, Eph. 2:12; Romans 9:22.

And so I have done with those reasons that may satisfy the reader concerning my dedication of this treatise to all sorts, ranks, and degrees of people.

I. Having premised these things in the general, give me permission to say, that if this treatise should fall into the hands of any of the **learned judges** of this land, or into the hands of any of the justices of this nation, I would then take the humble boldness to offer this to

their most serious consideration—namely, that if they would discharge the duties of their places, so as to give up their accounts at last with joy and cheerfulness to the King of kings and Lord of lords; it highly concerns them to study this doctrine of holiness, yes, to fall in love with holiness, and highly to prize it, and earnestly to press after it, and to be restless in their own spirits, until they have experienced the powerful operations of holiness in their own souls; for until then, they will never be able so to administer justice and judgment as befits those who have the name of God, and the name of profession upon them, and who judge themselves to be in a higher place than those heathens were, who were famous for justice and righteousness—and yet never heard of a Christ nor salvation by him—and as befits those who would not stand trembling and quaking in the great and terrible day, when Christ the Lord-Chief-Justice of heaven and earth shall pass a righteous and impartial judgment upon all the judges and justices that ever were on earth, Joel 2:11, 31; Acts 17:31; 2 Tim. 4:1-2.

My Lords and Gentlemen—You know that the wisest prince that ever sat upon a throne has told us that "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people," Proverbs 14:34. ["Where justice is, God is; and where God is, there is no lack of men or fortitude," said Herod at the head of his army, the better to encourage his soldiers.] It is not valor in war—but righteousness; it is not policy in government—but righteousness; it is not wittiness of invention—but righteousness; it is not civility in behavior—but righteousness; it is not antiquity of laws—but righteousness; it is not largeness of dominion—but righteousness; nor it is not greatness of command—but righteousness, which is the honor and the safety, which is the renown and the security of a nation. That nation which exalts righteousness, that nation shall be certainly exalted by righteousness, Amos 5:24.

It is not Ahithophel's policy, it is not Jeroboam's calves in Dan and Bethel, it is not Jehu's pompous zeal, it is not Goliath's sword, it is not rich mines of gold and silver, nor storehouses, nor armies, nor

councils, nor fleets, nor forts—but justice and righteousness which exalts a nation, and which will make a lowly people to become a great, a glorious, and a famous people in the world. The world is a ring, and righteousness is the diamond in that ring: the world is a body, and righteousness and justice is the soul of that body.

Ah! England, England! so long as judgment runs down [The Hebrew word which is here rendered "run down," signifies to roll down freely, plentifully, plainly, vigorously, constantly: Where justice thus rolls down, all the world shall never make that nation miserable.] as waters in the midst of you, and righteousness as a mighty stream, you shall not die—but live and bear up bravely against all gainsayers and opposers. But if injustice shall grow rampant, and you shall brandish the sword of justice in the behalf of the friends of Baal, Balaam, and Bacchus, and turn the wheel upon the righteous; if the sword of justice shall be a sword of protection to the desperate swearer, and to the cruel oppressor, and to the roaring drunkard, and to the cursing monster, and to the gospel despiser, and to the Christ despiser, etc., and shall be a devouring sword to the upright and peaceable in the land—divine vengeance will dig your grave, and divine justice will tumble you into it, though all the nations of the earth should labor to prevent it.

It is a base and ignoble spirit, to pity Cataline more than to pity Rome; to pity any particular sort of men, more than to pity the whole. It is cruelty to the good, to justify the bad: it is wrong to the sheep, to animate the wolves: it is danger if not death to the lambs, not to restrain or chain up the lions. But from all these vanities the Lord deliver all your souls! And oh that you would forever remember this, that as the constitution of a man's body is best known by his pulse: if it beats not at all, then we know he is dead; if it beats violently, then we know him to be in a fever; if it keeps an equal stroke, then we know he is sound, well, and whole: so the state of a kingdom or commonweal is best known by the manner of executing justice therein; for justice is the pulse of a kingdom. If justice be violent, then the kingdom is in a fever, in a very bad state; if it stirs

not at all, then the kingdom is dead; but if it has an equal stroke, if it be justly and duly administered, then the kingdom is in a good, a safe, and sound condition. When Vespasian asked Apollonius what was the cause of Nero's ruin, he answered, that Nero could tune the harps well—but in government he did always wind up the strings too high, or let them down too low. The application is easy.

Now having premised thus much in the general, give me permission to tell you that **there are eight special rules that you are carefully and faithfully to observe in the administration of justice and righteousness.** And how you will be able to act suitable to those rules without a spirit of holiness, without principles of holiness, and without an experience of the powerful influences and operations of holiness in your own souls, I cannot for the present understand.

1. Now, my Lords and Gentlemen, the first rule that you are to observe in your administering of judgment and justice, is this—**you must do justice IMPARTIALLY.** You are called gods, [Psalm 82:1, 6; Luke 20:21; Mat. 22:16.] and in this you must be like to God, who shows no favoritism. He accepts not the rich man because of his robes, neither does he reject the poor man because of his rags. Deut. 1:17, "You shall not respect people in judgment—but you shall hear the small as well as the great; you shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's." And so in Lev. 19:15, "You shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; you shall not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty: but in righteousness shall you judge your neighbor." The great man is not to be spared for his might, nor the poor man for his misery. [Mercy is good—but not when it is contrary to judgment—Augustine.]

It is neither the great man's power, nor the poor man's baseness—which a judge is to mind in judgment. A judge, a justice, must never out of carnal pity cry out, "Oh, he is a poor man!" nor yet out of base fear cry out, "Oh, he is a great man!" Their eyes are always to be upon *causes*, and not upon *people*. The statues of the Theban judges were

made without hands and without eyes, to intimate to us, that as judges and justices should have no hands to receive bribes, so they should have no eyes to see a friend from a foe, a brother from a stranger. [The judges in Egypt were portrayed without hands and without eyes, to signify that they were not to take bribes, nor to have partiality.] And it was the oath of the heathen judges, as the orator relates, "I will hear the plaintiff and defendant, with an equal mind, without affection and respect of persons."

In the twelfth novel of Justinian, you may read of an oath imposed upon judges and justices, against inclining or addicting themselves to either party; yes, they put themselves under a deep and bitter execration and curse in case of partiality, imploring God in such language as this, "Let me have my part with Judas, and let the leprosy of Gehazi cleave to me, and the trembling of Cain come upon me, and whatever else may astonish and dismay a man—if I am partial in the administration of justice." That was a famous act of justice that was performed by Canutus, king of Denmark, who, when one of the twelve thieves that he had condemned pleaded that he was of the royal blood—says the king, "It is reason some favor should be showed to this person; whereupon he commanded that he should be hanged on the highest gibbet: which was done accordingly."

It was Cato's complaint of old, that those who robbed *private* men were clapped up and laid by the heels in cold irons. "But," says he, "*public* thieves who wrong and rob the commonwealth, they sit in scarlet, with gold chains about their necks."

The Roman orator observed, that the force of justice is such, and so great, that even thieves and robbers, both by sea and land, who live upon injustice and rapine—yet cannot live upon their trade without some practice of justice among themselves. And the Scythian philosopher has long since complained, that laws were like spiders' webs, that would catch flies but not wasps or hornets. His meaning was, that if poor men offended, they would be sure to be punished; but great men who were the makers of laws, they might be breakers

of the laws, and yet never be punished for it. In all ages some or others have poured out sad complaints against partial justice. Pilate, who unjustly condemned Christ, was afterwards kicked off the bench by Caius the emperor, for partial justice, and for grief and shame he became his own executioner. O sirs, God will one day kick such judges and justices, not only off the bench—but into hell, who make a trade of partial justice, except there be sound repentance on their sides, and pardoning grace on his, Psalm 9:17, and 11:5. Oh that all the judges and justices of the land would forever remember, what the wisest prince who ever swayed a scepter says in Proverbs 18:5, "It is not good to be partial to the wicked or to deprive the innocent of justice." It is not good, that is, it is bad, it is very bad, yes, it is so exceeding bad, as that it can hardly be expressed or uttered. It is so great a wickedness, it is so horrid and so hideous a wickedness, yes, it is so hellish a wickedness—as can hardly be imagined—as can rarely be declared.

The Athenian judges judged in the night, when the faces of men could not be seen, that so they might be impartial in judgment. I have read of Zaleucus, that impartial law-giver and judge among the Locrians, how that he made a very severe law against adulterers—namely, that whoever should be found guilty thereof should have both their eyes put out. Now it so happened, that his son proved the first offender. Forthwith sentence was pronounced, and execution ready to be done: whereupon the judge, his father, put out one of his own eyes and one of his son's, and so showed himself to be both a tender father and an upright and impartial judge at once. O sirs! it is your wisdom and work, yes, it is as much your glory as it is your duty, to be impartial in all your administrations of justice, and not to favor friends or relations, nor to fear the frowns of enemies—but to proceed impartially, according to the merits of the cause that is before you. But,

2. Secondly, As you must do justice impartially, so **you must do justice SPEEDILY**. Jer. 21:12, "O house of David, thus says the Lord; Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him who is

robbed out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings." After examination, execution is to be done with swiftness, Ezra 7:16. When men cry out for "justice, justice," you must not cry out "tomorrow, tomorrow;" you must do justice in the morning. Noon-justice and evening-justice is not so acceptable to God, nor so honorable to yourselves, nor so advantageous to others, as morning-justice is. You are called gods: and as in other things, so in this, you should be like to God, who is speedy and swift in the exercise of justice, as you may see by comparing these scriptures together. [Joel 3:4; Gen. 19; Num. 16; Psalm 101:8.]

The Persian king had one about him, whose office it was to remind him every morning of his charge, saying, "Arise, O king, and have an eye to those affairs for which the great God has made you king, and despatch them." To *delay* justice, is worse sometimes than to deny justice. It is an evil thing and a dangerous thing, when magistrates, judges, and justice are as long a-bringing forth their verdicts as the elephant her young. Delays of justice make many more irreconcilable. It makes the client often go with a heavy heart, an empty purse, and a threadbare coat. It fetches heavy sighs and groans from the hearts, and a sea of tears from the eyes of the delayed and oppressed. Magistrates, judges, and justices should be always ready to do justice: they should always make time to do justice.

I have read of one of the kings of Persia, how that he would many times alight off from his horse to do justice only to a poor person. It were well if all judges and justices would write after this copy, to be ready to do justice and judgment at all times, and upon all occasions. O sirs! you may have time to live; even when you have outlived your seasons and opportunities of doing justice and judgment; and what a hell will then your lives be to you! To prevent this hell, it is good to do justice in the morning.

I have read of a very poor woman, who was very earnest with king Philip of Macedon to do her justice—but he deferred her, and told her that he had no time to hear her: she replied then, "Why have you time to be king?" The poor woman thought that they were very unfit to be kings and judges, who could not be at time to do justice when the necessities and miseries of poor creatures cried aloud for justice, justice.

I have read of a famous passage of Theodoric, king of the Romans, who, when a widow came to him with a sad complaint, that she had a suit pending in the court three years, which might have been ended in a few days: the king demands of her the judges' names: she tells him: he sends a special command to them to give all the speedy dispatch that was possible to the widow's cause, which they did, and in two days determined it to the widow's liking. This being done, the king calls for the judges, and they supposing that they should have both applause and reward for their expedition, hastened to him full of joy: but after the king had propounded several things to them about their former delays, he commanded both their heads to be struck off, because they had spun out that cause to a three years' length, which two days would have ended. Here was royal justice indeed! [The poets feign Justice to be the daughter of Jupiter, whom he has set over the world to revenge those injuries that one man does to another, etc.]

Oh that all the magistrates, judges, and justices of the nation would every morning lay Proverbs 13:12 warm upon their hearts! "Hope deferred makes the heart sick: but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life." The Hebrew word, that is here rendered deferred, signifies to draw out at length. Men are short-breathed and short-spirited, and hope's hours are full of eternity: and when their hopes are drawn out at length, this makes their hearts sick; and ah, what a world of such sick souls lies languishing at hope's hospital all the nation over, yes, all the world over! Hope in this text is put for the good things men hope for. Now, when the good things men hope for—be it justice or a quick verdict, etc.—are deferred and delayed, this makes the poor

client sick at heart. A lingering hope always breeds in the heart a lingering consumption. The harder travail hope has, and the more strongly it labors to bring forth, and yet is deferred and delayed, the more deadly sick the client grows. But when the desire comes, that is, when the thing desired, wished, and looked for, be it justice, be it righteousness, be it success, etc., is gained, it is a tree of life; or rather as the Hebrew has it, is a tree of lives. All sorts of lives, and all the comforts and contents of life, are enrapt up in the enjoyment of the thing desired. He who has those things granted to him which are earnestly desired by him, is once more put into a paradise. Willful delays in justice makes the judge unrighteous, Luke 18:6. But,

3. Thirdly, As you must do justice speedily, so **you must do justice SINCERELY**. You must do justice out of love to justice, Isaiah 61:8. When the *golden angels* [money-bribes] appear to draw you to pervert justice, you must say as Peter did to Simon Magus, "May your money perish with you!" Acts 8:20.

Deut. 16:20, "That which is altogether just shall you follow, that you may live, and inherit the land which the Lord your God gives you." Or rather as the Hebrew has it, "justice, justice shall you follow," that is, pure justice shall you follow. The streams of justice should be always pure and clear. "Justice, justice shall you follow," that is, all manner of justice shall you follow, and nothing but justice shall you follow; and you shall follow justice sincerely, exactly, carefully, and constantly: you shall be not apparently just—but really just; not hypocritically just—but entirely just; not partially just—but universally just; not just to some—but just to all; not transiently just—but perpetually just; not sometimes just—but always just.

Proverbs 21:15, "It is joy to the just to do judgment." This argues much sincerity and integrity in a man's spirit, when he does not only do judgment—but joys to do judgment. It is a vanity to do justice slightly, lightly, spasmodically; but it is an honor to do justice from a principle of divine joy. He who joys to do judgment, he will do justice sincerely, he will do justice out of love to justice; and indeed there

are no judges, there are no justices compared to those who do justice out of love to justice. Certainly men do justice sincerely—who do justice out of love to justice.

Some judges and justices there have been, who would, like mendicant friars, touch no money themselves—but have a boy or a clerk with a bag to receive it for them. Certainly these were as far from doing justice out of love to justice, as heaven is from hell, or as the Pope, the Turk, and the devil are from being real saints. Doubtless many magistrates, judges, and justices have found that "a gift blinds the wise, and perverts the words of the righteous," Exod. 23:8. Golden dust has put out more eyes, than it has done good to hearts. Oh, this *golden wedge*, has made many men silent and speechless in good causes!

Titus Vespasian was so delighted in doing of justice, that if a day had passed over his head wherein he had done no act of justice, he would cry out, "O my friends, I have lost a day." And so Epaminondas, a heathen, though he was very poor, and often tempted with great bribes and presents to be unjust—yet he refused and scorned all, and would commonly say, that if the cause were good, he would do it without a bribe, because it was good; but if the cause was bad, he would not meddle with it for a world. These heathens will one day rise in judgment against all such corrupt judges and justices that will not do justice without a bribe. If this treatise should fall into the hands of any such, I would then let them know that God will one day make good that dreadful word against them, that you have in Job 15:34, "For the congregation of hypocrites shall be desolate, and fire shall consume the tabernacles of bribery;" or as the Septuagint reads it, "Of men that take gifts, fire shall consume;" or rather as the Hebrew has it, "Fire shall eat the tabernacles; it shall feed on their tabernacles as greedily as a hungry man does feed on his food." Oh, the sumptuous buildings which have been built by the hands of bribery, shall be set on fire by a hand of justice! Proverbs 10:2-3, and 3:33. God will one day burn up all the comforts, and all the

contentments, and all the enjoyments of corrupt magistrates, judges, and justices.

I have read of a Polonian judge, who stood up very stoutly and resolutely a long time for a poor plaintiff against a rich defendant; but at last he received from the defendant a great sum of money, stamped with the usual stamp of that country, which is a man in complete armor; and at the next session in open court he adjudged the cause in the favor of the defendant: and being sharply blamed by his friends for it, he showed them his large bribe, and demanded of them, "Who could stand out against so many men in complete armor?" Ah, England, England! it would be better with you if this spirit did not still survive; but alas, what good will all these men in armor do them in the great day of our Lord, when the thoughts of all such corrupt magistrates, judges, and justices shall be exceedingly troubled, their countenances changed, their hearts terrified, their consciences awakened, their souls amazed, and their knees dashed one against another! Oh that all judges and justices would forever make Isaiah 5:23 their daily companion, "Woe to those who justify the wicked for a reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him."

I have read of Sysamnes, a covetous, tenacious judge, who for filthy lucre pronounced a false sentence; whereupon Cambyses, king of Persia, commanded him to be killed and flayed, and his skin to be nailed over the tribunal: and then he commanded his son to sit as judge there, that so this sight might arm him against all injustice, and be a terror to all that succeeded him. If princes did but exercise such royal justice upon all corrupt covetous judges and justices, justice would be had at a cheaper rate, and poor men would not be so often put to pawn their coats, nor rich men would not so often empty their purses nor mortgage their inheritances. But,

4. Fourthly, As you must do justice sincerely, so **you must do justice DELIBERATELY**. You must have one ear for the defendant, and another for the plaintiff, or else you are at once both

weak and wicked, Deut. 17:4; vide Deut. 19:17-19. It argues much weakness of spirit, to judge a matter before all is heard that can be said. Job's piety and prudence shined forth eminently in this, that the cause that he knew not, he *searched* it out, Job 29:16. Before God would pronounce judgment upon Adam, he first examines him, and propounds several questions to him, Gen. 3. And in those two great and famous acts of justice, when God confounded Babel's builders, and rained hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, he tells you that *he will go down and see*, Gen. 11 and 18.

You are called *gods*; in this it is as much your glory as it is your duty to imitate the great God. Though Solomon was in all his glory—yet he had patience to hear both what the mother and the harlot had to say. The Holy Spirit calls him a fool—who answers a matter before he hears it, Proverbs 18:13. It was the usual custom of Philip, king of Macedon, to stop up one of his ears while the accuser was speaking, that so he might reserve it for the defendant. I have read of some who have deeply suffered both in their civil liberties and in their consciences, for their rash and hasty passing of judgment upon others. Why has God given the judges of the earth two ears and but one tongue—but that they should be swift to hear and slow to speak?

I have read of Louis, king of France, that when he had through inadvertency granted an unjust suit, as soon as ever he had read those words of the psalmist, "Blessed is he who does righteousness at all times," Psalm 106:3, he presently recollected himself, and upon better thoughts gave his judgment quite contrary. **Certainly all acts of justice ought to flow from mature deliberation.** All magistrates, judges, and justices, in their administrations of justice and judgment, should wisely observe by what principles they act, and by what rules they act, and by what authority they act, and in what manner they act, and to what ends they act. And how all these important things can be done without serious deliberation, I cannot for the present understand.

Justice in the emblem is represented with a *balance* in the one hand, and a *sword* in the other—to note that matters must be first deliberately weighed in the balance, before judgment can be passed. He who only uses the sword and not the balance, may smite an innocent Naboth, and acquit a guilty Ahab. The civil law concludes it very unreasonable for any man to give advice or judgment before he has considered and weighed the whole cause. And therefore by your own laws you are bound to deliberate before you give judgment, unless you will tell the world that you, even you, are unreasonable men, who above all others should be the masters of the greatest reason, as well as men of the greatest measures of grace and holiness. But,

5. Fifthly, As you must do justice deliberately, so **you must do justice RESOLUTELY, courageously, valiantly**. As soon as Joshua came into the office of magistracy, God charges him no less than three times, in a breath as it were, to be very courageous, in Joshua 1:6-9. A judge who is *timorous* will quickly be *treacherous*. A judge who is *fearful* can never be *faithful*. Solomon's throne was supported with lions, to show that magistrates should be men of courage and mettle. The Athenian judges sat in Mars Street, to show that they had martial hearts, and that they were men of courage and mettle, Acts 17:22; Job 31:31, 34. Job was a judge of rare courage and magnanimity; nothing could frighten him, nothing could daunt him, nothing could terrify him, nothing could discourage him from doing justice and judgment.

There must be indifference in determining, so there ought to be courage in executing. Where there is courage without knowledge, there the eye of justice is blind; and where there is knowledge without courage, there the sword of justice is blunt. Judges and justices should be men of courage for God and godliness. Why should not the standard be of steel, and the chief posts in the house be of oak? I have read of Agesilaus, how that he was by all concluded fit to be made their king—*except* that he halted. Men of the best and choicest accomplishments, if they are not courageous and

magnanimous—but lame and halting, they are no ways fit for magistrates. Judges and justices should have martial spirits, high spirits for justice and righteousness.

Every judge, every justice, should have a *lion's heart*, an *eagle's eye*, and a *giant's arm*. Such men whose dull hearts are faint, whose heads are dull, whose ears are heavy, whose eyes are dim, whose hands are weak, and whose feet are lame—are more fit to sit in a chimney corner than to sit as judges and justices upon the bench. It has been long since said of Cato, Fabricius, and Aristides, that it was as easy to remove the sun out of the sky—as to remove them from justice and equity; they were men of such courageous and magnanimous spirits for justice and righteousness. No scarlet robe does so well befit a judge—as holy courage and stoutness does.

I have read of Louis the Eleventh, king of France, who going about to establish some unjust edicts, which, when some of his chief courtiers perceived, they all went to him in red gowns; the king asked them what they would have, they answered, "We have come with a full purpose to lose our lives—rather than by our connivance, any unjust ordinance should take place." The king being amazed at this answer, and at the courage, constancy, and resolution of those nobles, gave them gracious reception, and commanded that all the former edicts should be forthwith cancelled in his presence. **Courage and resolution may prevent many a public mischief and misery.** But,

6. Sixthly, As you are to do justice resolutely, courageously, so **you are to do justice and judgment EXACTLY**. God is exact in all his *ways*, and he is exact in all his *works*; he is exact in all his *promises*, and he is exact in all his *threatenings*; he is exact in all his *rewards*, and he is exact in all his *punishments*; he is exact in the exercise of his *mercy*, and he is exact in the exercise of his *justice*. "He appointed judges throughout the nation in all the fortified cities, and he gave them these instructions—Always think carefully before pronouncing judgment. Remember that you do not judge to please

people but to please the Lord. He will be with you when you render the verdict in each case that comes before you. Fear the Lord and judge with care, for the Lord our God does not tolerate perverted justice, partiality, or the taking of bribes." 2 Chronicles 19:5-7; Exod. 23:6, 7, 13.

You who are called *gods*, should in this be like God. O sirs, some by force, others by flattery, some by large presents to your relations, and others by promising great rewards to yourselves—may endeavor to corrupt you, and blind you, and induce you to judge rashly, inconsiderately, irregularly, etc.; and therefore you have the more cause to be exact in transacting all your judicial affairs. Oh, remember that the most sharp and piercing eye of God is still upon you! Oh, remember that the severe eye of Jesus Christ, who is the judge of judges, is never off of you! Oh, remember that the angels, those princes of glory, are very strict observers of you. When the Ethiopian judges were set in their seats of judicature, certain empty chairs were placed about them, into which they conjectured the holy angels came and were spectators of all their transactions, and this they thought would work such an awe, such a dread, such a care, such a fear, and such a resolution in them, that they could not but manage all their judicial proceedings with much exactness and heedfulness.

And as the angels have their eyes upon you, so Satan has always his eyes upon you; he has always a watchful eye, an envious eye, a malicious eye, a crafty eye, and a revengeful eye upon you. Witness his dissuading you sometimes from your duty; and witness his distracting and disturbing of you while you are in your duty; and witness his accusing of you for the neglect of your duty; and witness his endeavors to pride you and puff you up upon the discharge of your duty.

And as the eye of Satan is upon you, so the eyes of godly men are always upon you, and the eyes of bad men are upon you. And if all this does not bespeak you to be very exact and accurate in all your

judicial transactions, I know nothing. My Lords and Gentlemen, if all this will not do, then remember that the lives, liberties, consciences, rights, privileges, estates, and interests of people—next to God and Christ and grace—are the most choice and precious, the most desirable and delectable jewels which men have in all the world; and therefore you had need be very exact and accurate in all your judicial transactions. [Tennes was so strict and exact in judgment, that he caused an axe to be held over the witnesses' heads, to execute them immediately, if they were taken with falsehood.]

Yes, once more, remember that God will one day bring you to an exact account concerning all your judicial proceedings. That same mouth which tells you who you are gods, tells you also that you must *die* like men; and after death comes *judgment*, Psalm 82:6, 7; Heb. 9:27. You who now call others to judgment, shall shortly be called to judgment yourselves: you who now sit in judgment upon others, shall before long be judged by him who will judge the world in righteousness, Acts 17:31. That judge to whom you must be responsible is no *ignorant* judge, nor any *covetous* judge, nor any *partial* judge, nor any *fearful* judge, nor any *doting* judge, nor any *trifling* judge; but he is an *omniscient* judge, an *omnipotent* judge, an *impartial* judge, a *holy* judge, a *courageous* judge, a *serious* judge, a *exact* judge, an *unbiased* judge, a *righteous* judge, and a *resolute* judge. Alas, sirs, it is not your scarlet gowns, nor your titles of honor, nor your great estates, nor your interest in princes, nor your noble relations, nor your applause among men—which will stand you in good stead, when you shall stand before that judge who is a consuming fire, Heb. 12:29.

Well, Gentlemen, remember this, there is never a professing judge nor justice in the world, who will be able at last to give up their accounts with joy, and to stand in judgment when the Lamb shall sit upon his throne—but such as have made it their great business to take the Spirit of the Lord for their *guide*, and to set up the glory of the Lord as their great *end*, and to make the word of the Lord their principal *rule*, and to eye the example of the Lord as their choicest

and chief *pattern*. And therefore it is much to be feared that the number of such judges and justices, that will be able to stand before the judge of all the world—will be but few. But,

7. Seventhly, As you must do justice and judgment exactly, **so you must do justice to others as you would have others do justice to you.** For judges and justices to do as they would be done by, is the royal law, the golden rule, and the standard of equity. Judges and justices should think of others, as they would have others think of them; and speak of others, as they would have others speak of them; and do to others, as they would have others do to them. [Mat. 7:12. Severus, the emperor, had this scripture often in his mouth; and whenever he punished any of his soldiers for offering of injuries to others, he still commanded this scripture to be proclaimed by the crier.] Whatever by the light of *nature*, or by the light of *conscience*, or by the light of *scripture*—a judge, a justice, would have another do to him, the same must he do to another. In all just things—for so this law of Christ is only to be understood—we must do to others, as we would have others do to us. As we would have others behave equally, justly, and righteously towards us—so we must behave equally, justly, and righteously towards others. And as we would not have others to wrong us in our names, estates, rights, liberties, lives—so we must not wrong others in their names, estates, rights, liberties, lives, etc. This law of Christ is the sum of all righteousness. It is the foundation of all justice and equity.

Self-love does so commonly blind men, that to judge righteously, they must put themselves in others' place. All princes, judges, justices, parents, masters, subjects, servants, and children, should so act in their relations, as they would have others act in the co-relation. All injustice will be repaid one time or another; and therefore men had need be just, and do to others as they would have others do to them. I have read of a citizen of Comun, who being cast into prison upon suspicion of murder, his wife could get no promise of his deliverance, unless she would give the captain, whose prisoner he was, two hundred ducats, and yield her body to his pleasure; which,

with the consent of her husband, she did; but after the captain had his desire, he notwithstanding put him to death. The Duke Gonzala hearing of it, commanded the captain to restore the two hundred ducats to the widow, with an addition of seven hundred crowns; then he enjoined him to marry her presently, and lastly, before he could enjoy his new wife, the duke caused him to be hanged for his treachery and injustice. Sometimes in this life, injustice is repaid upon the heads of unjust judges.

My Lords and Gentlemen, before I close up this head, give me permission heartily to recommend to your justice those wrongs and injuries which more immediately strike at the honor and glory of the great God. God has put his name upon you; Psalm 82:6, "I said that you are gods:" yet it must be granted that you are gods in a smaller letter—mortal gods, gods that must die like men. And as God has put his name upon you, so he has made you his viceroys. 2 Chron. 19:6, "You judge not for yourselves—but for the Lord." And therefore God takes all affronts which are done to you, as done to himself, as you may see by comparing theses scriptures together. [Romans 13:2; Exod. 16:7, 8; 1 Sam. 8:7; Romans 13:7; Josh. 4:14.] And God has provided for your honor among men; Exod. 22:28, "You shall not revile your judges, or curse the ruler of your people." God will judge against all who scorn to give to magistrates that honor that, by the fifth commandment, which is due unto them. And God is very severe in revenging the wrongs which are done to you, 2 Pet. 2:9-10; 1 Sam. 8:7. He interprets all the injuries which are done to you, as done to himself. And why then will you not revenge the wrongs and injuries which are done to the great God?

Give me permission, Gentlemen, in the behalf of the great God, a little to expostulate with you. Shall the least dishonorable word that is spoken against an earthly prince be severely punished? and shall all those horrid and hellish blasphemies, by which the Prince of the kings of the earth is dishonored and reproached all the nation over, pass unobserved? Shall all affronts which are offered to ambassadors be deeply resented and justly censured, as high indignities done to

the prince who employs them? and shall the ambassadors of the great God—I mean such as are called, commissioned, spirited, gifted, and graced for that high office by God himself—be scorned, defamed, injured, reviled, and on all hands evilly entreated, and yet no man say, "Why do you thus wickedly, to provoke the great God to your own destruction?" 2 Chron. 36:15, seq. Shall it be looked upon as noble and necessary justice, that all insurrections in the state be punished as rebellion? and shall those who are daily up in open arms against the great God, and who daily bid defiance to him, to his Son, to his ordinances, to his people, to his word, and to his ways—escape without the least lash, the least censure? Shall those who rob their neighbors, be indicted, examined, condemned, and executed? and shall others that rob God of his glory, of his Sabbaths, and of his service, etc., escape without the least shaking of the rod, or without the least danger of the whip? Shall all profaneness, looseness, and wickedness, be winked at, yes, countenanced and encouraged, notwithstanding his Majesty's most zealous, pious, and renowned declaration against it? and shall real holiness and the power of godliness be on all hands scorned, discountenanced, opposed, and reviled?

Well, my Lords and Gentlemen, forever remember this: all those sins which are in this land committed, which by your just power and gracious examples might have been prevented, all those sins in the great day shall be charged upon your accounts; and therefore it highly concerns you with all your might to browbeat wickedness, to discountenance ungodliness, and to improve your power to the uttermost, for the suppressing of all profaneness, and for the countenancing, encouraging, and promoting of real holiness, that so you may give up your accounts at last with joy.

I have read of king Ethelbert, how that by his godly example, and by his countenancing and encouraging such as were godly, and by his discountenancing of profaneness and wickedness, he drew this whole kingdom once to look after godliness. O my Lords and Gentlemen, if you would be but shining examples and patterns of holiness to the

nation; if you would but in good earnest put forth your utmost power for the encouraging of godliness, and for the suppressing of profaneness; oh, what a holy nation, yes, what a happy nation would we have! King Cyrus commanded the chief officers of his army to keep a strict hand upon themselves; for, says he, that is the best way in the world to keep the whole army in good order. The application is easy. But,

8. Eighthly, In the exercise of justice, **you must see that justice and mercy, that justice and clemency go hand in hand.** Proverbs 20:28, "Mercy and truth preserve the king: and his throne is upheld by mercy," Proverbs 29:14; Psalm 101:1. Some read the words thus, "Mercy and justice preserve the king; and his throne is upheld by mercy." [It is usual in Scripture, by *truth*, to understand *justice*.] All justice will not preserve the king, nor all mercy will not preserve the king; there must be a mixture both of justice and mercy to preserve the king, and to uphold his throne; and to show that mercy is more requisite than justice, the word mercy is doubled in the text. Justice without mercy turns into rigor, and so becomes hateful; mercy without justice turns into fond pity, and so becomes contemptible.

Look! as the *rod* of Aaron and the pot of *manna* were by God's command laid up in the same ark—so must *mercy* and *justice* be preserved entire in the bosom of the same magistrate, judge, and justice. Mercy and justice, mildness and righteousness, lenity and fidelity—are a safer and a stronger guard to princes and people, than rich mines, munitions of rocks, mighty armies, powerful navies, or any warlike preparations.

It is very observable that Christ is called but once the *Lion* of the tribe of Judah, in the Book of the Revelation, and that is in chapter 5:5; but he is called a *Lamb* no less than twenty-nine times in that book. And what is this but to show the transcendent mercy, clemency, lenity, mildness, and sweetness, which is in Jesus Christ, and to show that he is infinitely more inclined to the exercise of

mercy, than he is to the exercise of justice. It is true, magistrates, judges, and justices should be *lions* in the execution of justice; and it is as true that they should be *lambs* in the exercise of mercy and clemency, mildness and sweetness. And the more ready and inclinable they are to the exercise of mercy, where mercy is to be showed, the more like to the lamb they are. Seneca has long since observed that the custom of anointing kings, was to show that kings should be above all other men of the greatest sweetness and mildness, their anointing being a sign of that kingly sweetness and mildness which should be in them. Nero's speech has great praise, who, when he was to subscribe to the death of any condemned man, would say, "I wish I did not know how to write." But,

9. Ninthly and lastly, **You must do justice PROPORTIONATE to the nature of the offence.** Your penalties and punishments must be always suitable to the offence. To punish any fact *more severely* than it deserves, is always injustice to the offender; for so far innocency itself suffers, as any man is punished beyond the demerit of his offence. And to punish *less* than the fact deserves, may be of dangerous consequence to the public. [I have read of the Nile river, that if it either exceeds or is deficient in its due over-flowings of the land of Egypt, it causes famine: the application is easy.] The Roman fasces were a bundle of rods with an axe in the midst, to signify the equity of magistrates in punishing some only with rods, and others with the axe. The Romans had their rods for lesser faults, and their axe for capital crimes. Justice is *lax*, when it spares where it ought to punish; and justice is then *too severe*, when it punishes where it ought to spare.

Extreme right often proves extreme wrong. He who will always go to the utmost of what the law allows, will too often do more than the law requires. It is rare, very rare, to see a man dance upon the brink of the pit, and not to tumble in. A rigid severity often mars all; equity is still to be preferred before extremity. To inflict great penalties and heavy censures for light offences, this is to kill a fly upon a man's forehead with a hammer. In the French history, there is mention

made of an old courtier who would often depart the court, and retire himself to a private life; the king desired his advice in some general rules, what was best to be done in the government of the kingdom. Upon which motion he took a large paper, and wrote upon the top of the leaf, Moderation; and in the middle of the leaf, Moderation; and at the bottom of the leaf, Moderation; signifying thereby thus much to the king, that the best way in the world to have his crown set fast, and to keep his kingdom safe, was to manage throughout all his affairs with moderation. And there is nothing more evident in scripture and history than this, that many by screwing the pegs of government too high, have broke all in pieces about their ears.

Now, my Lords and Gentlemen, there are **five things or rules that will be of singular use** to help you in this case, to steer such a course as may be safe and honorable to you, and as may render you a mercy and a blessing to the nation.

1. And the first is this, **Never make those things to be sins, which God never made to be sins.** To make those things to be sins which God has made to be no sins, is to make gods of yourselves; yes, it is to lift up yourselves above God himself, as if you were more holy, more wise, more just, and more righteous than the Holy One of Israel is. Indeed the Papists, who are will-worshippers, and commonly highly conceited of their own wisdom and worth, they frequently transgress this rule with their "Touch not, taste not, handle not," Col. 2:21-23; which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, etc. But why should you, why should you, who have a higher profession upon you, and a more clear gospel-light shining every day more strongly upon you? But,

2. Secondly, **Never make those things to be absolute and necessary duties, that God has nowhere declared to be such,** Isaiah 33:22; James 4:12. Such things that do neither fall under a general nor a particular command of God, may not be imposed upon the consciences of men as absolute and necessary duties to be performed by them. A faithful observing of these two

rules would prevent a multitude of sins, a sea of sorrows, and a world of troubles. But,

3. Thirdly, **In all your administrations of justice, take the authority of the word of God with you.** This will yield you most comfort, most peace, most security, and most boldness, in the great day of your account. But,

4. Fourthly, **Never put off your own souls with any such pleas or arguments now,** which are not pleadable in the court of *conscience*, when you shall lie upon your *dying-beds*; nor which are not pleadable before the court of heaven, when you shall stand before *Christ's judgment-seat*. But,

5. Fifthly and lastly, In all your administrations of justice and judgment, be sure that you act nothing upon the account of any command, commission, or authority under heaven, that you dare not own, plead, and stand by before the great authority of heaven, **when the King of kings shall make a narrow inspection into all your judicial proceedings, and accordingly pass judgment upon you.** What though this command, and that commission, and the other authority, may bear you out in this world? yet if they are too weak to bear you out in the other world, you will curse the day that ever you were born, and wish that you had rather been lying under a hedge, or a-begging at the rich man's door—than that you had ever sat in seats of judicature, to act upon such grounds as are no ways pleadable before the Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall come in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels, to judge all the kings, princes, nobles, judges, and justices of the earth.

My Lords and Gentlemen, if these five things or rules were but sincerely, seriously, resolutely, and constantly followed, no heart can conceive, nor any tongue can express, the heinous sins, the sore troubles, and the dreadful calamities and woeful miseries that thereby would be prevented. And thus, my Lords and Gentlemen, I am done with those special rules that you are carefully, diligently,

faithfully, and constantly to observe in all your judicial administrations; but how you will be able to act suitable and answerable to these rules without a spirit of holiness, without a principle of holiness, and without an experience of the powerful operations of holiness in your own souls—I am not able to see. And, therefore, how important is it for you to study holiness, to love holiness, to prize holiness, to countenance holiness, to encourage holiness, to promote holiness; and to be restless until you have experienced the power, and life, and sweet of holiness in your own hearts and lives.

And oh, that after all this pains that I have taken upon the account of your immortal souls, I may not have cause to complain, as once Marcus Antonius did: "Alas," says he, "those graces which the deity sent down as so many pillars to prop up human societies, namely, Faith and Modesty, Justice and Verity, they found such cold treatment in the world, that they are fled back to heaven." I shall follow these weak endeavors with my best prayers, that you may all put on holiness as a royal robe, and that all your judicial administrations may savor of a spirit of holiness, and of the power and prevalence of holiness, that so you may be as high in happiness above others, as you are now in power and place exalted above others.

II. If this treatise should fall into any of their hands who call and account themselves **ministers** of Jesus Christ—but are such as who preach to please the people—rather than to profit their souls; to tickle the ear—rather than to awaken the conscience; who are better at fleecing of their flocks—rather than they are at feeding of their flocks; who seek more men's goods—rather than their good; [Ezekiel 13, Ezekiel 34—read it throughout; Mat. 23:23; Mat. 25:1-10.] who set up men's traditions above God's own institutions; who prefer human commands before divine commands; who are very zealous and warm for mint, anise, and cummin—but are very cold, careless, and negligent in the great and weighty matters of the law, namely, judgment, mercy, and faith; who can bless God in the church, and

blaspheme him in the tavern; who prefer entertaining music in the church before singing of hallelujahs in heaven; who prefer a fat salary before an interest in a heavenly inheritance; who can kneel devoutly behind a pillar, and in their drunken fits rail as stoutly against a post; who pretend a great deal of reverence to the name of Jesus, and yet in their lives do daily crucify the Lord Jesus; who with Judas can kiss Christ and betray Christ in a breath; who pretend much kindness to Christ, the head, and yet show nothing but unkindness to his body—his people; who preach as if they had a mind to go to heaven, and live as if they were resolved to go to hell; who feast their own bodies—but starve their people's souls; who think it a greater sin to eat flesh in Lent, than it is to lie with their neighbor's wife; who speak ten words to elevate themselves, and hardly two for Christ; and who instead of preaching up holiness, and promoting of holiness, and countenancing and encouraging of holiness—do all they can to discountenance holiness, to browbeat holiness, to keep down holiness, to bespatter holiness, to work men out of love with holiness, and to hinder the growth and increase of holiness. "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds, the leaders of Israel. Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: Destruction is certain for you shepherds who feed yourselves instead of your flocks. Shouldn't shepherds feed their sheep? You drink the milk, wear the wool, and butcher the best animals, but you let your flocks starve!" Ezekiel 34:2-3

Oh that these men would seriously consider how unlike to the true ministers of Jesus Christ they are! Do but look into a scripture-glass, and you may easily see that hell is not more unlike to heaven, nor sin more unlike to grace, nor Satan more unlike to God—than you are unlike to the holy, conscientious, laborious, etc., ministers of Jesus Christ. Several authors in print have written on this at large, and therefore I shall not enlarge upon it; only give me permission to say, that God's holy things ought to be handled with fear and reverence, rather than with wit and dalliance. Spiritual cuteness is the next degree to unfaithfulness. Ministers must not be hot in the pulpit—but cold, carnal, and careless in their lives. Those who stand before

princes must be exact in their behavior. God appointed both the weights and measures of the sanctuary to be twice as large as those of the commonwealth; to show that he expects much more of those who serve him there, than he does of others.

"The souls of ministers, must be purer than the sunbeams," says golden-mouthed Chrysostom. Mirthful things in a sermon are only for men to gaze upon and admire. What are high strains and flashes of wit, new minted words and phrases—but like colorful weeds compared to the good corn?

Doctrine is but the drawing of the bow; **application** is the hitting of the mark. How many are wise in *generals*—but vain in their *practical inferences*. A *general doctrine not applied*, is as a sword without an edge, not in itself—but to others; or as a whole loaf set before children, that will do them no good. A garment fitted for all bodies, is fit for no body; and so that which is spoken to all, is taken as spoken to none. Aaron's bells were golden bells, sounding pleasantly, and not as sounding brass or tinkling cymbals, as many of the carnal clergy of this nation are this day.

Many there are who account themselves ministers of Jesus Christ, who are but like empty orators, who have a flood of words, and but a drop of matter; of whom we may truly say, "They speak much, and yet say nothing," because they say nothing to the purpose. When the Lacedemonian heard how sweetly the nightingale sang, "Oh," said he, "that I had this bird, surely it is a rare dish!" But when he had taken it, and ate it, and found nothing but a little picking meat, he concluded with that proverbial saying, "Now I see that you are a mere voice and nothing else." How applicable this is to many preachers in these days, who have good lungs—but bad brains, and worse hearts and lives, the prudent reader may easily see.

John the Baptist was a burning and a shining light, as well as a voice. His sermons were stuffed with divine and weighty matter, etc., and not filled up with big words or strains of wit. Many there are, who

have John's voice in the ministry, that have not that heat and life that John had in his ministry. That great orator—Demosthenes—himself could say, "that the riches of Greece did not consist in words." It is not for ministers to use golden sentences, strong lines, frothy wit, in winning of souls to Christ; for it is iron, and not gold—which kills in the encounter; it is the steel sword, and not the golden sword—which wins the field. Woe to such preachers that darken counsel by words without knowledge, Job 38:2, that affect sublime notions, obscure expressions, uncouth phrases, making plain truths difficult, and easy truths hard; who seek abstrusities, and love to soar aloft in dark expressions, and take pleasure to shoot their arrows over their hearers' heads.

The heathenish priests had their mythologies and strange canting expressions of their imaginary inaccessible deities to amaze and amuse their blind superstitious followers, and thereby to hold up their Popish and apish idolatries in greater veneration. And is not this spirit now revived among many? Certainly men of abstracted conceits, and sublime speculations—are but *wise fools*; and commonly they are as erroneous as they are curious. Such as mind more the humoring of their hearers' fancies, than the saving of their souls, do little consider that saying of Seneca, "Sick men are not bettered by physicians' sugared words—but by their skillful hands." **The sword of the Spirit never wounds deep, until it be plucked out of the gaudy scabbards of human eloquence.**

Mr. Greenham, speaking of ministers, wishes that this motto might be written on their study-doors without, and walls within, on all their books they look on, on all the beds they lie on, and on all the tables they sit at, etc.: "The price of blood, the price of blood, the price of blood!" **A preacher's life should be a commentary upon his doctrine; his practice should be the counterpart of his sermons. Heavenly doctrines should always be adorned with a heavenly life.**

"Preachers are the glass, the school, the book,
Where people's eyes do learn, do read, do look."

Gentlemen, by these short hints you may see, as in a glass, if you will not put a cheat upon your own souls, how unlike to the true, holy, and faithful ministers of Jesus Christ you are. O sirs, do not you know that the Holy Scriptures, which always speak truth, do clearly evidence that an ignorant, profane, scandalous, superstitious, inefficient, and soul-flattering clergy are the greatest pest, plague, affliction, judgment, etc., which can befall a people, as you may easily see by comparing these scriptures together—Micah 2:11; Isaiah 30:10-11; Jer. 5:31; Lam. 2:14; Isaiah 9:16; Ezek. 3:18; Jer. 23:9, 18; Ezek. 13:22; Jer. 6:14, and 27:14, 16; 1 Thes. 5:3; Jer. 14:13-16; Isaiah 28:7-8; Ezek. 34 throughout; Romans 2:21-24. Other judgments, as war, famine, pestilence, burning fevers, plagues, etc., cannot separate between God and men's souls; for men may have very sweet and high communion with God under the sorest of those judgments. Other afflictions and judgments may spring from the fatherly love of God, and from a gracious design of good to his people: Rev. 3:19; Proverbs 3:11; Heb. 12:5-8; Psalm 89:30, 35; Job 7:17-18; but this is a sad fruit of God's judicial anger and severe indignation against a people. Other judgments often issue in men's seeking of the Lord, and in men's returning to the Lord. Isaiah 26:16-17; Hosea 5:14-15, compared with chapter 6:1-3, and chapter 2:6-7; but this judgment frequently issues in men's forsaking of the Lord, and in their running from God, and in their walking contrary to God, and in the hardening of them against God, and in an everlasting shutting of them out from the presence of the Lord: as you may see by comparing of these scriptures together—Mat. 15:14; Luke 6:39; 1 Thes. 5:3; 2 Thes. 1:7-10; Mat. 23:13.

Do not you know that where there is no vision, the people *perish*? Proverbs 29:18: The word, that is here rendered *perish*, signifies to be made naked, to be made bare and uncovered. They are naked as people who are stripped of their garments, and exposed to perish by cold in the winter, or to be scorched or roasted by heat in the

summer; or they are naked, that is, they are made the objects of shame and contempt to all that look upon them: or they are made naked, that is, of the grace, blessing, and protection of God: or they are naked, that is, say others, they are forsaken and cast off; for everyone forsakes and casts off people who will not wear clothes, they will have nothing to do with them, Exod. 32:25. Others thus, "The people shall be stripped naked, they shall be left as a city without walls, exposed to the fury of the enemy, as a body without clothes, open to wind and weather." Others thus, "The people shall be unveiled; it will then appear what is within, whether grace or sin; it will then be discovered what pantings, breathings, hungerings, and longings there be in souls after God, and Christ, and holiness, and ordinances." Pagnine thus, "The people will grow barbarous, rebellious, etc., as experience in all ages has fully demonstrated." Others thus, "The people shall be of no esteem, of no repute; nobody will prize them, nobody will value them, nobody will regard them; men set no price, no value upon naked people." Others thus, "The people shall be dispersed, scattered, shivered and shattered;" and this in all ages has been too apparent. Others thus, "They shall be drawn away with errors: they shall either be starved, or else poisoned with God-dishonoring, Christ-denying, scripture-debasing, conscience-destroying, life-polluting, and soul-damning opinions."

It is concluded on all hands, that it shall go ill, very ill, with that people who lack vision—who lack serious, sincere, faithful, and powerful preaching; for where there is no vision, no serious, sincere, faithful, and powerful preaching, there the people perish **certainly**, undoubtedly, there they go tumbling to hell; and this is evident in the text, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." He does not say they may perish—but they do perish; or they are in danger of perishing—but they do certainly perish. Where there is no serious, conscientious, faithful, powerful preaching, there the people grow abominably wicked, as woeful experience tells us: and what the outcome of that will be, you may see in Psalm 9:17, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God;" or as the Hebrew has it, the wicked shall be turned into hell, that is, they shall

certainly be turned into hell; yes, they shall be turned into the nethermost hell, into the lowest dungeon in hell. See Psalm 11:6.

Where vision fails, there men perish **temporally**. When *vision*, when *preaching* ceased among the Jews, oh the dreadful calamities and miseries that came upon that people! how soon did God burn up all their outward comforts, contentments, and enjoyments on every hand, 2 Chron. 15:3, 5-6, compared with chapter 13:9-11, and chapter 36:15 seq.; Mat. 23:37-38. They shut their eyes against all that light that Christ and his apostles brought among them: and what was the outcome of this? Why, about forty years after Christ's ascension, the Romans came and took away their city, and sold thirty of them for a penny, as Josephus writes, etc.; and ever since that time, which is above sixteen hundred years ago, they have been scattered as dung over the face of the whole earth.

Where vision fails, there men perish **totally**: both the bodies, and the souls of men perish, where serious, conscientious preaching fails; Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." The Chaldee renders it, they are besotted, and so fitted for destruction. The Papists say that ignorance is the mother of devotion; but this text tells us that ignorance is the mother of destruction. The heathens were accustomed to say that when their god Jupiter would destroy one—he would first besot him. So these people were first besotted, and then destroyed, Romans 6:16-19.

Where vision fails, there the people perish **insensibly** and **unexpectedly**. The ungodly flatter themselves that God is made up all of mercy, and believe that they shall go to heaven--until they awake with everlasting flames about their ears--as you may see in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Where vision fails, there men perish **suddenly**: in a moment they go down to hell, Job 21:13-15. As the travail of a woman comes suddenly upon her when she least expects it, so everlasting pains and torments come suddenly upon poor sinners when they least expect them,

Proverbs 24:22; Deut. 7:4; 1 Thes. 5:3. As God suddenly rained hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen. 18; and as he suddenly swept away the old world, Mat. 24:37-39; and as Samuel suddenly cut off Agag, when he concluded that the bitterness of death was past, 1 Sam. 15:32: so God suddenly casts sinners to hell—he suddenly sweeps them away—he cuts them off suddenly; and when they say, "Surely the bitterness of death is past, and everlasting wrath is past, and hell is past, and eternal ruin is past," then suddenly God cuts them off, and gives them their portion with devils and damned spirits, etc.

Where vision fails, there men perish **inevitably, irrecoverably**: 1 Thes. 5, And they shall not escape. "Therefore disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will suddenly be destroyed--without remedy." Proverbs 6:15. Here is their dismal doom: They shall not be only bruised—but broken; yes, they shall be suddenly broken when they least look for it, when they do not at all dream of it, or dread it, and this without remedy. They shall be so broken, as that there shall not be so much as a possibility of making them up again. If a man loses his estate, his friend, his child, this loss may be made up again; but if a man once lose his soul, there is no repairing nor making up of that loss.

Where there is no vision, there men perish everlastingly, there they perish **eternally**, 2 Thes. 1:7-9; Jude 7.

Do not you know that God will require the blood of all their souls at your hands, who perish either by your insufficiency, or neglect, or bad examples Ezek. 3:18-20, "You shall surely die," in dying you shall die; that is, you shall certainly die, you shall eternally die. The ancients commonly interpret it of the death of the soul.

Do not you know that a minister were better have the blood of all the men in the world upon him—than the blood of one soul upon him? For there is no blood that cries so loud, that will lie so heavy, and

which will sink a man so deep in hell, as the blood of souls—I say, as the blood of souls!

Do not you know that there are no men upon the face of the earth who are by office so strictly, so strongly, so universally, so indispensably, and so signally engaged to prize holiness, to countenance holiness, to encourage holiness, to promote holiness, and to practice holiness—as the ministers of Jesus Christ are?

Do not you know that *ministers* are called *angels*, in respect of their offices? Rev. 2. Now angels are spiritual creatures; their communion is spiritual, their food is spiritual, their delights are spiritual, their minds are spiritual, their affections are spiritual, and their exercises are spiritual, Psalm 104:4; and in all these respects ministers should be like to the angels. But are not many of them spiritual madmen in these days?—being nothing less than what they profess to be? They are *spiritual men in a mockery*. So these have no substantial goodness, no substantial holiness at all in them; whereas in holiness they should as far exceed all other men, as the angels in holiness do exceed them.

Do not you know that there is no rank nor order of men on earth, who have so enriched hell, who have been such benefactors to hell—as the ignorant, insufficient, profane, scandalous, and superstitious clergy? In times of Popery letters were written and published as sent from hell, wherein the devil gave the carnal, ignorant, insufficient, scandalous, and superstitious clergy of those times great thanks for so many millions of souls as by their means were daily sent to hell.

Do not you know that all the true faithful prophets, apostles, and ministers of Jesus Christ, who are mentioned in the Old and New Testament, were men of the greatest holiness; [2 Chron. 36:15; Jer. 7:25; 25:4; 35:15; 11:7, etc.; 2 Cor. 11, etc.] and men who made it their greatest business and work to keep down a spirit of profaneness and wickedness; and to countenance, encourage, and promote holiness? Oh, how diligent! oh, how frequent! oh, how abundant! oh, how

constant were they in the work of the Lord—that profane people might be made holy, and that those who were holy might be made more and more holy, yes, that they might perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord! etc.

If a man might eat the sweet and never sweat, it would be an easy matter to be a preacher. But every clergyman is, or ought to be, a steward and overseer in God's house; and that is an office of great labor, trust, and employment. Stewards and overseers commonly eat their bread in the sweat of their brows, and after much beating of their brains; but how unlike to such stewards and overseers the clergy are, who I am now expostulating with, I must leave the Christian reader to judge.

Ernestus, Duke of Lunebury, caused a burning lamp to be stamped on his coin, with these four letters, A. S. M. C., by which was meant, "Aliis Serviens Meipsum Contero." That is—by giving light to others, I consume myself. And such were the Lord's faithful prophets, apostles, and ministers of old: and such are all his faithful, laborious, and conscientious ministers now. But how unlike to the one or the other they are, that now I am reasoning with, you may easily perceive, by comparing them together.

I have read of the nobles of Polonia, that when the gospel is read, they clap their hands upon their swords, and begin to draw them out, intimating by that ceremony their resolution to defend the faith, and their willingness to hazard their lives for the gospel's safety. The faithful prophets, apostles, and ministers of old, were willing to sacrifice themselves for the gospel's sake: but how many are there in these days who are more ready and willing to make a sacrifice of the gospel for profit sake, and preferment sake, and honor sake, and lust's sake, etc., than they are to make themselves a sacrifice for the gospel's sake! How unlike these are to the faithful, conscientious ministers of Jesus Christ that have been in all ages, I must leave you to judge.

Do not you know that Pharaoh had that tender regard of his cattle, as that he thought none fit to be their ruler, their overseer—but such as were known men of activity? Gen. 47:6-7. Pharaoh would have none to be his cow-herders but men of activity, men of skill—men who were prudent and diligent, ingenuous and industrious. Shall Pharaoh be so careful for his cows—and shall not ministers be as careful for souls? What man is there under heaven, who has the use of his reason, his wits, etc., that when he is to travel, would take a fool, an ignoramus, for his guide; and that when he is sick, would send for a charlatan to be his physician; or that when he is to ride a dangerous way, would make choice of a coward to defend him; or that when he has a lawsuit, would make use of a dunce to plead it; or that when he has a suit of clothes to make, would send for a bungling tailor to make it? Surely none! And why then should not men be as wise for their souls?

Unholy ministers have been the greatest instruments of bringing the greatest calamities and miseries, and the sorest desolations and destructions, which ever have been brought upon cities, nations, kingdoms, and countries? Compare these scriptures together, and then let conscience speak. [Jer. 26:8-9, 11, 14, 15; Lam. 4:11-13; Amos 7:10-11; 1 Kings 22; 2 Chron. 18.] And who does not know that it was the high-priests, scribes, and Pharisees, who brought the innocent blood of our Lord Jesus Christ upon that once great and glorious nation of the Jews, to their utter destruction and desolation, about forty years after Christ's ascension, when the Romans came and took their city, and practiced the greatest severity and cruelty imaginable upon them, as Josephus and other historians show?

In the Marian days, and in the massacre of the Protestants in France, how great a hand this sort of men had, that I am now a-reasoning with, all the world knows. And so the pagan priests stirred up the pagan emperors to be desperate persecutors of the people of God that were within their empires; which occasioned Tertullian to give that good counsel to Scapula, a pagan persecutor; "God," says he, "will surely make inquisition for our blood, and therefore if you will

not spare us—yet spare yourself: if not yourself—yet spare your country, which must be responsible when God comes to visit for the innocent shedding of our blood."

Do not you know that his Majesty has very Christianly, zealously, argumentatively, and smartly declared against drunkenness, lewdness, profaneness, etc., and that he has declared that his resolution is and shall be to promote the power of godliness, to encourage the exercises of religion, both public and private; and that inefficient, negligent, and scandalous ministers be not permitted in the church?

Do not you know that when the great Shepherd our Lord Jesus Christ shall appear, that he will call you to a particular and exact account for every soul that has perished under your charge—either by reason of your ignorance, inefficiency, profaneness, looseness, or superstition, etc.? and how will you then be able to stand in that day? etc., 1 Pet. 5:2-4; Ezek. 17-19.

Gentlemen, if you say you don't understand these things, and that they are riddles and mysteries to you—how dare you say that you are the ministers of Jesus Christ? But if you shall say that you know very well that these things are certainly true, yes, that they are such clear and undeniable truths that no devil can deny—and yet shall continue in your ignorance, inefficiency, profaneness, looseness, superstition, etc., what man on earth is there, who has but read the scriptures, and that can but write his own name, and that would not taken for a fool in folio—will believe you to be the true faithful ministers of Jesus Christ?

Well, Gentlemen, I have read of Alexander the Great, how that he had a soldier by the name of *Alexander*, who was a coward; which he commanded him either to fight like Alexander, or else to lay down the name of Alexander. So say I to you, Gentlemen, either preach as the ministers of Jesus Christ ought to preach—namely, plainly, spiritually, powerfully, feelingly, fervently, frequently, etc., and live

as the ministers of Jesus Christ ought to live—namely, heavenly, graciously, holily, humbly, righteously, harmlessly, and exemplarily, etc., or else lay down your very names of being the ministers of Jesus Christ, and put no longer a cheat upon yourselves, nor upon the people, by making them believe that you are ministers of Jesus Christ, when you have nothing of the spirit of Christ, nor of the anointings of Christ, nor of the grace of Christ, nor of the life of Christ in you.

Gentlemen, if this counsel be seriously minded and faithfully followed, it will turn more to your accounts in the great day of our Lord Jesus, and do you more good then, than all the profits, preferments, and honors of this world can do you good now. But if you shall slight and despise this counsel now, I shall be found a true prophet—to your woe and misery in that great day, etc.

III. If this Treatise should fall into the hands of any **ladies and gentlewomen**, as I suppose it may, who have not yet experienced the sweet and powerful operations of holiness in their own souls, I would then say,

Ladies and Gentlewomen, your souls are as precious, and as immortal, and as capable of union and communion with Christ here, and of an eternal fruition of Christ hereafter, as the souls of any men in the world are. I have read a sad story of a woman named Bochna, who had but two sons in all the world; and while she was walking with the one by the river, she heard the other crying out, and hastening to him, she found a knife sticking in his side, which killed him immediately. Then she made haste back to the other child—but he in her absence had fallen into the river and drowned—and so she lost both her sons at once! Now, ladies, this is your very case; everyone of you have two children, as I may say—a soul and a body—an eternal life and a temporal life; and oh, what a dreadful and unspeakable loss would it be to lose both these at once! and yet, as certain as there is a God in heaven, you will lose them both without holiness.

All know, who know anything of scripture or history, that there have been many great ladies and gentlewomen, who have been great lovers of holiness, and great delighters in holiness, and great prizers of holiness, and great admirers of holiness, and great countenancers of holiness, and great encouragers of holiness, and great promoters of holiness, and great followers after holiness, and great experiencers of the sweet and powerful operations of holiness in their own souls. And oh that this might be all your honor and happiness, to be in all respects as famous for holiness, as any of your gender has been before you.

Christ has prayed as much for your souls, as he has for the souls of others; and he has paid as much for your souls, as he has for the souls of others; and he has sweat, and wept, and bled as much for your souls, as he has for the souls of others; and he has suffered, and satisfied as much for your souls, as he has for the souls of others; and he has purchased and prepared as great and as glorious things for your souls, as he has for the souls of others, if you will be but a holy people to him: and what does all this speak out—but an unspeakable readiness and willingness in Jesus Christ to sanctify you, and save you, as well as others?

All knowing men can tell you, that many ladies and gentlewomen in all ages have been very famous for all natural, moral, spiritual, and acquired excellencies; yes, more famous than many men who have done worthily in their generation; and by their attainments you may easily see what is possible for you to attain unto, both in respect of gifts and grace. [We might write volumes on this subject: there is so much said in scripture and history upon this account; but *a touch* must suffice, etc.] Of all things, **gracious examples** are most awakening, convincing, and encouraging; for in them you may see that both the attainment of holiness, and the exercise of holiness, is possible, though difficult. In eyeing of examples, it is always best to eye the highest, the holiest, and the worthiest examples; for, as he who shoots at the sun, though he falls short of his mark—yet will shoot higher than he who aims only at a shrub; so those who set up

the highest examples of holiness for their mark, for their imitation, will certainly attain to greater degrees of holiness, than those who propose to themselves the lowest examples of holiness for their pattern and imitation.

Well, Ladies and Gentlewomen—Do you think that it is good to be going to hell—that it is good dwelling with the devouring fire, that it is good dwelling with everlasting burnings, that it is good forever to be separated from the glorious presence of God? Isaiah 33:14; 2 Thes. 1:7-10. Do you think that it is good to be forever to lie a-sweltering under the wrath of an infinite just God, and to abide forever and ever under those pains and torments which are endless, easeless, hopeless, and remediless? Do you think that it is good to be associated, and fettered with devils and damned spirits to all eternity? Oh no, this cannot be good; for the very serious thoughts of these things are enough to raise a hell on this side hell, in our hearts! Oh then, Ladies and Gentlewomen, pray that you may be holy; hear that you may be holy; read that you may be holy; and with all your might press after holiness, and pursue hard after holiness—as after the one thing necessary; for without holiness you will as certainly go to hell, as holy people shall certainly go to heaven! And this you will find as clearly and fully proved in this following treatise, as heart can wish.

Oh that you would forever remember this, that without all question, you shall never be saved, unless you are sanctified; you shall never be truly and eternally happy, unless you are really holy—unless God should do five things, which are not possible for him to do—namely,

1. Change his purpose;
2. Make null and void his decree;
3. Make a new gospel;
4. Find out a new way to heaven; and

5. Ungod himself.

God must undo himself and ungod himself, if ever he makes you happy before he has made you holy; and therefore, oh, what infinite cause have you to read this following treatise, and to study this treatise, and to meditate on this treatise, and to pray over this treatise, and to look up to heaven for counsel and strength to make such an improvement of the means, helps, and directions which are here prescribed for the attaining of holiness, as that you may be made really holy, that so you may be everlastingly happy!

IV. If this treatise should fall into the hands of any **faithful, serious, gracious, conscientious, laborious ministers'** hands, as I suppose it may, I would then say, sirs, let my weak endeavors be a spur, a provocation to you to lay out your choicest and your chief gifts, parts, strength, time, and opportunities—to promote holiness of life, and holiness in doctrine, worship, discipline, and in all your sacred communions. Certainly, had we all eyed holiness more, and preached holiness more, and practiced holiness more, and cried up holiness more, and encouraged holiness more, and countenanced holiness more—the countenance both of God and man might have been set more pleasingly towards us than they are this day. When once the paycheck comes to be more in ministers' eyes than holiness; and when their studies and endeavors are more to make men proselytes to this or that *doctrine*, this or that *form*, this or that *party*—than to make men holy—it is no wonder if God writes out "bitter things" against them. I doubt not but providential dispensations have had such a teaching virtue in them, as to lead you to lay your fingers upon several such-like sores, and to mourn over them, and to justify the Holy One of Israel, who is holy in all his ways, and righteous in all his works. [Be it remembered this was written at the time of the "Ejection" of the Two Thousand, of whom Brooks was one.—editor]

Truly, brethren, I have always looked upon the great work of the ministry to lie in two things: first, in making unholy men holy; and,

secondly, in making those who are already holy to be more and more holy. First to beget holiness, and then to nurse up holiness; first to bring souls to Christ, and then to build up souls in Christ, is without all question the work of works which should be most in every minister's eye, and which should always lie nearest and warmest upon every minister's heart, etc. And, through grace, I have made this my grand design in the course of my ministry, and throughout all my writings; and now it yields me that joy, that comfort, that contentment, and that satisfaction, that I would not be without for all the world. Besides, I know it will turn most to my account at the great day.

Oh that all of you who yet have any opportunities and advantages in your hands to preach the everlasting gospel would make this your great business, to promote holiness, and to exalt and lift up holiness in the world! For as this great principle of holiness shall gain ground upon the hearts, consciences, and lives of men; so all the things of Antichrist, and all the trade of Antichrist, and all those grand mischiefs and miseries that threaten the sons of men, will fall before it—as Dagon fell before the ark.

V. If this treatise should fall into the hands of any of **God's sanctified ones**, of whatever degree or rank they are of, as I suppose it may fall into the hands of many such, I would then say, Dear friends, in this treatise you will find many strong *motives* to provoke you to "perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord," and many special *means* to enable you to "perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord," and many *evidences* whereby you may certainly and infallibly know whether you have attained to any considerable height of holiness or not. And in the opening of these things, you will find that great doctrine about *degrees of glory* in heaven to be asserted and proved, and the objections against it to be fairly dismissed, etc.

VI. Reader, if you are one that to this very day **are in an unsanctified estate**, and an enemy to holiness, or a scoffer at holiness, or a secret despiser of holiness, or a desperate opposer of

holiness, or a bitter persecutor of holiness, then I would commend this following treatise, before any I know extant in the world, to the service of your soul. For I know of no other treatise which is so calculated and fitted up for that purpose as this is. Read and judge. This I will assure you, O you unsanctified soul, that the grand design of this book is your salvation; it is to make you really holy, that you may be eternally happy. And of this you may be confident—namely, that I shall follow these poor labors with my earnest prayers, that they may be blessed to the internal and eternal welfare of your soul, and that they may issue in the conviction, conversion, and salvation of your soul.

I shall send this treatise forth into the world with Jacob's blessing and prayer for his sons, "May God Almighty send you mercy in the sight of the man," Gen. 43:14, etc., in the sight of the *proud* man that he may be humbled; and in the sight of the *hardened* man—that he may be softened; and in the sight of the *carnal* man—that he may be spiritualized; and in the sight of the *polluted* man—that he may be washed; and in the sight of the *unsanctified* man that he may be sanctified; and in the sight of the *ignorant* man—that he may be enlightened; and in the sight of the *stubborn* man—that he may be bowed; and in the sight of the *unconverted* man—that he may be changed; and in the sight of the *lost* man—that he may be saved.

Christian reader, I suppose by this time that I have almost tired you in reading, as I have myself in writing—and therefore I shall presently draw to a close; only, before I take my leave of you, give me leave to say, that it is impossible to find a book printed without errata, even though the printer had Argus' eyes. Notwithstanding all the care that has been taken, you will find some mistakes of the printer. I know the Christian reader, who is daily sensible of the erratas of his life, will do me the courtesy, and cast a mantle of love over my mistakes.

Reader, I do not offer you that which cost me nothing. This treatise that now I put into your hand is the fruit of much prayer and serious

study. If you find any profit and benefit by it—give Christ all the glory—the crown of praise befits no head but his. Only when you are in the mount—let me lie near your heart. Oh, pray earnestly, pray fervently, pray frequently, and pray unweariedly—that I may have much of the fresh anointings of the Holy Spirit, that my communion with a holy God may every day rise higher and higher; and that all my transactions, both before God and man; may savor of some heights of holiness: so you will the more strongly oblige me to be your soul's servant in all gospel engagements,
Thomas Brooks, 1662.

What This Holiness Is?

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Hebrews 12:14

I remember a saying of golden-mouthed Chrysostom, "If I were," said he, "the fittest man in the world to preach a sermon to the whole world, gathered together in one congregation, and had some high mountain for my pulpit, from whence I might have a prospect of all the world in my view, and were furnished with a voice of brass, a voice as loud as the trumpet of the archangel, that all the world might hear me; I would choose to preach on no other text than that in Psalm 4:2, O mortal men, how long will you love vanity, and pursue a lie?" So I say, had I Chrysostom's tongue, head, and heart, and were I every way advantaged to preach a sermon to the whole world, I would choose to preach on this text before any other in the Bible, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

Beloved! the salvation of souls is that which should be first and most in a minister's eye, and that which should always lie closest and warmest upon a minister's heart. O sirs! our dear Lord Jesus was

infinitely tender of the souls of men. He left his Father's bosom for souls; he trod the wine-press of his Father's wrath for souls; he prayed for souls; he paid for souls; he sweat for souls; he bled out his heart's blood for souls; and he made himself an offering for souls! [Isaiah 63:3; John 17:22; Luke 4:24; 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Pet. 1:18-20; Heb. 9:12-15.] Oh, what an encouragement should this be to all his faithful messengers to woo for souls, to mourn for souls, to pray for souls, to study for souls, and in preaching to spend and to be spent for the salvation of souls! Ah, friends, there is no work nor wisdom on earth compared to that of winning souls, "he who wins souls is wise." Proverbs 11:30. There is no art, no industry to that of winning souls, of "taking" souls, as fowlers take birds, as the Hebrew word imports. Now, though there is a great deal of art required to take birds—yet there is ten thousand times more are required to take souls. In a word, to convert a soul is a greater work than to sway a scepter, or than it is to pour out millions into the baskets of the poor.

My design in choosing this text is the winning of souls, it is the salvation of souls, it is the bringing in and building up of souls. I have read of Louis the Ninth, king of France, that he was found instructing his poor kitchen-boy in the way to heaven; and being asked the reason of it, he answered, "The poorest has a soul as precious as my own, and bought by the same blood of Christ." He who paid the price of souls, has long since told us that a soul is more worth than a world, Mat. 16:26. That I may catch some poor soul or other by a holy craft, 2 Cor. 12:16, and establish and strengthen others in the love and liking of holiness, and in the power and practice of holiness, I have cast my thoughts upon this scripture.

But to draw nearer to my text.

As no means has more populated hell than beautiful faces, so no means has more enriched heaven than the beauty of holiness. Now that I may discover the necessity, beauty, rarity, and excellency of holiness, I have chosen this text, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." I shall give a

little light into the words, and then come to that main point I intend to engage in.

"Follow peace with all men." The Greek word translated *follow*, signifies to pursue and press after peace, as the persecutor pursues and presses after him he persecutes. It notes an earnest, an eager, an affectionate, and an incessant pressing and following after peace with all men: Psalm 34:14, "Seek peace, and pursue it." [The very name of peace is sweet.] Here the Hebrew word translated *seek*, signifies to "seek earnestly," vehemently, studiously, industriously. Thus peace with God, and peace with conscience, and peace with men must be sought. "Seek peace and pursue it." The word translated pursue, signifies an "earnest pursuit." It is a metaphor taken from the earnestness of wild beasts, or ravenous fowl, which will run or fly fast and far, eagerly and unweariedly, rather than be disappointed of their prey.

Though Christians meet with many encumbrances and hindrances—yet peace must be resolutely pursued. The Spirit of God is a Spirit of peace, and God delights to be styled the God of peace, and Christ chooses to be the Prince of peace, and King of *Salem*, that is, King of *peace*. [Gal. 5:22; 2 Cor. 13:11; Isaiah 9:6, 7; Heb. 1:2.] Where peace is, there is Christ, because Christ is peace. Therefore let all who are interested in Christ pursue after peace. But this is not the point that I have in my eye at this time. I shall hasten to it. "With all men;" that is, with all orders, ranks, and sorts of men.

"And *holiness*," etc. [A man may be miserable under peace—but never under holiness.] We must so pursue after peace in such a way—as that we do not neglect holiness for peace sake. Better is holiness without peace, than peace without holiness. **Holiness differs nothing from happiness but in name.** Holiness is happiness in the bud, and happiness is holiness at the full. Happiness is nothing but the quintessence of holiness. A man were better be holy in hell, than unholy in heaven. Holiness would make hell to be no hell, as the fire was no fire to those holy worthies, Dan. 27. Look! as unholiness

would make heaven to be no heaven, yes, turn a heaven into a very hell, so holiness would turn a hell into a very heaven. What holiness this is in the text, I shall discover to you in the opening of that point I intend to engage in.

"Without which no man." This expression is exclusive, "no man," be he rich or poor, high or low, honorable or base, young or old, Jew or Gentile, bond or free, under one form or another, etc.

"Shall see the Lord." To "see," in the Hebrew phrase, is ordinarily used to "enjoy:" Psalm 4:6, "Who will show us any good?" The word in the Hebrew is from to "see," "Who will make us to see any good?" that is, to enjoy any good. "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" that is, without holiness no man shall ever come to a blessed, to a glorious fruition and enjoyment of the Lord. There was once a holy man [Chrysostom] who professed that the lack of the enjoyment of God would be a far greater hell to him than the feeling of any punishment; and yet this great hell, everyone shall be sure to feel—who lives and dies without holiness. The Jews say of holy Moses, that he died at the kisses of God's mouth, and in divine embraces, Psalm 37:37. When a man of holiness dies, he shall be sure to die in divine embraces, and live forever in divine embraces.

When Socrates was to die, he comforted himself with this—that he would go to a place where he would enjoy Homer and Musaeus, and other worthies who lived before him. But ah, what an unspeakable comfort is this to a holy man when he comes to die—to consider that he is going to a place where he shall see the Lord, not as now, through a glass darkly—but in all his heavenly resplendency, and in all his divine embroidery and bespangled glory! 1 Cor. 13:12. And let this suffice for the opening of the words.

In my text you have two things: First, An *exhortation* to "follow peace and holiness." Secondly, The *reason* or argument to enforce the duty pressed, namely, "without which no man shall see the Lord."

The words will afford us many weighty observations. I shall only name one, which I intend to insist upon, and that is this—namely:

DOCTRINE. That real holiness is the only way to happiness.

All men must be holy on earth, or they shall never see the beatifical vision, they shall never reach to a glorious fruition of God in heaven.

For the clearing up, and making good of this great and glorious truth, I shall endeavor these three things—

First, to show you what this holiness is, "without which no man shall see the Lord."

Secondly, I shall, by an induction of particulars, make good the proposition.

Thirdly, Give you the reasons of the point.

I. What is this holiness "without which no man shall see the Lord"?

I answer, there is a sixfold holiness.

1. First, There is a LEGAL holiness. Now a legal holiness consists in an exact, perfect, and complete conformity in heart and life to the whole revealed will of God—and this was the holiness that Adam had in his innocency; and this holiness was immediately derived from God, and was perfect. Adam knew the will of God perfectly, so far as it was revealed to him, and had a divine principle in him of perfect conformity to that blessed will. Adam's holiness was as natural to him, as unholiness is now to us; and had he stood fast in that glorious condition, we would have all been as naturally holy from the womb, as now we are sinful. Adam's holiness was as natural, and as pleasing, and as delightful to him, as any way of unholiness can be natural, pleasing, and delightful unto us. But this holiness, which was Adam's choicest sparkling gem of beauty, and his weightiest crown of glory, is by Satan's policy long since fallen off from Adam's head, Psalm 51:5.

Now if this legal holiness were the holiness meant in the text, then woe to every man who ever was born; for then no man would ever see the Lord, Romans 3:10. For by Adam's fall all men are gone out of the way, and there is none legally righteous, no not one. Now if we look upon man as fallen from that holiness which was his greatest honor, dignity, and excellency—he has become a pile of dust, a puff of wind; a dream; a shadow; a puff of smoke; a poor silly flea, a worm, a debased soul, a curious nothing. Yes, man having fallen from his primitive glory, has become altogether vanity, says the prophet: Psalm 39:5, "Truly, every man at his best state is altogether vanity." "Truly;" this asseveration is only used in matters of greatest weight and importance, and notes the reality and certainty of the things delivered. Every man, ["all Adam"] or every son of Adam; not some man—but every man at his best state, that is, in his most settled and composed condition, when he is best constituted and underlaid, when he stands a-tiptoe, and is in the height and perfection of all creature comforts and contentments, is altogether, not in some measure—but altogether, vanity—all vanity. Since the fall of Adam every natural man in his best estate is vanity; nay, every man is every vanity. Imagine whatever vanity you will, fallen man is that. He is a comprehensive vanity—he is **an epitome of all vanity**.

Man in honor, before his fall, was the best of creatures; but since his fall, he has become the worst of creatures. By his fall he is fallen below the very beasts which perish, Isaiah 1:3-4; Proverbs 6:6; Jer. 8:7; Mat. 6:26. He who was once the image of God, the glory of paradise, the world's ruler, and the Lord's darling—has now become a burden to heaven, a burden to himself, and a slave to others, etc., which made one cry out—

"Oh, what is man?

A scuttleful of dust, a measured span,

Man's breath a bubble, and his days a span;

'Tis glorious misery to be born a man." (Quarles)

By all which you may easily perceive how far we are off from that legal holiness that Adam had in innocency. Rabbi Solomon makes Adam so high, that he touched heaven with his head. I shall not dispute the certainty of that; but certainly the higher he was in holiness, the greater was his fall, and ours in him. This legal holiness was so lost in Adam, that no son of Adam could ever find it since Adam fell; and if this were the holiness without which no man should ever see the Lord, then farewell forever to all the sons of Adam. But this legal holiness is not the holiness in the text.

2. Secondly, There is an IMAGINARY holiness, a conceited holiness, an opinionative holiness. Proverbs 30:12, "There is a generation which is pure in their own eyes—and yet is not washed from their filthiness." They were very bad—and yet they had a great opinion of their own goodness. They were very filthy—and yet they stood very much upon their own purity. Their hands were black, their hearts were black, their works were black, and their ways were as black as hell—and yet they were pure in their own eye. They were filthy within, and filthy without; filthy in body, and filthy in soul, and filthy in spirit. Filthiness had quite overspread them—and yet they thought to cover their filthiness with a mask of holiness. The worst men are commonly best conceited of themselves.

Ah, friends, there has been never been a generation wherein there has not been such a generation of men who have wallowed in sin like swine in the mire—and yet have kept up in themselves a strong opinion of their own goodness and holiness. This generation had neither their souls nor consciences washed in the blood of Christ, nor sanctified by the Spirit of Christ—and yet they gloried in their conceited purity and holiness, as if they had been purified by Christ. There are many who are shining Christians, who are pure golden Christians in their own eyes, who are viler than dross, yes, than smoke in God's eyes: Isaiah 65:5, "Stand by yourself, come not near to me; for I am holier than you: these are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burns all the day." They were very licentious, very ungracious, very rebellious, very superstitious, very idolatrous, (ver. 2-4,) and yet

counted themselves very pious. They were worse than others—and yet thought themselves better than others; they were very bad—and yet judged themselves very good. They were more impure, more profane, and more polluted than others—and yet they reckon themselves more pure and holier than others; they stand upon their comparative goodnesses—and yet at the same time are charged by God of the greatest wickedness.

And thus their kinsmen the *Pharisees* stand upon their images, fraudulent appearances and outward dresses of holiness, when at the same time they practiced the worst of wickedness, Mat. 23:5; Luke 18:11-12; so those in Hosea 12:8, "They will not find in me any iniquity or sin." Ephraim's iniquities were grown over his head, as may be seen throughout this whole prophecy—and yet Ephraim cannot bear the being charged with iniquity. Though he was notoriously guilty of the highest crimes—yet he would have you to know that he was free of sin, and clear of sin. Ephraim could give good *words*, when his *works* were abominable; he could pretend much to *innocency*, when he was guilty of the greatest *impiety*. But though Ephraim had his cloak at hand—yet it was too short to cover his sin; for God saw it, and condemned him for it.

Chrysostom does elegantly set forth the blindness and brutishness of such people. "When they lie in the mire," says he, they think they are besmeared with some sweet ointments; when they are full of vermin, they vaunt themselves, as if they were adorned with precious stones." And so the Laodiceans were of the same temper of spirit: Rev. 3:17, "Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." They had a great opinion of their own goodness, worth, and excellent state, having need of nothing, when they had nothing of a Christian in them.

You say you are "**rich**;" ay—but you do but say so. You boast and brag of your riches, as many proud beggars do of that wealth they have not. For all you deem yourself rich—you are but poor and

beggarly. It is man's sin and judgment, that ever since he ceased to be what he should be, he strives to *seem* to be what he is not. You say you are "increased with goods, and need nothing;" ay—but you do but *say* so, you do but *dream* it is so: for you are ignorant of your own wretched and lamentable estate. You say you are rich—but I know you are poor and beggarly. If a grain of grace would save your life, your soul, your family, nay, the whole world—you have it not.

"You say you **see**"; but you are blind, you are destitute of spiritual eyesight; you see not your own wants, nor Christ's worth; your own emptiness, nor Christ's fullness; your own sinfulness, nor Christ's holiness; your own poverty, nor Christ's riches and plenty; your own misery, nor Christ's mercy; your own insufficiency, nor Christ's all-sufficiency; your own vanity, nor Christ's glory, etc. Many know much—but few know themselves, or their own danger, infelicity, or misery; and indeed no misery can be compared to this.

The Chinese used to say of themselves, that all other nations of the world did see but with one eye, they only with two; and of this spirit and temper were those blind Laodiceans. They thought they knew all things, when they knew nothing that they should, nor as they should.

By all which you may see that there is an imaginary holiness, a conceited holiness, where there is no real holiness; but an imaginary holiness will bring a man but to an imaginary blessedness; a conceited holiness will bring a man but to a conceited happiness; he who does but dream that he is holy, he does but dream that he shall be happy.

Bastards of old were not to inherit—but to be thrust out from among the true heirs: Gen. 21:10; Judges 11:1-2, "Now Jephthah of Gilead was a great warrior. He was the son of Gilead, but his mother was a prostitute. Gilead's wife also had several sons, and when these half brothers grew up, they chased Jephthah off the land. "You will not get any of our father's inheritance," they said, "for you are the son of a prostitute." Ah, sirs, you who are but bastard Christians, bastard

professors, bastard believers, bastard saints, you shall never inherit among the heirs of glory—but shall be thrust out forever from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, and thrust into utter darkness, because you have pleased yourselves, and satisfied your spirits, and blessed your souls in a bastard holiness, in a conceited holiness, 2 Thes. 1:8-9; Mat. 8:12, and 22:13; Deut. 23:2, "A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord." He shall have no fellowship nor communion with the people of God; the door of admission shall be shut upon him. The foolish virgins had but a bastard holiness, a conceited holiness, an outward dress of holiness; and therefore the door of life, the door of hope, the door of help, the door of grace, the door of mercy, the door of glory was shut upon them, Mat. 25:10-12, 7:21-23. William the Conqueror was much slighted and scorned because he was a bastard. God and his people will slight such, and scorn such, and turn their backs at last upon such, who have no more than a bastardly holiness; and therefore this cannot be the holiness here meant. But,

3. Thirdly, There is an outward, EXTERNAL, visible holiness, which includes men's freedom from scandalous vices, and their ordinary performance of religious duties.

Now, in this sense, Zacharias and Elizabeth were both holy people: for they "walked in all the commandments and ordinances of God blameless." [Luke 1:5, 6. Their life was such as none could justly complain of it. It was irreprehensible; it could not be reprehended.] And so the apostles, 1 Thes. 2:10, "For you are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you who believe." Answerable to this, is that of the apostle in 2 Cor. 1:12, "Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace." These precious souls behaved themselves holily towards God, justly towards the world, and unblamably towards believers. They were holy in religious work, they were just in their

civil affairs and commerce, and unblamably in their private behavior among their familiar and most bosom friends.

And this is that holiness which the apostle presses upon Christians in Phil. 2:15, "That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke," (or unblemished,) "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." Christians must be the spotless sons of God: they must have no spots upon them, which are inconsistent with sonship or saintship, Deut. 32:5. Now it is certain, without this outward visible holiness there is no happiness, there is no fruition of God in everlasting blessedness. Those who pretend their hearts are as good as the best, when their lives are as bad as the worst, shall experience this truth at last to their shame and cost, that without visible holiness here, there can be no fruition of God hereafter.

Yet this must be granted—that a man **may** be visibly holy—who is not inwardly holy, 2 Tim. 2:5. A man may be outwardly holy—who is not throughout holy. A man may have an outward dress of holiness upon him—who has not the spirit and vitals of holiness in him. [They say of Halifax nuts, that they are all shells—no kernels. There are many who make a glorious show before men—who are abominable in the sight of God, Luke 16:15, who are gold in man's eyes, dirt in God's sight.] As Judas had, and Simon Magus had, and Demas had, and the Scribes and Pharisees had: Mat. 23:25, 27, 28, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter—but within they are full of extortion and excess. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you are like unto whited sepulchers, which indeed appear beautiful outward—but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous unto men—but within you are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." They were outwardly religious—but inwardly wicked; they had the semblance of sanctity—but inwardly very full of impurity; they were fair professors—but foul sinners; they were gracious without—but impious within. Look! as those are the worst of vices which are covered over with the *show* of

virtue; so they are the worst of sinners, who cover over their inward filthiness with the disguises of outward holiness.

The Egyptian temples were fair without—but foul and filthy within. Such were the Scribes and Pharisees in Christ's days, and such are many professors in our days. It is said of Dionysius the tyrant, that though he loved not the philosophers—yet he would wrap himself up in their cloaks, that men might have the better opinion of him. Just so, there are many who put on an outward dress of holiness, who wrap themselves up in the cloak of holiness—so that others may take them for holy people—and yet they love not holiness, they have nothing of real holiness in them. "As he is not a Jew which is one outwardly," but not inwardly, Romans 2:28, 29, and 4:12; so he is not a holy person who is only so outwardly—but not inwardly; who has the name of holiness upon him—but has no principles of holiness in him. Though without outward visible holiness no man shall see the Lord; yet a man may have an outward visible holiness—who shall never see the Lord in happiness.

"I hate him even to hell," says the heathen in Homer, "who says one thing with his mouth, and thinks another thing in his heart." So God will at last hate that man to hell, yes, cast him into the hottest place in hell—who has a form of godliness upon him—but nothing of the reality and power of holiness in him. Outward holiness is good—but it must be throughout holiness which will do a man good to all eternity. [Mat. 23:14; 2 Tim. 3:5; 1 Cor. 7:18; Phil. 3:3; Gal. 5:6, and 6:15.] It is not the *show* of holiness, but the *substance* of holiness which will bring a man to everlasting happiness. Mere outward holiness will certainly leave a man short of heaven and happiness; but throughout holiness will certainly lodge the soul in the bosom of God forever.

It is true, all men reach not to an outward holiness, which made Athanasius wish, "Would to God that all were hypocrites!" Without all question, it is a very desirable thing that all were outwardly holy; yet all who reach to this, must go farther, or else they will sit down on

this side happiness: Mat. 5:20, "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall *exceed* the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Now they were much in works of piety, in works of charity, in works of equity, and in works of courtesy, by which means they gained so much admiration from the people, that it was commonly thought among them, that if there were but two of all the world who should go to heaven—the one should be a Scribe, and the other a Pharisee. Yet your righteousness must exceed theirs, or the gates of glory will be shut upon you! Their righteousness and holiness was only external, not internal; it was partial, not universal; it was rather circumstantial than substantial—and therefore heaven's doors were double-bolted against them. Heaven is for that man, and that man is for heaven, that is not only outwardly holy—but throughout holy.

4. Fourthly, There is a RELATIVE holiness. Now relative holiness is a special relation which people or things have unto God. Relative holiness includes two things—

(1.) First, A SEPARATION of people or things from common use. And thus, in the law those things were called holy which were separated from common use and set apart for the worship and service of God—such as the holy oil, show-bread, first-fruits, incense, altars, vestments; and in this sense the priests and Levites were called holy, because they were separated from others to serve in the tabernacle; [Deut. 19:2; 1 Kings 8:35; Ezra 8:28, and 10:11; Isaiah 63:18.] and in this sense the people of Israel are frequently called a sanctified people, a holy people, etc. The *Greek* word corresponds to the Hebrew word, which commonly signifies that which is appropriated to a holy use; and this is the proper notion of holiness in the Old and New Testament, as I might show you out of some hundred places of scripture.

Now certainly, without this holiness of special separation from the common sinful lifestyles of the world, there is no seeing of God, nor

any fruition of God hereafter: 2 Cor. 6:17-18, "Therefore come out from among them, and be separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." God will have no communion with any in this world who are not separated from the sinful practices of the world. God will look upon none, he will own none, he will delight in none, he will acknowledge none, he will receive none for his sons and daughters—but such as are separated from all evil vices and unholy lifestyles.

Suitable to this is Isaiah 52:11, "Depart, depart, go out from there! Touch no unclean thing! Come out from it and be pure, you who carry the vessels of the Lord." Estrange yourselves from those who are estranged from God; have nothing to do with those who have nothing to do with God; separate yourselves from those who have separated themselves from God; have no delightful converse with those who have no delightful converse with God; have no bosom communion with those who have no bosom communion with God. [Cicero, though heathen, had rather have no companion than a bad one.]

O sirs, you are to keep yourselves as pure and clean from others' defilements—as you would keep yourselves free from others' punishments. He who will imitate others in their sins—shall certainly participate with others in their sorrows. It is true we may live with wicked men in their cities—but it is as true, that we must not lie with wicked men in their enormities. There are many professors who are, like the planet Mercury, good in conjunction with those who are good, and bad with those who are bad; but these wound many at once—God, Christ, the gospel, and their own credits and consciences. These put virtue to an open shame; and these are deservedly to be shamed by your separating from them, and by your renouncing all intimate communion or fellowship with them. But,

(2.) Secondly, As relative holiness takes in a *separation* of people or things from common use—so it also takes in a **DEDICATION** and

devoting of them to a holy use. And thus the Nazarites, Temple, Mount Zion, the Sabbath-day, and other festival days are said to be holy under the law. [So Christ is said to sanctify himself, when he dedicated himself to be a sacrifice for the sins of his people, etc.] In short, the whole Jewish religion did lie in holy times, holy places, holy people, and holy things. And certainly without this holiness, without this dedicating of ourselves to God—we shall never come to a glorious fruition of God. He who does not dedicate himself really to God, wholly to God, only to God, and always to God on earth—shall never come to a sight and vision of God in heaven. If we do not give up ourselves to God, God will never give up himself to us: Hosea 3:3, "You must live with me many days. Don't be promiscuous or belong to any man, and I will act the same way toward you." God will be *only* theirs who are really his—but he will be *altogether* theirs who are wholly his; he will only be a husband to those who dedicate themselves to him, as a wife does to her husband. He will devote himself to those—who devote themselves him. He will avouch himself to be theirs—who avouch themselves to be his: Deut. 26:17-19, "You have declared today that the Lord is your God. You have promised to obey his laws, commands, and regulations by walking in his ways and doing everything he tells you. The Lord has declared today that you are his people, his own special treasure, just as he promised, and that you must obey all his commands. And if you do, he will make you greater than any other nation. Then you will receive praise, honor, and renown. You will be a nation that is holy to the Lord your God, just as he promised."

God will resign himself up to those who resign themselves up to him; he will give up himself to those who have given up their names and their hearts to him; he will bestow himself as the pearl of greatest price, upon those who shall make a surrender of themselves to him. [That is an apt saying of Tertullian, That is a good trade, when something is parted with to gain more.] There is no way to be higher than others, happier than others, more noble and honorable than others, than by making a dedication-gift of ourselves to God. He who dedicates himself to God, dedicates all; he who does not dedicate

himself, dedicates nothing at all. What Aeschines once said to Socrates, "Others, said he, give you gold, silver, jewels—but I give you myself," that must a Christian say to his God, "Ah, Lord! there are some who give you their *lips*—but I give you my heart; others give you good *words*, good expressions—but I give you the best of my affections; others give you a few *cold prayers*—but I give you my whole soul; and had I as many hearts in my body as I have hairs on my head, I would give them all to you—for you are worthy, you alone are worthy!"

What the king of Israel once said to the king of Syria, "I am yours—and all that I have," 1 Kings 20:4; that must a Christian say to his Christ, "I am yours, O Lord—and all that I have." A Christian must cry out with Bernard who cried, "Lord, I have two mites—a soul and a body—and I give them both to you." And this was the honor and commendations of the Macedonians, that they gave up themselves to the Lord, 2 Cor. 8:5. Having no better present at hand, they present themselves to God. Certainly there is no present more honorable, delectable, and acceptable to God—than this of giving up ourselves to God, Romans 12:1. Well, remember this: that man was never really holy that is not relatively holy; nor that man will never be really happy—who is not relatively holy. Without relative holiness there will be no vision of God in everlasting happiness. **We must be separated from the corruptions and pollutions of the world, and we must dedicate ourselves to God—or we shall never come to a future fruition of God.** But,

5. Fifthly, There is an IMPUTED holiness—and that is the holiness of Christ imputed to us. [Consult these scriptures, Luke 1:35; Mark 1:24; Heb. 7:26; Romans 5:19; Col. 1:22; Romans 2:3-4; 2 Cor. 5:21-22; Gal. 3:13; Jer. 23:6.] To prevent mistakes, please to take notice that there is a twofold holiness in Christ: first, there is his **essential** and personal holiness—as he is God. Now this essential holiness of Christ cannot be imparted nor imputed to any mortal man; it is essential to him. Secondly, there is his **mediatorial** holiness, or that holiness which he wrought for us as

Mediator. Now the holiness of Christ as Mediator consist both in the habitual holiness of his person, in the absence of all sin, and in the rich and plentiful presence of all holy and supernatural qualities, as also in the actual holiness of his life and death. By his active obedience—that is, by his subjecting of his heart and life to divine precepts—he perfectly fulfilled the commands of the law. And by his passive obedience—that is, his voluntary sufferings—he fully satisfied the penalties and curses of the law. Now this mediatorial holiness of Christ's is ours by imputation, and by virtue of which we stand justified in the sight of God: 1 Cor. 1:30, "But of him are you in Christ Jesus, who is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." This mediatorial holiness of Christ, reckoned unto a believing sinner, is that whereby he is constituted holy; and upon this account they are said to be "all fair," Cant. 4:7; to be "without spot or wrinkle," Eph. 5:25-27; to be "complete in him," Col. 2:10; and to be "without fault before the throne of God," Rev. 14:4-5. And certainly, without this mediatorial holiness of Christ—there is no appearing before God, there is no glorious vision nor fruition of God. God is a God of such infinite purity and holiness, that no holiness below the imputed holiness of Christ can make a man stand before him, or bring a man to the fruition of him, Hab. 1:13.

It was a very sweet and excellent saying of Bernard, when in his own opinion he was at the point of death: "I confess, said he, I am not worthy, I have no merits of my own to obtain heaven by: but my Lord had a double right thereunto; a *hereditary* right as a Son, and a *meritorious* right as a sacrifice. He was contented with the one right himself; the other right he has given unto me, by the virtue of which gift I do rightly lay claim unto it, and am not confounded.'

Though we cannot lay claim to heaven, nor to a blessed fruition of God by any *inherent holiness in us*—it being weak and imperfect—yet we may lay claim to both—by the mediatorial holiness of Christ imputed to us. As Christ's essential holiness gives him a hereditary right to everlasting happiness; so his mediatorial holiness gives us a

right to everlasting blessedness. The costly cloak of Alcisthenes, which Dionysius sold to the Carthaginians for a great price, was but a poor and beggarly rag, compared to that embroidered royal robe of Christ's mediatorial holiness, which is imputed or reckoned to us. And therefore, as ever you would come to a vision of God in happiness, you must labor to be interested by faith in Christ's mediatorial holiness. But,

6. Sixthly and lastly, There is an inherent, INTERNAL, qualitative holiness. [Holiness is not any single grace alone—but a conjunction, a constellation of all graces together.] Now this inherent holiness lies in two things.

(1.) First, In the infusing of holy principles, divine qualities, or supernatural graces into the soul, such as the apostle mentions in Gal. 5:22-23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." These *habits of grace*, are nothing else but the new nature, or "new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. 4:24. These seeds of holiness, these habits of grace, are those sweet ointments with which all must be anointed, who shall ever come to a blessed sight or vision of God, 1 John 3:9; 2 Cor. 1:21; 1 John 27. You may *know* much of God, you may *hear* much of God, you may *talk* much of God, and you may *boast* much of your hopes and saving interest in God—and yet without these *habits of holiness* you shall never come to a blessed fruition of God in happiness; without these seeds of holiness you shall never reap a crop of blessedness. But,

(2.) Secondly, This inherent, this qualitative holiness, lies in a holy use and exercise of those supernatural graces in a way of holy walking. [Acts 10:35; 1 John 1:3, 7; Titus 2:12; Luke 1:73; 2 Pet. 1:8; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Isaiah 35:8] All holy habits must be brought forth into holy acts. All gracious habits must be attended with gracious motions, gracious operations, and a gracious life. Outward works must be suitable to inward habits. It is with spiritual

habits as it is with natural habits—the more they are acted and exercised, the more they are increased and strengthened. Holy habits are golden talents that must be employed and improved. Gracious habits are the candles of the Lord set up in us; and God has set up those candles of heaven not to idle by, not to sleep by—but to work by, and to walk by. Where there is holiness of disposition, there *must* be, nay there *will* be—holiness of conversation. **A holy heart is always attended with a holy life.**

You may separate a man from his friend—but you can never separate, though you may distinguish, *acts* of holiness from the *habits* of holiness. Now it is certain, without this holiness, you shall never come to a sight or fruition of God in happiness. [Where there are the seeds of holiness, there will be the flowers of holiness.] And thus I have showed you what that holiness is, without which there is no hope, no possibility of ever seeing the Lord.

The Truth of the Proposition, that "without holiness, no man shall see the Lord"

II. I come now to the second thing, and that is to **prove the truth of the proposition—namely, that without holiness, men can never see God—and be eternally happy.** Without holiness on earth, no one shall ever come to a blessed vision and fruition of God in heaven. Now this great and weighty truth I shall make good by an induction of particulars, thus:

1. First, God has by very plain and clear scriptures bolted and barred the door of heaven and happiness against all unholy ones. Witness 1 Cor. 6:9-11, "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." Heaven is an undefiled inheritance, and none who are defiled can enter into the possession of it, 1 Pet. 1:4. When the angels fell from their righteousness, heaven rejected them; it would no longer hold them; and will it now accept of the unrighteous? will it now entertain and welcome them? Surely not! Such sinners make the very earth to mourn and groan now; and shall they make heaven to mourn and groan hereafter? Surely not! What though the serpent did wind himself into an earthy paradise—yet none of the seed of the serpent, so remaining, shall ever be able to wind themselves into a heavenly paradise!

Witness Gal. 5:19-21, "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft;

hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God." Before the wicked go to hell, God tells them again and again that they shall not inherit the kingdom of God. By the kingdom of God we are to understand the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of glory. Now the kingdom of heaven, of glory, is called the **kingdom of God**—

1. Because he has prepared it.

2. Because it is a royal gift that he confers and bestows upon his little, little flock, Mat. 20:23; Luke 12:32. Augustus, in his solemn feasts, gave *trifles* to some, and *gold* to others. The trifles of this world God often gives to the worst and wickedest of men; but the kingdom of heaven he only gives to his bosom-friends, Rev. 4:10-11, and 20:6; Dan. 4:16-17.

3. Because with him they shall forever reign in the fruition of it.

And so that in John 3, Jesus answered and said unto him, "Truly, truly, I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." To give a little light into the words: "Truly, truly:" the Greek is "amen, amen" [truth, truth, or truly, truly]. The word amen is Hebrew, and in the Old Testament is most commonly used by way of wishing or imprecation; but here, and in other places of the New Testament, the sense of it is altered from the way of wishing to the way of *affirming*. This phrase, "Amen, amen," or Truly, truly," imports,

[1.] First, The truth and certainty of the things delivered; for the word "amen" does properly signify truth.

[2.] Secondly, This double asseveration is never used but in matters of greatest weight and importance: the matters here spoken of are of a very celestial and sublime nature.

[3.] Thirdly, This affirmation, "Truly, truly," is a vehement confirmation of what Christ speaks.

[4.] Fourthly, This affirmation calls aloud for the greatest observation and most serious attention of the soul to what Christ is a-saying.

"I say unto you:" "I," who you have confessed to be a teacher sent from God; "I," who lie in the bosom of the Father, John 1:18; "I," who am of the cabinet-council of heaven; "I," who know his heart and all his secrets, Rev. 3:14; "I," who am the faithful and true witness, and cannot lie; "I," who am called the Amen," the truth itself; "I," who have the keys of heaven and hell at my own belt, Rev. 1:18; "I," who opens and no man shuts, and "I," who shuts and no man opens; "I," who shall be your Judge in the great day, "I say unto you," etc.

"Except a man be born again:" A man, be he old or young, learned or unlearned, high or low, rich or poor, knowing or ignorant, circumcised or uncircumcised, under this form or that, a member of this church or that, let his disposition be ever so sincere, and his abilities ever so high, and his outward life ever so blameless and harmless; yet, except this man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God, Romans 2:28-29.

"Be born again:" Except a man be first unmade, and new-made up again; except he be made a new creature, yes, a new creation of God, 2 Cor. 5:17, there is no seeing of the kingdom of God. The whole frame of the old man must be dissolved, and a new frame erected—else there is no heaven to be enjoyed. The kingdom of God is a divine kingdom, and there is no possession of it without a divine nature. A new head without a new heart, a new lip without a new life—will never bring a man to this kingdom of light. That man is for the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of God is for that man—who has got the kingdom of God within him. [2 Pet. 1:4; 1 Cor. 7:19; Gal. 5:6; Luke 17:21; Romans 14:17.] If the kingdom of grace does not enter into you here—you shall never enter into the kingdom of glory

hereafter. A new heart is for a new heaven, and a new heaven is for a new heart. "Except a man be born again," except a man be born from above. Generation in some sense is from below—but *regeneration* is only from above, and without this there is no fruition of God above.

"He **cannot** see the kingdom of God." The Scripture speaks of several **cannots**.

[1.] First, There is a NATURAL cannot. Now, every son and daughter of Adam is by nature born under a *cannot*. They are all born under a cannot believe, a cannot repent, a cannot love God, a cannot walk with God, a cannot see God, a cannot enjoy God: 1 Cor. 2:14, "The natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither *can* he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." A blind man cannot see colors—nor can a natural man discern spiritual things. They are too high, they are too sublime for him; they are mysteries that he cannot understand, that he cannot unriddle. The natural man can ascend no higher than nature, as the water can rise no higher than the spring from whence it comes. The Scripture sets such sad souls below the ox and the donkey, Isaiah 1:3. Take human nature—civilized and moralized, refined and raised, cultured, strengthened, and improved to the utmost—yet all this cannot enable a man to do a supernatural action above itself. But,

[2.] Secondly, There is a CONTRACTED and an habituated cannot; and of this cannot the prophet speaks in Jer. 6:10, "To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken: behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach: they have no delight in it." They had by their carnality, impiety, sensuality, security, and obstinacy; contracted upon their poor souls such deafness, wretchedness, unteachableness, and untractableness, that they could neither love the word nor like it; they could neither take pleasure nor delight in it; nay, they could neither hear it nor bear it, though it ever so nearly concerned the internal and eternal welfare of their souls.

And of this cannot the apostle speak in 2 Pet. 2:14, "Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: a heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children." [... this phrase of having eyes full of the adulteress answers to that of the rhetorician, who, describing an unchaste, lascivious person, rhetorically said of him that he had whores in his eyes.] By their riot and excess, by their lasciviousness and wantonness, by their looseness and uncleanness which they had habituated and accustomed themselves unto—they brought upon themselves a cursed necessity of sinning, so that they could not cease from sin.

They mourn over sin—and yet they cannot cease from sin; they resolve against sin—yet they cannot cease to sin; they pray against sin—yet they cannot cease to sin; they make many promises, vows, and covenants against sin—yet they cannot cease from sin, their souls being habituated and accustomed thereunto: Jer 2:20, "For of old time I have broken your yoke, and burst your bands; and you said I will not transgress"—I will never more play the harlot; but were they as good as their word? no!—"for upon every high hill and under every green tree they wandered, playing the harlot."

I have read of a man who, in the time of his sickness, was so terrified in his conscience for his sins, that he made the very bed to shake upon which he lay, and cried out all night long, "I am damned, I am damned!" and made many great promises and protestations of amendment of life, if God would be pleased to recover him. In a little while he did recover, and being recovered, he was as base and vile, as wretched and wicked, as ever he was before.

Custom in sin takes away all conscience of sin: Jer. 13:23, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are *accustomed to doing evil*." The Ethiopian cannot make his black skin white; he cannot change the hue or the color of it by washing; to attempt this is but labor in vain. Nor can the leopard change his spots. No more can a poor sinner who has habituated and accustomed himself to sin, who is desperately enthralled to sin—turn

from his sin. The spots of the leopard are not in him by accident—but by nature; and they are such which no art can cure, nor water wash off; because they are not only in the skin—but in the flesh and bones, in the sinews and most inward parts.

By custom, sin has bespotted not only the skin, the life, the outside of a poor sinner—but also the very heart and soul of a poor sinner, so as that he is never able to wash off these spots. Ambrose reports of one Theotimus, that, having a disease upon his body, his physician told him, that except he did abstain from intemperance, drunkenness, uncleanness, etc., he was likely to lose his eyes. His heart being habituated to sin, and set upon wickedness, he answered, "Farewell sweet light then." But,

[3.] Thirdly, As there is a contracted cannot, an habituated cannot—so **there is a JUDICIAL cannot.** The Lord inflicts a judicial cannot upon many people in judgment: they cannot return from their sins, they cannot withstand a temptation, they cannot lay hold on eternal life, they cannot make sure work for their souls, they cannot leave their bosom-lusts, they cannot prefer Christ above all the world, they cannot make provision for eternity, they cannot see the things that belong to their peace, etc.; and this cannot the Lord in wrath has brought upon them! Isaiah 6:9-10, "Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving. Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes (or besmear their eyes). Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed." They would not *see*—so they shall not see; they would not *hear*—so they shall not hear; they would not *understand*—so they shall not understand; they would not be *converted*—so they shall not be converted; they would not be *healed*—so they shall not be healed.

When men are stiffly and desperately resolved upon their sinful courses, when men grow stubborn, rebellious, licentious, and willfully wink and shut their eyes against the light, and stop their ears against the truth—God in his just judgment gives them up to

dullness, stupidity, blindness, darkness! Isaiah 44:18, "They have not known nor understood: for he has shut their eyes that they cannot see" (or he has plastered up their eyes from seeing); their minds so closed so that they cannot understand!" God in his righteous judgment casts a judicial cannot upon them; he has plastered up their eyes so that they cannot see, and he has shut up their minds so that they cannot understand the great concerns of their souls.

Now while men lie under these sad *cannots*, they can never see the kingdom of God. These three cannots, like a threefold cord, bind poor sinners, so as that they can never come to a sight or fruition of God in grace or glory—until they are delivered from these cannots by a new birth, by being born again.

"They cannot see the kingdom of God;" that is, they cannot *enter* into it, they cannot enjoy it, they can have no child's part or portion in it—except they are new born, except they pass the pangs of the second birth. Let their education be ever so sweet, their illumination ever so great, their profession ever so amiable, and their lives ever so unblamably—yet except they are new born, it had been good for them that they had never been born. And thus you see by plain scriptures, that the Lord has bolted the gates of glory against all unholy people.

2. A second argument to prove that without holiness there is no happiness, etc., is this: **Without holiness men are strangers to God; and therefore, without holiness they cannot be admitted to a cohabitation with God.** God loves not to dwell with strangers, nor to associate himself with strangers. Now such are all unholy people: Eph. 2:12, "That at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel" (or, being far removed from the citizenship of Israel), "and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." Here are five "withouts" in the words:

1. They were without God, the author of hope.
2. They were without Christ, the foundation of hope.
3. They were without the church, the place of hope.
4. They were without the covenants of promise—that is, they were without the precious promises, which God in his covenant had made and oftentimes renewed with the Israelites, and therefore called covenants in the plural number—the ground and reason of hope.
5. And, lastly, They were without the grace of hope: they had no hope of communion with Christ, no hope of fellowship with the saints, no hope of any interest in the promise, no hope of reconciliation to God here, nor any hope of a fruition of God hereafter.

And thus you see what strangers they were to the Lord, and to the great concerns of their own souls. God of old would not have strangers come into his sanctuary; and do you think, then—that he will ever admit such into heaven? Surely not! Ezek. 44:6, 7, 9, "Say to the rebellious house of Israel—This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Enough of your detestable practices, O house of Israel! In addition to all your other detestable practices, you brought foreigners uncircumcised in heart and flesh into my sanctuary, desecrating my temple while you offered me food, fat and blood, and you broke my covenant. This is what the Sovereign Lord says—No foreigner uncircumcised in heart and flesh is to enter my sanctuary, not even the foreigners who live among the Israelites."

Heaven would be no heaven were there any strangers there. Such as had no holiness within, nor any holiness without; such as had no holiness in their hearts, nor any holiness in their lives—God would not have them to enter into his sanctuary; and, therefore, certainly such he will never allow to enter into heaven. [Mat 7:21-23, 25:11-12, and 22:11-13.] If God shuts the doors of an earthly tabernacle against such as were strangers to him, to his covenant, to his church, and to themselves—will he not much more shut the door of his heavenly

tabernacle against such who are strangers to him, and to his Christ, and to his word—yes, who are strangers to their own souls, and to all the concerns of another world? And such are all those who are uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh.

Princes' palaces are not for strangers—but for sons, friends, acquaintances, favorites; just so, is the palace of heaven. We will not admit strangers to cohabit with us; and will God admit such to cohabit with him, who never had any acquaintance or familiarity with him? Surely not! In history we read of such towns and cities as would not admit strangers to inhabit among them; and such a city is that above, Exod. 33:12, 17. It has been long since concluded, that—in heaven there shall be no strangers: none shall be admitted into that state but such as God knows by name. What a dishonor and derogation would that be to the place!

3. Unholy people have fellowship and familiarity with Satan, and therefore, doubtless, God will have no familiarity nor fellowship with them. 2 Cor. 6:14-16. As righteousness can have no fellowship with unrighteousness, nor light with darkness, nor Christ with Belial, nor heaven with hell; no more can a holy God have any communion or fellowship with unholy souls, for they are Satan's household, Luke 11:21; Rev. 18:2. He keeps possession of them as a man does of his house, and has familiarity with them as a man has with those of his house: he is their father, and they are his children, John 8:44; and look, what familiarity a father has with his children, that has an unholy devil with unholy souls.

A workman cannot be more familiar with his tools than Satan is with unholy souls; and therefore he is said to work in the children of disobedience, as a smith works in his forge, or as an artificer works in his shop, Eph. 2:2. Unholy people have bosom-fellowship with Satan: 1 John 5:19, "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in wickedness;" or in that wicked one the devil, as the Greek will bear; they lie, as it were, in the bosom of Satan, as the

child lies in the bosom of the mother, or as the wife lies in the bosom of the husband, or as a friend lies in the bosom of his friend. Unholy people partake with him at his table; they eat with him, and drink with him, and converse with him: 1 Cor. 10:21, "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: you cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."

Ambrose brings in the devil boasting against Christ, and challenging Judas as his own, thus: "He is not yours, Jesus, he is mine; his thoughts beat for me; he eats with you—but is fed by me; he takes bread from you—but money from me; he drinks with you, and sells your blood to me." By all which you may see what fellowship and familiarity there is between Satan and a sinner. Now what is this less than blasphemy, to assert that a holy God will have fellowship with those who have fellowship with the devil? God has not cast Satan out of heaven, only that he may make room for Satan's slaves in heaven. If heaven was too holy to hold unholy devils, it will be found at last to be too holy to hold unholy souls. Certainly they shall not lie in the bosom of God, who have the devil for their bedfellow.

4. Fourthly, Unholy people are full of contrariety to God; their natures, principles, practices, aims, minds, wills, affections, judgments, intentions, and resolutions, are contrary to God, his name, nature, being, truth, and glory. [Lev. 26:21-24, 27-28, 40, 41; Isaiah 58:4-6; Jer. 44:16-18; 2:25, and 18:11-2.] You may as soon bring east and west, north and south, light and darkness, heaven and hell together—as you shall bring a holy God and unholy souls together. Antipathies will never incorporate; as soon may midnight be married to the noonday, as a holy God embrace an unholy sinner. That unholy people are made up of contrarities to God, is most evident, as you may see in Isaiah 22:12-13, "The Lord, the Lord Almighty, called you to weep and mourn. He told you to shave your heads in sorrow for your sins and to wear clothes of sackcloth to show your remorse. But instead, you dance and play; you slaughter sacrificial animals, feast on meat, and drink wine. 'Let's eat, drink, and be merry,' you say. 'What's the difference, for tomorrow we die.'"

These sad souls practice quite contrary to what the Lord calls for at their hands. He calls them to weeping and mourning—and behold joy and gladness; he calls them to fasting—and behold, there is nothing but feasting, carousing, and making merry and jovial—and that in contempt of God and his dreadful judgments, Romans 8:7; James 4:4.

Unholy people are like the rainbow: now the rainbow is never on that side of the world that the sun is on; but whensoever it appears, it is still in opposition against the sun. If the sun be in the east, the rainbow is in the west, etc. Just so, unholy souls, in all their actings and walkings, will still be opposite to God; they will still be cross and contrary to him: John 8:38, "I am telling you what I saw when I was with my Father. But you are following the advice of your father (the Devil, verse 44)." Unholy hearts are full of the highest strains of contrariety and opposition against the Lord. I have read of a king, who, having received a blow from the hand of God, took a solemn oath to be revenged on him; and ordained that for ten years' space no man should pray to him, speak of him, nor, so long as he was in authority, to believe in God. Oh the vanity, the contrariety, and blasphemy of this prince!

Now, *we* will not admit such to be about us, who are made up of contrarities to us: and will God, will God? Heaven and earth, fire and water, the wolf and the lamb, the winds and the sea will sooner accord, than a holy God and an unholy heart. There can be no amity where there is a spiritual antipathy.

5. Fifthly, Without holiness no man can have any spiritual communion with God in this world. He may *hear*—but he can have no communion with God in hearing without holiness. He may *pray*—but he can have no communion with God in prayer without holiness. He may come to the *sacrament*—but he can have no communion with God in the sacrament without holiness. He may come into the *communion of saints*—but he can have no communion with God in the communion of saints without holiness. He may *read*

and *meditate*—but he can have no communion with God in reading and meditation without holiness. Deut. 23:14, "For the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you, and to give up your enemies before you; therefore shall your camp be holy: that he see no unclean thing in you, and turn away from you." "Keep up holiness among you, and you shall keep me among you," says God; "but if you turn away from holiness, I will undoubtedly turn away from you!"

A holy God will keep company with none but those who are holy. Holiness is the bond which ties God and souls together. God will cleave close to those who in holiness cleave fast to him; but if he see uncleanness and wickedness among you, he will certainly turn away from you. The Holy Spirit gives the lie to those who say they have fellowship with God—and yet maintain familiarity and fellowship with sin: 1 John 1:6, "If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness—we lie." The apostle dares give the lie to any man, without fearing the stab, who pretends to communion with God—and yet walks in darkness.

Men may be much in ordinances—and yet, for lack of holiness, may have no communion at all with God in ordinances, Isaiah 1:11-18; and though communion with God in ordinances is the very life and soul of ordinances—yet multitudes who enjoy ordinances can content and satisfy themselves without that which is the very life, soul, and quintessence of ordinances. There are many who cry out, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord," who have no communion with the Lord of the temple at all, Jer. 7:4-12. Though unholy people may trade much in ordinances—yet they will never make any earnings, any advantage by all their trading and stir, because they cannot reach to communion with God in them, which is the only means of being enriched by them, Isaiah 29:13; Ezek. 24:21-22, and 33:30-32. As many men rise early and go to bed late, and make a great deal of stir and effort to be rich in the world—and yet, for lack of a stock, nothing comes on it; they are poor still, and beggarly still, and low and poor in the world still: so many rise

early, and go late to ordinances, they exercise themselves much in religious duties—and yet nothing comes on it; their souls are poor and beggarly and threadbare still. And no wonder, for they lack a stock of holiness to trade with.

Remigius, a judge, says that the devil in those parts did use to give money to witches which at first did appear to be good and current coin—but after a while it turned to dry leaves. Ah, sirs, all duties and ordinances to a man who lacks holiness, will be found at last to be but as dry leaves, to be sapless and lifeless, and heartless and comfortless to him. Now if without holiness no man can have any spiritual communion or fellowship with God here, then certainly without holiness no man can have a glorious communion with God hereafter. If without holiness God will not take us into his arms on earth—then undoubtedly without holiness God will never put us into his bosom in heaven. But to proceed.

6. Unholy people are fools; and what should such do in the presence of God, who is wisdom itself? The fool and the ungodly man are synonymous words, signifying the same thing, in Scripture: Psalm 14:1, "The fool" (that is, the wicked, the unholy person) "has said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that does good;" Jer. 4:22, "For my people are foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have no understanding: they are wise to do evil—but to do good they have no knowledge;" Proverbs 1:7, "Fools despise wisdom and instruction;" that is, wicked and ungodly men despise wisdom and instruction. And to show that the world is full of such fools, he uses the word in the plural no less than sixteen times in this book of the Proverbs. I shall open this truth a little more to you, by proving that they have all the characteristic notes and properties of fools; so that one face is not more like another than a fool is like a wicked man, or than a wicked man is like a fool;

for,

(1.) First, A fool prefers toys and trifles—above things of greatest worth. Proverbs 1:29. He prefers a shiny brass penny—above a piece of gold; a pretty baby doll—above a rich inheritance; an apple which pleases his eye—above a pearl of great price. Just so, wicked and ungodly men, they prefer their lusts before the Lord. Isaiah 65:12, "I will destine you for the sword, and you will all bend down for the slaughter; for I called but you did not answer, I spoke but you did not listen. You did evil in my sight and chose what displeases me." Upon choice, they preferred the honors, the riches, the bravery, and glory of the world—above their own souls and the great concernments of another world. [Such a one was Cardinal Borbonius, who professed he would not leave his part in Paris for a portion in paradise.] Such fools were Laban and Nabal, in the Old Testament, (whose names by inversion of letters are the same, and the latter signifies a fool,) and such were the two rich fools in the New Testament, Luke 12:16-22, and 16:19-31.

I have read of the foolish people of Ceylon, who preferred a consecrated ape's tooth—above an incredible mass of treasure. Such fools are all unholy people, who prefer the toys, the trifles of this world—above the pleasures and treasures which are at God's right hand. The world is full of such fools.

Says one—"If you behold the lives of men, you will judge the whole world to be a house of fools!" Ah, friends! What folly can be compared to that of men's spending their time, their strength, their lives, their souls—in getting the great things of this world, and neglecting that one thing necessary, the salvation of their souls! Oh, what vanity is it to prefer a smoke of honor, a blast of fame, a dream of pleasure, a wedge of gold, a Babylonish garment, and such like transitory trifles and trash—before a blessed eternity!

(2.) Secondly, Fools make no improvement of advantages and opportunities which are put into their hands. Proverbs 17:16, "Why is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he has no heart to it?" [Like grasshoppers, they sing and sport

away their precious time and opportunities of mercy, etc.] It is to no purpose to put a price into the hand--if folly be bound up in the heart. If a man had as much wealth as would buy all the grace, all the peace, all the comforts, and all the wisdom in the world; yet if he has neither wit nor will to make an improvement of his wealth--what good would his wealth do him? To what purpose is the market open, and a large sum put into the buyer's hands--if the buyer has neither wisdom nor heart to buy? Unholy people are such spiritual fools: though they have a sum, an opportunity put into their hands, which if improved might make them forever happy; yet they have no heart to make an improvement of the means and advantages that might do them good to all eternity. [Proverbs 1:20, seq.; Isaiah 53:1; 55:1-2; Mat. 25:3, 6, 10; 23:37; Luke 19:41-42, etc.]

Ah, what opportunities have unsanctified people to get changed hearts, renewed natures, purged consciences, reformed lives, to get an interest in Christ, to obtain the favor of God, to procure pardon of sin, to make provision for their immortal souls! But they have no hearts to improve these opportunities--and so by neglecting of them they cut the throat of their own souls. And this will be the worm that will lie gnawing of them to all eternity--that they have let slip the opportunities of grace--that they have trifled away the seasons of mercy. Ah, sirs, there is no fool compared to that fool that has an opportunity put into his hand to make himself forever happy--and yet has no heart to improve it. The hottest place in hell will be the portion of such fools, Mat. 11:21-22.

The little **bee**, so soon as flowers appear, goes abroad, views the mirthful various colors, and the diversity of the flowery fields--sucks the sweetest of them, carries the load, makes a wondrous honey-comb--and so early hoards up honey in summer against winter. And so the little busy **ant** in summer provides food for winter, Proverbs 6:6-8; the **stork**, the crane, and the swallow know their seasons and opportunities, Jer. 8:7. All these poor little creatures are not so much below man in nature, as they are above sinful man in worth, wisdom, and work. These improve their summer seasons, their harvest hours;

and yet such spiritual fools are wicked men--who let slip such seasons of grace and mercy--who cannot be redeemed with ten thousand worlds. Ah, how is man fallen from his primitive nobility and glory--that these little busy creatures are propounded as a pattern of diligence and wisdom unto him!

The ancients painted Opportunity with a hairy forehead—but bald behind, to signify that while a man has it before him, he may lay hold on it—but if he lets it slip away, he cannot pull it back again. There is a great truth in what the Rabbi has long since said, "Every man has his hour, and he who slips his season, may never meet with the like again." There are many thousand spiritual fools in hell, who find this true by experience, and therefore now they bewail their folly—but all too late, all too late!

(3.) Thirdly, Natural fools are very inconstant; they are never long in one mind. Now they are for this--and afterwards for that; now in this mind--and afterwards in that. Their minds are more changeable than the moon; they turn oftener than the weathercock, they are only constant in inconstancy. Such spiritual fools are all unholy people. For now they are for a righteous cause, and before long they are against it. Now they are for God, and later they are against him. Now they are for Christ, and by and by they are against him. Now they cry out "Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest," Mat. 21:9, 15; but did they hold in this mind long? No! their mind is presently changed, and they cry out, "Crucify him, crucify him!" Luke 23:21. Now they are for the saints, and anon they are against them. Now they cry up the gospel, and presently they make opposition against the gospel. Now they kindly embrace the gospel—but as soon as they found it restrain their lusts and carnal liberties, they made fierce opposition against the gospel. This week they are for ordinances, and the next they are against ordinances. This hour they will forsake their sins, and the next hour they will return to their sins as the "dog to his vomit, and as the sow to her wallowing in the mire," 2 Peter 2:20-22. Now they are for this way, and afterwards for that. Now they are for this opinion, and shortly for that. Now they are for this religion, and

tomorrow they are for another religion, 2 Kings 17:33; like Baldwin a French lawyer, of whom it is said that every day he had a new religion—but was constant in none. This moment you shall hear them bless, and the next moment you shall hear them curse: James 3:9-10, "Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing."

Louis the Second would swear, and then kiss his crucifix, and then swear again more confidently, and kiss his crucifix again more devoutly. Now because this age is full of such swearing fools, and happily this Treatise may fall into some of their hands, give me permission to say, that it is observable that the word in the Hebrew which the Scripture uses for swearing, is always used in the passive voice, to note, say some, that a man should not swear but when an oath is laid upon him, and he driven to it. The word also has a signification of seven, as having reference, say some, to the seven spirits of God before the throne, before whom we swear, and therefore should never swear but in "truth, righteousness, and judgment," Jer. 4:2; Rev. 1:4, and 5:6. One day you shall have these spiritual fools, these profane fools, crying out, "Oh heaven, heaven, heaven! Oh that we may go to heaven! and the next day you shall see them live as if there were neither heaven nor hell! One day with Balaam you shall have them wish, "Oh that we might die the death of the righteous!" And the next day with Saul you shall have them persecuting of the righteous to death! One day you shall have them cry out, "What shall we do to be saved?" and the next day you shall see them live as if they were resolved to be damned. Thus these spiritual fools, like natural fools--are always fickle and inconstant.

(4.) Fourthly, Fools delight to sport and play with such things as are most hurtful, pernicious, and dangerous to them, as you all know that have observed anything of natural fools. "The wicked freely strut about, when what is vile is honored among men." Psalm 12:8. "A fool finds pleasure in evil conduct." Proverbs 10:23. Evil conduct is the fool's bauble, the fool's fiddle. Fools take great delight and pleasure in doing evil. Sin and wickedness are a sport or recreation to a fool. It is a great pleasure and merriment to a

fool, to do wickedly. Proverbs 14:9, "Fools make a mock of sin." They make a jeer of sin--which they should fear more than hell itself! They make a sport of sin--which will prove a matter of damnation to them. They make a pastime, a game of sin--which will them miserable to all eternity. They make a mock of sin on earth--for which the devil will mock and flout them forever in hell.

Justice will at last turn over such fools to Satan, who will be sure to return mock for mock, jeer for jeer, and flout for flout. Those who love such kind of pastime shall have enough of it in hell. All unbelievers are such fools--for they delight and take pleasure in sin, which is the most corrupting and dangerous thing in the world.

Psalm 62:4, "They delight in lies," Proverbs 1:22. Though every lie deserves a stab from God—yet spiritual fools make but a sport of them. It is said of Epaminondas, a heathen, that he abhorred a jesting lie; this heathen in the great day will put such liars to the blush who delight in lies.

"They love to indulge in evil pleasures in broad daylight." 2 Peter 2:13. "They have chosen their own ways, and their souls delight in their abominations." Isaiah 66:3. "And so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness." 2 Thessalonians 2:12. Not that there is any real delight in intemperance; for if there were, then Heliogabalus, an exceeding intemperate person, would have been more happy than Adam in paradise. Apicius was the greatest glutton that ever was; at length he hanged himself: such shall hang in hell at last, who delight to abuse many at once; the creatures, their Creator, and their own souls and bodies. Well, sirs! Sin is the poison of the soul, the nakedness of the soul, the disease of the soul, the burden of the soul—and if God's mercy does not prevent it—sin will prove the eternal bane of the soul. Oh, then, how great is their folly, who delight in sin, and who make a sport of it!

[5.] Fifthly, Natural fools are taken more with the outward shine, luster, beauty, and glory of things—than they are taken with the intrinsic virtue, value, and worth of them; they are more taken with the shine and luster of gold, jewels, and precious stones, than they are with the worth and value of them. Just so, unholy hearts are taken more with the form of godliness than they are with the power, 2 Tim. 3:5; they are taken more with a name to live, with a name of being holy, than they are taken with holiness itself, Rev. 3:1-2. **Many have the name of Christians to their condemnation, not to their salvation,** Isaiah 58:2-6; Mat. 1:21; Zechariah 7:4-7; Mat. 23. They are taken more with the *outward* shine and pomp of duties, than they are taken with the *spiritualness* and holiness of duties; they are taken more with what of *man* is in duty, than they are taken with that of *God* which is in a duty; they are taken more with raised *notions*, than they are taken with raised *affections*; they are taken more with some witty, rhetorical expressions in duty, than they are taken with the holy movings and breathings of the spirit in duty, Ezek. 33:30-32. All which speaks them out to be spiritual fools; and indeed no fools compared to those who are taken more with the *shadow* of religion—than they are with the *substance* of religion; who are taken more with the *outside* of godliness than they are with the *inside* of godliness. For what is this but to be taken more with the outside of the cabinet, than with the treasure that is within? or to be taken more with the purse that holds the gold, than with the gold that is in the purse? and with Democritus the philosopher, to esteem a poor hut—above the royal palace?

(6.) Sixthly, Natural fools are all for the PRESENT. They only mind and care for the things of this life—as what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, and what they shall put on. They are all for their bodies, their bellies, their backs. They take no care, they make no provision for their immortal souls. Just so, fools look only to their bodies; and have no concern for their souls. Such fools are all unsanctified people; they look only after their bodies, and their outward concernments; they look not at the necessities, miseries,

and needs of their souls. Such were those in John 6:26-27, who crossed the seas and followed after Christ for loaves—but never looked for the food which endures to everlasting life. And such fools were those in Hosea 7:14, "who howled upon their beds for grain and wine." Only let them have but food for their bodies—and they care not what becomes of their souls! And such were they in Phil. 3:19, "whose God was their gut." And such were the Laodiceans in Rev. 3:14-19, who had well-fed bodies—but starved souls; whose houses were full of goods—but their hearts empty and void of Christ and grace; who had threadbare souls under all their purple robes; who were rich in temporals—but very poor and beggarly in spirituals. And such a one was that rich fool in Luke 12, who only laid up for his body for this life—but never took care for another life, for eternal life; he makes many years' provision for his body—and not a day's provision for his soul; he talks of living many years—when he had not a day nor a night to live in this world. And being thus foolish in his reckoning, Christ brands him for a fool to all generations: ver. 20-21, "You *fool*, this night shall your soul be required of you! Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?" So is he who heaps up treasure for himself—and is not rich towards God.

Every man in the world is a fool—who heaps up treasure to himself, who adds land to land, and house to house, and heap to heap, and bags to bags, and hundreds to hundreds, and thousands to thousands—and is not rich towards God. [Plato seeing one over-indulgent to his body, asked him what he meant, to make his prison so strong.] This age is full of such **golden fools**, who pamper their bodies—but starve their souls: who primp and trim up their bodies with gold, silver, and silks—while their souls are naked, and ragged, and destitute of all grace and goodness.

The Jews have a story of a foolish woman who took two children to nurse, the one very mean, deformed, crooked, blind, and not likely to live long; the other a goodly, lively, lovely, beautiful child, and likely to live long: now this foolish woman spent all her pains, care, diligence, and attendance upon the worst child, never so much as

mindings or regarding the best child. This age is full of such foolish men and women, who, having two to nurse, their bodies and their souls, spend their time, their care, labor, and pains in making provision for the flesh, in laying up for their bodies, and in the meanwhile never regard their souls, never look after their souls, though they have the beauty of a deity upon them, and though they are immortal, and capable of union and communion with God in grace, and of a blessed fruition of God in glory. Surely no fools like these fools.

[7.] Seventhly, The sharpest and severest course you can take, cannot separate between a fool and his folly. Notwithstanding all your frowns, threats, checks, knocks, etc.—a fool will not leave his folly; nay, you shall sooner beat a fool to death—than you shall beat him off from his folly: Proverbs 27:22, "You cannot separate fools from their foolishness, even though you grind them like grain with mortar and pestle." [Solomon in this place alludes to one kind of grinding, which in old time the people were accustomed to, which was to put their parched corn into a mortar, and to beat it unto powder.] The husk does not stick so close to the grain of corn, as folly does to the heart of a fool. There is a possibility of severing the husk from the flour by beating—but there is no possibility of severing a fool from his folly.

You see it in *Pharaoh*, who, though he was often in God's mortar—yet he could not be severed from his folly; nay, he did choose rather to be beaten to death, and to see his friends, relations, favorites, followers, subjects, and soldiers, with their first-born, beaten to death before his eyes—rather than he would leave his folly. And such a fool was king *Ahaz*, who, when God had him in the mortar, and threatened to beat him and his people to death—yet then in his distress he sinned more against the Lord, 2 Chron. 28:22, and therefore for his obstinacy, obdurateness, and irreclaimableness, he is branded and marked with a black coal by the Lord to all posterity, "This is that king Ahaz." [They were like those bears in Pliny, that could not be stirred with the sharpest prickles.]

And such spiritual fools are all ungodly people; let God frown, chide, strike, reprove, correct—yet they will not turn from the evil of their doings: they will rather be consumed and destroyed, than they will be amended or reformed: Jer. 5:3, "O Lord, you have stricken them—but they have not grieved; you have consumed them—but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return." No pain nor grief, no calamities nor miseries, can turn obstinate fools from their impieties: Jer. 6:29, "The bellows blow fiercely. The refining fire grows hotter. But it will never purify and cleanse them because there is no purity in them to refine." [See Ezra 22:18; Jer. 2:30, 31, and 19:15; Amos 4:4, 13; Isaiah 26:10-11; 2 Pet 22.]

All the cost and charge that God has been at, all the pains and labor that he has taken to sever these wicked ones from their wickedness was lost; they would not be refined nor reformed. After God's greatest severity, a spiritual fool will return to his iniquity: Proverbs 26:11, "As a dog returns to his vomit—so a fool *returns* to his folly," or *repeats* his folly. It is true, the comparison is homely—but good enough for those fools to whom it is applied. Spiritual fools sometimes vomit up their sins when they are under terrors of conscience, or under the afflicting hand of God, or upon a dying bed; but still retain a disposition and purpose to return to them again: as some say, the serpent vomits up his poison when he goes to drink, and then takes it in again. Foolish souls say to their lusts, as Abraham to his servants, Gen. 22:5, "Abide here, and I will go yonder and come again to you." Whatever becomes of their souls, they are resolved to keep close to their sins, Isaiah 1:5. And as Aesop's foolish fish leaped out of the warm water into the burning fire for ease; so these poor fools will rather adventure a burning in hell, than they will attempt a turning from their folly.

[8.] Eighthly, Natural fools make the most stupid and injurious exchanges. Natural fools make the most stupid and injurious exchanges. They will exchange a pearl--for a pin; things of greatest worth and value--for a feather, a ribbon, a toy, a trifle. The

foolish Indians prefer every toy and trifle above their mines of gold. All unholy people are spiritual fools. They will exchange spirituals--for carnals; and eternal--for temporals. They will exchange God, Christ, the gospel, heaven, and their souls--for a lust, for a little of the world's smiles, pleasures, or profits. They will exchange their eternal soul--for the toys and trifles of this world. "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Matthew 16:26

Now do you think that God, who has within himself all the wisdom of angels, of men, and universal nature—that he who has all glory, all dignity, all riches, all treasures, all pleasures, all comforts, all delights, all joys, all beatitudes in himself—that that God who is a super-substantial substance, and understanding not to be understood, a word never to be spoken—that he will have everlasting fellowship and communion with fools? Do you think that a God whose wisdom is infinite and unsearchable, will ever debase himself so as to have his royal palace filled with fools, as to make those his companions in heaven, that he can take no pleasure in on earth? Eccles. 5:4, "He has no pleasure in fools." The wise God would not have his children keep company with fools: Proverbs 14:7, "Stay away from a foolish man; you will gain no knowledge from his speech;" and will God keep company with them himself? Surely not! God has given it under his own hand, that such shall not tarry in his sight: Psalm 5:5, "The foolish shall not stand in your sight" [or, as the Hebrew has it, before your eyes]: "you hate all workers of iniquity." God will never admit fools to be his favorites: he will at last shut the door of glory against them, Mat. 25:4-13.

7. A seventh argument to prove that without real holiness there is no happiness; that without holiness on earth no man shall ever come to a blessed vision or fruition of God in heaven, is this—**Unholy people are to be excluded and shut out from sacred, from special communion and fellowship with the saints in this world; and therefore, without all question, they shall never be admitted to everlasting communion and fellowship with God, Christ, angels, and saints in that other world.** That they

are to be shut out from having any special communion with the saints here, is most plain and evident from several scriptures. Take these for a taste: Lev. 10:10, "And that you may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean;" Ezek. 44:23, "And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean." And because the priests did not improve their power and interest to preserve the things of God from profaning and polluting, the Lord was very much offended and provoked: Ezek. 22:26, "Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned mine holy things: they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they showed difference between the unclean and the clean, and have hid their eyes from my Sabbaths, and I am profaned among them." And in chapter 44:7-8, God sadly complains that they "brought into his sanctuary strangers uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh;" and prohibits such from entering into his sanctuary, ver. 9, "Thus says the Lord God, No stranger, uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel."

God expects that faithful teachers should put a difference between person and person, between the holy and profane, between the clean and the unclean, in all holy administrations: Jer. 15:19, "Therefore thus says the Lord, If you take forth the precious from the vile, then you shall be as my mouth: let them return unto you; but return not you unto them." Now certainly if under the ceremonial law natural uncleanness did exclude and shut out the Israelites from a participation in holy things, then certainly moral uncleanness may justly exclude and shut out Christians from a participation in holy things under the gospel: Mat. 7:6, "Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast you your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and tear you."

Holy things are too precious to be spent and spilt upon swinish sinners. Gospel blessings are precious pearls—which must not be given to swine. 2 Cor. 6:17, "Therefore come out from among them,

and be separate, says the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." [Lev. 13:46; Num. 5:1-4; Exod. 12:48; Lev. 22:3-7. "As often," said one, "as I have been among wicked men, I return home less a man than I was before." Bad company will quench the most burning and most shining Christians, as you see in Joseph and Peter, Psalm 106:35; when they were mingled among the heathen, they quickly learned their works, Psalm 119:115.] Profane, scandalous, blind, and ignorant people are very unclean things—and from them we must come out. As we would be in with God, we must be out with them. We must reject them—if we would have God to receive us: 2 Tim. 3:5, "Having a form of godliness—but denying the power thereof—from such turn away." Our Savior Christ went to the wilderness among the beasts, and carried his disciples with him, holding their fellowship to be less hurtful and dangerous. It is better to live among beasts, than to live among men of beastly principles and beastly practices. Now **there are ten sorts of people that Christians must turn from, that they must have no intimate, no special communion with in this world.**

(1.) First, Unbelievers. 2 Cor. 6:14-16. We should not close with those who have not closed with Christ; nor give ourselves up to those who have not given up themselves to Christ. Every unbeliever is a condemned person: the law has condemned him, the gospel has condemned him, and his own conscience has condemned him; and what sacred communion, what delightful fellowship can believers have with condemned people? John 3:18, 36. Every unbeliever is under the wrath of the great God; he is under that wrath which he can neither avoid nor withstand; and what communion can such have who are under God's love, with those who are under God's wrath? Every unbeliever makes God a liar, 1 John 5:10; and what children will have communion with such who every day give their heavenly father the lie to his very face? Every unbeliever does practically say, "Tush! there is no such loveliness or desirability, there is no such beauty or glory, there is no such fullness or sweetness, there is no such goodness or graciousness in Jesus as men would make us believe;" and what is this—but to give God the lie?

"Tush! there is no such favor, there is no such peace, there is no such pardon, there is no such righteousness, there is no such grace, there is no such glory to be reaped by Christ as God and men would persuade us;" and what is this—but to tell God he lies to his very teeth? And what sincere child can take pleasure in such who are still a-spitting in his heavenly father's face?

Every unbeliever is a disobedient person, and therefore what communion can obedient children have with those who are disobedient and rebellious? [Num. 14:11; Heb. 11:31, 1 Tim. 5:8; 2 Cor. 6:14, 15; 1 Cor. 14:23, seq.; 2 Tim. 3:1, 6.] Every unbeliever is a *pagan*, a *heathen*, in the Scripture dialect; and what communion can those who are of the household of faith have with pagans and heathens? Every unbeliever is a traitor; he commits treason daily against the crown and dignity of heaven; and what loyal subjects will hold communion with traitors? Unbelievers are the greatest robbers; they rob God of his declarative glory, though they cannot rob him of his essential glory; they rob him of the glory of his truth and faithfulness; as if he would falsify the word which has gone out of his mouth; as if he were yes and nay; and as if his word was so base and contemptible, that he who shall trust to him, must needs be in hazard. They rob him of the glory of his goodness and mercy, as if there were any sins too great for him to pardon, or any mercy too great for him to give, or any wrath too great for him to divert, or any debt too great for him to satisfy. They rob him of the glory of his omnipotency and all-sufficiency, as if there were something too hard for a God. Now what communion can the people of God have with robbers, with the greatest robbers, with the worst of robbers? and yet such are all unbelievers. And therefore let no unbelievers mutter or murmur when the door of admission is shut against them. But,

(2.) Secondly, Such as have a mere form, a picture, a mask, a pretense of godliness—but deny the power. 2 Tim. 3:5.

(3.) Thirdly, Such as walk disorderly—who live either without an employment, or idly and negligently in their employment; these

make religion odious, by making religion a mask for their idleness and laziness: 2 Thes. 3:6, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly." Now, who they are that walk disorderly you may see in ver. 11, "For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly—not working at all—but are busybodies." Such vagrant professors who live idly, who will have an oar in every man's boat, a sickle in every man's harvest, a curious eye upon every man's way and work—are to be shut out of the communion of Christians, and to be shunned as a man would shun a serpent, a contagious disease, or as the seaman shuns rocks, and sands, and shelves. [Solon made a law, that the son should not be bound to relieve his father when he was old, unless he had set him in his youth to some employment.]

It was a great vanity in Dionysius, who would needs be the best poet; and in Caligula, who would needs be the best orator; and in Nero, who would needs be the best fiddler; and so became the three worst princes, minding more their own amusements than their own callings. Just so, it is a very great vanity in many professors to mind more their own amusements than their own callings; from the society of such, saints must withdraw. No man is too noble to have a calling. If iron had reason, it would choose rather to be used in labor than to grow rusty in a corner. By Mahomet's law the Grand Turk himself was to be of some trade. **The hour of idleness is the hour of temptation; an idle person is the devil's tennis-ball, tossed by him at his pleasure.** God ordained the neck of the consecrated donkey should be broken—Exod. 13:13—instead of sacrificing him; perhaps because that creature has ever been the hieroglyphic of sloth and laziness. Among the Egyptians idleness was a capital crime. Among the Lucans, he who lent money to an idle person was to lose it. Among the Corinthians idle people were delivered to the prison. By Solon's law idle people were to suffer death. The ancients call idleness the burial of a living man. Seneca had rather be sick than idle. Now shall nature do more than grace? Shall poor blind heathens be so severe against idle people, and shall

Christians embrace them? Shall they not rather turn their backs upon them, and have no communion with those who think themselves too great or too good to hold the plough? "We urge you, brothers, warn those who are idle!" 1 Thessalonians 5:14

(4.) Fourthly, Such whose judgments are corrupt and unsound in foundation-truths. Titus 3:10, "A man who is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject." "A little leaven leavens the whole lump:" and what leaven is more infectious than that of heresy and error? "Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work." 2 John 1:9-11. You must have nothing to do with those who have nothing to do with God, 1 John 2:22-25; Col. 2:18, 19: your house must be too hot to hold him who holds not fast to foundation-truths, who holds not close to Christ the head.

Eusebius reports of John the Evangelist, that he would not allow Cerinthus the heretic in the same room with him, lest some judgment should abide them both. He who had the leprosy in his head was to be pronounced utterly unclean, Lev. 13:44. The breath of the erroneous is more dangerous and infectious than the breath of lepers: for one infects but the body—but the other infects the soul, and therefore ought more carefully to be avoided.

An erroneous mind is as odious to God as a *wicked life*; and why should it not be so to us also? Certainly we should shun the society of erroneous people as we should shun a serpent in the way, or poison in our food. 1 Tim. 6:5, "men whose minds are depraved and deprived of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw yourself;" or, as the Greek word signifies, stand off, keep at a distance, as you would from one who has an infectious disease, or as seamen stand off from rocks or from a leeshore. It is recorded by Theodoret, that when Lucius, an Arian bishop, came and preached

his erroneous doctrines—the people went out of the church, and would not so much as lend an ear to him. In these days there are many old errors—newly dressed; and old Jezebels, old harlots—newly painted. The best way is not to lend an ear to them—but to serve them as they served Jezebel: they gave her no quarter—but cast her down and trod her under foot, 2 Kings 9:10, 30-37. Errors on foundational truths are like the Jerusalem artichokes, which overrun all the ground where they are planted, and choke the very heart of it; and therefore to be abhorred, avoided, and shunned, as a man would shun hell itself. Who but a fool or madman would exchange one old piece of gold for a hundred new pennies? and what then shall we think of those who willingly and readily exchange old tried truths for new-minted errors? The society of such must be shunned.

(5.) Fifthly, Such as cause divisions and discord among the people of God. Romans 16:17, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned; and avoid them." "Mark them;" the Greek word signifies such a marking as a watchman uses, who stands on a watchtower to espy an approaching enemy. Ah! with what a wary, with what a watchful, with what a curious, with what a jealous, with what a serious, with what a diligent eye—does the watchman watch all the notions, turnings, and windings of the approaching enemy! With such an eye we should mark those who cause divisions. "And avoid them;" the Greek word signifies a studious, careful declining of them. A man must decline and shun them as he would decline and shun such people or things which are most pernicious, dangerous, or infectious to him. Divisions are a dishonor to Christ, a reproach to Christians, a blot upon profession, a block in the way of the weak, and a sword in the hand of the wicked; they are Satan's engines, and an inlet to all destruction and confusion. And therefore the authors of them are to be shunned and avoided. [The Turks pray daily that the divisions among Christians may be heightened, that so they may be the sooner ruined and undone.]

(6.) Sixthly, Such professing Christians as are scandalous and profane in their lives.

1 Cor. 5:11, "But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat." [Proverbs 9:6; Psalm 15:4; Eph. 5:7; Psalm 119:115; Proverbs 4:14-15.] Do not to joined, mixed, or mingled with such a brother who belies his profession. With such a brother whose course and life contradicts his profession—we must not hold Christian communion. Certainly I may not have fellowship with him at the Lord's table, whom I may not have fellowship with at my own table: Eph. 5:11, "Have no fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness—but rather reprove them;" Acts 2:40, "Save yourselves from this wicked generation." Wicked company is very dangerous and infectious: 1 Cor. 15:33, "Do not be misled—Bad company corrupts good character." As he who walks in the sun will be tanned, and he who touches pitch will be defiled; so he who associates himself with the wicked will be tainted and polluted.

Guilt or grief is all you shall gain by bad company, 2 Pet. 2:7-8—witness Lot, David, Joseph, and Peter. [Psalm 120:7-8; Gen. 42:15, 16; Mark 14:66-72; 1 Kings 22:8; 2 Chron. 24:17-18.] By bad company Christians come to lose much of the sweetness, seriousness, goodness, and graciousness of their spirits. Gold, though the noblest metal, loses of its luster by being continually worn in the same purse with silver. Familiarity with vain people has much worn off the spiritual luster, beauty, and glory that has been upon many Christians. Bad company will prove a very great hindrance to you in your Christian course: Psalm 119:115, "Away from me, you wicked, for I will keep the commandments of my God." I cannot keep my God's commands while I keep your company; I shall never do my duty until I abandon your society. Divine commands will never lie close and warm upon my heart, so long as I give you my hand.

How hard is it to keep the commandment of *labor* among the slothful, or the commandment of *diligence* among the negligent, or that of *liberality* among the covetous, or that of *humility* among the ambitious, or that of *love* among the malicious, or that of *union* among the contentious, or that of *chastity* among the lascivious, or that of *righteousness* among the unrighteous, or that of *faithfulness* among the unfaithful, or that of *fruitfulness* among the unfruitful, or that of *thankfulness* among the unthankful, or that of *faith* among the doubtful, etc. But,

(7.) Seventhly, A seventh sort of people that Christians must have no intimate, no special communion with—is false prophets, false teachers. [Mat. 16:6, 11-12; Gal. 1:8; Mat. 7:15, 13; Deut. 13:1-3; Titus 1:10-11.] They are not to give such any house-room, 2 John 10-11, nor heart-room, Mat. 24:23-24, 26. They are to shun them and avoid them, Romans 16:17. It is not safe for a Christian to hear them, or to have any communion or fellowship with them. Aristotle writes of a certain bird called, a goat-sucker, which sucked their blood—upon which, the goats grow blind. Ah, how many a seeing man has been made blind, and how many hopeful thriving Christians have had all their springs of love, of life, of sweetness and goodness dried up in them—by the sleights, deceits, and insinuations of false teachers. False prophets have their good words, and fair speeches, and subtle devices, whereby they blind many souls, and dry up all the spiritual milk and moisture that is in them—and therefore they are to be shunned and avoided. But,

(8.) Eighthly, You must have no intimate, no special communion with such as are obstinate and refractory, and who will not submit to Christ's rules and laws. 2 Thes. 3:14, "And if any man obeys not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." [The Greek word, is very significant, for it denotes such a perturbation of the mind, that he who is affected therewith, seeks where he may hide himself for shame.] Such as are obstinate must be noted with a brand of infamy; such must be infamous in your eye, who look with an eye

of contumacy upon any command or institution of Christ. The Greek word signifies to note him so as to make a sign, as it were, of him; or to mark him so as to put him to the blush, to put him to shame. The obstinate, the obstinate person should be a marked person, you must set a cross upon him, that all may know him and shun him. The assemblies of the saints are honorable—and obstinate professors are to be shut out of them.

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, [if he is obstinate,] take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector." Matthew 18:15-17. He who shall be obstinate under private and public admonition, is to be shut out from church communion; he who to small faults shall add obstinacy, is to be cut off from the saints' society. We must turn our backs upon him who turns his back upon the church. As we would keep ourselves untainted, as we would preserve the church from being infected, as we would not have the name of God blasphemed, and as we would have the obstinate professor ashamed and humbled—we must have no sacred society with him.

(9.) A ninth sort of people that Christians must have no intimate, no sacred, no special communion with—are fools.

Proverbs 9:6, "Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding." Proverbs 14:7, "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when you perceive not in him the lips of knowledge." Proverbs 23:9, "Speak not in the ears of a fool; for he will despise the wisdom of your words." [Who would hang a jewel in a swine's ear, or sow precious seed among craggy rocks, or put sweet liquor into a musty vessel? etc.] There is no profit, no pleasure, no delight to be had in the society of fools. Fools are neither capable of doing good nor of receiving good; and therefore what should good souls do among such? A fool has neither an *ear* to hear, nor an *eye* to see, nor a *heart*

to understand, nor a *memory* to retain, nor a *will* to choose, nor affections to embrace—anything that is good. And therefore their company is to be shunned and avoided. The society of fools is as dangerous as it is vexatious: Proverbs 13:20, "He who walks with wise men shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed." The Hebrew word that is here used, signifies to be broken; yes, to be broken as sometimes an army is broken by some fierce and sudden surprisal; a companion of fools shall be broken in his credit, in his estate, in his name, in his reputation; yes, in his very wits, for nothing contributes so much to make a man a fool as the company of fools.

(10.) The tenth and last sort of people that Christians must have no familiarity nor society with, are scorers. Such as scorn the saints, and scorn true religion, and scorn piety; such who scorn every way of Christ, and every institution of Christ: Proverbs 9:8, "Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate you." Wise and gracious reproofs are pearls—which are not to be cast before scorers. Now certainly, if I may not reprove scorers, then I may not keep company with scorers: Proverbs 22:10, "Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; yes, strife and reproach shall cease." The scorner must be cast out of your company. Strife and contention, shame and reproach, are the scorner's attendants; and therefore he who would be rid of them must cast out him. The Hebrew word here translated "cast out," signifies not simply to eject or cast out; but to cast out or drive out, as God did drive Adam out of paradise, Gen. 3:24, for the word is the same; and this God did, with violence and displeasure. Just so, must the scorner be cast out, or driven out.

Look! as God did drive out the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite before his people, Exod. 34:11; so must the scorner be driven out of the society of the saints; for the Hebrew word is the same in both places. Look! as Sarah would have Abraham to cast out the bond-woman and her son, Gen. 21:10; so must the scorner be cast out of the company of the saints; the word is still the same. Look! as the sea casts up mire

and dirt, Isaiah 57:20; so should Christians cast out scorers from among them; the word being still the same.

The scorner construes everything to the worst; he envies those who excel him; he disdains those who are below him; he is never contented, never satisfied, he is still a-quarreling, still a-fretting, and still a-perplexing of himself and others; and therefore you must cast him out with scoffing Ishmael, or the house will be too hot to hold you. Cast out the firebrand, and the fire goes out; cast out Jonah, and the storm shall cease; cast out the bond-woman and her scornful son, and all will be quiet.

David's blessed man is described by this, Psalm 1:1, that he "sits not in the seat of the scornful." Scorers are no companions for blessed men. Of all men, the blessed man will never choose the scorner for his friend. God himself scorns the scorner: Proverbs 34, "Surely he scorns the scorner," etc. Of all men in the world, God casts the greatest contempt and scorn upon scorers, and therefore why should we make such our bosom-associates?

And thus you see the several sorts of people that God has shut out from the communion of his people. Well, Christians, remember this, dead stones must not be laid in a living temple. No stones but hewn stones were to be brought and laid in the building of Solomon's temple, which was a type of the church of Christ in gospel-days. [1 Kings 5:15-18; 2 Chron. 2, and 2:2, 18; 1 Pet. 2:5.] Certainly such stones, such souls, as are not hewn by the word and Spirit, are not fit to be laid in Christ's building. In Josiah's days, when the Passover was kept, there were porters at every gate of Jerusalem, that no unclean or uncircumcised ones might enter, 2 Chron. 35. That vain people are to be shut out from sacred communion with the people of God—is further evident by the judgment of many godly authors. As,

Chrysostom says that "the table of the Lord is that whereon the body is laid, and that we must not allow chattering blue-jays to come thereunto; for only high-flying eagles are to feed thereupon."

Thereupon the same author protested "that he had rather give his life to a murderer, than Christ's body to an unworthy receiver, and rather allow his own blood to be poured out like water, than to offer Christ's blessed blood to a base liver." And again, "Church-officers," says he, "are to keep the sacrament pure, as a man would keep a pleasant spring clean whereat he always drinks, not letting the feet of filthy beasts and swine to puddle it." The same author further says that in the primitive times, whenever the sacrament was administered, a deacon stood up, and cried in the open assembly, "Holy things for holy men, holy things for holy men!" thereby debarring all others who were unholy, and raising the hearts of the holy.

Justin Martyr, who lived some thirty years after the apostle John, writes thus: "In our assemblies we admit none to the Lord's supper but such as being baptized continue in professing the true faith, and in leading such lives as Christ has taught." There were three things, says this author, that were required of those who were to be received to the sacrament: 1. A new birth; 2. Soundness in faith; 3. A promise to live well."

Augustine well observes, "That as many think the eating of an apple was but a small sin, so many think that the eating of the sacrament is but a small sin. But as many horrid sins were enrap't up in that, so are there many enrap't up in this:

1. Here is pride; else no man in his wickedness would presume to come to the Lord's table.
2. Here is rebellion and treason against the crown and dignity of Christ; their hands and lips adore him, as Judas his did—but their hearts and lives abhor him, Romans 2:22.
3. Here is theft and sacrilege; now if to take away the communion-cup be such a high offence, such horrid sacrilege, what is it then to take the bread and wine, set apart and sanctified for a holy use by the Lord himself? 1 Cor. 11:27, 29.

4. Here is murder, the worst murder, the greatest murder, the cruellest murder; you kill yourself, your soul, and as much as in you lies, God's dearest Son.

Now certainly, in some respects, this sin is a greater sin than Adam's was, For,

1. Adam's eating was against a Creator—but yours is sinning against a Redeemer: now it is more to redeem a soul than to create a world.

2. His was against the word of the Lord; your against the blood of the Lord.

3. His struck at the covenant of works; your at the covenant of grace.

4. He ate but once; but you eat often."

"Yes," Aquinas says, "the majesty of church discipline should never allow this, to let open and known offenders presume to come to the table of the Lord."

It was a worthy saying of Bilson, a godly author, "Suppose any man," says he, "be he a prince, if he will not submit himself to the precepts of Christ—but willfully maintain either heresy or open impurity—the ministers are to admonish him what danger from God is at the door; and if he impenitently persists, they must not allow him to partake either in divine prayer, or any holy mysteries among the people of God; but wholly to be excluded the congregation." "Not only the lack of the word and sacraments," says the same author, "but the abuse of either—greatly hazards the welfare of the whole church; yes, casting holy things to dogs, etc., procures a dreadful doom as well to consenters as presumers, it being the way to turn the house of God into a den of thieves—if profane ones are allowed to defile the ordinances and assemblies of the faithful."

"I," said Calvin, will sooner die than this hand of mine shall give the things of God to the despisers of God."

Mr. Rutherford, says "that they are copartners with the wicked—who dispense the bread to those who are knowingly dead in sins." I might multiply many others; but let these suffice. For a close, let me only say, How the father can be guiltless of the death of his child, who gives him poison to drink, with this caution—that he tells him it is poison—I cannot see. Josephus reports of some who profanely searched the sepulchers of the saints, supposing to find some treasures there—but God made fire to rise out of the earth, which suddenly devoured them. Now if God's wrath like fire breaks forth to consume such as wrong but the sepulchers of his saints, etc., oh then with what flames of fury will God burn up such as abuse not only the sacrament of his Son—but his Son himself!

It was a very great wickedness in Julian to throw his blood in the face of Christ; but for a wicked communicant to take Christ's own blood as it were, running from his heart, and to throw it into the face of Christ—is most abominable and damnable. By all that has been spoken, you clearly see that unholy people are to be shut out of the special communion of saints here on earth; and therefore certainly the Lord will never allow such to have communion with him in heaven. It will not stand with the holiness and purity of God to have fellowship with such in the kingdom of glory, whom he would not have his people have fellowship with in the kingdom of grace.

8. The eighth argument to prove that without real holiness there is no happiness; that without holiness on earth no man shall ever come to a blessed vision or fruition of God in heaven, is this—The Scripture, which speaks no falsehood, styles unholy people beasts, yes, the worst of beasts; and what would such do in heaven? [Unholy people are, throughout the Scriptures, branded, to their everlasting contempt—with the worst appellations.] Unholy people are the most dangerous, and the most harmful beings in the world, and therefore

are emblemized by lions—for they are cruel, Psalm 22:21; by bears—for they are savage, Isaiah 11:7; by dragons—for they are hideous, Ezek. 29:3; by wolves—for they are ravenous, Ezek. 22:27; by dogs—for they are snarling, Rev. 22:15; by vipers and scorpions—for they are stinging, Mat. 12:34, Ezek. 2:6; by spiders and cockatrices—for they are poisoning, Isaiah 59:5; by swine—for their intemperance, Mat. 7:6. The glutton is depicted as a swine; the fraudulent person is depicted as a fox; the lustful person is depicted as a goat; the backbiter is depicted as a barking cur; the slanderer is depicted as an asp; the oppressor is depicted as a wolf; the persecutor is depicted as a tiger; the seducer is depicted as a serpent. Certainly God will not allow such beasts and toads and snakes and serpents to live with Him in heaven!

[It was accustomed to be a trial whether land belonged to England or Ireland, by putting in toads or snakes, etc., into it; if they lived there, it was concluded that the land belonged to England; if they died, to Ireland.] Surely God, and Christ, and the Spirit, and angels, and "the spirits of just men made perfect," are not so in love with dogs and swine, etc., as to put them into their bosoms, or make them their companions. **Heaven is a too holy place to admit such vermin to inhabit there.** "Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life." Revelation 21:27

When Cyneas, the ambassador of Pyrrhus, after his return from Rome, was asked by his master what he thought of the city and state, he answered and said, that it seemed to him to be a state of none but great statesmen, and a commonwealth of kings. Such is heaven; it is no other state than a parliament of emperors, a commonwealth of kings. There is not a soul in heaven under the degree of a king, Rev. 1:6, and every king there has a robe of honor upon his back, a golden scepter in his hand, and a glorious crown upon his head. And do you think that it will stand with the state of heaven—to admit such vermin as unholy people are, to be of that holy society? Surely not! God has long since resolved upon it, that no unclean beasts shall

enter into heaven, that no dirty dogs shall ever trample upon that golden pavement. "Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood." Revelation 22:15.

All in heaven are holy: the angels holy, the saints holy--but the Lord Himself above all, is most glorious in holiness. Now certainly it would be a hell to these holy ones to have unholy wretches to be their eternal companions! **When the holy angels fell from their holiness, heaven was so holy that it spewed them out**, as once Canaan did its unholy inhabitants, Lev. 18:28; and therefore **certainly there will be no room in heaven for such filthy beasts as unholy people are.**

Well, remember this—that all those stinging expressions and appellations which disgrace and vilify unholy people, they were inspired by a holy Spirit, and penned by holy secretaries, and enrolled in his holy word, and published by his holy messengers, and all by his holy appointment, who, as he is greater than the greatest, and wiser than the wisest, and better than the best, so he is too pure and too holy to revoke the words which are gone out of his mouth, or to deny or unsay what he has spoken, or not to maintain the truth thereof against all gainsayers. It is prophesied that when the church shall be restored to her purity and glory, such beasts shall not be there, Isaiah 35:9; Ezek. 28:24. The majesty of church discipline shall be such as shall keep out all such beasts. "Jerusalem above" is too glorious a habitation for beasts, or for men of beastly spirits, or beastly principles, or beastly practices. The city of the great God was never built for beasts. A wilderness and not a paradise—is fittest for beasts.

9. The ninth argument to prove the truth of the proposition is this, God would not have his holy ones in this world to be yoked in marriage with unholy ones; and therefore certainly he will never allow such to be yoked to himself to all eternity. [Exod. 23:32; 34:12. If you would see the greatness and

dangerousness of this sin, then read Ezra 10 and 1 Kings 11, with Exod. 34:14-16; Judges 3:6-8. When the tyrant Dionysius asked Aristide's permission to marry his daughter—said he, "I had rather see my daughter dead—than married to a tyrant!" The application is easy.] That God would not have his righteous people to be yoked in marriage with the unrighteous, is most evident by these scriptures: Deut. 7:3, 6, "Neither shall you make marriages with them; your daughter you shall not give to his son, nor his daughter shall you take unto your son: for you are a holy people unto the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a special people unto himself, above all people who are upon the face of the earth."

Ezra 9:12, "You told us not to let our daughters marry their sons, and not to let our sons marry their daughters, and not to help those nations in any way." But did they keep this commandment of the Lord? No—as you may see in the second verse of that chapter, "For the men of Israel have married women from these people and have taken them as wives for their sons. Just so, the holy race has become polluted by these mixed marriages. To make matters worse, the officials and leaders are some of the worst offender." But how did this operate upon good Ezra? That you may see in the third verse, "When I heard this, I tore my clothing, pulled hair from my head and beard, and sat down utterly shocked!" Oh the sorrow, the grief, the perplexity, the holy passion, the indignation, the amazement, the astonishment that this abomination begot in the heart of good Ezra!

The like effect this sin had upon the heart of good Nehemiah, as you may see in that remarkable text, Neh. 13:23-25, compared with chapter 10:29-30. Just so, in 2 Cor. 6:14-15, "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols?" It is an evil thing, a dangerous thing, to be yoked to any who have neither skill nor will to bear the yoke of Christ. Under the law an ox and an

donkey might not be yoked or coupled together, Deut. 22:10; and to this the apostle alludes as some judge—God would not have righteous souls to be yoked in marriage with those who are unrighteous; a gracious soul were better be married to a dog, than to an ungracious wife. "A virtuous wife is a crown to her husband," Proverbs 12:4; she is the life of life. If you are a man of holiness, you must look more for a portion of *grace* in a wife—than for a portion of *gold* with a wife; you must look more after *righteousness* than *riches*; more after *piety* than *money*; more after what inheritance she has in *heaven*, than what possessions she has on *earth*; more at what interest she has in *Christ*, than at what interest she has in creatures; more at her being *new-born*, than at her being *high-born*; more at her being *godly*, than at all her *worldly goods*, 1 Cor. 7:39. If money makes the match, and she be good enough that has but goods enough—you shall be sure to have hell enough with such a wife! In your choice of a spouse—to err but once is to be undone for your whole life—at least as to the comforts and contentments of your life. Once blessed or cursed with a spouse—you must be always so!

By what has been said, it is most evident that God would not have the holy seed to mingle or marry with the unholy. And do you think that a holy God will mingle and marry with such in heaven, that he would not have his people to mingle or marry with on earth? Surely not! Or do you think that God—who would not in the law have an ox and an donkey plough together—that he will be yoked to such wretches, may I say to such donkeys, whose ungodliness has debased them below the very ox and donkey? Isaiah 1:3. Surely not!

10. The tenth and last argument to prove that without real holiness there is no happiness, etc., is this—Unholy people are adjudged, doomed and sentenced to another place, namely, to hell. Psalm 9:17, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." In the Hebrew there are two "intos;" "into," "into" hell, that is, the wicked shall be turned into the nethermost hell, into the lowest and darkest dungeon of hell! "They shall be turned into hell," that is, they shall be certainly turned into

hell; they shall be vehemently, forcibly turned into hell. God will, as it were with both hands, thrust them into hell. [Matt. 11:23, and 23:15, 33. The Hebrew word Sheol has several significations; sometimes it signifies the grave, sometimes it signifies extraordinary great anguishes and distresses; and sometimes it signifies hell or the place of the damned, as here, and as in Job 11:8, and Proverbs 15:11.] The wicked shall go from hell to judgment, and from judgment they shall be turned with a witness into hell.

Many now-a-days say there is no hell but what a man finds in his own conscience. Multitudes think that all that is spoken of hell in Scripture, is false and mythical. They will not believe that there is a hell, until they come to feel themselves in hell, until they find everlasting flames about their ears. They are sentenced to the fire, to everlasting fire, they are doomed to fire and brimstone! "Then He will also say to those on the left—Depart from Me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his angels!"
Matthew 25:41

This terrible sentence breathes out nothing but fire and brimstone, terror and horror, dread and woe! The last words that ever Christ will speak to the ungodly, will be the most tormenting, and horrifying, the most killing and damning, the most stinging and wounding! "Depart from Me!" Here is utter rejection—"Pack! Begone! Get out of my sight! Let me never see your face again!"

It was a heavy doom that was passed upon Nebuchadnezzar, that he would be driven from the society of men, and in an extremity of a sottish melancholy, spend his time among the beasts of the field, Dan. 4:25; but that was nothing to this soul-killing word, "Depart from me;" it was nothing to men's being cast out of the presence of Christ forever; the remembrance of which made one to pray thus, "O Lord, deliver me at the great day from that soul-killing word, **depart.**" And what says another,

This word "depart," the goats with horror hears.

But this word "come," the sheep to joy appears."

"You who are cursed!" There is malediction. "But, Lord, if we must depart, oh let us depart *blessed!*" No, "depart who are you *cursed!*" You have cursed others, and now you shall be cursed yourselves; you have delighted yourselves in cursing, and now you shall be cursed forever. [Cursings now are their hymns—but in hell they shall be their woes, Rev. 16:9, 11-21.] You shall be cursed in your bodies and cursed in your souls; you shall be cursed of God, and cursed of angels, and cursed of saints, and cursed of devils, and cursed of your companions, yes, you shall curse your very selves, your very souls. You loved not blessing, and therefore you shall have cursing enough: "Depart from me, you who are cursed!" all your curses, all your maledictions shall at last recoil upon your own souls. Now you curse every man and thing which stands in the way of your lusts, and which crosses your designs: but at last all the curses of heaven and hell shall meet in their full power and force upon you!

But, Lord, if we must depart, and depart cursed, oh let us go into some good place! No! "Depart into the *eternal* fire!" There is the vengeance and everlasting continuance of it. [They do but dream, who think and say that the devil and damned shall be delivered at last, Psalm 11:6.] You shall go into fire, into everlasting fire, that will neither consume itself, nor consume you! Eternity of extreme punishment is the hell of hell. The fire in hell is like that stone in Arcadia, which being once kindled could never be quenched.

If all the fires that ever were in the world were contracted into one fire, how terrible would it be! Yet such a fire would be but as a 'painted' fire—compared to the fire of hell. The greatest and the hottest fires that ever were on earth—are but ice in comparison to the fire of hell. If it be so sad a spectacle to behold a malefactor's flesh consumed by piece-meal in a lingering fire; ah! how sad, how dreadful would it be to experience what it is to lie in unquenchable fire, not for a day, a month, or a year, or a hundred, or a thousand years—but forever and ever! "If it were," says one, "but for a

thousand years, I could bear it—but seeing it is for eternity, this astonishes and affrights me!" "I am afraid of hell," says another, [Cyril,] "because the worm there never dies, and the fire never goes out!"

It is called "unquenchable fire," Mat. 18:8, and "eternal fire" in the Epistle of Jude, ver. 7. The torments of the damned are very grievous for the **bitterness** of them—but more grievous for the **diversity** of them—but most of all grievous for the **eternity** of them. To lie in everlasting torments, Mat. 25:46, goes beyond all the bounds of desperation. To roar forever for disquietness of heart, to rage forever for madness of soul, to weep, and grieve, and gnash the teeth forever for vexation of spirit—is a misery beyond all expression!

Suetonius reports of Tiberius Caesar, that, being petitioned by a certain offender to hasten his punishment, and to grant him a speedy despatch, he made him this answer, "Stay sir, you and I are not friends yet." Just so, if after a damned soul has been in hell a thousand years, he should petition the Lord for a speedy death, the Lord would answer after the same manner, "Stay soul, you and I are not yet friends!" If after thousands and millions of thousands of years, the request should be renewed, the answer would still be the same, "Stay, you and I are not yet friends!" Wronged justice can never be satisfied, and therefore the sinner must be forever tormented. The sinner in hell will sin forever—and therefore he must be punished forever. It will not stand with the unspotted justice and righteousness of God to cease punishing, where the sinner ceases not sinning.

One tells us of some devout people, who caused those words of the prophet, Isaiah 33:14, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" to be written in letters of gold upon their chimney-pieces. The fear of Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace made men do anything to avoid it, Dan. 3:8; and shall not the fear of eternal flames, of everlasting burnings, work men to bewail their sins, to hate all their bitter-

sweets, and to lay hold on everlasting strength—that it may go well with them forever?

I have read of a chaste virgin, who being strongly tempted and solicited by a lewd ruffian to uncleanness, after some discourse, she called for a pan of burning coals, requesting him for her sake to hold his finger in them but one hour; he answered, that it is an unkind and unreasonable request. "That is true," says she, "it is so; but you ask me a more unkind and unreasonable request, namely—to satisfy you in a thing for which I shall not only burn an hour—but burn both body and soul in hell-fire forever and ever!" And so she overcame the temptation.

"But, Lord, if I must go into fire, into everlasting fire, oh let me have some good company in my misery!" "No! the devil and his demons shall be your companions!" Ah! who can conceive or express the misery of living with devils and damned spirits! Many ungodly people would not live in a house haunted with evil spirits one night for all the world; and yet they live as if it were nothing to dwell with hellish fiends and furies forever. If the sight of a ghost for a moment be such a terror and torment to you; what will the horrible sight of devils, and the ghastly sight of the damned be? If it was so great an affliction to Job to be a companion to owls, Job 30:29; what will it be to you to be a companion to devils? If it was so great a grief and woe to David to sojourn in Mesech, and to dwell in the tents of Kedar for a time, Psalm 120:5; what a woe will it be to unholy souls to dwell with devils and reprobates forever? Ah! how will Satan's deformity, antipathy, and cruelty bewilder you and torment you! How will the damned's wringing of hands and gnashing of teeth abash you and confound you! How will your old companions' cursing of you, the sight of your near relations in misery with you, and devils scornfully insulting over you, and the never-dying worm feeding perpetually upon you—be many hells of horror to you! Had an unholy soul as many worlds in his hand to give as there be stars in heaven—he would give them all to escape those pains and torments which will admit of no intermission or mitigation.

In Revelation 21:8 you have a catalog of that damned crew, of that rabble of reprobates which shall be your companions forever: "But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death." These companions are the devil's whips; they are his scorpions with which he will torment and whip poor souls forever. Such companions will make many hells to meet in one; they will be the top of the soul's torments.

Thus I have done with those arguments that prove the point; namely, that without holiness there is no happiness, etc.

Reasons

III. I come now to the reasons of the point—why is it that without holiness there is no happiness; that without holiness on earth, no man shall ever come to a blessed vision or fruition of God in heaven? Among other reasons that might be rendered, you may please to take these—

Reason 1. First, Because God has said it, who is truth and faithfulness itself, and cannot lie. That he has said it, witness the very text, and the proofs which are produced to make good the doctrine. And has he said it, and shall it not come to pass? Has he spoken it, and will he not accomplish the word that is gone out of his mouth? [Isaiah 46:11, and 48:15; Jer. 32:24; Isaiah 4:11; Zech. 1:6; Dan. 9:12; Psalm 119:138.] "God is not a man that he should lie," Num. 23:19. "Also the Strength of Israel will not lie," 1 Sam. 15:29. God will make good every word that is gone out of his mouth. Men sometimes eat their words as soon as they have spoken them; they often say and unsay—but not the Holy One of Israel. That first and supreme being, who gives being to all others, will certainly give being

to all his promises and threatenings. God himself shall sooner cease to be, than the word that is gone out of his mouth shall be frustrated. He who is the faithful witness has said it, "that without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "And truly, heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or one tittle" (that is, before the least letter or particle of a letter) "of God's blessed word shall pass unfulfilled," Mat. 5:18.

God's "faithfulness is great," Lam. 3:23; It reaches unto the clouds," Psalm 36:5; "He will not allow his faithfulness to fail," Psalm 89:33; "His faithfulness endures through all generations," Psalm 119:90. God will never allow his faithfulness to be stained or blotted, and therefore he will undoubtedly make good the word which is gone out of his mouth. "I had rather," said Plutarch, that men should say there was never any such person in the world as Plutarch, than that they should say Plutarch is unfaithful." A man were better say there is no God, than say that God is unfaithful. A noble spirit can better bear any charge, than that of being unfaithful; and so can a faithful God.

Reason 2. Secondly, Because real holiness is that great principle which fits and capacitates souls for communion with God, and for a blessed sight and fruition of God. Mat. 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Without a principle of purity, of sanctity—there is no vision of God in glory. If a man be ever so poor—yet if his heart be pure, God will make a house of his heart, wherein his honor will delight to dwell; let a man's outside be ever so homely—yet if his inside be but cleanly, God will make it his own habitation. God is for that man, and that man is for God—who carries about with him a pure heart. Heart-purity makes a man a darling of heaven. Many affect pure language, pure houses, pure habits, pure hands, pure air, pure food, pure drink, pure gestures, etc., who yet for lack of heart-purity shall never see the face of God in glory. Heart-purity speaks a man eternally happy.

Holiness is that noble principle, which fits a man for the happiest sight of God: it makes a man a fit companion for God both here and

hereafter. Without this principle no man can have communion with God in this world, much less can he have communion with God in heaven—if this precious principle of holiness be not seated in his heart. It will not stand with the holiness of God, to have anything to do with those who have no principles of holiness in them. It is a principle of holiness, which fits a man for the service of God, which fits a man for fellowship with God, which fits a man for walking with God, which fits a man for correspondence with God, and which fits a man for the delight of God, and which fits a man for an everlasting fruition of God. And therefore certainly, without holiness—there is no happiness; without a principle of purity—there can be no seeing of the face of God in glory. [The glory of glory consists in seeing of God, 1 Cor. 13:12; 1 John 3:2, as the hell of hell lies in the soul's everlasting separation from God.]

Reason 3. A third reason why without real holiness there is no happiness, etc., is this—Because heaven is a holy place, and therefore no unholy souls can enter there. It is called the "high and holy place," Isaiah 57:15. The inheritance of the saints in heaven is an inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, 1 Pet. 1:4. Holiness dwells in heaven, 2 Pet. 3:13, as a man dwells in his house. Heaven is the house of God's holiness, and therefore certainly without holiness there is no entering into that house, Rev. 21:27. The Holy of Holies in the temple was a type of heaven. [Exod. 26:34; Psalm 78:69; Heb. 9:8, and 12:24.] And as none might enter into the Holy of Holies who were unholy, so none can enter into heaven, which is the true holy of holies—but those who are holy. Heaven was so holy, that it cast out the angels when they fell from their holiness. Paradise was a type of heaven, and no sooner did Adam lose his holiness—but he was shut out of paradise.

Heaven is a city of holiness: and none can enter into that city but such as are holy, Rev. 22:14. Heaven is so holy that it would groan to bear one unholy soul. Well, heaven is a holy place, and the inhabitants are all holy, and the work of heaven is holy; and what then would unholy souls do there?

Reason 4. A fourth reason why without real holiness there is no happiness, etc., is this—Because unholy people have no hearts to go to heaven. Though now and then they may talk of heaven, and now and then lift up their eyes and hands to heaven, and now and then express a few cold wishes and lazy desires after heaven—it is no difficult thing to demonstrate that in good earnest they have no heart to go to heaven. ["Heaven is another hell to the damned," said one, Isaiah 88:3-4.]

For first, How often has God set life and death, heaven and hell before them—and they have chosen death rather than life, and hell rather than heaven!

2. Do you think that that man has any heart to heaven—who will not so much as part with a lust for heaven?

3. Will you say that that man has a heart to go to heaven—who has not so much as a hand to lay hold on the opportunities of grace that might bring him to heaven? Luke 13:33-34.

4. Will you say that that man has a heart to go to heaven—who daily hardens his heart against him who is the way to heaven? John 14:6; Isaiah 63:10.

5. Will you say that that man has a heart to go to heaven—who is still a-grieving, vexing, and quenching that Spirit of holiness—who alone can fit, frame, and form him for heaven?

6. Will you say that that man has a heart to go to heaven—who rarely spends a serious thought of heaven, and that lives in this world as if there were no heaven?

7. Will you say that that man has a heart to go to heaven, whose sinful courses speak him out to be one of those who have made a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell? Isaiah 28:15, 18.

8. Do you think that that man has a heart to go to heaven—who detests those most who are the best wooers for heaven?

9. Do you think that that man has any heart to go to heaven—who can take no pleasure nor delight in those who are traveling towards heaven? Romans 3:8; 1 Cor. 4:9-10.

10. Will you say that that man has a heart to go to heaven—who will do nothing affectionately for heaven—who will not hear for heaven, nor pray for heaven, nor trade for heaven, nor look for heaven, nor long for heaven, nor strive for heaven, nor wait for heaven? [No man ever went to heaven sleeping.]

The heart commands all, it carries all; if the *heart* were bent for heaven, the *head* would contrive for heaven, the *eye* would look out for heaven, and the *ear* would hear for heaven, and the *tongue* would speak for heaven, and the *foot* would walk towards heaven, and the *hand* would do for heaven. By all which, it is most evident that unholy people are not cordially willing to go to heaven. It is most certain that unholy people have no such great mind to go to heaven as some imagine. When Dives was in hell, his desire was not to be with Abraham in heaven—but that Lazarus might come and give him a little ease in hell; he preferred a little ease in hell before his being with Abraham in heaven, Luke 16:24, 27-29. Neither did he desire that his five brethren might go to heaven—but that they might be kept out of hell; and that not out of love to them—but out of love to himself, he knowing that their company would be no small increase of his own torments.

Heaven would be a very hell to an unholy heart. If now the presence of God in his servants, and the presence of God in his ordinances—is such a hell to unholy souls; ah, what a hell would the presence of God in heaven be to unholy hearts! It is true an unholy heart may desire heaven, as it is a place of freedom from troubles, afflictions, oppressions, vexations, etc., and as it is a place of peace, rest, ease, safety, etc.—but this is the least and lowest part of heaven;

but to desire it as it is, a place of purity, of grace, of holiness, of enjoying of God, etc., is above the reach of an unholy heart. The *company* of heaven are all holy, the *employments* of heaven are all holy, and the *enjoyments* of heaven are all holy; and therefore heaven cannot but be an undesirable thing to unholy hearts. An unholy heart is no way desirous nor ambitious of such a heaven as will rid him of his darling sins, as will make him conformable to a holy God, as will everlastingly divorce him from his old lusts, and link him forever to those gracious souls whom he has scorned, despised, and persecuted in this world. Ergo, etc.

Reason 5. Fifthly and lastly—Because without real holiness men are good for nothing, they are fit for nothing. Without holiness men are neither good for church nor state, they are neither fit to rule nor to be ruled; to command, nor to be commanded; to guide, nor to be guided, etc. Men void of holiness are in the Scripture resembled to chaff, to dust, to dirt, to briars and thorns—which are things which are good for nothing—which are fit for nothing. [Psalm 1:4; Isaiah 41:2; Zeph. 1:17; Ezek. 2:6; Isaiah 9:18, 10:6, 17, and 57:27.] And what should such men do in heaven, who are good for nothing on earth? The horse is good to carry, the ox is good to draw the plow, the sheep is good for cloth, the cow is good to give milk, the donkey is good to carry, and the dog is good to protect the house; but what is a man void of holiness good for? An unholy person is good for nothing but to be destroyed, and to make some room for a better person to stand up in that place which he takes up in the world.

As the hog in the Arabic fable tells us that a butcher, carrying three creatures upon his horse—a sheep, a goat, and a hog—the two former lay very quiet and still—but the hog kicked, and cried, and would never be quiet. Thereupon the butcher said, "Why are you so impatient when the other two are so quiet?" The hog answered, "Everyone knows himself; the sheep knows that he is brought into the city for his wool's sake, and the goat knows that he is brought into the city for his milk's sake, and so they need not fear nor care; but, alas, I know very well that I have neither wool nor milk—but that

as soon as I am come into the city I must be killed—for that is all I am good for." An unholy person is like a hog—good for nothing but to be killed, Mat. 7:6.

Certainly heaven-happiness is too great and too glorious a thing to be possessed by those who are good for nothing. We look upon such as are fit for nothing, to be worthy of banishment from the society of men. But oh, how much more worthy are they to be banished from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power, and to be shut out forever from the society of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect—who are fit for nothing but to dishonor the Lord, undo their own souls, and to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath! 2 Thes. 1:8-9; Heb. 12:22-23; Romans 2:5.

And thus I have given you an account of the reasons of the point.

Conviction

We come now to the Practical Application

Use 1. We shall now come to make some improvement of this great truth to our own souls. Is it so, that real holiness is the only way to happiness, and that without holiness here, no man shall ever come to a blessed vision or fruition of God hereafter? Then the first use shall be a use of **conviction**. This, then, may serve to convince the world of several things: As,

1. First, That the number of those who shall be eternally happy, the number of those who shall attain to a blessed vision and glorious fruition of God in heaven—are very few; for there are but a few that reach to this holiness without which there is no happiness: Rev. 3:4, "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy." Among the many in Sardis there were but a *few* who had holy insides and pure outsides. [A few *names*, that is, a few people: Acts 1:15, who are all known to Christ by name; as he said to Moses, "I know you by name," Exod. 33:12, 17. By these scriptures it is evident that few shall be saved, Jer. 5:1; Ezek. 22:30, and 9:4, 6-7; Micah 1:13-15; Luke 23:28, seq.; Romans 9:21; Mat. 22:14; 1 Cor. 1:20.]

Among the multitude who made a holy profession, there were but few who walked answerable to their holy calling; and therefore but a few who would walk with Christ in white. White in ancient times was the dress of nobles: to walk with Christ in white, is to partake with Christ in his glory. They, and only they, at last shall be clothed nobly, royally, gloriously—who maintain inward and outward purity. The holy seed is a "little, little flock," Luke 12:32. Here are two diminutives in the Greek, "little, little flock;" to show the exceeding littleness of it. They were little in their own eyes, and little in their enemies' eyes, and little in regard of that world of wolves among

whom they were preserved, as a spark of fire in the midst of the wide ocean.

When the Syrians came up against Israel in the time of Ahab, it is said that "the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of goats—but the Syrians filled the country," 1 Kings 20:27. Holy souls are but like two little flocks of goats; but the unholy fill the world. Gracious souls are like the three hundred men of Gideon; but graceless souls are as the Midianites, that were like grasshoppers for multitude, Judges 7:7, 12.

"Small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." Mat. 7:14. The way of holiness which leads to happiness, is a narrow way; there is but just room enough for a holy God and a holy soul to walk together. And few there are, who find it. And no wonder; for there are but few who mind it, who love it, who like it, or who inquire after it. "The whole world lies in wickedness," 1 John 5:19, and will die in their wickedness, John 8:21. If all the known parts of the world were divided into thirty-one parts, there will be found but five parts that do so much as profess the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ: for at this day, nineteen parts of the world are possessed by unholy Turks and Jews, which do not, nor will not so much as acknowledge Jesus Christ to be the King and Head of his church; and seven parts of the world is possessed this day merely by heathens, who worship stocks and stones. And of those five parts which are possessed by Christians, how many are Papists, atheists, hypocrites, drunkards, swearers, liars, adulterers, idolaters, oppressors! How many are proud, covetous, carnal, formal, lukewarm, indifferent, etc.! Now, should all these sorts of sinners be separated, as they shall in the great day, from those who are truly gracious and holy, would it not quickly appear that the flock of Christ is a little, little flock?

Ah, how few among the great ones are found to be gracious! How few among the rich are found to be rich in Christ, rich in grace, rich in good works! How few among those who are high-born, can you find

who are new-born! 1 Cor. 1:16; 1 Tim. 6:16-17. It was the saying of Lipsius, that "the names of all godly princes may easily be written in a small ring." I have read of Mr. Buchanan, that was King James' tutor, who lying upon his dying bed, desired a nobleman then with him to tell the king that his old master, Buchanan, was going to a place where few kings come. "Kings are as rare meat in heaven as venison is in poor men's kitchens," says the Dutch proverb. And how few among the *wise* can you find who are wise for heaven, who are wise for their souls, who are wise for eternity! And how few among the *learned*, can you find who have learned Christ, and learned their own hearts, and learned to deny themselves, and learned to save their own souls! By all which it is most evident that few are holy, and that few shall be happy. But,

2. Secondly, and more particularly—Is it so that real holiness is the only way to happiness—and that without holiness here, no man shall ever come to a blessed vision or fruition of God hereafter? Then this may serve to convince several sorts of people of their woeful and miserable conditions. As,

(1.) First, All profane people, who give up themselves to wickedness, who wallow in all ungodliness, and delight themselves in all manner of filthiness, who commit wickedness with greediness; who draw iniquity and sin with cords of vanity; who weary themselves to commit iniquity; who are so desperately set upon wickedness, that neither the rod of God, the lashes and checks of their own consciences, nor the flashes of hell upon their souls—can stop them; who are resolved that they will gratify their lusts, though they damn their souls; and who will live wickedly, though they perish eternally; who by custom in sin have destroyed all conscience of sin, and contracted such desperate hardness upon their own hearts, as neither God's smiles nor frowns, promises nor threatenings, life nor death, heaven nor hell, ministry nor misery, miracle nor mercy—can possibly hinder them. These are grown from evil—to be very evil; from very evil, to be stark evil; these

souls are sadly abandoned by God, and woefully blinded by Satan, and fully ripened for ruin. [Job 21:14; 2 Pet. 2:20-22; Isaiah 66:3; Eph. 4:19; Isaiah 5:19; Jer. 9:5.]

Now if without holiness no man shall see the Lord, what will become of all profane wretches, who are so far from being holy, that they fall short of common honesty? Certainly God will shut the gates of glory upon such workers of iniquity. "All will be damned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness." 2 Thessalonians 2:12. Such profane Esaus shall never be blessed with a sight of God in glory, Mat. 7:22. **A wicked man is a sin-lover; he is a sin-maker, he lives in sin upon choice;** the Hebrew word that is commonly used for a wicked man, properly signifies a laborious sinner, a practitioner in sin, Psalm 11:5; 1 John 3:8. Now such as these are, God will have nothing to do with: Job 8:20, "Behold God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evildoers;" or rather as the Hebrew denotes, "he will not take the ungodly by the hand," that is, he will not have any fellowship, any society, any familiarity with the ungodly. The holy God will not so much as take an unholy soul by the hand; he will not in the least countenance him nor respect him; he will not welcome him nor entertain him, nor show the least favor to him. Now certainly if God will not take the wicked by the hand, he will never take them into heaven, he will never take them into his bosom. God will have no commerce nor communion with those to whom he will not so much as lend a hand. God will wash his hands of them forever—to whom he will not give a hand. Which made Augustine say, that "he would not be a wicked man one half-hour for all the world, because he might die in that half-hour." God will wash his hands of every man who lives and dies a wicked man, Mat. 25:11-12. **The hearts and ways of wicked men are full of hells; and therefore to fill heaven with such, would be to fill heaven with hells.**

(2.) Secondly, This truth may serve to convince those who are scoffers and mockers at holiness, of their woeful and miserable estate. 2 Pet. 3:3; Jude 18. Holiness is so high and so

noble a thing, that men should rather honor it than deride it—reverence it than reproach it; they should rather set a crown of glory than a crown of thorns upon the head of it. Holiness is the glorious image of God fairly stamped upon the soul; and to deride holiness is to deride God himself. God takes all the affronts which are done to his image—as done to himself; and this scoffers shall know at last to their eternal woe.

If it was such a heinous crime in Tiberius' days, to carry the image of Augustus upon a ring or coin into any sordid place; ah, how heinous a crime is it then to cast dirt and filth, scorn and reproach upon holiness, which is the image of the invisible God! The despite and contempt that is done to the image or coin of a prince is done to the prince himself, and accordingly he will revenge it.

In old Rome there were near as many statues as there were living people, and some were made of gold, some of silver, some of brass, some of ivory, and some of polished marble; and there was an earl appointed whose office it was continually to walk up and down in the night, attended with many soldiers, to see that no one harmed the statues which were set up in the city; and if any such were found that had harmed any of the statues, they were put to death. Holiness is the statue of God, and such as shall dare to deface it and wrong it—God will destroy.

The old world scoffed and scorned at righteousness—and God sweeps them away with a flood. Ham mocked and scoffed at righteous Noah—and what did he get by it, but a curse? Ishmael scoffed at holy Isaac—and what did he get by his scoffing and mocking, but ejection out of Abraham's family? And what became of those forty-two young scoffers that scoffed and mocked at holy Elisha? Were they not cursed in the name of the Lord, and torn in pieces by two she-bears which were more fierce and cruel than others? The Jews were given up to scoffing and mocking of the messengers of the Lord, until there was no remedy: until old and young were destroyed by the sword of the Chaldeans; until their

temple and city were burned and sacked, and thirty of them sold for a penny, etc., and those who escaped the sword were captivated and enslaved. Sennacherib scoffed and mocked at the virgin daughter of Zion—but his scoffs resulted in the destruction of his army by the hand of an angel, and in his own destruction by the hands of his two sons. [Gen. 9:22, 25, and 21:9, 15. The apostle interprets Ishmael's mocking to be persecution. Gal. 4:27; 2 Kings 2:23, 24; 2 Chron. 30:10, and 36:15, 21; 2 Kings 19:20, seq.]

Julian, the emperor, was a great mocker and scoffer at the Christians—but God struck him with an arrow from heaven, which made him cry out "You Galilean, [meaning our Lord Jesus,] have overcome me!" Felix, for one malicious scoff, did nothing day and night but vomit blood, until his unhappy soul was separated from his wretched body. Lucian, for barking against true religion as a dog, was by the just judgments of God devoured of dogs. History tells us of some scoffers that God has stricken with madness, others with blindness, others with loathsome diseases, and some God has stricken dead, and others he has left to be their own executioners. Scoffing at holiness is a capital sin—and therefore no wonder if God executes upon scoffers, capital judgments. **Mockers and scoffers are the worst of sinners.**

Among the three sorts of sinners that David mentions, *scorners* have the chair—the chair of pestilence, as the Septuagint translates it. Scorners are the pests of mankind. The eye of the scorner is blinded; the heart of the scorner is hardened; the judgment of the scorner is perverted; the will of the scorner is enthralled, and the conscience of the scorner is seared, and this makes the scorner fall mad upon scoffing at holy men and holy things. Look! as they are the worst of servants that will scoff and mock a child in the family, because he is his father's picture—though they take wages of his father, and live by his father—so they are the worst of sinners who scoff at holiness, which is the very picture of God, though they live by him and cannot live without him. Yet this world is full of such monsters, who count it a grace to disgrace holiness, and to laden holy ones with all the

names of scorn and contempt that they can invent, or that Satan can help them to. "These are your *holy brethren*, these are *fanatics*, these are your *holy sect*, these are your *pure souls*, these are your *strict precisians*, these are the *saints*, these are the *brotherhood*." Such scoffing is devised by the devil himself to scoff and mock men out of their holiness.

It has been the common portion of men most eminent in grace and holiness—to be most scoffed and scorned in all ages, Job 17:2; Neh. 4:1; Isaiah 28:22; Luke 18:32. Witness Noah, Isaac, and Elisha just now cited, and witness Job, chapter 21:3, "Bear with me while I speak; then after I have spoken, you may continue mocking;" chapter 12:4, "I am a laughingstock to my friends, by calling on God, who answers me. The righteous and upright man is a laughingstock." Just so, David, Psalm 35:16, "They mock me with the worst kind of profanity, and they snarl at me." Psalm 44:14, "You make us a joke among the nations, a laughingstock among the peoples." Psalm 79:4, "We have become an object of reproach to our neighbors, a source of mockery and ridicule to those around us." Psalm 109:25, "I have become an object of ridicule to my accusers; when they see me, they shake their heads in scorn." Just so, Jeremiah, chapter 20:7, "I am in derision daily, everyone mocks me." Just so, Paul, Acts 17:18, "What will this babbler say?" Just so, the apostles, Acts 2:13, "But others in the crowd were mocking—They're drunk, that's all!" Just so, those worthies of whom this world was not worthy, Heb. 11:36, "Others had trial of cruel mockings."

But, above all, how sadly, how frequently, yes, how fearfully was our Lord Jesus Christ scoffed and scorned by Herod and Pilate, and flouted by the rascally soldiers! but the vengeance of his Father overtook them all. [Mat. 26:68, and 27:29, 31; Luke 22:63, and 23:11; Mark 15:31. Yes, the philosophers called Christ a magician, and affirmed that he did all by necromancy.] And in the primitive times, as Tertullian observes, the saints were called herds of donkeys, vile fellows, the disciples of a crucified man, Galileans, Nazarites, eaters of men's flesh, and drinkers of men's blood. The heathens painted

the God of the Christians with an donkey's head, and a book in his hand; to signify that though the Christians pretended to knowledge—yet they were a company of silly ignorant donkeys. The libertines of old have cast much scorn and contempt upon all the apostles: they call Matthew a usurer, Peter an apostate, Luke a paltry physician, Paul a broken vessel, and John a foolish young man, etc., by way of scorn and contempt. The godly Cyprian was called Coprian, *one that gathers up dung*; and so Luther, Calvin, and almost everyone that has attained to any eminency in holiness, they have been commonly accounted as the offscouring and refuse among the people, 1 Cor. 4:13-14; Lam. 2:15-16, and 4:2.

Now certainly if holiness be the only way to happiness, etc., then such as are scorers and scoffers at holiness are out of the very way to happiness. And how such are likely to come to heaven, who scorn the very path that leads to heaven—I shall leave you to judge. If the ravens of the valley shall pick out his eyes, who mocks his father, and the young eagles eat out his eyes, who despises the instruction of his mother, as Solomon speaks, then of how much more severe a punishment are they guilty of, who mock and scoff at holiness, which is the very image, picture, and glory of God himself! [Proverbs 30:17. The first thing that eagles do when they have found a carcass, is to pick out its eyes.]

Holiness is so near akin to God, that no man can deride holiness—but he derides God himself. As he who "mocks the poor, derides him who made him," Proverbs 17:5, so he who mocks holy ones derides that God that made them holy. And will God take this at the scorer's hands? No, he will retaliate; he loves to retaliate scorn upon the scorer: Proverbs 3:34, "Surely he scorns the scorers!" God will pay back scorers in their own coin; scorers shall be sure to have scorning enough. God so scorns the people and prayers of scorers, that he will have nothing to do with them, Proverbs 1:24-33; Psalm 2:4; Isaiah 37:36. The angels so scorn scorers, that instead of being a life-guard to them, they stand ready engaged to execute the vengeance of God upon them. And saints are so far to scorn them, by

a divine precept, as not to reprove them: Proverbs 9:8, "Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate you." Yes, God in his just judgments will make scorners to be an abomination to all sorts of men. Proverbs 24:9, "The scorner is an abomination to men;" that is, to all sorts of men. The scorner is an abomination not only to holy men—but also to all civil and moral honest men. As the scorner's tongue and hand is against every man—so every man's tongue and hand shall be against him. Now if the scorners of men be abominable to men, then much more are the scorners of holiness abominable to God, and therefore certainly such shall be shut out from a glorious fruition of God.

3. Thirdly, If real holiness be the only way to happiness, and that if men are not holy on earth, they shall never come to a blessed vision or fruition of God in heaven; then, by way of conviction, this looks sourly and sadly upon all FORMALISTS who have only a form, a show, a profession of holiness—but have nothing of the reality, spirit, life, or power of holiness in them. "Having a form of godliness but denying its power." 2 Timothy 3:5. They have a face, a cloak, a mask, a show of godliness—but they have nothing of the pith, sap, life, or marrow of godliness. Their devotion, their godliness, lies in good words, and in fair shows, and in religious gestures, Isaiah 58:1-3, and Zech. 7:4-6. If you hearken to their voice, if you look upon their eyes, if you observe the motion of their hands, and the bowing of their knees, and the shaking of their heads, etc., you would think that they were men of much religion, of much godliness; but if you look into their hearts and lives, you will find them to be the greatest renouncers and deniers of religion and godliness in the world. They have the semblance of godliness—but not the substance; they have the lineaments of godliness—but not the life; they have the face of godliness—but not the heart; they have the form, the shadow of godliness—but not the power. They are like a well-drawn picture, which has all the lineaments of a man—but lacks life, lacks a principle of motion and operation. Mark—

1. The form of godliness is common—but the power of godliness is rare.
2. The form of godliness is cheap—but the power of godliness is dear.
3. The form of godliness is easy—but the power of godliness is difficult.
4. The form of godliness is credited by the world—but the power of godliness is a reproach.
5. The form of godliness is pleasurable and delightful—but the power of godliness is displeasing and undelightful to the ignoble part of a Christian.
6. The form of godliness exists with secret and with open wickedness—as you see in Saul, Jehu, Judas, Simon Magus, Demas, and the Scribes and Pharisees—but the power of godliness will not. The power of godliness lays the axe to the very root of all sin, both secret and open. Rachel was very fair and beautiful to the eye—but she was barren—and that marred all. Just so, the formalist, he is a very fair and beautiful professor to the eye—but he is barren Godwards, and Christwards, and heavenwards; he is fruitless, sapless, and lifeless—and that mars all.

The formalist takes up a form of godliness—

1. To quiet his conscience;
2. To get himself a name;
3. To cloak over his sins;
4. To advance his worldly interest;

5. To avoid opposition and persecution from the world, the flesh, and the devil;

6. And to conform to old customs.

What would such formalists do in heaven? A formal Christian is but a figure, a flaunt, a flourish, a flash—and all he does is but the shadow of what he should do. A formalist is more light than life, more notion than motion, more head than heart, more outside than inside, more leaves than fruit, more shadow than substance. A formalist is a blazing comet, a painted tomb, a stage-player, a white devil, or a devil in an angel's garb! **What would such devils do in heaven?** Certainly if without real holiness no man shall see the Lord, then the formalist, who has only the shape, the show, the form of godliness—but nothing of the reality and power of it, shall never be blessed with such a sight of heaven. A formalist is neither hot nor cold—he is lukewarm. Of all sorts of sinners he is the worst; and God so loathes him, that he is resolved he will rid his stomach of him: Rev. 3:16, "So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of My mouth." Certainly heaven is too holy a place to lick up that filth which God has vomited up. Lukewarm water cannot be so loathsome to our stomachs as a formalist is to God's. God is never so relieved, as when he has vomited up and vomited out the formal Christian.

I have read of Anastasius the emperor, how God shot him to death with a thunderbolt because of his lukewarmness and formality. God has a thunderbolt for every formalist, by which he will at last certainly strike them down to the lowest hell. A formalist is too loathsome a thing, too heavy a burden, for heaven to bear.

4. Fourthly, If real holiness be the only way to happiness; if men must be holy on earth, or else they shall never see the face of God in heaven; then this truth, by way of conviction, looks sourly and sadly upon all those who please and satisfy themselves with mere civility and common morality;

who are good *negative* Christians, who bless themselves that they are not swearers, nor drunkards, nor extortioners, nor adulterers, etc.; they pay every man his own, they are just and righteous in their dealings; no man can say they were wronged by them; their behavior is civil, lovely, harmless, and blameless. [Luke 18:10-14; Mat. 5:21, and 19:20-22.]

"They make a fair show in the flesh," Gal. 6:12, or as the Greek has it, they set a good face on it. But as good a face as they set on it, I must tell them that **civility is not sanctity; civility rested in is but a beautiful abomination—a smooth way to hell and destruction.** I may truly say of all civil men—who are destitute of that real holiness that leads to happiness—what Erasmus said of Seneca: If you look upon him as a heathen, then he seems to write as if he were a Christian; but if you look upon him as a Christian, then he seems to write as a heathen. Just so, if you look upon many civil, moral men's lives, you will find them so full of sincerity, equity, righteousness, sweetness, and justice, that you will be ready to say, Sure these are holy men. But then do but observe how unacquainted they are with God, with Christ, with the Scripture, with the way and working of the Spirit, with the filthiness of sin, with the depths and devices of Satan, with their own hearts, with the new birth, and with the great concerns of eternity, and you will judge them to be mere heathens, to be men void of all principles of grace and holiness, and to be utter strangers to union and communion with Christ, and to the more secret and inward operations and workings of the Spirit of Christ, and to the most spiritual duties and services which are commanded by Christ.

Civility is very often the nurse of impiety, the mother of flattery, and an enemy to real sanctity. A high conceit of civility keeps many a man from looking after inward and outward purity. Morality proves to many men a bond of iniquity. [Mat. 5:19, 20; Acts 7:54, 13:50, and 17:17-18; Romans 8:7.] There are those who are so blinded with the fair shows of civility, that they can neither see the necessity nor beauty of sanctity; there are those who now bless

themselves in their common morality, whom at last God will scorn and cast off for lack of real holiness and purity, Mat. 25:3, 11-12.

Many of the heathen were so famous for justice and uprightness, for equity, fidelity, and sobriety, for civility and morality—that it would put many professors to the blush to read what is written of them! And yet there was such a tincture of popular applause, of pride and vainglory, of hypocrisy and self-flattery, upon their civility and morality, that, for anything we can find in Scripture to the contrary, there is cause to fear that they shall be miserable to all eternity: for all their civility and morality, they were left in a *damnable*, I will not say in a *darned*, condition.

He who rises to no higher pitch than civility and morality shall never have communion with God in glory. Naaman was a great man—*but he was a leper*, 2 Kings 5:1; Naaman was an honorable man—but a leper; Naaman was a mighty man—*but he was a leper*; Naaman was a victorious man—*but he was a leper*; Naaman was in high favor and esteem with his prince—*but he was a leper*. This *but he was a leper* stained all his honor, and was a blot upon all his greatness and glory, both at court and in the field, both in the city and in the country. Just so, it is a stain, a blot upon the most moral man in the world to say, he is a very civil honest man—but Christless; he is a very just man—but graceless; he is a man of much moral righteousness—but he has not a grain of real holiness, etc. This *but* is a fly in the box of ointment, that spoils all.

Well, sirs, remember this, though the moral man is good for many things—yet he is not good enough to go to heaven, he is not good enough to be made glorious, Mat. 5:20. Certainly there is nothing in all the world, below real sanctity, which will ever bring a man to the possession of glory. And though it may grieve us—to speak after the manner of men—to see sweet natures, to see many moral honest men, take many a weary step towards heaven, and to come near to heaven, and to bid fair for heaven—and yet after all to fall short of heaven; yet it will be no way grievous to a holy God to turn such

sweet natures into hell, Psalm 9:17. **Morality is not sufficient to keep a man out of eternal misery; all it can do is to help a man to one of the best rooms and easiest beds which hell affords.** For, look, as the moral man's sins are not so great as others, so his punishments shall not be so great as others. This is all the comfort that can be afforded to a moral man, that he shall have a cooler hell than others have: but this is but cold comfort. Morality without piety is as a body without a soul. Will God ever accept of such a stinking sacrifice? Surely not!

"The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men--robbers, evildoers, adulterers--or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Luke 18:11-14

5. Fifthly, If real holiness be the only way to happiness; if men must be holy on earth, or else they shall never come to a fruition of God in heaven; then this truth, by way of conviction, looks sourly and sadly upon all DOUBLE-MINDED men, who divide their hearts between God and mammon, Mat. 6:19. These halt between God and Baal, 1 Kings 18:21; and divide their souls between heaven and earth, between piety and their lusts, Zeph. 1:5. They are like the Samaritans, who both worshiped the Lord, and the Assyrians' idols too, 2 Kings 17:32-33, and 18:11. A double-minded man is a monster; he has two tongues, two minds, and two souls: he has a tongue for God, and a tongue for the world too; he looks up to God, and says, "Certainly you are mine!" He looks down upon the world, and says, "Surely I am yours!" He has a mind to be religious, and a mind to save his own stake in the world too. [James 1:8. A double-souled man, Mat. 19:16, 26.]

He has a soul reaching after the happiness of another world: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his," says Balaam, Num. 23:10; and he has a soul strongly reaching after this evil world too, as if heaven and happiness were enrap't up in it. As you may see in the same person, "he loved the wages of unrighteousness:" he loved it as his portion, he loved it as his life, he loved it as his happiness, he loved it as his all; he loved it as his soul, yes, he loved it above his own soul—for he damned his soul to gain it! [Callenuceus tells us of a nobleman of Naples, who was accustomed profanely to say that he had two souls in his body, one for God, and another for whoever would buy it.] It is true, when he was under a divine restraint, he professed that he would not curse the people of God for a house full of gold; but when he was free from under that restraint, his heart was so set upon the unrighteous reward, that he would have cursed them for a handful of gold. The double-minded man, as the Romans paint Erasmus, hangs between heaven and earth; he is neither fit to go to heaven, nor yet worthy to live on earth. If Meroz was to be certainly cursed, to be bitterly cursed, to be universally cursed—as the Hebrew phrase, "with cursing, curse Meroz," imports, in Judges 5:23—for standing double-minded when they should have come forth to the help of the Lord; do you think that double-minded man in religion shall be blessed? Do you think that ever such shall go to heaven, who are indifferent whether they go to heaven or not? or that ever such shall be happy, who are indifferent whether they are holy or not? or that ever such shall see the face of Christ with joy, who are indifferent whether they have an interest in Christ or not? or that ever such shall be admitted into the kingdom of glory, who are indifferent whether they ever have any entrance into the kingdom of grace or not? Certainly heaven is too holy to hold any such indifferent, irresolute, double-minded men. [Double-minded men are traitors; they betray Christ for the world's sake, and the world for Christ's sake; and themselves for sin and Satan's sake. And who will not refuse and scorn traitors?]

God will refuse them, because he loathes halting; angels will refuse them, because they loathe halving; godly men will refuse them,

because they loathe lukewarmness; and bad men will refuse them, because they pretend to goodness, though they live in wickedness. Double-minded men in religion, are ignominious disgracers both of the name and profession of Christians; they are prodigious traitors to the crown of heaven; they are the greatest enemies to the power of godliness; they are the very offspring of Judas; and in the day of account it will be found that it would have been good for them that they had never been born.

Neutrality is the spiritual adultery of the heart. Double-minded men are spiritual harlots; they have their hearts divided between God and mammon, between Christ and other lovers. Now harlots in ancient time were to be burnt, Gen. 38:24. Certainly hell is for the double-minded man—and the double-minded man for hell. God will be as severe, yes, more severe, in punishing, spiritual whoredom, than ever men have been in punishing bodily whoredom. God looks upon every double-minded man as in arms against him: Mat. 12:30, "He who is not with me, is against me;" and, therefore, martial law shall be executed upon them. God will blot out their names, and hang them up as monuments of his justice and vengeance.

Sirs, do not deceive your own souls; no man was ever yet carried to glory in the chariot of neutrality or mediocrity. He who is not throughout holy—is not really holy; and he who is not really holy—can never be truly happy. It is only thorough holiness which entitles a man to everlasting happiness, 1 Pet. 1:15; 2 Pet. 3:11. The true mother would not have the child divided; she would have all or none; you must be for all holiness, or for none. Double-minded men divide and cut those things asunder, which God has closely joined together; but at last God will suit their punishment to their sin, and cut them asunder, Mat. 24:51, and Luke 12:46. Now the double-minded man chooses here a piece, and there a piece; and at last God will cut him in pieces, as Samuel did Agag, 1 Sam. 15:33. Well, double-minded man—you divide one command from another, one duty from another, one promise from another, one threatening from another, one ordinance from another, and one way of God from another. But

the day is a-coming wherein God will divide your souls from your bodies, and both from himself, his Son, his saints, and his glory forever!

6. Sixthly, If real holiness be the only way to happiness; if men must be holy on earth, or they shall never come to a fruition of God in heaven; then this truth, by way of conviction, looks sourly and sadly upon all HYPOCRITES, who have only a pretend holiness, a feigned holiness, a counterfeit holiness. The apostle speaks of a true holiness, Eph. 4:24—or holiness of truth, as the Greek reads it—in opposition to that feigned and counterfeit holiness that is in the world. Pretended holiness is most opposite to the holiness of God. Hypocritical holiness is the greatest unholiness; and as God has, so certainly God will still suit the punishment to the sin. If it was death in the law of Moses, to counterfeit that ceremonial and figurative ointment, Exod. 30:32-33; what shall it then be to counterfeit the spirit of life and holiness?

Dissembled sanctity is double iniquity. He who professes piety without being pious, and godliness without being godly; he who makes counterfeit holiness a cloak to impiety, and a midwife to iniquity; he who is a Jacob without—and an Esau within, a David without—and a Saul within, a Peter without—and a Judas within, a saint without—and a Satan within, an angel without—and a devil within, is ripened for the worst of torments! Mat. 24:51, "He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth!" Hypocrites are the freeholders of hell; all other sinners do but hold under them. None have so large a portion in hell as hypocrites have. No man at last will be found so miserable as he who has the name of a saint *upon* him—but not the divine nature *in* him; who has a profession of holiness upon him—but no principles of holiness in him; who has a form of godliness—but not the power; who can cry up godliness, and court godliness—but in practice denies it; who is a Jew outwardly—but an atheist, a pagan, a devil inwardly.

Who had a greater name for holiness, and who made a greater show of holiness, and who did more despise and insult over men for the lack of holiness—than the Scribes and Pharisees? And who so miserable now—as they? Mat. 23:14, "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers; therefore you shall receive the greater damnation." Pretended holiness will double-damn souls at last. ["There is not a more cruel creature, more impatient and vindictive, than a hypocrite," said he who had the experience of it in his own person.]

Sirs, do not deceive your own souls. A painted *sword* shall as soon defend a man, and a painted *mint* shall as soon enrich a man, and a painted *fire* shall as soon warm a man, and a painted *friend* shall as soon counsel a man, and a painted *horse* shall as soon carry a man, and a painted *feast* shall as soon satisfy a man, and a painted *house* shall as soon shelter a man—as a **painted holiness** shall save a man! He who now thinks to put off God with a painted holiness, shall not fare so well at last—as to be put off with a painted happiness. The lowest, the hottest, and the darkest habitation in hell will be his portion—whose religion lies all in shows and shadows.

Well, spiritual counterfeits, remember this—it will not be long before Christ will unmask you, before he will uncloak you, before he will disrobe you, before he will take off your masks, your cloaks, and turn your rotten insides outward, to your eternal shame and reproach before all the world. Counterfeit diamonds may sparkle and glisten, and make a great show for a time—but their luster will soon wear off. Nothing counterfeit will last long.

Maud, mother to King Henry the Second, being besieged in Winchester Castle, pretended herself to be dead, and so was carried out in a coffin, whereby she escaped; at another time, being besieged at Oxford in a cold winter, by wearing white apparel she got away in the snow undiscovered; but at last vengeance did overtake her. Just so, though hypocrites may for a time seem to be dead to sin, and

dead to the world, though they may clothe themselves with a snow-like purity, and with the white satin of pretend sanctity—yet God at last will unmask and uncloak them, and vengeance will overtake them, Job 17:8, and 36:13; Isaiah 33:14. Hypocrites are like blazing stars, which, so long as they are fed with vapors, shine as if they were fixed stars; but let the vapors dry up, and presently they vanish and disappear. As the *joy* of the hypocrite, so the *goodness* of the hypocrite—is but for a moment; it is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew. A hypocrite is a mere comet, a flaunt, a flash. Principles of holiness are lasting—but hypocrisy makes a man only constant in inconstancy, Job 20:5; Hosea 6:4.

7. Seventhly, If real holiness be the only way to happiness; if men must be holy on earth, or they shall never come to a fruition of God in heaven; then this truth, by way of conviction, looks sourly and sadly upon such who please and bless themselves with common gifts and common grace, with a gift of knowledge, a gift of faith, a gift of prayer, a gift of utterance, a gift of memory, etc., when they have nothing of real holiness in them. Like those in Mat. 7:22-23, who had great gifts—but were so far from real sanctity, that they were workers of iniquity; they had a flood of gifts—but not a drop of grace; they had many gifts—but not one saving grace: they could work miracles—but that miracle of holiness being not wrought in them, Christ takes an everlasting farewell of them, "Depart from me, you workers of iniquity."

Just so, those in Heb. 6 had enlightened heads; but where was their humbleness and holiness of heart? They had silver tongues; but where was their sanctified souls? They had some tastes and relishes of heaven's glory; but where was their inward and outward purity? Notwithstanding all their extraordinary gifts of speaking with tongues, casting out of devils, and opening of prophecies—yet were they not renewed, regenerated, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. [As nurses' milk is of use to others—but of none to themselves.] Their gifts might be of singular use to the enlightening, quickening,

edifying, comforting, and encouraging of others—and yet never have any influence upon their own hearts—to the changing, renewing, and sanctifying of them. Men of greatest gifts are not always men of greatest holiness. The Scribes and Pharisees, Judas, Demas, Balaam, and Simon Magus, were men of great gifts—and yet they had no real holiness. They had the ninety-nine gifts which Christ looks not after—but lacked the one, namely, real holiness, which with Christ is all in all. **The devil has greater gifts than any man on earth—and yet he is a devil still.** Gifts without holiness will but make a man twice told the child of hell, Mat. 23:15. [Augustine trembled when he considered the extraordinary gifts and abilities which were in his unsaved child, to think what God meant in giving such rare gifts to such an impure creature.] **The more of gifts here, without holiness--the more of hell hereafter.**

The greatest scholars have often proved the greatest sinners, the stoutest opposers, and the worst of persecutors. There are none so wicked as he who is wise—and yet wicked. The highest gifts many times prove but the smoothest paths to the chambers of hell. As the richer the ship is laden with bars of silver and gold—the deeper it sinks; just so, the richer the soul is laden with silver parts and golden gifts—and yet not balanced with real holiness, the deeper it sinks under wrath and misery. And no wonder, for—

1. Gifts do but tickle the ear—they do not cleanse the heart.
2. They do but stir the affections—they do not kill corruptions.
3. They are but ornaments to a man's profession—they have no saving influence upon a man's life. They tempt a man to take up with the world—but they never help a man to overcome the world.
4. They make a man wise to deceive, and wise to delude both himself and others. Rare accomplishments are many times

turned into beautiful ornaments to adorn the devil and error with.

5. The gifted man cares not who is most holy—but only that he may be most honored. He cares not who is highest in favor with God—but only that he may be highest in favor with men. He cares not who is most serviceable—but only that he may be most acceptable. He cares not who gets most of the eternal world—but only that he may have most of this world. And what would such a one do in heaven? Gifts differ as much from real holiness, as an angel in heaven differs from a devil in hell.

6. Gifts makes a man work for life—but holiness makes a man work from life, Zech. 7:5-6.

7. Gifts work a man to set up for himself, and to deal and trade for himself—but holiness works a man to deal for God, and to trade for God and his glory, Romans 14:6-8.

8. Gifts are concerned with outward civilities and formalities—but holiness is concerned with the Holy One, Hab. 1:12.

9. Gifts only *restrains* the soul—but grace *renews* and *changes* the soul.

10. Gifts *puffs up* the soul—but holiness *humbles* the soul.

11. Gifts makes a man beautiful, like Rachel—but holiness makes a man fruitful, like Leah.

12. Gifts makes a man most studious and laborious about mending and reforming other men's hearts and lives—but holiness makes a man most studious and industrious in mending and reforming his own heart and life.

13. Gifts makes all glorious without—but holiness makes all glorious within.

14. Gifts makes a good head—but holiness makes a good heart.
15. Gifts envies, lessens, darkens, obscures, and disparages the excellencies of others; but holiness makes a man rejoice in every sun which outshines its own, John 4:14.
16. Gifts are fading and withering—but holiness is an everlasting spring that can never be drawn dry, 1 John 3:9.
17. Gifts draw from God—but holiness draws to God, 1 Cor, 13:1, 6.

Though men of gifts may bid fair for heaven, yes, come so near as to hear the music of heaven—yet without holiness they shall never enter into heaven. When night comes, the father will only take his own child into his house, and though another child which may be much like his own should attempt to come in—yet the father will keep him out, and wish him to go to his own home. Just so, when the night of death comes, the heavenly Father will only take into the family of heaven his own child, namely, the child of holiness; but now if the child of gifts, which is so like the child of holiness, should press hard upon God to come in, as that child of gifts, Baalam, did, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his," Num. 23:10, God will answer him, "No!" He will say to him, as he did to that child of gifts, Judas, "Go to your own place!" Acts 1:25; Mat. 8:12.

In the night of death and judgment, the *children of the kingdom* (that is, of children of the *church*) shall be cast out. Now the children of the kingdom are children of gifts—and yet there will come a day when these children shall be cast out. As Abraham put off the sons of the concubines with gifts—but entailed the inheritance upon Isaac, Gen. 25:6, etc.; so God puts off many men now with gifts—but he entails the heavenly inheritance upon holiness: Psalm 24:3-4, "Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in His holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not

set his mind on vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." Heaven is for that man, and that man is for heaven, who has clean hands and a pure heart, whose holy life is attended with heart purification. A pure heart is better than a golden head; a heart full of holy affections is infinitely beyond a head full of curious notions. There is no jewel, there is no anointing compared to that of holiness. He who has that has all, and he who lacks that has nothing at all. But,

8. Eighthly and lastly, If real holiness be the only way to happiness; if men must be holy on earth, or they shall never come to a blessed fruition of God in heaven; then, by way of conviction, let me say that this truth looks very sourly and angrily upon those who are so far from being holy themselves, that they cannot endure holiness in those who are around them. Ah, how many unholy people are there—who cannot endure holiness in their ministers! And how many unholy husbands are there—who cannot endure holiness in their wives! And how many unholy parents are there—who cannot endure holiness in their children! And how many unholy masters are there—who cannot endure holiness in their servants! The panther, say some, when she cannot come at the man, she rends and tears his picture in pieces; just so, many unholy husbands, unholy fathers, and unholy masters, when they cannot rend and tear their relations in pieces, ah, how do they do their best to rend and tear the image of God upon them, namely, holiness, in pieces! These forlorn souls will not be holy themselves, nor allow others to be holy; they will neither go to heaven themselves, nor allow others to go there who are strongly biased that way, Mat. 23:14-15; 2 Sam. 6:16, 20.

Some despise their gracious relations, because they are holy. Sometimes you shall hear them speak at such a rate as this: "Well, our relations are wise and witty—but so holy; they are very knowing and thriving—but so precise; they have good parts and sweet natures—but they are so strict; they are so perfect, that they will not endure swearing, a lie, etc., and therefore I cannot endure them." These are that man who was so fearfully idle—that his sides would ache to see

another work. Just so, these are so fearfully wicked, that it makes their sides, their heads, their very hearts ache—to see others holy. How far these are in their actings below heathens, you may see in Romans 16:10-11. Aristobulus and Narcissus, who are spoken of in this scripture, were both heathens—and yet they had in their families those who were in the Lord, those who were gracious, etc. Heathens were so sincere, that they would not despise that holiness in others, which they lacked in themselves; they were so noble, that they would give holiness house-room, though they knew not how to give it heart-room. Just so, Potiphar, though he was a heathen—yet he gave holy Joseph both house-room and heart-room, Gen. 39:1-4. These, and several other heathens of the like spirit with them, will one day rise in judgment against many in these days which are so far fallen out with holiness, as that they will not endure it under the roof of their houses, yes, as that they make it the greatest matter of scorn and derision.

Like those in Lam. 2:15-16, "All who pass by jeer at you. They scoff and insult Jerusalem, saying—Is this the city called 'Most Beautiful in All the World' and 'Joy of All the Earth'? All your enemies deride you. They scoff and grind their teeth and say—We have destroyed her at last! Long have we awaited this day, and it is finally here!" etc. Ah, how many such monsters are there in these days, who express their derision, disdain, and contempt of holiness and holy people, by all the scornful gestures, postures, and expressions imaginable; who clap their hands, who hiss, who wag their head, who gnash their teeth, and who say, "Lo, these are your saints, these are your holy ones, your perfect ones, your beautiful ones!"

It is very sad to lack holiness—but it is saddest of all to deride holiness, to disdain holiness. Of this evil spirit Salvian complained in his time, "What madness is this—that if a man is godly, he is despised as if he were evil! If he is evil, he is honored as if he were good!" And as great cause have we to complain of the prevalence of the same evil spirit in our times. If the wife is holy, how is she despised by her unholy husband as if she were wicked! 1 Cor. 7:16. If

she is wicked, how is she honored as if she were holy! Just so, if the child is gracious, how is he disdained as if he were graceless! if he be graceless, how is he admired as if he were gracious! Just so, if a servant be godly, how is he scorned as if he were godless! if he be godless, how is he applauded as if he were godly! Certainly God will never endure such to stand in his sight—who cannot endure the sight of holiness, Psalm 1:5. Doubtless God will never give them any room in heaven, who will not so much as give holiness a little house-room, I say not heart-room, here. He who now despises and disdains holiness in others, shall at last be eternally despised and disdained for lack of holiness himself.

Sixteen Marks of a Holy Person

Is it so, that real holiness is the only way to happiness? Must men be holy on earth, or else they shall never come to a blessed vision or fruition of God in heaven? Oh then, what cause has everyone to try and examine whether he has this real holiness, without which there is no happiness! Now because this is a point of great importance, and a mistake here may undo a man forever; and considering the great averseness and backwardness of men's hearts to this noble and necessary work, I shall therefore in the first place propose **some considerations to provoke all your hearts to undertake in good earnest upon this great point of trial and examination.** Now to this purpose consider,

1. First, It is possible for you to know whether you have this real holiness or not. It is possible for you by the light of the Spirit, by the light of the word, and by the light of your own consciences, to see whether holiness, which is the image of God—is stamped upon your souls or not. Though it be impossible for you to climb up to heaven to search the records of glory, to see whether your name is written in the book of life—yet it is possible for you to go down into

the chambers of your own soul, to enter into the withdrawing-rooms of your own heart—and there to read what impressions of holiness are upon you. Though this work be hard and difficult—yet it is noble and possible; though the heart be deceitful and full of shifts—yet it is possible for a man to make such a particular, such a narrow, such a diligent, such a faithful, and such an impartial search into his own soul—as that he may certainly know whether he has that real holiness which is the pledge of immortal happiness or not; it is possible for him who has this jewel, this holiness, to know it, to find it, and in the beautiful face of holiness to read his own everlasting happiness.

I might call in the experiences of many precious saints—as Abraham, Noah, Jacob, David, Job, Paul, and others—to bear witness to this truth; but I suppose it is needless. What great and weighty, what high and hard, what hazardous and dangerous things do many soldiers, sailors, sick patients, and others, attempt and undertake, upon the mere account of a possibility! It is possible that the *soldier* may win the field; it is possible that the *mariner* may make a happy voyage; it is possible that the sick *patient* may recover; it is possible that he who strives for *mastery* may overcome, etc.

Now upon this very account, that it is possible, what will they not attempt and endeavor to try? And why then should not Christians, upon the account of a possibility, make a diligent search after that holiness which will at last enthrone the soul in everlasting happiness? Well, Christians, as a possibility of obtaining grace and mercy should bear up your hearts against despair; as a possibility of obtaining a pardon should keep up your hearts in a seeking and a waiting way; and as a possibility of salvation by Christ should be argument sufficient to work a soul to venture itself upon Christ; so a possibility of knowing whether you have this pearl of price, holiness, should work you to make a diligent search and inquiry after it. [Mark 10:27, 14:36, and 9:23; Luke 18:27.]

Let no man do more upon the account of a possibility for this world, than you will do upon the account of a possibility for the eternal world: let no man do more upon the account of a possibility for his body, than you will do upon the account of a possibility for your souls; let no man do more upon the account of a possibility for temporals, than you will do upon the account of a possibility for eternals. It is possible for you to know whether this babe of grace, holiness, be formed in your souls or not; and therefore search and inquire after it.

2. Secondly, Consider this, that it is a point of very great concern to you to know whether you have this real holiness or not. Your souls depend upon it, eternity depends upon it, your all depends upon it! An error here may make a man miserable forever. It is good for you to know the state of your *body*, the state of your family, the state of your *flock*—but it is of infinite more consequence for you to know the state of your own *soul*. No man lives so miserable, nor no man dies so sadly—as he who lives and dies a stranger to his own soul. It is good for you to have all accounts good between yourself and others—but it is far better to have all accounts good between God and your own soul. Ah, how many are there who are better known to others—than they are to themselves! and who are able to give a better account of their lands and lordships, of their treasures and trifles, yes; of their horses, hawks, and hounds—than they are of the state of their souls! [Luke 12:16-21, and 16:19, 26.]

Ah, how many are there who are very inquisitive to know things to come, to know what will be hereafter, to know whether they shall be great and rich in the world, Eccles. 7:10, to know whether they shall be prosperous and successful in their undertakings, to know whether they shall be crowned with length of days, or whether they shall be cut off in the flower of their age; to know the secret counsels of princes, and what will be the outcome of such and such mutations and revolutions that have happened among us; and yet are not at all inquisitive after the state of their souls, nor whether they have this

real holiness, without which there is no happiness! [Job 21:23-24; Isaiah 41:22-23, and 43:9-10.

Yet they never inquire what will become of them hereafter! They never inquire what state they shall enter upon after death, whether upon a state of eternal woe or a state of everlasting bliss! Of all acquaintances in this world, there is none compared to that of a man's being acquainted with the state of his own soul. A mistake about my outward condition may trouble me—but a mistake about my spiritual condition may damn me! There are many ways to make up my mistakes about temporals—but there is no way to make up my mistakes about eternals! If at last I shall be found to be mistaken in the great concernments of my soul—I am undone forever! [The heathens did admire that saying as an oracle, Know your own self.]

Well, sirs, you are in a state of *nature*—or in a state of *grace*; you are in a state of *darkness*—or in a state of *light*; you are in a state of *life*—or in a state of *death*; you are in a state of God's *love*—or in a state of God's *wrath*; you are either *sheep*—or *goats*; you are either *sons* of God—or *slaves* of Satan; you are either in the broad way to *destruction*—or in the narrow way of *salvation*. Therefore what can be of greater concern in this world to you than to know in which of these two spiritual estates you are in? How can you order aright your prayers, or your praises, or any religious services, until you come to know in which of these two spiritual estates you stand? —whether you are in a state of *nature* or in a state of *grace*, in a state of *sin* or in a state of *holiness*: for all religious duties must be ordered according to men's spiritual estates. If a man is in a state of nature, his work lies one way; if he is in a state of holiness, his work lies another way; by all which it is most evident that it very dearly concerns you to search and try whether you have this bird of paradise, holiness, in your bosoms or not. And for a close, let me say, that a mistake about your spiritual estate will at last be found not only unallowable and inexcusable—but very terrible and damnable.

3. Thirdly, Consider that a cordial willingness to enter heartily upon this work of trial, is a hopeful evidence of your real integrity and sanctity. Unsanctified souls hate the light; they had rather go to hell in the dark, than come to be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, John 3:20. As pure gold fears neither fire nor furnace, neither test nor touchstone, neither one balance nor another—so a pure heart, a sanctified soul, dares venture itself upon trial, yes, upon the very trial of God. For he knows that God never brings a pair of scales to *weigh* his graces—but only a touchstone to try the *truth* of his graces; he knows if his gold be true, though it be ever so little, it will pass for current with God. [Job 31:5-6; Psalm 26:2; 139:23-24; Mat. 12:20.] As bankrupts care not for casting up their accounts, because they know all is bad, very bad, stark bad with them; just so, unsanctified souls care not to come to the trial, to the test, because they know that all is bad, yes, worse than bad with them. They have no mind to cast up their spiritual estates, because at the foot of the account they must be forced to read their neck-verse, "Undone, undone, forever undone!"

And, therefore, as old deformed women cannot endure to look into the looking-glass, lest their wrinkles and deformity should be discovered; so unsanctified souls cannot endure to look into the mirror of the gospel, lest their deformities, impieties, and wickednesses should be discovered and detected. I have read of the elephant, how unwilling he is to go into the water—but when he is forced into it, he puddles it, lest by the clearness of the stream he should discern his own deformity; so unholy people are very unwilling to look into their own hearts, or into the clear streams of Scripture, lest their souls' deformity and ugliness should appear, to their own terror and amazement.

And therefore, as you would have a hopeful evidence of your integrity and sanctity, enter heartily upon this work of trial. For as it is a hopeful evidence that the client's cause is good—when he is ready and willing to enter upon a trial, and as it is a hopeful sign that a man's gold is true gold—when he is willing to bring it to the

touchstone, and that a man thrives—when he is willing to cast up his books; just so, it is a hopeful evidence that a Christian has real holiness—when he is ready and willing to bring his holiness to the test, to try whether it be true or not—when he is willing to cast up his books, that he may see what he is worth for the eternal world, Gal. 6:4-5.

4. Fourthly, Consider that there are very many who deceive themselves about their spiritual estates. It is the easiest thing in the world for a man to deceive himself, Job 15:34, and Proverbs 30:12. There are those who do but think that they stand, (1 Cor. 10:12,) and these at last come to fall from their seeming standing into a real hell—yes, from their highest standing into the lowest hell. There are many who think themselves to be something—when they are nothing, Gal. 6:3. There are many who have a form of godliness—but none of the power, 2 Tim. 3:8. There are many who have a name to live—but are dead, Rev. 3:1. There are many who are very confident of their integrity—and yet are full of horrible hypocrisy. There are many who carry the lamps of profession—who have no oil of grace in their hearts. There are many who take—a good nature for grace, civility for sanctity, and a garb of godliness for real holiness—yes, there are those who dare say that they excel others in holiness, when, in truth, they exceed most men in wickedness [Isaiah 9:17, 29:13; Jer. 7:4, 8-11; Rev. 3:16-18; Isaiah 65:2-5; Mat. 25.]

Yes, there are many now in hell who have had a great confidence of going to heaven. There are many that cry out with Agag, "Surely the bitterness of death is past," wrath is past, and hell is past, and damnation is past, where as vengeance is ready to fall on them, and hell stands gaping to devour them. The heart of man is full of self-love, full of self-flattery, and full of hypocrisy, and therefore many a man who is only a Jew outwardly, thinks himself to be a Jew inwardly, Romans 2:28-29. Many a man thinks himself to be as good a Christian as the best, and to be as happy as the best, and to be as fair for heaven as the best, until he comes to hear that tormenting word, "Depart, I know you not!"

As many are kept off from Christ by a conceit that they have him already—just so, many are kept off from holiness by a conceit that they have it already. And therefore it does very much concern you to make a diligent inquiry whether you have that holiness without which there is no happiness, or not. I have read of Plato, that when he walked in the streets, if he saw any disordered in speech, drunk, or otherwise out of frame, he would say to himself, "Am I such a one as this is? Am I such a swearer as this is? Am I such a drunkard as this is? Am I such a promiscuous person as this is? Am I such a riotous person as this?" etc. Just so, should every Christian say when he hears of any who think that they stand, "Am I such a one as this is?" When he sees one who thinks himself something when he is nothing, he should say, "Am I such a one as this is?" When he sees a man to have a mere form of godliness—but no power, he should say, "Am I such a one as this is?" When he hears of a man who has a name to live—but is spiritually dead, he should say, "Am I such a one as this is?" etc.

And when he hears or reads of one who is really holy, he should say, "Am I such a one as this is?" As you would not put a cheat upon your own souls, it highly concerns you to try whether you have real holiness or not. Look! as many young children catch many a fall out of a strong conceit of their abilities to go—just so, many a man, out of a strong conceit that he has holiness when he has none, catches many a fall in an eternal fall at last. The best way to prevent an everlasting miscarriage, is to make a privy search after holiness in your own heart.

5. Fifthly, Consider that there is a great deal of counterfeit grace and holiness in the world. There is not more counterfeit coin this day in the world—than there is counterfeit holiness in the world. Look! as many counterfeit gems, do so shine and sparkle like true jewels, that if a man is not very careful he may be easily cheated; so counterfeit grace, counterfeit holiness, does so shine and sparkle, they do so nearly resemble real holiness, and the sanctifying and saving graces of the Spirit—that a man may be easily mistaken, if he

do not make a careful search. Does the gracious soul abstain from gross sins? so does the formalist also. Do saints fast and pray? so do Pharisees also. Does Peter shed tears? so does Esau also. Does Peter repent? so does Judas also. Does Cornelius give alms? so do the Pharisees also. Does Zaccheus believe? so does Simon Magus also. Does David confess his sin? so does Saul also. Does David delight in approaching to God? so do Isaiah's hypocrites also. Does Hezekiah humble himself? so do Ahab and the king of Nineveh also. Does a gracious soul hear the word with joy? so did Herod also. Does a gracious soul receive the word with joy? so did the stony ground hearer also. Does a gracious soul delight in his teacher? so did Ezekiel's worldlings also. Is a gracious soul in closet duties? so is the Pharisee also, etc. [Mat. 25:1-4; Ezra 8; Esther 4; Daniel 9; Mat. 6:16; Luke 18:11; Mat. 27; Heb. 12; Mat. 6; Acts 10:1-4; Luke 19:11; Acts 21:8; 1 Sam. 15:24; Isaiah; 2 Chron. 32:26; 1 Kings 22:15; Jonah 3; Mark 6; Ezek. 33:30-33; Luke 18:11.]

When counterfeit coin is abroad, you will not take a piece but you will try it; you will bring every piece to the touchstone. Ah, that you would deal so by your holiness! There is a great deal of counterfeit holiness abroad, and therefore you had need bring yours to the trial. As all is not gold that glitters—just so, all is not holiness that men take for holiness, that men count for holiness. The child is not more like the father, nor one brother like another. Water in the cistern is not more like to water in the river, nor fire in the forge more like to fire in the chimney, nor milk in the saucer to milk in the breasts, than counterfeit grace and holiness is like to that which is real.

Counterfeit *faith* does so nearly resemble true faith, and counterfeit *love* true love, and counterfeit *repentance* true repentance, and counterfeit *obedience* true obedience, and counterfeit *knowledge* true knowledge, and counterfeit *holiness* true holiness—that it is not an easy matter to discover the one from the other. "The Cyprian diamond," says Pliny, "looks so like the true Indian diamond, that if a man does not look closely at it, he may easily be deceived and cheated." O sirs, true grace and counterfeit grace, true holiness and

counterfeit holiness—look so like one another, that, without a divine light to guide you, you may be easily cheated and deceived forever.

In these days of profession there is abundance of false ware put off. Satan is a subtle merchant; and where profaneness will not pass for current coin, there he labors to furnish his customers with the shows and resemblances of grace and holiness—so that he may hold them the faster in golden fetters, and put them off from looking after that real holiness, without which no man can be blessed here, or happy hereafter. And therefore it nearly concerns every man to search and try whether he has real holiness or not.

6. Sixthly, Consider, if upon trial you shall find in yourself this real holiness which paves the way to happiness, it will turn exceedingly to your accounts. Your eternal *happiness* depends upon the real being of holiness in you—but your *present comfort* depends upon your seeing of holiness. Genuine holiness will yield you a heaven hereafter; but genuine assurance will yield you a heaven here. He who has holiness and knows it, shall have two heavens—a heaven of joy, comfort, peace, contentment, and assurance here—and a heaven of happiness and blessedness hereafter. But he who has holiness and does not know it, shall certainly be saved—yet so as by fire; he shall have a heaven at last—but he must pass to it by the flaming sword, 1 Cor. 3:11, 16.

When a person is heir to a great estate, and knows it; when a person is son to a king, and knows it; when a person is highly in favor, and knows it; when a person is out of all hazard and danger, and knows it; when a person's pardon is sealed, and he knows it—then the spring of joy and comfort rises in him. Just so—when a man is holy, and knows it, then the spring of divine joy and comfort rises in his soul, as the waters rise in Ezekiel's sanctuary, Ezek. 47:2-5.

Genuine assurance will be a spring of joy and comfort in you. It will make heavy afflictions light, long afflictions short, and bitter afflictions sweet, 2 Cor. 4:16-18; 1 Cor. 15:58. It will make you

frequent, fervent, constant, and abundant in the work of the Lord. It will strengthen your faith, raise your hope, inflame your love, increase your patience, and brighten your zeal. It will make every mercy sweet, every duty sweet, every ordinance sweet, and every providence sweet. It will rid you of all your sinful fears and cares. It will give you ease under every burden, and it will make death more desirable than life, Phil. 1:22, 23; 2 Cor. 5:1, 10. It will make you more strong to resist temptation, more victorious over opposition, and more silent in every difficult condition.

Genuine assurance will turn every winter night into a summer's day, every cross into a crown, and every wilderness into a paradise. Genuine assurance will be a sword to defend you, a staff to support you, a cordial to strengthen you, a medicine to heal you, and a star to lead you.

And oh, who then will not take some pains with his own heart to know the goodness and holiness of his own estate? Well, remember this, next to a man's being holy, it is the greatest mercy in this world to know that he is holy. But if upon trial a man shall find that his estate is bad, and that his holiness is not of the right stamp—yet this will be many ways a mercy and an advantage to him. For the way to be found, is to see yourselves lost: the way to infinite mercy is to see your own misery; the way to Canaan is through the wilderness; the way to heaven is by the gates of hell. Upon the knowledge of the badness and sadness of your estate, you will be awakened out of your security, and you will be alarmed to loathe yourself, to judge yourself, to condemn yourself, to be sick of sin, to break with Satan, and to close with Christ.

Now the daily language of your soul will be, "Men and brethren, what shall I do to be saved?" Acts 2:37, 42, and 16:22, 35. "Oh, what shall I do to get my sinful *nature* changed, my hard *heart* softened, my blind *mind* enlightened, my polluted *conscience* purged, and my poor naked *soul* adorned with grace and holiness?" Now the daily language of your soul will be that of the martyr, "Oh, none but

Christ! None but Christ!" "Oh, none but Christ to pardon me! None but Christ to justify me! None but Christ to command me! None but Christ to save me! None but Christ to reign over me!"

Now the language of your soul will be this, "Oh, though I have formerly thought myself to be wise—yet now I see myself to be a fool! Oh that Christ would be wisdom to me! 1 Cor. 1:30-31. Oh, now I see myself to be red with guilt, and black with filth! Oh that Christ would be **righteousness** to me! Oh, now I see myself to be unclean, unclean! Oh that Christ would be **sanctification** to me! Oh, now I see myself to be in a damnable condition! Oh that Christ would be **redemption** to me! Rev. 3:16-18. Oh, now I see myself naked! Oh that Christ would **clothe** me! Now I see myself poor and miserable! Oh that Christ would **enrich** me! Now I feel myself to be hungry! Oh that Christ would be bread of life to **feed** me! Now I perceive myself to be lost! Oh that Christ would **seek** me! Now I fear that I am perishing! Oh that Christ would **save** me!"

Now the language of your souls will be that of the lepers, "If we stay here—we die!" 2 Kings 7:3-6. "If we stay in our unsanctified and unrenewed estate—we die! If we stay in our sins—we die! If we stay on our duties—we die! If we stay on a conceited or counterfeit holiness—we die! If we stay on a form of godliness—we die! If we stay on a name to live—we die! If we stay where the world stays—we die! If we stay in anything a-this side Christ and real holiness—we die, we eternally die! Therefore, let us arise and make a venture of our souls upon Christ, and pursue after that holiness, without which there is no eternal happiness!" But,

7. Seventhly and lastly, Consider that there are many who are truly holy, who have real holiness in them—and yet for lack of a narrow search, diligent inquiry into their spiritual estates, they come to be sorely and sadly afflicted with fears and doubts about their lack of holiness. As the treasures of this world often lie obscure and hidden in the midst of the earth—just so, the treasures of holiness often lie obscure and hid in many a

gracious soul, for lack of a privy search. As it is one mercy for me to believe, and another mercy for me to *know* that I do believe, 1 John 5:13; as it is one mercy for me to be beloved, and another mercy for me to *know* that I am beloved, Psalm 4:6, and 51:1-3; as it is one mercy for me to be pardoned in the court of glory, and another mercy for me to *know* that I am pardoned in the court of conscience; as it is one mercy for me to have my name written in the book of life, and another mercy for me to be *told* that my name is written in that book, Luke 10:20—just so, it is one mercy for me to *have* real holiness in me, and another mercy for me to *see* it and to *know* it.

As we many times complain of the lack of those things which we have in our hands—just so, many dear Christians complain of the lack of that holiness which they have in their hearts. As the well, the spring of water, was near to Hagar though she saw it not, Gen. 21:16-19—just so, the spring of holiness is near to many a Christian, yes, it is in many a Christian—and yet he sees it not, he knows it not. As Jacob once said, "The Lord was in this place—and I knew it not," Gen. 28:16; so many a precious soul may say, I had real holiness in my heart—and I knew it not. As the face of Moses did shine—but he saw it not, he knew it not, though others did see it and take notice of it, Exod. 34:29-35—just so, holiness shines in many a Christian's heart and life—yet corruptions raise such a dust in his soul that he sees it not, he knows it not, though others can see it, take notice of it, and bless and admire the Lord for it.

As there are some who think they are rich, when they are not; and that say they are rich, when they are not, Rev. 3:16-17; Proverbs 13:7—just so, there are others who are rich—and yet they will not say it, nor believe it; so there are some who think they have holiness, when they have not, yes, who say they have holiness when they have not, Isaiah 65:3-6; Mark 8:18. Just so—there are others who have real holiness—and yet they dare not think so, they dare not say so; yes, they are apt, in times of temptation, desertion, sore afflictions, and when they are under the sensible stirrings of strong corruptions—to conclude that they have no holiness, no grace—when indeed they

have. Witness Job, chapter 13:24, and 19:9; witness David, Psalm 22:1-2; witness Asaph, Psalm 73:2, 11; witness Heman, Psalm 88:1, 17; witness Jeremiah, Lam. 3:18; witness the whole church, Isaiah 49:15-16; Ezek. 37:11-12; and witness the disciples, John 14:4, 5, 7-9, 20, compared.

To know ourselves to be holy, is very desirable; but woe is it to many precious Christians—that they are holy and yet not know it—that they have holiness in their hearts, when it is hidden from their eyes. Look! as sparks and coals of fire are often hidden under the ashes, and we see them not; and as in winter the sap and life is hidden in the root of the tree, and we perceive it not; and as precious flowers are hidden in their seeds, and we discern them not; just so—when it is winter with a Christian, his holiness may be so hidden and covered under fears, doubts, sins, etc., that he may not be able to see it, to discern it, or conclude that he has it.

As the *air* is sometimes clear and sometimes cloudy, and the *sea* sometimes ebbing and sometimes flowing—so the *holiness* of the saints is sometimes so clouded, and at so low an ebb, that a Christian can hardly discern it, he can hardly say, "Lo, here is my holiness!" The *being* of holiness in the soul is one thing, the *seeing* of holiness in the soul is another thing; the *being* of holiness is one thing, the *feeling* of holiness is another thing. A Christian may as safely conclude that there are no stars in the sky in a dark night, because he cannot see them; and that there is no treasure in the mine, because he cannot discern it, nor come to the feeling of it—as he may conclude that he has no holiness in his heart, because he cannot see it, he cannot feel it. As the treasures of this world—so the treasures of holiness oftentimes lie low—a man must dig deep before he can come at them, Proverbs 2:3-6. As the babe lives in the womb—but does not know it; and as the sun often shines into the house, and a man does not see it—so the babe of grace may be formed in the soul—and yet a Christian not know it; and the sun of holiness may shine in his soul—and yet he not see it. Oh, therefore, how greatly does it concern Christians to make a diligent, a narrow, and a serious search into

their own hearts, whether they have this jewel of glory—holiness—in their souls or not! And if these arguments will not provoke you to fall upon this work of trial, I know not what will.

But methinks I hear some of you saying, "O sir, **how shall we know whether we have this real holiness or not?** we see it is our very great concernment to know whether God has sown this heavenly seed in our souls or not—but how shall we come to know this?" Now to this I answer, there are several ways whereby this may be discovered. As,

1. First, A person of real holiness is much affected and taken up in the admiration of the holiness of God. Unholy people may be somewhat affected and taken with other of the excellencies of God; but it is only holy souls who are affected and taken with the holiness of God: Exod. 15:11, "Who is like unto you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, glorious in *holiness*, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" In this stately description of God, holy Moses is most taken up in magnifying and admiring the holiness of God. Holiness is that glory of the Creator, which holy ones most delight to glory in. Just so, holy David: Psalm 71:22, "Unto you will I sing with the harp, O *Holy One* of Israel." Just so, Isaiah 12:6, "Cry out and shout, O inhabitant of Zion: for great is the *Holy One* of Israel in the midst of you." Just so, Psalm 78:41, and 89:19; Isaiah 43:3, and 49:7. The inhabitants of Zion must shout and roar out, (as the Hebrew word carries it,) in token of joy, because he who is great and in the midst of them is the Holy One of Israel. Just so, Psalm 78:41, and 89:19; Isaiah 43:3, and 49:7.

Just so, Hab. 1:12, "Are not you from everlasting, O Lord my God, my *Holy One*?" Among holy ones—there is none who can be compared to the Holy One! Yes, the more holy any are, the more deeply are they affected and captivated with the holiness of God: as you may see in Isaiah 6:3, "And one cried unto another"—or this one cried to that one—and said, "*Holy, holy, holy* is the Lord Almighty! The whole

earth is full of his glory." The holy seraphim, by *trebling* the acclamation of his holiness, "*Holy, holy, holy,*" denote not only the superlative eminency, glory, and excellency of God's holiness—but also they reveal how greatly, how abundantly they are affected and captivated with the holiness of God. To the holy angels, the holiness of God is the sparkling diamond in the ring of glory.

But now unholy people are rather affected and taken with anything than with the holiness of God. The *carnally-secure sinner* is affected and taken with the patience, forbearance, and long-suffering of God. "Oh!" says he, "what a God of patience is this, who has waited so many years for my repentance! that he who might long since have damned me—waits still to save me! that he who might long since have cast me into hell—is still willing that I should go to heaven!"

The *presumptuous sinner* is much affected and taken with the mercy and goodness of God. "Well," says the presumptuous sinner, "though I have sinned thus and thus—yet God has been merciful to me; and though I do sin daily thus and thus—yet God is still merciful to me; and though I should still go on to sin sevenfold more—yet he would be merciful to me. (Deut. 29:18-21; Eccles. 8:11.) He does not delight in the death of a sinner, nor in the damnation of souls; oh, what a merciful God is God!"

The *prosperous sinner* is taken with the bounty and liberality of God. "Oh!" says he, "what a bountiful God, what a liberal God is this, who fills my barns, who fills my bags, who prospers me at home and abroad, who has blessed me with a healthful body, a fair estate, a kind wife, a full trade, laborious servants, and thriving children!" etc.

But where is there a sinner in all the world, who is affected and taken with the holiness of God? Certainly there is nothing which renders God so formidable and dreadful to unholy people—as his holiness does. Isaiah 30:11, "Leave this way, get off this path, and stop confronting us with the Holy One of Israel!" "Oh that you would not preach so much, nor talk so much to us of the Holy One of Israel! Oh

that you would for once, cease from molesting and vexing us with message upon message from the *Holy One*! Why can't you talk and preach to us of the *merciful One*, the *compassionate One*, the *affectionate One*, the *pitiful One*, etc., as be still a-talking to us of *the Holy One, the Holy One*! Oh, we do not like to hear it! Oh, we cannot bear it!"

Nothing strikes the **sinner** into such a terror as a discourse on the holiness of God; it is as the handwriting upon the wall, Dan. 5:4-6. Nothing makes the head and heart of a sinner to ache like a sermon upon the Holy One. Nothing galls and gripes, nothing stings and terrifies unsanctified ones—like a lively setting forth of the holiness of God, Hab. 1:13.

But to **holy** souls, there are no discourses which more suit them and satisfy them, which more delight and content them, which more please and profit them—than those do, which most fully and powerfully reveal God to be glorious in holiness.

Well, this is an everlasting truth—he who truly loves the holiness of God, and loves God for his holiness—is certainly made partaker of his holiness. If you are really holy, you are much affected and taken with the holiness of God. Souls, what say you to this? But,

2. Secondly, True holiness is diffusive. It extends, diffuses, and spreads itself all over the soul; it spreads itself over head and heart, lip and life, inside and outside. Psalm 45:13, "The king's daughter is all glorious within, her clothing is of wrought gold." Inward holiness is the inward glory of the king's daughter. The king's daughter is "all glorious **within**;" her *understanding* is hanged with holiness, her *mind* is adorned with holiness, her *will* is bowed to holiness, and all her *affections* are sprinkled, yes, clothed with holiness. Her *love* is holy love, her *grief* is holy grief, her *joy* is holy joy, her *sorrow* is holy sorrow, her *fear* is holy fear, her *care* is holy care, her *zeal* is holy zeal. And on the **outside**, her clothing is of "wrought gold"—that is, her life and conversation, which is as visible to others as the

clothes she wears, is very sparkling and shining in grace and holiness. True sanctification is throughout, it reaches to soul, body, and spirit, "May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

True holiness is a divine leaven, which leavens the whole man, Mat. 13:33. Look! as leaven diffuses itself through the whole lump of dough, so true holiness diffuses itself through the whole man. Look! as Absalom's beauty was spread all over him, even from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, 2 Sam. 14:25, so the beauty of holiness spreads itself over every member of the body, and every faculty of the soul. Look! as Solomon's temple was glorious both within and without, so holiness makes all glorious both within and without. Look! as Adam's sin spread itself over the whole man, so that holiness that we have by the "second Adam" spreads itself over the whole man—just so, that that man who is not all over holy, that is not throughout holy, that man was never truly holy, 1 John 1:16. Look! as that holiness which was in Christ did diffuse and spread itself over all Christ; so that his person was holy, his natures were holy, his heart was holy, his language was holy, and his life was holy—just so, real holiness spreads itself over head, hand, heart, lip, and life, 1 Pet. 1:15.

The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, Eph. 5:9; he who is truly good, is all over good; he has goodness engraved upon his understanding, and goodness engraved upon his judgment, and goodness engraved upon his will, and goodness engraved upon his affections, and goodness engraved upon his inclination, and goodness engraved upon his disposition, and goodness engraved upon his conversation. He who is not all over good is not really good. There are those who have new heads but old hearts, new words but old wills, new expressions but old affections, new memories but old minds, new notions but old conversations; and these are as far off from true holiness, as the Pope, the Turk, and the devil are from real happiness.

In every holy person there are many divine miracles: there is a dead man restored to life, a dumb man restored to speech, a blind man restored to sight, a deaf man restored to hearing, a lame man restored to walking, a man possessed with devils possessed with grace, a heart of stone turned into a heart of flesh, and a life of wickedness turned into a life of holiness. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17. If it be thus with you, I dare write you, and call you both holy and eternally happy. But,

3. Thirdly, People of real holiness set the highest price and the greatest value and esteem upon those who are holy.

They do not, as the blind world do—value people by their great estates, names, professions, arts, parts, gifts, mirthful clothes, gold chains, honors, and riches—but by their holiness. As a holy God, so holy souls look not how rational men are—but how religious; not how notional—but how experimental; not how great—but how gracious; not how high—but how holy; and, accordingly they value them. Psalm 16:3, "But to the saints who are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight." Proverbs 12:26, "The righteous is more excellent than his neighbor."

It is holiness which differences one man from another, and which exalts one man above another. A holy man is a better man than his neighbor, in the eye, account, and esteem of God, angels, and saints. There is no man, compared to the holy man. The sun does not more excel and outshine the stars—than does a righteous man excel and outshine his unrighteous neighbor: Proverbs 28:6, "Better is the poor that walks in his uprightness, than he who is perverse in his ways, though he be rich."

A man of holiness prefers a holy Job, though upon the ash-heap—before a wicked Ahab upon the throne; he sets a higher price upon a holy Lazarus, though clothed with rags, and full of sores—than upon a rich and wretched Dives, who is clothed gloriously, and fares sumptuously every day. As King Ingo valued poor, ragged Christians

above his pagan nobles, saying, that when his pagan nobles, in all their pomp and glory, should be cast down to hell—those poor Christians should be his fellow-princes in heaven. This blind, mad world rates and values men according to their worldly interest, greatness, glory, and grandeur; but men of holiness rate and value men by their holiness, by their inward excellencies, and by what they are worth for the eternal world. The world judges him the best man in the village, who is most rich; but a holy man judges him the best man in the village, who is most righteous. The world counts him the best man in the town, who is clothed most gorgeously; but a holy man counts him the best man in the town, whose inside and outside, whose heart and life, whose body and soul are clothed with sanctity and purity. The world reckons him the best man in the city whose bags are fullest, and whose estate is largest; but a holy man reckons him the best man in the city whose heart is fullest of holiness, and who has most to show for a fair estate in the other world. Certainly, to a holy man—there is no wife, compared to a holy wife; no child, compared to a holy child; no friend, compared to a holy friend; no magistrate, compared to a holy magistrate; no minister, compared to a holy minister; nor no servant, compared to a holy servant. Internal excellencies are far more important with a holy man—than all external glories.

The Jews say that those seventy people who went with Jacob into Egypt were as much worth as all the seventy nations in the world. Doubtless seventy holy people, in the esteem and judgment of those who are holy, are more worth than a whole world, yes, than seventy worlds, of unrighteous souls. [Plato could say, that no gold or precious stones does glisten so gloriously as the prudent spirit of a godly man.]

A soul, truly holy, sets the highest price upon those who are holy. Holy Paul prized holy Onesimus as his son, Philem. 10, as himself, verse 17, yes, as his own heart, verse 12; 2 Sam. 22:27, "With the pure you will show yourself pure," or (as the Hebrew will bear it) "with the choice you will show yourself choice." Pure souls are the choicest

souls in all the world; they are choice in every eye but their own. All worldly excellencies, in the judgment of a holy man, are but as copper, brass, tin, and lead; but holiness is the tried silver, the gold of Ophir, the pearl of great price—in his eye, who has purity in his heart. They only rate and value men aright, who rate and value them according to their holiness; and if men were thus rated and valued, most men in the world would be found not worth the money that Judas sold his Master for.

If you prize others for their holiness, you are a holy person. No man can truly prize and highly value holiness in another—but he who has holiness in his own heart. Some prize Christians for their wit, others prize them for their wealth; some prize them for their birth and breeding, others prize them for their beauty and worldly glory; some prize them for the great things that have been done by them, others prize them for the good things that they have received from them; some prize them for their eagles' eyes, others prize them for their silver tongues; but he who is truly holy prizes them for their holiness, he values them for their purity and sanctity. But,

4. Fourthly, He who is truly holy will be still a-reaching and stretching himself out after higher degrees of holiness. Yes, a man who is truly holy can never be holy enough; he sets no bounds nor limits to his holiness; the perfection of holiness is the mark that he has in his eye; he hears, and prays, and mourns, and studies, and strives—that he may come up to the highest pitch of holiness. [Psalm 84:7, and 119:106; Col. 1:10; 2 Cor. 7:1, seq.] "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:12-14. [This is a metaphor from runners in a race, who strain and stretch out themselves to the utmost, that they may take hold on the mark or prize that is set before them.]

Received measures of holiness will not satisfy a holy soul; so much holiness as will keep hell and his soul asunder—will not satisfy him; nor will so much holiness as will bring him to eternal happiness satisfy him; he will be still reaching and stretching out after the highest measures of holiness; his **desires** are for more holiness, "One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple." Psalm 27:4. The beauties of holiness do so affect him and inflame him, that he cannot but desire to be more and more holy. "Lord," says the soul, "I desire to be more holy, that I may glorify your name more, that I may honor my profession more, and that I may serve my generation more. Lord, I desire to be more holy, that I may sin less against you, and that I may enjoy more of you! I would be more holy, that I may be more prevalent with you, and that I may be more victorious over all earthly vanities."

And as a man of holiness desires more holiness, so a man of holiness earnestly **prays** for more holiness, Psalm 51:2, 7. He prays that he may be filled with the fruits of righteousness, and that he may go on from faith to faith, and from strength to strength, Job 17:9, and Proverbs 4:18; he prays that his spark of holiness may be turned into a flame, his drop of holiness into a sea, and his mite of holiness into a rich treasury; he prays that he may, like the eagle, fly higher and higher, and that his soul may be like the rising sun, which shines brighter and brighter until it be perfect day; he prays that he may, like the giant refreshed, rejoice to run his course, and that holiness in his soul, like the waters in Ezekiel's sanctuary, may still be rising higher and higher. It was Beza's prayer, "Lord, perfect what you have begun in me, that I may not suffer shipwreck when I am almost at heaven."

And as a man of holiness prays for more holiness, so a man of holiness **believes** for more holiness. Psalm 51:7—in the Hebrew the words run in the future thus: "You *will* purge me from sin with hyssop, and I shall be clean: you *will* wash me, and I shall be whiter

than snow." In the sense of all his sinfulness and vileness, he believes that God *will* give out greater measures of purity and sanctity to him: "You *will* purge me, and I shall be clean: you *will* wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Just so, in Psalm 65:3, "Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, you *shall* purge them away." Though for the present iniquity did prevail—yet he had faith enough to believe that God would purge him from his transgressions, and that he would mortify prevailing corruptions.

And as a man of holiness believes for more holiness, so a man of holiness **hopes** for more holiness, 1 John 3:2-4. In every *ordinance* he hopes for more holiness, and under every *providence* he hopes for more holiness, and under every *change* of his condition he hopes for more holiness, 2 Pet. 3:14. When he is in prosperity, he hopes that God will make him more zealous, thankful, cheerful, fruitful, and useful. And when he is in *adversity*, he hopes that God will inflame his love, and raise his faith, and increase his patience, and strengthen his submission, and quiet his heart in a gracious resignation of himself to God.

I dare boldly to say, that that man was never truly holy, who does not endeavor to get up to the highest pitches of holiness. True holiness knows no restrictions nor limitation. But now counterfeit holiness is either like Hezekiah's sun, which went backward; or like Joshua's sun, which stood still; or like Ephraim's morning cloud, which soon passed away. No round but the highest round in Jacob's ladder will satisfy a holy soul. True holiness makes a man divinely covetous. Look! as the victorious man can never make enough conquests, nor can the ambitious man ever have enough honor, nor can the voluptuous man ever have enough pleasure, nor can the worldling ever have enough mammon, nor can the wanton ever have enough vain embraces—no more can a man of holiness have ever have enough holiness. As the grave and the barren womb are never satisfied, they never say "it is enough," Proverbs 30:15-16—just so, a holy man, while he is on this side eternity, he is never satisfied, he can never say that he has holiness enough.

5. Fifthly, Where there is real holiness, there is a holy hatred, detestation, and indignation against all ungodliness and wickedness, and that upon holy accounts: [True hatred is against the whole kind.] Psalm 119:101, "I have refrained my feet from *every* evil way." But why? "That I may keep your word;" verse 104, "Through your precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate *every* false way." The good that he got by divine precepts stirred up his hatred against every false way: verse 128, "Therefore I esteem all your precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate *every* false way." His high esteem of every precept raised up in him a holy indignation against every evil way. A holy man knows that all sin strikes at the holiness of God, the glory of God, the nature of God, the being of God, and the law of God; and therefore his heart rises against all; he looks upon every sin, as the Scribes and Pharisees who accused Christ; and as that Judas who betrayed Christ; and that Pilate who condemned Christ; and those soldiers who scourged Christ; and as those spears which pierced Christ; and therefore his heart cries out for justice upon all. He looks upon every sin as having a hand in the death of his Savior, and therefore he cries out, "Crucify them all, crucify them all!"

He looks upon every sin as a grieving of the Spirit, as a vexing of the Spirit, and as a quenching of the Spirit; and so nothing will satisfy him but the ruin of them all. [Eph. 4:30; Isaiah 63:10; 1 Thes. 5:19.] He looks upon every sin as a dishonor to God, as an enemy to Christ, as a wound to the Spirit, as a reproach to the gospel, and as a moth to his holiness; and therefore his heart and his hand is against every sin.

But now, if you will but look into the Scriptures, you shall find that all those who have been but *pretenders* to holiness, that their hearts have been always engaged to some one way of wickedness or another, Isaiah 58:1, 9; Zech. 7:4-7. Jehu was very zealous against idolaters; but yet his heart was engaged to his golden calves. Herod hears John Baptist gladly, and reforms many things, Mark 6 etc.; but yet his Herodias must still lie in his bosom. Judas was as forward in

religious services as any others—but yet money did bear the mastery with him, John 12:6. The Pharisees made long prayers—but only that they might the better make a prey upon widows' houses, Mat. 23:19, and 26:23. The young man seemed fair for heaven—but yet his possessions had so possessed and locked up his heart, that Christ could get no entrance.

Though Simon Magus believed, and was baptized, and wondered at the miracles and signs which were done by Philip; yet for all these *shows of godliness*, he was a prisoner to his lusts; his condition was dangerous, poisonous, and odious; he was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, Acts 8:13-23. Just so, those in Mat. 7:21-23, though they complimented with Christ, saying, "Lord, Lord;" though they prophesied in Christ's name, and cast out devils in Christ's name; yes, though they did not a few—but many wonderful works in Christ's name; yet all this while they were *workers of iniquity*, they were *artists in sin*; they were so *addicted to sin*, that they made a trade of sin. ["He who harbors any one vice, has all other with it," says Seneca truly.]

Look! as every *lion* has his den, every *dog* his kennel, every swine his sty, and every crow his nest—just so, every unholy person has one sin or another, to which his heart is engaged and married; and that sin will undo him forever!

As Lysimachus lost his earthly kingdom by drinking one draught of water, so many lose a heavenly kingdom by indulging some one sin or other. One flaw spoils the diamond, one treason makes a traitor, one turn brings a man quite out of the way, one leak sinks the ship, one wound strikes Goliath dead, one Delilah betrays Samson, one broken wheel spoils the whole clock, and one dead fly spoils the whole box of ointment. And as one bastard son destroyed Gideon's seventy sons, Judges 8, so one predominant sin is enough to destroy the soul forever. As by taking one nap Samson lost his strength, and by eating one apple Adam lost paradise—just so, many men, by favoring one sin—lose God, heaven, and their souls forever. He who

favors any sin, though he frowns upon many, does but as Benhadad, recover of one disease and die of another; yes, he takes pains to go to hell. Sin favored—always ends tragically.

And as no unholy heart rises against all sin, so no unholy heart disdains sin or rises against sin upon noble accounts, upon holy and heavenly accounts. Sometimes you shall have an unholy person angry with sin, and falling out with sin, because it has cracked his credit, or clouded his honor, or hindered his profit, or embittered his pleasure, or enraged his conscience, or exposed him to shame here and hell hereafter: but never because a righteous law is transgressed, a holy God is dishonored, a loving Savior is afresh crucified, or the blessed Spirit grieved.

It is between a holy and an unholy soul, as it is between two children; one will not touch the coal because it will *smut* him, and the other will not touch it because it will *burn* him. A holy heart rises against sin because of its *defiling* nature; but an unholy heart rises against sin because of its *burning* and *damning* nature. A holy man is most affected and afflicted with the *evil* that is in sin; but an unholy heart is most affected and afflicted with the *punishment* that is due to sin. A holy person hates sin because it *pollutes* his soul; but an unholy person hates it because it *destroys* his soul. A holy person loathes sin because it makes against God's holiness; but an unholy person loathes it because it provokes God's justice. A holy person detests sin because of the hell which is *in* sin; but an unholy person detests sin because of the hell which follows sin. A holy heart abhors all sin; but an unholy heart is still in league with some sin, Romans 12:9, and 7:15, 19; Isaiah 28:15, 18. Now because this is a point of great concernment, I shall a little more open and evidence the truth of it, in these three particulars:

(1.) First, The heart of a holy man rises against SECRET sins, against such as lie furthest off from the eye of man: Psalm 119:113, "I hate vain thoughts—but your law do I love." What more secret than vain thoughts? and yet against these the heart of a holy

man rises. When Joseph was tempted to be secretly wicked with his mistress, his heart rises against it: Gen. 39:9, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against the Lord?" **Hezekiah** humbled himself for "the pride of his heart," 2 Chron. 32:24-26. Heart-sins lie most hidden and secret; and yet for these, a holy man humbles himself. **Job** would not allow his heart, in an idolatrous way, secretly to kiss his hand, Job 31:26-27.

The heart of a holy man rises against *wickedness in the dark*, against *folly in a corner*, against *sin in a closet*. Just so, **Paul** was much affected and afflicted with the operations of sin within him, "with the law in his members rebelling against the law of his mind," Romans 7:23-24. Paul, after his conversion, never fell into any scandalous sin. Those sins that did most trouble him and distress him were of his own house—yes, were in his own heart.

A holy man knows that secret sins are sins, as well as those which are open, Psalm 19:12. He knows that secret sins must be repented of as well as others; he knows that God takes notice of secret sins as well as of open sins: 2 Sam. 12:12, "You did it secretly." He knows that secret sins do often interpose between God and his soul: "You have set our iniquities before you: our secret sins in the light of your countenance," Psalm 90:8. He knows that secret sins will quickly become public, except they are presently loathed and speedily mortified, Gen. 38:24-27. He knows that secret sins, like secret diseases and secret wounds, do oftentimes prove most dangerous and pernicious; he knows that secret sins are the price of blood, as well as open sinnings. He knows that secret sins are a grief to the Spirit, as well as those which are manifest. He knows that sometimes God punishes secret sins with manifest judgments, as you may see in that great instance of David, 2 Sam. 12:10, 18. Upon all which accounts, a holy heart rises in a detestation of secret sins. But,

(2.) Secondly, The heart of a holy man rises against the LEAST sins, as well as against secret sins, in a strict sense. I know there is no *little* sin, because there is no little hell, no little

damnation, no little law, nor no little God to sin against; but yet some sins may comparatively be said to be little, if you compare them with those which are more great and gross, which are more heinous and odious, Mat. 23:24. Now the hatred of a holy man rises against the least: Psalm 119:163, "I hate and abhor lying: but your law do I love." I hate, I abhor with horror, I loathe, I detest, I abominate lying as I do hell itself—so much the original word imports. David's heart smote him for the cutting off the lap of Saul's garment; and his heart smote him again for numbering of the people; and yet neither of these sins were heinous or scandalous, 1 Sam. 24:5, and 2 Sam. 24:10.

Some write, that there is such a native dread and terror of the hawk implanted in the dove, that it detests and abhors the very sight of the least feather that has grown upon the hawk. Certainly, there is such a holy dread of sin implanted in the heart of a saint, that he cannot but detest and abhor the least sin—yes, the very appearance of sin: his soul rises against the least motions or inclinations to evil, though they are silvered over with the most sophisticated shows, and most glorious pretenses: for he knows that the least sins are contrary to a righteous law, a holy God, and to his blessed Savior, and the Spirit—his only Comforter. [1 Cor. 8:13; Gal. 2:3-4; Jude 23.]

[1.] First, A holy man knows that little sins, if not prevented, will bring on greater sins. *David* gives way to his wandering eye, and that led him to those scandalous sins for which God broke his bones, hid his face, and withdrew his Spirit, 2 Sam. 12:26, seq.

Just so, *Peter* first denies his Master, and then denies him, and then falls a-cursing and damning of himself, Mat. 26:70-75; as the Greek word imports, he imprecated the wrath of God to fall upon him, and that he might be separated from the presence and glory of God, if he knew the man; and then concludes with a most incredible lie, "I don't know the man!"—though there was hardly a person who did not know Christ by sight—he being very famous for the many miracles

that he daily wrought before their eyes. Ah! to what a height will sin suddenly rise!

Just so, *Jacob*, first he tells three lies in a breath, Gen. 27:19, 20: 1. I am Esau; 2. Your firstborn; 3. I have done according as you bade me. And then he takes the name of God in vain, by authoring God to that which he did: "*The Lord your God* brought it to me." Ah, of what an encroaching nature is sin! how insensibly and suddenly does it infiltrate into the soul! [Just so, Austin confesses that his mother Monica, by sipping and supping when she filled the cup to others, came at last to take a cup of wine excessively sometimes.]

I have read of a young man who was tempted to three great sins, namely, to kill his father, to lie with his mother, and to be drunk. Judging the last to be the least, he yielded to it, and being drunk, he killed his father, and ravished his own mother.

Lesser sins usually are inlets to greater sins—as the little thief let in at the window opens the door, and makes way for the greater; and the little wedge makes way for the greater. When Pompey could not take a city by force, he pretended that he would withdraw his army: only he desired that they would entertain a few of his weak and wounded soldiers, which accordingly they did. These soldiers soon recovered their strength, and opened the gates of the city, by which means Pompey's army entered and subdued the citizens. Just so, little sins yielded to soon gather strength, and open the door to greater sins; and so a conquest is made upon the soul. This a holy heart well understands, and therefore it hates and abhors the least sin. But,

[2.] Secondly, A holy heart knows that little sins have exposed both sinners and saints to very great punishments. A gracious soul remembers the man who was stoned to death—for gathering of sticks on the Sabbath-day. He remembers how Saul lost two kingdoms at once, his own kingdom and the kingdom of heaven—for *sparing of Agag* and the fat of the cattle. He remembers how

the unprofitable servant, for the *non-improvement of his talent*, was cast into outer darkness. He remembers how Ananias and Sapphira were suddenly stricken dead for *telling a lie*. He remembers how Lot's wife, for *a look of curiosity*, was turned into a pillar of salt. He remembers how Adam was cast out of paradise for *eating an apple*; and the angels cast out of heaven for not keeping their standings. He remembers that Jacob smarted for his *lying* to his dying day. He remembers how God followed him with sorrow upon sorrow, and breach upon breach, filling up his days with grief and trouble. He remembers how Moses was shut out of the Holy Land, because he *spoke unadvisedly* with his lips. [Num. 15:30, 37-38; 1 Sam. 15:23; Mat. 25:25, 31; Acts 5:3- 4; Gen. 19:26 and 3 and 27.]

He remembers the young prophet who was slain by a lion for eating a little bread and drinking a little water, contrary to the command of God, though he was drawn thereunto by an old prophet, under a pretense of a revelation from heaven, 1 Kings 13. He remembers how Zacharias was stricken both dumb and deaf, because he believed not the report of the angel Gabriel, Luke 1:19-62. He remembers how Uzzah was stricken dead for holding up the ark when it was in danger to have fallen. Yes, he can never forget the fifty thousand men of Beth-shemesh who were slain for *looking* into the ark, 2 Sam. 6:7-8; 1 Sam. 6:19-21. Now, ah, how does the remembrance of these things stir up the hatred and indignation of a gracious soul against the least sins!

A grain of poison diffuses itself to all parts, until it strangles the vital spirits, and separates the soul from the body. A little coal of fire has turned many a stately building into ashes. A little prick with a thorn can as well kill a man, as a cut with a drawn sword. A little fly may spoil all the alabaster box of ointment. General Norris having received a slight wound in his arm in the wars of Ireland, made light of it—but his arm gangrened, and so he lost both arm and life together. Fabius, a senator of Rome, and chief-justice besides, was strangled by swallowing a small hair in a draught of milk. A fit of an fever carried away Tamerlane, who was the terror of his time.

Anacreon, the poet, was choked to death, with the skin of a grape. An emperor died by the scratch of a comb. One of the kings of France died miserably by choking on a bite of pork; and his brother, being hit with a tennis ball, was struck into his grave! And thus you see **little things have brought upon many great miseries.**

And so little sins may expose and make people very liable to great punishments: and therefore no wonder if the heart of a holy man rises against them. Those sins which are seemingly but small, are very provoking to the great God, and very hurtful to the immortal soul—and therefore they cannot but be the object of a Christian's hatred.

[3.] Thirdly, A holy heart knows that a holy God looks and expects that the least sins should be shunned and avoided. He sees that the cockatrice should be crushed in the egg. God demands that Babylon's little ones should be dashed against the stones, Psalm 137:9. Not only great sins—but little ones, must be killed, or they will kill the soul. The viper is killed by the little ones that she nourishes in her own bosom—just so, many a man is eternally slain by the little sins that he nourishes in his own bosom. **As a little stab at the heart kills a man. Just so—a little sin, without a great deal of mercy, will damn a man.** God expects that his children should "abstain from all appearance of evil," 1 Thes. 5:22. As you would neither wound your conscience nor your credit, God nor the gospel—you must keep off from the very appearances of evil.

A Christian is to hate not only the flesh—but the garment; and not only the garment which is besmeared—but the very garment which is but bespotted with the flesh, Jude 23. Our first parents were not only forbidden to *eat* of the forbidden fruit—but they were forbidden to *touch* it, Gen. 3. And certainly he who would not gape after forbidden fruit—must not gaze upon forbidden fruit; he who would not long after it—must not look upon it; he who would not taste it—must not touch it.

The pious Nazarite was not only commanded to abstain from wine and strong drink—but also from eating grapes, whether moist or dry; yes, he was prohibited from eating anything that was made of the vine-tree, from the kernels even to the husk, Num. 6:3-4, lest by the sweet and delight of any of these, he should be tempted or enticed to drink wine, and so forget the law, and break his vow, and make work for hell or repentance, or the Physician of souls, Proverbs 31:5.

Sin is so hateful a thing, that both the remote occasion, and the least occasion that might draw the soul to it—is to be avoided and shunned—as a man would avoid and shun hell itself. ["A man can hardly drink poison and live." Cyprian.] He who truly hates the nature of sin, cannot but hate the least sin, yes, all appearances of sin. A holy heart knows that the very *thought* of sin, if but *dwelt* on, will break forth into *action*, action into *custom*, custom into *habit*—and then body and soul are undone forever. Look! as nothing speaks out more sincerity and real sanctity, than shunning the very appearances of vanity—just so, nothing speaks out more indignation against sin, than the avoiding the occasions of sin. But,

[4.] Fourthly, A holy heart knows that the indulging of the least sin is ground sufficient for any man to question his integrity and sincerity towards God. He has much reason to suspect himself, and to be suspected by others—who dares break with God, and with his own conscience—for a trifle. He who will transgress for a morsel of bread, will be ready enough to sell his soul for a price, Proverbs 28:21. He who will pervert justice for a few pieces of silver, what will he not do for a hatful of gold? he who will sell the poor for a pair of shoes, will destroy the poor for the right price, Amos 2:6. He who will sell souls dog-cheap, who will slay the souls that should not die, and spare the souls alive that should not live—for handfuls of barley and pieces of bread—will make no bones of making merchandise of souls for silver and gold, Ezek. 19. He who will sell his Savior once for thirty pieces of silver—will sell him as often for a greater sum, Zech. 11:12. He who makes no conscience of betraying Christ into the hands of sinners for thirty shillings, will

make no conscience of betraying his own soul into the hands of the devil at the price of a noose. He who dares lie to save a little of his estate—what will not he do to save his life? These things a holy heart well understands, and the serious remembrance of them stirs up in him a holy indignation against the least transgression. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, Take many things in one: a holy heart knows that the least sin cost Christ his dearest blood. Heb. 9:22, "Without shedding of blood there was no remission"—no remission of *great* sins, nor no remission of *little* sins. He knows that the blood of Christ is as requisite to cleanse the soul from the least sin, as it is to cleanse it from the greatest: 1 John 1:7, "And the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all our sins." It is not the casting of a little holy water upon us; it is not the Papists' purgatories, nor their whippings; nor St Francis' kissing or licking of our sores; nor a bishop's blessing; nor a few knocks on the conscience, nor a few tears dropping from our eyes—which can cleanse us from the least sin. No, it is only the blood of Christ, which cleanses us from all our sins. There is not the least spot in a Christian's heart that can be washed out—but in the blood of the Lamb.

It is said of Luther, that when he was dying—that Satan appeared and presented to him a long parchment scroll—on which were written his sins—his more wicked words and deeds. Luther answered, "All this is true, Satan—but yet there is one thing more for you to set down under all my sins, and that is this—*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all our sins.*" Whereupon the devil vanished, as being vanquished. Be that as it may, it is certain that there is not a vain thought, nor an idle word, nor an angry word, nor a wanton word that can be pardoned or cleansed—but by the blood of Jesus Christ; the remembrance of which cannot but stir up a holy indignation in a gracious soul against the least corruption.

When Julius Caesar the emperor was murdered, Antonius brought forth his bloody coat, and showed it to the people, which stirred up in

them such an indignation against the murderers, that they cried out, "Slay the murderers!" and went and burnt their houses, and all who were in them. Just so, when a holy heart looks upon his sins, yes, his little sins, as those who have murdered the Prince of glory, ah, what an indignation does it raise in the soul against them!

A holy heart knows that there is not the least sin—but does in a measure estrange the soul from God. As little clouds do somewhat interpose between the sun and us—just so, little sins do somewhat interpose between God and our souls. And as sometimes a little matter, a mistake, or lending an ear, or a word out of joint, or an act of forgetfulness—bring some coolness and distance between dearest friends, Acts 15:36-41—just so, sometimes little sins bring some coolness and distance between our dearest God and our souls, Proverbs 16:28, and 17:9.

A holy heart knows that Christ looks upon those sins as great, which the blind world accounts but little. Christ accounts hatred—murder, 1 John 3:15; a lustful eye—adultery, Mat. 5:28; and he reckons the officious lie and the merry lie among the most monstrous sins, and condemns it to the lowest hell, Rev. 21:8. The consideration of all which raises no small indignation in a holy heart against the least, the smallest sin.

But unholy hearts make nothing of little sins: with *Achan* they will be slaves for a wedge of gold; with *Gehazi* they will be servants of unrighteousness for a piece of silver and two changes of garments; with *Adam* they will transgress for an apple; and with *Esau* they will sell their birthright of grace here, and of glory hereafter—for a bowl of soup. The hearts of unholy people may rise against gross sins, such as are not only against the law of God—but against the light and laws of nature and nations. Their souls may rise in arms against those sins which makes them liable to the laws of men, or which lays them open to shame, fear, grief, or loss; but as for vain thoughts, idle words, petty oaths, sinful motions, and frequent omissions—they look upon

these as trifles, motes and gnats which are not to be regarded or bewailed. But,

(3.) Thirdly, As a holy heart rises against the least sins—just so, a holy heart rises against BOSOM-sins, against constitution-sins, against those sins which either his calling, former custom, or his present inclination or condition—do most dispose him to. It is true, a prodigal person may abhor covetousness, and a covetous person may condemn prodigality; a furious person may hate fearfulness, and a fearful person may detest furiousness. But now the hearts of those who are holy rise against their complexion sins, against their darling sins, against those sins which make for present pleasure and profit, against those sins which were once as right hands and right eyes. They are against those sins which were that to their souls, which Delilah was to Samson, Herodias to Herod, Isaac to Abraham, and Joseph to Jacob.

Psalm 18:23, "I was also upright before him; and I kept myself from *my* iniquity;" that is, from my darling sin, whereunto I was most inclined and addicted. What this bosom-sin was, which he kept himself from, is hard to say. Some suppose his darling sin was lying, deceit; for it is certain, he often fell into this sin. Others suppose it to be some secret iniquity, which was only known to God and his own conscience. Others say it was uncleanness, and that therefore he prayed that "God would turn away his eyes from beholding vanity," Psalm 119:37. Others judge it to be that sin of disloyalty, which Saul and his courtiers falsely charged upon him. It is enough for our purpose, to know that his heart did rise against that very sin, that either by custom or some strong inclination he was most naturally apt, ready, and prone to fall into.

Idolatry was the darling sin of the people of Israel; [Jer. 44:15, 20; Isaiah 1:29, and 57:5; Jer. 17:1-2; Hosea 2:8; Isaiah 31:6-7.] they called their idols delectable, or desirable things, Isaiah 44:9; they did dearly affect and delight in their idols. But when God would come to put a spirit of holiness upon them—then their hearts would rise in

hatred and detestation of their idols, as you may see in Isaiah 30:18, 25; mark verse 22, "Then you will defile your idols overlaid with silver and your images covered with gold; you will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them—Away with you!" They were so delighted and enamored with their idols, that they would deck them up in the greatest elegance and finery; they would attire them with the most rich, costly, pompous, and glorious raiment. Oh—but when a spirit of holiness would rise upon them, then they would defile, deface, and disgrace their idols—then they should so hate and abhor them, they should so detest and loathe them, that in a holy indignation they should cast them away as a menstruous cloth, and say unto them, "Away with you! pack, begone, I will never have any more to do with you! God has now made an everlasting divorce between you and me!" [After the return of the Jews out of Babylon, they so hated and abhorred idols, that in the time of the Romans they chose rather to die than to allow the eagle, which was the Roman imperial arms, to be set up in their temple.]

And so in Isaiah 20:17 "In that day"— that is, in the day of the Lord's exaltation in the hearts, lives, and consciences of his people—"a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship—to the moles and to the bats." In the day of God's exaltation they shall express such disdain and indignation against their idols, that they shall take not only those made of trees and stones—but even their most precious and costly idols, those which were made of silver and gold, and cast them to the moles and to the bats; that is, they shall cast them into such blind holes, and into such dark, filthy, nasty, and dusty corners, as moles make underground, and as bats roost in! Just so, when holiness comes to be exalted in the soul, then all a man's darling and bosom sins, which are his idols of silver, and his idols of gold—these are with a holy indignation cast to the moles and to the bats; they are so loathed, abandoned, and abhorred—that he desires they may be forever buried in oblivion, and never see the light more.

Idols were Ephraim's bosom-sin: Hosea 4:17, "Ephraim is joined," or glued, "to idols, let him alone;" but when the dew of grace and holiness fell upon Ephraim, as it did in chapter 14:5-7, "Then says Ephraim—What have I any more to do with idols?" verse 8. Now Ephraim loathes his idols as much or more than before he loved them! He now abandons and abominates them, though before he was as closely glued to them, as the wanton is glued to his Delilah, or as the enchanter is glued to the devil, from whom by no means he is able to stir. Ephraim becoming holy, cries out, "What have I any more to do with idols?" Oh, I have had to do with them too long and too much already! Oh, how does my soul now rise against them! how do I detest and abhor them! surely I will never have more to do with them.

But unholy hearts are very favorable to bosom-sins; they say of them, as Lot of Zoar, "Is it not a little one?" Gen. 19:20. And as David spoke of Absalom, 2 Sam. 18:5, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom." "Beware that none touch the young man Absalom," verse 12. "And the king said—Is the young man Absalom safe?" verse 29. An unholy heart is as fond of his bosom-sins as Herod was of his Herodias; or as Demetrius was of his Diana; or as Naaman was of the idol Rimmon, which was the idol of the Syrians; or as Judas was of filching the bag; or as the Pharisees were of having the uppermost seats, and of being saluted in the market-place with those glorious titles, "Rabbi, Rabbi!"

Bosom-sins have at least a *seeming sweetness* in them; and therefore an unholy heart will not easily let them go. Let God frown or smile, stroke or strike, lift up or cast down, promise or threaten—yet he will hide and hold fast his darling sins. Let God wound his conscience, blow upon his estate, leave a blot upon his name, crack his credit, afflict his body, write death upon his relations, and be a terror to his soul—yet will he not let go of his bosom-lusts! He will rather let God go, and Christ go, and grace go, and heaven go, all go—than he will let some pleasurable or profitable lusts go!

An unholy heart may sigh over those sins, and make war upon those sins—which war against his honors, profits, or pleasures—and yet at the same time, make truce with those sins which are as right hands and right eyes! An unholy person may set his sword at the breasts of some sins—and yet at the same time his heart may be secretly courting of his bosom-sins.

But now a holy heart rises most against the Delilah in his bosom; against the Benjamin, the son, the sin, of his right hand. And thus you see how a holy heart hates and disdains all sins; he abhors small sins as well as great sins, secret sins as well as open sins; and bosom-sins as well as others sins which have not that delight and acceptance with the soul. Real holiness will never mix nor mingle itself with any sin, it will never incorporate with any corruption. Wine and water will easily mix—so the wine of gifts and the water of sin, the wine of civility and the water of vanity, the wine of morality and the water of impiety—will easily mix. But oil and water will not mix, they will not incorporate—just so, the oil of grace, the oil of holiness, will not mix; it will not incorporate with sin, the oil of holiness will be uppermost.

Mark, natural and acquired habits and excellencies, as a silver-tongued wit, an eloquent tongue, a strong brain, an iron memory, a learned head—all these, with some high speculations of holiness, and some profession of holiness, and some commendations of holiness, and some visible actings of holiness—are consistent with the love of lusts, with the dominion of sin! Witness the Scribes and Pharisees, Judas, Demas, and Simon Magus. But the real infused habits of true grace and holiness, will never admit of the dominion of any sin, whether great or little, whether secret or open. But,

6. Sixthly, People of genuine holiness are sincerely affected and afflicted, grieved and troubled—about their own vileness and unholiness. Ezek. 36:25-26, 31. You may see this in holy *Job*, chapter 40:3-4, "Then Job answered the Lord and said—Behold, I am vile! What shall I answer you? I will lay my hand upon my mouth."

Just so, holy *Agur*: Proverbs 30:2-3, "Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy." Though all men are brutish—yet *holy men are most sensible of their brutishness*, and most affected and afflicted with it. Wicked men are more brutish than the beasts—yet they see it not, they bewail it not; but holy Agur both sees his brutishness, and bewails it. Holy Agur, looking upon that rare knowledge, that depth of wisdom, and those admirable excellencies that Adam was endued with in his integrity and innocency, confesses himself to be but brutish, to be as much below what Adam once was as a brute is below a man.

Just so, holy *David* does not cry, "I am *undone*, I shall perish!"—but, "I have *sinned*, I have done foolishly!" Psalm 51:3. And so for his being envious at the prosperity of the foolish, Psalm 73:2-3, how does David befool and be-beast himself! Psalm 73:22, "Just so, *foolish* was I, and ignorant: I was as a *beast* before you." The Hebrew word *Behemoth*, which is here rendered *beast*, generally comprehends all beasts of the greater sort. As an aggravation of his folly, he confesses that he was as a beast, as a great beast, yes, as an epitome of all great beasts.

Just so, the holy prophet *Isaiah* complains that he was undone, that he was cut off, not upon any worldly account—but because he was a man a unclean lips, and dwelt in the midst of a people of unclean lips, Isaiah 6:5.

Just so, holy *Daniel*, chapter 9, did not complain that they were reproached and oppressed—but that they had *rebelled*.

Just so, *Peter*, Luke 5:8, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" Or as the Greek has it, "I am a man—a sinner!" "O Lord depart from me—for I am a mixture and compound of all vileness and sinfulness!"

Just so, holy Paul does not cry out because of his opposers or persecutors—but of the law in his members rebelling against the law of his mind, Romans 7:23-24. Paul's body of death within him put him to more grief and sorrow than all the troubles and trials that ever befell him.

A holy heart laments over those sins that he cannot conquer. A holy person labors to wash out all the stains and spots that are in his soul, in the streams of godly sorrow. That his sins may never drown his soul—he will do what he can to drown his sins in penitential tears. A holy person looks upon his sins as the crucifiers of his Savior, and so they affect him. He looks upon his sins as the great agitators, and separators between God and his soul—and so they afflict him, Isaiah 59:1-2. He looks upon his sins as so many reproaches to his God, blemishes to his profession, and wounds to his credit and conscience—and so they grieve and trouble him. He looks upon his sins as that which has made many a righteous soul sad, whom God would not have saddened; and that which opens many a sinful mouth that God would have stopped, and that which strengthens many a wicked heart that God would not have strengthened; and so his sins fetch many a sigh from his heart, and many a tear from his eyes, Ezek. 13:22.

When a holy man sins he looks *upwards*, and there he sees God frowning; he looks *downwards*, and there he sees Satan insulting; he looks *within* himself, and there he finds his conscience either a-bleeding, raging, or accusing; he looks *outside* himself, and there he finds gracious men lamenting and mourning, and graceless men deriding and mocking. The realization of all these things do sorely and sadly afflict a gracious soul.

Some say that *Peter's* eyes, after his great falls, were always full of tears, insomuch that his face was furrowed with continual weeping for his horrid thoughts, his desperate words, his shameful shifts, and his damnable deeds—which made him look more like a child of hell than like a saint whose name was written in heaven. Some say of

Adam, that whenever he turned his face towards the garden of Eden, he sadly lamented his great fall. Some say of *Mary Magdalene*, that she spent thirty years in weeping for her sins. *David's* sins were ever before him, and therefore no wonder if tears, instead of gems—were so constantly the ornaments of his bed.

Wicked Pharaoh cries out, "Oh take away these filthy frogs, take away these dreadful judgments!" But holy David cries out "O Lord, take away the iniquity of your servant!" Pharaoh cries out because of his punishments—but David cries out because of his sin! Anselm says that with grief he considered the whole course of his life: "I found," says he, "the infancy of sin in the sins of my infancy; the youth and growth of sin in the sins of my youth and growth; and the ripeness of all sin in the sins of my ripe and mature age;" and then he breaks forth into this pathetic expression, "What remains for you, wretched man—but that you spend your whole life in bewailing your whole life!" By all which it is most evident, that **holy hearts are very much affected and afflicted with their own unholiness and vileness.**

Now certainly those people are as far off from real holiness—as hell is from heaven—who take pleasure in unrighteousness, who make a scoff and mock of sin, who commit wickedness with greediness, who talk wickedly, who live wantonly, who trade deceitfully, who swear horribly, who drink stiffly, who lie hideously, and who die impenitently. But,

7. Seventhly, Real holiness naturalizes holy duties to the soul; it makes religious services to be easy and pleasant to the soul. Hence prayer is called the **prayer** of faith, because holy faith naturalizes a man's heart to prayer, 1 Pet 1:2, and James 5:15. It is as natural for a holy man to pray, as it is for him to breathe, or as it is for a bird to fly, or fire to ascend, or a stone to descend: and hence it is that obedience is called the obedience of faith, because holy faith naturalizes a man's heart to obedience, Romans 16:26, and Psalm

119:166. As soon as ever this *plant of renown* was set in the heart of Paul, he cries out, "Lord, what will you have me to do?" Acts 9:6.

And hence it is that **hearing** is called "the hearing of faith," because this holy principle naturalizes a man's heart to hearing God's word. Psalm 122:1, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." And so in Isaiah 2:3, "And many people shall go and say—Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths."

And hence patience is called "patience of **hope**," because this holy principle of hope naturalizes a man's heart to a patient waiting upon God, 1 Thes. 1:3. Romans 8:25, "But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

Just so, holy love naturalizes the soul to holy **service**; in 1 Thes. 1:3, you read of "the labor of love." Holy love is very laborious. Nothing makes a Christian more industrious, painstaking, and diligent in the service and ways of God—than holy love. Holy love will cause us to pray and to praise; it will cause us wait and work; it will provoke souls to study Christ, to admire Christ, to live to Christ, to lift up Christ, to spend and be spent for Christ, and to break through all difficulties that it may come nearer to Christ, and cleave closer to Christ, Rom 14:7-8, and 2 Cor. 12:14-16.

As Jerome once bravely said, "If my father," said he, "should stand before me, my mother should hang upon me, and my brothers should press about me—I would break through my brothers, throw down my mother, tread under feet my father—that I might the faster cleave unto Christ my Savior." Oh the laboriousness of holy love! So far as a Christian is holy, so far holy services will be delightful and easy to him: Romans 7:22, "I delight in the law of God after the inward man;" verse 25, "So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God;" Psalm 119:16, "I will delight myself in your statutes: I will not forget your word;" verse 35, "Make me to go in the path of your

commandments; for therein do I delight;" verse 47, "And I will delight myself in your commandments which I have loved;" verse 92, "Unless your law had been my delight, I would have perished in my affliction;" verse 143, "Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: yet your commandments are my delight."

Sirs, honor is not more suitable, delightful, and pleasing to an *ambitious* man, nor pleasure to a *voluptuous* man, nor flattery to a *proud* man, nor gold to a *covetous* man, nor overindulgence to an *intemperate* man, nor revenge to an *envious* man, nor pardon to a *condemned* man—than pious duties and services are suitable, pleasing, and delightful to a holy man, Psalm 27:8, and 81:8-16.

But unholy hearts are very averse to holy duties and services: they are averse to hearing, averse to praying, averse to reading, averse to meditating, averse to self-judging, averse to self-examining, averse to holy worship. Amos 8:5, "When will the New Moon be over so we may sell grain, and the Sabbath, so we may market wheat?" Isaiah 26:10-11, and Jer. 5:1, 6. You may sooner draw a coward to fight, or a guilty criminal to the court, or a bear to the stake—than you shall draw unholy hearts to holy services. [Wicked hearts are habitually averse to all that is good, etc.]

But if at any time, by the strong motions of the Spirit, the close debates of conscience, the powerful persuasions of the word, the education of godly parents, the pious example of bosom friends, the rich treasures in precious promises, the dreadful evils in terrible threatenings; or if at any time by the displeasure of God, the smarting rod, the affections of God's mercy, the wooings of God's love; or if at any time by some flashes of hell, or glimpses of heaven, or by the heavy sighs, the deep groans, and the bleeding wounds of a dying Savior—their hearts are wrought over to pious services—Isaiah 58:1-5—ah, how soon are they weary of them! What little delight or pleasure do they take in them! Isaiah 43:22, "But you have not called upon me, O Jacob"—that is, you have not worshiped nor served me sincerely, faithfully, feelingly, heartily, affectionately, humbly, holily,

as you should and as you ought—"but you have been weary of me, O Israel;" that is, you have been weary of my worship and service, and you have counted it rather a burden than a benefit, a damage rather than an advantage, a reproach rather than an honor, a disgrace rather than a favor, a vexation rather than a blessing. And for all your formal courtings and complimentings of me—you have been secretly weary of me!

Just so, in Mal. 1:12, 13, "But you profane it by saying of the Lord's table, 'It is defiled,' and of its food, 'It is contemptible.' And you say, 'What a burden!' and you sniff at it contemptuously," says the Lord Almighty. When you bring injured, crippled or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?" They did God but little service, and that they did was after the worst manner too—and yet they snuff, and puff, and blow, and sweat, and swell, and fall into a pompous and exaggerated fume—as if they had been over-tired and wearied with the burden and weight of those sacrifices which they offered up to the great God.

A holy heart thinks that what he does for God, is all too little; but an unholy heart thinks every little thing that he does for God, to be too much. A holy heart, like the holy angels, loves to do much—and make no noise; but an unholy heart makes most noise when he does least service. An unsanctified soul has a trumpet in his right hand, when he has but a penny to give in his left hand, as here. But,

8. Eighthly, Where there is real holiness, there will be the exercise of righteousness towards men from righteous principles, and upon pious accounts, namely, the honor of God, the command of God, the will of God, the credit of the gospel, etc. **Real holiness towards God is always attended with righteousness towards men:** Eph. 4:21, "And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," or, holiness of truth. Tit. 2:11-12, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly,

righteously, and godly in this present world." These words contain the sum of a Christian's duty; to live soberly towards ourselves, righteously towards our neighbors, and godly towards God, is true godliness indeed, and the whole duty of man.

Just so, holy **Abraham** in Gen. 23:16, "Abraham agreed to Ephron's terms and weighed out for him the price he had named in the hearing of the Hittites: four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weight current among the merchants." It is recorded to holy Abraham's everlasting honor and fame, that he paid for the field that he bought from Ephron with current money, not counterfeit; pure, not adulterate shekels of silver; not shekels of brass silvered over; he paid the price that was agreed, and he paid it in such coin as would go current in one country as well as another.

Just so, holy **Jacob**, in Gen. 43, supposing that the money that was returned in the sacks of corn that his sons brought out of Egypt was through some mistake or oversight, he very honestly and conscientiously ordered them to carry the money back again. Verse 12, "Take double the amount of silver with you, for you must return the silver that was put back into the mouths of your sacks. Perhaps it was a mistake." A holy heart will not, a holy heart dares not, take an advantage from another's error to do him wrong; it is but justice to return and restore to every man his due.

Just so, holy **Moses**, in Num. 16:15, "I have not taken so much as a donkey from them, and I have never hurt a single one of them." He sought their good, not their goods; he preferred their safety before his own life; he did right to every man, he did wrong to no man; he did every man some good, he did no man the least hurt.

Just so, holy **Samuel**, in 1 Sam. 12:3-4, "Now tell me as I stand before the Lord and before his anointed one—whose ox or donkey have I stolen? Have I ever cheated any of you? Have I ever oppressed you? Have I ever taken a bribe? Tell me and I will make right whatever I have done wrong." "No," they replied, "you have never

cheated or oppressed us in any way, and you have never taken even a single bribe." He makes a solemn protestation before the Lord, before his anointed, and before the people, that he had so lived in the exercise of justice and righteousness among them, that they could not accuse him of the least unrighteousness, they could not say black was his eye, they could not say that he had lessened them to greatness himself, or that he had impoverished them to enrich himself, or that he had ruined them to raise himself; upon his appeal they unanimously declare his innocency and integrity.

Just so, holy **Daniel**, in Dan. 6:4-5, "Then the other administrators and princes began searching for some fault in the way Daniel was handling his affairs, but they couldn't find anything to criticize. He was faithful and honest and always responsible. So they concluded—Our only chance of finding grounds for accusing Daniel will be in connection with the requirements of his religion." Though ENVY is the father of cruelty and malice, the mother of murder and ambition, the plotter of others' destruction—yet holy Daniel was so just and righteous, so innocent and prudent, so careful and faithful in the administration of his high office—that none of his envious, malicious, and ambitious enemies could, after their unity in a hellish and cruel conspiracy, charge him with the least spot of injustice or of unrighteousness; they narrowly scanned all his administrations, and diligently weighed all his actions—and yet themselves being judges, Daniel is found innocent. They could not so much as charge him with a fault.

Just so, **Zachariah** and **Elizabeth**, they walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, Luke 1:5-6; they walked not only in the ordinances—but also in the commandments of the Lord, and they walked not only in some commandments—but in *all* the commandments of the Lord; they walked in the commandments of the second table, as well as in the commandments of the first table; they were as well for righteousness towards man, as they were for holiness towards God.

Just so, the **apostles**, in 2 Cor. 7:2, "Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one." The apostle would have the Corinthians to make room for them in their hearts and houses, as the Greek word imports, for they had wronged no man in his name or reputation, as the false apostles had; neither had they corrupted any man in his judgment by false doctrines or evil examples, as the false apostles had; neither had they defrauded any man in his estate, as the false apostles had, who made a prize of their followers and hearers.

Of the same import is that of the apostle in 1 Thes. 2:10, "You are witness, and God also, how holily, justly, and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you who believe." He takes God and them to witness, that they had lived holily in respect of *God*, and righteously in respect of the *world*, and unblamably in respect of those who *believe*. By all which it is most evident, that **where there is real holiness towards God, there will be the exercise of righteousness towards men.**

But now, where there are but the shows and appearances of holiness, there people make no conscience of exercising righteousness towards men. Witness the **Scribes and Pharisees**, who, under a pretense of *praying*, made a *prey* of widows' houses; who, under a pretense of piety, exercised the greatest covetousness, unrighteousness, and cruelty—and that upon widows, who are usually the greatest objects of pity and charity; they made no bones of robbing the widow, under pretense of honoring of God, Mat. 23:14.

Just so, **Judas**, who under a pretense of laying up for the poor, robbed the poor, John 12:6; he made use of counterfeit holiness, as a cloak to cover all his thievish villainies; he pretended to lay up for the poor—but he intended only to lay up for himself, and to provide against a rainy day. It is like he had no great mind to stay long with his Lord, and therefore he was resolved to make the best profit he could for himself; that so when he should lay down his stewardship, he might have something to live upon. Judas acted the part of a saint

in his profession and discourses, that so he might be the less suspected to act the part of a thief in his more secret practices. Judas had not been long in office, before he put conscience out of office, and conscience being put out of office, Judas sets up for himself, and, under a cloak of holiness, he practices the greatest unfaithfulness. Though the eagle soars high—yet still her eye is upon her prey—just so, though Judas did soar high in profession—yet his eye was still upon his prey, upon his bags, and so he might have it, he cared not who went without it; so he might be rich, he did not care though his Lord and his retinue grew ever so poor. Judas had Jacob's voice—but Gehazi's heart and hands. Under all his shows of sanctity, he had not so much as common honesty in him. Counterfeit holiness is often made a stalking-horse to the exercise of much unrighteousness. Certainly that man is as far from real holiness, as the devil himself is from true happiness, who lives not in the exercise of righteousness towards men, as well as in a profession of holiness towards God. Well, Christians, remember this, it were better to have honesty and morality without religion, than to have religion without honesty and morality. But,

9. Ninthly, He who is truly holy—will labor and endeavor to make others holy. A holy heart loves not to go to heaven alone; it loves not to be happy and blessed alone. A man who has experienced the power, excellency, and sweetness of holiness, will strive and study how to make others holy. When Samson had tasted honey, he gave his father and mother some with him, Judges 14:8-9. Holiness is so sweet a morsel, that a soul cannot taste of it but he will be commending of it to others. ["We therefore learn—that we may teach," is a proverb among the Rabbis. The heathen could say, I do therefore lay in and lay up, that I may draw forth again for the good of many.] A

as you may see in holy **Moses**, in Num. 11:29, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!" A holy soul will never make a monopoly of holiness. The prophets, you know, were men of greatest

grace and holiness; now holy Moses is very importunate and earnest with God that he would not only make the two who prophesied—but all the Lord's people eminent and excellent in grace and holiness. Such was Moses' holiness and humbleness, that he desires that all others might either equal him or excel him in gifts and grace. A heart eminently holy is so far from envying of the gracious excellencies of others, that it can rejoice in every sun that outshines his own. Every light that burns more dim than his—he desires that it may be snuffed, not put out, that so it may give a clearer and a greater light to others.

Just so, holy **Paul** in Acts 26:29, "I pray to God that both you and everyone here in this audience might become the same as I am, except for these chains." True holiness is no churl; nothing makes a man more noble in his spiritual desires, wishes, and actings for others, than holiness. Real holiness, like *oil*, is of a diffusive nature; like *light*, it will spread itself over all; like Mary's box of *ointment*, it fills all the house with the sweet scent thereof. Are you a holy *father*? then you will, with holy Abraham, labor to make your children holy, Gen. 18:17-19. A holy heart knows that both by his first birth—but especially by his new birth, he stands obliged to promote holiness in all—but especially in those which are parts and pieces of himself. Are you a holy *master*? then you will, with holy Joshua, labor to make all under your charge holy: Josh. 24:15, "But as for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord."

True holiness cannot be concealed; it will be a-stirring and a-provoking of others to be holy: as a holy man does not love to be *happy* alone, so a holy man does not love to be *holy* alone. A holy master loves to see a crown of holiness set upon every head in his family. Holiness is a very beautiful thing, and it makes those beautiful in whom it exists. In a holy master's eye, there is no servant so lovely and beautiful as he who has the beauty of holiness upon him.

A holy *magistrate* will labor to make both his servants and his subjects holy: as holy David, holy Asa, holy Isaiah, and holy Hezekiah did; he knows that the souls of his servants and subjects are the choicest treasure that God has committed to his care; he knows that every soul is more worth than his crown and kingdom; he knows that he must one day give up an account for more souls than his own, and therefore he improves his power and interest every way for the making of all holy under him. Louis the Ninth, king of France, took pains to instruct his poor kitchen-boy in the way to heaven, and being asked the reason of it, he answered, The poorest have a soul to save as precious as my own, and bought by the same blood of Christ. It is said of Constantine that in this he was truly great, that he would have his whole court gathered together, and cause the Scriptures to be read and opened to them, that they might be made holy courtiers, and so fitted for the court of heaven, into which no unclean person or thing can enter, Rev. 21:27. It grieved an emperor that a neighbor of his should die before he had done him any good. Ah, it is the grief of a holy magistrate to see others die before they are made holy. The great request of a holy magistrate, living and dying, is this, "Lord, make this people a holy people! Oh, make this people a holy people!"

Are you a holy kinsman, a holy friend; then you will labor to make your kindred holy, and your friends holy; as holy Cornelius did, as you may see in Acts 10:24, "Cornelius was waiting for him and had called together his relatives and close friends to meet Peter." And in verse 33, says Cornelius to Peter, "So I sent for you at once, and it was good of you to come. Now here we are, waiting before God to hear the message the Lord has given you." [Just so, in John 1:39, 49, and 4:28-30.] Devout Cornelius gets his kinsmen and near friends together, that they also might be partakers of the grace and mercy of God with him. He had experienced a work of grace and holiness upon his own heart, and he uses his best endeavors that they might experience the same on theirs.

A holy Christian is like a magnet, which draws to itself first one iron ring, and that another, and that a third. As there is a natural instinct

in all creatures to propagate their own kind, as in beasts, birds, and fish; so there is a holy, a spiritual instinct in all gracious hearts to propagate grace and holiness in whatever hearts they can. Look! as *fire* will assimilate and turn everything that comes near it into its own nature, so will a holy heart labor to make all that comes near him like himself. Look! as one *drunkard* labors to make another, and one *swearer* another, and one *wanton* another, and one *thief* another, and one *idle* person another, and one *fearful* person another, and one *doubtful* person another, and one *erroneous* person another, etc.—just so, one holy heart labors to make another holy heart; one gracious heart labors to make another gracious heart. [It is a true saying in science, that it is the most natural act or work of every living thing to produce another like unto itself.]

He who is *humble* will labor to make others humble, he who is *sincere* will labor to make others sincere, he who is *faithful* will labor to make others to be faithful, he who is *fruitful* will labor to make others fruitful, and he who is *watchful* will labor to make others watchful. A heart that is truly holy will labor, by prayers, reproofs, tears, example, counsel, and commands—to make others like himself. He knows that there is no love, no wisdom, no care, no pains—compared to that which he takes with his own heart, compared to that which is laid out to make unholy hearts holy. And therefore he prays and weeps, and weeps and prays, that holiness may be written upon all that his name is written upon; he learns and teaches, and he teaches and learns, and all that he may teach and learn others to be holy; he counts it not worth while to live in this world, were it not for the glory of God, and the good of his own and others' souls.

But now, what shall we say of those people who are so far from being holy, who are so far from drawing others to be holy, that they do what they can to make those who are holy to become unholy, and who strongly tempt those who are unholy to be more unholy? These are agents and instruments for hell, and certainly such solicitors shall at last be most dreadfully handled by hellish tormentors. But,

10. Tenthly, He who is really holy—will be holy in the use of earthly and common things, as well as in the use of spiritual and heavenly things. Titus 1:15. He will be spiritual in the use of mundane things; and heavenly in the use of earthly things. There is a silver vein of sanctity which runs through all his worldly concernments. If you look upon him in his eating and drinking—you shall find him holy. 1 Cor. 10:31, "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." If you look upon him in his buying and selling, in his paying and receiving—you shall find him holy: Isaiah 23:18, "And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord." Before Tyre's conversion, she labored to enrich herself by hook and by crook: all was fish which came to Tyre's net. Tyre could say anything, or do anything, or be anything—for gain. Oh—but when Tyre is converted and sanctified, then all her gettings and earnings, shall be holiness to the Lord. Tyre now shall write holiness upon all her wares and commodities. Tyre shall buy nothing, nor sell anything, nor exchange anything—but there shall be *holiness* written upon it. And Tyre shall be as well holy in using and improving of her merchandise and earnings, as she has been holy in the getting of them; for so it follows in the same verse, "But in the end her businesses will give their profits to the Lord. Her wealth will not be hoarded but will be used to provide good food and fine clothing for the Lord's priests." Tyre, before her conversion, hoarded up riches, and laid up her merchandise to spend upon her lusts, to spend upon her pride, and wantonness, and luxuriousness, etc. But now, being converted, she uses and improves what she has in the service of the Lord, and for the comfort, support, and relief of the poor and needy. When Tyre is once made holy, then Tyre will be holy in the use of all her earthly enjoyments.

If you look upon a holy man going to war, then you shall find holiness written upon the bridles of his horses: Zech. 14:20-21, "In that day shall there be upon the bridles, or bells, of the horses, *Holiness unto the Lord*. Yes, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be *holiness unto the Lord Almighty*." [Calvin renders it, *stables* of horses, which are the most stinking and contemptible places; and

yet these should be holily used.] Here is holiness written upon the bridles of the horses they ride on, and holiness written upon the cups and pots they drink in. A holy heart will be holy in the use of the mundane things which are for common use. Every piece of his life, shall savor of sanctity; and in all the parts of his common life you shall be able to discern something of the power of true religion.

He is holy in his commerce, and holy in his converse. Holiness is written upon his dealings with others, and upon his behavior towards his family and friends. Whatever he puts his hand to in his home, shall have *holiness* written upon it.

A holy man makes a Jacob's ladder of all his earthly enjoyments. All the comforts in his home, are as so many bright morning stars to lead him on in a way of holiness, and to lead him up to a holy God. Look upon a holy man in his vocation, and you shall find him holy. Look upon him in the use of common things, and you shall find him holy. Look upon him in his recreations, and you shall find him holy. The habitual frame and bent of his heart is to be holy in every earthly thing that he puts his hand unto. A spirit of holiness runs and shines in all the common actions of his life.

But now look upon those who have only the shows and appearances of holiness, and you shall find that they have but a worldly spirit in common things. Take them out of their religious duties, and you shall find them to be habitually earthly in the use of earthly things, and carnal in the use of carnal things, and worldly in the use of worldly things. All their religion, all their holiness, lies in a few religious duties; take them out of these, and you shall find them as carnal, as vain, as foolish, as filthy and as frothy, as light and as slight—as those who have not so much as a cloak of holiness upon them. But he who is really holy, will be holy as well out of duties as in duties. If you look closely upon him in all his worldly concernments, you shall find some footsteps of the awe, fear, dread, authority, and glory of God upon his spirit. Look! as an unholy heart is carnal in spiritual things, and earthly in heavenly things, and unholy in holy

things—just so, a man who is truly holy, he is as well holy in the ordinary affairs and actions of this life, as he is holy in any of the exercises of piety. But,

11. Eleventhly, True holiness is conformable to the holiness of Christ. The holiness of Christ is that first and noble pattern which real holiness makes us conformable to: 1 John 4:17, "As he is—so are we in this world." There is no grace in Christ—which is not in some degree formed in a holy heart. "Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did." 1 John 2:6. And therefore the work of grace and holiness is called a forming of Christ in the soul, Gal. 4:19. Holy hearts have the very prints, stamps, and impressions of the graces of Jesus Christ upon them: John 1:16, "Indeed, we have all received grace after grace from His fullness." Look! as face answers to face, so the graces which are in real Christians correspond to the graces which are in Jesus; there is such **love** as corresponds to the love of Christ, and such **lowliness** as corresponds to the lowliness of Christ, and such **heavenly-mindedness** as corresponds to the heavenly-mindedness of Christ, and such **meekness** as corresponds to the meekness of Christ, and such **patience** as corresponds to the patience of Christ, and such **faith** as corresponds to the faith of Christ, and such **zeal** as corresponds to the zeal of Christ, and such **fear** as corresponds to the fear of Christ—in truth and reality, though not in degree and quantity.

Look! as in generation the child receives member for member; or as the paper receives from the press, letter for letter; or the mirror receives from the face, image for image; or as the wax receives from the seal, stamp for stamp—just so, holy hearts receive from Christ grace for grace. Look! as wine in the bottle is conformable to that in the butt, and as water in the cistern is conformable to that in the river, and as light in the air is conformable to that in the sun, and as milk in the saucer is conformable to milk in the breasts, and as money in the pocket is conformable to money in the bag—so the graces which are in a holy Christian, are conformable to the graces which are in Christ, 2 Cor. 3:17-18. **To be a holy person is to**

know a holy Christ, to be in love with a holy Christ, and to imitate the virtues of a holy Christ.

It was the height of Caesar's glory to walk in the steps of Alexander; and of Selymus, a Turkish emperor, to walk in the steps of Caesar; and of Themistocles to walk in the steps of Miltiades—just so, **it is the height of a Christian's glory to tread in the virtuous steps of his dearest Lord.** A holy heart counts it a great encouragement to him—to somewhat walk in the steps of that holy pattern which Christ has set him. Look! as the holy prophet did lay his mouth to the Shunammite's child's mouth, and his eyes to his eyes, and his hands to his hands, 2 Kings 4:34—just so, a holy Christian lays his mouth to the mouth of Christ, and his eyes to the eyes of Christ, and his hands to the hands of Christ, and his breasts to the breasts of Christ, and his heart to the heart of Christ: that is, he does in all things labor to resemble Christ, to be like to Christ; especially in those holy virtues which were most shining in the heart and life of Christ, 1 Pet. 2:9.

Now certainly they are far from being holy who count it a crime to be virtuous; and so are they who walk directly contrary to Jesus Christ. He was holy—but they are profane; he was humble—but they are proud; he was heavenly—but they are earthly; he was spiritual—but they are carnal; he was zealous—but they are lukewarm; he was meek—but they are contentious; he was charitable—but they are covetous; he was courteous—but they are malicious. Will you call these men holy? Surely not! But,

12. Twelfthly, He who is truly holy is much affected and afflicted with the unholiness of others. [Josh. 7:9; Psalm 69:9; Ezra 9:3; Neh. 9; Dan. 9; Micah 1:8; Jer. 13:17.] Psalm 119:53, "Horror has taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake your law;" verse 158, "I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, because they kept not your word;" verse 136, "Rivers of waters run down my eyes, because they keep not your law." By this hyperbolic phrase he sets forth the greatness of his sorrows, and that not

because his enemies had wronged *him*—but because they had dishonored his *God*. It was a great grief to him to see others a-grieving his God.

Just so, Jer. 9:1-3, "Oh that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night! oh that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people, and go from them." But why does the holy prophet thus take on? why does he thus lament? why does he wish himself turned into waters, and into a fountain of tears? why does he prefer a habitation among the wild beasts, before his habitation among his own people? Why, the cause you have in the following words, "For they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men, and they bend their tongues like their bow for lies: but they are not valiant for the truth upon the earth; for they proceed from evil to evil, and they know not me, says the Lord."

Just so, Ezek. 9:4, "And the Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh, and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof." There were holy hearts in Jerusalem, who did sigh and cry, and cry and sigh for the wickedness of the times; the abominations of the times did lie in such full weight upon them, that they did fetch many a sigh from their hearts, and many a tear from their eyes. Holy hearts are able to tell you many sad stories of the groans, griefs, and gripes—which other men's sins has cost them. When most were a-sinning, God's marked ones were a-mourning; when others were with a high hand a-cursing, blaspheming, and a-rebelling, God's marked ones were deeply sorrowing; they mourned sincerely, they sighed greatly, they grieved wonderfully, they groaned lamentably, and that not for some—but for all, for all court sins, and church sins, and city sins, and family sins.

And so, holy *Paul* could not with dry eyes make mention of those belly-gods and earthworms that were in his time, Phil. 3:18. Just so,

holy *Lot* was much affected and afflicted with seeing and hearing of the wickedness of those among whom he lived, 2 Pet. 2:7-8. The Greek word for vexed, in verse 7, signifies to be oppressed under the wanton and wicked lives of the ungodly Sodomites, as a man who is oppressed under a heavy burden which he labors under, and would gladly be delivered from; or to be oppressed, as the Israelites were under their cruel Egyptian taskmasters. Ah, the sins, the wickedness of others—greatly affect the hearts of the saints! The Israelites did not more labor and sigh and groan under all their loads and oppressions, than many holy hearts do labor and sigh and groan under the load of wicked men's sins. And the Greek word for vexed, in verse 8, signifies to be tortured, tormented, and racked. [It is a metaphor taken from devices which they tormented people with.] Oh, their wickedness did torment and rack his righteous soul; he could not see nor hear of their wickedness—but his soul was as upon a rack!

Pambus wept when he saw a harlot take so much pains to deck and dress herself in splendid and costly apparel—and all to entertain a wanton lover, and so to make work for hell! Oh, it cannot but grieve a gracious soul—to see what pains poor sinners take to go to hell! A holy heart looks upon other men's sins as great dishonors done to his father, his king; and therefore he cannot but cry out with Croesus' son, who though he was born dumb—yet seeing some going about to kill his father, his tongue-strings unloosed, and he cried out, "Oh kill not king Croesus! Kill not my father!" Oh kill not my God, and my King! "Oh kill not, oh dishonor not my dear Father and Savior!" says a holy heart. Such is the love and high respect, which holy hearts bear to their heavenly Father, that they cannot but grieve, and mourn, and cry out when they see others to act treason against the crown and dignity of heaven. Elijah had rather die, than to see Ahab and Jezebel to cast contempt and dishonor upon his God.

[1.] A holy heart mourns for sin AS SIN, he weeps over the very nature of sin. He grieves for sin as it is the breach of a holy law, and as it is a dishonor to a holy God, etc., and therefore he

cannot but mourn for other men's sins as well as his own. [He who hates a thief as a thief, will hate a thief in another man's house as well as in his own. He who hates a toad as a toad, will hate a toad in other men's bosoms as well as his own; he who hates poison as poison, will hate poison in another man's hand as well as his own. Just so, he who hates sin as sin, will hate it wherever he sees it; and he who mourns over sin as sin, cannot but mourn over sin wherever he observes it.

[2.] By other men's sins, a holy man is put in mind of the badness of his own heart. Bernard makes mention of an old man, who, when he saw any man sin, wept and lamented for him; and being asked why he grieved so for other men's sins, answered, "He fell today, and I may fall tomorrow!" The falls of others puts a holy man in mind of the roots of sinfulness which are in himself. Other men's actual sins are as so many glasses, through which a holy man comes to see the manifold seeds of sin that are in his own nature, and such a sight as this cannot but melt him and break him.

[3.] A holy heart knows that the best way to keep himself pure from other men's sins, is to mourn for other men's sins. [1 Tim. 5:22; 1 Cor. 5:1-3; Eph. 5:11.] He who makes conscience of weeping over other men's sins--will rarely be defiled with other men's sins. He who mourns not over other men's sins is accessory to other men's sins: and first or last may find them charged upon his account. He who mourns not for other men's sins, is in danger of being ensnared by other men's sins. And how then can a holy man look upon other men's sins with dry eyes?

[4.] A holy man looks upon other men's sins as the crucifiers of his Savior. He looks upon the proud man's **pride**, as that which set a crown of thorns upon the sacred head of Christ—and this makes him sigh. He looks upon the swearer's **oaths** as the nails which nailed his blessed hands and feet to the cross—and this makes him grieve. He looks upon **scorners** as spitting upon Christ, and **worldlings** as preferring Barabbas before Christ—and this makes

him groan. He looks upon **hypocrites** as kissing and betraying of Christ, and he looks upon **drunkards** and **wantons** as giving gall and vinegar to Christ—and this makes him mourn. He looks upon other men's sins as having a hand in all Christ's torments—and this puts him upon the rack, and makes his very soul heavy, even to the death.

[5.] A holy heart knows that by mourning for other men's sins, he may be instrumental to keep off wrath, Ezek. 9:4, 6. How often did holy Moses by his tears—quench the wrath of an angry God! However, if wrath should break forth upon a nation—yet those who mourn for the abominations of the times, they shall be hidden in the day of God's public visitation, Isaiah 26:20. When the house is on fire, the father has a special care to provide for the safety and security of his children. When the lumber is on fire, a man will be sure first to secure his box of jewels. In times of common calamity, God will be sure to look after his jewels, his mourning ones. Though the lumber, the wicked, be burnt up on every hand in the day of God's wrath—yet he will be sure to preserve his jewels in the midst of the flames. [Isaiah 43:2-3; Dan. 3:17-28.]

Augustine, coming to visit a sick man, found the room full of mourners; he found the wife sobbing, the children sighing, and the kindred lamenting; whereupon he suddenly breathed forth this short—but sweet ejaculatory prayer, "Lord," says he, "what prayers do you hear—if not these?" So in times of common calamity, holy hearts may look up and say, "Ah, Lord, whose sighs, whose groans, whose tears will you hear—if not ours? Who are mourners in Zion, and who will you save and secure, in this day of your fierce indignation—if not we who have labored to drown both our own and other men's sins in penitential tears?"

[6.] A holy heart looks upon sinners' sins to contribute very much towards the bringing in of sore and sad changes upon a land and nation, Psalm 107:33-34. He knows that sinners' sins may turn rivers into a wilderness, and water-springs into dry ground,

and a fruitful land into a barren wilderness. He knows that sinners' sins may have a deep hand in provoking God to rain hell out of heaven upon a sinful nation, as he did of old upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and this sets him a-mourning. If one sinner destroys much good, as Solomon speaks, Eccles. 9:18, "Ah!" says he, "what a world of good will a world of sinners destroy then!" The serious thoughts of this makes him sigh. [Witness Achan, Manasseh, Jeroboam, Saul, Herod, Ahab, etc.]

[7.] A holy heart looks upon other men's sins as their bonds and chains, Acts 8:23, and this makes him mourn. When Marcellus, the Roman general, saw the multitude of captives that were taken in the city of Syracuse, the tears trickled down his cheeks. Ah, how can tears but trickle down a Christian's cheeks when he sees multitudes, fast bound with the cords of their iniquity, trooping to hell? Who can look upon a sinner as a fast-bound prisoner to the prince of darkness, and not bemoan him?

If holy people thus mourn for the wickedness of others—then certainly those who take pleasure in the wickedness of others—who laugh and joy, who can make a sport of other men's sins—are rather monsters than men! There are none so nearly allied to Satan as these, nor any so resemble Satan as much as these! (The devil always joys most when sinners sin most!) To applaud them, and take pleasure in those who take pleasure in sin—is the highest degree of ungodliness!

Doubtless are they unholy—who tempt and entice others to be unholy. Neither are they holy who only *talk* of other men's sins—but never *sigh* for other men's sins. Neither are they holy who insult over the iniquities of others—but never mourn for the iniquities of others. Neither are they holy who can rail, reproach, and revile others for their sins—but have neither skill nor will to lament over others' sins—and yet this age is full of such wretches! Certainly that man's holiness will be found to be of the right stamp at last, who can evangelically mourn for other men's sins as well as his own. But,

13. Thirteenthly, He who is truly holy—he loves the word, and is affected and taken with the word for its holiness and purity. Psalm 119:140, "Your word is very *pure*, therefore your servant loves it." A pure heart embraces the word for its purity, 1 Pet. 2:2; Psalm 12:6-7, and 18:30. Just so, holy Paul in Romans 7:12, "Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good." Well, and what then? Why, says he, verse 22, "I *delight* in the law of God after the inward man." But is this all? No, says he, verse 25, "With the mind I myself serve the law of God." Holy Paul delights in the law as holy, and serves the law as holy, just, and good. A holy heart is taken with the word for its spirituality, divinity, and purity. Just so, in Psalm 19:8-10, "The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean," (that is, the doctrine which teaches the true fear of God,) "enduring forever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether; more to be desired are they than gold, yes, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb:" or, as the Hebrew has it—sweeter than the dropping of honeycombs. [These several titles—law, statutes, testimony, commandments, judgments—are used interchangeably for the whole word of God.]

The whole word of God, as it is a pure word, a clean word, so it rejoices a holy heart; and so it is sweeter than the very droppings of honeycombs. It is more sweet than those drops which drop immediately and naturally, without any force or art—which is counted the purest and the sweetest honey. There is no profit nor pleasure compared to that which the purity of the word yields to a holy heart.

But now unholy hearts they are affected with the word as it is dressed up with fine high notions—which are but mysterious nothings. They are taken with the word, as it is clothed with arts, parts, and elegance of phrase. They are pleased with the word, as it is appareled with a spruce wit, or with silken expressions, or with some fancy elocution. Augustine confesses that the delight which he took before his

conversion in Ambrose's sermons, was more for the eloquence of the words—than the substance of the matter. Just so, many are taken more with the wit, elocution, action, high notions, and far-fetched expressions that are in a sermon—than they are taken with the spirituality, divinity, weight, and holy worth that is in a sermon! These are like those children who are more taken with the fine flowers which are strewed about the dish—than they are with the food which is in the dish; and who are more taken with the pretty wild-flowers which grow in the field—than they are with the good corn that grows there. [In great fairs and markets, the peddler and the ballad-singer who sell toys and trifles, have many children and fools hanging upon them; but those who are wise and prudent attend those shops where there are the best and richest commodities. You know how to apply it.]

But now, as the prudent farmer is taken more with a few handfuls of sound grain, than he is with all the colorful weeds which are in the field—just so, a holy heart is more taken with a few sound truths in a sermon, than he is taken with all the strong lines, and high strains, and flourishes of wit with which a sermon may be decked up! Some are taken with the word—as the profession of it brings in customers into their shops, and keeps up their credit in the world. Others are taken with the word—as it seems to tickle their ears and please their fancies. Some are affected with sermons—because of the elegance of the style, eloquence of the words, smoothness of the language, and gracefulness of the delivery. And these deal by sermons as many men do by their bouquets, which are made up of many picked sweet flowers, which, after they have smelled to them a while—cast them into a corner. Just so, these, after they have commended a sermon, after they have applauded a sermon—they cast away the sermon. They smell to the sermon, and say "It is sweet, it is sweet!" But shortly they throw it away, as a bouquet that is withered, and of no further use.

When a man who is sick and unhealthy is at a table which is furnished with variety of wholesome dishes, you know he easily and

readily passes over all the most wholesome and nourishing dishes, and falls a-piddling and picking here and there upon kickshaws and puff-paste, which have little or no substance in them. Just so, unsound, unholy hearts, when God has prepared his table, and made a feast of fat things for their souls in the ministry of his word—they easily and readily pass over those sound, solid, and savory truths which are prepared for their strength and nourishment, and fall a-piddling and picking upon some new-coined phrases, or some quaint expressions, or some seraphical notions! And no wonder, for they are not sound within—their hearts are under a great malady. The Israelites would not be satisfied with wholesome diet—but they must needs have quails as picking meat; well, they had them, and while they were at their picking meat, the wrath of God came upon them. The application is as easy, as it is dreadful.

But now a holy heart savors the word, and relishes the word, and is affected and taken with the word—as it is a holy word, a substantial word, a pure word, a clean word, and as it begets holiness, and nourishes holiness, and increases holiness, and as it works towards the completing and perfecting of holiness.

QUESTION. But how may a person know whether he loves the word, and is affected and taken with the word—as it is a holy word, or not?

ANSWER.

[1.] First, By what has been already said. But because the question is weighty, I further answer—

[2.] In the second place, He who loves the word, and who is affected and taken with the word as it is a holy word—he loves the **WHOLE** word of God, and he is affected and taken with one part of the word as well as another. Every *law* of God is a holy law, and every *statute* is a holy statute, and every *command* is a holy command, and every *promise* is a holy promise, and every *threatening* is a holy

threatening, and every *exhortation* is a holy exhortation; and, therefore, he who loves any part of the word as a holy word, he cannot but love every part of the word, because every part of the word is holy. [As the wise philosopher delights in all Aristotle, and the prudent physician in all Galen, and the clever orator in all Tully, and the understanding lawyer in all Justinian—just so, a holy man delights in all the Bible. The Jewish Rabbis were accustomed to say that "upon every letter of the law there hangs mountains of profitable matter."]

And indeed he loves no part of the word as holy—who loves not every part of the word as holy. Every *chapter* in the book of God is a holy chapter, and every *verse* is a holy verse, and every *line* in that book is a holy line, and every *word* in every line is a holy word! He who loves a *chapter* as it is a holy chapter—he loves every verse in that chapter as a holy verse. And he who loves every *verse* as a holy verse—he loves every line as a holy line. And he who loves every *line* as a holy line—he loves every word in every line as a holy word.

Upon *easy* **commands** he reads holiness—and upon *difficult* commands he reads holiness. Upon *comfortable* commands he reads holiness—and upon *laborious* commands he reads holiness. And therefore he *loves* all, and *embraces* all, and endeavors a *conformity* to all. A holy heart dares neither to dispute with that word, nor make light of that word, where he reads holiness engraved upon it. To a holy heart, there is no command of God which is unjust or unreasonable.

But now an unholy heart, though it may for some worldly advantages court and cry up some parts of the word—yet it is ready, with Judas, to betray and crucify other parts of the word. The whole Scripture is but one entire **love-letter**, despatched from the Lord Christ to his beloved spouse on earth. This love-letter is all written in golden letters, and therefore a holy heart cannot but be taken and affected with every line in this letter. In this love-letter there is so much to be read of the *love* of Christ, the *heart* of Christ, the *kindness* of Christ,

the *grace* of Christ, and the *glory* of Christ—that a holy heart cannot but be affected and taken with it. The whole word of God is a field—and Christ is the **treasure** that is hidden in that field. The whole word of God is a ring of gold—and Christ is the **diamond** in that ring, and therefore holy heart cannot but love, and embrace, and endeavor to conform to every line. Luther was accustomed to say that he would not take all the world for one leaf of the Bible. And Rabbi Chija, in the Jerusalem Talmud, says that all the world is not of equal value with one word out of the law.

[3.] Thirdly, A man who is affected and taken with the word as it is a holy word—he is ALWAYS affected and taken with it! He loves it and takes pleasure in it, as well in adversity as in prosperity: Psalm 119:59, "Your statutes have been my songs"—yes, but where?—"in the house of my pilgrimage," or "pilgrimages," as the Hebrew has it. [The saints have commonly looked upon themselves as pilgrims and strangers in this world, Gen. 47:9, 39; Psalm 12:19; Heb. 11:9-10, etc.] When David was in his banishments, being hunted Saul, Absalom, and others—then the word of God was music to him—then it was matter of joy and rejoicing to him; his whole life was the life of a pilgrim and stranger; now as a pilgrim he sojourns here, and at another time as a stranger he sojourns there. No man could take more pleasure, joy, and contentment in the rarest and choicest music—than David did in the word of God; and that not only when he was in his royal palace—but also when he was in the house of his pilgrimage.

He who loves the word, and that delights in the word for its holiness and purity—he will love it and delight in it in health and sickness; in strength and weakness; in honor and disgrace; in wealth and want; in life and in death. The holiness of the word is a lasting holiness, and so will every man's affections be towards it who loves it, and is taken with it for its holiness and pureness.

Some there are, who cry up the word, and who seem to be much affected, delighted, and ravished with the word, (as Herod, Ezekiel's

hearers, and the stony ground was, Ezek. 33:30-33, and Mark 4 and 6, etc.) while the word is either a *cheap* word to them, or a *profitable* and *pleasing* word to them, or while it is courted and countenanced in the world, or while it is the path to preferment, or a key to enlargement, etc. But when the word gets within them, and discovers their own sinfulness and wretchedness to them; when it shows them how Christless, and graceless, and lifeless, and helpless, and hopeless they are; when it discovers how far they are from heaven, and how near they are to hell, Jer. 44:15, 29; oh, then their hearts begin to rise against it, and to cry out, "Away with it! It was never good days, since we have had so much preaching and hearing!" Or when the word comes to be scorned, slighted, disgraced, opposed, or persecuted, oh, then they turn their backs upon it, and quickly grow weary of it.

Strabo notes that the Iassians delighted themselves with the music of an excellent harpist—until they heard the *market-bell* ring; upon which they all ran away to the market! Just so, let these men but hear the market-bell of lust, or the bell of profit, or the bell of pleasure, or the bell of applause, or the bell of honor, or the bell of error, or the bell of superstition sound in their ears—and immediately they will run from the sweet music of the Word—to follow after any of these market-bells. But now a man who loves the word, and who is affected and taken with the word as it is a holy word—no *bell* can ring him from the word! No disgrace, no affliction, no opposition, no persecution—can take him off from loving the word, and from taking pleasure in the word. The cause of his love is abiding and lasting, and therefore his love must be lasting and continuing.

This is not to say, that a holy heart may not sometimes be more affected and taken with the word than at some times than at other times—as when a man enjoys much communion with God in the word; or when God speaks much peace and comfort to the soul by the word; or when God assures a man more clearly and fully of the goodness and happiness of his condition by the word; or when God lets in very much quietness, or quickness, or sweetness, or seriousness, or spiritualness into a man's spirit by the word. Oh, then

a man may more than ordinarily be affected and taken with the word.

But now, though a holy Christian is not at all times in the same degree and measure taken with the word—yet take such a Christian when he is at worst, and you shall find two things in him:

(1.) you shall find in him a holy love to the word;

(2.) you shall find in him a real love to holy Christians.

[4.] Fourthly, He who loves the word, and who is affected and taken with the word as it is a holy word—he is most affected and taken with those parts of the word which most *incite* to holiness, which most *promote* holiness, and which most *provoke* to holiness. "But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God—who chose you to be his children—is holy. For he himself has said—You must be holy because I am holy." 1 Peter 1:15-16. (I shall give you light into these words when I come to open the holiness of God to you.)

Just so, Mat. 5:48, "But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Our *summum bonum* in this world consists in our conformity to the heavenly pattern. In all imitations it is best to choose the most perfect pattern. There is nothing more laudable and commendable than for a Christian to endeavor more and more to resemble his God in the highest perfections of righteousness and holiness. Just so, Eph. 5:15-16, "So be careful how you live, not as fools but as those who are wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Christians must walk precisely, wisely, exactly, accurately. As the carpenter works by line and rule, so a Christian must walk by line and rule; he must labor to get up to the very top of godliness; he must go to the utmost of every command, as the original word imports.

Just so, Phil. 2:15, "You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of crooked and perverse people. Let your lives shine brightly before them." God's sons should be spotless sons,

that is, they should be without all such spots as are inconsistent with sonship or saintship.

Just so, in Col. 2:6, "Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord—walk in Him." They had received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Law-giver, they had received Christ as a ruling Christ, as a reigning Christ, and as a commanding Christ; and now the great duty incumbent upon them is to walk and live at such a rate of holiness as may evidence that they have thus received Christ.

Just so, in 1 John 2:6, "He who says he abides in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked." Christians are to set all Christ's moral actions before them as a pattern for their imitation, John 13:15. In Christ's life—a Christian may behold the picture or lineaments of all virtues—and accordingly he ought to order his life in this world. To walk as Christ walked is to walk humbly, holily, justly, righteously, meekly, lowly, lovingly, fruitfully, faithfully, uprightly, with an "as" of quality or likeness—but not with an "as" of equality; for that is impossible for any saint on earth—to walk so purely, so holily, so blamelessly, so unspottedly, so spiritually, so heavenly as Christ walked; that is, with an "as" of equality. To walk as Christ walked is to slight the world, and despise the world, and make a footstool of the world, and to live above the world, and to triumph over the world as Christ did; that is, with an "as" of quality—but not with an "as" of equality. To walk as Christ walked is to love those who hate us, to pray for those who persecute us, to bless those who curse us, and to do good to those who do evil to us; but still with an "as" of similitude—but not with an "as" of equality, Mat. 5:44-47. To walk as Christ walked is to be patient, and silent, and submissive, and thankful, under the vilest reproaches, the heaviest afflictions, and the greatest sufferings, 1 Pet. 2:20-23; with an "as" of quality—but not with an "as" of equality.

Now a holy heart that is taken with the holiness of the word—he is certainly taken most with those parts of the word which most call for holiness, and which most strongly press the soul to make a progress

in holiness. I have given you a taste of some of the most principal scriptures that do incite most to holiness, and I shall leave it to your own consciences to give in witness for you or against you, according to what you find in your own spirits. Certainly to a holy man there are no prayers, no sermons, no discourses, no conferences, no books, nor no parts of scripture—which can compare to those which most encourage and provoke to holiness. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, He who loves the word, and who is affected and taken with the word as it is a holy word—he highly prizes and values the holy *dispensers* of the word for their work's sake, Acts 10:24-26; Gal. 4:14. Isaiah 52:7, "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion—Your God reigns!" If the very *feet* of those who brought good tidings, though they were afar off, and sweaty, dusty, and dirty from traveling upon the mountains, were so desirable and amiable, honorable and comfortable; oh then what were their *faces*, what were their *messages*! Surely they were much more amiable and desirable.

Just so, in 1 Thes. 5:12,13, "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly" (or, more than abundantly, as the Greek has it) "in love for their work's sake; and be at peace among yourselves." Their work is to *bring* Christ and your souls together, and to *keep* Christ and your souls together. Their work is to turn you from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Jesus Christ. [Acts 26:16-18. If a minister had as many eyes as Argus to watch, as many heads as Typhoeus to plan, and as many hands as Briareus to labor—he might find employment enough for them all in the faithful discharge of his ministerial function.]

Their work is gradual: first, they are to bring you to a saving acquaintance with Christ; and then they are to bring you to a holy acceptance of Christ; and then they are to bring you to a willing resignation of yourselves to Christ; and then they are to bring you to

a sweet and blessed assurance of your interest in Christ, and so to fit you and prepare you for a glorious fruition of Christ. Therefore certainly their work is high and honorable, excellent and eminent, laborious and glorious; and why, then, should you not have a high and honorable esteem of them, even for their work's sake?

I have read of Ambrose, that being about to leave the church of Milan, the people of the place flocked about him, laid hold of him, protesting that they had rather lose their lives than lose their pastor, beseeching him to remain, and to promote among them the gospel and government of Christ, professing and promising, for his encouragement, their ready submission to Christ. Chrysostom's hearers were accustomed to say, that they had as good be without the sun in the sky, as to be without Chrysostom in the pulpit. Some of the ancients have long since concluded that Herod might have kept his oath, Mark 6:23—and yet have spared John Baptist's head, because John's head, John's life, was more worth than all Herod's kingdom. O sirs, shall Titus Sabinus' dog bring food to the mouth of his dead master, because sometimes he gave him a crust of bread; and will not you highly love, honor, and esteem of those pastors who feed your souls with the bread of life, yes, with that bread that came down from heaven?

Certainly the more any man is affected and taken with the holiness of the word, the more highly they will honor and prize the holy and faithful dispensers of the word. Holy men know that their place is honorable, their calling honorable, and their work honorable; and therefore they cannot but honor them. Holy men know that if they do not honor them, they dishonor him whose ambassadors they are. Holy men know that Christ takes all the affronts which are put upon them as put upon himself, and will accordingly revenge them, as you may see by comparing these scriptures together. [Luke 10:16; Mat. 22:4, 8, 21:33, 44, and 23:37-39; 2 Chron. 36:14, 22; 2 Sam. a. 1, 7, compared with 12:31.]

Ambassadors are inviolable by the law of nations. David never retaliated so harshly, as he did to the Ammonites, who despitefully used his ambassadors that he sent unto them, when they shaved off one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, etc. I have read that Rome was destroyed to the ground for some abuses that were offered to an ambassador that was sent unto it. And the Romans sacked the famous city of Corinth, and razed it to the ground, for a little discourtesy that they offered to their ambassadors. No wonder then, if God deals so severely with those who slight his ambassadors, who come with messages of grace and favor from the King of kings and Lord of lords, and whose great work is to make a firm, an everlasting peace between God and sinners' souls, and that all differences between God and them may be forever decided, and a free trade to heaven fully opened and maintained. As for such as slight, scorn, and despise the holy and faithful dispensers of the word, I think they are as far from real holiness as hell is from true happiness. And so, doubtless, are those who grumble at the expense of a penny for the maintenance of that divine candle that wastes itself to give light to them, that will rather die to save charges than spend a little money to save their souls, 2 Cor. 12:14-16.

14. In the fourteenth place, A man who is really holy will be holy among the unholy. He will retain and keep his holiness, let the times be ever so unholy. Principles of grace and holiness are lasting; they are not like the morning cloud nor the early dew, Psalm 119:112, and 106:3; 1 John 3:9-10. Holy *Abraham* was righteous in Chaldea; holy *Lot* was just in Sodom; holy *Job* was upright in the land of Uz, which was a place of much profaneness and superstition; holy *Nehemiah* was courageous and zealous in Damascus; and so was holy *Daniel* in Babylon. The different generations wherein these holy men lived were wholly devoted to wickedness and superstition—and yet these precious souls had wholly devoted themselves to godliness.

And of the same spirit, mind, and metal was holy *David*. Psalm 119:20, "My soul breaks for the longing it has to your judgments at

all times." Let the times be ever so dangerous, licentious, superstitious, or erroneous—yet David's heart was strongly carried forth to God's judgments—that is, to his word; for under this title, "judgments," you are to understand the whole word of God.

And so there were some in *Sardis* who were of the same spirit with the worthies above mentioned: Rev. 3:4, "You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." In polluting times pure hearts will keep themselves pure. A holy heart will keep himself undefiled, even in defiling times; when others are besmeared all over, he will keep his garments white and clean. Let the times ever so often turn, you shall find that he who is really holy will be holy under every turn. No turns shall turn him out of a way of holiness: Job 17:9, "The righteous shall hold on his way, and he who has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger."

A man who is really holy—will be holy among the holy, and he will be holy among the unholy. If you look upon him among unholy *friends*, unholy *children*, and unholy *servants*—you shall find him holy. If you look upon him among unholy *neighbors*—you shall find him holy. If you look upon him among unholy *buyers* and *sellers*—you shall find him holy. If you take him at his *table*—you shall find him holy. If you take him in his *shop*, in his commerce—you shall find him holy. If you take him in his *family*—you shall find him holy. If you take him in his *closet*—shall find him holy. If you take him in his *journeyings*—you shall find him holy. If you take him in his *recreations*—you shall find him holy.

True holiness is like that famous Queen Elizabeth, '*always the same*'. The godly man is four square. Cast him where you will, like a dice, he falls always sure and square. Just so, cast a holy man where you will, and into what company you will—yet still he falls sure and square for holiness. True holiness is a part of the divine nature; it is of such a heavenly complexion, that it will never alter. If the times should be so sad and bad that holy people should not be able to hold fast their

estates, their liberties, their trades, their lives, their religion—yet they will still hold fast their holiness.

A holy Christian is like gold. Cast gold into the fire, or into the water; cast it upon the ash-heap, or into the pleasant garden; cast it among the poor or among the rich, among the religious or among the licentious; yet still it is gold, still it retains its purity and excellency. Just so, cast a holy Christian, a golden Christian, into whatever condition you will, and into what company you will—yet still he will retain his purity, his sanctity! **Yes, the worse the times are, the more a holy man studies holiness, and prefers holiness, and prizes holiness, and practices holiness,** that he may keep up the credit of holiness, and the credit of a holy God, and the credit of his holy profession in the world.

But now, such as have only a *show* of holiness, an *appearance* of holiness—these will be religious among the religious, and wicked among the wicked, Isaiah 9:17. They will be righteous among the righteous, and licentious among the licentious; they will be as the company is among which they are cast. With the good they will be good, and with the bad they will be bad. With the zealous they will be zealous, and with the superstitious they will be superstitious. With the lukewarm they will be lukewarm, etc. They are for all changing times and tides; they are for any turn that will serve their turn; for any mode that will bring pleasure or profit to them. They are like Alcibiades, of whom it was said that he was a man for all times; for he could swagger it at Athens, and take any pains at Thebes; he could live most sparingly at Lacidaemon, and live riotously among the Thracians, and hunt among the Persians. Just so, unholy men can accommodate themselves to the times, and comply with them, whatever they are. With *Proteus* they will transform themselves into all shapes. As the times change—so will they; what the times favor—that they will favor; what the times commend—that they will commend; and what the times cry up and admire—that they will cry up and admire; and what the times frown upon and condemn—that they will frown upon and condemn.

Look! as curious and well-drawn pictures seem to turn their eyes every way, and to smile upon everyone that looks upon them—just so, these can *turn* with the times; they can *look* as the times look, and *smile* as the times smile; they can *talk* with the times, and *sail* with the times. Sometimes they can act one part, and sometimes another part—as the times require. If the times require a large profession—they can make it. If the times require a rigid spirit against such as cannot comply with the times—they can act it. If the times demand them to leave their religion at the church door—they can leave it, etc. If the times call upon them to worship God according to the prescriptions of men—they can do it.

Oh—but give me a man who is really holy—and he will be holy though the times should be ever so unholy! Yes, the more licentious the times are—the more gracious he will labor to be.

15. In the fifteenth place—He who is really holy, ordinarily has holy AIMS and ENDS in his actings and undertakings.

The glory of God is the mark—the bulls-eye which holy men have in their eyes. "For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord." Romans 14:7-8. They live not to themselves—but they live to him who lives forever. They live not to their own wills, lusts, greatness, and glory in this world—but they live to his glory, whose glory is dearer to them than their very lives. [John 7:18; Gen. 41:16; Dan. 2:23; Titus 2:10, 38; 1 Cor. 10; Rev. 12:11.] They make divine glory their ultimate end.

2 Cor. 4:5, "We preach not ourselves—but Christ Jesus the Lord;" that is, in our preaching we woo not for ourselves—but for Christ. [That Christian duties are esteemed by God—not by their *acts* but by their *ends*—is most certain.] We are no kin to those who speak two words for themselves, and hardly one for Christ. In all our preaching we eye the glory of Christ, we design the honor and exaltation of Christ. Real holiness is commonly attended with a single eye—just as

counterfeit holiness is commonly attended with a squint eye; squint-eyed aims, and squint-eyed ends—do usually wait upon divided hearts. Take a holy man in the exercise of his gifts and graces for the good of men's souls, or take him in the exercise of charity for the good of men's bodies, and in both you shall find his eye fixed upon the glory of God. "If anyone speaks, he should do it as one speaking the very words of God. If anyone serves, he should do it with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever! Amen." 1 Peter 4:11

Look! as bright shining golden vessels do not retain the beams of the sun which they receive—but reflect them back again upon the sun—just so, those who are really holy, they do return and reflect back again upon the Sun of righteousness—the praise and glory of all the gifts, graces, and virtues that they have received from him. The daily language of their souls is, "Not unto us, Lord, not unto us, Lord—but to your name be all the glory!" Holy men make conscience of giving *men* their dues; how much more then do they make conscience of giving *God* his due? 1 Chron. 29:10, 18. Now, glory is God's due, and God desires nothing more than that we give him the glory due unto his name, as you may see in Psalm 29:1-2. Just so, in Psalm 96:7-8. There are three "gives" in those two verses, "Give unto the Lord," "give unto the Lord," "give unto the Lord the glory that is due unto his name!" Glory is God's right, and he demands his right; and this holy men know, and therefore they give him his right; they give him the honor and the glory which is due unto his name.

"So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do—do it all for the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31. Holy hearts do habitually eye the glory of Christ in all things. When they eat—they eat to his glory; and when they drink—they drink to his glory; and when they sleep—they sleep to his glory; when they buy—they buy for his glory; and when they sell—they sell for his glory; and when they give—they give for his glory; and when they recreate themselves—they recreate for his glory: so when they hear preaching—they hear for his glory; and

when they pray—they pray for his glory; and when they fast—they fast for his glory; and when they read Scripture—they read for his glory; and when they come to the Lord's table—they come to his glory. In all secular and pious actions—holy hearts have a habitual eye to divine glory.

Do not mistake me; I do not say that such as are really holy do *actually* eye the glory of Christ in *all* their actions. Oh no—this is a happiness desirable on earth—but shall never be attained until we come to heaven. Selfish and base ends and aims, will too often creep into the holiest hearts—but holy hearts sigh and groan under them; they complain to God of them, and they cry for justice, justice upon them: and it is the strong and earnest desires of their souls to be rid of them. But take a holy Christian in his ordinary, usual, and habitual course, and he will have holy aims and ends in all his actions and undertakings.

But now such whose holiness is counterfeit, they never look at divine glory in what they do; sometimes their eye is upon their *credit*, and sometimes their eyes are upon *applause*; sometimes they have *pleasure* in their eyes, and sometimes they have *profit* in their eyes, and sometimes they have *preferments* in their eyes, etc., Mat. 6:5; John 6:26; Zech. 7:5-7. They will be very godly when they can make a gain of godliness; they will be very holy when holiness is the way to outward happiness; but this religious wickedness will double damn them at last! This is most certain, that some carnal or worldly consideration or other, always acts him who has not real principles of holiness in him. But he who is really holy makes the glory of God his center. "To God be the glory!" was once, and is still a holy man's motto.

QUESTION. But how may a person know when he makes the glory of God his aim, his end, in this or that service which he performs? I shall answer this question briefly thus—

ANSWER.

[1.] First, Such a man as makes the glory of God his aim, his end—he will do duty when all outward encouragements to duty fail. When the eye of men, the favor of men, the respects of men, and all other encouragements from men fail—yet then a holy man will hold up, and hold on in his work and way! Yes, when all outward encouragements from God shall fail—yet such a person will keep close to his duty! Hab. 3:17-18, "Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vine; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation!" When all necessary and delightful mercies fail—yet he will not fail in his duty. Though God withholds his blessings—yet he will not withhold his service—in the lack of a livelihood he will be lively in his duty; when he has nothing to exist by—yet then he will live upon his God.

Though war and poverty come—yet he will not be lacking in his duty. There are three things in a holy heart, which strongly incline it to persevere when all outward encouragements fail. The first is a **forcible principle**—divine love, 2 Cor. 5:14; the second is a **mighty aid**—the Spirit of God, Phil. 4:12-13; the third is a **high aim**—the glory of God. But now, it is otherwise with those who have only a *show of godliness*. Let but their outward encouragements fail them; let but the eye, the ear, the applause of the creature fail them; if they cannot make some gain of their godliness, some profit of their profession, some advantage of their religion—they are ready, with Demas, to throw up and throw off all! Profit and applause are usually the baits that these men bite at; and if they miss these baits, then farewell profession, farewell religion, farewell all!

But now look—as Ruth kept close to her mother in the lack of all outward encouragements; just so, souls that eye the glory of God in duties, they will keep close to duties when all outward encouragements fail. Though outward encouragements be sometimes as a side-wind, or as oil, or as chariot wheels—means to move a Christian to go on more sweetly, easily, and comfortably in

the ways of God—yet when this wind shall fail, and these chariot wheels shall be knocked off—a real Christian will hold on his way, Job. 17:9.

[2.] Secondly, When a man aims at the glory of God in what he does, then he labors to hide and conceal all his human excellencies, which may any way tend to obscure, eclipse, or darken the glory of God. "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power." 1 Corinthians 2:2-5.

Holy Paul handled holy things in such a manner, as much of *God*—and little or nothing of *man* could be perceived. In religious exercises, Paul seems to say to human eloquence and fleshly wisdom, to affected rhetoric and flattering oratory, "Stand afar off—come not near! I have now to do with God, and to do with souls, and to do with eternity—and therefore what have I to do with you?" Paul had an eye to divine glory in all that he did, and therefore he dared not tip his tongue and store his head with airy notions, or with "the enticing words of man's wisdom." Of all the apostles, Paul was most eminent and excellent in all human arts, abilities, and gifts—and yet in pious exercises he lays them all aside. 1 Cor. 14:18-19, "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue."

The church of Corinth excelled all other churches in *gifts*—I do not say in *grace*—and many among them prided themselves up in the exercise of their gifts and tongues in their church assemblies, that so they might win the more credit and repute to themselves, of being men of great learning, reading, and abilities; but the holy apostle by his own example, labors to win them to decline all vain ostentation, and to work them to express themselves so as might be most for the

information, conviction, edification, and salvation of their hearers' souls. Holy Paul had much learning—and yet in pious exercises he used little. The Corinthians had less—and yet made such shows of it, even in their pious duties—as if in *their minds*—all the libraries in the world had been locked up.

This puts me in mind of what once I have read concerning a Rabbi, who had but little learning, and less modesty and ingenuity; for he usurping all the discourse at table where many were gathered. One commented concerning him, "For anything I know he may be learned; but I never heard learning make such a noise." The more learning—the less noise men will make; the less learning—the more noise men will make. The sun shows least when it is at the highest; and those waters are most deep which run most silent. They usually are men of the greatest abilities—who flaunt them least in pious works. [At one time, when Bernard had preached very eloquently, and the people much admired and applauded him—which much saddened him. The next day he preached a plain and powerful sermon without any rhetorical dresses, at which many curious, itching ears were unsatisfied—but himself and his lower-capacitated auditors were much pleased and delighted. And being asked the reason of it, he returned this answer, "Yesterday I preached Bernard—but today, I preached Jesus Christ.]

Mr. Dod was accustomed to say that "so much ***Greek*** and ***Hebrew*** in a sermon—was so much *fleshly ostentation* in a sermon!" The gilding upon the pill may please the eye—but it profits not the patient; the paint upon the window-pane may feed the fancy—but the room is rather the darker than the lighter for it. Painted glass in churches is more glorious—but plain glass is most perspicuous. When men come to church-work, to pulpit-work, all plainness must be used. Starched oratory may tickle the brain—but it is plain doctrine which informs the judgment, which convinces the conscience, which bows the will, and which wins the heart. That sermon has most learning in it—which has most plainness in it. And

therefore a great scholar was accustomed to say, "Lord, give me learning enough that I may preach plain enough."

Silly, ignorant people are very apt to dote upon that most, and admire that most—which they understand least; but prudent Christians judge of ministers not by their lungs—but by their brains; not by their throats—but by their hearts and lives; not by their voices and tones—but by the plainness, spiritualness, suitableness, and usefulness of their matter. It is observable throughout the Scriptures, that the profoundest prophets, and the greatest apostles, yes, and Christ himself, did commonly accommodate themselves to their hearers' capacities. [Holy Moses covered his glistening face with a veil when he spoke to the people.] They kept in and kept under all those human excellencies, the discovery of which might anyway cloud divine glory. Men who have their eyes upon divine glory—know that the more any acquired abilities, gifts, and excellencies appear in holy exercises—the more the name, honor, and glory of God is clouded, and the more those who have most of the indwellings of God are dissatisfied and disadvantaged; and therefore those who have real respect to divine glory, they draw as it were a curtain between all their human excellencies and pious exercises.

That none may think this is my private opinion, let me add a few sayings of theirs that have been eminent in acquired excellencies. *Gregory Nazianzen*, a holy and a weighty writer, compares curiosity and novelty of speech in the things of God unto lascivious dancing, and the arts of jugglers, whereby they deceive the senses of those who look on; and further says that simple, proper, genuine language was in holy things accustomed to be esteemed godliness. *Eusebius* tells us of some in his days, who to win upon the minds of men, did amaze them with fancy words. And it was a remarkable saying of golden-mouthed *Chrysostom*, as some call him, "When I first began to preach," said he, "I was a child, and delighted in rattles—in the applause of the people; but when I was a man, I began to despise them."

New *phrases* and *expressions* do many times make way for the introducing of new *doctrines*—as learned Paraeus observes: "For the most part," says he, "those who in points of divinity devise new terms and unusual expressions, do hide under them some new and strange doctrines; they wrap up their error in some intricate words and fancy distinctions." When our words in preaching differ from the style of the Holy Spirit, the people be in danger of turning aside to vain jangling, says Danaeus. Said that incomparable man, Peter Ramus: "Let us speak the words of scripture, let us make use of the language of the Holy Spirit, and forever abominate those who profanely disdain at the stately plainness of God's blessed book, and who think to correct the divine wisdom and eloquence, with their own infancy and sophistry." [The orators of Athens were then suspected, when they began to make excursions with florid expressions.] Said Seneca, "Sick men are not bettered by physicians' sugared words—but by their skillful hands."

Truth is most beautiful when most naked. Many mar the sweetness of the word, by perfuming it with their human eloquence and oratory. For a close, remember that God himself, the great master of speech, when he spoke from heaven, he made use of three different texts in a breath: Mat. 17:5, "This is my beloved Son," Psalm 7; "In whom I am well pleased," Isaiah 42:1; "Hear him," Deut. 18:15; which you may note against the squeamishness of such as disdain at the stately plainness of the Scriptures. But,

[3.] Thirdly, If you do really and actually aim at the glory of God in what you do, then the glory of God will swallow up all selfish aims and ends that may thrust themselves in upon the soul while it is at its work. Look! as Aaron's rod, Exod. 7:10-12, swallowed up the magicians' rods—so the glory of God will swallow up all carnal aims and ends. Look! as the sun puts out the light of the fire, so the glory of God will put out and consume all other ends. This is most certain—that which is a man's great end—that will work out all other ends. If you set up the glory of God as your chief end, that will by degrees eat out all selfish and base ends.

Look! as Pharaoh's lean cows, Gen. 41:4, ate up the fat, so the glory of God will eat up all those fat and worldly ends, which crowd in upon the soul in religious work. The keeping up of the glory of God as your great end, will be the keeping down and the casting out of all other ends.

[4.] Fourthly, He who really and actually aims at the glory of God in what he does—he will persevere in doing what God commands, though nothing for the present comes of it. If his eye is truly fixed upon divine glory, a command of God shall be enough to carry him on in his work. Psalm 27:8, "When you said, Seek my face, my heart said unto you, Your face, Lord, will I seek." When the glory of God is a man's mark, his heart will sweetly echo and graciously comply with divine commands: Jer. 3:22, "Return, O backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto you; for you are the Lord our God." God's commands fall with great power and force upon that man's heart, who has divine glory in his eye. One word from God will command such a soul to a gracious compliance with what God requires: Psalm 119:4-5, "You have commanded us to keep your precepts diligently. Oh that my ways were directed to keep your statutes!" As soon as God lays a command upon a Christian—he looks up to heaven for power to turn that precept into practice. "Oh that my ways were directed to keep your statutes! Oh that I were as *holy* as God would have me to be! Oh that I were as *humble* and *lowly* as God would have me to be! Oh that I were as *heavenly* and *spiritual* as God would have me to be! Oh that I were as *pure* and *perfect* as God would have me to be!"

Just so, verse 48, "My hands will I lift up to your commandments, which I have loved." Many there are, who thrust away your commandments with all their might—but I lift up my hands to your commandments. Many there are, who will strain themselves to take a comfort—but I strain myself to lift up your commandments. Many there are, who will stretch out their hands to take a reward—but I stretch out my hands to take hold on your commandments. To give a little more light into these words: Sometimes the lifting up of hands

betokens *admiration*; when men are astonished and ravished they lift up their hands: "I will lift up my hands to your commandments," that is, I will admire the goodness, the holiness, the righteousness, the purity and excellency of your commandments. Again, we lift up our hands when we betake ourselves to *refuge*: God's commands are the saint's refuge. When they house and shelter themselves under the wings of God's commands they are safe. Again, men lift up their hands when they *take hold* on a thing. Now gracious souls do take hold on God's commandments to do them, to practice them, and to express the life and power of them. Again, men lift up their hands to those things which are *high and above them*.

Now the commands of God are high—they are **sublime**, they are above us. They are sublime and high in regard of their original, they come down from God. They are sublime and high in regard of the *matter* of them, they are heavenly oracles, they are dictates of divine wisdom. They are sublime and high in regard of the *difficulty* of keeping of them, they exceeding all human strength. They are sublime and high in regard of their *situation*, they are situated in heaven: "Your word," says David, "endures forever in heaven." But yet as sublime and as high as they are, a man who has his eye upon divine glory will lift up his hands unto them; he will do all he can to express the pleasure that he takes in them, and the readiness of his soul to a holy compliance with them.

A man who has his eye upon divine glory, he will keep close to his work—to his hearing work, to his praying work, to his mourning work, to his repenting work, to his believing work, to his waiting work; though nothing comes on it, though he make no earnings of it, though comfort does not come, though joy and peace does not come, though assurance does not come, though enlargements do not come, though answers and returns from heaven do not come, though good days do not come, though deliverance does not come—yet such will keep close to their work that have their eye upon divine glory.

But now, such who eye not the glory of God in what they do, they quickly grow weary of their work; if they can make no earnings of their seekings and fastings and prayings—they are presently ready to throw up all, and to quarrel with God himself, as if God had done them an injury, Isaiah 58:1-4. [Compare these scriptures together: Psalm 44:12, 20; Cant. 3:1-3; Isaiah 26:8, 9, and 59:8-11; Hab. 2:1-3; Micah 7:7-9; Lam. 3:8, 44, compared with verse 24-26, 31-32. 40-41, 55.]

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, A man who really aims at the glory of God in this or that duty—he cannot be satisfied or contented with the performance of duties, without some enjoyments of God in duties. Without some converse and communion with God in duties, his soul cannot be satisfied; his soul thirsts and longs to see the beauty and the glory of the Lord in his sanctuary, and without this sight he cannot be quieted. "O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory." Psalms 63:1-2

Here is the *ordinance*—but where is the *God* of the ordinance? Here is prayer—but where is the *God* of prayer? Here is the *duty*—but where is the *God* of duty? Here is *enlargements*—but where is the *God* of enlargements? Here are *meltings* and *breakings of spirit*—but where is the *God* of these meltings and breakings? Psalm 84:2, "My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh cries out for the living God." The courts of the Lord, without spiritual converses with the living God, could not satisfy his soul: "Oh," says he, "here are the courts of the Lord, the courts of the Lord—but where is the living God? where is the living God? where is that God who makes men to live, and who makes ordinances to be living and lively ordinances to his children's souls? Oh, the courts of the Lord are very desirable—but the living God is much more desirable! The courts of the Lord are precious and glorious—but the living God is infinitely more precious and glorious! Here is the

mantle of Elijah—but where is the God of Elijah? 2 Kings 2:12-14. Here are the courts of the Lord—but where is the Lord of these courts?

It was the speech of holy Mr. Bradford, "that he could not leave a duty until he had found communion with Christ in the duty. He could not give off a *duty* until his heart was brought into a duty frame. He could not leave *confession* until he had found his heart humbled and melted under the sense of his sin. He could not give over *petitioning* until he had found his heart taken with the beauties of the things desired, and strongly carried out after the enjoyment of them. Neither could he leave *thanksgiving* until he had found his spirit enlarged, and his soul quickened in the return of praises."

And so it was with holy Bernard, who was accustomed to say, "O Lord, I never come to you but by you; I never go from you without you." A man who has his eye upon the glory of Christ—cannot put off his soul with anything below communion with Christ, in those pious services and duties that he offers up to Christ. Though the breasts of duty are sweet—yet those breasts will not satisfy the soul, except Christ lies between them, Cant. 1:13.

But now, men who have base, poor, low, and selfish ends in what they do, they can come off easily from their duties; though they find no spirit, no life, no warmth in duty—yet they can come off with contentment from duty. Though they have no communion, no converse at all with God in duty, though they have no pledges of grace, no pawns of mercy, no tastes of love, no relishes of heaven in a duty—yet they can come off from the duty with contentment and satisfaction of spirit. Let but others applaud him, and his own heart hug him—and he has enough.

16. In the sixteenth and last place—A man who is really holy speaks a holy language. [Psalm 45:1-2; Zeph. 3:9; Cant. 4:3. Compare these scriptures together—Proverbs 11:30, 12:18, and 25:11; Mat. 7:6, and 12:35; Col. 4:6; Eph. 4:29; Acts 26:25; John 6:25; 1 Pet.

4:11.] A holy *heart* and a holy *tongue* are inseparable companions. If there be grace in the *heart*—there will be grace in the *lips*. If the *heart* is pure—the *language* will be pure. Christ says his spouse's lips are like a thread of scarlet; they are *red* with talking of nothing but a crucified Christ; and they are *thin* like a thread, not swelled with other vain discourses. And verse 11, he tells you that "the lips of his spouse drop as the honeycombs," or drop honeycombs; and that "honey and milk are under her tongue." You know that Canaan was a land that flowed with milk and honey. Why? the language of the spouse was the language of Canaan; her lips were still dropping such holy, spiritual, and heavenly matter—as was as sweet, pleasant, profitable, desirable, and delectable to men's souls—as ever honey and milk was to men's palates or appetites. And as many were fed and nourished by milk and honey, so many were fed and nourished by the holy droppings of her lips.

Psalm 37:30, "The mouth of the righteous speaks wisdom, and his tongue talks of judgment." If the heart is holy—the tongue will be a-talking wisely, fruitfully, feelingly, affectionately of that which may profit both a man's self and others. Proverbs 10:20, "The tongue of the just is as choice silver; but the heart of the wicked is little worth." Godly men's words are of more worth than wicked men's hearts! Look—as choice silver is known by its tinkling—so holy men are known by their talking. And as choice silver gives a clear and sweet sound—so the tongue of the just sounds sweetly and pleasantly in the ears of others. Look! as choice silver is highly prized and valued among men, so is the tongue of the righteous among those who are righteous. Look! as choice silver allures and draws the hearts of men to a love and liking of it—just so, the tongues of the righteous do allure and draw the hearts of men to a love and liking of virtue and goodness.

Verse 21, "The lips of the righteous feed many." They feed many by their exhortations, instructions, admonitions, and counsels. The mouths of the righteous are like the gates of some hospitable people, where many are fed. The lips of the righteous are a free and well-

furnished table—at which many are fed and nourished with the dainties of heaven to eternal life. Righteous men keep open house, they keep free hospitality for all comers and goers; and if they have not always bread in their hands—yet they have always grace in their lips, to feed many. Though they may be outwardly poor—yet they have a treasure within to enrich many.

The tongue is the instrument of a Christian's glory, and is so interested in the quality it expresses, that in the original it signifies both *glory* and the *tongue*—as thereby intimating that the chief glory of man is his tongue.

But now men that have only a show of godliness, they do practically say, "Our tongues are our own, and who shall control us?" Their speech is so far from administering of grace to their hearers, that it administers usually either matter of carnal mirth, or of contempt, or of scorn, or of sorrow and mourning. Certainly they have no holiness in their hearts—who have so much of hell, and the devil, and lusts in their mouths. [James 1:26, 27, and 3:8, 12; Mat. 26:73.]

I may say to most, "You are unholy people, your speech betrays you, your worldliness, your profaneness, your cursing, your swearing, your lying, your slandering, your reviling, your railing, your deriding, etc., does plainly evidence that you have no holiness in you." Well! remember this—a tongue that is set on fire from hell, is in danger to be set on fire in hell. *Hell* is for that man, and that man is for hell—who has so much of hell in his mouth. The *devil* is for that man, and that man is for the devil—who has so much of the devil in his mouth. *Damnation* is for that man, and that man is for damnation—who has so much of damnation in his mouth. The *world* is for that man, and that man is for the world—who has so much of the world in his mouth.

Whatever is in the heart will break out in the lips. If wickedness is in the heart—it will break out in the lips. Physicians say that the nature of diseases is as well known by the tongue as by the pulse. The

spiritual diseases that are in the heart will quickly discover themselves by the tongue. Wherever holiness is in the heart—it will break forth in the lips. A holy heart and a holy tongue are married together, and it is not in man to put them asunder. You shall sooner separate the soul from the body, than you shall separate a holy tongue from a holy heart.

And thus I have done with this use of **examination**. The Lord make you wise to lay these things to heart, that so you may know how it is likely to go with you in the eternal world.

Fifteen Motives for Unsanctified People to Pursue Holiness

First, let me speak to **unsanctified ones**. Is it so, that real holiness is the only way to happiness, and that without holiness on earth—men shall never come to the beatifical vision or blessed fruition of God in heaven? Oh then, how should this provoke and stir up all unholy people to strive and labor, as for life, after this real holiness, without which they shall never come to have anything to do with God in everlasting happiness! etc.

Now that I may the better prevail with unsanctified souls, I shall,

First, propound some **motives** to stir and provoke their hearts to look and labor after real holiness, etc.

Secondly, I shall propose some **means** for the obtaining of holiness.

Thirdly, I shall endeavor to answer those **objections**, and remove those impediments, which hinder and keep men off from laboring after real holiness.

I. For the first, I shall propound these following motives and considerations to provoke all unsanctified people to seek after holiness.

1. First, Consider the necessity of holiness. It is impossible that ever you should be eternally happy—except you are holy. No holiness here—no happiness hereafter. The Scripture speaks of three bodily inhabitants of heaven—Enoch, before the law; Elijah, under the law; and Jesus Christ, under the gospel; all three eminent in holiness, to teach us, that even in an ordinary course there is no going to heaven without holiness. There are many thousand thousands now in heaven—but not one unholy one among them all!

There is not one sinner among all those saints; not one goat among all those sheep; not one weed among all those flowers; not one thorn or prickle among all those roses; not one pebble among all those glistening diamonds. There is not one *Cain* among all those Abels; nor one *Ishmael* among all those Isaacs; nor one Esau among all those Jacobs in heaven. There is not one *Ham* among all the patriarchs; not one *Saul* among all the prophets; nor one *Judas* among all the apostles; nor one *Demas* among all the preachers; nor one *Simon Magus* among all the professors. Heaven is only for the holy man--and the holy man alone, is for heaven. Heaven is a garment of glory—which is only suited to him who is holy. [Rev. 5:11, and 7:9; Heb. 12:22-23.] God, who is truth itself, and cannot lie, has said it—that "without holiness no man, shall see the Lord."

Mark that word "no man." Without holiness the *rich* man shall not see the Lord. Without holiness the *poor* man shall not see the Lord. Without holiness the *noble* man shall not see the Lord—and without holiness the *base* man shall not see the Lord. Without holiness the *prince* shall not see the Lord—and without holiness the *peasant* shall not see the Lord. Without holiness the *ruler* shall not see the Lord—and without holiness the *ruled* shall not see the Lord. Without holiness the *learned* man shall not see the Lord—and without holiness the *ignorant* man shall not see the Lord. Without holiness the *husband* shall not see the Lord—and without holiness the *wife* shall not see the Lord. Without holiness the *father* shall not see the Lord—and without holiness the *child* shall not see the Lord;. Without holiness the *master* shall not see the Lord—and without holiness the *servant* shall not see the Lord. "For faithful and strong is the Lord Almighty, who has spoken it," Josh. 23:14.

In this day some cry up one form—some another; some cry up one church state—some another; some cry up one way—some another; but certainly the way of holiness is the good old way, Jer. 6:16; it is the King of kings' highway to heaven and happiness: Isaiah 35:8, "And a highway will be there; it will be called *the Way of Holiness*. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in

that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it." Some men say, "Lo, here is the way!" Other men say, "Lo, there is the way!" But certainly the way of holiness is the surest, the safest, the easiest, the noblest, and the shortest way to happiness. Among the heathens, no man could enter into the temple of *honor*—but must first enter into the temple of *virtue*. There is no entering into the temple of eternal happiness, except you enter into the temple of holiness. Holiness must first enter into you, before you can enter into God's holy hill.

As Samson cried out, "Give me water—or I die!" or as Rachel cried out, "Give me children—or I die!" So all unsanctified souls may well cry out, "Lord, give me holiness—or I die! Give me holiness—or I eternally die!" [Psalm 15] If the *angels*, those princes of glory, fall once from their holiness, they shall be forever excluded from everlasting happiness and blessedness. If *Adam* in paradise fall from his purity, he shall quickly be driven out from the presence of divine glory. Augustine would not be a wicked man, an unholy man, one hour for all the world, because he did not know but that he might die that hour: and should he die in an unholy estate, he knew he would be forever separated from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.

O sirs, do not deceive your own souls; holiness is of absolute necessity; without it you shall never see the Lord! 2 Thes. 1:8-10. It is not absolutely necessary that you should be great or rich in the world—but it is absolutely necessary that you should be holy. It is not absolutely necessary that you should enjoy health, strength, friends, liberty, life—but it is absolutely necessary that you should be holy. A man may see the Lord without worldly prosperity—but he can never see the Lord except he be holy. A man may to heaven, to happiness, without honor or worldly glory—but he can never to heaven, to happiness, without holiness. Without holiness here, no heaven hereafter! Rev. 21:27, "And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles." God will at last shut the gates of glory against every person who is without heart-purity.

Ah, sirs! holiness is a flower which does not grow in nature's garden. Men are not born with holiness in their hearts, as they are born with tongues in their mouths. Holiness is of a divine offspring—it is a pearl of price, which is to be found in no nature but a renewed nature—in no bosom but a sanctified bosom. There is not the least beam or spark of holiness in any natural man in the world: Gen. 6:5, "Every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually." Job 25:4, "How can man be clean who is born of a woman?" The interrogation carries in it a strong negation, "*How* can man be clean?" that is, man cannot be clean who is born of a woman! Man who is born of a woman, is born in sin, and born both under wrath and under the curse. "And who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" Job 14:4.

Isaiah 64:6, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Romans 3:10-11, "There is none righteous, no not one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks after God." Every man by nature is a *stranger*, yes, an *enemy* to holiness, Romans 8:7. Every man who comes into this world, comes with his face towards sin and hell, and with his back upon God and holiness. Such is the corruption of our nature, that, propound any divine good to it, it is entertained as fire by water or wet wood—with hissing. Propound any evil, then it is like a fire to straw; it is like the foolish satyr who made haste to kiss the fire; it is like that unctuous matter which, the naturalists say, sucks and snatches the fire to it, with which it is consumed.

All men are born sinners, and there is nothing but an infinite power that can make them saints. All men would be happy—and yet they naturally loathe to be holy. By all which you may clearly see that food is not more necessary for the preservation of natural life, than holiness is necessary for the preservation and salvation of the soul. If a man had the wisdom of Solomon, the strength of Samson, the courage of Joshua, the policy of Ahithophel, the dignities of Haman, the power of Ahasuerus, and the eloquence of Apollos—yet all these without holiness would never save him.

2. Secondly, Consider there is a possibility of obtaining holiness. Holiness is a *golden mine* that may be obtained—if you will but dig, and sweat, and take pains for it, Proverbs 2:2-7. Holiness is a *flower of paradise* that may be gathered. Holiness is a *crown* that may be put on. Holiness is a *pearl of great price* that may be obtained—if you will but part with the wicked man's trinity—the world, the flesh, and the devil—to enjoy it, Romans 13:12-14. Though some of the attributes of God be incommunicable—yet holiness is a communicable attribute; and this should mightily encourage you to look after holiness.

Well! sinners, remember this—it is possible that those *proud hearts* of yours may be humbled; it is possible that those *hard hearts* of yours may be softened; it is possible that those *unclean hearts* of yours may be sanctified; it is possible that those *blind minds* of yours may be enlightened; it is possible that those *stubborn wills* of yours may be tamed; it is possible that those *disordered affections* of yours may be regulated; it is possible that those *drowsy and defiled consciences* of yours may be awakened and purged; it is possible that those *vile and polluted natures* of yours may be changed and purified. There are several things that do witness that holiness is attainable; as

[1.] Witness God's promise to give his HOLY SPIRIT to those who ask. Luke 11:13, "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him?" The Holy Spirit is a gift more worth than a world, yes, than heaven itself—and yet, to make men holy, God is willing to give his Holy Spirit upon very easy terms—they shall have it for *asking*. The Spirit is a spirit of holiness; he is holy in himself, and the author of all that holiness that is in man. [John 3:6; Titus 3:5; 1 Cor. 6:11.] It is the Holy Spirit who most powerfully moves and persuades men to holiness who presents holiness in its beauty and glory to the soul. It is the Holy Spirit who sows seeds of holiness in the soul. It is the Holy Spirit who causes those seeds to grow up to maturity and

ripeness. Nothing can come from the Holy Spirit but that which is holy. The Holy Spirit is the great principle of all the holiness that is in the world; and this Holy Spirit God has engaged himself to give to those who are unholy. "I will also sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will place My Spirit within you and cause you to follow My statutes and carefully observe My ordinances." Ezekiel 36:25-27. The Holy Spirit is a gift—a free gift—a noble gift—a precious gift—a glorious gift—which God will bestow upon the unclean, upon the unsanctified, that they may be cleansed and sanctified, and so fitted for the Lord's service and use. It is possible that you may be holy, 2 Tim. 2:21; witness,

[2.] His holy WORD—which he has given on purpose to make men holy, and to keep men holy. His *commandments* are holy, just, and good. His *threatenings* are holy, just, and good. And all his *promises* are holy, just, and good. [Deut. 4:6-9: Romans 7:12: Luke 1:70-76.] The Holy Scriptures were written with a finger of holiness, so as to move us to holiness, and to work holiness in us. The whole word of God is an entire love-letter to provoke us to holiness, and to promote holiness in us. Holy *commands* should sweetly persuade us to holiness; and holy *threatenings* should divinely force us to holiness; and holy *promises* should effectually allure us—to the love of holiness, to the embracing of holiness, and to the practice of holiness. The great design of God, in sending this sacred volume in golden letters from heaven, was to enamor men with the love and beauty of holiness. Again, it is possible that you may attain to true holiness; witness,

[3.] Those holy AMBASSADORS that he has sent on purpose to turn men from "darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Jesus Christ." Their great business and work is to treat with you about holiness; it is to woo you to match with holiness, and to follow after holiness; it is to remove all impediments

that may in any way hinder your embracing of holiness; and it is to propose all manner of encouragements that may win you over to make holiness your great all, Acts 26:18, and 2 Cor. 5:18-20. Again, it is possible that you may be holy; witness,

[4.] The holy EXAMPLES of all the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and saints which are left on record, on purpose to provoke you to an imitation of them in holiness. Their holy examples, as so many shining stars, are left upon record to influence us to holiness. In the holy examples of those who are now triumphant in heaven, you may run and read that holiness is attainable. In their holy examples, as in so many looking-glasses, you may see that holiness is a jewel which may be procured. By that holiness which others have reached to, sinners may see that it is possible that they may be made saints. Again, it is possible that you may be holy; witness,

[5.] All those NOTORIOUS sinners that the Scripture declares have been sanctified and made holy. To instance only in a few: **ADAM**, you know, was created in an estate of innocency, integrity, and perfect holiness, Gen. 1:26; he being made in the image of God, and after the likeness and similitude of God. It was agreed upon in the parliament of heaven that man should be made glorious in holiness; and so he was, for he was made after God's own image. And this the apostle clearly and fully evidences in that famous scripture, Eph. 4:22-24. [In this scripture he speaks plainly of the renovation of that knowledge, holiness, and righteousness that Adam once had—but lost it by his fall, Psalm 8:4-6; Gen. 2:20.]

Adam was invested and endowed with righteousness and holiness in his first glorious estate. With *righteousness*, that he might live fairly, justly, evenly, and righteously towards man; and with *holiness*, that he might live wisely, lovingly, reverentially, and holily towards God; and that he might take up in God as his chief good, as his great All. Adam's first estate was a state of perfect knowledge, wisdom, and

understanding; it was a perfect state of holiness, righteousness, and happiness. There was nothing *within* him but what was desirable and delectable; there was nothing *outside* him but what was amiable and commendable; nor anything about him but what was serviceable and comfortable.

And yet, in the height of all his glory—Adam falls to apostasy and open rebellion against God! He takes part with Satan against God himself; he transgresses his righteous law, he affronts his justice, he provokes his anger, he stirs up his wrath against himself and his posterity. The sin of Adam was a *voluminous* sin! All kinds of notorious sins were bound up in it—as backsliding, rebellion, treason, pride, unbelief, blasphemy, contempt of God, unthankfulness, theft, murder, and idolatry, etc.

The philosopher being asked which was the *best* member of the body, answered, "The tongue; for if it is good, it is the best trumpet of God's glory." And being asked again which was the *worst* member of the body, answered, "The tongue; for if it be bad, it is the worst firebrand of hell." Just so, if any should ask me, Which was the best creature of God? I would answer, "Man in honor before his fall." If you should ask me, Which is the worst? I must answer, "Man in his fall."

Adam was once the wonder of all understanding, the mirror of wisdom and knowledge, the image of God, the delight of heaven, the glory of the creation, the world's great Lord, and the Lord's great darling! But being fallen, ah how low, how poor, how miserable, how sottish, how senseless, how brutish, yes how much below the beast which perishes, was he! And yet God pardoned, changed, and sanctified him, and stamped his image of holiness afresh upon him, when he made a covenant with him in Christ, Gen. 3.

Just so, **MANASSEH**, he was a notorious sinner, he was a sinner of the greatest magnitude; his sins reached up to heaven, his soul was ripe for hell, he had sold himself to work all manner of wickedness!

"Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. He did what was evil in the Lord's sight, imitating the detestable practices of the pagan nations whom the Lord had driven from the land ahead of the Israelites. He rebuilt the pagan shrines his father Hezekiah had destroyed. He constructed altars for the images of Baal and set up Asherah poles. He also bowed before all the stars of heaven and worshiped them. He even built pagan altars in the Temple of the Lord, the place where the Lord had said his name should be honored forever. Manasseh even sacrificed his own sons in the fire in the valley of the son of Hinnom. (Here was inhuman superstition, and inhuman cruelty—to offer his own children in sacrifice to the devil.) He practiced sorcery, divination, and witchcraft, and he consulted with mediums and psychics. He did much that was evil in the Lord's sight, arousing his anger. Manasseh even took a carved idol he had made and set it up in God's Temple! Manasseh led the people of Judah and Jerusalem to do even more evil than the pagan nations whom the Lord had destroyed when the Israelites entered the land." 2 Chronicles 33:1-9.

The actions of rulers become rules for the common people's actions; and their example passes as current as their coin. The common people dare practice the very worst of wickedness that they see acted in a scarlet robe; they are like warm wax, easily receiving impressions from the seals of great men's vices; they make no bones of it to sin by prescription, and to damn themselves with authority. The heathen brings in a young man, who hearing of the adulteries and wickednesses of the gods, said, "What, they do thus and thus—and shall I abstain from it?" So say most, when great ones are greatly wicked, "Why, they do thus and thus—so why should we abstain from it?" The Egyptians esteemed it graceful, and their duty, to halt on that leg on which their king limped; most men think it a grace to imitate the greatest authority in their most graceless actings, which made the poet say,

"Subjects and kingdoms commonly do choose
The manners that their princes daily use."

Verse 10, "The Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they ignored all his warnings." He was settled in idolatry, and stopped his ears against all the counsel and admonitions of the prophets who were sent to reclaim him. Now who would ever have thought that one so abominably wicked and wretched should ever have obtained such favor with God, as to be pardoned, renewed, and sanctified? and yet, verse 12-13, "But while in deep distress, Manasseh sought the Lord his God and cried out humbly to the God of his ancestors. And when he prayed, the Lord listened to him and was moved by his request for help. So the Lord let Manasseh return to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Manasseh had finally realized that the Lord alone is God!" He now acknowledges Jehovah to be the true God, and renounces all other gods, that he may cleave to God alone. **There is no heart so wicked—but grace can make it holy.**

Just so, **PAUL** was once so great a sinner, that had he stepped but one step further, he had fallen into the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit.

In 1 Tim. 1:13 you have a brief survey of his great transgressions. He was a **blasphemer**. He blasphemed God and Christ, and his ways and truth; he made a mock and scoff at holiness. He made nothing of blaspheming that *God* whom he should have feared, and of blaspheming that *Christ* whom he should have sweetly embraced, and of blaspheming those *truths* which he should have readily entertained. Paul was a great proficient in the school of blasphemy, he made nothing of belching out blasphemy in the very face of heaven. And he was a **persecutor** too: he persecuted holiness to the death, Acts 9 and 26:11; yes, he was mad in persecuting the poor saints and servants of Christ; he did all he could to make their lives a hell, and to rid them out of this world; he thought them not worthy to live, though they were such worthies of whom this world was not worthy, Acts 8:3. He was a ravening and an untired wolf that was never weary in worrying Christ's little flock, and in sucking out the blood of his lambs. Yes, and he was an **injurious** person too: he made no conscience of wronging others, or of disregarding that

golden rule, "Do to others as you would have others do to you," Mat. 7:12. This royal law, this standard of equity, he regarded not; he made nothing of throwing men and women into prison, and of compelling them to blaspheme by his cruelty and wicked example. He spared no gender—but practiced the highest cruelty upon all who had anything of sanctity in them. He would hazard the torments of hell, rather than not be a tormenter of the saints here; and the more active any were in holiness, the more injurious was he to them.

And yet behold this blasphemer, this persecutor, this injurious person, became a sanctified Christian, an eminent saint, a pattern of holiness to all Christians in all ages.

Once more, witness that sad roster of unsanctified people who are mentioned in 1 Cor. 6:9-10, "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." These monstrous sinners and prodigious sins were enough to have brought another flood upon the world, or to have provoked the Lord to rain hell out of heaven upon them, as once he did upon Sodom and Gomorrah, or to have caused the ground to open and swallow them up, as once it did Korah, Dathan, and Abiram—and yet behold some of these are changed and sanctified! verse 11, "And that is what some of you were! But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God." Oh, the infinite goodness! Oh, the infinite grace! Oh, the infinite wisdom and power of God—which has pardoned, washed, sanctified, and cleansed such guilty, filthy, and polluted souls! The worst of sinners should never despair of being made saints, considering what unholy ones have been made holy. [Matthew, Zaccheus, Mary Magdalene, the jailer, and the murderers of Christ, Acts 2 are clear instances of this truth.] It is possible that you may be made holy; witness,

[6.] All those sanctified ones among whom you live, who once were as unholy, or more unholy, it may be, than ever you were. The sanctified *husband* is a clear witness to the unsanctified *wife*—that she may be sanctified, 1 Cor. 7:14, 16; 1 Pet. 3:1, 6. The sanctified *father* is a witness to the unsanctified *child*—that he may be sanctified. The sanctified *master* is a witness to the unsanctified *servant*—that he may be sanctified. The sanctified *prince* is a witness to his unsanctified *people*—that they may be sanctified. The sanctified *minister* is a witness to his unsanctified *hearers*—that they may be sanctified. The same Spirit, the same grace, the same power, the same presence which has sanctified any of these, may sanctify all of these. There is no heart so unholy—but a holy God can make it holy! There is no spirit so unclean—but a Holy Spirit can make it clean. Well, sinners! there are many living and standing witnesses of divine grace among you, and around you, which do sufficiently declare that it is possible that you may be sanctified and saved. Again, it is possible that you may be sanctified and made holy; witness,

[7.] The oath of a holy God. Ezek. 18:31-32, and 33:11, "*As surely as I live*, declares the Sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, O house of Israel?" "*As surely as I live*" is the form of an oath, and is much used in the Scripture by God himself. Wicked men are very hardly persuaded to believe that God is willing that they should be sanctified and saved; and therefore God puts his oath on it—that he is infinitely more willing that wicked men should turn from their evil ways and be sanctified and saved, than that they should perish in their sins and be damned forever.

"*As surely as I live*" is a weighty oath, and imports the certainty of that which follows: it is absolute, without evasion or revocation. "*As surely as I live and am God*—I have no pleasure in destroying and damning of souls—but desire that they would turn from their evil ways, and that they would be sanctified and saved. Let me not live,

let me be no longer a God—if I would not have the wicked to live and be happy forever." The possibility of your being holy, God has confirmed by an oath, and therefore you may no longer question it.

The Egyptians, though heathens, so hated perjury, that if any man did but swear by the life of the king, and did not perform his oath, that man was to die, and no amount of gold was to redeem his life. And do you think that a holy God does not stand more upon his oath than heathens, yes, than the worst of heathens? Certainly he does! Lastly, it is possible that you may be holy; witness,

[8.] The great designs and undertakings of Jesus Christ to make lost man holy. His great design in leaving his Father's bosom and coming into this world, was the destroying, the dissolving of the works of the devil: 1 John 3:8, "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work." Sin is Satan's work, and Christ comes to destroy it, and break it all in pieces. Men's sins are Satan's chains, by which he links them fast to himself. But Christ was therefore manifested that he might loose and knock off these chains. Satan had knit many sinful knots in our souls—but Christ comes to untie those knots. Satan had laid many snares—but Christ comes to discover and to break those snares.

It was the great design of Christ in the divesting of himself, as it were, of his divine honor, glory, and dignity, and in his taking on him the nature of man—to destroy Satan, and to sanctify the souls of men, Phil. 2:6-8, 15; Heb. 2:11, 14-15. It was the great design of Jesus Christ in giving of himself for us—in giving his soul, his body, his life, to justice, to death, to wrath for us—that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works, Titus 2:14.

The crown of holiness was fallen from our heads, and Christ freely and willingly uncrowns himself, that once more we might be crowned with holiness, immortality, and glory. Christ was resolved that he would lose all that was near and dear unto him—that he

would recover our lost holiness for us. Christ knew that heaven would have been but a poor purchase—had he not purchased holiness for us. As heaven is but a base thing without God, so heaven is but a base thing without holiness. It is holiness, which is the sparkling diamond in the ring of happiness; a man were better be holy in hell than unholy in heaven; and therefore Christ ventures his all for holiness.

The great design of Christ in redeeming of souls with the choicest, the purest, the costliest, the noblest blood which ever ran in veins—was that they should "serve him in righteousness and holiness all the days of their lives," Luke 1:74-75. In a word, Christ would have never taken so great a journey from heaven to earth—but to make men holy. Christ would have never taken upon him the form of a servant—but to make us the servants of the most high God. Christ would have never lain in a manger, he would have never trod the wine-press of his Father's wrath—but to make you holy. He prayed, he sweat, he bled, and he hung on the cross—all to make you holy. He was holy in his birth, and holy in his life, and holy in his death, and holy in all his sufferings—and all to make you holy. The great design of Christ in all he did, and in all he suffered, was to make man holy. And thus you see by all these arguments that holiness is attainable.

3. Thirdly, Consider this—that real holiness is the honor and the glory of the creature; and therefore the apostle links holiness and honor together. 2 Cor. 3:18, and Eph. 5:27; 1 Thess. 4:3-4, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication; that everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor." The vessel is man's body—which is the great utensil or instrument of the soul, and contains it as in a vessel. Now the sanctity and chastity of this vessel is the honor of a Christian. Even bodily purity is a Christian's glory. He who keeps his vessel in holiness, keeps it in honor. Holiness is the greatest dignity that mortal man is capable of; it is man's highest promotion, it is his highest exaltation. Holiness is the true grandeur and the true nobility of the soul.

Deut. 26:19, "And to make you high above all nations which he has made, in praise, and in name, and in honor, and that you may be an holy people unto the Lord your God." There is nothing which lifts a people so high, and which makes them so truly famous and glorious—as holiness does. Holiness is the praise, the renown, the crown, and glory of a people. Holiness is the diadem, the beauty, and the excellency of a people. Holiness is the strength, the honor, and the riches of a people. Holiness is the image of God, the character of Christ. Holiness is a beam of the divine nature, a spark of glory, it is the life of your lives, and the soul of your souls. It is only holiness, which makes men to excel in honor all other people in the world.

Look! as God's holiness is his glory, and the angels' holiness is their glory, and the church's holiness is their glory, Exod. 15:11; Isaiah 6:2, 3; Psalm 93:5; Eph. 5:27—just so, the holiness of any particular person is the glory of that person. Why was Jabez reputed more honorable than his brethren—but because he was more holy than his brethren? 1 Chron. 4:9-10, "Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez, saying, 'I gave birth to him in pain.' Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, 'Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and *keep me from evil*, that it may not grieve me!' And God granted his request." Holiness is the truest and the greatest nobility and honor in the world.

Romanus, the martyr, who was born of noble parentage, entreated his persecutors that they would not favor him for his nobility; "for it is not," said he, "the blood of my ancestors—but my Christian faith, which makes me noble." *David* thought it not so happy nor so honorable a thing to be a king in his own house, as to be a door-keeper in God's house. Solomon did prefer the title of Ecclesiastes, that is, *a soul reconciled to the church*, before the title of the king of Jerusalem. Holy Theodosius, the emperor, preferred the title of *a member of the church*, before that of *the head of the empire*, professing that he had rather be a saint and no king, than a king and no saint. And Luther had rather be a *Christian dunce* than a *pagan*

emperor. These holy men well knew that holiness was the top of all their honor and glory.

Well, sinners, remember this, that holiness is the high and ready way to the highest honor; and therefore, as ever you would be truly honorable, labor to be truly holy. *Great swelling titles* are but as so many rattles, or as so many feathers in men's caps, without holiness. He who can be content to live without holiness, must be contented to see his honor entombed while he lives. Honor without holiness is but a wind that will blow a man the sooner to hell. Honor without holiness is but a great nothing, a glorious illusion. [Acts 25:23, "So the next day Agrippa and Bernice arrived at the auditorium with *great pomp*." That is, with great phantasy or vain show. All the honor, pomp, and accolade of this world is but a phantasy.]

Many a man has been the worse—but where lives that man who has been ever the better, for his worldly honor? A man swelled with honor, without holiness, is like a man in a dropsy, whose bigness is his disease. Well, let ambitionists, and all others who hunt after the breath of popular applause, know that that honor which attends holiness is the truest honor, the highest honor, the greatest honor, the happiest honor, the surest honor, the purest honor, and the most lasting and abiding honor. Mollerus, upon Psalm 73:20, concludes that wicked men's earthly honors and accolades are but as idle dreams, and their splendid braveries but dreamy fantasies. Adonibezek, a mighty prince, is quickly made to eat scraps from under the table with the dogs, Judges 1:7. And Nebuchadnezzar, a mighty conqueror, turned a-grazing among the oxen, Dan. 4:28. And Herod is reduced from a conceited god—to be the most loathsome of men, a living carrion attacked by the vilest of creatures, upon his affront of his Creator, Acts 12:23. And great Haman feasted with the king one day, and made a feast for crows the next, Esther 7:10. But that honor which accompanies holiness is honor that will abide with a man, that will to the grave with a man, yes, that will to heaven with a man.

Some heathens have been weary of their honors—but the honor that attends holiness is no burden to a Christian. Others have rejected honors when they have been offered to them, because of the trouble and danger which attends them. High seats are always uneasy, and crowns are usually stuffed with thorns. But the honor which attends holiness is a rose without prickles, it is a crown without thorns. That honor which springs from a root of holiness shall be both sanctified and sweetened by God, so as that it shall not hurt nor harm a gracious soul. Ah, sinners! sinners! if you will be ambitious, be ambitious of that honor which comes in with holiness, for there is no honor compared to that honor. The Romans were insatiable in their desires after worldly honor, which is but as a blast, a shadow, a dream. Oh, how much more insatiable should you be in your desires and endeavors after that honor that is linked to holiness, and that is substantial and lasting!

To stir you up to look after real holiness, consider,

4. Fourthly, That holiness is very attractive, drawing, and winning. It draws *love*, it draws *desire*, it draws *delight*. Holiness is like a precious perfume, whose savor spreads itself, and is pleasing and delightful to all who come near it: 2 Kings 4:9-10, "She said to her husband—I am sure this man who stops in from time to time is a holy man of God. Let's make a little room for him on the roof and furnish it with a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp. Then he will have a place to stay whenever he comes by." The holiness of the prophet's spirit, the holiness of his principles, the holiness of his behavior, and the holiness of his life, did so allure and win upon this great lady, that she becomes an importunate suitor to her husband that he might be lovingly, freely, courteously, and commodiously entertained and accommodated as often as he came that way. [History tells us of many infidels that have been won to the Christian faith by the holy lives of the saints, etc.]

Just so, Acts 2:46-47, "Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together

with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." That which did grace and ingratiate these holy converts into the favor of the people, was the exercise of their grace and holiness. It was their sweet unity, their noble charity, their holy familiarity, their blessed harmony, their singular sincerity, and their Christian constancy, which brought them into favor with all the people.

Visible holiness is a loadstone which will draw eyes and hearts after it: 1 Pet. 3:1, "Wives, in the same way be submissive to your husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives." A holy life is a winning life, Phil. 2:15, and 1 Cor. 7:16. The holy life of the wife may be the conversion of the husband; the holy, the wise, the watchful, the circumspect life of the wife may issue in the salvation of the husband. Many a husband has been won to Christ by the holy life of the wife; and many a wife has been won by the holy life of the husband. Many a servant has been won by the holy life of the master; and many a master has been won by the holy life of the servant.

Sozomen reports, that the holy life of a poor captive Christian maid, made a king and all his family to embrace the Christian faith. I have read of Cecilia, a poor maiden, who, by her holy and gracious behavior in her martyrdom, was the means of converting four hundred to Christ. Many a soul has been won by the silent oratory of a holy life. ["Monica won her husband from being an impure Manichee, not by force of argument—but by purity and chastity of life," says Augustine.] Justin Martyr confesses that the constancy of Christians in their piety and sufferings was the chief motive that converted him to Christianity. "For I myself," says he, "was once a Platonist, and did gladly hear the Christians reviled: but when I saw they feared not death, nor any of those miseries which did most frighten all other men, I began to consider with myself that it was impossible for such men to be lovers of pleasure more than lovers of piety; and that made me first think of turning Christian."

There is nothing that has that influence upon the *judgments* of men to persuade them, upon the *consciences* of men to awe them, upon the *mouths* of men to stop them, upon the *hearts* of men to convince them, and upon the *lives* of men to reform them—as holiness, 1 Pet. 2:12, "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." What Plato once said of his moral virtue—namely, that if it could be seen with bodily eyes it would be beloved of all, and draw all hearts to itself—that is most true of this theological grace, holiness. **Holiness is so beautiful and so lovely a thing, that it renders men amiable and lovely in the very eyes of their enemies.** Tilligny, for his rare virtues, was rescued from death by his greatest enemies at the massacre of Paris. Holiness makes a man's face to shine, as it did Moses his, and Stephen's. Nothing pleases the eye nor wins the heart, like holiness. What is gold to godliness, gifts to grace, parts to piety? A spark, a ray, a beam of holiness, will certainly have an influence upon the spirits of men, either to restrain them or change them, or allay them or sweeten them, or win them, or one way or another to better them.

Look! as the unholy lives of many professors do occasion some to blaspheme God, others to belie God, others to withstand God, and others to forsake God; look, as the looseness of many Christians does work some to reproach Christ, others to deny Christ, others to refuse Christ, others to revile the good ways of Christ, and others to oppose and despise the faithful followers of Christ: as Lactantius reports, that the loose lives of many Christians was made by the heathens the reproach of Christ himself, "How can we think the master to be good, whose disciples we see to be so bad?" And Salvian also complains that the loose walking of many Christians was made by the heathen the reproach of Christ himself, saying, "If Christ had taught holy doctrine, surely his followers would lead better lives." And further, the same author relates how the heathens did reproach some Christians, who by their lewd lives made the gospel of Christ to be a reproach: "Where," said they, "is that good law which they believe? Where are those rules of godliness which they learn? They read the

holy Gospel—and yet are unclean; they hear the apostles' writings—and yet are drunk; they follow Christ—and yet disobey Christ; they profess a holy law—and yet do lead impure lives."

Now I say, look, as the unholy lives of many professors is a dishonor to God, a reproach to Christ, a scandal to religion, a blot to profession, and a grief to many whom God would not have grieved, Ezek. 13:22—just so, the power of holiness, the practice of holiness, is very influential upon the worst of men, to win and work them to the Lord, and to a love and liking of his ways. The holy lives of the saints made the very heathens to say, "Surely this is a good God, whose servants are so good." Ambrose's holiness did very much draw out the heart of Theodosius, the emperor, to him. And the holiness of Paphnutius did very much draw out the heart of Constantine the Great to him. There is nothing which gives a man that heart-room and that hearty room in the souls of others—as holiness. It is the holy man who is a man of a thousand. [2 Thes. 1:3-5, read it.] But,

5. Fifthly, Consider that real holiness is the excellency of all a man's excellencies. As holiness is the glory of God, a part of the divine nature, a spark of heaven, a ray of glory—so it is the excellency of all a man's excellencies. Holiness is the excellency of all our *natural* excellencies, it is the excellency of all our *moral* excellencies, and it is the excellency of all our *intellectual* excellencies. Look! as God's holiness is the excellency of all his excellencies, as the angels, who best know what is the top of his excellency, do evidence by that threefold repetition, "Holy, holy, holy," Isaiah 6:3; these multiplied acclamations of holiness denote the superlative eminency, excellency, and perfection of God's holiness. Both among the Hebrews and among the Grecians the holiness of God is the excellency of his omniscency, omnipotency, and omnipresence. It is the excellency of his eternity, immutability, and fidelity; it is the excellency of his wisdom, love, care, and goodness.

Psalm 111:9, "Holy and reverend is his name." God's name comes to be reverend by holiness. If his name were not holy, it would never be

reverend. And why is God called so often "the holy one," but to show us that holiness is the very top of all his glory and excellency. [Exod. 15:11. That which God accounts his highest honor is his holiness.] God could not be glorious in anything if he were not glorious in holiness. That which speaks his *power* to be glorious power, is his holiness; and that which speaks his *wisdom* to be glorious wisdom, is his holiness; and that which speaks his *mercy* to be glorious mercy, is his holiness, etc, Were not the *power* of God a holy power, it could never be a glorious power; were not the *wisdom* of God a holy wisdom, it could never be glorious wisdom; and were not the *mercy* of God holy mercy, it could never be glorious mercy, etc.

Just so, the holiness of a man is the glory and excellency of all a man's excellencies; it is the perfection of all a man's perfections. In paradise, man's perfect holiness was his perfect blessedness; and in heaven, man's perfect holiness will be his perfect happiness, Heb. 12:23. Holiness adds an excellency to all a man's excellencies. That which adds an excellency to a man's *wisdom* is holiness. When a man's wisdom is a holy wisdom, then it is excellent wisdom. Just so, holy *courage* is excellent courage, and holy *zeal* is excellent zeal, and holy *knowledge* is excellent knowledge, and holy *faith* is excellent faith, and holy *love* is excellent love, and holy *fear* is excellent fear. It is the adding of holiness to all these, which renders these virtues truly excellent; it is holiness, which is the top of all these royalties.

Look! as all ciphers signify nothing except you add a figure before them—just so, all the excellencies which are in men, whether they are natural, moral, or acquired, they signify nothing except you add holiness to them. [0000000—these signify nothing; but if you do but add a figure to them, 10000000, then they signify much.] Birth and breeding, wit and wealth, honor and learning—are but the *shadows* of nobleness and true excellency; it is holiness, which is the soul and substance of all; and without holiness all other things are of no worth, all other excellencies have no excellency at all in them.

Naaman was general of the king's army; he was a man in great favor with his prince, a man much honored among the people for being a deliverer to them. He was also a mighty man in valor—but *he was a leper*, 2 Kings 5:1. This "but he was a leper" was a cloud upon all his glory; it was a veil upon all his honor, greatness, and nobleness. Just so, to say, there is a *wise* man—but unholy; and there is a *great* man—but unholy; and there is an *sincere* man—but unholy; and there is a *noble* man—but unholy; and there is a *valiant* man—but unholy; and there is a *good-natured* man—but unholy; and there is a *learned* man—but unholy, etc. What is this "but unholy," but a cloud of darkness upon all the excellencies which are in these people? But let holiness be but added to each of these, and then they will shine as so many suns.

Holiness is a garment that sets off arts, and parts, and all other excellencies that are in man; let but this garment be lacking, and the nakedness of all things will quickly appear. And this made Jerome to say that he had rather have Paul's heavenly graces, than the purple of kings with their kingdoms. Look! as a precious jewel set in gold makes that much more glorious which was glorious before—just so, holiness adds beauty, splendor, and glory to a man's parts, birth, honor, and estate, etc. But,

6. Sixthly, Consider that holiness is not only an honor and an ornament to the person who has it—but it is also an honor and an ornament both to the people and places to whom he stands related. [Just so, holy Eliakim was a throne of glory to his father's house, Isaiah 22:23.] The holiness of the *father* is an honor and ornament to the child—just so, was Abraham's to Isaac. And the holiness of the *child* is an honor and an ornament to the father—just so, was Isaac's to Abraham. The holiness of the *husband* is an honor and ornament to the wife—just so, was Abraham's to Sarah. And the holiness of the *wife* is an honor and an ornament to the husband—just so, was Sarah's to Abraham. Just so, in Proverbs 12:4, "A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband." [The Hebrew is, a woman of strength, or a valiant woman; that is, a woman who is

made strong and valiant by grace, by holiness, to withstand sin, to conquer temptation, and to triumph in affliction, etc.] A crown is the top of honor, it is the top of royalty and glory; why! a virtuous wife is such a thing! A sweet, a good-natured wife is as a gold ring upon her husband's finger; a gifted wife is as a gold chain about her husband's neck; but a holy virtuous wife is as a crown upon her husband's head.

The holiness of the *prince* is an honor and an ornament to the people; and the holiness of the *people* is an honor and an ornament to the prince. The holiness of the *master* is an honor and an ornament to the servant; and the holiness of the *servant* is an honor and an ornament to the master. And the holiness of one *brother* is an honor to another brother. Jude glories in this—that he was the brother of James. James was famous for his sanctity; for his holiness, he was called *James the Just*. His holiness did so sparkle and shine, that the Jews were generally convinced that in holiness he was more eminent and excellent than others. Now Jude took it for a very high honor to be related to one so eminent in holiness.

Holy people reflect a credit and an honor upon their relations. It was the speech of a heathen notably qualified, though but poorly bred and born, to a dissolute person well born, upbraiding him with his birth, "I am a grace to my family—but you are a blot to your lineage." Yes, holy people are an honor to the places where they have been born and bred: Psalm 87:5-6, "Indeed, of Zion it will be said, 'This one and that one were born in her, and the Most High himself will establish her.' The Lord will write in the register of the peoples: 'This one was born in Zion.'"

God seems to be very much affected and taken with the very places where holy men are born; he loves the very ground that holy men tread on, and he delights in the very air that holy men breathe in. Holy people reflect honor upon the very places where they were born. The holy patriarchs, prophets, and apostles were the honor and the glory of the ages and places where they lived. [Some antiquaries say that the primitive church had her public tables, wherein the

names of the people who were most noted for piety and holiness were recorded.] They were as so many bright morning stars, they were as so many rising suns in the places where they were bred and born. Melancthon was called the phoenix of Germany, and Luther was the glory of the age wherein he lived. And so were many of the ancients before them, and many since, who have been burning and shining lights in the places of their abode.

Look! as an unholy person is a plague and a curse to the very place he lives in, and hastens down wrath and vengeance upon it, as Bias the philosopher has long since observed; for he being at sea in a great tempest among many profane debauched fellows, and perceiving them to call upon their gods, as the worst of men usually do in such cases, he comes to them, and desires them to hold their peace, lest the gods should take notice that they were in the ship, and so not only themselves—but others also should suffer for their sakes.

It was the wickedness of the wicked which brought the sweeping flood upon the old world. And it was the wickedness and filthiness of the Sodomites which caused God to rain hell out of heaven upon the cities where they lived. Let men be ever so honorable, or ever so potent, or ever so witty, or ever so wealthy, etc.—yet if they are profane, if they are wicked, they will hasten down the wrath and vengeance of God upon the places of their abode.

Just so, a holy person is an honor and a blessing to the very place he lives in, as you may see in Jacob and Joseph, who were choice and noble blessings to the very families where they lived. O sirs, as ever you would be an honor to your relations, to your country, and to the places of your abode—labor for holiness! Some venture life and limb, and many a better thing, to reflect honor upon their relations, and upon their country—as many of the Romans did; and why then should not you venture far, and venture high for holiness, which will be not only an honor to yourselves—but also an honor and a glory to all people and places which you have relation to?

7. Seventhly, Consider that holiness is the very ear-mark, the very attire and badge of Christ's servants and subjects.

Isaiah 63:8, "For he said, Surely they are my people, children who will not lie: so he was their Savior;" and verse 18, they are called "the people of his holiness." God's people are too holy to lie; they will not lie for their own worldly good. [Job 13:7; Romans 3:7-8; Rev. 14:5.] They will rather die than lie, with that brave woman that Jerome writes of, who being upon the rack, bade her persecutors do their worst, for she was resolved rather to die than lie. Neither the merry lie, nor the jesting lie, nor the officious lie, nor the pernicious lie—will be found with those who are the people of God's holiness, or who are his holy people. Says God, "I have been at so much cost and charge about them, I have acted so kindly, so bountifully, so sweetly, so favorably, so nobly to them; I have been such an all-sufficient Savior, such a mighty preserver, and such a glorious deliverer of them—that certainly they will not lie, they will not deceive my expectation, they will not deny me, they will not deal disloyally nor unworthily by me. [It is said of golden-mouthed Chrysostom that he never lied; answerable to this, Isaiah 63:8.] They are of Augustine's opinion, who has long since told us, that "we must not tell so much as a small lie, though it were to save all the world."

Just so, Jer. 2:3, "Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the first fruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them, says the Lord." Holiness to the Lord is the mark that God sets upon all his precious ones: Psalm 4:3, "Know that God has set apart him who is godly for himself." God has wonderfully, gloriously, marvelously, yes, miraculously set apart the pious, the holy, the merciful, the godly man, the gracious saint, by some mark of distinction for himself, that is, for his own honor, and glory, and service, and delight.

Look! as Rahab's house was known by a red rope, Josh. 2; and the Ephraimites by their lispings, Judges 11; and Jehu by his driving, 2 Kings 9; and Peter by his speaking, Mat. 26—just so, real Christians are known by their holiness. Holiness is that by which all Christ's

subjects and servants are known and differenced from all other people in the world. And in the primitive times, a Christian was known from another man only by the holiness of his life, as Tertullian witnesses. Look! as our Lord Jesus Christ, by the Spirit of holiness raising him up from the dead, was declared to be the Son of God, Romans 1:4—just so, it is the spirit of holiness, it is principles of holiness, it is the life and practice of holiness—which declares us to be the sons of God, 2 Cor. 6:17-18. Holiness is that golden character by which God differences and distinguishes his people from all others in the world. Look! as the worshipers of the beast are known by the mark of the beast that is upon them—just so, the worshipers of Christ, the people of Christ, are known by that mark of holiness that Christ has set upon them.

This title, "saints," is given eighty times to the people of God in Scripture, as if God took a greater delight to have his children known by this badge and title than by any other. As for such who have the name of saints upon them—but nothing of the nature of a saint in them; who have a name to be holy—and yet are unholy; who have a name to be gracious—and yet are graceless; who have a name to live—and yet are dead; these God will in that day unmask, when he shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. [Rev. 13:16; 14:9-10, and 19:20. A man were better be a beast, than to have the mark of the beast upon him. The title of a saint is but an empty thing without holiness.]

An unholy saint is a white devil, he is a monster among men. Christ sweat, and prayed, and died, and was raised to make sinners saints, to make the rebellious religious, and the licentious conscientious. All he did and suffered was to stamp the seal and impress of holiness upon them. And therefore, as ever you would be owned and honored by Christ another day, see that the Holy Spirit sets the seal of holiness upon you. If the impress of holiness is upon you in the day that the Lord makes up his jewels, he will declare you to be his before all the world. He will say, "These are my sheep, these are my sons, I know them by that mark of holiness that I find upon them!" But,

8. Eighthly, Consider this—that a man of holiness, or a holy man—is a common good, a common blessing. All fare the better for a holy man. All in the family, all in the court, all in the city, all in the country, fare the better for the holy man's sake. All in Laban's family did fare the better for *Jacob's* sake; and all in the city of Zoar did fare the better for *Lot's* sake; and all Pharaoh's court, and the whole country of Egypt, did fare the better for *Joseph's* sake. Sodom was safe while holy Lot was in it. While holy *Moses* stood in the gap, destroying judgments were diverted. When holy *Phinehas* took up his censer, and stood between the living and the dead, the plague was stayed. [Gen. 30:27; 19:21-24, and 41, etc.; 2 Kings 2:12; Psalm 106:23; Num. 26:46, 49.]

Holy people are public mercies, public blessings: Job 22:30, "He shall deliver the island of the innocent: and it is delivered by the pureness of your hands:" or, as some read the words, "the innocent shall deliver the island;" that is, the inhabitants of the island. [God will sometimes deliver a whole country for the sake of the innocent, etc.] The innocent shall deliver those who are not innocent; had there been but ten innocent—but ten righteous people in Sodom, Sodom might have been a glorious city to this day; had there been but ten righteous souls among them, God would never have rained hell out of heaven upon them; Gen. 18:32 to the end. The guiltless shall deliver the guilty in an island; the guiltless, by lifting up pure hands to God in prayer, shall stay the hand of God, that it destroys not the guilty.

It is the holy seed that upholds the civil state. So says God, "it is the holy seed that bears up the whole state, and were it not for them, desolation and destruction would come in as a flood upon you." Proverbs 10:25, "The righteous is an everlasting foundation." The Hebrew sense is thus, "The righteous are the foundation of the world, which would soon shatter and fall to ruin but for their sakes." The whole world fares the better every day for the righteous' sake. If it were not for this holy seed, the chaff of this world would soon be set on fire. If the final number of the holy seed were but called and

converted, God would quickly turn the whole world into flames and ashes! It is those who bear up the pillars of the earth: Psalm 75:3, "I bear up the pillars of the earth." Holy people are the true Atlases both of church and state; they are the pillars on whom all do rest, the props on whom all do lean; do but overturn these pillars, and all will fall about your ears, as the house did about the Philistines when Samson shook it. Let but kingdoms and commonwealths wreck these, and they shall quickly be shipwrecked themselves.

There is not a sinner in the world but enjoys his estate, his relations, his outward accommodations, yes, his very life—upon the account of the saints; and therefore they must needs be bewitched, or fools, or madmen—who are still a-lifting and a-thrusting at these very pillars which bear them up. Look! as Samson's strength did lie in his locks, so the strength and safety of the nation lies in the holy seed: they are the bulwarks and ammunition of the nation; the safety and felicity of the whole is bound up in them. It is not armies, nor navies, nor walled cities, nor fortified castles, nor golden mines, nor solemn counsels which will secure a nation, if once the people of God's holiness be cast by as broken pitchers. It is their piety and prayers which keeps off sweeping judgments from a nation, and that brings down variety of mercies upon a nation. [Lam. 4:1-2, and Esther chapters 4 and 10 compared.]

Holy people are the clouds which water the earth as a common blessing; and they are the rising sun which scatters all clouds and darkness. A holy man is a public diffusive blessing in the place where he lives. Look! as one sinner destroys much good, Eccles. 9:18, so one saint may save a land, a country! Jer. 5:1, "Run up and down every street in Jerusalem," says the Lord. "Look high and low; search throughout the city! If you can find even one person who is just and honest, I will not destroy the city." Though Jerusalem was far larger and more populous, I say not only than Sodom—but than all the other cities which sinned and perished with it—yet God makes so large and noble an offer, that if there could be found in it but one man divinely qualified—but a man of justice, a man of faithfulness, a

man of uprightness, a man of holiness—the Lord would not destroy it, nor ruin it. God once made an offer to Abraham, that if there were but ten righteous souls in Sodom, he would save it; but here he falls so low as to make an offer, that if there could be but one righteous soul found in Jerusalem, he would not destroy it. [If among the rabble, if among the noble, if among the rich, if among the learned—a man could have been found who loved holiness, who was stout for righteousness, and who practiced uprightness—God would have spared Jerusalem.] One saint may save a city, yes, a world of sinners, from confusion and destruction.

Luther, while he lived, by faith and prayer, kept off troubles from Germany—but soon after he was gone to his grave in peace, oh, the wars, the miseries and mischiefs, the distractions and confusions that came in like a flood upon them! Possidonius, in his *life of Augustine*, tells us that the famous city of Hippo could never be captured while Augustine lived. The flood could not drown the old world until holy Methuselah was laid up in peace. O sirs! as ever you would be a public blessing, labor to be holy. But,

9. Ninthly, Consider the antiquity of holiness. Holiness is of the greatest, highest, and most ancient antiquity. The first suit that ever was put upon the back of man's nature, was holiness. Sin is of a later edition than holiness; holiness was—when sin was not, Deut. 32:7, etc. "Let us make man," says God, "in our own image." Sin is against nature, it is a defect in nature, it came in by a lie, and, by-the-bye, through the subtlety of the father of lies, Gen. 1:26. God stamped his image of holiness upon man before ever Satan assayed to tempt him. Holiness is of the most ancient house, of the greatest antiquity, John 8:44. Sin is but an upstart, holiness is the firstborn; the way of holiness is the oldest way: Jer. 6:16, "Look for the old, godly way, and walk in it. Travel its path, and you will find rest for your souls." The way of holiness was that old way in which Adam at first, and in which all the holy patriarchs and prophets walked. [Paths of eternity, the paths of piety; the paths of purity are

paths of eternity, etc.] In this sense it is most certain that the oldest way is the best way; the way of sanctity is of greatest antiquity.

Let Papists and carnal superstitious Protestants cry up their superstitious ways as ways of greatest antiquity—yet when they have said all they can, there is no antiquity, compared to that of holiness. The way of will-worship was not the first way of worshiping God in the world. Many carnal men cry out that they are for the good old way, they care not for this new way, they care not for this new religion, as they call it; they say that we have never had good days since there has been so much praying, and so much preaching, and so much fasting, and so much printing, and so much ado about close walking with God. It is most certain, that a carnal religion is best pleasing to a carnal heart; and this you may see evidently among the Turks, whose religion gives much carnal liberty to the professors of it; and whose religion promises them a paradise of *sensual* pleasures in the eternal world. And the same is very observable among the Papists, and all the carnal Protestants in the world, who cry up that for the best religion, and for the true religion, and for the good old religion—which is most suitable to their carnal reason, and most pleasing and indulging to their lusts.

Socrates prescribed for men to worship God according to the manner of the country where they lived; and what was this but to gratify the lust of men, by subjecting the rule of God's worship to the laws and customs of men? But from the beginning it was not so. Holy Noah, holy Enoch, and the rest of the holy patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, walked only in ways of piety and purity. Holy Abraham, holy Isaac, and holy Jacob, never walked in those ways which are now by loose, formal, carnal, and superstitious people cried up for the good old way—but in ways of holiness and righteousness.

I have read of the Cretians, that when they cursed their enemies, they did not wish their houses on fire, nor a sword at their hearts—but that they might be delighted and given up to an evil custom. It is one of the greatest and bitterest curses and woes to be delighted and

given up to evil customs; and the older the custom is of evil, the worse it is! Ah, how many are fallen under these curses in these days, wherein multitudes are addicted and given up to carnal and superstitious customs, and choose rather to follow an evil custom, though it be ever so absurd, irregular, vain, and superstitious—than to walk in a way of peace and holiness!

Well, sirs, shall the antiquity of holiness provoke you to be holy? Many will do much for antiquity sake; and why, then, should not you do much for holiness sake? Holiness is God's firstborn; it is as ancient as the ancient of days. The way of holiness is gray-headed, and of ancientest institution; all other ways are but of yesterday; they are but *new* ways to the way of holiness. Oh that this might alarm you to look after holiness! The Gibeonites cheated Joshua with their old worn-out shoes, and with their old sacks, and old boots, and old garments, Josh. 9:4-5; and so does Rome this day cheat and delude multitudes of poor, blind, ignorant souls, with their old customs, and with their old ceremonies, and old traditions, and old inventions, under a pretense of the good old way, and the good old religion. But certainly the way of holiness, the way of purity, is of the greatest antiquity, and therefore, oh embrace it! oh, walk in it! Look! as the stamp of antiquity upon some things is a disparagement and a dishonor to them—as an old garment that is past wearing, and an old house that is past repairing, and an old ship that is past rigging—just so, the stamp of antiquity upon other things is a praise and an honor to them—as old gold, old friends, old manuscripts, old monuments, old scars, and old holiness. The stamp of antiquity upon holiness is the praise and honor of holiness. Look! as it is an honor to a man to be descended of an ancient house—just so, it is an honor to a man to be allied to holiness; because sanctity is of greatest antiquity; and therefore, above all gettings, get holiness. But,

10. Tenthly, Consider, that of all things, holiness will render you most beautiful and amiable. As holiness is the beauty of *God*, and the beauty of *angels*—so it is the beauty and glory of a *Christian* also. [Exod. 15:11. Plato called God the horn of plenty,

and the ocean of beauty, without the least spot of injustice. God is beauty itself, the very essential idea and pure fountain of all beauties.] Holiness is a Christian's greatest honor and ornament. Psalm 93:5, "Holiness is the beauty of Your house"—that is, your church—"O Lord, forever." There is no garment which suits the church, which befits the church, like the garment of holiness. It is sanctity, which is the church's excellency and glory; it is purity, which is the church's ornament and beauty. Holiness is a beauty which beautifies the church; it is the gracefulness and loveliness of the church. Holiness is so beautiful a thing—that it puts a beauty on all things else. As holiness is the greatest ornament of the church triumphant, so it is the greatest ornament of the church militant, Eph. 5:26-27.

The redness of the rose, the whiteness of the lily, and all the beauties of the natural universe, are but *deformities*, compared to that beauty which holiness puts upon us. If all natural and artificial beauty were contracted into one beauty—yet it would be but an obscure and an unlovely beauty, compared to that beauty which holiness puts upon us!

Psalm 29:2, "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." Psalm 96:9, "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." Psalm 110:3, "Your people shall be willing in the day of your power, in the beauty of holiness." You see beauty and holiness is by God himself, still linked together; and that which God has so closely joined together—no man may put asunder. The scripture last cited does not only speak out holiness to be a beautiful thing—but it speaks out many beauties to be in holiness. Those Christians who are decked in the beauties of holiness, they shall be very beautiful and shining through holiness.

Holiness casts such a beauty upon man as makes him very amiable and desirable. The holiness of *parents* renders them very amiable and desirable in the eyes of their children; and the holiness of *children* renders them very amiable and desirable in the eyes of their

parents, Isaiah 22:21. When that incomparable lady, Cornelia, presented her sons to the commonwealth, she said, "These are my jewels; these are my ornaments." Holy children are their parents' crown, their parents' ornaments; no glistening gold, no sparkling diamonds, no shining or glittering apparel—renders children so amiable and lovely in the eyes of their parents as holiness does. [Xenophon never prayed that his son Gryllus might live long—but that he might be a good man.]

The holiness of the *husband* renders him very amiable in the eyes of the wife; and the holiness of the *wife* renders her very desirable in the eyes of her husband. The holiness of the *master* renders him very lovely in the eyes of his servants; and the holiness of the *servants* renders them very lovely in the eyes of their masters, etc. Jewel's holiness, Bradford's holiness, and Bucer's holiness, rendered them very amiable and lovely, not only in the eyes of their friends—but also in the eyes of their enemies. There is nothing in this world that will render all sorts and ranks of people so glorious and famous in the eyes of one another, as holiness will do. Were all ranks and orders of men more holy, they would certainly be more lovely in the eyes of one another. Oh that all men would cease from being injurious one to another, and labor to be more holy! and then, I am sure, they would be more lovely in one another's eyes.

Holiness is lovely, yes—loveliness itself. Purity is a Christian's splendor and glory. There is no beauty compared to that of sanctity; nothing beautifies and bespangles a man like holiness. Holiness is so attractive and so lovely a thing, that it draws all eyes and hearts to an admiration of it. Holiness is so great a beauty, that it puts a beauty upon all other excellencies in a man. That holiness is a very beautiful thing, and that it makes all those beautiful who have it, is a truth that no devil can deny! Therefore, O sirs, as ever you would be attractive and lovely—labor to be holy.

The natural beauty of Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Joseph, and Absalom, was no beauty, compared to that beauty, luster, and glory which

holiness puts upon a man. "Demetrius," says Plutarch, "was so lovely of face and countenance, that no painter was able to draw him." Holiness puts so rare a beauty upon man, that no painter under heaven is able to draw him. Scipio Africanus was so lovely a person, that the barbarians in Spain stood amazed at his loveliness. Holiness puts such a loveliness, and such an amiableness upon a person—that many admire it, and stand amazed at it. O sirs, as ever you would be amiable and desirable—be holy! As ever you would be attractive and lovely—be holy! As ever you would be famous and glorious—be holy! As ever you would outshine the sun in splendor and glory, labor to be holy. Many have ventured their names, their estates, their liberties, their lives, yes, their very souls, to enjoy a lovely Bathsheba, an attractive Helena, a beautiful Diana, a lovely Cleopatra, etc., whose beauties have been but *clay, well-colored*. Oh, how much more, then, should you be provoked to labor and venture your all for holiness, which will imprint upon you that most excellent and most exquisite beauty—which will go to the grave and to glory with you; yes, which will render you not only amiable and excellent in the eyes of men—but also lovely and lovely in the eyes of God!

I remember Bernard, writing to a noble maiden who was holy, tells her "that others were clothed with purple and silk—but their consciences were poor and beggarly; they glistened with their jewels—but were loose in their manners. But you," says he, "are but poorly clad—but within shine exceeding beautiful, not to human—but to divine eyes!" Psalm 45:13-14. Both in the eyes of God, angels, and men—none shine and glisten so gloriously as those who are holy, Ezek. 16:1, 12. Unholy souls are foul souls, ugly souls, deformed souls, withered souls, wrinkled souls; they are altogether unlovely souls. I have read of Acco, an old woman, who seeing her deformity in a looking-glass, became crazy. Should God but show unholy men their deformity in the looking-glass of the Scripture, it would either make them spiritually crazy—or else it would make them fall in love with holiness, that so they might be made lovely and attractive by being made pure and holy. But,

11. Eleventhly, Consider this to provoke you to be holy—that holiness is the most gainful and the most thriving trade in the world. Now, when all worldly trading is declining—Oh that everyone would settle to the trade of holiness! Oh, there is no gain, there is no advantage, compared to the gain that comes in upon the account of godliness! 1 Tim. 6:6, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." Though godliness itself be great gain—yet godliness brings in a great deal of gain besides itself. [Godliness is the greatest riches, the best treasure, the highest honor, and the most lasting fame.] The godly man is still on the gaining side—his piety brings him in the greatest plenty: chapter 4:8, "Godliness is profitable to all things." A man is as well able to count the stars of heaven, and to number the hairs of his head—as he is able to count the several commodities, or to number up the variety of blessings, or multitude of mercies—which come flying in upon the wings of godliness.

Godliness has the promise of both lives, that is, both of *earthly* favors and of *eternal* blessings also. It is profitable, not for *some* things—but for *every* thing; both temporal, spiritual, and eternal blessings do grow upon this tree of life—holiness. There is no trade, compared to the trade of godliness: Proverbs 22:4, "By humility and the fear of the Lord—are riches, and honor, and life." Godliness has the promise of gold—as well as of grace; of honor—as well as of heaven; of life and happiness here—as well as of glory and blessedness hereafter. The good things of this life, as well as the great things of eternal life, follow hard at heels of holiness. Holiness is not a barren but a fruitful womb; it is like that tree in Rev. 22:2, which bore twelve kinds of fruits, and that yielded fruit every month.

What is of greater value among men than **riches**? and what is more glorious among men than **honor**? and what is more sweet among men than **life**? Why, all these fruits, and ten thousand more, grow upon the tree of holiness. The bag of riches, the robe of honor and life—that is, the comfort and sweet of both—hangs all upon the back of holiness. But that I may the more effectually win upon you, and

provoke you to look after holiness, let me by an induction of particulars further confirm the truth of this last consideration, especially considering that there is no argument under heaven that is so taking with all men as this of gain. **Money is the bait that all bite at; it is the great god of the world.** And therefore thus,

(1.) First, Consider that holiness brings in PRESENT gain; and what gain is better than present gain? There are many who lay out much, and venture far, and run the hazard of all—and yet it is a long time before they see returns. Oh—but holiness, that brings in *present* profit! Romans 6:22, "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you *have* your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." The apostle does not say, you *may* have your fruit unto holiness—but you *have* your fruit unto holiness. He does not say, you *shall* have your fruit unto holiness—but you *have* your fruit unto holiness. He does not say, oh *that* you had your fruit unto holiness—but you *have* your fruit unto holiness.

Just so, Psalm 19:11, "*In* keeping them there is great reward." Not only *for* keeping but also *in* keeping of his commands there is great reward. Holiness is its own **reward**. While a Christian is in the very exercise of holiness, oh what blessed sights, what sweet tastes, what glorious incomings from heaven, has he! Oh the secret visits, the secret whispers, the secret joggings, the secret love-tokens which Christians meet with, in the very practice of holiness!

Holiness brings in present **comfort** and **joy**: 2 Cor. 1:12, "Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God." [Seneca, a heathen, has confessed, that the best receipt to drive away sadness—was to live well.] There is no mirth, no joy, compared to that which holiness brings in. Let a man's load be ever so heavy—yet holiness will bring in that joy that will make him bear up bravely and cheerfully under it.

Holiness brings in present **peace**; hence it is that you read of "the peaceable fruits of righteousness," Heb. 12:10-11.

Holiness will bring in present **communion with God**: 1 John 1:7, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another:" that is, God and ourselves have fellowship together, as it is verse 3. Now to walk in the light as he is in the light—what is it but to walk in holiness, to walk in paths of sanctity? for only in such paths the Lord walks. And therefore as you love present gain, labor after holiness. But,

(2.) Secondly, As holiness brings in present gain—so holiness brings in the BEST and GREATEST gain. And this I shall evidence thus:

[1.] First, Holiness will make a man rich in the midst of poverty. James 2:5: Rev. 2:9, "I know your poverty—but you are rich;" though the church of Smyrna was poor in goods—yet she was rich in grace, she was rich in faith, and rich in hope, and rich in patience, and rich in contentment, etc. She was rich in Christ her head, and rich in promises, and rich in experiences. She had spiritual riches in possession, and glorious riches in reversion. Just so, in 2 Cor. 6:10, "As poor—yet making many rich; as having nothing—and yet possessing all things." A holy man cannot be a poor man. A holy man is always the richest man. But this is a riddle the world cannot understand. The riches of a Christian have no bottom. All a saint's bags are bottomless bags. Experience tells us that unholy men's bags, purses, coffers, and mints—may be drawn dry; but the treasury, the riches of a saint—can never be exhausted, for he still possesses all things in Christ and with Christ. 1 Cor. 3:22-23, "Everything belongs to you, and you belong to Christ!" Though he has nothing in hand—yet he has all things in hope; though he has nothing in the cistern—yet he has all things in the fountain.

Gen. 33:9, Esau could say, "I have *much*;" and it was much that an Esau should say he had much; but says holy Jacob, verse 11, "I have

all." Esau had much—but Jacob had all, because he had the God of all: he had him who was all in all. It has been said of the great Duke of Guise, that though he was poor as to his present possessions—yet he was the richest man in France in bills, bonds, and obligations, because he had engaged all the noblemen in France to himself, by favoring of them. A holy man is the richest man in the world in promises and obligations, for he has the great and glorious God engaged by many thousand promises to own him, to bless him, to stand by him, to give grace and glory to him, and to withhold nothing from him that may be good for him, Psalm 84:10-11. When wicked men brag of their lordships and manors, and boast of their great possessions, and glory in their thousands a year, a holy man may make his boast of God, and say, "God is mine! God is mine! he is my great all; he is my all in all; and therefore I am richer and a greater possessor than any wicked man in the world, yes, than all wicked men in the world put together!" But,

[2.] Secondly, By holiness you will gain a good report, a good reputation. Heb. 11:39, "And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise." Nothing raises a man's name and fame in the world—like holiness. The *seven deacons* which the church chose were holy men, Acts 6:5; and they were men of good report, verse 3; they were men well witnessed unto, well testified of, as the Greek word imports. *Cornelius* was a holy man, Acts 10:1-4; and he was a man of good report among all the nation of the Jews, verse 22. *Ananias* was a holy man, Acts 9:10, 20; and he was a man of a good report. Acts 22:12, *Gaius* and *Demetrius* were both holy men, and they were men of good report; witness that third epistle of John. The *patriarchs* and prophets were holy men, and they were men of a good report: Heb. 11:1-2, "For by it the elders obtained a good report;" their holiness did eternalize them. The *apostles* were holy men, 1 Thes. 2:10; and they were men of a good report, 2 Cor. 6:8. Now certainly it is none of the least of mercies to be well reputed and reported of.

Next to a good conscience, a good report is the noblest blessing. Good fare does not more rejoice and strengthen the outward man, the ignoble part of man, than a good report does rejoice and strengthen the inward man—the noble part of man: Proverbs 15:30, "A good report makes the bones fat." Yes, and I may add, it makes the heart fat too. It is no small pleasure to a man to know that others are pleased with him. Beautiful objects do not more delight the eyes—than a good report delights the ears. O sirs, as ever you would obtain a good report, you must labor after holiness. You may obtain a great report without holiness—but you can never obtain a good report without holiness. There is no such way to perpetuate your names—as to labor after holiness. Holiness will embalm your names, it will make them immortal: Psalm 112:6, "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance."

Proverbs 10:7, "The memory of the just is blessed—but the name of the wicked shall rot." Wicked men many times outlive their names—but the names of just men outlive them. When a holy man dies, he leaves his name as a sweet and as a lasting scent behind him; his fame shall live when he is dead. [Holy Abel has been dead above this five thousand years—and yet his name is as fresh and fragrant as a rose to this very day, Heb. 11:4.] According to the Hebrew, the words may be read thus, "The memory of the just shall be for a blessing." The very remembering of the just shall bring a blessing upon those who remember them. While the just, the holy man lived—he was a blessing to those among whom he lived; and when he is dead—his memory is a blessing to posterity. But the name of the wicked shall rot. While a wicked man lives, he lays his name under disdain and disgrace, and when he dies, he leaves it under an odious stench. Wickedness corrupts not only the heart—but the name. And look, as wickedness makes a man's soul stink in the nostrils of God, so wickedness makes a man's name stink in the nostrils of men. Look! as a wicked man's body, when he is dead, stinks under ground, so his name stinks above ground. His very name casts forth so stinking a stench, that all the perfumes in the world, and all the spicery of hell, can never sweeten it.

Well, once more remember that these words, "the name of the wicked shall rot," are a metaphorical speech taken from a tree, which, though for a time it grows green and flourishes—yet at length it grows rotten—just so, though wicked men may flourish and be green and glorious for a time—yet at last they shall rot, their *names* shall rot on earth, their *bodies* shall rot in the grave, and their *souls* shall rot in hell!

But the memory of the just shall be blessed. Next to a holy man's soul, there is nothing so near and dear to him as his name; and this God will so perfume as that the fragrancy of it shall last forever. The name of a holy man shall be always as an ointment poured forth; but the name of a wicked man shall be always as a stench. O sirs, what a deal of stir do many men make to get a name—to get a name to be *wise*, a name to be *knowing*, a name to be *learned*, a name to be *skillful*, a name to be *rich*, a name to be *great*, a name to be *mighty*, and a name to be *valiant*, etc., as Nimrod, Cain, Absalom, Alexander, Pompey, Adrian, etc. And why then should you not labor after holiness, that so you may get a good name, which is rather to be chosen than riches, Proverbs 22:1, and which is better than precious ointment? Eccles. 7:1. O sirs, shall many Romans and others run the hazard of damning their souls to immortalize their names, and will not you labor after holiness to eternalize yours? There is no way to a good name, to a good report—but by getting of holiness.

[3.] Thirdly, By holiness you will gain a hiding-place, a shelter, a refuge in stormy and tempestuous times. Proverbs 11:6, "The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the unfaithful are trapped by evil desires." Let a holy man's enemies, dangers, snares, hazards, be ever so many—yet his righteousness shall shelter him against all, Isaiah 3:10, and 26:20-21. In the midst of trouble, holiness will keep a man from trouble; and in the midst of dangers, holiness will keep a man from dangers, Isaiah 43:2-4; John 14:1. **Holiness is the most sovereign antidote in the world against all the troubles of this life.** *Noah's*' sanctity was Noah's safety in the midst of a deluge. *Lot's* piety was Lot's security in the

day of Sodom's ruin and misery. The *three Hebrew children's* innocence was a wall of fire about them in the midst of the fiery furnace: [They walked up and down in the fiery furnace, as a man walks up and down in a pleasant garden.] *David's* integrity was a shield and buckler against Saul's rage and cruelty.

Just so, in Proverbs 13:6, "Righteousness keeps him who is upright in the way: but wickedness overthrows the sinner." There is no guard, no protection against troubles and dangers, compared to that of righteousness. Righteousness and holiness is the most powerful army, and the strongest tower of defense against all hazards and enemies. The Hebrew word that is here rendered *keeps*, signifies to keep with the greatest care, diligence, and vigilance that can be; it signifies to preserve and keep, as a man would preserve and keep the pupil of his eye, which is the chief and the tenderest piece of the tenderest part, Deut. 32:14. And it signifies to keep, as a man would keep ammunition and provision from fire, or from treacherous hands, when a powerful and enraged enemy is drawing near, Nah. 2:1. "Why," says he, "look how careful and diligent, etc., men are to keep and preserve those things which are most near and dear unto them, and which are most highly prized and valued by them." Just so, will righteousness and holiness preserve and keep the righteous man in times of trouble and danger.

Just so, in Ezek. 14:14, 20, "even if these three men--Noah, Daniel and Job--were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign Lord. As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, even if Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, they could save neither son nor daughter. They would save only themselves by their righteousness." [Saints may prevail with God for themselves, when they cannot prevail with him for others.] These three, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were very holy men, they had great interest in God, and were very prevalent with God. But the decree being gone forth, they could not prevail with God for others; yet their righteousness should be their own preservation, safety, and security, in days of calamity and misery.

Just so, in Isaiah 33:15-16, "He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil—this is the man who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress. His bread will be supplied, and water will not fail him" Let us dive a little into this admirable promise: "*He shall dwell on the heights.*" If the holy man were among his enemies, he might be in danger—but he shall dwell on the heights, on many heights, and many ascents, he shall be out of harm's way, out of gunshot, he shall be above the reach of danger. Oh! but his enemies may raise up mounts, and so get as high as he is. Well, grant that—but yet they shall not hurt him; for he is in a place of refuge. Oh! but though he be in a place of refuge—yet his refuge is not so strong but it may be broken down and destroyed. No, not so, for his place of refuge shall be the mountain fortress; many rocks, and many munitions of rocks, shall be the place of his defense; and therefore his defense is impregnable and invincible. Oh! but though his defense be the mountain fortress—yet he may be famished, he may be starved out, for rocks are barren places, and there is no ploughing and sowing upon rocks. No, he shall not be starved nor famished out of his strong place of refuge; for bread shall be given him, God will spread a table for him. Oh! but though he has bread—yet he may perish for lack of water; for he has no faith, skill, nor power to fetch water out of a rock: Moses had not, and he has not, and therefore he may be forced to deliver up his place of refuge for water to quench his thirst, as king Lysimachus and others have done. No, not so, for he shall have water too. Oh! but his water may be spent, his water will not always last, his well, as well as Hagar's bottle, may be dry, his pipes may be cut off, or the water that now supplies him may be turned another way. No, not so, for his water will not fail him. Oh the safety and security of holy men!

Plutarch, in the life of Alexander, tells us, that when he came to besiege the Sogdians, a people who dwelt upon a mountain fortress for their defense—they jeered him, and asked him whether his soldiers had wings or not; for, said they, except your soldiers can fly

in the air, we fear you not. Such is the safety of God's holy ones, that they need not to fear. There are no ladders long enough to scale their place of defense, nor no artillery or engine strong enough to batter down their mountain fortress.

There is a fable how the dove moaned to her fellow-birds of the tyranny of the hawk; one counsels her to keep below; but says another, the hawk can stoop for his prey; another advised her to soar aloft; but says another, the hawk can mount as high as she; another wished her to shroud herself in the woods, for there she should be secure; but says another, alas! there is the hawk's dominion; another bids her to stay in the town; but says another, that is to become a prey to man; but at last one bids her rest herself in the holes of the rock, and there she should certainly be safe, for violence itself could not surprise her there, and there she was safe.

Dove-like saints have their mountain fortress to fly to, and there they shall be safe. O sirs! there is no breastplate to that of righteousness, there is no armor, no mountain fortress, to that of holiness. Noah's holiness was an ark to save him, when Nimrod's Tower of Babel, which was raised five thousand one hundred forty-six paces high, could not secure him. And therefore as you tender your own safety and security in times of trouble and calamity—oh, labor to be holy!

[4.] Fourthly, By holiness you will gain deliverance from death in death. Proverbs 11:4, "Riches profit not in the day of wrath; but righteousness delivers from death;" and chapter 10:2, "Treasuries of wickedness profit nothing—but righteousness delivers from death." Many treasuries of the most precious jewels that are in the world cannot ward off a blow, a disease, a sickness in the day of God's wrath. A crown of gold cannot cure a headache. A golden scepter cannot cure the palsied hand. A necklace of pearl cannot cure the aching teeth. A honorable title cannot ease the gout. A purple robe cannot chase away the burning fever. A velvet slipper cannot heal the bruised heel. Nor can treasures of gold or silver deliver from

wrath, or help in a day of death. Oh—but righteousness, that delivers from death.

Look! what the sword, the shield, the helmet, the breastplate, the coat of armor, is to the soldier in the heat of battle, that, all that, and more than that, is righteousness to the righteous in the day of death. [Nugas the Scythian king despised the rich presents and ornaments that were sent unto him by the Emperor of Constantinople, because they could not ward off sorrow, sickness, diseases, death.] Righteousness, or holiness of heart, of action, of life—delivers from spiritual death, and from eternal death, yes, it delivers from the evil, the hurt, the horror, the terror, the dread, and the sting of temporal death. Piety delivers not only from the second death—but also from all the evils and miseries of the first death too. As the righteousness of the righteous will be a royal protection to him, both against the day of wrath, and the wrath of the day—just so, the righteousness of the righteous will be a royal protection to him, both against death, and against all the evils of death. Righteousness unstings death, it takes away the venom, the poison and bitterness of death; it turns that curse into a blessing, that punishment into a benefit, that night of darkness into a day of light, that wilderness into a paradise, that hell into a heaven!

Proverbs 12:28, "In the way of righteousness is life, and in the path thereof there is no death." "In the way of righteousness is *lives*"—so the Hebrew has it. In the way of righteousness there are *many lives*: in that way there is *spiritual* life, and *eternal* life, and *natural* life, and all the comforts, and sweets, and blessings, and happiness of that life, without which man's life would be but a lingering, a languishing death; yes, a hell rather than a heaven unto him. "And in the path thereof there is no death." There is no *spiritual* death, there is no *eternal* death, yes, there is no *corporal*, no *temporal* death to hurt or harm them, to sting or terrify them, to damage or disadvantage them.

For **death** is an outlet and an inlet to a holy man. It is an eternal outlet to all sins, to all sorrow, to all shame, to all sufferings, to all afflictions, to all temptations, to all oppressions, to all confusions, and to all vexations. And it is an eternal inlet into the clear, full, and constant fruition of God and Christ; and an inlet to the sweetest pleasures, the purest joys, the highest delights, the strongest comforts, and the most satisfying contentments. Death is the funeral of all a holy man's sins and miseries--and the perfection of all his joys, his graces, and spiritual excellencies. Death is not the death of the man--but the death of his sin! Death is a Christian's discharge from all trouble and misery! Death to a holy man is nothing but the changing of his grace into glory, his faith into vision, his hope into fruition, and his love into eternal rapture.

The Persians had a certain day in the year in which they used to kill all serpents and venomous creatures: such a day as that will the day of death be to a holy man. Sin was the midwife which brought death into the world, and death shall be the bearer which shall carry sin out of the world. When Samson died, the Philistines died together with him: so when a holy man dies, his sins die with him. Death came in by sin, and sin goes out by death. As the worm kills the plant which bred it--just so, death kills sin which bred it. Death cures all diseases, the aching head and the unbelieving heart: the diseased body and the defiled soul.

At Stratford Bow were burned in Queen Mary's days, a lame man and a blind man; after the lame man was chained, casting away his crutch, he bade the blind man be of good comfort; for, says he, death will cure us both; it will cure you of your blindness and me of my lameness. Death will cure the holy man of all natural and spiritual distempers. Death is the holy man's jubilee, it is his greatest advantage, it puts him into a better estate than ever he had before. It is God's gentleman-usher to conduct us to heaven; it will blow the bud of grace into the flower of glory. Oh, who would not go through hell to heaven! who would not go through a temporary death to an eternal life! who would not willingly march through mortality to

immortality and glory! [Death is but an entrance into life. Miserable unbelievers call it death—but to faithful believers, what is it but a Passover—but a jubilee?—Bernard.]

O sirs! holiness will make you look upon death as a welcome guest, a happy friend, a joyful messenger. It will make you kiss it and embrace it, as Favinus the Italian martyr kissed and embraced his executioner: it will make you desire it, and long after it with tears, as holy Bradford did. By all this you see that holiness will deliver you from death in death. "When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true—Death has been swallowed up in victory!" 1 Corinthians 15:54.

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, By holiness you shall gain the greatest boldness in the day of judgment. Job 19:25. Nothing will embolden a man in that great day like holiness; holiness will then make the face to shine indeed. 1 John 4:17, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; *because as he is, so are we in this world.*" That which will make Christ's last appearance delightful to Christians, will be their likeness to Christ in holiness. In both nature and grace, likeness begets the greatest boldness. As there is no child so bold with the father—as he who is most like the father; so there is no Christian so bold with Christ—as he who is most like Christ. A holy Christ is most familiar with a holy Christian; and a holy Christian is most bold with a holy Christ. The more a Christian is like Christ in holiness of heart and life—the more divinely bold and familiar will that man be with Christ, both in this world and in the great day of account. When he who was a brat of Satan's is made a saint; when he who was like hell is made like heaven; when he who was most ugly and unlovely is made like him who is the holy of holies; this is that which gives boldness both here and hereafter! O sirs, it is not wit nor wealth—but holiness; it is not race nor place—but holiness; it is not power nor policy—but holiness; it is not honor nor riches—but holiness; it is not natural

excellencies nor acquired abilities—but holiness, which will give boldness in the day of Christ's appearing!

1 Pet. 1:5-7, "A well-tried faith," which is but a branch of holiness, "shall be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." At the coming of Christ, holiness shall be a man's praise and honor and glory. In that great day when shame and everlasting contempt shall be poured forth upon the great monarchs of the world, who have made the earth to tremble, "when the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, etc., shall cry out to the mountains and rocks to fall upon them, and to hide them from the face of him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb," Rev. 6:15-17—then, I say, "then shall the righteous shine as the sun in the skies!" Dan. 12:1-3.

In life and death, and in the day of account, a righteous man will be as bold as a lion, Proverbs 28:1. Real holiness will make a man death-proof, and hell-proof, and judgment-proof. The day of judgment will be to a holy man a marriage-day, a day of redemption, a day of coronation, a day of exultation—and therefore he may well lift up his head and rejoice. Look! as the Israelites who had the blood of the Passover lamb on their door-posts, though the destroyer was abroad, and a dreadful cry was all over Egypt—yet they were not slain, not stricken, Exod. 12:7, 11; they did not fear nor tremble—but dressed for travel, and walking sticks in their hands—boldly and cheerfully expecting when the happy and joyful hour of their redemption would come, Heb. 9:14. Just so, those who have the door-posts of their hearts and consciences sprinkled with holiness, in this dreadful day of the Lord, they shall with boldness and cheerfulness lift up their faces, because the day of their redemption has come. And this made Luther say that he "had rather never to have been born, than not to be in hope of this day." This day to God's holy ones will be like music in the ear, and a jubilee in the heart.

It is true, the **ungodly** shall not stand in judgment, Psalm 1:5; 2 Thes. 2:7-10. Stand they must to be arraigned, sentenced, and condemned. Stand they shall—but not with any boldness or cheerfulness, comfort or contentment. Stand they shall—but not to be approved, acquitted, or absolved. Chaff and stubble cannot stand before that God, who is a consuming fire, Heb. 12:29. When Belshazzar saw the handwriting upon the wall, oh, how his face turned pale with fear. Such terror gripped him that his knees knocked together and his legs gave way beneath him! Daniel 5:5-6. Oh, how do many ungodly men now tremble at a thunder-crack in the clouds, and at a flash of lightning in the air! but how will they tremble and quake when the whole frame of heaven and earth shall break in pieces, and be set in a flame about their ears! Oh, what trouble of mind, what horror and terror of conscience, what weeping and wailing, what crying and roaring, what wringing of hands, what tearing of hair, and what gnashing of teeth—will there be among the ungodly in this day, when they shall see their sins charged on them on the one side, and divine justice terrifying them on the other side! when they shall look *upward*, and there see an angry God frowning upon them, and look *downward*, and there see hell gaping ready to receive them, and look *inward*, and there find conscience accusing and gnawing of them! when they shall look on their *right hands*, and there behold the good angels standing with so many flaming swords to keep them out of heaven, and look on their *left hands*, and there behold the devil and his demons ready to drag them down to the lowest hell! Oh, now how will they wish for the rocks to fall upon them, and the mountains to cover them! How will they wish that they had never been born, or that they might now be unborn! How will they now wish that their immortal souls were mortal; or that they might be turned into beasts, birds, stones, trees, or air--or anything rather than what they are! Alas! what heart is able to conceive, or what tongue is able to express—the fear and dread, the horror and terror, the astonishment and amazement, which will fall upon all ungodly people in this day!

And yet even now God's holy ones shall lift up their heads and hearts: they shall be bold and steadfast, they shall be far from fear, shame, or trembling. "For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thessalonians 5:9.

And thus you see that godliness, that holiness—is the most gainful trade. And therefore, sirs, as you love gain, as you desire your own profit and advantage, labor to be holy. But,

12. Twelfthly, Consider this—that holiness will put the greatest splendor and majesty upon people that can possibly be put upon them. Job 29:8-11; Proverbs 12:26. There is nothing that imprints such a reverence and majesty upon man as holiness does. There is nothing that is such a grace to man—as grace. It is holiness which puts the greatest excellency and majesty upon man.

Psalm 16:3, "But to the saints who are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight." Saints are the most excellent ones. The Hebrew word which is here rendered *excellent*, signifies the magnificent ones, or the noble, glorious, or wonderful ones. Saints or holy people are the most excellent, magnificent, noble, and glorious ones! Daniel 8:24 "The mighty men and the holy people." The holy people are called mighty, because there are no people upon the earth who have might and majesty stamped upon them as they have.

Cant. 6:10, "Who is she who looks forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun—and *terrible as an army with banners*." [Some by the *moon* understand inherent righteousness, and by the *sun* they understand imputed righteousness.] The light, grace, glory, and holiness of the church rises by degrees: and this makes her terrible to all her enemies. Every degree of holiness is terrible to the unholy; but the higher the church rises in holiness, the more terrible and majestic it grows. Holiness puts such a splendor and graceful

majesty upon all people who have it, as even dazzles the eyes sometimes of wicked men, and begets in them an awe and reverence; as it is evident in Saul: 1 Sam. 24:17, "And Saul said to David, You are more righteous than I." Just so, Herod: in Mark 6:20, it is said that he "feared John, knowing that he was a just man and holy, and observed him." Holiness is very majestic. The greatest monarchs fall down before it. Herod reverences John, not for his birth or breeding—but for his holiness; not for his arts or parts—but for his holiness; not for his scholarship or greatness—but for his holiness.

Just so, that great monarch king *Joash* fell down before the holiness of Jehoiada while he lived, 2 Kings 11:1-2, etc. And so did the holiness of the *three Hebrew children* command respect and honor from that great monarch Nebuchadnezzar. And so did the holiness of *Daniel* cause king Darius to reverence him, and to cast a favorable aspect upon him, Dan 3. And so did the holiness that was written upon Judas the high priest cause Alexander the emperor to reverence him, and to fall down before him. In holiness there is such a sparkling luster, that none can behold it but must admire it, and bow before the graceful majesty of it. It is not greatness but grace, it is not riches but righteousness, it is not outward pomp or splendor—but holiness, that can overawe the vain spirits of men. A holy life is the upbraiding of that which is corrupt: Wisdom 2:15, 12, "He is grievous unto us, even to behold him; for his life is not like other men's, his ways are of another fashion, he upbraids us with our offending the law."

Grace will make a man majestic among those who have no grace. Bradford was esteemed in so great reverence and admiration for his holiness, that a multitude that never knew him but by fame, greatly lamented his death, yes, and a number of Papists also wished heartily his life. Holy men have a daunting presence and majesty with them, as Athanasius had, and Basil had; for when Valens the emperor came to surprise him, he being in holy exercises, such a splendor and majesty was upon him, that it struck such a terror into the emperor that he reeled, and would have fallen backward, had he not been

upheld by those who were with him. Henry the Second, king of France, being present at the martyrdom of a certain tailor, who was burnt by him for his religion, and so terrified by the boldness of his countenance, and by his holy and gracious behavior in his sufferings, that he swore at his going away that he would never more be present at such a sight.

It is very observable, that *the moral virtues of the heathen* did put a great deal of splendor and majesty upon them—to instance only in Cato. Cato was a man of much justice and integrity; he was a man of an unspotted life and of high reputation among the Romans. Now his morality put such a splendor and majesty upon him, that when he was present, the very worst of the worst dared not in speech or gesture discover any impiety or immodesty, any wantonness or wickedness. Now certainly if *morality* puts such a splendor and majesty upon men, *true sanctity* will put much more upon them. And therefore, sirs, as ever you would have a splendor and majesty upon you, labor to be holy. Maximilian the emperor had such a presence and majesty with him, that a stranger who never saw him before, pointed him out among thirty great people. O sirs, it is not the gray beard, nor the purple robe, nor the grim look—which makes a man so much a man of presence and majesty—as holiness does. Therefore as you would indeed be men of presence, men of majesty, labor to be holy. But,

13. Thirteenthly, Consider that the times and seasons wherein we live call aloud for holiness. Many say the times are bad, very bad, extremely bad! But oh, let me tell you that your hearts and lives are bad, very bad, extremely bad. And it is your hearts and lives which have made the times so bad, so very bad, so extremely bad. It is in vain to talk of better times, or wish for better times—until you mend your lives, and get better hearts. The times would quickly mend, if every man would but in good earnest labor to mend himself. If your hearts and lives were but more holy, the times would quickly be more happy. You say you shall never have peace and prosperity until all be brought to uniformity in religion; but I say you

shall never have any lasting peace, felicity, or prosperity until you come to be holy.

2 Kings 9:22, "And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, Is it peace, Jehu? And he answered, What peace, so long as the whoredoms of your mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?" The interrogation carries with it a strong negation, "What peace?" that is, there is no peace to such a wicked wretch as you are: you may wish for peace, and dream of peace, and long for peace, and look for peace, and pursue after peace—and yet you shall be far off from peace. What Jehu said to Joram, I may say to all unholy people. What peace and what prosperity can you expect while your drunkenness, and uncleanness, and worldliness, and lukewarmness, and dead-heartedness, and wantonness, and wickedness remains? What good days, what happy year can you look for, while your formality, and indifference, and hypocrisy, and infidelity—bear witness against you?

Just so, when Israel was very superstitious and vain in her worship, then "there was no peace to him who went out, nor to him who came in—but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries. And nation was destroyed" (or beaten in pieces) "of nation, and city of city; for God did vex them with all adversity," 2 Chron. 15:5-6. [Verse 3 doubtless relates to Jeroboam's and the ten tribes' first revolt from the house of David, and from the house of God, and from all his ordinances; and this was a very wicked and unholy time, as is evident in several scriptures.] When men are unholy—God will vex them; he will vex them with adversity, he will vex them with all adversity. When nations are ungodly—God will destroy them; he will beat them in pieces, he will beat them in pieces one against another. When there is no holiness in him who comes in, nor in him who goes out—then there shall be no peace to him who goes in, or to him who goes out. When all is said that can be said, and when all is done that can be done, wicked men will still be as unquiet as the raging and foaming sea, Isaiah 57:20-21.

God will one day or another be still at war with that man who is at peace with his sin. It is said of the locusts that came out of the bottomless pit, in Rev. 9:7-9, that "On their heads they wore something *like* crowns of gold, and their faces *resembled* human faces. Their hair was *like* women's hair, and their teeth were *like* lions' teeth. They had breastplates *like* breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was *like* the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle." etc. Here are quasi horses, quasi crowns of gold, quasi faces of men, quasi hair of a woman, and quasi teeth of lions, etc. Now just such things are all the comforts and contentments of unholy people: their gold and silver—is but as it were gold and silver; and their prosperity and plenty—is but as it were prosperity and plenty; their peace and tranquility—is but as it were peace and tranquility; and their victories and triumphs—are but as it were victories and triumphs; and their joys and rejoicings—are but as it were joys and rejoicings.

But mark, when the holy evangelist comes to set down a description of the locusts' tails, he does not say that there were as it were stings in their tails—but in plain, positive, downright terms he tells you that "there were stings in their tails;" verse 10, he tells you that their stings were true stings, real stings, certain stings. And so while men remain unholy, there are sure and certain stings in the tails of all their comforts, contentments, and enjoyments. The best way on earth to have a sure, a sound, a solid, a lasting peace with God, with ourselves, and with others, is to put on holiness as a robe upon us, Job 29:14, and to put all iniquity far from us, Job 11:13, 20.

O sirs, the worser the times are, the better should every man labor to be. Many complain of burdens, taxes, oppressions, and vexations; and they say with those, that "judgment is turned backward, and that justice stands afar off, and that truth is fallen in the street, and that equity cannot enter, and that he who departs from evil makes himself a prey; that we wait for light—but behold obscurity; for brightness—but behold darkness; that we grope for the wall like the blind, that we grope as if we had no eyes, that we stumble at noonday, that we roar

like bears, and mourn like doves; that we look for justice—but there is none; and for salvation—but it is far off from us," Isaiah 59:9-11, 14-15.

These and a thousand more such complaints may be found among us. This scripture last cited, puts me in mind of a strange—but yet of a very true saying, namely, that there is more justice and equity in hell, than there is in France: for in hell the oppressor is oppressed; in hell he who would not give a crumb of bread, shall not have a drop of water. In hell such as shed innocent blood, have blood to drink; in hell there are no bribes; in hell there is none to plead an unrighteous cause; in hell there is no respect of people; in hell every man has according to his deserts: but in France it is otherwise, etc. And do not the strong cries, tears, sighs, groans, and complaints of the poor and needy, of hirelings, orphans, and widows, etc., in most nations strongly demonstrate that there is more justice and equity in hell, than there is in most of the nations of the earth?

But now, what is the choicest salve for all these sores? Certainly holiness. What is the most sovereign remedy against all these maladies? Nothing but holiness. O sirs, the more holiness rises in a nation, the more will righteousness run down as mighty streams, and the more the hearts of the poor and needy will leap and sing for joy. There is no way to make a nation happy—but by making of it holy. O sirs as you are men, as you are Englishmen, as you love your country, as you honor your king and country, and as you desire the peace, prosperity, and felicity of your country—labor to be holy! O England, England, it is holiness, which will be a wall of fire about you, and a glory in the midst of you: it is holiness, which will make you happy at home, and prosperous abroad. Among all Englishmen, there is no man compared to the holy man. **Certainly that man who is most busy about mending his own heart and life, contributes most to the mending of the times.**

There are many active young men who will talk stiffly for their country, and that say that they will stand stoutly for their country—

and yet by their daily ungodliness they undo their country. These men destroy by their lives what they seem to build with their hands. And therefore, as ever you would have all things which are out of order in order, labor for a well-ordered heart, and a well-ordered life. Holiness of life is the best means under heaven to prevent confusion and desolation.

Again, if you will look upon the present times as times wherein the judgments of God are abroad in the world—I say, if you will thus look upon them, then, I say, the times call aloud upon you for holiness. Isaiah 26:9, "When your judgments are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." O sirs! when garments are rolled in blood, when the sword devours the flesh of the slain, when justice lays heap upon heap, when pestilence and famine destroys all on the right hand and on the left, oh then everyone will say, "Come, let us break off our sins, let us turn to the Lord, let us mend our ways, and reform our lives, and get holiness into our hearts!"

We behold many sorer, heavier, and worse judgments than these are upon us this day, if we had but eyes to behold them. Oh, that hardness of heart, that barrenness of soul, that blindness of mind, that searedness of conscience, that perverseness of spirit, that superstitious will-worship, and that looseness of life—which multitudes are given up to this day! Oh, those God-dishonoring, those Christ-denying, those ordinance-despising, those conscience-wasting, those life-corrupting, and those soul-damning opinions, principles, blasphemies, and practices—which multitudes are given up to this day! Oh, the spiritual decays, the spiritual witherings, the spiritual slumberings, the spiritual faintings, the spiritual languishings—which are to be found among a professing people this day! [Psalm 78 and 81:12. That which was accustomed to be said of Africa, that it was ever a-producing some new monster or other, may be said of the age, yes, of the land wherein we live, 2 Thes. 1:8-9; Amos 8:11-12.]

Now certainly, there are no judgments compared to spiritual judgments; none reach the soul like these, none separate between God and the soul like these, none lay men open to temporal and eternal judgments like these. Spiritual judgments are the most insensible judgments, they are the most dreadful judgments, they are the most incurable judgments, they are the most damning judgments of all judgments. Spiritual judgments have most of wrath, and most of horror, and most of hell in them. Oh that now these terrible judgments are abroad in the earth, you would learn righteousness, that you would learn to be holy! For as there is no such sense against temporal judgments as holiness, so there is no such sense against spiritual judgments as holiness. Oh, the spiritual strokes, the spiritual arrows, the spiritual diseases, the spiritual sicknesses, the spiritual plagues—which are abroad in the world! And oh, that the dread and sense of these might provoke you and prevail with you to labor after real holiness, to labor after the power of godliness—which will be your greatest security against these most deadly and soul-killing maladies!

Again, the days and times wherein we live call aloud for holiness. If you look upon them as days and times of grace, what greater and higher engagements to holiness were ever put upon a people, than those which God has put upon us, who enjoy so many ways, means, and helps to make us holy? Oh, the pains, the care, the cost, the charge—which God has been at, and which God is daily at—to make us holy! [Jer. 7:13, 25; 25:3-4; and 35:14-15; Isaiah 49:4-5; 2 Cor. 12:14-15; Romans 13:11-14.] Has he not sent, and does he not still send his messengers, rising up early, and going to bed late—and all to provoke you to be holy? Have not many of them spent their time, and spent their strength, and spent their spirits, and spit up their lungs, and spent their very lives—to make you holy?

O sirs! what do holy ordinances call for—but holy hearts and holy lives? What do days of light call for—but walking in the light, and casting off the deeds of darkness? What is the voice of all the means of grace—but this, "Oh, labor to be gracious!" And what is the voice

of the Holy Spirit—but this, "Oh, labor to be holy!" And what is the voice of all the miracles of mercy which God has wrought in the midst of you—but this, "Be holy, be holy!"

O sirs, what could the Lord have done, which he has not done—to make you holy? Has he not lifted you up to heaven in respect of holy helps? Has he not to this very day followed you close with holy offers, and holy entreaties, and holy counsels, and holy encouragements—and all to make you holy? And will you be lustful still, and proud still, and worldly still, and malicious still, and envious still, and contentious still, and unholy still? Oh, what is this—but to provoke the Lord to put out all the lights of heaven, to drive your godly teachers into corners, to remove your candlesticks, and to send his everlasting gospel to a people who will more highly prize it, and dearly love it, and stoutly defend it, and conscientiously practice it—than you have done to this very day? Rev. 2:4-5; Isaiah 32:25.

By what has been said, I suppose there is nothing more evident than that the times and seasons wherein we live calls aloud upon everyone to look after holiness, and to labor for holiness; never complain of the times—but cease to do evil, and labor to do well, and all will be well. Get but better hearts and better lives, and you will quickly see better times, Isaiah 1:16-19.

14. Fourteenthly, Consider that holiness will render you most like a holy God, a holy Christ, and to holy angels. GOD is frequently called *the Holy One* in Scripture; he is called the Holy One above thirty times in the Old Testament. Angels are holy, and saints are holy—but it is God alone that is *the Holy One*. [Gold being the most precious metal, you lay it over those things that are most precious to you—just so, does God lay holiness over all those things which are most precious to him.] His *person* is holy, Isaiah 6:3; his *name* is holy, Luke 1:49; his *works* are holy, Psalm 45:17; his *judgments* are holy, Psalm 22:1-3; his *habitation* is holy, Isaiah 57:15; his *temple* is holy, 1 Cor. 3:17; his *kingdom* is holy, Rev. 21:27; his *word* is holy, Psalm 19:7; and his *Sabbaths* are holy, Exod. 16:23.

Now this is God's own argument, "Be holy—*for I am holy*," Lev. 19:2; 1 Pet. 1:15-16. Concerning the holiness of God, I shall speak at large, by divine assistance, when I come to press you upon perfecting of holiness; and therefore let this touch suffice for the present. Sirs, you cannot be like to God in many other things—but you may be like to God in this one thing, in this noble thing, in this most necessary thing—holiness; and therefore labor after it.

Again, as holiness will render you most like a holy God, so holiness will render you most like a holy CHRIST. The apostle calls him "the Holy One," 1 John 2:20. Christ is *essentially* holy, he is *infinitely* holy, he is *originally* holy, he is *singularly* holy, he is *eminently* holy, he is *perfectly* holy, he is *transcendently* holy, and he is *immutably* holy. And so much the devil himself confesses, in Mark 1:24, "I know you who you are—the Holy One of God," or rather as the Greek has it, that Holy One, by way of excellency and eminency—alluding, as some think, to Exod. 28:36. Yes, Christ takes delight to characterize himself by this title: in Rev. 3:7, "These things says he who is holy;" and in Dan. 9:25, he is called "the most holy;" or as the Hebrew has it, "the holiness of holinesses." These abstracts speak out the vigor and strength, the eminency and excellency of Christ's holiness. Christ is holiness itself, yes, holinesses; and what do these abstracts speak out—but that perfect and complete holiness which is in Christ? The angels, in Isaiah 6:3, do three times iterate or repeat, "holy, holy, holy." Now though some do conceive that this threefold repetition has reference to all the three persons of the Trinity—holy Father, holy Son, and holy Spirit—yet those who will but compare the text with John 12:37-41, shall plainly see that it relates only to our Lord Jesus Christ; and so the threefold repetition denotes only the superlative eminency of Christ's holiness.

Christ is holy in his *natures*, in his *offices*, in his *purposes*, in his *counsels*, in his *word*, and in his *works*. His *conception* was holy, his *life* was holy, his *converse* was holy, etc., Acts 4:23; Luke 1:35; Eph. 4; Gal. 2:20. Holiness is the image of Christ, it is the picture of Christ, the perfection of Christ, it makes a man conformable to the

life of Christ. **Christ's holiness is that noble copy after which we should all endeavor to write.** Subjects may without treason or offence attempt to be like their prince—in wisdom, goodness, righteousness, holiness, peace, piety, mercy, and sanctity; though they cannot without rebellion and disobedience endeavor to be like him in power, greatness, might, majesty, splendor, and glory. Just so—we may safely and honorably attempt to be like to Jesus Christ in wisdom, righteousness, and holiness, etc.; though we may not attempt to be like him in his miracles, signs, and wonders. [It is Christ's particular honor to be imitated in all morals absolutely.]

O sirs! some have counted it their greatest honor and glory in this world, that they have been like such and such, who have been high and glorious in the world; and why, then, should not you reckon it your greatest glory and happiness to be like to Christ in holiness, though not in measure or quantity—yet in truth and reality? As you would resemble Christ to the life—labor to be holy. In other things you cannot be like to Christ—but in holiness you may. You cannot be like to Christ in his greatness, majesty, or glory, nor yet in his omnipotency, omniscency, nor omnipresence, nor yet in his general or special providence, nor in a thousand other things—but you may be like to Christ in his holiness. Look! as face answers to face, as Solomon speaks, so you may reach to that holiness that in reality may correspond to the very holiness of Christ; and this is your only way to be like to Christ.

Again, as holiness will render you most like to a holy Christ, so holiness will render you most like to the blessed ANGELS. The blessed angels are holy in their *nature*, and holy in their *offices*, and holy in their *actings*. [All angels, in respect of their nature, are alike; but what the particular differences are between angels, archangels, principalities, and powers, and what their distinct offices are, I confess, with Austin, "I understand not, neither is it my duty to know, nor my danger to be ignorant of these things."] They are called *holy* angels: Mat. 25:31, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all his *holy* angels with him;" and so in Rev. 14:9-10, "And

he who worships the beast, or that receives his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." The angels' holiness is their conformity to the original pattern of purity and excellency. The crown of holiness was set upon the heads of angels at their creation. Those princes of glory were crowned with holiness, as it were, in the cradle. The angels are holy in their *praises*, and holy in their *waitings*, and holy in their *operations*, and holy in all their *ministrations*.

When that sorcerer Balaam went to curse the people of God, a holy angel stood in the way, drew his sword upon him, and jostled his bones against the wall, and all to prevent the execution of his wicked and cursed intentions, Num. 22:22. Oh, how much more, then, do they stand in the way of the saints, to prevent those weaknesses and miscarriages which Satan and their own corruptions would otherwise carry them to! And doubtless as they have a hand to restrain the saints from evil, so they have an eye and an influence upon them for good: 1 Tim. 5:21, "I charge you before God, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels," etc. The holy angels have their eyes and their influences upon us; they are our observers and overseers; they are called *watchers* in Dan. 4:17, for they watch our words, and they watch our works, and they watch our ways; they watch us before duties, and they watch us in duties, and they watch us after duties. They watch us *before* duties, to see how we prepare and fit ourselves to meet with God; and they watch us *in* duties, to see how our graces are acted upon God, and how our hearts and affections are running out after God; and they watch us *after* duties, to see whether we walk worthy of God, and worthy of our duties, and worthy of our profession, and worthy of our high calling. [1 Cor. 11:10; Heb. 1:14; Rev. 22:9.]

The angels watch you in all places, cases, and conditions, etc. In times of health, strength, peace, prosperity, etc., they watch to see how wisely, holily, humbly, fruitfully, cheerfully, and thankfully we will walk with God. In times of adversity, they watch to see how

believingly, how contentedly, how self-denyingly, and how patiently we will submit to God, etc.; all which speaks out the holiness of the angels.

O sirs, you cannot in this world be like to the angels in power, strength, might, nor in agility, activity, splendor, beauty, or glory; but yet you may be like to them in purity and sanctity. Sirs, do not deceive yourselves. You shall never be like to the angels in *glory*, if you will not are like to them now in *grace*. If you will not with them now put on the robe of *holiness*, you shall not with them hereafter put on the crown of *happiness*.

We are to follow the examples of the best men—not an inch further than they were followers of Christ, 1 Cor. 11:1. "Christians," says Latimer, "are not bound to be the saints' apes, they are not to imitate them in everything." Where their examples were good, it is good to imitate them, and where they were bad, it is duty to decline them. The fairest copies that ever were written by saints have their blots, their blurs, and their erratas; and therefore it is best, it is safest, it is noblest, to set the most exact, the most perfect, and the most excellent copy of the angels before us, who, as they excel in strength, so they excel in holiness also: Psalm 103:20, "Praise the Lord, you angels of his, you mighty creatures who carry out his plans, listening for each of his commands." **The angels obey divine commands readily, cheerfully, faithfully, universally, reverentially, humbly, affectionately, and unweariedly.** O sirs, such obedience, such holiness will be your honor here, and your happiness hereafter.

To gather up all, as ever you would be like to a holy God, a holy Christ, and the holy angels—labor to be holy. In holiness you may be like them, in other things you cannot resemble them. But,

15. In the fifteenth and last place, To provoke you to labor after holiness, consider the stinging argument in the text, namely—that without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

The expression is exclusive. Now to "see" is a Hebraism, and implies both vision and fruition. Now without holiness, no man, be he high or low, noble or ignoble, rich or poor, etc., shall ever come to a blessed acquaintance with God here, or to a glorious fruition of God hereafter. O friends, if it were so great a misery to Adam to be cast out of paradise, and so great a punishment to Cain to be cast out of his father's family—which was the only visible church of God on earth—and such a sore affliction for the lepers under the law to be shut out from all converse with men, and so great a trouble and torment to Absalom to be banished his father's court, and so great a hell to Jonah to be seemingly cast out of God's sight, and so great a tribulation to John to be confined to the isle of Patmos; [Gen. 3:and 4:13; Lev. 14; 2 Sam. 14:13, 14; Jonah 2; Rev. 1:9.] oh, how great a misery, how great a punishment, how great an affliction, how great a trouble and torment, how great a tribulation, how great a hell, will it be for all unholy people forever and ever to be banished the court of heaven, and to be shut out from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power! 2 Thes. 1:7, 11.

If it were such an unspeakable grief and misery to the primitive Christians, as indeed it was, to be debarred of one another's society and company, by being exiled to islands, or shut up in prisons; oh, then, what an unspeakable grief and misery will it be to all unholy people to be forever debarred of the blessed society of God, Christ, angels, and saints—and to be everlastingly confined to the prison of hell, and to the society and company of that damned crew who will be still a-cursing and a-blaspheming of God, and adding to one another's torments!

O sirs, it is the sight of God in heaven wherein man's happiness and blessedness does consist; it is the fruition of God in heaven which is the life, the honor, the crown, and glory of angels and saints. Heaven itself would be but a poor thing, yes, it would be but a great nothing, without the sight and fruition of God there. Now without holiness there is no seeing of God, there is no possessing or enjoying of God, there is no possibility of ever obtaining a part or portion in God. Ah,

friends! without holiness all is lost. Your soul is lost, your Christ is lost, your God is lost, your crown is lost, your heaven is lost, your glory is lost; and what are all other losses, compared to these losses?

Demorrathus said, "they lost the chief part of their lives' happiness, who did not see Alexander sit on the throne of Darius." But what was their loss, compared to that unconceivable and unexpressible loss which all unholy people must sustain, who shall never see the King of kings in his beauty, who shall never behold the Lord on the throne of his glory? Well, sirs, if none of these arguments can prevail with you to labor after holiness, I must conclude that *divine justice* has hardened you, and that *Satan* has blinded you, and that your *lusts* have besotted you, and that this *world* has bewitched you, and that it had been ten thousand thousand times better for you that you had never been born—than to live without holiness, and to die without holiness, and to be everlastingly damned for lack of holiness!

And thus much for the **motives for holiness**.

Sixteen Counsels

I come now to lay down some means and helps to holiness. Supposing that the language of some of your souls may be this: "Oh, what shall we do to be holy! Oh, what course, what way, what means must we use that we may obtain this holiness, without which we now clearly see that we shall never come to a fruition of happiness!" Methinks I hear some of you crying out, "Oh, nothing but holiness, nothing but holiness!" as that martyr once cried out, "Oh, none but Christ, none but Christ!" Methinks I hear you crying out, "Oh, give me holiness--or I die!" as Samson once cried out, "Give me water—or I die;" or as Rachel once cried out, "Give me children—or I die." Just so, you cry out, "Oh, give us holiness—or we die! Give us holiness, or we eternally die! Oh, what shall we do to be holy! We see we are undone without holiness, we shall be damned without holiness. Oh, that we were but made holy—that hereafter we may be assuredly happy!"

Well, then, if you are in good earnest resolved to be holy, I would thus advise and counsel you in these sixteen particulars:

First, take heed of some things. There are **six** things you must avoid and shun.

Secondly, Labor to put in practice these **ten** things.

I. The six things that you are to avoid and shun, even as you would shun poison in your food, or a serpent in your way, yes, as you would shun the devil himself, or hell itself, are these:

1. First, Take heed of mistaking some particular scriptures, as that of Ezek. 14:6; 18:30-32, and 33:11, 14, 16, 19. From these and such like scriptures, many unholy hearts are apt to conclude that they can repent when they please, and that though they do defer their repentance—yet it is no such difficult thing to confess their sins

at the last moment of life, and to be sorry for their sins at the last moment, and to forsake their sins at the last moment, and to beg the pardon of their sins at at the last moment. And that if they do so, they imagine that God has given his word for it, he has given it under his own hand—that he will pardon their sins, and save their souls. Now to prevent these soul-undoing mistakes, you must know, O sinner,

[1.] First, That you can as well wash a black man white at pleasure—as you can repent at pleasure! You can as well raise the dead at pleasure—as you can repent at pleasure! You can as well make a world at pleasure—as you can repent at pleasure! You can as well stop the course of the sun at pleasure—as you can repent at pleasure! You can as well put the sea in a cockle-shell at pleasure—and measure the earth with a ruler at pleasure—as you can repent at pleasure. Witness the proofs in the margin. [Jer. 13:23, and 31:18; Lam. 5:21; Acts 5:31; Eph. 1:17-19; 2 Tim. 2:25; Acts 11:18.]

I confess that if to repent were to hang down the head like a bulrush for a day, or to whine with Saul for an hour, or to put on sackcloth and walk softly with Ahab for a short space, or to confess with Judas, "I have sinned," or to say with Simon Magus, "Pray to the Lord for me," or to tremble with Felix for a moment—I say, if this were to repent, doubtless you might repent at pleasure; but alas! friends, to repent is another thing, to repent is the hardest and most difficult work in the world; and that will appear in the next particular. And therefore,

[2.] Secondly, To repent is to turn a heart of flint into a heart of flesh; it is to turn darkness into light; it is to turn hell into heaven—and is this easy? To repent is to make all clean: inside clean, and outside clean. To repent is to make a clean head and a clean heart; a clean lip and a clean life—and is this easy? [Ezek. 36:25, 26; Acts 26:18; Ezek. 16:61-63, and 29:43; 2 Cor. 7:10-11.] True repentance includes a true sense of sin, a deep sorrow for sin, a hearty loathing of sin, and a holy shame and blushing for sin—and is this easy? To

repent is for a man to loathe himself as well as his sin—and is this easy for man, who is so great a self-lover, and so great a self-exalter, and so great a self-admirer, to become a self-loather? To repent is to cross sinful self, it is to walk contrary to sinful self, yes, it is to revenge a man's self upon himself—and is this easy? To repent is to pluck out right eyes, and to cut off right hands, and offer up only Isaacs—and is this easy? True repentance is a daily turning of the soul further and further from sin, and a daily turning of the soul nearer and nearer to God. It is a repentance not to be repented of; it is a repentance from sin, as well as a repentance for sin. Sin has cast the soul at such a distance from God, that though the soul be every day a-turning nearer and nearer to God—yet it can never, in this life, get so near him as once it was, and as in heaven it shall be. And now tell me, O soul, is this such an easy thing, to be every day a-turning your back upon sin, and a-turning your face nearer and nearer to God? Surely not! True repentance lies in a daily dying to sin, and in a daily living to him who lives forever. The very life of repentance is the repentance of the life: and is this easy? But,

[3.] Thirdly, True repentance is a turning, not from some sin—but from every sin. Ezek. 18:30, "Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall." Every sin strikes at the law of God, the honor of God, the being of God, and the glory of God; and therefore the penitent must strike at all. Every sin fetches blood from the heart of Christ, and every sin is a grief and vexation to the Holy Spirit; and therefore the penitent must set upon crucifying of all. [Ezek. 18:21, 31, and 20:43. He who had the spot of leprosy in any one part of his body was accounted a leper, although all the rest of his body were sound and whole, Lev. 13. Just so, he who has but one spot, one sin which he does not endeavor to wash out in the blood of Christ, and in the tears of true repentance, he is a leper in the account of God.]

Every sin is an enemy to a man's *peace*, and to a man's *comfort*, and to a man's *confidence*, and to a man's *assurance*, and to a man's *communion* with God; and therefore he must set upon forsaking of

all. If ever you are saved, O man, you must repent of your *Achans*—as well as your *Absaloms*. You must repent of your *Rimmons*—as well as your *Mammons*. You must repent of your *Davids*—as well as of your *Goliaths*. You must repent of your *secret* sins—as well as your *open* sins. You must repent of your loved sins—as well as well as of your loathed lusts. You must repent of your babe-transgressions—as well as of your giant-like provocations. If your repentance is not universal, it will never be effectual. If a ship springs three leaks, and only two are stopped—the third will certainly sink the ship. Or if a man has two mortal wounds in his body, and takes only the remedy for the cure of one—the other will undoubtedly kill him. Or if a man has two mortal diseases upon him, and will only deal with the physician for a remedy against the one—he will, without all question, perish by the prevalence of the other.

Herod turned from many sins—but not from his *Delilah*, his *Herodias*, which was his ruin. *Judas*, you know, was a devil in an angel's dress; he seemed to be turned from every sin—but he was a secret thief, he loved the bag; and that golden devil, covetousness, choked him, and hanged him at last. *Saul* for a time turned from several evils—but his sparing one, *Agag*, cost him his soul and his kingdom at once.

I have read a story of a devout man, who among other gifts had the gift of healing, and many people resorted to him for cure. Among the rest, one *Chromatius*, who being sick, sent for him, and told him of his sickness, and desired that he might have the benefit of cure, as others had before him. The devout man replied, "I cannot do it until you have beaten all the idols in your house to pieces." "Oh, that shall be done," said *Chromatius*. "Here, take my keys, and where you find any idols, break them in pieces;" which accordingly was done. Upon this the devout man went to prayer—but no cure was wrought; whereupon the sick man cried out, "Oh, I am as sick as ever! oh, I am very weak and sick still!" "It cannot be otherwise," replied the devout person, "neither can I help it, for there is doubtless one idol yet in your house undiscovered, and that must be defaced too." "True," says

Chromatius, "it is so indeed, it is all of beaten gold, it cost a fortune. I would gladly have saved it—but here take my keys again, you shall find it fast locked up in my chest, break it also in pieces;" which being done, the devout man prayed, and Chromatius was healed.

The moral of it is good—the sin-sick soul must break, not some—but all its idols in pieces, before a cure will follow. It must deface its golden idols, its most costly idols, its most darling idols! The returning sinner must make headway against *all* his sins, and trample upon *all* his lusts—or else he will die and be undone forever; and though this be as difficult as it is noble—yet it is no more than what God has engaged to do, and to see done, as you may see by comparing Ezek. 36:25-27 with Isaiah 30:21-22. "Then you will defile your idols overlaid with silver and your images covered with gold; you will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them—Away with you!" Isaiah 30:22

Now is this an easy thing, to turn from every sin, to loathe every sin, and to abandon every sin, with an "Away with you—for what have I more to do with you!" Surely not! "Ephraim shall say—What have I to do any more with idols?" Hosea 14:8. As Nehemiah cast out Tobiah and all his household stuff, in Neh. 13:6-8—just so, true repentance, it casts out Satan and all his retinue. As Moses would not leave so much as a hoof behind him, Exod. 10:26—just so, true repentance will not leave so much as a lust behind. A *dispensatory* conscience is always an evil conscience; he who can dispense with one sin, will, when opportunity presents, commit any sin. And as the flood made clean work, it swept away all Noah's friends, and drowned all his servants—just so, the flood of penitent tears makes clean work, it sweeps away every lust, it drowns every corruption—in respect of love and dominion. And as conquerors will not give so much as one of their enemies quarter, so true repentance will not give one lust quarter; it falls heavily upon the bones of every sin, and nothing but the blood and death of sin will satisfy the penitent soul.

The true penitent is for the mortifying of every lust which has had a hand in crucifying of his dearest Savior. It was worthily and wittily said by one, that "true repentance strips us stark naked of all the garments of the old Adam, and leaves not so much as the shirt behind." Well, sirs, remember this, to *repent* of sin—and yet to *live* in sin—is a contradiction. "If you repent with a contradiction," says Tertullian, "God will pardon you with a contradiction. You repent and yet continue in your sin, God will pardon you—and yet send you to hell. There is a pardon with a contradiction." Again,

[4.] Fourthly, If repentance be such an easy work as you suppose, I beseech you to tell me—why do many men lie under such horrors and terrors of conscience as they do, for not repenting, when repentance would quickly give them ease, and turn their hell into a heaven? I was last winter with a young man, who upon his dying bed for several hours together, being in a dreadful agony, lay crying out, "I am damned! I am damned! I am damned! I am damned!" Ah, how soon would this poor wretch have gotten out of this hell, if it had been so easy a thing to have repented, as you imagine it is! and how many, when they have been pressed to repent, have professed, that if they might have a thousand worlds to repent, they could not repent! And will you say that repentance is easy? How many have sought repentance with tears, and would have bought repentance with the price of their dearest blood—but could not obtain it! and will you say that repentance is easy? O sirs, is it good to be damned? Is it good to go to hell? Is it good to dwell with a devouring fire, and to live in everlasting burnings? Is it good to have your eternal dwelling place among devils and damned spirits? Is it good to be banished the court of heaven, and to be separated forever from the glorious presence of God, and the sweet enjoyments of Christ, and the blessed society of angels and saints, and the fruition of all the happiness that heaven affords? Oh no! oh no! Oh, why then do not men prevent all this by repentance, if it be such an easy thing to repent! But,

[5.] Lastly, If repentance be such an easy work, why then do your hearts so rise both against the doctrine of repentance, and against

those who preach it and press it? Of all words, is not the word of *repentance* the hardest word to read? John 6:60. And of all sayings and sermons, is not that of *repentance* the hardest to hear and bear? Luther confesses that before his conversion he met not with a more displeasing word in all the Scripture, nor in all his study of divinity, than that word *repent*. O man! if repentance be so easy, why does your spirit rage, and why does your heart so swell and rise against those who preach repentance unto life? Of all preachers, there are none who so displease and move you, who so cut and gall you—as those who are still a-crying out, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" Mat. 3:2.

Repentance is the *vomit* of the soul; and ah, how do sinners' hearts rise against that remedy—and those who bring it! You love those who preach pleasing things, who tickle your ears—though they never touch your hearts! You love those who please your fancies—though they never meddle with your consciences; and you prefer one sermon of *mercy*—before a thousand sermons of *repentance*. [Isaiah 30:10; Jer. 5:30, 31; 14:14, and 23:11 to the end.] Now certainly if repentance were so easy to you, the doctrine of repentance would be more pleasing to you.

For a close, know that that white devil who now presents repentance to you as the easiest thing in the world, he will at last—work you to despair, and to cut the throat of your soul—by presenting repentance not only as a hard and difficult work—but as an *impossible* work. Oh, that these things may be so blessed unto you, as to preserve you from being deceived and deluded with a conceit that repentance is easy, and so by this means keep you from laboring to be holy!

Now as to that part of the plea, from the scriptures formerly cited—namely, that **HEREAFTER will be time enough to repent**—I shall thus reply:

1. First, Certainly the present call of God, the uncertainty of the Spirit's motion, and the danger of delay—calls upon you for *present*

repentance. It is a dangerous thing to deal with God, as ill debtors do by their creditors; first they put them off one week, and then another week, and then a third week, etc., until at last they provoke their creditors to cast them into prison, and to practice all severity upon them. Those who thus deal with God shall be as severely dealt with by God, as you may see in Proverbs 1:24-32.

The ancient warriors would not receive an *old* man into their army; and do you think, O vain man! that after you have spent your time, and wasted your strength, and exhausted your spirits in the work of Satan, and in the service of your lusts—that God will receive you to his grace and favor? If you do thus flatter yourself, it is ten thousand to one but that you will deceive yourself! **Though true repentance is never too late—yet late repentance is seldom true.** Ah, how many millions are now in hell, who have thought, and resolved, and said that they would repent hereafter—but that hereafter never came! You say "Tomorrow, tomorrow I will repent," when you know not what a tomorrow will bring forth. Alas! how many thousand ways may death surprise you before *tomorrow* comes! Though there is but one way to come into the world—yet there are a thousand thousand ways to be sent out of the world. Oh, the diseases, the hazards, the dangers, the accidents, the deaths—which daily—which hourly attend the life of man!

A Jewish Rabbi, pressing the practice of repentance upon his disciples, exhorted them to be sure to repent the day before they died; to which one of them replied, that "the day of a man's death was very uncertain;!" to which the Rabbin made answer, !Repent, therefore, every day, and then you shall be sure to repent the day before you die.! O sirs, unless you do repent today, you cannot tell that you shall repent the day before you die; for who knows today—but that he may die tomorrow?

It was once asked of Augustine, what he would say of a wicked man who had lived loosely all his life—but died penitently, etc. To whom he replied, "What would you have me to say? That he is damned? I

will not, for I have nothing to do to judge him. Shall I say that he is saved? I dare not, for I would not deceive you. What then? Why, this, "If you now repent—you are safe, whatever has become of him."

Ah, friends, you are never safe until you repent; it is repentance which puts you out of all danger of miscarrying forever. Shall the farmer take his present seasons for sowing and reaping? shall the good tenant repair his house while the weather is fair? shall the careful pilot take his advantage of wind and tide, and so put out to sea? shall the traveler mend his pace when he sees the night comes on? and shall the smith strike when the iron is hot?—and shall not we take the present opportunity of repenting and turning to the Lord, remembering that there will be a time when time shall be no more; and when there shall be no place found for repentance, though it should be sought carefully with tears, Heb. 12:17; and remembering that there will be a time when your hour-glass will be out, and when the door will be shut, and when there will be no entrance at all, Luke 13:24, 27; and remembering that it is a safer course, with prudent Prometheus, to foresee a danger and shun it, than, with foolish Epimetheus, to go on unadvisedly and be punished?

Ah friends! it is a dangerous thing to make repentance, which should be the practice of all your days, to be the task of old age. Does not common experience tell us that the longer the ship leaks—the harder it is to be emptied; and that the longer the house goes to decay—the worse it is to repair; and that the further the nail is driven—the harder it will be to get out? And so certainly the longer any man defers his repentance, the more difficult it will be for him to repent; his *heart* will every day grow more and more hard, and his *will* more and more perverse, and his *judgment* more and more corrupted, and his *affections* more and more disordered, and his *conscience* more and more benumbed or enraged, and his *whole life* more and more defiled and debauched. "Let me die the death of the righteous, and may my end be like theirs!" Numbers 23:10

Friends, do not deceive yourselves, old age is but a sad, a sandy, a tottering and sinking foundation for you to build your hopes and happiness upon—for you to build your everlasting condition, your eternal making or marring upon. Are the dog-days of old age, are the trembling hands, the wrinkled face, the failing eyes, the gasping lungs, the fainting heart, the feeble knees, and the broken down legs—*are these a sacrifice worthy of a majestic God? Is a body full of sores, aches, and diseases, and a soul full of sin—an offering befitting a majestic God? Surely not! Oh, what madness, what wickedness is this—to serve Satan, your lusts, and this world with full dishes—and to put off God with scraps! to serve these in the flower, in the prime and primrose of your days—and to put off God with the dregs of old age!*

Certainly repentance is rather a work for youth than old age. It is a work rather for strength than weakness, and for health than sickness. Oh, do not let Satan deceive you, do not let your own hearts delude you—but fall upon the work of repentance presently, knowing that as you have one day more to repent of, so you have one day less to repent in. What a piece of vanity is it—that while the ship is sound, the tackling sure, the pilot well, the sailors strong, provisions laid in, and the wind favorable—that the mariners and passengers should lie in the harbor—playing cards, drinking, dicing, dancing, and idling! And when the ship is leaky, the pilot sick, the mariners faint, provisions spent, and the winds boisterous—then to hoist up sail, to make a voyage into a far country!

And yet such is the vanity of most men, who in the days of their youth, health, and strength, who when their memories are strong, and their minds quick, and their reason ripe, etc., do sin away, and fool away, and trifle away the day of grace, the offers of mercy, the motions of the Spirit, and the entreaties of Christ! And when old age comes, when their wits are cracked, their souls distracted, their senses stupified, their hearts astonished, their minds darkened, and their bodies diseased and distempered—oh, then they think to leap into heaven, with a "Lord have mercy upon me" in their mouths!

Even though they have lived like devils—yet they hope they shall die like saints; and though they never took no care of God's honor—yet they hope that God will take care of their souls; but when the thread of their lives is cut, the next news that ever you shall hear of these is—that they are gone to hell.

I have read of a young man, who being admonished of the evil of his way and course, and being pressed to leave his wickedness, and to break off his sins by repentance, upon the consideration of judgment, eternity, and death a-coming; he answered, "What do you tell me of these things? I guarantee you, that I will do well enough, for when death comes, I will speak but three words—and that will help all. And so he went on in his wickedness. But one day, on coming to a bridge over deep waters, the horse stumbled, and he let go the bridle, and gave up himself and his horse to the waters; and was heard to say these three words, "Devil take all!" Here were three words with a witness! And oh that all that think to repent at last, with a "Lord have mercy upon me," would lay this instance to heart! The light of your life may be put out before you can once say, "Lord be merciful to me a sinner!"

Oh, take heed of delaying your repentance, for the more you delay it, the more will your account be increased, your debt augmented, Satan strengthened, your body enfeebled, your lusts emboldened, your soul endangered, and all the difficulties of conversion more and more multiplied. By delaying of your repentance you gratify Satan, deceive yourself, lose the opportunities of grace, and damn your soul forever and ever. Well, remember this, if you will not repent today, God may swear in his wrath tomorrow, that you shall not enter into his rest! And then woe to you—that ever you were born!

And thus much for the preventing of these sad mistakes about repentance, which mistakes keep off many a man from looking and laboring after that holiness without which there is no happiness.

2. Secondly, If ever you would be holy—oh, then take heed of the witch—take heed of the world! The world often swells the heart with pride; it makes men forget God, neglect Christ, slight ordinances, and despise holiness, Deut. 32:15, 22. Ah, the time, the thoughts, the strength, the energies—which this enticing world has made many to spend and consume, while their souls have lain a-bleeding, and eternity has been hastening upon them! Oh, the deadness, the barrenness, the listlessness, the heartlessness to anything which is holy—which attends a worldly temper! Many men are so bewitched with the profits, pleasures, and honors of the world, that they mind not holiness, they regard not holiness, they care not for holiness, nor the means that lead to holiness: Phil. 3:18-19, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now I tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things." [That cardinal was wretched as well as rich, who would not leave his part in Paris for a part in paradise.] Who were those who walked disorderly? why, those who minded earthly things. Who were those who fetched tears from the apostle's eyes? why, those who minded earthly things. Who were those who were enemies to the cross of Christ? why, those who minded earthly things. Who were those whose end is destruction? why, those who minded earthly things. Who were those whose God was their belly? why, those who minded earthly things. Who were those whose glory was their shame? why, those who minded earthly things.

Sicily is so full of sweet flowers, that dogs cannot hunt there; and what do all the sweet contentments and delights of this world—but make men lose the scent of heaven and holiness? **The world proves silken halters to some, and golden fetters to others.** All the flowers of this world, are surrounded with many briars. The world is all shadow and vanity; it is like Jonah's gourd—man may sit under its shadow for a while—but it soon decays and dies. He who shall but weigh man's pains with his pay, his miseries with his

pleasures, his sorrows with his joys, his crosses with his comforts, his needs with his enjoyments, etc., may well cry out, "Vanity of vanity, and all is vanity." The whole world is circular, the heart of man is triangular, and we know a circle cannot fill a triangle. [If the whole earth were changed into a globe of gold, it could not fill your heart.]

O sirs, if your hearts are not filled with holiness—they will be filled with the world, the flesh, and the devil. Either holiness or Satan must possess you.

Some there are, who have much holiness, and much of the world too; as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, David, Hezekiah, Daniel, etc.

And others there are, who have no holiness, nor anything of the world either. These men are fair for **two hells—a hell of misery here, and a hell of torment hereafter.**

Some have much of the world—but not a spark of holiness; as Saul, Haman, Dives, Herod, etc., who had a world of wealth—but not a grain of grace.

And others have a great deal of holiness, who have but little or nothing of the world; as the apostles and Lazarus, etc., James 2:5; Mat. 11:5.

Is it not infinitely better to have holiness without the world, and so be happy forever—than to have much of the world without holiness, and so be damned forever?

A man bewitched with the world will lose many precious opportunities of grace, which are more worth than a world: witness rich Felix, who had no leisure to hear poor Paul, though the hearing of a sermon might have saved his soul, Acts 24:24, seq. A man bewitched with the world has his sinning times, and his eating times, and his sleeping times, and his trading times, and his feasting times, and his sporting times, etc.; but he has not his hearing times, nor his praying times, nor his reading times, nor his mourning times,

nor his repenting times, nor his reforming times, etc. He can have time, yes, and he will have time, for everything—but to honor his God, and to make himself happy forever.

A man bewitched with the world will, when it is put to his choice, rather part with Christ to enjoy the world, than part with the world to enjoy Christ: witness the young man in the Gospel, who preferred a drop before a sea, a crumb before a crown, and his treasure on earth before eternal treasure in heaven, Mat. 19:16, 23. He would not leave that on earth which he could not long keep, for the enjoyment of that in heaven which he should never lose; rather than he would let his possessions go, he would let God and Christ go, and heaven go, and all go, etc. If heaven can be had at no cheaper a rate than parting with his possessions, "Christ may keep his heaven to himself," says he, for he'll have not have heaven upon those terms.

Again, a man bewitched with the world will prefer the most base and contemptible things before the Lord Jesus Christ; he will, with the Gergesenes, prefer his very swine before a Savior, Mat. 8:28, seq.; when they saw what a sad market their hogs were brought to, they desired Christ to depart out of their country; these Gergesites had rather lose Christ than lose their porkers; they had rather that the devil should possess their souls than that he should drown their pigs; they prefer their swine before their salvation, and present a wretched petition for their own damnation; they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts; though there be no misery, no plague, no curse, no wrath, no hell--compared to Christ's departure from a people—yet men bewitched with the world will desire this. "Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region." Matthew 8:34

Men bewitched with the world will prefer a Barabbas before a Jesus. They will with Judas betray Christ, and with Pilate condemn Christ, and with the Scribes and Pharisees they will cry out,

"Crucify him crucify him! Away with this Jesus! Away with this Jesus! Let Barabbas live—but let Jesus die! Let Barabbas be saved—but let Christ be hanged!" Ah, what incarnate devils will such men prove, who are bewitched with this world!

A man bewitched with the world will gain no good by the ministry of the word. Witness Ezekiel's hearers, "So they come pretending to be sincere and sit before you listening. But they have no intention of doing what I tell them. They express love with their mouths, but their hearts seek only after money. You are very entertaining to them, like someone who sings love songs with a beautiful voice or plays fine music on an instrument. They hear what you say, but they don't do it!" Ezekiel 33:31-32. Witness the stony ground hearer, Mat. 13:22; and witness Christ's followers, John 6.

Some writers say that nothing will grow where gold grows. Be that as it may, certainly where the love of this world grows—there nothing holy will grow. A heart filled either with the *love* of the world, or the *profits* of the world, or the *pleasures* of the world, or the *honors* of the world, or the cares of the world, or the *businesses* of the world—is a heart incapacitated to receive any divine counsel or comfort. It is a heart shut up against God and holiness, it is a heart possessed with many devils; and therefore no wonder if such a heart loathes the honeycomb of holiness! Yes, it is no wonder to see such a heart to deride and scorn holiness as the greatest foolishness, "The Pharisees, who dearly loved their money, naturally scoffed at all this." Luke 16:14

The myth tells of Lycaon being turned into a wolf; but when a worldling is made holy, there is a wolf turned into a man! Yes, a devil is turned into a saint! Therefore the Holy Spirit, speaking of Zaccheus, who had long been bewitched by the world, brings him in with an "Behold!"—as if it were a wonder of wonders that ever such a worldling should be made holy.

A man bewitched with the world will venture the loss of his soul to enjoy the world, Mat. 16:26; as that pope that sold his soul to the devil for the enjoyment of the popedom six years. We hate the Turks for selling of Christians as slaves; but ah, how many are there among us, who call themselves Christians, who yet sell themselves and their souls to the slaves of the devil for a penny! Look! as Shimei, by seeking his servant, lost his life—just so, many, by seeking of the world, have lost their souls. Now though of all losses the loss of the soul is the greatest, the saddest, the sorest, the heaviest, and the most intolerable, inconceivable, and irrecoverable loss—yet a man bewitched with the world will run the hazard of losing it, of damning it, to enjoy the world.

You know the Reubenites in Joshua 22 preferred the country that was commodious for the feeding of their cattle, though it was far from the temple, where they might have fed their souls, and have got heaven and holiness for their souls—before their interest in the land of promise. Well, so men who are bewitched with this world in these days, oh, how do they prefer their sensual delights, their brutish contentments, and their carnal enjoyments—before the heavenly Canaan, and before the beauties of holiness, and before the temple of God's holiness, where holiness sparkles and shines in all its bravery and glory, and where their souls might be abundantly satisfied and delighted with the most ravishing joys, the most surpassing delights, and the most transcendent pleasures which are at God's right hand!

To draw to a close, the Arabic proverb says that the world is a carcass, and those who hunt after it are dogs. If this proverb is true, what a multitude of professors will be found to be dogs—who hunt more after earth than heaven; who hunt more after terrestrial than celestial things; who hunt more after nothingnesses and emptinesses, than they do after those fullnesses and sweetnesses which are in God, Christ, heaven, and holiness!

Well, friends, as ever you would obtain that real holiness, without which there is no happiness—take heed of a *witch*—take heed of this

world! And to that purpose, oh that you would always look upon the things of this world—as you will look upon them when you come to die! Oh, that you would now look upon all the pomp, state, bravery, and glory of the world—as you will look upon it when your souls shall sit upon your trembling lips! Oh, with what a disdainful eye, with what a weaned heart, do men look upon those things then! Do so now, and I dare assure you, that though the world may trouble you—yet it shall never bewitch you.

I have read of a man who, lying in a burning fever, professed that if he had all the world at his dispose, he would give it all for one draught of beer; at so low a rate do men value the world at such a time as that is. If men were so wise to value the world at no higher a rate in health than they do in sickness; in life than they do at the time of their death—it would never bewitch them, it would never be as a wall of separation between holiness and them. As ever you would be holy here, and happy hereafter, take heed of this witch! And believe it to be a witch before it has bewitched you—or else you may believe it too late.

3. Thirdly, If ever you would be holy, then take heed of comparing yourselves with those who are, at least supposedly, worse than yourselves. Many there are, who by comparing themselves with those who are bad, very bad—think themselves to be good, very good; yes, to be too good to go to hell. Such a one was that proud Pharisee in Luke 18, who thought himself a far better man than the poor publican—and yet he was not half so honest, nor half so just, nor half so righteous, nor half so good as he was. The poor publican was ashamed of himself; he loathed himself, he abased himself, he judged himself, and he condemned himself. He acknowledged God, he adored God, he dreaded God, he admired God, and he justified God; in all of which, he exceeded the proud Pharisee. And yet, oh how scornfully does this proud Pharisee look upon him! and how disdainfully and disgracefully does he speak of him! And this was the general frame and temper of the Scribes and Pharisees, who thought no man's penny so good coin, as their own;

who thought themselves better than the best—when they were the very worst of the worst. For publicans and harlots believed and repented, and entered into the kingdom of God before them, Mat. 21:31-32.

And likewise, those in Isaiah 65 were bad, very bad, yes, stark bad; they were the *basest* among the base, they were the *vilest* among the vile, they were the most *rebellious* among the rebellious, and the most *superstitious* among the superstitious. "I opened my arms to my own people all day long, but they have rebelled. They follow their own evil paths and thoughts. All day long they insult me to my face by worshiping idols in their sacred gardens. They burn incense on the rooftops of their homes. At night they go out among the graves and secret places to worship evil spirits. They also eat pork and other forbidden foods. Isaiah 65:2-4. And yet, oh how do they stroke themselves, and bless themselves, and commend themselves, and cry up themselves, and exalt themselves as the only holy ones. "Yet they say to each other—Don't come too close or you will defile me! I am holier than you!" Isaiah 65:5. They could deify themselves—and yet damn and devilify others, though they were such monsters as God abhorred, "They are a stench in my nostrils, an acrid smell that never goes away." Isaiah 65:5.

Ah! how many be there who, by comparing themselves with those who are worse than themselves—do judge themselves to be good enough, and holy enough! They are good *negative* Christians—and they think that is enough to bring them to heaven. They bless themselves that they are no *Nabals* for drunkenness, nor any *Sodomites* for filthiness, nor any *Hamans* for haughtiness, nor any *Ammons* for lustfulness, nor any of the old world for idleness, nor any *Zaccheuses* for covetousness, nor any *Laodiceans* for lukewarmness, etc. They bless themselves that they are no *Gehazis* for lying, nor any *Shimeis* for cursing, nor any *Joabs* for swearing, nor any *Rabshakehs* for railing, nor any *Doegs* for cruelty, nor any *Judases* for treachery, nor any *Demases* for apostasy, etc.

And thus they cheat themselves, and find out fine ways to delude and damn their own souls; they think it grace enough, and holiness enough, that they have attained to this—namely, not to be so bad as the worst, though they fall infinitely short of coming near unto the best. Well, sirs, remember this, if you are not so great sinners as others—your horrors, your terrors, your torments, your hell shall not be so great, nor so hot as others—but without holiness you shall be as certainly damned as others! And what a cold comfort is this, to have a cooler and a lighter hell than others; and yet this is all the comfort that can be handed to unholy hearts. But,

4. Fourthly, Take heed of flatterers. Ah! how good might many men have been, who are yet exceeding bad, had they not sold their ears to flatterers! Flatterers are soul-murderers; they are soul-undoers; they are like incompetent physicians, who skin over the wound—but kill the patient! Flattery is the very mother of folly, and the very nursery of all impiety. Flatterers will cry up those for *pious* men—who are only superstitious; and those for *wise* men—who are foolish; and those for *knowing* men—who are ignorant; and those for virtuous men—who are wicked; and those for holy men—who at best are but civil; and those for happy men—who are certainly miserable. Flatterers dare call the proud—happy; and bless those whom God has cursed. They dare call evil good, and good evil. They dare call darkness light, and light darkness. They dare say that that man has grace—who has none. Yes, they dare swear that such and such shall be saved—though for the present they live as if they were resolved to be damned. They dare take upon them to tell you that such and such men's names are written in heaven, and that such and such belong to the election of grace—though their lives speak them out to be void of all grace.

Ah! how many a man has been kept off from the thoughts of holiness, and from the ways of holiness, and from the love and liking of holiness—by flatterers who have flattered them—that doubtless they are in the favor of God—and that certainly God did not make men to damn them—and that without all question they have a saving

interest in Christ—and that there is no question but that their hearts are as good as the best—and that their eternal conditions are good, and their souls happy. Yes, they are so confident of their happiness, that they dare venture a-going to hell, if ever such should go to hell whom they fondly flatter; they dare pawn their souls and their salvation on it, that such shall never miscarry; and by these flatteries they harden men in sin, and arm them against holiness.

Flattery is that sweet poison that has destroyed many a soul. Witness Rehoboam, Ahab, Herod, Nero, Alexander, etc. Just so, true is that of the wise man: Proverbs 26:28, "A lying tongue hates those who are afflicted by it, and a flattering mouth works ruin." [The Hebrew word signifies to throw down, to drive on forwards until a man falls into destruction; none drive so furiously to the ruin and destruction of souls—as flatterers do.] A flattering mouth ruins name, fame, estate, life, body and soul; it ruins a man both temporally and eternally; it often undoes a man in both worlds; it makes a man miserable both here and hereafter. Flatterers are devouring caterpillars. Flatterers' tongues do more mischief than persecutors' swords, for their swords can but destroy the bodies of men—but flatterers' tongues destroy the souls of men. Flatterers are the greatest soul-cheaters and soul-undoers in the world. Flatterers dare call vice—virtue; they dare call pride—civility; covetousness—good economy; drunkenness—good company; prodigality—liberality; wantonness—a foible of youth; passion—zeal; revenge—courage, etc. They dare call enormities—infirmities; and wickednesses—weaknesses. They dare call great sins—little sins; little sins—no sins. They gild over all their poisonous pills with gold. They draw the fairest glove upon the foulest hand. They lay their neatest colors upon the filthiest sores. They put their best paint upon the worst faces, and the richest robes upon the most diseased bodies. And by these devices they entangle many to their utter ruin.

Proverbs 29:5, "A man who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet." The Hebrew word which is here rendered flatterer, signifies a soft, butter-spoken man; because flatterers, the better to deceive—oil

their tongues and to butter their lips, so that by their smooth, soft speeches they may the more insinuate themselves into men's minds, and so make way for their destruction. Flatterers have their silken nets to ensnare and entangle poor souls to their eternal ruin. Look! as fowlers strew corn and lay baits to draw birds into their nets; or look, as hunters spread their nets, that they may capture beasts and prey upon them, or make a prey of them—just so, flatterers spread their nets that they may catch poor souls, and either prey upon them, or else make a prey of them.

Flattery is **the devil's invisible net**; and happy is that soul who escapes it. The flatterer's net is worse than his sword—for his sword may be the more easily seen, feared, and avoided, than his net. Of all weapons, the flatterer's net is the most perilous and dangerous, both to the lives, estates, and souls of men. It were ten thousand times better to trample a flatterer under a man's feet, than for a man to allow his feet to be taken in the flatterer's net. A flatterer is a foul enemy in the dress of a friend; he is a wolf in sheep's clothing; he is a devil transformed into an angel of light! What punishment can be too great for such?

The severity of many heathen princes and emperors has been very great against flatterers. Take one instance for all: Alexander Severus commanded one Turinus, a great flatterer, to be tied to a stake and stifled with smoke, with a herald standing by, and proclaiming to all the people, that it was but just that he who lived by the smoke of flattery should die by smoke. [Many great emperors were great enemies to flatterers.]

Now what a shameful thing is it that such as are called Christians should desire to be flattered—when heathens have so severely punished flatterers. Well, sirs, as ever you would be holy, take heed of flatterers, and take heed of flattery! Let Solomon's counsel be always in your eye, and let it always lie warm upon your hearts: Proverbs 20:19, "Do not meddle with him who flatters with his lips." A man who loves his soul, and would be happy in the eternal world,

should shun flatterers as he should shun a thief, a serpent, a wolf, a lion, a devil. Until you stop your ears against a spirit of flattery, there is little hopes that ever you will be holy.

5. Fifthly, If ever you would be holy, oh! then take heed of putting the day of death far from you. Man is a creature naturally prone to look upon death at a distance, to look upon death afar off, and to say with those in Ezekiel, "Behold, the people of Israel are saying—The vision he sees is for many years from now, and he prophesies about the distant future." Ezek. 12:27. Just so, the rich man in the Gospel reckoned upon many *years*, when he had not many *months*, no not many *weeks*, no not many *days*, no not many hours—to live in this world! Unholy people are very apt to say to death as Pharaoh said to Moses, "Get out of my sight! Make sure you do not appear before me again!" Exod. 10:28. When death knocks at the *poor* man's door he sends it to the *rich* man's gate, and the rich man translates it to the *scholar*, and the scholar posts it away to the courtier, and the courtier to his lady, and his lady to her maid; and so death is posted away, as it were, from one to another, everyone crying out to death, "Oh, let me not see your face! Oh, let me not see your face!"

It is a death to many kings and rulers—just to *think* of death, or to *hear* of death; and therefore they strictly charge all their servants about them, that when they saw them sick, they should never dare to name that bitter word 'death' in their ears. And Pashur cannot cast his eye upon death—but he is presently a Magor-missabib, *a terror to himself*, Jer. 20:3. And Saul, though he was a valiant king—yet at the news of death he falls on his face, 1 Sam. 28:20. And so Belshazzar, though he was a mighty emperor, Dan. 5:1-7—yet a letter to him, from him whom Bildad calls the *king of terrors*, Job 18:14, ah, how does it amaze, astonish, affright, and terrify him! and how many are there who, with Maecenas, had rather live in many diseases than die; and, with the most famous heathens, prefer the poorest life on earth, above all the hopes they have of the eternal world; like Achilles, who had rather be a servant to a poor country down here,

than to be a king to all the souls departed; or like Withipoll, a rich and wretched man, who, when he was in danger of death, earnestly desired that he might live five hundred years, though it were but in the shape of a toad. Vitellius, when facing death, made himself drunk to drown the thoughts of it. A woman being ill—one of her neighbors coming to visit her, told her that if she died she would go to heaven and be with God and Jesus Christ, and with angels and saints; the sick woman answered, that she had no acquaintance there, she knew nobody there, and therefore she had rather live with her neighbors here on earth, than to go there to live among strangers.

And thus you see how apt people are to shrug at death, which is a common lot, and to say to it, as Ephraim did to his idols, "Get away from me, what have we more to do with you?" But this is and must be for a lamentation, that men put off the thoughts of their latter end to the latter end of their thoughts. Man naturally is a great life-lover, and therefore he will bleed, sweat, vomit, purge, part with an estate, yes, with a limb, ay, limbs—to preserve his life. Like him who cried out, "Oh, give me any deformity, any torment, any misery, just so that you spare my life!" And upon this account it is, that he desires that such a guest as death may not knock at his door. But ah! that all such vain men would consider, that by putting the day of their death far from them, they do but gratify Satan, strengthen their sins, provoke the Lord, and make the work of faith and holiness more hard and difficult, and so lay a deep foundation for their own eternal destruction!

Well, sirs, remember this, the serious thoughts and meditations of death, if anything, will work you to break off your sins, to mend your lives, and to look to the salvation of your souls. There is nothing that will sooner work a man to a holy fear of offending God in anything, and to a holy care of pleasing God in everything—than the serious meditation of death. Though that text, "Remember your latter end, and you shall never do amiss," is apocryphal—yet the truth asserted is canonical. I have read a story of one who gave a young prodigal a ring with a death's-head, on this condition—that he should one hour

in a day, for seven days together, think and meditate upon death, which accordingly he did, and it bred a great change and alteration in his thinking and life.

O man! you do not know but that the serious thoughts of death may work that desirable thing in you, namely, holiness, which yet has not been wrought in you by all the holy counsels, the gracious examples, the fervent prayers, and the sorrowful tears of your dearest friends. You do not know but that the serious meditation of death may do you more good than all the *sermons* that you have ever heard; or than all the *books* that you have ever read; or than all the *prayers* that you have ever made; or than all the *sighs* or *groans* that you have ever poured out; and why then should you put the thoughts of death far from you? Certainly as he is an deep-rooted sinner, who dares look death in the face and yet sin; who dares steal a purse when the judge looks on—just so, he is a monster rather than a man, who dares look death in the face—and yet satisfy himself to live without holiness; who dares look death in the face—and yet say "I'll drink and be drunk, I'll swear and swagger, I'll roar and whore, I'll cheat and cozen, I'll hate and oppose, I'll quarrel and kill, and my hands shall be as bloody as my heart—let death do her worst!" If such a person is not in the ready way of being miserable forever, I know nothing.

1. Firstly, Well, sirs, remember these three things:

[1.] First, That **there is nothing more CERTAIN than death.** That statute law of heaven, "Dust you are, and unto dust you shall return," Gen. 3:19, will take hold of all the sons of men. "There is no man who lives and shall not see death," Psalm 89:48. Though Jacob wrestled with an *angel* and prevailed—yet *death* was too hard for him, Gen. 32. Though Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe—yet he could not *outrun* death, and Absalom could not *outride* it, nor Pharaoh *outdrive* it. Though Saul and Jonathan were as swift as eagles, and as strong as lions—yet were they slain among the mighty. It was not Solomon's *wisdom* that could deliver him, nor Samson's *strength* which could rescue him, nor Haman's *honor* which could

secure him, nor Goliath's *sword* which could defend him, nor Dives's riches which could ransom him from the grave; and therefore why should men put this day so far from them? But,

[2.] Secondly, As there is nothing more certain than death, so **there is nothing more SUDDEN than death**. When the old world, when Sodom, when Pharaoh, when Hagar, when Amalek, when Haman, when Nebuchadnezzar, when Belshazzar, when Dives, when the rich fool, and when Herod—were all in their prime and pride, when they were in their most flourishing estate, when they were at the very top of their glory—ah, how suddenly, how sadly, how strangely, how unexpectedly, and how astonishingly were they brought down to the grave, yes, to hell! Oh, the thousand thousands of crosses, losses, diseases, sicknesses, calamities, dangers, and deaths—which attends the life of man—and by the least of which he may be suddenly surprised and carried into the eternal world! And therefore, why should man cry out "Tomorrow, tomorrow!" when he does not know whether he shall have a tomorrow, when he does not know but that he may die before he has begun to live?

Waldus, a rich merchant of France, seeing one suddenly drop down dead in the streets, went home, repented, changed his life, studied the Scriptures, and became a worthy teacher, father, and founder of the Christians called the Waldenses. And oh that the serious thoughts of the suddenness of death might have that happy effect upon your souls, as to work you to break your league with sin, and to frighten you, as it were—into a love of holiness, and into a life of holiness!

O *swearer*, what do you know but that death may seize on you while the oath is in your mouth? And what do you know, O *drunkard*—but that death may step in between the cup and the lip, as it did to Belshazzar? And what do you know, O *adulterer*—but that a poisoned dart may strike through your liver while you are in the very flagrancy of your lust, as it did through Zimri's and Cozbi's? And what do you know, O *proud* Haman—but that you who are thus

nobly feasted one day, may be a feast for the crows the next day? And what do you know who are so *crafty*, O Ahithophel—but that if your subtle counsel is rejected one hour, you may hang yourself the next hour? And what do you know, O you opposing and *murmuring* Korah—but that the earth may suddenly open and swallow you up? And therefore why should you put that day so far from you, that may so suddenly overtake you?

Berline, in Germany, while in the pulpit, said that the Scriptures were a lie—and was suddenly smitten with an apoplexy, and fell down dead on the spot. And what do you know, who are so apt to charge the Scriptures with lying—but that God may strike you both dumb and dead while the lie is in your mouth? Bibulus, a Roman general, while riding in triumph in all his glory—a tile fell off from a house in the street and knocked out his brains. And what do you know, O vain-glorious man—but that while you are triumphing in your world-glory, by some unexpected blow you may be sent into the eternal world?

Lepidus and Aufidius both stumbled at the very threshold of the senate and died; the blow came in a cloud from heaven. God by an invisible blow may send you out of this visible world.

Sophocles died suddenly by excessive joy, and Homer died by immoderate grief; excessive joy or excessive grief may suddenly bring you to your *long* home. Olympus the Arian heretic, speaking against the Holy Trinity as he was a-bathing himself, was struck dead by a threefold thunderbolt. We may run and read some men's sins in the very face of their punishments. Mr. Perkins speaks of one who, when it thundered, scoffingly said, "it was nothing but Tom Tumbrel a-hooping his tubs, etc.," and immediately he was struck dead with a thunderbolt from heaven. There would be no end of recounting the many judgments which have suddenly surprised all sorts of sinners. Let these few instances suffice to stir up every unholy heart to take heed of putting far off the day of death. But,

[3.] Thirdly, As there is nothing more sudden than death, so **there is nothing more short than life**; and why then should you put the day of your death so far from you? [Job 8:9; Psalm 102:11, 73:20, and 90:5; Job 20:8, and 7:7.] If you consider the life of man absolutely, it is but short—it is but as a span, a shadow, a dream, a bubble, a blast, a puff of wind, a pile of dust, a fading leaf, or a tale that is told, etc. The life of man is as a *dream* that vanishes when one awakes; it is a *wind* that goes away and comes not again; it is as a *cloud* that is soon dispersed with the wind; it is as a *vapor* that appears for a time, and then vanishes away; it is as the *grass* that soon withers; it is as the *flower* that soon fades; it is as the *candle* that every light puff of wind blows out.

The life of man is rather made up of *days* than *years*. Psalm 90:12, "So teach us to number our *days*, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom." Moses does not say, Lord, teach us to number our *years*—but "Lord, teach us to number our *days*." Fallen man is apt to misreckon, and to compute days for years; and therefore this holy prophet desires that God would teach them this divine arithmetic, of numbering their days—it being a lesson that none but a God can teach. Just so, Job 14:1-2, "Man born of woman is of *few days* and full of trouble. He springs up like a *flower* and withers away; like a *fleeting shadow*, he does not endure." He speaks not of an age, nor of years, nor of many days—but of a *few days*. Man's days are short in themselves, and shorter in respect of the troubles which attend this present life. Man's life is so short, Austin doubts whether to call it a *dying life*, or a *living death*.

Now these few days of man's life are upon the wing, hastening and flying from us as the eagle hastens to his prey; and therefore man had need set a greater price upon every moment and minute of time, than he does upon all the world, and accordingly improve it.

2. Secondly, If you consider the life of man COMPARATIVELY, it is but short, and that will appear briefly thus:

[1.] First, If you compare the life of man to what man might have reached to had he continued in his primitive glory.

Had man stood fast in innocency, he would have never known what death and misery had meant. Death is a fall that came in by a fall. Had man kept sin out of the world, he would have kept death out of the world. Had man kept fast his holiness and purity, he would have retained his immortality to this day; death could never have carried man out of the world, had not man first let sin into the world, Romans 5:12, seq.

[2.] Secondly, If you compare the life of man to the long lives of the patriarchs before the flood—then the life of man is but short.

Threescore years and ten, is man's age, Psalm 90:10. And where one man lives to this age, how many thousands die before they come to it! But what is this seventy years, compared to the age that men lived to in former times? Enoch lived as many years as there are days in the year, and Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years, and Methuselah lived nine hundred sixty-nine years, Gen. 5. Now what are our lives—compared to the long lives of the patriarchs? As men's wickedness does more and more increase—so their days do more and more decrease. The more wicked any generation is—the shorter lived that generation shall be. God will quickly despatch them out of the world—who make quick despatches in ways of wickedness.

[3.] Thirdly, The life of man is but short, if you compare it to what it shall be after the morning of the resurrection.

Oh, then man's days shall reach to eternity! Eternity is that one perpetual day which shall never have an end. When men after the resurrection begin to live—they shall never die after that day. Every man shall live in everlasting *bliss* or in everlasting *woe*! When the last trumpet has sounded, man shall live forever and ever!

[4.] Fourthly, The life of man is but short, if you compare it with the days of God.

Psalm 39:5, "My age is nothing before him;" all time is nothing, compared to eternity. Man's life is but a minute, it

is but a point of time, compared to the days of eternity. What head, what heart can conceive or reckon up the duration of God, who ever was, who still is, and who ever will be! Every child and every fool can tell you their age—but what man on earth or what angel in heaven can tell you the years of the Most High? Surely none!

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, The life of man is but short, if you compare it with the lives of other creatures. Some say that the *eagle* will live until she is a hundred years old. And some *elephants* live three hundred years; by which you see the brevity of man's life. And why then should man be so foolish, so vain—to put the day of his death so far from him? I have read of the birds of Norway, that they fly faster than the fowls of any other country; they knowing, by an instinct that God has put into them, that the days in that climate are very short—do therefore make the more haste to their nests. And oh that all who hear me this day would learn by these birds of Norway—to make haste to *believe*, and to make haste to *repent*, and to make haste to *love God*, and to make haste to be *holy*, etc., seeing their day of life is so short, and their *night of death* is hastening towards them.

And as the life of man is very short, so it is very significant—that a very small matter, a very little thing—may quickly put an end to man's life. When the emperor threatened the philosopher with death, he replied, "What more is your threat—than a Spanish fly may do?" An ordinary fly, zooming into the mouth of the proud Pope Adrian, choked him. Tamerlane, a Scythian captain, the terror of his time, died suddenly with a fever. Anacreon the poet was choked with the seed of a grape. Aeschylus was killed by the fall of a turtle, which fell from an eagle's talons upon his head. The duke of Brittany was stifled to death in a throng of people. An emperor died by the scratch of a comb. One of the kings of France died by choking on his food. One who was playing at tennis, received a blow with a ball a little above the right ear, which struck him into his grave. There is nothing so small, but it may be a man's bane. The tripping of a toe, the cutting of a corn, the scratch of a nail, the prick of a pin, a fish-bone, a hair, a drop of water, a crumb of bread, bad air—may bring a man to his

long home! Yes, a little smoke may soon suffocate him, or his own spittle may suddenly choke him.

And oh, that all I have spoken upon this account might be so blessed as to work you to take heed of putting the day of your death so far away from you! The evil servant, when he thought his master was gone afar off, begins oppressing the other servants, partying, and getting drunk, Luke 12:45. And just so, the lewd woman in the Proverbs, chapter 7:19-20, when the husband was gone a long journey, when he was far from home—then she grew promiscuous, vain, and secure. Just so, when men put afar off the day of their death, then they grow more loose, profane, and unholy. Whereas a serious and frequent eyeing and minding of death as at hand, as at a man's elbow—would alarm a man to break off his sins by repentance, and to labor for holiness, as a man would labor for life itself. I have read of the women on a certain island—that the first garment they make is their shroud, with which they usually gird themselves when they go abroad, to show that they are still mindful of their mortality. Ah, friends, a constant minding of your mortality would contribute very much towards the making of you holy. He who daily looks upon death—will be daily a-looking after holiness. The oftener any man looks into the grave—the oftener that man will be looking up to heaven, and a-begging that God would make him holy even as he is holy. But,

6. Sixthly and lastly, Take heed of settling yourselves under an unholy minister--of one whose life gives the lie to his doctrine. An unholy preacher is the greatest destroyer of the souls of men! He who preaches well--but lives bad--does what he can, to murder all his hearers at once! There is no greater bar to holiness, than ministers' unholy lives. An unholy life mars the soundest and the sweetest doctrine. The sins of teachers are the teachers of sins! "The leaders of the people have led them down the path of destruction." Isaiah 9:16.

An unholy minister is the greatest pest, the worst plague, and the greatest mischief--that can be to a people; for his enormities, his wickednesses, will have the strongest influences upon the souls and

lives of men--to make them eternally miserable. His falls will be the fall and ruin of many; for people are more prone to live more by *examples*--than by *precepts*; mind more what the minister *does*--than what he *says*; eye more how he *walks*--than how he *talks*. "Watch your *life* and doctrine closely." 1 Timothy 4:16. "Set an *example* for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity." 1 Timothy 4:12. "In everything set them an *example* by doing what is good." Titus 2:7.

It was said of one--that was an excellent preacher--but a very bad liver; that when he was in the pulpit--it was pity he should ever come out of it, he preached so well; and when he was out of the pulpit--it was pity that ever he should go into it, he lived so badly. Certainly it is pity that ever such should go into a pulpit who preach well but live bad; who have much of God in their mouths, and much of the devil in their lives; who have the earth as much at their fingers' end as they have heaven at their tongue's end; whose lives puts their words to a blush; who have much of heaven in their expressions, and nothing of heaven in their lives; who have much holiness in their looks--but none in their hearts; and much holiness in their lips--but none in their lives. The unholy lives of such preachers causes people to slight and abhor the holy things of God, 1 Sam. 2:17; yes, their bad lives often raise doubts in their hearers' hearts whether those things that they preach are true or not. Hearers will be ready to object and say, "If these things are true that the minister says, why does he not practice what he preaches? why does he not *do* as well as *say*?"

And with what face or confidence can he appear against that in the pulpit, which he countenances and patronizes in his life? Who will credit that man's doctrine, who has Jacob's voice--but Esau's hands; who is a saint, yes, an angel, in the pulpit--but a debauched sinner, yes, an incarnate devil, out of it?

I have read of a woman who, living in professed doubt of the Godhead, after better illumination and repentance, did often protest that the wicked life of a great minister, under whose ministry she lived, did conjure up those damnable doubts in her soul. There is nothing that brings holy truths so much into question as the unholy lives of such preachers; neither is there anything that exposes a minister's person and office to so much scorn and contempt as an unholy life. Let a minister be ever so learned, solid, quaint, elegant, zealous, judicious, sententious, etc.—yet if he is carnal, covetous, worldly, vain, and loose in his life and conversation, his hearers will rather deride his doctrine—than reform by his doctrine; they will rather despise it—than study how to profit by it; therefore he said right, who said—

"Unto a teacher it's no small disgrace
When his own faults reprove him to his face."

There is nothing in all the world that is more powerful and prevalent to corrupt and mislead unholy men, and to harden, strengthen, and encourage them in ways of wickedness—than the looseness of their lives whose office binds them to look to the salvation of their souls, Ezek. 13:22, and Jer. 33:15: Mal. 2:8, "You are departed out of the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law." When the preacher departs out of the way of holiness, the people will quickly stumble at the law of holiness; when ministers are as wandering stars, no wonder if their hearers wander from all that is good. He whose life is not a standing reproof to sin, will, by his life, encourage sinners more and more in a way of sin.

There is nothing which keeps men so off from a good opinion of holiness, and from the love of holiness, and the liking of holiness, and from the pursuing after holiness—than the unholy lives of their teachers. Therefore, as ever you would be holy, fly their tents, and abandon their company and society. Ministers whose lives are unholy, though their abilities may be high, are like a stone gutter, that conveys water into a garden—but receives no benefit itself

thereby; or like a harp that makes melody for others—but hears nothing itself. They are like those carpenters who built the ark to save others, and were drowned themselves; or like porters at great men's gates, that let in others—but lodge without themselves; or like sea-marks, that rot themselves—and yet give others warning to avoid shipwreck; or like Caesar's soldier, that dug a fountain for Caesar, and perished himself for lack of water.

Oh, the folly and madness of such ministers, who give light to others—and yet walk in darkness themselves; who feast others' souls—but starve their own; who rescue others from a devouring enemy—and yet allow themselves to be devoured; who forewarn others of the horrible pit—and yet fall into it themselves; who give good counsel to others—and yet can't take good counsel themselves; who study and strive to bring others to heaven—and yet have no mind to go there themselves!

Certainly society and company with such, can't but be a mighty hindrance to holiness. He who is in good earnest resolved to be holy, must resolutely be resolved to have nothing to do with such unholy people. And thus you see the several things that you must decline, if ever you would be holy. But,

II. Secondly, As there are **six** things that you must **decline** if ever you would obtain that real holiness without which there is no happiness—just so, there are **ten things which you are to DO--which you are to put in PRACTICE, without which you will never be holy here, nor happy hereafter.**

Question. But what are they?

Answer. They are these:

(1.) First, Greatly lament and mourn over your own unholiness, over your own wickedness. The first step to holiness, is melting and mourning over a man's own unholiness. Go to your closet, and fall down before the most high and holy God, and

mourn bitterly over the unholiness of your nature, the unholiness of your heart, the unholiness of your affections, the unholiness of your intentions, the unholiness of your resolutions, the unholiness of your expressions, and the unholiness of your life: Joel 2:12, "Turn to the Lord with weeping and with mourning." The foundation of a thorough reformation must be laid in a deep humiliation. The best way to be holy is to accuse, indict, arraign, and condemn yourself for your unholiness. [Ezra 6:2; Jer. 50:4; Psalm 51:5.]

You shall as soon espouse light and darkness, and marry midnight to the noonday—as you shall espouse or marry a holy God to an unhumiliated sinner. Oh, who can look upon sin as an offence against a holy God, as the breach of a holy law, as the wounding and crucifying of a holy Savior, as the grieving and saddening of a holy Sanctifier, and as an eternal loss and undoing of his own soul—and not mourn over it? Oh, who can cast a serious eye upon the nature of sin, or upon the exceeding sinfulness of sin, or upon the aggravations of sin—and not have his heart humbled, his soul grieved, and his spirit melted for sin? Oh, who can look upon sin as it strikes at the honor of God, the name of God, the being of God, the glory of God, and the design of God—and not have his mouth full of penitential confessions, his eyes full of penitential tears, and his heart full of penitential sorrow?

Some, as they say of witches, cannot weep for sin; but those who weep not for sin here, where there are handkerchiefs in the hands of Christ to wipe off their tears—shall weep out their eyes in hell hereafter. It is better to weep bitterly for your sins on earth, than to weep eternally for your folly in hell. Ah, how hard is that heart that can sadly lament and bewail the loss of a groat, a chicken, a child, a sheep, a ship, a friend, etc.—and yet can't let fall a tear to save a lost soul!

Jacob weeps and prevails with God, Hosea 12:4; his tears made a happy conquest upon God. *Jacob* weeps and prevails with God for his life; and what do you know but that by your penitential tears you

may prevail with God for your soul? He weeps and prevails with God for temporals; and why may not you by weeping prevail with God for eternal? He weeps and prevails with God for some outward happiness; and why may not you by weeping prevail with God for inward holiness? It is an old observation, that the tears of repenting sinners are the wine of angels. Certainly God himself can smile to see a sinner grieve for his sins, and to see him grieve that he can grieve no more, for that he has sinned against a God so great, so gracious, so bountiful, so merciful, etc., Psalm 51:17.

Though God is displeased with a sinner's sins—yet he is very well pleased with a sinner's tears, and therefore as he has a bag for the one, so he has a bottle for the other. It cannot but be a pleasure to God—to see a sinner drown his sins in a deluge of penitential tears. Though tears of indignation, as was Esau's; and tears of dissimulation, as was Ishmael's; and tears of desperation, as was Judas'; are abominable to God—yet tears of godly compunction and contrition are acceptable and delightful unto God. A sinner never looks so sweetly, as when he weeps most penitentially: witness Mary Magdalene, Manasseh, and those murderers of Christ, Acts 2. A sinner's face never shines so beautiful, as when it is bedewed with penitential tears. Tears have a voice, "The Lord has heard the sound of my weeping" Psalm 6:8. And God has an eye as well upon a man's tears as upon his prayers. Penitent tears are divine ambassadors, which never return from the throne of grace without answers of grace, Isaiah 38:5, "I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears." Peter said nothing—but went out and wept bitterly—and obtained mercy, Mat. 26:75. Tears are a kind of silent prayers, that will at last prevail for mercy. Naaman the Syrian was cleansed of his leprosy by the waters of Jordan; penitential tears may do much towards the cleansing of your leprous soul from sin.

He who really grieves that he cannot grieve for sin—is grieved for sin. He who is truly sorry that he cannot be sorry for sin, is in a measure sorry for sin. He who truly desires to drown his sins in his tears, he has in divine account drowned his sins in his tears. The maid in

Scaliger swooned at the sight of a lily. Oh, how much more should you swoon at the sight of your unholiness! Basil wept when he saw the rose, because it brought to his mind the first sin from whence it had the prickles. Oh, how should a sinner fall a-weeping when he looks upon the greatness of his wickedness and his lack of holiness! As ever you would be holy, mourn over your own unholiness. But,

(2.) Secondly, If ever you would be holy, you must seek the HOLY SPIRIT. The Spirit is the efficient cause of all the holiness which is in the world. The Spirit of God is a spirit of holiness, Romans 1:4; he is frequently called the *Holy Spirit*: "Cast me not away from your presence; and take not your *Holy Spirit* from me," Psalm 51:11; "But they rebelled, and vexed his *Holy Spirit*," Isaiah 63:10; "And grieve not the *Holy Spirit* of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption," Eph. 4:30; "God, who has also given unto us his *Holy Spirit*," 1 Thes. 4:8; "In whom also, after that you believed, you were sealed by the *Holy Spirit* of promise," Eph. 1:13.

To make a man holy—is greater than to create a world; it is a work too high and too hard for angels or men; it can be done by none but by the Holy Spirit. Sanctification is made the Spirit's personal operation, 2 Thes. 2:13, 1 Pet. 1:2. It is the great work of the Spirit—to shape, form, and fashion the new creature holiness, in all the vessels of glory. The Spirit is the *root* of all holiness; and therefore the several parts of holiness are called the *fruits* of the Spirit, Gal. 5:22. It is true, God *purposes* holiness to his people, and Christ has *purchased* holiness for his people; but it is only the Spirit that is the efficient *cause* or *worker* of holiness in his people. Though the Father, Son, and Spirit has designed to re-imprint holiness upon man's heart—yet the Spirit has the greatest hand in that work. When man was in his primitive glory, holiness was his loveliness and his likeness to God; but being now fallen, that image is so broken and marred, that no hand can repair it or restore it but the hand of the Spirit.

The great principle of holiness which was in Christ, as to his human nature, was the Holy Spirit, which he had above measure; for he was anointed with the unction of the Spirit above his fellows. Just so, that, look which way you will, the Spirit still appears to be the great principle of holiness. Holiness is the very picture of God, and certainly no hand can carve that excellent picture but the Spirit of God. Holiness is the divine nature, and none can impart that to man but the Spirit.

"When He comes, He will convict the world about sin." John 16:8. A man never comes to see his sins, nor to be sick of his sins, nor to loathe his sins, nor to arraign his sins, nor to condemn his sins, nor to judge himself for his sins, evangelically—until he comes to be possessed of the Holy Spirit. A man never comes to spit out the sweet morsels of sin, he never comes to make a sacrifice of his only Isaac, and to hack his trembling Agag in pieces, and to strangle his Delilah, and in good earnest to set upon an utter extirpation of those sins that his constitution, inclination, custom, calling, and interest does most incline him to—until the Spirit of holiness comes upon him. Until the Holy Spirit falls upon the hearts of sinners, they will never be fired out of their pride, formality, carnality, sensuality, and security.

When the Holy Spirit comes as a spirit of glory and power to change your heart, to destroy your sins, to reform your ways, and to save your soul, etc., oh, then cry out, "Let him still go on conquering and to conquer, until all his enemies are made his footstool. Oh, let him cut off every right hand, and pluck out every right eye, etc., which offends! Oh, let him do justice upon every sin—upon every *open* sin, upon every *secret* sin, upon every *bosom* sin, upon every *pleasing* sin, and upon every *gainful* sin!"

Oh, set yourselves under the celestial influences and sweet distillings of the Holy Spirit! Oh, prize his motions! Oh, welcome his motions! Oh, comply with his motions! Oh, follow his motions, so that you may be holy and happy forever. When David asked counsel of God, whether he should go up against the Philistines or not, he received

this answer: "When you hear a sound like marching feet in the tops of the balsam trees, attack! That will be the signal that the Lord is moving ahead of you to strike down the Philistines," 2 Sam. 5:24. Just so, should everyone wisely observe, when the Spirit sweetly and strongly moves them to mind holiness, to fall in love with holiness, to press after holiness; when the Spirit moves them to leave off their sins, to turn to God, to embrace Christ, to tremble at threatenings, and to embrace promises; oh, make much of these holy motions! Oh, cherish these divine breathings! Oh, don't quench these heavenly sparks, lest the Spirit never more moves you, nor ever more strives with you, Gen. 6:3.

Oh, when you hear a voice within you, or a voice behind you, saying, "Come with me from Lebanon, my sister, my spouse," etc., Isaiah 30:21, and Cant. 4:8, "Come away from your cups—you drunken wretch! Come away from your wanton Delilahs—you unclean wretch! Come away from your sinful pleasures—you voluptuous wretch! Come away from your money bags—you worldly wretch! Come away from your honors—you ambitious wretch! Come away from your fraud—you cheating wretch!" Oh hearken to this voice! oh obey this voice, that it may go well with your soul forever! If now you strike while the iron is hot, if now you hoist up sail while the wind is fair—you may be made happy forever.

In John 5:4, there were certain times when the angel came down and troubled the waters, and whoever did then step in, was healed of whatever disease he had. Just so, there are certain times and seasons wherein the Spirit of holiness stirs the heart and affections, and moves and breathes upon the soul. Now if men were wise to observe these times and seasons, they might be happy forever. The time of the Spirit's moving is the acceptable time; if you observe it you are made, if you neglect it you are marred. All the movings and motions of the Spirit are in order to an eternity of felicity and glory. Oh, therefore don't *grieve* the Spirit! Don't *cross* the Spirit! Don't *vex* the Spirit! Don't *tempt* the Spirit! Don't *quench* the Spirit! Don't *oppose* the Spirit! Don't *resist* the Spirit! Don't deal harshly or unkindly with

the Spirit—by sinning against illumination, conviction, resolutions and promises of reformation.

Oh, be more tender of the gracious motions of the Spirit, than you are of your name, your estate, your liberty, your life; for he designs your internal good in this world, and your eternal good in the eternal world; and therefore don't affront him, nor behave unworthily towards him. If you should, it may be at the cost of your life and your soul! If a man misses the opportunity of a favorable gale, his ship will lie still. When the Spirit moves salvation, and all the glory of heaven stands waiting at your door, if now you will but open, the King of glory will enter in, and bless you forever. Saul, by neglecting his opportunity, lost an earthly kingdom. Take heed lest you, by slighting the motions of the Spirit, come to lose a heavenly kingdom. The letting slip one season when the Spirit moves may undo a man in both worlds—as Felix found it so. Well, sirs, as ever you would be holy, you must labor for a spirit of holiness; and for your encouragement remember this, that though the Holy Spirit is the great jewel of glory—yet God is more ready to give Him, than you are to ask; witness that 11th of Luke, from the 9th to the 14th verse. But,

(3.) Thirdly, If ever you would be holy, then you must wait upon the WORD. The word of God faithfully preached, is the *ordinary* means by which holiness is wrought in sinners' hearts. The word is that triumphant chariot of the Spirit, wherein he rides conquering and to conquer the souls of men. The holy word is designed by God to beget holiness in sinners' hearts—and to countenance, cherish, nourish, and strengthen holiness where it is begotten. John 17:17, "Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth." And for their sakes, etc., "I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth," verse 19. Just so, chapter 15:3, "Now you are clean through the word which I have spoken to you." The *ordinary* way of making unclean souls clean, unholy souls holy—is the ministry of the word, Phil. 5:26. As there is a cleansing virtue in the *blood* of Christ, 1 John 1:7, so there is a cleansing virtue in the *word* of Christ.

Psalm 119:9, "How shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to your word." Of all men, the young man is usually most wild and wicked, most licentious and rebellious; and yet the word of God is the power of God to his conviction and conversion, to his sanctification and salvation. Though the cleansing of a young man's heart be one of the hardest works in the world—yet this may be done by the word. There are no lusts so strong but the word can cast them down, nor no stains so deep but the word can wash them out. Three thousand sinners were made saints by one sermon, Acts 2:41; and five thousand more were converted and sanctified by another sermon, chapter 4:4. Here were eight thousand men cleansed, sanctified, and saved—by two sermons, and doubtless most of them were young.

O sirs, as ever you would have holy principles laid in your souls, and holy affections raised in your souls, and holy ends aimed at by your souls, hear the word in season and out of season. Oh attend it! oh wait on it! It will be *soap* to cleanse you, and *fire* to purge you, and *water* to wash you, and a *wind* to turn you from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Jesus Christ, Acts 26:16-24. The gospel preached, has been the power of God to the salvation of multitudes of souls, Romans 1:16. The word is that immortal seed by which holiness—which is not only a grace but the conjunction of all graces—is formed in the soul, 1 Pet. 1:23. It is the word which gives a spiritual birth and being to men, Gal. 4:19. The word enlightens the eye, Psalm 119:105. The word softens the heart, Deut. 32:2. The word purges the conscience, and it converts the soul, Psalm 19:7. The word dethrones Satan, it casts down strongholds, 2 Cor. 10:4-5. The word quickens the dull, Psalm 119:50. The word raises the dead, John 5:24-25. Oh, therefore, hear it, and wait on it, and come to it—that you may be made holy by it.

Many come to hear the word to *censure* it, others to *mock* at it, others to enrich their *curious* notions by it, and others come to catch the minister at it. You must come to it, that you may be made holy by it, and doubtless sooner or later you shall obtain your end. Yes, it is

good for a man to come to the word, though his design in coming is bad; it is good for a man to sit under that great ordinance of the word, though he sits upon thorns, as it were, all the while he is there. Those who come to see who has got the newest fashions—may have their hearts fashioned into a conformity with the word. They came to catch—but were caught themselves, "Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, "Why didn't you bring him in?" "No one ever spoke the way this man does," the guards declared." John 7:45-46. Austin coming to Ambrose to have his ears tickled, had his heart touched and turned. "Come," says old Latimer, in a sermon before king Edward the Sixth, "to the public meeting, though you come to sleep, it may be God may take you napping."

When you come, though it be but to taste the minister's spirit—yet then God may take hold on your spirit, and save it in the day of his power upon your soul. Though you come with a heart full of prejudices against Christ—yet by the word you may be brought to a *love* of Christ, to a *liking* of Christ, and to a *choice* of Christ, and to a blessed close and *resignation* of yourself to Christ. Those who came to surprise Christ, were so taken with Christ, that being filled with admiration they could not but proclaim his divine excellencies; "No one ever spoke the way this man does!" The word is the word of the Lord—let the *hand* be what it will, which brings it. When gold is offered, men care not how noble or ignoble, how great or how base he is, who offers it. Just so, men should not look so much at the *hand* which brings the word, as at the *word* itself. The word of the Lord was as much the word of the Lord in the hand and mouth of *Amos*—who was a prophet from among the *herdsmen* of Tekoa—as it was the word of the Lord in the hand and mouth of *Isaiah*—who, as some think, was a prophet of *royal* blood.

Ambrose observes of the woman of Samaria, John 4:7, that she came to Jesus at Jacob's well as a sinner—but she went away an evangelist. O sirs, let nothing hinder you from coming to the word! Oh come to the word! though you come as sinners—yet come, for though you do

come sinners—yet you may go away saints. Though the dew of heaven has richly and sweetly fallen upon your hearts—and yet, like Gideon's fleece, you are still dry—yet come to the word still, for who can tell but that at the very next sermon God may make your soul like a watered garden, and like a spring of water "whose waters fail not," Isaiah 58:11.

It is reported of young king Edward the Sixth, that being about to lay hold on something that was above the reach of his short arm, one who stood by espying a large embossed Bible lying on the table, offered to lay that under his feet to heighten him—but the good young king disliked the motion, and instead of treading it under his feet he laid it to his heart. Oh come to the word—but come not to *trample* upon it, come not to *scoff* or mock at it, come not to *despise* it or to *revile* it—but come and lay it to your hearts, and it may do you good forever! **There is no better way to make you holy than to attend on the holy word.** But,

(4.) Fourthly, If ever you would be holy—then associate yourselves with those who are holy. Look! as he who walks with the *wise* shall be wise, so he who walks with the *holy* shall certainly be pressed and provoked to be holy, Proverbs 13:20. As Socrates made it his business to better others by his company—just so, will a holy man will make it his business to make others holy by his counsel, prayers, and example. He knows that it is one of the most noble and divine employments in the world to make others holy, and therefore he sets upon that work with all his might.

Look! as there is no greater a hindrance to holiness than the society of the wicked—so there is no greater a help to holiness than the society of those who are godly, Psalm 119:115, and 1:1. Look! as the beginning of ungodliness is to keep company with those who are ungodly—so the beginning of holiness is to keep company with those who are holy. Look! as one *drunkard* makes another, and one *swearer* makes another, and one *proud* person makes another, and one *worldling* makes another, and one *formalist* makes another—so

one holy man makes another. Look! as one *sober* man makes another, and one *prudent* man makes another, and one *resolute* man makes another, and one *zealous* man makes another, and one *heavenly-minded* man makes another—so one *holy* man makes another.

Ah, sinners! sinners! there are no companions in the world—who will *pity* you as these; who will *weep* and *mourn* over you as these; who will *strive* and *wrestle* with God for you as these, Romans 10:1. There are none who will be so concerned for your salvation as these; nor any who will labor so much for your conversion as these; nor any who will so spend themselves to prevent your damnation as these, 2 Cor. 12:15. O sirs, upon trial you will find that there are none so able to *counsel* you, nor any so faithful to *reprove* you, nor any so ready to *help* you, nor any so compassionate to *sympathize* with you, nor any so strong to *support* you, nor any so advantaged to *convert* you—as those who are holy! Why then will you not labor to be one of this society?

O sirs, of all fellowships, the fellowship of saints is the most *noble*, the most *honorable*, the most *pleasant*, the most *amiable*, the most *desirable*, the most *profitable*, and the most *commendable* fellowship! Why then will you still live strangers, yes, enemies, to this fellowship? Ah sirs, holy men will still be awakening and alarming of your drowsy spirits, they will be still a-knocking at the door of your hearts, and asking of you whether it be good going to hell; they will still be inquiring of you what provision you have made for the eternal world, and how all things stand within; they will still be jogging at your elbows—that you may not die in your sins; and they will still be whispering in your ear—that your souls may live forever.

The Jews have a proverb, that "two dry sticks put to a green one will kindle it." Oh, there is nothing in all the world which contributes so much to the kindling, to the firing, and to the inflaming of men's hearts after holiness—as the society of those who are holy. Algerius, an Italian martyr, "had rather be in prison with Cato, than to live

with Caesar in the senate-house." Oh, it is ten thousand times better to live with those who are holy—though in a dark prison; than to live among those who are unholy—though in a royal palace. Urbanus Regius, having one day's converse with Luther, tells us, "that it was one of the sweetest days that ever he had in all his life."

O sinners, did you but experience for one day the sweet and happiness of the communion of saints, you would then cry out, "Oh, there is no society, compared to the society of God's holy ones." And therefore, as ever you would be holy, let holy men have more heart-room and house-room with you. But,

(5.) Fifthly, If ever you would be holy—then dwell much upon those solemn vows and covenants that you have formerly made in the days of your distress. Ah, how often have you—in the days of your *calamity* and *misery*, and in the days when *sicknesses* and *weaknesses* did hang upon you, and when the *terrors of death* were upon you—how frequently in those days did you solemnly vow and promise that, by the strength and assistance of the Lord—you would break off your sins by repentance, and that you would make it your greatest care, and your greatest business and work in this world, to mind holiness, and to press after holiness, and to give your souls no rest until you had experienced the power, excellency, and sweetness of holiness!

David by an oath bound himself to keep God's righteous judgments: Psalm 119:106, "I have sworn, and I will perform it—that I will keep your righteous judgments." A religious vow is nothing else but a solemn promise or oath, whereby a man engages himself to the great God—that he will decline such ways, means, and methods as lead to wickedness; and that he will set in good earnest upon the practice of all the ways and means of holiness—by the strength and assistance of divine grace.

So you have by many vows and promises engaged yourselves "to cast off the works of darkness, and to put on the armor of light," suitable

to the apostle's exhortation, Romans 13:12. And as the people in Nehemiah's time did enter into a solemn oath to walk in God's law, and to observe and do all his commandments, Neh. 10:29—just so, you have in the times of your outward and inward distresses vowed to the Lord, that you would observe all his statutes, and walk in all his holy ways, and do all his righteous commandments. Job once made a covenant with his *eyes*—that he would not lustfully look upon a girl, Job 31:1-2; but how often have you made a covenant with your *thoughts*—that you would not think of vanity; and with your *eyes*—that you would not behold vanity; and with your *ears*—that you would not hear vanity; and with your *tongues*—that you would not speak vanity; and with your *hearts*—that you would not contrive vanity; and with your *hands*—that you would not act vanity.

Now your vows and your covenants are upon you, oh that you would not, with the immoral woman in the Proverbs, chapter 17, forget the covenant of your God! Oh, it is better ten thousand times not to vow, than to vow and not to pay, Eccles. 5:5. God can take no pleasure in such as are *off and on* with him, nor in such who are forward to vow—but make no conscience to pay their vows. These are fools in folio, and therefore God cannot but detest them, and turn his back upon them.

If good Jacob, who is called "the father of vows," was so backward to pay his vows, that God was forced, not only to tell him again and again with a "go up to Bethel, and there build me a chapel," but also severely to punish his delays, both in the rape of his daughter, and in the cruelty of his sons, etc., Gen. 35; ah, how severely then may God deal with such who not only delay the paying of their vows—but who live also in the daily breach of their vows! Most men have need of that counsel which one gave Sigismund the emperor, who asked him what he should do to be happy; "Live," said he, "as you promised and vowed to do, when you were last sick of the stone and gout." Ah, that all men would make more conscience of living out, and of living up to the covenants, vows, and promises that they have made to God in the days when the hand of the Lord has gone out many ways against

them, and when terrors of conscience have been strong upon them! Oh, what repentance! oh, what reformation! oh, what amendment have they promised in those days! And yet no sooner have these outward and inward storms been over—but they have been as vain and loose and base as ever.

In the time of the great plague in king Edward's days, as long as the heat of the plague lasted, oh how did everyone cry out, "I have sinned, I have sinned! Mercy, Lord! Oh mercy! mercy, good Lord!" Then lords and ladies, and people of all sorts, cried out to the ministers, "Tell us what shall we do to avoid the wrath of the Lord? what shall we do to be safe in this evil day? Oh take these bags of money, and pay so much to such a one whom I have deceived! and restore so much to such a one whom I have in bargaining overreached! Oh give so much to the poor, and so much to other pious uses!" etc. But after the sickness was over, they "returned with the dog to the vomit, and with the sow to the wallowing in the mire again; and so their latter end was worse than their former."

There was a very great sinner, who in the time of his sickness was so sorely terrified in his conscience for his many heinous sins, that he made the very bed to shake upon which he lay, and cried out all night long, "I am damned! I am damned! I am damned!" etc.; and in this his sickness he made many great protestations of amendment of life, if God would but be pleased to recover him, and prevent his going down to the grave at this time. Well, in a short time after he did recover, and being recovered he was as base, wretched, and wicked as ever he was before.

But those who are now like to Satan in sin, may hereafter be like to him in torment. Such who now outlive their vows, shall, when they die, have hell enough. You count it a very shameful thing to break a promise or covenant with men; but is it not far more shameful to break a promise with God? The Egyptians, though heathens, so hated perjury, that if any man did but swear by the life of the king, and did not perform his oath—that man was to die, and no gold was to

redeem his life. When the Romans made covenants, they took stones in their hands, and said, "If I make this covenant seriously and faithfully, then let the great Jupiter bless me; if not, so let me be cast away from the face of the gods as I cast away this stone." Covenant-breaking was a sin greatly detested and abhorred among the very heathens; and shall Christians make nothing of breaking their vows, promises, and covenants with the great God? Well, sirs, remember this—those sins that you have vowed against must be deserted, and that holiness which you have vowed to follow must be pursued—or a worse thing than the curse of Meroz must be expected; Judges 5:23 compared with that John 5:14. But,

(6.) Sixthly, If ever you would be holy, then dwell much upon the worth and preciousness of your SOULS. Christ, who alone paid the price of souls, has told us that one soul is more worth than all the world, Mat. 16:26. Christ left his Father's bosom, and all the glory of heaven, for the good of souls; he assumed the nature of man for the happiness of the soul of man; he trod the wine-press of his Father's wrath for souls; he *wept* for souls, he *sweat* for souls, he *prayed* for souls, he *paid* for souls, and he *bled* out his heart-blood for souls.

The soul is the breath of God, the beauty of man, the wonder of angels, and the envy of devils; it is of an angelical nature, it is a heavenly spark, a celestial plant, and of a divine offspring. The soul is a spiritual substance, capable of the knowledge of God, and of union with God, and of communion with God, and of an eternal fruition of God. There is nothing that can *suit* the soul below God, nor anything that can *satisfy* the soul without God. The soul is so high and so noble a piece, that it scorns all the world in point of acceptance, justification, satisfaction, and salvation. What are all the riches of the East or West Indies? what are rocks of diamonds, or mountains of gold—compared to the price that Christ laid down for souls? 1 Pet. 1:18-19. Christ made himself an offering for sin—that souls might not be undone by sin; the Lord died—that slaves may live; the Son dies—that servants may live; the natural Son dies—that adopted sons may

live; the only-begotten Son dies—that bastards may live; yes, the Judge dies—that malefactors may live.

Ah, friends, as there was never sorrow like Christ's sorrow—so there was never love like Christ's love; and of all his love, none can compare to his love for souls. In a word, the spiritual *enemies* which daily war against the soul, the glorious angels which hourly *guard* the soul, and the precious *ordinances* which God has appointed as means both to convert and to feed the soul—do all speak out the preciousness and excellency of the soul.

Many lay claim to the soul of man—*sin* lays claim to it, and the *world* lays claim to it, and *Satan* lays claim to it, and *Christ* and *holiness* lay claim to it. Oh, that Christ and holiness might have it before all others! O sirs, there is no wisdom nor policy to that of securing our precious souls—for they are jewels of more worth than all the world! All the honors, riches, greatness, and glory of this world are but sticks and stones, compared to these glorious gems. Therefore, before all and above all other things—make sure work for your souls. If they are safe all is safe—but if they are lost all is lost.

Other things cannot be made sure. **Riches** cannot, for as they are lying vanities, so they are flying vanities—they make themselves wings, and they fly away.

Honors cannot: Haman is feasted with the king one day, and made a feast for crows the next. Herod is one hour cried up as a god, and the next hour he is eaten of worms. Princely courts are very slippery: a man may quickly get a fall there, that may easily break both back and neck, as many in all ages have experienced.

The **applause** and favor of creatures cannot, for many men's favors are got with an apple, and lost with a nut. Judas' heart was hardly warmed with the high-priest's favor, before they shut their doors upon him, with a "what is that to us? look you to that," Mat. 27:4-5. Most men's favors are as light as a feather, and so tossed up and

down with every breath of windy vanity. The moon does not so often vary and change, as the esteem of most men do vary and change. How many men have had their names written in golden characters one year—and in letters of blood the next! What is the favor of man but a blast, a sunshine-hour, a puff of wind, a great nothing? and who then would spend an hour's time to secure it?

Near and dear **relations** cannot, for the delight of Ezekiel's eyes is taken away with a stroke, Ezek. 24:16; and all Job's children are snatched away in a day, Job 1:10. All our nearest and dearest relations are like a bouquet, which the oftener we smell to it, the sooner it withers.

But **holiness** may be made sure: witness the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven, Heb. 12:23. And witness the many thousands of Christians this day in the world, who experience the principles of holiness in their hearts, and who evidence the power of holiness in their lives. O sirs, if the serious consideration of the preciousness and worth of your souls will not draw you out to study holiness, to love holiness, to prize holiness, and to press after holiness—what will? O sirs, it is only holiness, which is the *happiness* of the soul, the *safety* and *security* of the soul, the *prosperity* and *felicity* of the soul, and the *luster* and *glory* of the soul. Therefore why should you not labor, as for life, after this inestimable jewel, holiness?

Oh, let the remembrance of the preciousness of your souls be an effectual means to draw you to *hear*—that you may be holy, and to *pray*—that you may be holy, and to *read*—that you may be holy, and to *mourn*—that you may be holy; and to *sigh* and *groan* after holiness, as after that which is the soul's only happiness. O sirs, there is nothing below heaven as precious and noble as your souls! Oh, do not *poison* your precious souls by gross enormities! Oh, do not *starve* your souls by the omission of pious duties! Oh, do not *murder* and damn your souls by turning your backs upon holy ordinances!

I have read of a woman, who, when her house was on fire, so minded the saving of her goods, that she forgot her only child, and left it burning in the fire; at last, being minded of it, she cries out, "Oh, my child! oh, my poor child!" but all too late, all too late. Just so, there are many men now so mad upon the world, and so bewitched with the world, that they never mind, they never regard their poor souls, until they come to fall under everlasting burnings, and then they cry out, "Oh, our souls! oh, our poor souls! Oh, that we had been wise for our souls! Oh, that we had got holiness for our souls Oh, that we had made sure work for our souls! But all too late, all too late!" The Lord make you wise to prevent soul-burnings at last. If he is rather a monster than a man—who feasts his slave but starves his wife; what shall we say of those who pamper their bodies but starve their souls; and who have threadbare souls under silk and satin clothes; and who please themselves with deformed souls under beautiful faces? Surely it would have been good for these, that they had never been born!

I have read of a Scythian captain, who, having for a drink of water—yielded up the city, cried out, "What have I lost! what have I betrayed!" Just so, all unholy people will at last cry out, "We have betrayed our immortal souls, we have lost a precious Father, we have lost a dear Redeemer, we have lost the company of glorious angels, we have lost the society of the spirits of just men made perfect, and we have lost all the pleasures and joys and delights that are at the right hand of the Most High! We have lost these, we have lost all these, and we have lost them forever and ever! Surely there is no hell compared to this hell!"

For a close of this direction, remember this—that as the soul is the life and excellency of the body—so holiness is the life and excellency of the soul. And as the body without the soul is dead—so the soul without holiness is dead. "This my son was dead, and is alive." If you get holiness into your souls, your souls shall live forever—but if you die without holiness, your souls shall die forever and ever. I have read that there was a time when the Romans wore jewels on their shoes. Oh, that in these days most men did not do worse! oh that

they did not trample under feet that matchless jewel—their precious souls! But,

(7.) Seventhly, If ever you would be holy, then set in good earnest upon reading of the Holy SCRIPTURE. Many a man has been made holy by reading of the holy word. The Bible is the book of books—it is the only book—all other books in the world are but waste paper compared to it. Augustine cries out, "Away with our writings, that room may be made for the book of God!" Notwithstanding the greatness and multiplicity of the affairs of princes—yet they were diligently to read the word: Deut. 17:19, "And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them." God looks that the greatest princes on earth should make use of this library. Though David was a great prince, and had a multitude of weighty businesses upon his hand—yet he was so much in reading and meditating on the word, that he made it his counselors. The word was David's learned counselor, Psalm 119:24, to which he resorted for counsel, advice, and comfort, in all his necessities and miseries.

Alphonsus, king of Arragon, has been highly extolled for reading the Scriptures fourteen times over, with expositions, notwithstanding his great public employments. And Alphonsus, king of Naples, read over the Bible forty times, notwithstanding many great affairs were upon his hand. Theodosius the emperor, and Constantine the Great, were much taken up in reading of the Scriptures. Just so, Queen Elizabeth, when she passed in triumph through the streets of London after her coronation, and had the Bible presented to her—she received the same with both her hands, and, kissing it, laid it to her breasts, saying, that "the bible had ever been her chief delight, and should be the rule whereby she meant to frame her government."

It is very observable, that the eunuch was reading the Scripture when Philip was commanded, by commission from the Holy Spirit, to join himself to his chariot, and to instruct him in the knowledge of Christ

—which proved his conversion and salvation, Acts 8:26, 40. And Junius was converted by the reading of that first chapter of John, "In the beginning was the Word," etc., being amazed with the strange majesty of the style, and the profound mysteries therein contained. Augustine was strangely converted by hearing a voice from heaven, saying, "Tolle lege, tolle lege!"—Take and read, take and read! and taking up the Bible, the first passage of Scripture that he cast his eyes upon was that Romans 13:13-14, "Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature." And no sooner had he read the verses, but the work of conversion was finished, and pious resolutions for a thorough reformation of life was settled in him.

The gospel *read* is sometimes the power of God to salvation, as well as the gospel *heard*, Romans 1:16. Cyprian confesses that he was converted from idolatry and necromancy by hearing the history of the prophet Jonah read and expounded. And Luther confesses that he was converted by reading Scripture. I have read of a scandalous minister who was struck at the heart and converted in reading Romans 2:21-22, "You, then, who teach others, do you not teach yourself? You who preach against stealing, do you steal? You who say that people should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?" There is a scholar now alive, who being persuaded by an honest poor man to leave reading of poetry, and to fall upon reading of the Bible, did so; and before he had read out Genesis his heart was changed, and he was converted.

O sirs, as you prize your conversion, your salvation, make more conscience of reading the Scripture than ever you have done. Be often in whetting of these scriptures upon your hearts, Deut. 6:6-9, and 31:11, 12; Jer. 36:6-7; John 5:39. In these scriptures God requires all sorts of people, both men, women, children, and strangers, both learned and unlearned—to read the Scriptures, and to search after the heavenly treasures which are laid up in them, as

men search for gold and silver in the ore. And Paul charges Timothy that he give attendance to reading, 1 Tim. 4:13. "And blessed is he," says John, "who hears and reads the words of this book," Rev. 1:3. Yes, Christ himself has highly honored the reading of Scripture, with his own example; for coming to Nazareth, as his *custom* was, he stood up to read the Scriptures, Luke 4:16, 21.

The Bereans, for reading and searching of the Scriptures, are styled "more noble than the Jews of Thessalonica," or as the Greek has it, "they were of a more noble and sincere disposition," though they belonged to the *country* town of Berea, than the Thessalonians were, who dwelt in the *rich* and stately city of Thessalonica, Acts 17:11. Sometimes there is more true nobility and sincerity under a ragged coat—than there is under a satin suit. The Holy Spirit gives a very large and high commendation of the Scriptures in 2 Tim. 3:15, "And that from a child you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." It is observable that in these words you have not simply holy Scriptures—but *the* holy Scriptures. The article there is very emphatical, and it is used by the Holy Spirit to distinguish these sacred writings from all profane writings, and to note the eminency and excellency of the holy Scriptures above all other men's writings whatever. Now the Scriptures have this adjunct, this epithet "holy" given them in five respects.

[1.] In respect of their **author** and origin—namely, a holy God.

[2.] They are holy in respect of the **penmen**—who were holy men of God, 2 Pet. 1:21.

[3.] They are holy in respect of their **matter**—they treat of the holy things of God; a vein of holiness runs through every line of Scripture. The Scripture calls for holy hearts and holy lives; it calls for holy principles and holy practices, holy words and holy works, holy affections and holy lives, 1 Pet. 1:15.

[4.] They are holy in respect of their **effects** and operations—they are a means to effect and work holiness, and they are a means to complete and perfect holiness, Job 17:17. The word is not only a pure word—but also a purifying word; it is not only a clean word—but also a cleansing word, Psalm 19:8-9.

[5.] They are called holy by way of **distinction**, and in opposition not only to all human and profane writings—but also to the writings of the best and choicest men who ever wrote; for they have had their failings, weaknesses, and infirmities, and therefore must have their many grains of allowance; but the holy Scripture is most perfect and complete. Now, sirs, if ever you would be holy, it is imperative that you make more conscience of reading the holy Scriptures than ever yet you have done. Many a man has been made holy by reading the holy Scriptures; and why may not you also be made holy by reading of the same holy word? Certainly all the angels in heaven, and all the men on earth, can't tell to the contrary—but that you may be made holy even by reading of the holy word.

The Holy Spirit is a sovereign agent, and he can as well work holiness in your heart by *reading* as by *hearing*—and therefore set yourself about this noble and necessary work. Ah, friends, the Scriptures are God's epistle; they are God's love-letter to men; and why then will you not read them? Anhalt, that princely preacher, was accustomed to say that the Scriptures were Christ's swaddling-bands, the child Jesus being to be found almost in every page, in every verse, and in every line. Oh, be often in looking upon, and handling of these swaddling-bands! O sirs, there are no histories which are comparable to the histories of the Scripture.

[1.] First, For **antiquity**. Moses is found more ancient than all those whom the Grecians make most ancient, as Homer, Hesiod, and Jupiter himself, whom the Greeks have seated in the top of their divinity.

[2.] Secondly, For **rarity**.

[3.] Thirdly, For **brevity**. Here you have much wrapped up in a little space: here you have Homer's "Iliads" comprised in a nutshell.

[4.] Fourthly, For **perspicuity**. The foundations of true religion and happiness are so plain and clear, that everyone may run and read them. It was a true saying of Augustine, "That God has bowed down the Scriptures to the capacities even of babes and sucklings."

[5.] Fifthly, For **harmony**. Though there may seem to be a contrariety between scripture and scripture—yet there is a blessed harmony between all the parts of Scripture; the contrariety is seeming, not real. As when a man is drawing water out of a well with two vessels of a different metal, the water at the first seems to be of a different color—but when he draws up the vessels nearer to him, the diversity of colors vanish, and the water appears to be of one and the same color; and when he tastes them, they have one and the same relish. Just so, though at first sight there may seem to be some contradictions in the Scriptures—yet when we look more nearly and narrowly into them, and compare one place with another, we shall find no contrariety, no differences in them at all—but a perfect harmony, and a full and sweet consent and agreement between one place and another, between text and text, scripture and scripture.

[6.] Sixthly, For **verity**. The Scriptures are most sure and certain; heaven and earth shall pass away before one jot or tittle of the Scripture shall pass unfulfilled.

[7.] Seventhly, For **variety**. There are no varieties, compared to those which are to be found in Scripture. As in Noah's ark all sorts of creatures were to be found—so in this heavenly ark, the Scriptures, all varieties are to be found. Here you may find a *remedy* for every disease, and *balm* for every wound, and a *plaster* for every sore. Here the lamb may wade—and here the elephant may swim. Here is milk for babes—and here is meat for strong men. Here is comfort for the *afflicted*, and support for the *tempted*, and solace for the *distressed*, and ease for the *wearied*. Here is a staff to support the

feeble—and a sword to defend the weak. That which a Papist reports lyingly of their sacrament of the mass—namely, that there are as many mysteries in it as there are drops in the sea, dust on the earth, angels in heaven, stars in the sky, atoms in the sunbeams, or sands on the sea-shore, etc.—may be truly asserted of the holy Scriptures; there are many thousand thousand varieties in this garden of paradise, the Scripture.

[8.] Eighthly, For **fullness**. The Scriptures are full of light; and full of life; and full of love; and full of righteousness; and full of holiness; and full of all goodness. It was a weighty saying of Tertullian, "I adore the fullness of the Scripture."

Many men talk much of the *philosopher's stone*—that it turns copper into gold; and of *cornucopia*—that it had all things necessary for food in it; and of the herb *panaces*—that it was good for all diseases; and of the drug *catholicon*—that it can cure anything; and of *Vulcan's armor*—that it was full armor against all thrusts and blows. But that which they vainly attribute to these things for bodily good—may safely and honorably be attributed to the blessed Scriptures in a spiritual manner. The Scriptures turns hearts of copper into hearts of gold; it is a paradise that is full of the trees of life, and these trees of life are both for food and healing; here is all manner of fruit to feed you and fill you, to delight you and satisfy you, and the very leaves of these trees are singular medicines to heal you and cure you, Rev. 22:2. The Scripture prescribes the choicest drugs to heal you, namely, repentance and the blood of Christ. And it is the Scripture which furnishes you with the best armor against all principalities and powers, and against all spiritual wickednesses in high places, Eph. 6:11, 18.

Oh, how should the consideration of all these things work you to be much in reading of the holy Scriptures! If you will but make trial, you should be sure to find in them, stories more true, more various, more pleasant, more profitable, and more comfortable than any you will find in all ancient or modern writers. Ah, friends, if you would but in

good earnest set upon reading of the holy Scriptures, you may find in them so many happinesses as cannot be *numbered*, and so great happinesses as cannot be *measured*, and so copious happinesses as cannot be *defined*, and such precious happinesses as cannot be *valued*! If all this won't draw you to read the holy Scriptures conscientiously and frequently—I know not what will.

It is said of Mary, that she spent the third part of her time in reading of the word. Caecilia, a Roman maiden of noble parentage, carried always about her the New Testament, and spent much time in reading it. Alfred, once king of England, compiled psalms and prayers into one book, and called it a Manual, which he always carried about him, and spent much time in the perusal of it. Augustine caused David's penitential psalms to be written upon the walls of his bedchamber, that he might read them as he lay in his bed; he read and wept, and wept and read.

Well, if all this will not prevail with you to be much in reading of the Scriptures, consider that Agesilaus, an excellent king of Sparta, would never go to bed, nor rise up, before he had looked into Homer, whom he called *his sweetheart*; but what was Homer's books to God's book, which is *the book of books*, as Charles the Great did signify when he crowned it with his own crown. Scipio Africanus usually had in his hands the books of Xenophon. But oh, how much more commendable will it be for you to have always in your hands the book of God! Alphonsus had always in his bosom the Commentaries of Caesar, and he was so much delighted with the history of Titus Livius, that he once commanded certain musicians, that were very skillful in that art, to depart his presence, saying that he could read a more pleasant story out of Livius. Alas! what are Livius' stories, compared to the blessed stories that are in the Bible! O sirs, if Lipsius, when he did but read Seneca, thought that he was even on the top of Olympus, above mortality and human things; and if Julius Scaliger thought twelve verses in Lucan better than the German empire—oh, then, of what infinite worth and value is the blessed Scripture! Shall heathens take such pleasure in reading of the

works of heathens, and shall not Christians take as much pleasure in reading of the holy Scriptures, wherein there is so much of the Spirit, hand, and heart of God? Shall they set so high a price upon the books of heathens, and shall we so slight and undervalue the book of God as not to think it worth a-opening once a day? Truly, I am afraid, I am afraid, that there are some among us, who hardly open their Bibles once a week, and others, who hardly open their Bibles once a month, and not a few who hardly open their Bibles once a quarter, etc. Certainly as the rustiness of some men's gold will be a witness against them in the great day of the Lord, so the mustiness of some men's Bibles will be a witness against them in that great day! James 5:1-3.

Question. But is it not lawful for a man to read other men's books, to read other men's holy works? etc.

Answer. Doubtless it is lawful; and that,

[1.] First, Because other men's holy works, so far as they are holy—are but the fruits, products, and operations of the Holy Spirit, etc.

[2.] Secondly, Because their holy labors are of singular use for the clearing up of many hard, difficult, and mysterious scriptures, etc.

[3.] Thirdly, Because they have been the means of many men's conversion. While Vergerius read Luther's books with an intent to confute them—he himself was converted by them. I doubt not but that there are many now in heaven, and multitudes now on earth, who have been converted by the books and writings of holy men; and therefore it cannot but be lawful to read such books, etc.

[4.] Fourthly, Though it is lawful to read other men's holy writings—yet the holy Scriptures must still have the pre-eminence; they must be firstly, chiefly, and mostly read. All other books in comparison of the book of God, must be cast aside; it is God's book which is indeed the book of books.

Cumanus, a governor of Judea, though he was but a heathen, and a wicked man—yet he caused a soldier to be beheaded for tearing a copy of the book of Moses's law, which he found at the sacking of a town. And venerable in all ages and among all nations have been the books wherein the laws either of their beliefs or polity have been contained; as the Talmud among the Jews, and the laws of the twelve tables among the Romans, and the Alcoran among the Turks. Yes, all pagans have highly valued the laws of their legislators; and shall not Christians much more set a high esteem upon the holy Scriptures, which are the map of God's mercy, and man's misery, the touchstone of truth, the shop of remedies against all maladies, the hammer of vices, and the treasury of virtues, the expositor of all sensual and worldly vanities, the balance of equity, and the most perfect rule of all justice and honesty?

What Chrysostom said of old to his hearers—namely, "Get you Bibles, for they are your souls' remedies"—that I say to you all, Oh, get you Bibles, for they are your souls' remedies, your souls' food, your souls' happiness. Ah, friends, no book befits your hands like the Bible. It was this book which made David wiser than his teachers; this is the book which *makes* the best preachers; and this is the book which *is* the best preacher. This book, this preacher will preach to you in your shops, in your chambers, in your closets, yes, in your own bosoms. This book will preach to you at home and abroad, it will preach to you in all companies, whether they are good or bad, and it will preach to you in all conditions, whether they are prosperous or afflictive. By this book you shall be *saved*, or by this book you shall be *damned*! By this book you must *live*, by this book you must *die*, and by this book you shall be *judged* in the great day! John 12:48. Oh, therefore, *love* this book above all other books, and *prize* this book above all other books, and *buy* this book before all other books.

In King Henry the Eighth's time, and in Queen Mary's days, Christians would have given cartloads of hay and corn for a few chapters in the New Testament; and will not you part with three or four shillings to buy a Bible, that may save your souls, that may make

you holy here and happy hereafter? And read this book before all other books, and study this book more than all other books; for he who reads much and understands nothing, is like him who hunts much and catches nothing. And let this suffice for this seventh direction.

(8.) Eighthly, If ever you would be holy, then be much in PRAYER. Prayer is the most prevalent orator at the throne of grace. Many who have gone to that throne with *tears* in their eyes—have come away with *praises* in their hearts! Many who have gone to that throne with hearts full of *sin*—have returned with hearts full of *grace*! Jacob wept and prayed, and prayed and wept—and in the end, as a prince he prevailed with God, Hosea 14:4. Just so, many a sinner has wept and prayed, and prayed and wept—and in the end, as a prince he has prevailed with God. Ah, sirs, it may be that there are but a few weeks, nay, a few days, nay, perhaps but a few hours—between your souls and eternity, between your souls and everlasting burnings, between your souls and a devouring fire, between your souls and damnation! Will you not then pray and mourn, and mourn and pray, for that holiness, without which there is no happiness, yes, without which hell and destruction will be forever your portion? Oh, take that blessed promise, Ezek. 36:25-27, and urge God with it; oh, tell him that he has said that "he will sprinkle clean water upon you, and that you shall be clean from all your filthiness, and that from all your idols he will cleanse you", etc. Oh, tell him,

First, That he stands engaged by promise to give his Holy Spirit to those who ask it, Luke 11:13.

Secondly, Oh, tell him that none can make an unholy heart holy—but a holy God.

Thirdly, Tell him that surely it is no sin to beg holiness from a holy God.

Fourthly, Tell him that he has made such who were once notorious in wickedness, to become eminent in holiness: witness Manasseh, Mary Magdalene, Paul, the murderers of Christ, and those vile Corinthians, 1 Cor. 5:6, 9-11.

Fifthly, Tell him that he has given holiness to those who have not sought it, and how then can it stand with his honor to deny it to those who seek it? Surely if he has been "found by those who sought him not," he will not hide himself "from those who seek him," Isaiah 65:1-2.

Sixthly, Tell him that you had rather that he should deny you anything, than that he should deny you holiness. Say to him, "Lord, *health* is the prince of outward mercies; and *wealth* is the spring of many mercies; and wife, children, and friends are the pinnacle of mercies, the cream of mercies—and that mercy is the sweetener of all your mercies"—and yet tell him that you had rather that he should strip you of any of these, nay, that he should deny you all of these—than that he should deny you holiness.

Seventhly, Tell him that you did never read of any man who did ever make a hearty request for holiness—but his request was granted. The leper would sincerely be clean, and Christ's answer is, "I will—be clean!" Mat. 8:2-3. Christ does neither delay him nor deny him. The poor leper could no sooner desire to be clean—but Christ commands him to be clean—"I will—be clean." His *prayer* was short and sweet—and his *answer* was sudden and gracious.

Eighthly, Tell him that you are unwilling to be miserable forever, tell him that you can not bear the thoughts of an eternal separation from him—and yet this must be your portion, except he will glorify the riches of his grace in bestowing of that pearl of price, holiness, upon you! Oh, tell him that your lack of holiness is now your greatest hell! tell him that you are now fully resolved to give him no rest until he has changed your heart, and made you in some measure to be what he would have you to be, etc.

It is observable among the worst of men, the Turks, yes, among the worst of Turks, the Moors—who by their law it is a usual custom with them to pray for day before the *daybreak*, and when it is day they give thanks for *daylight*, and at *noon* they give thanks to God that half the day is past, and then at last they pray that they may have a good *night* after their day. Ah, sinners, sinners, shall not these Turks rise up one day in judgment against you who think not holiness worth a-praying for?

OBJECTION. But the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord, Proverbs 15:8, and 28:9; and he casts their sacrifices as dung in their faces, Isaiah 11-16, and 58:1-7; their very prayers are sinful, and therefore they were better neglect prayer until God shall work graciously and savingly upon them, than to pray, and so to sin as often as they pray, etc. To this I answer,

(1.) First, The prayers of the wicked may be *materially* good, when they are not *formally* good; yes, when they are *theologically* evil, 2 Chron. 25:2. Amaziah did that which was perfect in the sight of the Lord, as to the *matter*—but not with a perfect or sincere heart. He failed not in the matter—but in the manner. He did not do that good which he did, from *principles* of faith, love, etc., nor to a right *end*—divine glory. Many unsanctified people may have the *gift* of prayer—who have not the *spirit* of prayer, nor the *grace* of prayer, Mat. 7:21, and 23:14. [Psalm 78:36-37; Proverbs 1:27-28; Isaiah 58:1-4.]

Now certainly where God gives such a gift, he requires the use of it. The gift of prayer is from the Spirit, as well as the grace of prayer; and who can tell but that upon the use of the gift of prayer, the Spirit may give the grace of prayer? However, it is dangerous to neglect a gift. The slothful servant was not cast into utter darkness for rioting out his talent—but for not improving of his talent, Mat. 25:30. That the prayers of a wicked man are not formally good, must be granted, yes, that they are abominable and ineffectual, cannot be denied; they are like the precious stone Diacletes, which though it has many excellent powers in it—yet it loses them all if it be put in a dead man's

mouth. Just so, prayer, though it has many virtues and excellencies in it—yet it loses them all when it is performed by a man who is spiritually dead—that is, dead God-wards, and Christ-wards, and heaven-wards, and holiness-wards; but if you consider the matter of a wicked man's prayers, so they may be good, yes, so good as that they may prevail with a good God for much temporal good, as I shall show you before I close up all my answers to this objection. But,

(2.) Secondly, It is a less sin for an unholy person to *do* a religious duty, than it is to *omit* it. Now of two sins, whereupon, not God—but a man's self has inevitably put him to commit one of them, he must choose the least, he must choose rather to sin in the manner, in not doing of it so well as he should, than to fail in the matter, and so quite neglect the duty itself. For this is most certain, when God commands a duty absolutely to be done, it is a greater sin not to do it at all, than to do it amiss, and the reason is evident, because our disobedience is total in not doing at all, and but only partial in doing it otherwise than we ought. As for a man willfully and peremptorily to refuse to hear the word, is a greater and fouler fault than to hear it with a forgetful or disobedient heart, there being more hope of the latter than of the former; for some that have come to catch, have been caught by the word, John 7:46. "And therefore come," says Latimer, "to the word; though you come to sleep, it may be God may take you napping."

When Mr. Henry Sulphen was preacher at Bremen, several Roman Catholics sent their chaplains to trap him in his words; but the power of God was so wonderfully seen in his preaching, that the greatest part of those who came to ensnare him, were converted by him. It is good to come to the word, though a man comes with an ill intent; to come, though he should come with a purpose to catch, for in so coming he may be caught, as Augustine was by Ambrose.

Without doubt there is no disobedience like that which is total. Partial disobedience is no disobedience, compared to that which is total. That wife who totally disobeys her husband, and that child who

totally disobeys the father, and that servant who totally disobeys his master, is much more to blame, and do much more provoke—than those who are only partial in their disobedience. And so it is between God and sinners, etc.

(3.) Thirdly, If there were any strength in this objection, it would lie as strong against a wicked man's civil actions, as it does against his religious actions: Proverbs 21:4, "The plowings of the wicked is sin;" not only the prayers of the wicked—but also the plowings of the wicked are sin, not only the spiritual but also the natural and civil actions of a wicked man are sin; and therefore, according to their arguing, a wicked man must not exercise himself in his calling, in his plowing and sowing, etc., because that his civil actions are sinful as well as his religious; and it is as impossible for him to please God in the one, as it is to please him in the other. Surely all men who are in their wits, will either sigh or laugh at such kind of reasonings. But,

(4.) Fourthly, This objection lies as strong against wicked men's natural actions—namely, their eating, drinking, and sleeping, etc.—as it does against their praying. When a wicked man eats, he is to eat to divine glory, and when he drinks, he is to drink to divine glory, 1 Cor. 10:31; and when he recreates himself, he is to recreate himself to divine glory; and when he sleeps, he is to sleep to divine glory. In all these natural and common actions, he is to make the glory of God his supreme scope. Now there is not a wicked man on earth who does or can eat or drink, etc., to divine glory; he does not—and he cannot set up the glory of God as the chief and ultimate end of his natural and common actions. Now who but fools in folio will reason thus: wicked men are to eat and drink, etc., to divine glory—but this they cannot do, Titus 1:15; and therefore wicked men must neither eat nor drink, etc. But,

(5.) Fifthly, The force and spirit of this objection, if there were any in it, lies as flatly and fully against all other pious duties—as it does against prayer. It lies as strong against hearing, reading, and meditating on the word, etc., as it does against prayer. And who but

such who are sadly left of God, and woefully blinded by Satan, will be so wretched as to say, wicked men must neither hear the word, nor read the word, nor meditate on the word—because they cannot do these actions in faith, "and whatever is not of faith is sin," Romans 14:23. But,

(6.) Sixthly, There are those who can say by experience, that the first special work of God that ever they perceived on their own hearts—was while they were pleading with God at the throne of grace. There are those who have brought *proud* hearts to the throne of grace—but have returned with hearts humbled; and who have brought *hard* hearts—but have gone away with hearts graciously broken and melted; and who have brought *carnal* hearts—but returned with spiritual hearts; and who have brought *worldly* hearts—but returned with heavenly hearts. God sometimes hears prayers for his own sake, and for his Son's sake, and for his glory's sake, and for his promise sake—when he will not hear prayers for the sinner's sake. But,

(7.) Seventhly, Sinful *omissions* lead to sinful *commissions*, yes, sometimes they lead to ruin! As you may see in the *angels*—which fell from the highest heaven to the lowest hell; and in *Adam*—who fell in paradise from the highest pinnacle of glory to the lowest step of sin and misery. Those reprobates in that 25th of Matthew did not rob the saints—but only omitted the relieving of them, and this proved a damning to them. Rich Dives did not rob the poor—but his not relieving of them was his ruin, Luke 16. Moab and Ammon were banished the sanctuary to the tenth generation for a mere omission, because they did not meet God's Israel in the wilderness with bread and water, Deut. 23:3, 4, 6.

Look! as the omission of healthy diet breeds natural diseases in the body, so does the omission of good duties breed spiritual diseases in the soul. All sinful omissions make work for hell—or for the physician of souls. O man! you do not know what deadly sin, what deadly temptation—may follow upon a mere single omission. Origen, going to comfort and encourage a martyr who was to suffer, was

apprehended by the officers, and constrained either to offer to the idols or to be tortured. Being thus hard put to it, to save his life, he bowed to the idols; but afterwards, when he came to himself, he sadly bewails his sin, and confesses that he went forth that morning without making his prayers unto God, which sinful omission God did so severely punish, by leaving of him to fall into so great a sin, which pierced his soul through with many sorrows.

I am apt to think that many a sin, many a snare, and many a fall might have been prevented—if such and such pious duties had not been omitted. Sinful *omissions* prepare the way to sinful *commissions*, and both prepare the way to a fatal *destruction*. I believe many men would never have been so abominable wicked—if they had not first cast off pious duties. He who lives in the neglect of prayer, tempts more devils than one—to ensnare his soul, yes, to destroy his soul, etc. But,

(8.) Eighthly and lastly, There are several weighty arguments that may be produced to prove that it is the **DUTY** of wicked and unconverted men to perform religious duties, as to pray and seek the Lord, etc. Among the many that may be brought forth, I shall only give you these six:

[1.] First, This is evident from divine commands, as you may clearly see by comparing of these scriptures together, Isaiah 55:6-7; Acts 8:21-23; Psalm 65:21. 1 Thes. 5:17, "Pray without ceasing," is an indefinite injunction; and who are you, O man, who dares to prohibit what God commands? Are not his commands obliging? and may not disobedience to the least of them cost you your life, your soul, your all? God's commands are neither to be *slighted*, *censured*, nor *neglected*. Woe to him who looks upon great commands as little commands—and little commands as no commands, Mat. 23:23. O sirs, it is a very dangerous thing to act or run counter-cross to God's express command; it may cost a man dear, as you may see in that sad story, 1 Kings 13:24.

The heathens, indeed, would frequently run cross to their gods' commands, for when their gods commanded them to offer up a man, they would offer up a candle; and so Hercules, when he was to offer up a living man, he offered up a painted man. But does it befit Christians to deal thus with the great God, with the living God, with the God of gods—as the heathens did by their gods? Surely not! God's commands are not like unto the commands of the heathens—which might be contradicted and changed—but they are like to the commands of the Medes—which cannot be reversed nor changed; they must be *evangelically obeyed*, or you will be *eternally destroyed*. The Rechabites were very rigid observers of their father's commands; and will you make slight of God's commands? Jer. 35:2, 5-7. "The *angels* who excel in strength do his commandments," Psalm 103:20; and will *you* despise them? Why should the peasant scorn that work in which the prince himself is engaged? But,

[2.] Secondly, Prayer is a natural worship, and is incumbent upon all men, as they are created by God. Prayer is a duty which the very law of *nature*, as well as the law of the *word*, lays upon men. And this you may see in those pagans, Jonah 1:5, "The mariners cried every man to his god." That there is a God, and that this God is to be called upon—are lessons which are taught in nature's school: Isaiah 45:20, "They pray to a god which cannot save." For any man to say a wicked man ought not to pray—is to say a wicked man ought not to worship God, nor acknowledge him to be his maker; and who but such who are either blind or mad dare speak such language? Certainly those who live in the neglect of prayer under the gospel—sin against a double light, the light of nature and the light of the gospel, and therefore they shall be double-damned. There is no hell compared to these men's hell—who sin against a double light, etc. But,

[3.] Thirdly, The neglect of prayer is charged upon wicked people as their sin; as you may see by comparing of these scriptures together, Psalm 14:2, 4, and 10:4; Jer. 10:21; Hosea 7:7; Zeph. 1:6. Now doubtless if it were not a duty for unregenerate people to pray, it could never stand with the holiness, justice, and righteousness of

God, to charge the omission of prayer upon them as a sin, and therefore, without question, it is their duty to pray. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Wicked and unregenerate people are again and again imprecated against for not calling upon the Lord: Psalm 79:6, "Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you, on the kingdoms that do not call on your name." Jer. 10:25, "Pour out your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge you, on the peoples who do not call on your name." Now certainly, if prayer were not a duty incumbent upon wicked men, they would never be thus imprecated against for the omission of it. To imprecate that vials, that full vials, that full vials of wrath and fury should be poured forth, suddenly and plentifully, upon those kingdoms and peoples who do not call upon the name of the Lord, is so dreadful a thing, that it would have never been mentioned in the Scripture, had it not been to alarm the worst of men to the work of prayer. But,

[5.] Fifthly, If absolute promises, or precious promises of special grace and mercy—are made to sinners, as sinners—then sinners may in prayer plead out those promises, and urge God upon making good his promises. But absolute promises, or promises of special grace and favor, are made over to sinners, as sinners, consequently, that such promises are made over to poor sinners, as sinners, is evident, "I was enraged by his sinful covetousness; I punished him, and hid my face in anger, yet he kept on in his willful ways. I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will guide him and restore comfort to him, creating praise on the lips of the mourners in Israel. Peace, peace, to those far and near. And I will heal them." Isaiah 57:17-19. These words drop nothing but myrrh and mercy. If Ennius could pick gold out of a ash-heap, oh, what gold, what comfort, may be picked out of these golden promises! In these words, let us consider two things: first, the precious **promises** which are here made; secondly, the **people** to whom they are made. In the words you have four precious promises of special grace and favor; they are as so many streams of grace flowing from the covenant of grace.

I. The precious **promises** which are here made.

First, You have here a promise of **healing**: verse 18, "I have seen his ways, but I will heal him," or, as you may read the words, though I have seen his ways and courses, and well observed how unworthily, how exasperating, and how obstinately he has behaved, "yet I will heal him,"—"I will heal his backsliding nature." Though his disease is dangerous, though it is very dangerous—yet to an almighty physician no disease is incurable. I will heal his *inside* by pardoning his sin and purging his conscience; and I will heal his *outside* by removing of judgments and calamities from him; and all this I will do upon the account of my promise and covenant: Hosea 14:4; Jer. 32:38, and 40:2, compared; Psalm 103:3; Jer. 3:22; Mal. 4:2.

Secondly, You have in the words a promise of **guiding**; "I will guide him," or, as the Hebrew has it, "and I will guide him, I will conduct him in safety to his own country." So some sense it—but you may understand it, doubtless, of a spiritual, as well as of a providential leading. "I will lead him by my *word*, and I will lead him by my *Spirit*, and I will lead him by my *counsel*, suitable unto many precious promises of grace which are scattered up and down in the Scripture."

Thirdly, In the words you have a promise of **comfort**; "I will restore comforts to him," not comfort—but comforts; that is, in the room of all those discomforts, sorrows, calamities, and miseries brought upon himself—I will, says God, lay in abundance of comfort, yes, I will laden him with all sorts of comforts, both temporal, spiritual, and eternal, suitable to that word of grace that you have in Isaiah 40:1-2.

Fourthly, In the words you have a promise of **peace**: verse 19, "I will create praise on the lips of the mourners in Israel. Peace, peace, to those far and near," says the Lord. The repetition of the word '*Shalom, shalom*', '*peace, peace*', imports a large extent of peace; it notes true peace, firm peace, sure peace, great peace, abundance of

peace, yes, constant and lasting peace. Under the name of the Hebrew word 'peace' in is denoted all manner of prosperity, and the repetition of the word always notes a large measure of tranquility, plenty, prosperity, and felicity. O sirs, peace with God, and peace with conscience, and peace with the creatures—are all the products of God's creating power and grace, Eph. 2:16-18, and so must be referred to the covenant of grace.

Let us consider,

II. The **people** to whom these precious promises are made; and I here let us observe these three things.

First, Their sin; and this you have in verse 17, "I was enraged by his sinful covetousness." The sin that is charged upon him is a very great and grievous, it is a very vile and heinous sin; it is called not only *greed*—but the *sinful greed*, to show the height and transcendency of this their wickedness!

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of **covetousness**; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Luke 12:15. Covetousness is—a very great and grievous sin—a mother-sin—a breeding sin—a sin which has all sin in its womb—a very vile and heinous sin—the root of all evil. Covetousness makes the soul earthly—which should be celestial. Covetousness is an evil which subjects

men to the basest and vilest evils.

Covetousness makes a man a fool! "You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?" Luke 12:20.

Covetousness robs a man of all true peace, comfort, contentment and quiet. Covetousness brings men into snares which drown their souls in perdition. Covetousness renders men unsatisfied under all their outward enjoyments. Though a covetous wretch has enough to sink

him--yet he can never have enough to satisfy him. First he wishes for a *bag* full, and then a *chest* full, and then a *room* full, and then a *house* full, etc.

The *plague of unsatisfiedness*, is the great plague which covetous men are under. Certainly you shall as soon fill a triangle with a circle, and a chest with grace--as you shall be able to fill and satisfy a covetous mind with money.

A covetous man is like a *swine*--which is good for nothing while it lives. The *horse* is good to carry, the *ox* is good to draw, the *sheep* is good for cloth, the *cow* is good to give milk, and the *dog* is good to guard the house--but the *hog* is good for nothing while he lives! Just so, a covetous man is only serviceable when he is dead. That scripture often proves true, "the riches of a sinner are laid up for the just," Job 27:17.

No sin lays men under greater woes! "People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." 1 Timothy 6:9-10.

Secondly, They grew worse under the afflicting hand of God; "I was enraged by his sinful greed; I punished him, and hid my face in anger, yet he kept on in his willful ways." They were like peevish, self-willed, stubborn children--which grow more cross, crooked, and perverse under all the chastenings of their father. And this was no small aggravation of their sin--that they grew *worse* under the rod! Plutarch writes that it is the quality of tigers, that if drums sound about them, they will grow mad, and rip and tear their own flesh in pieces; and so it was with these sinners in the text. Oh, how did they fret and fume, and tear--when they were under the rebukes of God! But,

Thirdly, They persevered and went on against all warnings; "I have seen his ways," that is, I have seen his obstinacy and incorrigibility in sin. "Ah, poor creature!" says God, "he sees not his present misery and slavery; he takes no notice of his own folly and vanity—of his own perverseness and peevishness; he scorns to bend or bow under my mighty hand; he is resolved to stand it out to the death; he will persist on in his own ways, though he eternally perishes—though hell stands at the end of his ways—yet on he will go!"

Well! what is the outcome of all this? God says, "I have seen his ways—and I will *heal* him." It is not, "I have seen his ways—and will *curse* him!" No, but "I have seen his ways—and I will *heal* him." It is not, "I have seen his ways—and will never have any more to do with him!" No, but "I have seen his ways—and will *heal* him!" It is not, "I have seen his ways—and will *damn* him!" No, but "I have seen his ways—and will heal him."

Oh the *freeness!* Oh the *unsearchableness!* Oh the *riches* of God's grace!

And thus you see that the precious promises last cited are promises which are made over to sinners as sinners.

And this is further evident in Isaiah 43:22-25. "Yet you have not called upon me, O Jacob, you have not wearied yourselves for me, O Israel. You have not brought me sheep for burnt offerings, nor honored me with your sacrifices. I have not burdened you with grain offerings nor wearied you with demands for incense. You have not bought any fragrant calamus for me, or lavished on me the fat of your sacrifices. But you have burdened me with your sins and wearied me with your offenses. I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more!"

For sins of omission and sins of commission, what can be more charged upon a sinful people than here is charged upon them? They were not only negligent of his worship and service—but they were

also weary of his worship and service, and counted it rather a burden than a benefit, rather a toil than a pleasure. In all their outward observances they did but court the Lord, they did but compliment God; for while they were in his service, their hearts were secretly weary of his service; and by their sinful commissions, oh, how did they grieve, vex, oppress, and burden the Holy One of Israel! And yet, in verse 25, God does passionately and emphatically proclaim their free pardon, "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more!"

The metaphor is taken from men's blotting out of debts out of their debt-book. Now when a debt is blotted out of the debt-book, it is never more charged upon the debtor; it is never more regarded nor remembered. Just so, when God proclaims the sinner's pardon, when he forgives him his transgressions—he blots out, he erases, he crosses his books, and cancels all debts—so that he will never count his sins against him, and never charge his sins upon him! Being once forgiven—they shall be *forever* forgotten, they shall never more come into his remembrance!

And all this he will do for his name's sake, and for the praise and glory of his own free grace.

Just so, in Ezek. 36:26-29. "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God. I will save you from all your uncleanness!"

Now by all these scriptures it is most plain and evident that the precious promises of special grace and mercy are made over to sinners as sinners; and if so, then doubtless sinners may lawfully put these promises into suit. O sirs, don't you know that *desire* is the soul of prayer? and who—but such as are witless and graceless—will say that a wicked man may not *desire* the accomplishment of God's

gracious promises—who will say an unregenerate man may not desire to be pardoned, sanctified, and renewed; and that the Lord would bestow his Spirit upon him, and that, by the finger of the same Spirit, the law of the Lord may be written in his heart, that he may observe his statutes, and do them? These are things that God has engaged himself to do for poor sinners, and therefore certainly sinners may put God in mind of his engagements. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, God would never have encouraged and rewarded with temporal favors wicked and unregenerate men's religious duties and services as he has done—if he would not have had them exercise themselves in pious duties. Now that he has thus encouraged and rewarded wicked and unregenerate men, is evident in these instances, 1 Kings 21:19; Jonah 3:4, seq.; 2 Chron. 26:5. *Uzziah* sought God in the days of *Zechariah*; and when he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper. Had he been really godly, had he had the root of the matter in him, had he been a sincere, a throughout Christian, he would have sought the Lord all his days, he would have held on and held out in well-doing; but being carnal, hypocritical, and unregenerate, his religion dies with *Zechariah*. Another instance you have of this is in the book of *Jonah*, among the sailors, who usually are the worst of sinners, Psalm 107:23-30. And another instance you have in that known case of *Jehu*. From all which we may well conclude, that God expects and looks that wicked men, that unregenerate men, should be found in the exercise of religious duties.

It is an excellent observation of Calvin upon God's rewarding the *Rechabites'* obedience: Jer. 35:19, "God," says he, "oft recompenses the shadows and seeming appearances of virtue—to show that delight he takes in the ample rewards he has reserved for true and sincere piety." To conclude, it was as easy for *Boaz* to have given *Ruth* as much grain at once, and so have sent her home without any more ado—but he would not, being resolved that she should use her endeavor to gather and glean it, and beat it out too when she had gleaned it. Just so, it is as easy a thing for God to give his Christ, to

give his Spirit, and to give his grace immediately to poor sinners without their using of the means—but he won't, being resolved that they shall use the means of hearing, reading, praying, and conference, etc., and when they have done, leave the issue of all their labors and endeavors to his good-will and pleasure. I have taken the more pains fully and clearly to answer this objection, that it may never more have a resurrection in any of your souls.

(9.) Ninthly, If ever you would be holy, then, when you have done all—WAIT. Oh, **hear** and wait—and wait and hear; **pray** and wait—and wait and pray; **read** and wait—and wait and read; **confer** and wait—and wait and confer; **watch** and wait—and wait and watch. O sirs, shall the *farmer* wait for a good harvest? and the *merchant* wait for good returns? James 5:7-8; and the *watchman* wait for the dawning of the day? and the *patient* wait for a happy cure? and the poor *client* wait for a day of hearing? etc.; and will not you wait for Christ, and wait for the Spirit, and wait for pardon, and wait for grace, and wait for glory? etc. O sinners, sinners, remember you are at the right door—and therefore wait. Oh, remember that while you are waiting for mercy, God is preparing of mercy. Oh, remember that it is mercy that you may wait for mercy. Devils and damned spirits can't wait for mercy. Wait they must; but, oh, it is for more wrath, anger, and fiery indignation.

Oh, remember your *condition* bespeaks waiting—for you are poor, halt, lame, blind, and miserable creatures. Oh, remember that mercy is sweetest when it comes after a patient waiting: Deut. 32:13, "He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock;" that is, he made him to suck water that was as sweet as honey out of the rock, out of the flinty rock. Oh, remember that a patient waiting for mercy is the only way to greaten your mercy. "The longer," said the emperor's son, "the cooks are a-preparing the food, the better the meal will be." His meaning was, the longer he waited for the empire, the greater it would be. Just so, the longer a soul waits for mercy, the greater and the better it will be when it comes; as you may see in that famous instance of the poor man who lay

thirty-eight years at the pool of Bethesda, John 5:2, 16. Famous was the patience of Elijah's servant, who, in obedience to his master's command, went seven several times up and down steep Carmel, 1 Kings 18:8, which could not be without danger and difficulty, and all to bring news of nothing, until his last journey, which made a recompense for all the rest, with the tidings of a cloud arising. Oh, so do but patiently wait upon the Lord—and that grace, that favor, that mercy, will come at last, which will fully recompense you for all your waitings.

Remember that the mercies of God are not styled the *swift*—but the *sure* mercies of David, Isaiah 55:3. Mercy may be sure, though it be not presently upon the wing flying towards us. And the same prophet says, "The glory of the Lord shall be your reward," Isaiah 58:8. Now this, we know, comes up *last*, to secure and make good all the rest, for where *grace* leads the front, *glory* at last will be in the rear. Oh, do but patiently wait, and he who shall come, will come, and will not tarry, Heb. 10:37; not a year, not a quarter, not a month, not a week, not a day, no, not an hour beyond the prefixed time that he has set of showing mercy to poor sinners.

Oh, how sad was it that Saul should lose his kingdom for lack of two or three hours patience! But oh, how much more sad will it be if you should lose all the *prayers* that you have made, and all the *sermons* that you have heard, and all the *tears* that you have shed, and all other *pains* that you have taken—and all for lack of a little more patience! yes, how woefully-sad would it be if you should lose your *God*, and lose your *Christ*, and lose your *soul*, and lose an *eternity of glory*, and all for lack of a little patience to wait the Lord's time! Oh, therefore resolve to hold on waiting to the death, and if you must perish, to perish in a waiting way—which if you should, you would be the first that ever so perished. Oh, remember that if *God* should come, and *mercy* come, and *pardon* come, and *grace* come—when your sun is near setting, when your hour-glass is almost out, and when there is but a short step between you and eternity—it will

infinitely recompense you for all your waiting; and therefore wait still.

And to keep up your spirits, and to uphold your soul in a waiting way, oh that you would make these following promises your daily *food*, your daily *friends*, your daily *companions*: Psalm 27:14, "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord." Proverbs 20:22, "Wait on the Lord, and he shall save you." Isaiah 30:18, "Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are all who wait for him!" Isaiah 40:31, "But those who wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint!" Isaiah 49:23, "Those who wait for me will never be put to shame." Isaiah 64:4, "Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him!" Proverbs 8:34, "Blessed is the man who hears me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." Oh, how should these precious promises encourage your hearts to wait on the Lord! Oh, how should they lengthen and draw out your patience to the utmost! But,

(10.) Tenthly and lastly—Dwell much upon the memorable judgments of God, that even in this life have fallen upon unholy people. "Remember Lot's wife!" Luke 17:32. Oh, remember her sin and punishment—so that fearing her sin, you may learn to take heed of her punishment. Isaiah 26:9, "When your judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness;" that is, they should learn righteousness—for so the words may be read—they should learn to *fear* you, and learn to *turn* unto you, and learn to forsake their sins and amend their lives. When your judgments, your memorable judgments, are abroad in the world, it highly concerns all the sons of men to look after holy *thoughts*, holy *affections*, and holy *lives*—so that it may go well with them in the day of the Lord's wrath. Others sense the words thus: When your judgments are on the earth, the inhabitants of the world, that is,

sinner as well as saint, shall learn righteousness, that is, they shall learn to fear you upon the account of your righteous judgment; suitable to Job 37:23-24, "We cannot imagine the power of the Almighty, yet he is so just and merciful that he does not oppress us. No wonder people everywhere fear him. People who are truly wise show him reverence." Rev. 15:4, "Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous deeds have been revealed." The judgments of God upon Antichrist shall so awaken, alarm, and dismay the nations—that they shall cast off all false ways of worship, and worship the Lord in a more pure, spiritual, high, and noble way than ever yet they have done.

God is a sovereign agent, and he can make sinners saints, as well by judgments as by mercies. Waldus, (from whom the Waldenses derived their name), when many worldlings were met together to be merry, seeing one among them suddenly fall down dead—it so struck to his heart, that he went home a penitent, and proved to be a very precious holy man. Pharaoh was not a pin the better for all the plagues which came upon him; but Jethro, taking notice of God's heavy judgments upon Pharaoh, and likewise upon the Amalekites, was thereby converted, and became a proselyte, as some observe. O sirs, who can tell but that a fixed eye upon the remarkable judgments of God, that have been inflicted upon notorious sinners—may be a means to change you and turn you to the Lord?

Do not forget the plagues which came upon bloody *Pharaoh*. Remember how crafty *Ahithophel*, and proud *Haman*, and covetous Judas—all came to the halter. Do not forget how the earth opened her mouth and swallowed up *Korah* and his companions. Do not forget the Samuel's sword which cut *Agag* in pieces; nor the stately oak tree, on which *Absalom* was hanged; nor the javelin which Phinehas, in his zeal for God, thrust through *Zimri* and *Cozbi*. Remember how *Ananias* and *Sapphira* were struck dead with a lie in their mouths. Remember how God rained hell out of heaven upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*. Remember how suddenly, how unexpectedly,

and how inevitably the *flood* came upon the old world; and remember how the *angels* that kept not their first station of holiness—are now in chains under everlasting darkness. Oh, who can seriously dwell upon the severe judgments of God upon these people, and not resolve upon breaking off his sins, and pursuing after that holiness, without which there is no happiness!

Oh, remember that God is as *holy* a God as ever, and as *just* a God as ever, and as *jealous* of his glory as ever; and therefore turn from the evil of your doings, that your souls may live. Oh, that the dreadful judgments of God that have been executed upon others might so alarm all unholy hearts—that they may with all their might cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, so that they may be children of the light, and their souls may live forever! And thus much for the means whereby men may reach to that holiness, without which there is no happiness.

Seven Objections

I come now, in the next place, to answer those objections which usually are made against men's pursuing after holiness. As,

Objection 1. First, We have no power to make ourselves holy. We are as well able to make a world, to command the winds, and to raise the dead—as we are able to cleanse our own hearts, or change our own natures, or sanctify our own souls. Therefore, to what purpose should we be so strongly pressed to do that which we have no power to do? Now to this objection I shall give these following answers:

1. First, That you have no power to perform any supernatural act—such as to believe or love God, or repent, or to change your own heart, or to sanctify or make yourself holy—must be granted. That by nature you are dead in trespasses and sins, and have lost all your spiritual senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, and feeling—can't be denied, Eph. 2:1. It is certain that your nature is so corrupted that you can not think a good thought, nor speak a good word, nor do a good work; you are not sick—but dead, God-wards, and Christ-wards, and heaven-wards, and holiness-wards, etc. [2 Cor. 3:5; Mat 12:34; John 6:44; 1 Cor. 2:14.]

I have read of the lioness—that she brings forth her whelps dead, and so they remain, until, by her roaring loudly over them, they come to live. Certainly all unholy hearts are spiritually dead, and until Christ, the lion of the tribe of Judah, comes to roar over them, by uttering his voice in the gospel, they cannot live, John 5:25. Since the creation of the world, no dead man ever made himself alive. It is God alone, who can quicken the dead. *Sin in dominion* is the plague of the heart, 1 Kings 8:38. Now as there is no disease so deadly as the plague, so there is no plague so deadly as the plague of the heart. Oh, this is a disease that none can cure but he who is the physician of souls. An

unsanctified person is not half-dead, as the Pelagians, Arminians, and Papists say; but as to spirituals he is stark dead, Col. 2:13.

An unsanctified soul is dead.

[1.] In respect of **working**, and therefore his works are called dead works, Heb. 9:14. There is death written upon all he does.

[2.] He is dead in respect of **honor**; he is dead to all privileges, he is not fit to inherit mercy. Who will set the crown of life upon a dead man's head? The crown of life is for the holy Christian, and the holy Christian is for the crown of life, Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 4:8. When he in Plutarch, had tried all manner of ways to raise a dead man, and to make him stand upon his feet, and saw he could not do it, then he cried out, "There must be something within, there must be something within!" Just so, when men have said and done all they can—there must be something within, there must be something of the power and spirit of Christ within—which must raise up spiritual life in those who are spiritually dead. But,

2. Secondly, I answer, That God gave you ability and power in Adam to obey him in all his commands, and though by Adam's fall you have lost your power to obey—yet God has not lost his right and power to command you to obey. [Gen. 1:26; Eccles. 7:29; Psalm 8:4, seq.] Suppose a father should furnish a child with moneys and all other necessaries to go a journey, and he should be drawn in by some strong temptation to spend his money, his time, and his strength, so as that now he is not able to go his journey; whose fault is this? Will you now say that the father has lost his power to command, because his son has lost his power to obey? Surely not! It is no iniquity in God to require that of us—which once he gave unto us. It is no injustice in the creditor to call for his debt, when the debtor is fallen into extreme poverty through his own default. But,

3. Thirdly, I answer, Though an unsanctified person is not able to perform any holy or *spiritual* action—such as to believe or repent,

etc.—yet he is able to perform all *natural* actions—such as to eat, drink, work, walk, etc., and he is able to perform all social actions also—such as to trade, bargain, buy, sell, plant, and build, etc. The soul even in an unsanctified person is not dead—but a living principle; and therefore it is able to understand, will, desire, discourse, reason, and to attend the means of grace. Though he is not able to work grace in his own heart—yet he is able to attend on the means of grace. An unsanctified person may as well go to a *sermon*—as to a *tavern*; he may as well read the *Scriptures*—as read *novels* and *newspapers*; he may as well associate himself with those who fear an oath—as he does with those who delight to blaspheme that name that all should tremble at, etc. Man's spiritual impotency lies in his obstinacy. Man pretends he **cannot** believe, nor come to Christ, nor repent, etc., when he is resolved that he will **not** believe, nor come to Christ, nor repent, etc. [Mat. 23:37; Luke 13:34; John 5:40; Acts 7:5.]

Christ in the gospel comes and offers pardon and peace and reconciliation—but you turn your back upon him. He woos and entreats and beseeches you by his ambassadors—but you will not hear, etc. He sets life and death, heaven and hell, mercy and misery before you—but you slight all, 2 Cor. 5:18-20. Christ brings a cordial in one hand to strengthen you, and a remedy in the other hand to cure you—but you despise both. Christ offers tried gold to enrich you, and white raiment to clothe you, and precious eye-salve to enlighten you, Rev. 3:18—but you shut up your heart against all his offers! Well, sirs! remember this, in the great day of judgement, all unsanctified people will be damned, not for **cannots** but for **will-nots**! It is neither men nor devils—it is neither the greatness of your sins, nor the numberless number of your sins, which can damn you, were it not for your *wilfulness* in sin, Hosea 13:9.

O sinners, sinners, if you are but heartily willing to forsake your sins, and to accept of Christ as your Lord and King, and to resign up yourselves to him to be *really* his, to be wholly his, to be *only* his, and to be *eternally* his—he will certainly change you, and sanctify

you, and save you! But if you will not be holy, if you will not be happy, if you will not be sanctified, if you will not be saved, if you will not go to heaven—but are resolved upon going to hell, what can be more just with God than that you should be Satan's bond-slaves, and firebrands of hell, and vessels of wrath to all eternity? [Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9; Luke 19:41-42.] But,

4. Fourthly, I answer, If you do but stir up yourself to obey the command as well as you can—you do not know but that a power may go forth with the command, that may enable you to act suitable to the command. In that Mat. 9:1-9, Christ bid the *palsied man* "rise and walk, take up your bed, and go unto your house." The palsied man might have objected, "Alas! I am carried by four strong men! I am not able to stir a limb, much less to rise—but least of all to take up my bed and walk!" etc. Oh! but he puts forth himself as well as he could, and a power went forth with the command, which enabled him to do what was commanded.

Just so, in Matthew 12:10-14, there was a poor *man who had a withered hand*, and Christ commands him to stretch forth his hand. He might have objected, "My hand is withered, and if I might have a thousand worlds to stretch it forth, I could not stretch it forth! Yes, if my life, if my salvation did lie upon stretching forth my withered arm, I could not stretch it forth!" Oh but he throws by all objections, and complies as well as he could, and a power went forth and healed his hand.

God commanded *Moses* to go and deliver his people out of Egypt. Moses might have objected his old age, the great power of Pharaoh, and his lack of an army to force their way, etc. But he turns his back upon these objections, and addresses himself to the work, and such a mighty power went along with him, as did effect it.

God commanded the *Israelites* to take rams' horns, and with them to go and blow down the walls of Jericho, Joshua 6. They might have said, "Lord, these are weak and contemptible means, yes, Lord, if we

may speak after the manner of men, they are such ridiculous means as will expose us to scorn and laughter!" But they pass over these things, and apply themselves to those weak and despicable means which God had appointed, and such a divine and glorious power went along with the means as made the walls of Jericho not only to *tremble*—but to *tumble* down before them!

Christ commanded *Lazarus* to come out of the grave, and there went divine power and virtue with that call of Christ, which made him to rise!

The **means** are the Spirit's triumphing chariot, in which he pleases to ride conquering and to conquer the souls of men, 2 Cor. 2:14. "While Peter yet spoke, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the word," Acts 10:44. O man, you can not tell but that while you are in the use of divine helps, a secret power of the Spirit may break in upon you, and make the means effectual to your conversion and salvation. Many thousands have found it so—therefore address yourself to the use of the means, and wait at the pool; you cannot tell how soon the Spirit may come and move upon your soul; it may be this day, this hour, yes, this very moment wherein am thus speaking to you! But,

5. Fifthly, I answer, That the sense of your own inability, insufficiency, and impotency, should provoke you to run to Christ, and to lay hold on his everlasting strength, and to storm the throne of grace, and to give God no rest—until he has renewed and sanctified your soul, until he has effectually turned you from "darkness to light," Acts 26:18, until he has bespangled your soul with grace, and filled you with his Spirit, and made you partakers of his holiness, Heb. 12:10. It was a good saying of Augustine, "Give what you command, and command what you will."

Oh, go to God, and tell him that what he has *commanded* in some scriptures, he has promised to *give* in other scriptures. Therefore press him to make good his promises, so that you may obey his

precepts. Oh, tell him that if he will but "sprinkle clean water upon you, and put his Spirit within you, and give a new heart unto you," according to his promise, that then "you will walk in his statutes, and keep his judgments, and do them," Ezek. 36:25-28. Oh, tell him that if he will but "put his fear into your heart," according to his promise, that then "you will never depart from him," Jer. 32:40. Oh, tell him that he has commanded you to "believe," and that he has also promised to give you faith, and therefore if he will but make good his promise, you shall be sure to obey his precepts, Phil. 1:29; James 5:17. Oh, tell him that he has frequently commanded you to "repent," Acts 5:31, and that he has also graciously promised to give "repentance," 2 Tim. 2:25, and therefore if he will but perform his promise, you shall not fail to obey his precepts, etc.

Oh, tell him that you have no mind to be damned! Tell him that you tremble at the thoughts of hell! Tell him that you are horrified think of "dwelling with a devouring fire, of dwelling with everlasting burnings!" Isaiah 33:14; 2 Thes. 7-10. Oh, tell him that you dread an eternal separation from him—and therefore earnestly beseech him, for his *Son's* sake, and for his *glory* sake, and his *promise* sake, and *your soul's* sake—that he would renew your nature, and sanctify your soul, so that you may not perish to all eternity. But,

6. Sixthly and lastly, What *insincerity*, yes, what *injustice* and *unrighteousness* is this—that you should lie complaining of the lack of power, when you do not use and improve the power you have. Without the power and assistance of special grace—you have power to attend Christian duties and services; you have power to turn your back upon the infectious and dangerous society of wicked and ungodly men; you have power to keep at a distance from the "harlot's door;" you have power to keep your mouth of blasphemy shut; you have power to keep your hands from stealing, and your feet "from being swift to shed innocent blood;" you have power to bring your *body* to Christian duties, though you have not power to bring your *soul* to Christian duties. [James 3:10; Eph. 4:28; Romans 3:15.]

The noble Bereans brought their *bodies* to the sermon, and they took the *heads* of the apostle's sermon, and compared Paul's teachings with the Scripture—and yet they were in an unrenewed and unsanctified estate, Acts 17:11-12. O sirs, you have power to come to Christian duties, and to set yourselves under the droppings of a gospel powerful ministry; you have power to lie at the pool of Bethesda, and there to wait until the cure is wrought. But where is the unsanctified soul who improves the power he has? Tell me, O vain man—why should God trust you with a greater power, when you make no conscience of improving that power you have? Why should God trust you with ten talents—when you have no heart to improve the two which he has already trusted you with? What wise father or master will trust that child or servant with thousands, who makes no conscience of improving far lesser sums to the honor and advantage of the father or the master?

How do you know, O man—but that upon the faithful improvement of that power which you have, God may add a greater power to you? If you will but go those two steps which you can—God may strike in with you, and enable you to go ten. *It is a dangerous thing to neglect the doing of that which you **can** do, because that you cannot do everything that you should do.* Suppose a father or a master should say to his son or servant, "Take such and such wares, and carry them to such and such places." And the son or servant should say, "Well, though there be some small light burdens that I can well enough carry—yet there are many heavy burdens that I cannot carry, and therefore I will carry none at all." May not the father of such a son, or the master of such a servant, in much justice and righteousness severely punish such a son or servant? Doubtless yes.

Why, this is the very case of all unsanctified souls. God commands them to believe and repent, and to love him with all their hearts, and to set him up as the object of their fear, and to give him the pre-eminence in all things, etc.—but these are supernatural acts, beyond their power. But he also commands them to attend on the means of grace, and to wait at wisdom's door, and to apply themselves to

public ordinances, and to keep up pious duties, and to turn their backs upon such and such wicked societies, etc.—and these are things they **can** do. And yet because they cannot do the *former*—they willfully and wickedly refuse to do the *latter*; because they cannot bear the *heaviest* burden—they are resolved they will bear *none* at all; and because they cannot do *everything* they should—they will do *nothing* at all—except it be to complain that God is a hard master, and expects to reap where he does not sow. Now how just and righteous a thing it is with God to deal severely with such, I will leave you to judge. And let this suffice for answer to the first objection.

Objection 2. HEREAFTER may be time enough to look after holiness. I may yet pursue after the pleasures and profits of the world; I may yet spend some years in gratifying my own lusts, and in walking after the course of the world; I have time enough before me, and therefore some future years may be time enough to look after holiness. Now to this objection I shall give these answers:

1. First, You will not say that you can be *saved* too soon, nor *happy* too soon, nor *blessed* too soon, nor *pardoned* too soon, nor in the *favor of God* too soon, nor *out of the danger of wrath, hell, and everlasting burnings* too soon. And if so, then certainly you can not be *holy* too soon—for you can never be truly *happy* until you are truly *holy*. No man will be so foolish and mad as to say he may be *rich* too soon, and *great* too soon, and high and *honorable* in the world too soon, and in favor and *esteem* with men, especially with great men, too soon. Why then should you be so mad and foolish, as practically to say that you can be *holy* too soon? Yet this is exactly what you proclaim upon the house-top, when you cry out, "Hereafter, hereafter will be time enough to seek after holiness." But,

2. Secondly, I answer, That it is your wisdom and your work to set one "perhaps" against another. You say, "*Perhaps* hereafter may be time enough to look after holiness." Eccles. 7:14. Oh, set another *perhaps* against this *perhaps*, and say, "If I now neglect this season of grace—*perhaps* I shall never have another!" Isaiah 55:6 "If I now

slight the offers of mercy—*perhaps* I shall never have another such offer! If I now despise this day of salvation—*perhaps* I shall never have another such day! If I now withstand the offers of Christ—*perhaps* Christ will never again make an offer to me! If I now resist the strivings of the Spirit—*perhaps* the Spirit will never strive with my soul again! And then—woe, woe to me that ever I was born!" [Proverbs 1:20-33; Heb. 2:1-3; Luke 19:41-45; Gen. 6:3.]

Oh, don't put off God, don't put off your soul, don't put off the thoughts of holiness, don't put off eternity with a *perhaps*—lest "the Lord should swear in his wrath, that you shall never enter into his rest." Heb. 3:18—and seeing that you will not allow holiness to enter into you, you shall never enter into your master's joy. Oh, why should you treat your poor soul—as you would not have God to treat it? You would not have God treat your soul with a *perhaps*; as with "*Perhaps* I will pardon you; *perhaps* I will lift up the light of my countenance upon you; *perhaps* I will change your nature and save your soul; *perhaps* I will fill you with my Spirit and adorn you with my grace; *perhaps* I will bring you to my kingdom and glory. Oh, you would not have God to put you off with such a *perhaps*. Why then should you deal more harshly and cruelly with your own soul—than you would have God to deal with you? But,

3. Thirdly, I answer, It is a clear argument that you are not truly nor thoroughly sensible of your present condition and danger, who thus object. Were you but truly sensible of your lost and undone estate out of Christ; did you but indeed know what it is to live one hour in a Christless and graceless condition; did you but see that wrath that hangs over your head; did you but read the curses which are pronounced in the book of God against you; did you but behold how hell gapes to devour you; did you but see how far off you are from God, Christ, the covenant, and all the glory and happiness of the eternal world; ah, how would you every day cry out, Give me holiness or I die, give me holiness or I eternally die! Acts 2:39; Eph. 2:12.

The *patient* that is truly sensible of his mortal disease will not say, "Hereafter will be time enough to send for the physician." Nor will the mortally *wounded* man say, "Hereafter will be time enough to fetch the surgeon." Nor will the condemned man say, "Hereafter will be time enough to plead for a pardon." Nor will the *needy* man say, "Hereafter will be time enough to look for relief." Nor will the *fallen* man say, "Hereafter will be time enough to lift me up." Nor will the *drowning* man say, "Hereafter will be time enough to bring a boat to save my life." Now this is the very case of all unsanctified people in the world; and why then should they cry out, "Hereafter, hereafter will be time enough to be holy!"

The boar in the fable, being questioned why he stood sharpening his teeth so, when nobody was near to hurt him, wisely answered, that it would then be too late to *sharpen* them when he was to *use* them, and therefore he sharpened them *before* danger that he might have them ready in danger. Ah, sirs, there is nothing more dangerous than for you to have your holiness to seek—when temporal, spiritual, and eternal dangers are at your heels. There is no wisdom, compared to that which leads men forth to a *present* pursuit after holiness! Nor is there any hell compared to that hell—for a man to have his holiness to *seek* when he should *use* it.

4. Fourthly, I answer, That the brevity, shortness, and preciousness of TIME—calls aloud upon you to pursue after holiness without delay. Time *past* is irrecoverable; time *future* is uncertain; the *present* time is the only time—and on this moment of time depends eternity! This present day is a day of grace; oh that you had but grace to take notice of it. This present time is an acceptable time; oh that you had but a heart to realize it, and to improve it. He who has a great way to go, and a great deal of work to do in a little time—had not need to trifle away his time! This is the case of every unsanctified soul. Oh, the *sins* that such a soul has to repent of! oh, the *graces* that such a soul has to seek! oh, the *evidences* for heaven that such a soul has to secure! oh, the *miseries* that such a soul has to escape! oh, the *mercies* that such a soul has to press after, etc. Therefore of all

men in the world, it is incumbent upon unsanctified people—to well utilize and improve their present time.

Oh, it is a dangerous thing to put off that work to another day which must be done today, or else you may be eternally undone tomorrow. The old saying was, "Now or never!" If not now done, it may be never done, and if so, then you are undone forever! Many people are now in hell, who when they were on earth were accustomed to put off the motions of the Spirit by crying out, "Tomorrow, tomorrow!" Time is so precious a thing that mountains of gold and rocks of pearl cannot redeem one lost moment; which Queen Elizabeth well understood, when on her death-bed she cried out, "Call time again, call time again! A world of wealth for an inch of time!"

Ah, what a precious commodity would time be in hell, where for one day to repent, yes, for one hour to seek after holiness—a man would give ten thousand worlds, were they in his hands to dispose of.

Time is so costly a jewel that few know how to value it and prize it at a due rate. Witness that sad and frequent complaint among many, "Oh, what shall we do to drive away the time? come, let's go to cards to drive away the time! or let's go to gaming tables to drive away the time! or let's go to the tavern, and take a pint and a pipe to drive away the time! or let's go and take a walk in the fields to drive away the time!" etc. Thus most are lavishly and profusely prodigal of that precious time which is their greatest interest to redeem! Time is a precious talent, and the non-improvement of it God will charge upon men at last, as he did upon Jezebel, Rev. 2:20-21, especially upon such who *trifle* away, who *play* away, who *idle* away, yes, who grossly *sin* away their precious time! How many are there like children, who play until their candle be out, and then they go to bed in the dark! Just so, these play and fool away their precious time, until the candle of life be out, and then they go to their beds, they go to their graves in sorrow, yes, they go to hell in the dark!

I have read of a young man who, living vainly and loosely, was very fearful of being in the dark, who after falling sick and could not sleep, cried out, "Oh, if this darkness be so terrible, what is eternal darkness!" He who makes no conscience of trifling away his precious time, shall one day experience the terribleness of eternal darkness. The poets paint time with wings, to show the rapidity and swiftness of it. O sirs, if the sense of the brevity, shortness, and preciousness of time did but lie in its full weight upon your spirits, it would certainly put you upon a speedy and earnest pursuit after holiness! Oh, then you would never say, "Hereafter, hereafter will be time enough to seek after holiness." But you would address yourselves to a fervent and a constant pressing after holiness as the one thing necessary, and be restless in your own spirits, until you had experienced the power and sweetness which is in holiness! But,

5. Fifthly and lastly, I answer, That it is the greatest folly and madness in the world for you to put off the great God and the great concernments of your soul—as you dare not put off your superiors. Where is the subject or servant, who dares put off a lawful duty urged upon him by his prince with a "Perhaps I will do it." or "Later I will do it." Where is the loving child who dares put off a present duty pressed upon him by his parents with a "Perhaps I will do it." or "Later I will do it." Where is the affectionate wife who dares put off the just desires and requests of her husband with a "Perhaps I will do it." or "Later I will answer your desires, or hereafter I will answer your requests?" O sirs, you dare not put off your superiors with a 'perhaps', or with 'laters'—and how then do you dare to put off the King of kings and the Lord of lords, with a 'perhaps', or with 'later' I will look after holiness, it may be I will study holiness, it may be I will prize holiness, or hereafter I will press after holiness, I will pursue after holiness, hereafter I will follow hard after holiness. Oh, remember that as there is nothing that does more incense, enrage, and provoke a prince against his subjects, a master against his servants, a father against his child, and a husband against his wife, than the putting off of their services and commands with a 'perhaps', or with 'laters'—so there is nothing that does more incense, inflame,

and provoke the great God, than to put him off with a 'perhaps', or with 'laters' as you may see by comparing these scriptures together. [Psalm 95:6, to the end. Heb. 3:7, to the end.] And oh that for time to come you would tremble at the very thoughts of a 'perhaps', and at the very mentioning of a 'later', so that you may never put off the commands of God, to pursue after holiness with a 'perhaps', or with 'later' any more. And let this suffice for answer to this second objection.

Objection 3. Thirdly—but if we should thus press and pursue after holiness—then we must take our farewell of all joy and comfort, of all delight and pleasure, and never more expect to enjoy another merry day—for we observe that there are no people under heaven who live such a melancholy, sad, sorrowful, pensive life, as those who press most after holiness, and who make most stir and noise about holiness, and therefore if we should resolve to follow after holiness, we must resolve to spend our days in sorrow and sadness, in sighing and mourning, etc.

Now to this grand objection, I shall give these eight answers:

1. First, It may be you look only on the *dark* side of the cloud—and not on the *bright* side. You look only on your *left* hand, where the mourners in Zion stand—but did you but cast an eye on your *right* hand, there you would see many of the precious sons and daughters of Zion rejoicing and triumphing. [Isaiah 61:1-3, 10-11, and 35:10.] Now thus to look, what is it but to look for a straw to thrust out your own eyes with. O sirs, it is neither wisdom nor righteousness to look only upon those who *mourn*—and not upon those who *rejoice*; upon those who *sigh*—but not upon those who *sing*, Isaiah 52:8-9; Jer. 31:7, 12.

Before you pass a judgment upon the people of God, or the good ways of God—look on both sides! I say again, look on both sides—and then you will be sure to see some saints in their wedding attire, as well as others in their mourning garments. No man in his wits will

argue thus, because such and such men of such a calling or trade are in their mourning garments, therefore all men of that calling or trade are in their mourning garments; and yet so witless are many men as thus to argue against the people of God, and the ways of God. But,

2. Secondly, I answer, As there are tears of *sorrow*—so there are tears of *joy*. [Compare these scriptures together; Gen. 43:30, 45:2, and 46:29-30; 1 Sam. 1:13-20.] Jacob weeps over Joseph—but it was with tears of exceeding joy. The sweetest joy is from the sourest tears. Tears are the breeders of spiritual joy. A holy man's heart is usually fullest of joy—when his eyes are fullest of tears. When Hannah had wept, she went away and was no more sad. The bee gathers the best honey of the bitterest herbs. Christ made the best wine of water: the best, the purest, the strongest, and the sweetest joys are made of the distilled waters of evangelical repentance. Gospel mourning is fully consistent with holy joy.

Though it must be granted that the *love of sin* and true joy are inconsistent; and that the *reign and dominion of sin* and true joy are inconsistent—yet it must be confessed that mourning for sin and holy joy are consistent in one and the same heart; and though legal terror and evangelical joy are inconsistent—yet evangelical sorrow and evangelical joy are consistent in one and the same soul. The same eye of faith which drops tears of sorrow—also drops tears of joy, Zech. 12:10; 1 Pet. 1:8. **A clear sight of free grace, of pardoning mercy, and of a bleeding dying Savior—will fill the soul both with sorrow and joy at the same time**, as the experiences of a thousand Christians can testify. A Christian always joys most, and mourns most—when he is most under the sense of divine love, the influences and incomes of heaven, the hopes of glory, the reports of mercy, and the precious sealings of the blessed Spirit. "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." 2 Corinthians 6:10

Look! as medicine is the way to health, so godly sorrow is the way to holy joy. And look, as a wicked man's joy ends in sorrow, Proverbs 14:13, so a godly man's sorrow ends in joy: Isaiah 61:3, "To provide

for those who grieve in Zion--to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor." **Godly sorrow is the parent of holy joy; a godly man's mourning time is his most joyful time.** I have read of a godly man who, lying upon his dying bed, and being asked which was the most joyful time that ever he had in all his life, cried out, "Oh, give me my mourning days again, oh, give me my mourning days again, for they were the joyfulest days that ever I had!" The more a Christian "sows in tears," the greater, even in this world, shall be his "harvest of joy;" his merry days shall be always answerable to his mourning days, Psalm 126:6. But,

3. Thirdly, I answer, That this is a false charge, a mere slander, an unjust calumny that Satan and his bond-slaves have cast upon holiness, and the ways of holiness—on purpose to hinder men from pursuing and following after holiness. The language of the objection is quite contrary to the language of the holy Scripture; witness Psalm 138:5, "Yes, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord; for great is the glory of the Lord." When the kings of the earth shall be generally converted and sanctified, as it is in verse the 4th, "then they shall sing in the ways of the Lord." When they shall come to experience and taste the power, excellency, and sweetness of holiness, then they shall sing in the ways of the Lord. Conversion and sanctification administer the highest grounds of joy and rejoicing: 2 Cor. 1:12, "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom—but by the grace of God, we have had our life in the world, and more abundantly to you-wards."

A holy life affords the greatest ground of rejoicing. There is no joy compared to that which springs from the testimony of a sanctified conscience. God has given it under his own hand, that "the ways of wisdom" (which are always ways of holiness) "are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace," Proverbs 3:17. There is no

pleasure nor felicity compared to that which flows from the ways of sanctity. The sweetest roses, the strongest comforts, and the greatest pleasantness—is to be found in the ways of holiness. Oh the joy, the peace, the tranquility, the serenity which attends the ways of purity. I might call in many millions of saints, who from their own experiences are able to give the lie to this objection, and further to tell you—that they have met with more comforts, sweetness, and pleasantness in one hour's communion with God, in one hour's walking with God—than ever they have found in all the ways of ungodliness and wickedness, wherein they have wandered. Oh, they are able to tell you, that when they walked in ways of impiety, they found by experience that God had made a separation between sin and peace, between sin and joy, between sin and assurance, between sin and the light of his countenance, etc., Isaiah 57: 20-21; and they are able to tell you from what they have found, that there is no fear, no terror, no horror, no gripes, no grief, no stings, no hells—compared to those who attend the ways of ungodliness; and this were enough to blow off this objection, Romans 6:21. But,

4. Fourthly, I answer, That the joy of the saints is chiefly and mainly—an inward joy, a spiritual joy, a joy which lies remote from a carnal eye. The joy of a Christian lies deep, it cannot be expressed, it cannot be painted. Look! as no man can paint the sweetness of the honeycomb, nor the sweetness of a cluster of grapes, nor the fragrancy of the rose of Sharon—just so, no man can paint out the sweetness and spiritualness of a Christian's joy, it lies so deep and low in a gracious heart. And look, as the life of a Christian is hid with Christ in God," Col. 3:3—just so, the joy of a Christian is "hid with Christ in God." As their life is a hidden life, so their joy is a hidden joy. The joy of a Christian is "hidden manna," it is the "new name and white stone, that none knows but he who has it," Rev. 2:20; Proverbs 14:10, "The heart knows his own bitterness, and a stranger does not intermeddle with his joy." The joy of a saint is a jewel which falls not under a stranger's eye. Look! as the greatest terrors and torments of the wicked are inward, so the greatest joys and comforts of the saints are inward; and look, as the heart of man is deep, so

holy joy is a treasure that lies deep, and it is not every man who has a golden key to search into this treasury, Jer. 17:9-10.

As a man standing on the sea-shore sees a great heap of waters, one wave riding upon the back of another, and making a dreadful noise—but all this while, though he sees the water rolling, and hears it raging and roaring—yet he sees not the wealth, the gold, the silver, the jewels, and incredible treasures which lie buried there. Just so, wicked men they see the *needs* of the saints—but not their *wealth*; they see their *poverty*—but not their *riches*; they see their *miseries*—but not their *mercies*; they see their *conflicts*—but not their *comforts*; they see their *sorrows*—but not their *joys*, 1 Cor. 2:14. Oh, the blind world cannot see the joys and rejoicings, the comforts and consolations of the saints—which lie at the bottom of their souls. Their joys are inward and spiritual—and so must the eye be that discerns them.

The joy of the saints is like "a garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed," Cant. 4:12; and as the *glory* of the church is inward, Psalm 45:13, so the *joy* of the church is inward. The waters of consolation lie deep in the wells of salvation, Isaiah 12:3. The richest veins of gold lie deepest under ground; and so does the strongest and the choicest joys of the saints lie deep. The moon is often dark to the world, when yet that part which faces the sun is very lightsome, beautiful, and glorious. Just so, many times, if you look upon the outside of a Christian, which is his dark side, you may see his countenance clouded, and his bearing and behavior as to the world either damped or obscured; but if you could but now look upon his inside, which is his best side, and which faces the Sun of righteousness, oh, then you would see the light of joy and comfort sweetly and gloriously shining forth.

O sirs, look, as there are many rich men in the world, who make no show of it by their garb, or table, or attendance, etc.—just so, there are many Christians who are rich in divine consolations, who yet don't show it in such or such an outward carnal way as the men of

the world do usually express their joy in. Many a wicked man has heaviness in his heart when he has laughter in his face, as the wisest of princes has long since observed, in Proverbs 14:13, "Even in laughter the heart is sorrowful, and the end of that mirth is heaviness." The heart often weeps when the mouth laughs. Every laughter is not hearty, for laughter being but a sign of joy, the sign may be where the substance is not. Many wicked men are inwardly sad when they are outwardly glad, 2 Cor. 5:12. The false apostles put on a joyful face—but had not joy in the heart; they seemed to be merry—and yet all their smiles were but counterfeit smiles, all their joys were but skin deep; the joy which was in their faces was nothing compared to the terrors, horrors, and torments which were in their hearts. Just so, the godly many times rejoice in heart, when sadness and blackness seems to cover their faces: 2 Cor. 6:10, "As sorrowful—yet always rejoicing," etc.

It is very observable that the apostle brings in the sorrow of the godly with a quasi, as it were sorrow, not that it is sorrow indeed—but "*as sorrowful*," as if their sorrow had been rather a painted sorrow than a real sorrow; but when he speaks of their joy, there is no quasi—but true joy; he does not say "*as rejoicing*," but "*always rejoicing*." Their joy was a real joy—but their sorrow was but a seeming sorrow. When a Christian is at worst, as to the eye of the world, he may say of his joy, as Christ speaks of his meat, etc., when he said, "I have food to eat that you know not of," John 4:33—just so, he may say, I have joy, I have great joy, that the world knows not of.

Look! as there is life and sap and juice in the root of the tree, even in the winter season, when there is no leaves, nor blossoms, nor fruit hanging on the tree—just so, there is joy and comfort and peace in the heart of a saint, when there are no outward visible discoveries of it to others! You may as rationally conclude that there is no life, sap, and juice in the root of the tree, because the tree has no leaves, blossoms, or fruit on it—as you may conclude that the saints have no joy in their hearts, because they do not express it in such outward visible acts as may convince the world that they have it, etc. But,

5. Fifthly, I answer, That it is horrid injustice to make the hearts of the righteous sad, whom God would not have saddened, by your pride, profaneness, looseness, wickedness, worldliness, lukewarmness, filthiness, carnalness, etc., and then to cry out against them, that they are the saddest and most comfortable people in the world, Ezek. 13:22-23. What is this but, with Nero, to set the city of Rome on fire, and then to lay the blame of it upon the Christians, and punish them for it? What is this but to deal by the saints as the devil deals by them? He loads them and follows them with most sad, grievous, blasphemous, horrid, and hellish temptations, on purpose to make them walk heavily, mournfully, and uncomfortably; and when he has accomplished his design, then he accuses them sometimes to God, sometimes to themselves, and sometimes to others, for their heavy and uncomfortable walking, Rev. 12:10.

Oh, what inhumanity, cruelty, and vanity was it in the Egyptians to double the Israelites' sum of bricks, and to take away their straw, and then to cry out "that they were lazy," Exod. 5:8, 17. Just so, oh what inhumanity and cruelty is this in unsanctified people, to sadden, grieve, and afflict the people of God with their drunkenness, wantonness, and lewdness, and with their cursing, swearing, and lying, and with their scorning and scoffing at godliness, and with their slandering of the Lord, his people and ways, and with their resisting and quenching of the blessed motions of the Spirit, and with their shifting off the glorious offers of grace and mercy, and with their treasuring up of wrath against the day of wrath, etc., [Psalm 119:136, 158; Jer. 9:1-2; 2 Pet. 2:2:7-8; Romans 2:4-5.] and then to cry out, "Oh, how sadly, oh, how mournfully, do these men walk! Oh, what uncomfortable lives do these men live! Oh, what sorrow and pensiveness attends them!" But is this just? is this fair?

Suppose a husband should do all he could to afflict and grieve his wife, and a father his child, and a master his servant, and a friend his friend, etc., and when they had done, then fall a-complaining that there were none so melancholy, nor any so sad and sorrowful as they. Oh, what folly, what madness, and what injustice would this be! And

yet, this is the common dealing of unsanctified people with the people of God, Dan. 4:27.

Ah, sinners, sinners, if you would but break off your sins by repentance, and cease from doing evil, and turn to the Lord with all your hearts, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and fall in with the ways of God, and trample upon this wicked world, and seek after the things of a better life—oh, how soon would the saints' sighing be turned into singing, and their mourning into rejoicing! Oh, the music, the mirth, the melody, that your life would make, both in their hearts and in their ears! It is very observable that Abraham made a feast at the weaning of his son Isaac, Gen. 21:8. He did not make a feast on the day of his nativity, nor on the day of his circumcision, but on that day when he was taken from his mother's bosom. O sirs, if you were but once weaned from your lusts, and from the vanities of this world, if you were but once weaned from old corrupt customs, and from following after your sinful lovers—oh, how would all God's faithful Abrahams rejoice! 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Hosea 6:7. Oh, what a feast of fat things oh, what a heavenly banquet would this make in all their hearts!

About three hundred years after the apostles' time, Caius Marius Victorius, an old pagan, was converted from his paganism, infidelity, and impiety, and brought over to the Christian faith; which, when the people of God saw, there was wonderful rejoicing, and shouting, and dancing for gladness, and psalms were sung in every church, "Caius Marius Victorius has become a Christian! Caius Marius Victorius has become a Christian!" This was written as a wonder, and sung as a wonder, that this old pagan, this gray-headed pagan, should become a gracious Christian, that he should in his old age be renewed and sanctified.

Ah, friends, if you were but once converted and changed, if you were but once turned from darkness to light, if you were but once brought to Christ, if the people of God could but once see that you had passed the pangs of the new birth, and that Christ and holiness were formed

in your souls—ah, how would their hearts be filled with joy, and their mouths with laughter! Oh, what songs of salvation would they sing! Oh, how would the high praises of God be in their mouths!

You say, "Oh there are none so sad and sorrowful, etc., as such and such Christians." But what is the cause of their sorrow and sadness? is it not your wickedness and ungodliness? is it not your unconverted and unsanctified estate? Surely yes. Oh, that you would therefore cease from complaining against them, and fall amending of your own heart and ways! And then all tears will be quickly wiped away from their eyes. But,

6. Sixthly, I answer, That all the joys, delights, and pleasures that holiness debars men of—are sinful joys, delights, and pleasures. [Romans 1:32; 2 Thes. 2:12; Amos 6:13; Zeph. 3:11; 2 Pet. 2:13.] Unsanctified souls take pleasure in unrighteousness; they rejoice to do evil; they make a sport of sin; they delight to dishonor their God, and damn their own immortal souls. Proverbs 2:14, "They delight in doing wrong and rejoice in the perverseness of evil." And this is brought in as an aggravation of Jerusalem's sin: Jer. 11:15, "When you do evil, then you rejoice." Ah, how madly-merry are those who can take delight in that which is their shame and misery! Ah, how has man fallen from his primitive glory—that he can now rejoice in that which is—a dishonor to God, a reproach to Christ, a grief to the Spirit, a provocation to divine wrath, a blot upon his name, a curse upon his estate, a wound upon his conscience, and a plague upon his soul! Now what a mercy must it be to be taken off from that carnal mirth which ends in mourning, and from those vain delights which end in unspeakable torments, and from that foolish jollity which leads to everlasting misery! Rev. 18:17.

I have read of king Lysimachus, that when he and his army were besieged in one of his cities, and in great danger of perishing by thirst, for a cup of cold water he delivered up the keys of the city to his enemy, which cold comfort he had no sooner tasted, but his tongue betrayed the grief of his heart, saying, "Oh, that for so

momentary a pleasure, I should be brought down from a sovereign a servant, from a king a captive!" Ah, what folly and madness is it for men to run the hazard of losing the kingdom of heaven, and the pleasures which are at God's right hand, Psalm 16:11, for those short-lived pleasures which are but like a blaze, or like the lightning, or like a morning cloud, or the early dew which soon passes away! **Ah, who would endure an ocean of torture for a drop of sensual pleasure, or for a few bitter-sweets?** And therefore doubtless, God can't do the soul a greater pleasure than to take it off from such vanishing pleasures. All sensual pleasures defile the soul, they debase the soul, yes, they debauch the soul; they take off the heart from God, and they deaden the heart towards God. The widow while she lived in pleasure is reckoned dead, 1 Tim. 5:6. That is, she is dead God-wards, and dead Christ-wards, and dead duty-wards, and dead heaven-wards, and dead holiness-wards, etc.

Aristotle writes of a parcel of ground in Sicily that sends forth such a strong, such a sweet smell of fragrant flowers, that no hounds can hunt there. Just so, the carnal pleasures of this world do send forth so strong a scent, that unsanctified people cannot hunt after God, nor Christ, nor holiness, nor the great concernments of the eternal world; and therefore it is rather man's felicity than his misery—to be taken off from such vain pleasures. Sensual pleasures and delights cannot satisfy the soul of man; they are but frothy and flashy, they only wet the mouth, they never warm the heart. A man may sooner break his neck than satisfy his heart with sensual pleasures. They seem substantial in the *pursuit*—but are clouds in the *enjoyment*.

Xerxes being weary of his sensual pleasures, promised great rewards to those who would invent new pleasures; and when they had invented new pleasures and delights—yet then he could not be satisfied nor contented; he would gladly have had one pleasure to have taken off the weariness of another—but it could not be. There is nothing in carnal delights, but *imagination* and *expectation*; for they can neither fill the heart nor satisfy the heart.

O sirs, there is no real pleasure in sin. All the pleasures of sin are counterfeit pleasures; they are but the shapes and shadows of pleasure. They are the seeds of future grief; they are but a pledge laid down for sorrow or ruin. It is observed by the mythologists that 'pleasure' went on occasion to bathe herself, and having stripped off her clothes by the water-side, 'sorrow' having hid herself close at hand, steals the clothes away, puts them on, and so departs. Just so, carnal pleasures are nothing but sorrow in pleasure's clothes. Certainly if there were the least real delight in sin—hell could never be hell. Yes, then it would follow that hell would be the greatest place of pleasure—for doubtless hell is the greatest place of sin.

Oh, don't deceive your own souls! there can be no real joy in sensual pleasures. What real delight or pleasure can there be in fooling and staggering in an ale-house or tavern; in swaggering and swearing; in dicing and carding; in dancing, partying, and whoring; in slighting of Sabbaths, in scoffing at saints, in despising of ordinances, and in pursuing after lying vanities? Surely none! And as for those *seeming* pleasures which attend the ways of sin, ah, how soon do they vanish and leave a sting behind them!

Now all the pleasures that holiness deprives you of, are only such that you may better ten thousand times lack, than enjoy. Look! as all the pleasures which manhood takes a person off from, are babyish and toyish pleasures; such as from delighting in a rattle, a toy, a feather, a hobby-horse, a wooden sword, etc. Just so, all the pleasures and delights which holiness takes a man off from—they are babyish and foolish; yes, they are base, dangerous, and devilish! Therefore it must needs be rather a high felicity than a misery—for God to take you off from such sinful pleasures and delights, by laying principles of holiness into your heart.

Oh! remember that holiness will be no loss unto you; it will be only an exchange of *sinful* delights—for those which are *holy*; and of *carnal* delights—for those which are spiritual; and of earthly delights—for those which are heavenly. Isaac was not to be sacrificed—but

the ram. All the delights that holiness will put you upon to sacrifice, are but the rammish and foul delights of sin and the world, which may better be sacrificed than spared. Holiness will secure your Isaac—that is, your spiritual laughter, your spiritual joy, and your heavenly delights and pleasure. Well, for a close, remember this—that sensual pleasures are below a man. Witness Tully, who says that "he is not worthy of the name of a *man*—who would entirely spend one whole day in pleasures." And witness Julian the apostate, who professed that "the pleasures of the body were far below a great spirit." **He who delights in sensual pleasures shall find at last—that his greatest pleasures will become his bitterest pains.** All that holiness will do is but to ease you of your pains, and therefore you have more cause to pursue after it than to turn your back upon it. But,

7. Seventhly, I answer, It may be, that their *present* case and condition, bespeaks rather the exercise and evidence of sorrow and of grief, than of gladness, joy, and triumph.

[1.] For first, It may be, that some wound or **guilt** at present may lie hard upon their consciences, as once it did on David's, Psalm 51. And who then is able to rejoice when under a wounded conscience, or a guilty conscience? As long as Adam remained holy in paradise, he stood fast; but having once wounded his conscience by eating the forbidden fruit, though he tarried a while in paradise—yet he could take no delight nor contentment in paradise. It is true the sun did shine as bright as ever, and the rivers ran as clear as ever, and the birds sang as sweetly as ever, and the animals played as pleasantly as ever, and the flowers smelled as fragrantly as ever, and all the trees and fruits of the garden did flourish as greatly as ever, etc. Ah—but now Adam had contracted guilt upon his conscience, and this mars his joy, and spoils his delight, and unparadises paradise to him! His fall had made so deep a wound in his conscience, that he could take no delight in any of the delights of paradise. Guilt as an arrow did stick so fast in his conscience, that instead of sucking sweetness from the fairest fruits—he runs to hide himself under the broadest leaves,

Gen. 3:10. Guilt makes a man a *Magor-missabib*, Jer. 20:3—a *terror to himself*.

Put ever such stately robes upon a *wounded* man—he minds them not; set ever such dainty fare before a wounded man—he relishes it not; lay him on ever so soft a bed—yet it pleases him not; and let him hear ever such sweet music—yet it delights him not; the smart and sense of his wound takes off the sweet of all. Just so, does a wound in the conscience take off the sweet of all a man's enjoyments and contentments. A guilty conscience, like Prometheus' vulture, lies ever gnawing. What the would-be disciple said to our Savior—namely, "Master, I will follow you wherever you go," Mat. 8:19—that a guilty conscience says to a fallen sinner: "If you *fast* I will follow you, and fill your mind with black and dismal apprehensions of God, of justice, of hell; if you *feast* I will follow you, and show you the handwriting on the wall that shall make your countenance to change, your thoughts to be troubled, and your joints to be loosed, and your knees to knock one against another, Dan. 5:5; when you *go forth* I will follow you with terrors, and when you *return home* I will follow you with horrors; when you go to *board* I will follow you with stinging accusations, and when you go to *bed* I will follow you with terrifying and affrighting dreams, Job 7:14. Now what joy can be in such a man's heart? What gladness can be in such a man's face? Surely none!

I remember a saying of Luther, "One drop of an evil conscience swallows up the whole sea of worldly joy." [It was guilt which made that despairing Pope say that the cross could do him no good, he had so often sold it] Oh, it is better with Evagrius to lie secure on a bed of straw, than to lie with a guilty conscience on a bed of down, having the curtains embroidered with gold, and the fringes bespangled with pearls. Sin brings such a stain and such a sting with it, as spoils all a man's joys and delights. And if this be the present case of a Christian, as it may be—then never wonder to see him hang down his head, and to walk mournfully before his God. Or,

[2.] Secondly, This may arise from some great and **heavy affliction**, which for the present may sadly distress and oppress a saint's spirit; as Job's did his, or as Hezekiah's did his, or as Jacob's did his, etc. [Job 3:38; Isaiah 9:16; Gen. 37:30, to the end.] The disease may be so violent, the medicine may be so strong, the wound may be so deep, the plaster may be so corroding, the melting pot may be so hot, the iron chains may be so heavy, the gall and wormwood may be so bitter—that a Christian may be so far from joy and rejoicing, as that he may for the present be so shut up under trouble and amazement, and under sorrow and grief—as that he may not be able, if you would give him all the world, to open his case unto you; his eyes may in some sort tell what his tongue can in no sort utter, Psalm 77:4.

Usually they are the smallest miseries, when he who has them can presently tell all the world of them. The greatest sorrow has for the most part the deepest silence attending on it. What Christian ever had joy in his heart or gladness in his face, when God was disciplining him harshly and roughly? Or,

[3.] Thirdly, It may be they are **deserted**; perhaps God is withdrawn from them, and he who should comfort them stands afar off. [Lam. 1:16; Gen. 31:2, 5; Psalm 30:7; read the 77th and the 88th Psalms; Isaiah 8:17; Micah 7:7-9, 17; Psalm 4:6, and 42:5, 11, etc.] Ah, what Christian can rejoice when the countenance of God is not kindly towards him as of old? who can be pleasant when God is displeased? who can smile when God frowns? who can sing when God sighs? who can be merry when God is withdrawn? Surely none who have ever experienced what the shinings of his face means! O sirs, the proper work of a deserted soul lies not in joy and rejoicing—but in mourning and waiting, and in seeking and suing at the throne of grace—that God would lift up the light of his countenance, and cause his face to shine, and his favor to break forth—that the bones that he has broken may rejoice. Just as Hudson the martyr, when he was deserted at the stake, prayed earnestly, he was comforted immediately, and suffered valiantly.

Look! as when Samson's locks were cut off, his strength was gone—just so, when God is gone, a Christian's locks are cut off, his strength is gone, his strength to joy and rejoice in God is gone, his strength to delight and to take pleasure in God is gone; and as Samson, when his locks were cut off, and his strength was gone, fell to prayer, Judges 16:28, "And Samson called unto the Lord, and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray you, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes!" So when God is gone, the work of a Christian lies more in praying than it does in rejoicing. Though Joseph's heart was as full of love to his brethren as it could hold, Gen. 42:7-25—yet when he looked sourly upon them, and spoke roughly to them, they were much afflicted and distressed. Just so, though the heart of Jesus be as full of love to his people as it can hold—yet when he looks sourly, and speaks roughly to them—they can't but be grieved and saddened. But,

[4.] Fourthly, It may be they are sadly **tempted** and strangely buffeted by Satan, as Paul was—and from thence their present sadness may arise, 2 Cor. 12:8-10. Tempted souls can tell you that it is one of the hardest works in the world to rejoice in the school of temptation, and to be merry when Satan's fiery darts stick fast in the soul. *Adam's* tempting-time was not his rejoicing-time—but his sinning-time; and *David's* tempting-time was not his rejoicing-time—but his miscarrying-time, 1 Chron. 21; and *Job's* tempting-time was not his rejoicing-time—but his complaining-time, Job 3; and *Peter's* tempting-time was not his rejoicing-time—but his cursing and blaspheming-time, Mat. 26; and *Paul's* tempting-time was not his rejoicing-time—but his humbling-time, 2 Cor. 12:7-8. ["Our whole life," says Austin, "is nothing but a continued temptation."]

The best men are most tempted; and oftentimes they are followed with the saddest, darkest, vilest, basest, and most amazing, affrighting, tormenting, and astonishing temptations. And how is it possible that they should be able to rejoice and be glad, when such dreadful storms beat upon them! Certainly the work of a Christian in the day of temptation lies in his putting on the whole armor of God,

Eph. 6:10-11, 16-18, and in a prudent handling the sword of the Spirit and the shield of faith, and in earnest praying and vigilant watching, and a stout resisting of all Satan's fiery darts; for he who thinks, by disputing and reasoning, to put Satan off, does but shoot with him in his own bow, and will find to his cost that Satan will be too hard for him. It is open defiance, it is downright blows which makes Satan fly, and which secures the victory, James 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9. Now joy and rejoicing attends not the combat—but the conquest. The Romans never used to ride in triumph—but after conquests obtained. A Christian's triumphing time is his conquering time. Joy is most seasonable and suitable when a Christian has beaten Satan out of the field. The rooster in the Arabic fable began to crow and clap his wings, as if he had obtained a perfect conquest—but, behold, suddenly a vulture comes, and snatches this great conqueror away. Those who triumph and rejoice over Satan before they have overcome him, are in no small danger of being beaten by him. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, To gather up many things together. I say that their present sorrow and sadness may arise from their going astray into some by-path of vanity and folly, wherein they have got a fall, or broke a bone, or put their souls out of joint. As children sometimes get a fall, and then they come home by *weeping cross*—justso, Christians too often go astray and get a fall, and then they are fain to weep it out. When men keep not in the king's highway, they are often robbed of their money, and stripped of their clothes, and wounded too, as he was in the Gospel who fell among thieves—just so, when Christians keep not in the King of kings' highways, which are ways of righteousness and holiness, then they are often robbed of their comfort, and joy, and peace, and assurance, and communion with God, etc., and sorely wounded and bruised, and then it is no wonder if they are brought home with tears in their eyes.

Or it may be their evidences for heaven are so blotted and blurred that they cannot read their title to heaven—and then it is no wonder if they are perplexed and grieved. Or it may be they call in question former grants of favor and grace. Or it may be a deeper sense of

misspent time lies harder than ever upon them. Or else the littleness and smallness of their graces under such soul-enriching opportunities and advantages do sorely oppress them. Or else the lateness of their conversion may sadly afflict them, etc. [Luke 10:30; Isaiah 35:8; Psalm 119:176.]

Now how absurd and unreasonable a thing is it for any men to argue thus, that surely godly men have no joy, no delight, no pleasure, etc., because there are some particular cases and conditions wherein they may be cast which rather bespeaks sorrow than joy, grief than gladness, mourning than mirth! Certainly you may as rationally and as righteously expect mirth, joy, and gladness from carnal, worldly, and ungodly wretches when they are under burning fevers, loathsome diseases, or violent pains of the stone or gout, etc., as you may expect upon a rational or religious account, joy and gladness, etc., in the saints in the fore-mentioned cases which are incident to them. It was a very unreasonable request that they made to the people of God in Psalm 137:1-4, "By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down and wept when we remembered Zion. There we hung up our lyres on the poplar trees, for our captors there asked us for songs, and our tormentors, for rejoicing: "Sing us one of the songs of Zion." How can we sing the Lord's song on foreign soil?" And it is as unreasonable to expect or look that the people of God should sing and be merry, rejoice and be glad, when they are under soul distresses, and under the sore rebukes of God, and poured from vessel to vessel, etc. Music in times of mourning is as unreasonable as it is unseasonable and unsavory, Jer. 48:11, Proverbs 25:20, "Singing cheerful songs to a person whose heart is heavy is as bad as stealing someone's jacket in cold weather or rubbing salt in a wound." Music and mourning, singing and sorrow, agree like harp and harrow. There is such a contrariety between singing and sorrow, that he who sings does but add weight to his sorrow that cannot sing.

O sirs, as there is a time for *rejoicing*, so there is a time for *mourning*, Eccles. 3:4; as there is a time to *laugh*, so there is a time to *weep*; and as we must rejoice with those who *rejoice*, so we must

mourn with those who *mourn*, and weep with those who *weep*, Romans 12:15. The condition of God's people in this life is a mixed condition. In this life they have their *rejoicing* times and their *mourning* times, their *laughing* times and their *weeping* times, their *singing* times and their *sorrowing* times, etc. It is true, in heaven there is all joy and no sorrow, all gladness and no sadness; and in hell there is all sorrow and no joy, all grief and no gladness, all howling and no singing, all madness and no mirth. But in this present life it is otherwise, for if there should be nothing but joy, many would look for no other heaven; and if there should be nothing but sorrow, most would look for no other hell. If men should have nothing but joy, how sadly would they be puffed up! And if they should have nothing but sorrow, how easily would they be cast down! But now, by a divine hand, our sorrows being mixed with our joys, our hearts come to be the more effectually weaned from the vanities of this life, and to long more earnestly after the pure and unmixed joys of a better life, etc. But,

8. Eighthly, I answer, That it is possible that the sadness, sorrow, and grief of those particular saints that you have your eye upon may arise from the natural temper and constitution of their bodies. [The cure of *melancholy* belongs rather to the physician than to the divine, to Galen than to Paul.] Many saints are often cast into a melancholy mold; for though grace changes the disposition of the soul—yet it alters not the constitution of the body. Now there is no greater enemy to holy joy and gladness than melancholy, for this pestilent humor will raise such strange passions and imaginations, it will raise such groundless griefs, and fears, and frights, and such senseless surmises and jealousies, as will easily damp a Christian's joy, and mightily vex, perplex, trouble, and turmoil, daunt, and discourage a Christian's spirit. A melancholy constitution is Satan's anvil, upon which he forms many black, dark, and dismal temptations, which do exceedingly tend to the keeping down of divine consolation from rising high in the soul. This black, dark, dusky humor disturbs both soul and body; it tempts Satan to tempt the soul, and it disables the soul to resist the temptation; yes, it

prepares the soul to hearken to the temptation, and to close and fall in with the temptation, as the experiences of all melancholy Christians can testify.

Look! as colored glass makes the very beams of the sun seem to be all of the same color with itself—if the glass is blue, the beams of the sun seems to be blue; if the glass is red, the beams of the sun seem to be red; or if the glass be green, the beams of the sun seem to be green—so this black melancholy humor represents all things to the eye of the soul as duskish and dark, and as full of horror and terror, yes, many times it represents the bright beams of divine love, and the shinings of the Sun of righteousness, and the gracious whispers of the blessed Spirit—as delusions, and as sleights of Satan, to delude the soul.

I have read of a foolish melancholy bird which stands always but upon one leg, for fear her own weight, though she is very small, should sink her into the center of the earth, and holding her other leg over her head, lest the heavens should fall upon her and crush her. I shall not dispute the credibleness of the relation; but certainly there is nothing that fills a Christian so full of fears and frights as a melancholy humor does. There are no greater adversaries to joy and gladness, than such fears and frights. Now how absurd and unreasonable is it to father that upon holiness, or upon all holy people—which proceeds from the special constitution of some particular saints! And yet this is the trade that unsanctified souls drive. And let thus much suffice for answer to this grand objection; and oh that this objection may never have a resurrection in any of your hearts more But,

Objection 4. Some may object, and say, **We see that no people on earth are exposed to such troubles, dangers, afflictions, and persecutions, as those are exposed to who mind holiness, who follow after holiness.** These are days wherein men labor to frown holiness out of the world, and to scorn and kick holiness out of the world; and do you think that we are foolish

enough to pursue after holiness? Now to this great and sore objection, I shall give these following answers

1. It must be granted that afflictions and persecutions has been the common lot and portion of the people of God in this world. Abel was persecuted by Cain, (1 John 3:12), and Isaac by Ishmael, (Gal 4:29). That seems to be a standing law, "All who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution," (2 Tim 3:12). A man may have many faint wishes and cold desires after godliness, and yet escape persecution; yes, he may make some initial endeavors and attempts as if he would be godly, and yet escape persecution. But when a man is thoroughly resolved to be godly, and sets himself in good earnest upon pursuing after holiness and living a life of godliness, then he must expect to meet with afflictions and persecutions. It is neither a Christian's gifts nor his graces, it is neither his duties nor his services which can secure him from persecution. Whoever escapes, the godly man shall not escape persecution in one kind or another, in one degree or another. He who will live up to holy rules, and live out holy principles, must prepare for sufferings. All the *roses of holiness* are surrounded with pricking briars.

The history of the ten persecutions, and Foxe's book of martyrs, the 11th of the Hebrews, with many other treatises which are existent, do abundantly evidence that from age to age, and from one generation to another, those who have been born after the flesh have persecuted those who have been born after the Spirit, (Gal 4:20), and that the seed of the serpent have been still a-multiplying of troubles upon the seed of the woman.

Would any man take the church's picture, says Luther, then let him paint a poor helpless maid sitting in a wilderness, compassed about with hungry lions, wolves, boars, and bears, and with all kinds of other cruel, hurtful beasts, and in the midst of a great many furious men assaulting her every moment and minute—for this is her condition in the world. As certain as the night follows the day, so

certain will *that black angel*, persecution, follow holiness wherever it goes. In the last of the ten persecutions, seventeen thousand holy martyrs were slain in the space of one month. And in Queen Mary's days, or, if you will, in the Marian days, not of blessed—but of most abhorred memory, the Popish prelates in less than four years sacrificed the lives of eight hundred innocent Christians to their idols! And oh that that precious innocent blood did not still cry to heaven for vengeance against this nation! But,

2. Christ and his apostles has long since foretold us that afflictions and persecutions will attend us in this world. The Lord has long since forewarned us, that we may be forearmed, and not surprised on a sudden when they come. Christ has shot off many a warning piece in his word, and sent many a warning and harbinger, that so we may stand upon our guard, and not be surprised nor astonished when afflictions and persecutions overtake us: Matthew 10:22, "And you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he who endures to the end, the same shall be saved." Chapter 16:24, "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Luke 21:12, "But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake." John 15:20, "Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than the Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also."

Ah Christians, since they have crowned Christ's head with thorns, there is no reason why you should expect to be crowned with rosebuds! John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me you might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." Acts 14:21, 22, "And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into

the kingdom of God." As there was no way to paradise but by the flaming sword, nor any way to Canaan but through a wilderness; so there is no way to heaven but by the gates of hell, there is no way to a glorious exaltation but through a sea of tribulation. They do but dream and deceive their own souls who think to go to heaven upon beds of down, or in a soft and delicate way, or that think to be attended to glory with mirth and music, or with singing or dancing. **The way to eternal happiness is not strewn with roses—but full of thorns and briars**, as those of whom this world was not worthy have experienced.

Ecclesiastical histories tell us that all the apostles died violent deaths. Christ was crucified with his head upwards—but **Peter** thought this was too great an honor for him to be crucified as his Lord, and therefore he chose to be crucified with his heels upward. **Andrew** was crucified by Egeus, king of Odessa. **James** the son of Zebedee was slain by Herod with the sword, (Act 12:2). **Philip** was crucified at Hierapolis in Asia. While **Bartholomew** was preaching the glad tidings of salvation, multitudes fell upon him and beat him down with staves, and then crucified him, and after all this, his skin was flayed off, and he beheaded. **Thomas** was slain with a lance at Calumina in India. **Matthew** was run through with a sword. **James** the son of Alphaeus, who was called the Just, was thrown down from off a pinnacle of the temple, and yet having some life left in him, his head was bashed with a club. **Lebbeus** was slain by Agbarus, king of Edessa. **Paul** was beheaded at Rome under Nero. **Simon** the Canaanite was crucified in Egypt, say some, others say that he and Jude were slain in a tumult of the people. **Matthias** was stoned to death. **John** was banished into Patmos, (Rev 1:9), and afterwards, as some histories tell us, he was by that cruel tyrant Domitian cast into a large barrel of scalding lead, and yet delivered by a miracle. Thus all these precious servants of God, except John, died violent deaths, and so through sufferings entered into glory; they found in their own experience the truth of what Christ had foretold concerning their sufferings and persecutions.

When Mr. Bradford was told that his chain was being bought, and that he must be burnt, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "I thank God for it; I have looked forward to this a long time; it comes not to me suddenly—but as a thing waited for every day, yes, every hour in the day; the Lord make me worthy thereof." If upon God's warning you will but prepare for sufferings, you will never fear nor faint under sufferings, yes, then you will be able under the greatest persecutions to bear up bravely, and with holy Bradford bless the Lord that has called you to so high an honor as to count you worthy to suffer for his name. But,

3. I answer, That all the troubles, afflictions, and persecutions that do befall you for holiness' sake, shall never hurt you nor harm you, they shall never prejudice you, nor wrong you in your main and great concerns:

Exodus 3:2, "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." Here you have a bush, a dry bush, a bramble-bush all on fire, and yet not consumed. This burning bush was an excellent emblem of the church in the fire of tribulation and persecution. Though the church may seem to be all on fire by reason of afflictions and persecutions—yet it shall be preserved, it shall not be destroyed. God would not allow his anointed ones, his sanctified ones, so much as to be touched, hurt, or harmed by those who had malice enough in their hearts, and power enough in their hands, not only to hurt them—but even to destroy them. Sanctified people are sacred people, and those who touch them touch the apple of God's eye, and whoever shall be so bold to touch the apple of God's eye shall dearly smart for it.

It was no small affliction to have no settled habitation. To fly from place to place, from kingdom to kingdom, and from nation to nation, was certainly an afflicted condition. Doubtless many fears and frights, many hazards and dangers did attend them, when they considered that they were as lilies among the thorns, and as a few sheep among a multitude of wolves. In the land of Canaan there were

seven mighty nations (Deu 7:1). Now for the people of God, who were so few in number, to sojourn and wander among these, could not but be very dangerous and perilous; and yet such was the love of God to them, and the care of God over them, that he allowed no man, whether he was high or low, honorable or base, rich or poor, civil or profane, to hurt or harm them.

Daniel 3:25, 27, "And the king answered and said, 'Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods!' They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them." Though these holy men were cast into a furnace, into a fiery furnace, into the midst of a hot fiery furnace—yet God will work a miracle, yes, a glorious miracle, rather than the fire shall in the least hurt or harm them. God gives a commission to the fire to burn those mighty men who made the fire, and who cast his children into the fire, and whom the king would have to be spared and saved; and he lays a law of restraint upon the fire, that it should not hurt nor harm them whom the king would have destroyed.

Those, whom the King of kings will not have hurt, shall not be hurt, let kings and princes do their worst; that fire which burnt their bonds had no power to burn, no nor to touch, their bodies. God would not allow the fire to singe a hair of their heads, nor to change the color of their coats, nor to leave so much as a smoky smell upon his people, that those heathen princes might see how tender he was of them, and how willing he was to put forth his almighty power rather than he would see them wronged or harmed.

Daniel 6:21-24, "Daniel answered, 'Long live the king! My God sent his angel to shut the lions' mouths so that they would not hurt me, for I have been found innocent in his sight. And I have not wronged you, Your Majesty.' The king was overjoyed and ordered that Daniel be lifted from the den. Not a scratch was found on him because he had trusted in his God. Then the king gave orders to arrest the men

who had maliciously accused Daniel. He had them thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. The lions leaped on them and tore them apart before they even hit the floor of the den."

Holiness, innocency, and integrity will preserve a man even among lions. Daniel preferred the worship of his God before his life. He made no great reckoning of his life when it stood in competition with divine glory, and therefore, rather than Daniel shall be hurt, God will by a miracle preserve him, he will stop the mouths of the hungry lions, and he will tame their rage, and overmaster their cruelty, rather than a hair of Daniel's head shall perish. When Daniel was taken out of the den, there was no hurt, no wound, no sore, no bruise found upon him. Daniel was a harmless man, and God keeps him from harms in the midst of harms.

Acts 18:9, 10, "One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city." Paul met with many trials and troubles, bonds and prisons, oppositions and persecutions, and yet none of all these hurt him—but God miraculously preserved him even to old age (Act 20:23). All the troubles, afflictions, and persecutions which attend holiness, can never reach a Christian's soul, they can never diminish a Christian's treasure; they reach the shell—not the kernel; they reach the case—not the jewel; they reach the lumber—not the goods; they reach the barn—not the palace; they reach the ribbon in the hat—not the gold in the purse. The most fiery trials and persecutions can never deprive a Christian of the special presence of God, nor of the light of his countenance, nor of the testimony of a good conscience, nor of the joys of the Spirit, nor of the pardon of sin, nor of fellowship with Christ, nor of the exercise of grace, nor of the hopes of glory (Psalm 23:4; 2Co 1:8,9,12); and therefore certainly they can't hurt a Christian, they can't wrong a Christian in his greatest and chief concerns.

O Christian, let persecutors do their worst, they can't reach your soul, your God, your comfort, your crown, your paradise, &c.; and therefore let no man be kept off from pursuing after holiness because of afflictions or persecutions, seeing none of these can reach a Christian's great concernments. But,

4. I answer, That the condition of persecutors, of all conditions under heaven, is the most sad and deplorable condition; and this will appear by the consideration of these five things:

[1.] By the prayers and indictments that the saints have offered against them in the highest court of justice, I mean in the parliament of heaven: "Lift up your spear and javelin and block the way of my enemies. Let me hear you say, "I am your salvation!" Humiliate and disgrace those trying to kill me; turn them back in confusion. Blow them away like chaff in the wind—a wind sent by the angel of the Lord. Make their path dark and slippery, with the angel of the Lord pursuing them. Although I did them no wrong, they laid a trap for me. Although I did them no wrong, they dug a pit for me. So let sudden ruin overtake them! Let them be caught in the snare they set for me! Let them fall to destruction in the pit they dug for me. Then I will rejoice in the Lord. I will be glad because he rescues me." Psalm 35:3-9

Lamentations 3:61-65, "Lord, you have heard the vile names they call me. You know all about the plans they have made—the plots my enemies whisper and mutter against me all day long. Look at them! In all their activities, they constantly mock me with their songs. Pay them back, Lord, for all the evil they have done. Give them hard and stubborn hearts, and then let your curse fall upon them!" 2 Timothy 4:14, "Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done." Thus you see how the hearts of the saints have been drawn out against their persecutors. Prayers are the arms that in times of persecution the saints have still had recourse to. But,

[2.] Persecutions do but raise, whet, and stir up a more earnest and vehement spirit of prayer among the persecuted saints: Revelation 6:9, 10, "When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. They called out in a loud voice—How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" The blood of the persecuted cries aloud for vengeance upon the persecutors.

There is no blood which cries so loud, and which makes so great a noise in heaven, as the blood of the martyrs, as the blood of butchered persecuted saints. Persecutors, like these Roman emperors, in all ages have causelessly and cruelly destroyed the people of God; they delight in the blood of saints, they love to wallow in the blood of saints, they take pleasure in glutting themselves with the blood of saints, they make no conscience of watering the earth, nor of coloring the sea, nor of quenching the flames with the blood of the saints, yes, if it were possible, they would willingly swim to heaven through their hearts' blood, whom Christ has purchased with his own most precious blood.

Persecution puts an edge, yes, a sharp edge, upon the prayers of the saints: Acts 12:5, "So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him." The Greek word signifies earnest and stretched-out prayer. When Peter was in prison, sleeping between two soldiers, and bound with two chains, and the keepers standing before the prison door, oh, how earnest! Oh, how instant! Oh, how fervent! Oh, how vehement! Oh, how constant were the saints in their prayers for his deliverance! Oh, their hearts, their souls, their spirits were in their prayers! Oh, their prayers were no cold prayers, no formal prayers, no lukewarm prayers, no dull or drowsy prayers—but their prayers were full of life, and full of warmth, and full of heat. They knew Herod's bloody intention to destroy this holy apostle by his imprisoning of him, and by the chains that were put on him, and by the strong guards that were set upon him, and by his bathing of his sword in the innocent blood of James,

that his hand might be the more apt and ready for further acts of murder and cruelty; and oh, how did the consideration of these things whet and provoke their spirits to prayer! Oh, now they will take no denial, now they will give God no rest—until he has overturned the tyrant's counsel and designs, and sent his angel to open the prison doors, and to knock off Peter's chains, and to deliver him from the wrath and fury of Herod; and their prayers were successful, as is evident in the 12th verse, "When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying," or rather, as the original has it, "where many thronged together to pray." The violence and rage of their persecutors did so raise, whet, and encourage them to prayer, that they throng together, they crowded together to pray, yes, when others were a-sleeping they were a-praying, and their prayers were no sleepy prayers, they were no lazy dronish prayers, nor they were no *book-prayers*—but they were powerful and prevalent prayers; for as so many Jacobs, or as so many princes, they prevailed with God. They prayed and wept, and wept and prayed; they called and cried, and cried and called; they begged and bounced, and they bounced and begged; and they never left knocking at heaven's gates until Peter's chains were knocked off, and Peter given into their arms, yes, their bosoms, as an answer of prayer. Oh the power and force of joint prayer, when Christians do not only beseech God—but besiege him, and beset him too, and when they will not let him go until he has blessed them, and answered their prayers and the desires of their souls!

I have read that Mary Queen of Scots was accustomed to say that she was more afraid of Mr. Knox's prayers, and the prayers of those Christians that walked with him, than she was of a fierce army of ten thousand men. But,

[3.] Thirdly, It will appear that the condition of persecutors is the most sad and deplorable condition of all conditions under heaven, if you will but seriously consider and lay to heart the sore judgments which are threatened, and that have been executed upon them:

Deuteronomy 30:7, "And the Lord your God will put all these curses upon your enemies, and on those who hate you, who persecuted you;" Nehemiah 9:9-11, "You saw the sufferings and sorrows of our ancestors in Egypt, and you heard their cries from beside the Red Sea. You displayed miraculous signs and wonders against Pharaoh, his servants, and all his people, for you knew how arrogantly the Egyptians were treating them. You have a glorious reputation that has never been forgotten. You divided the sea for your people so they could walk through on dry land! And then you hurled their enemies into the depths of the sea. They sank like stones beneath the mighty waters!"

Pharaoh and his princes and people were very great oppressors and persecutors of God's Israel, and therefore God visited them with ten dreadful plagues, one after another; but when, after all these plagues, God saw that their enmity against his people was as great, or rather greater than ever, and that they were still set upon persecuting of his people, then God takes up Pharaoh and his mighty host, and throws them as a stone into the mighty waters! (Exo 15:10).

God whets before he strikes, he bends his bow before he shoots, he prepares instruments of death before he brings men down to the grave, his hand takes hold on judgment before his judgments take hold of men; but if all these warnings will not serve their turns, God will overturn them with a witness. "He ordains his arrows against the persecutors," or as the Hebrew has it, "against the hot burning persecutors." God has his hot burning arrows for hot burning persecutors. Let persecutors be ever so hot against the saints—God will be as hot against them; and let them be ever so much inflamed against the people of God—God will be as much inflamed against them.

When malicious and mischievous persecutors have done all they can to vex and fret, to daunt and affright, to dismay and discourage the people of God, then God will terrify the most terrible among them, and "they shall not prevail nor prosper, yes, they shall stumble and

fall, they shall be ashamed and confounded." When the time is expired that God has pre-fixed for his people's sufferings, then God will retaliate upon their persecutors. Then those who plundered his people shall be plundered; and those who dealt harshly and treacherously with them, shall be dealt harshly and treacherously with. 2 Thessalonians 1:6, "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to those who trouble you." It is but justice that God should trouble those who are the troublers of his people.

And God has even in this life been a swift witness against the persecutors of his people. **Cain** was a persecutor, and his brother's blood pursued him to hell. **Pharaoh** was a great oppressor and persecutor of his people, and God followed him with plague upon plague, and judgment upon judgment, until he had overthrown him in the Red Sea. **Saul** was a persecutor, and falls by his own sword. **Haman** was a great persecutor of the saints, and he was feasted with the king one day, and made a feast for crows the next! **Pashur** was a great persecutor, he smote the prophet Jeremiah, and put him in the stocks, and God threatened to make him a terror to himself and to all his friends, Jeremiah 20:1-3. **Zedekiah** was a persecutor, he smote the prophet Micaiah on the cheek for dealing plainly and faithfully with the kings, and in the day of trouble and distress he goes from chamber to chamber to hide himself (1Ki 22). **Jezebel** was a great persecutor, she slew the prophets of God, and she was thrown out of a window, and eaten up by dogs, (1Ki 18:4-13; 2Ki 9:30). **Herod** the Great, who caused the babes of Bethlehem to be slain, hoping thereby to destroy Christ, shortly after was plagued by God with an incurable disease, having a slow and relentless fever continually tormenting his inward parts; he had a vehement and greedy desire to eat, and yet nothing would satisfy him; his inward parts rotted, his breath was havy and stinking, some of his members rotted, and in all his members he had so violent a cramp, that nature was not able to bear it; and so growing mad with pain, he died miserably. But,

[4.] It will appear that persecutors are in the most sad and deplorable condition, if you do but consider that there is a day a-

coming wherein God will fully reckon with all persecutors, for their persecuting of his saints: Psalm 9:12, "When he makes inquisition for blood, he remembers them; he forgets not the cry of the humble." There is a time when God will make inquisition for innocent blood. The Hebrew word which is here rendered *inquisition*, signifies not barely to seek, to search—but to seek, search, and inquire with all diligence and care imaginable. Oh, there is a time a-coming, when the Lord will make a very diligent and careful search and inquiry after all the innocent blood of his afflicted and persecuted people, which persecutors and tyrants have spilt as water upon the ground; and woe to persecutors when God shall make a more strict, critical, and careful inquiry after the blood of his people, than ever was made in the Inquisition of Spain, where all things are done with the greatest diligence, scrutiny, secrecy, and severity.

O persecutors, there is a time a-coming, when God will make a strict inquiry after the blood of Hooper, Bradford, Latimer, Taylor, Ridley, etc. There is a time a-coming, wherein God will inquire who silenced and suspended such and such ministers, and who stopped the mouths of such and such, and who imprisoned, confined, and banished such and such—who were once burning and shining lights, and who were willing to spend and be spent, that sinner might be saved, and that Christ might be glorified. There is a time when the Lord will make a very careful inquiry into all the actions and practices of ecclesiastical courts, high committees, etc., and deal with persecutors as they have dealt with his people.

Psalm 12:5, "Because of the oppression of the weak and the groaning of the needy, I will now arise. I will protect them from those who malign them." When oppressors and persecutors do snuff and puff at the people of God, when they defy them, and scorn them, and think that they can with a blast of their breath blow them away—then God will arise to judgment! At that very nick of time when all seems to be lost, and when the poor oppressed and afflicted people of God can do nothing but sigh and weep, and weep and sigh, then the Lord will arise and ease them of their oppressions, and make their day of

extremity, a glorious opportunity to work for his own glory, and his people's good.

Alas, all the sorrows, troubles, afflictions, vexations, torments, and punishments that befall the persecutors of the saints in this life, they are but fairy-tales, as it were; they are but the beginnings of sorrows, they are but types and figures of those easeless, endless, and remediless torments and punishments that will at last inevitably fall upon all the persecutors of the saints. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, Persecutors at present are under an evident token of perdition and destruction; they have the marks and signs of divine displeasure upon them: Philippians 1:28, "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition—but to you of salvation, and that of God." Persecuted Christians ought not to be disheartened or discouraged—but rather to take heart and courage, by all the persecutions which are raised against them, because they are most certain witnesses and evidences from God himself, both of their own salvation, and of their persecutors' perdition and destruction.

And thus you see by these five things, that there is no condition under heaven that is so sad and deplorable a condition, as the condition of persecutors is. But,

5. I answer, That God will bear his people company in all their afflictions and persecutions. If the bush, the church, be all on fire, the angel of the covenant will be in the midst of it. Isaiah 43:1-3, "But now, O Israel, the Lord who created you says: "Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters and great trouble, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown! When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior." Both in the waters of affliction, and in the fire of persecution, God will bear his people

company. So in that Daniel 3:24, 25, "Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?" They replied, "Certainly, O king." He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like unto the Son of God." **Christ is never so near to his people as when they are in their fiery trials; and the hotter the furnace is, the more eminently present will Christ be with his people. Saints never enjoy so much of the supporting, emboldening, comforting, and encouraging presence of the Lord, as they do when the sun of persecution shines hottest upon them.**

2 Corinthians 4:8, 9, "We are troubled on every side—yet not destroyed; we are perplexed—but not in despair; persecuted—but not forsaken; cast down—but not destroyed." **Divine help is nearest when a saint's danger is greatest.** It is the deriding question which persecutors put to the saints in the time of their trials and troubles, *Where is now your God?* (Psalm 42:10); but they may return a bold and confident answer, "Our God is here," our God is near unto us, our God is round about us, our God is in the midst of us, our God has given us his promise "that he will never, never leave us, nor forsake us," (Heb 13:5); in every trouble, in every danger, in every death, the Lord will be sure to keep us company. God will bear his children company, not only while they are in a delightful paradise—but also when they are in a howling wilderness, (Hos 2:14).

O Christians, in all your sufferings the angel of God's presence will bear you company, and he will sweeten the most cruel torments, and wipe off all the sweat, and take away all the pain, yes, he will turn your pains into pleasure, (Isa 63:9). If Joseph is cast into prison, the Lord will be with him there, (Gen 39:20, 21). If Jeremiah is thrown into the dungeon, the Lord will be with him there, (Jer 36:6-14). If David walks through the valley of death, God's rod and his staff shall comfort him, (Psalm 23:4, 5). If the three children are cast into a fiery furnace, the presence of the Son of God shall preserve them. If

Daniel must go to the lions' den, God will keep him company there, and chain up the lions' nature, and sew up the lions' mouths, and lay a law of restraint upon the lions' paws, that they shall not have so much as a disposition to touch him, or in the least to hurt him or harm him. If Paul is brought before Nero 's judgment-seat, God will stand by him, though all men forsake him, and bring him off with credit and triumph, (2Ti 4:16-18). Thus you see that in all the afflictions and persecutions that do befall the people of God, God will not fail to keep them company; and therefore let not troubles trouble you, let not afflictions afflict you, nor let not persecutions discourage you. But,

6. I answer, That he shall be sure to suffer from Christ—who refuses to suffer, or that is afraid to suffer, for Christ's sake, or holiness' sake, or the gospel's sake. No man can suffer so much for Christ as he shall be sure to suffer from Christ, if he disdains and refuses to suffer for Christ: Mark 8:35, "For whoever will save his life, shall lose it; but whoever shall lose his life for my sake, and the gospel's, the same shall save it." He who shall attempt to save his life by shifting off of truth, or by forsaking of Christ—shall lose it. He who thinks to shun suffering by sinning, shall be sure to suffer with a witness. It is a gainful loss to suffer for the truth, it is a lossful gain, by time-serving and base complying with the lusts and humours of men, to provide for our present safety, security, plenty, peace, and ease, &c., either by *denying* the truth, or by *betraying* the truth, or by *exchanging* the truth, or by forsaking the truth.

So verse 38, "Whoever, therefore, shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels." Ah, friends, what are prisons and dungeons, and racks and flames—compared to Christ's being ashamed of a man in the great day, when he shall be attended with troops of saints and millions of angels? When, in the face of the court of heaven, when all the princes of glory shall sit upon their thrones, Christ shall disdain a man, and scorn so much as to look upon him, or take any notice of

him, or show the least respect or favor towards him. Oh, what a sea of sorrow and a hell of horror will this raise in him!

I have read that when Sapor, king of Persia, raised a violent persecution against the Christians, Usthazares, an old nobleman, and one of king Sapor's eunuchs and courtiers, being a Christian, was so terrified that he left off his profession, and sitting at the court gate when Simeon, an aged holy bishop, was led to prison, and rising up to salute him, the good bishop frowned upon him, and turned his face with indignation from him, as disdainingly to look upon a man who had denied the faith; upon this Usthazares fell a-weeping, and went into his chamber, and put off his courtly garments, and then broke out into these like words, *Ah, how shall I appear before that God that I have denied? With what face shall I behold that God of whom I have been ashamed, when Simeon, my old familiar acquaintance, will not endure to look upon me—but disdainingly to bestow a civil salute upon me? If he frowns now, oh, how will God behold me when I shall stand before his tribunal seat!* And this physic so wrought with him, that he recovered his spiritual strength, and went boldly and professed himself a Christian, and died a glorious martyr. The application is easy.

Well, sirs, remember this, it is infinitely better to suffer for God, than to suffer from God: 1 Peter 3:17, "For it is better, if the will of God be so, that you suffer for well doing, than for evil doing." It is better to suffer for well doing from men, than to suffer for ill doing from God. But,

7. I answer, That great are the advantages which will redound to you by all the troubles, afflictions, and persecutions that shall befall you, for righteousness' sake, for holiness' sake, Luke 21:13. Persecutions are the workmen that will fit you and square you for God's buildings; they are the rods which will beat off the dust from your souls; and the scullions [a kitchen servant who cleans pots and does other menial tasks] that will scour off the rust from your souls; they are the fire which will

purge you from your dross, and the water which will cleanse you from your filthiness. Physicians, you know, apply horse-leeches to their disordered patients. Now the horse-leech intends nothing but to satiate and fill himself with the blood of the sick patient—but the physician has a more noble aim, even the drawing away of that putrified and corrupt blood that endangers the life of his patient; so though persecutors aim at nothing more than to draw out the heartblood of God's people, that they may satiate and fill themselves with it—yet God has other thoughts and other aims, even the **drawing away of that corrupt blood, that pride, that self-love, that worldliness, that carnalness, and that lukewarmness, that otherwise would endanger the life, the health, and welfare of their souls.** But this great truth I shall make more evident by an induction of particulars. Thus,

[1.] Hereby you will give an evident proof of the soundness and uprightness of your own hearts, Philippians 1:27-29. Afflictions and persecutions will discover what metal men are made of. All is not gold that glistens. There are many who glisten, and look like golden Christians—but when they come to the fire, they prove but dross. He is a golden Christian indeed, who remains gold when under fiery trials.

The *stony ground hearer* did glisten and shine very gloriously, for it received the word with joy for a time—but when the sun of persecution rose upon it, it fell away, (Mat 13:20, 21). Men who now embrace the word, will, in times of persecution, distaste the word, if it is not rooted in their understandings, judgments, wills, affections, and consciences. Men may court the word, and compliment the word, and applaud the word, and seemingly rejoice in the word—but they will never suffer persecution for the word, if it be only received into their heads, and not rooted in their hearts.

The house built upon the sand was as lovely, as goodly, and as glorious a house to look upon as that which was built upon the rock; but when the rain of affliction descended, and the floods of

tribulation came, and the winds of persecution blew and beat upon that house, it fell with a great crash! (Mat 7:26, 27). No professors will be able to endure in all winds and weathers—but such as are built upon a rock. All others will sink, shatter, and fall when the wind of persecution blows upon them, (Mal 3:2); as sure as the rain will fall, the floods flow, and the winds blow, so sure will an unsound heart give out when trials come.

Nothing speaks out more soundness and uprightness, than a pursuing after holiness, even then when holiness is most afflicted, pursued, and persecuted in the world. To stand fast in fiery trials, argues much grace and integrity within. But,

[2.] All the troubles and persecutions which Satan or his instruments raise against the saints of the Most High shall not diminish their number—but rather increase them. The kingdom of Christ is set forth by a little stone cut out of a mountain without hands (Dan 2:34, 35); and though in all ages there has been many hammers at work to break this little stone in pieces—yet they have not been able to do it—but this little stone has proved a growing stone, and, in spite of the devil and a persecuting world, will grow more and more, until it comes to be a great mountain, and fills the whole earth. In the 8th chapter of the Acts you read of a great persecution, and the storm beat so hard upon the churches, that it dispersed and scattered them up and down; and this was so far from lessening of the number of believers, that it did mightily increase their number; witness verses 4-6, 8, "Therefore those who were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spoke, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. And there was great joy in that city." Samaria was a very wicked, corrupt place, and bewitched by the sorceries of Simon Magus—yet God had his people there, and by the ministry of Philip—not Philip the apostle—but Philip the deacon who was a persecuted brother, he called them home to be partakers of his Spirit and grace, verses 14-17. And

thus the scattering of the church was the great advantage and increase of the church.

The persecution of one church may be the gathering, edifying, multiplying, and erecting of many churches. Such ministers who have been by persecution driven from their own churches have been eminently instrumental in the planting of many other churches. Though the gospel, and the faithful preachers and professors of it—were by the Scribes, Pharisees, high priests, elders, and great Council exploded, blasphemed, and persecuted at Jerusalem, which was once the holy city—yet it was with joy received in the polluted, bewitched, scorned, and despised city of Samaria. Oh, the freeness! Oh, the riches of grace! Persecution is the multiplication of the people of God; in all ages the more the saints have been afflicted, oppressed, and persecuted, the more they have increased.

The removing of the seven churches in Asia brought the gospel to Europe and Africa. During the ten cruel persecutions of the heathen emperors, the Christian faith was spread through all places of the empire; because the oftener they were mown down, the more they grew, as Tertullian witnesses; and the more we are cut down by the sword of persecution, says the same author, the more still we increase. Persecuted saints are like camomile, which grows and spreads by being trod upon; the more persecutors tread upon the people of God, the more they will spread and grow. But,

[3.] The troubles, afflictions, and persecutions which befall you in the pursuit after holiness, may issue in the conversion and salvation of others; as is evident in Acts 8, which chapter I recommend to your most serious perusal. So in that 2 Timothy 2:9, 10, "Wherein I suffer trouble as an evil doer, even unto bonds—but the word of God is not bound," (though Paul was fettered—yet the word was free,) "therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory."

Paul, for preaching of the gospel clearly and faithfully, was imprisoned at Rome and handled as if he had been a malefactor, all which he was contented to suffer upon these very grounds—that the elect might be called, converted, saved, and glorified. It is very observable, that though Paul was a prisoner—yet he preached; though he was in chains—yet he preached; and though he was accounted as an evil-doer—yet he preached, that the elect might be sanctified and saved. Though his persecutors did lay irons upon his legs—yet they could not lay a law of silence upon his lips; and though they shut him up from going to others—yet they did not shut out others from coming to hear him; for even in prison he exercised his ministerial office. As cruel as his persecutors were, they would not shut the prison doors upon those who waited on his ministry. So Philemon was converted by Paul when he was in bonds: Philemon 10, "I beseech you for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds." God made Paul's prison to be a paradise to Onesimus; Paul by his preaching, patience, and cheerfulness in suffering, converts Onesimus to the faith.

Prisons in these times were turned into churches; and so they were in Queen Mary's days, for as bloody as her reign was, most of the prisons in England were turned into Christian schools and churches, says Mr. Foxe: so that there was no greater comfort than for Christians to resort to prisons, and to hear the martyrs to pray and preach, and to behold their holy, humble, heavenly, gracious conversation. So the afflictions and persecutions of the saints in the primitive times issued in the conversion and salvation of many souls.

We read that **Cecilia**, a poor virgin, by her gracious behavior in her martyrdom, was the means of converting four hundred to Christ. **Adrianus**, by seeing the martyrs suffer so patiently and cheerfully, was converted to the faith, and afterwards sealed to the truth with his blood. Justin Martyr was also converted in the same way. In the third persecution, Faustus and Jobita suffered martyrdom with such invincible patience, courage, and cheerfulness, that Calocerius cried out, *Truly, great is the God of the Christians*. Upon which words he

was presently apprehended, and so suffered martyrdom with them. And that was a remarkable saying of Luther, *The church converts the whole world by blood and prayer.*

Now if by your troubles, afflictions, and persecutions, and the exercise of grace under them, you shall be instrumental to convert and save a soul or souls from wrath to come, it will turn wonderfully to your advantage, and you shall "shine as the stars forever and ever" (Dan 12:3). That same power, presence, wisdom, and grace, that converted others by the sufferings of former saints, is able to accomplish the same glorious effects by the sufferings of the saints of this generation; and therefore bear up bravely, and neither fear nor faint under your present sufferings. But,

[4.] The troubles, afflictions, and persecutions which Christians meet with in their pursuit after holiness, will further the increase and growth of their grace. Grace never rises to so great a height as it does in times of persecution. Suffering times are a Christian's harvest times (Psalm 69:7-9, 12). Let me instance in that grace of zeal: I remember Moulin speaking of the French Protestants, says, "When Papists burn us for reading the Scriptures, we burn with zeal to be reading of them; but now persecution is over, our Bibles are like old almanacs," &c. All the reproaches, frowns, threatenings, oppositions, and persecutions that a Christian meets with in a way of holiness, does but raise his zeal and courage to a greater height.

In times of greatest affliction and persecution for holiness' sake, a Christian has, first, **a good captain** to lead and encourage him; secondly, **a righteous cause** to prompt and embolden him; thirdly, **a gracious God** to relieve and support him; fourthly, **a glorious heaven** to receive and reward him; and certainly these things cannot but mightily raise him and inflame him, under the greatest opposition and persecution. These things will keep him from fearing, fawning, fainting, sinking, or flying in a stormy day; yes, these things

will make his face like the face of an adamant, as God promised to make Ezekiel's, (Eze 3:7-9 and Job 41:24).

Now an **adamant** is the hardest of stones, it is harder than a flint, yes, it is harder than the nether-millstone. The naturalists observe, that the hardness of this stone is unspeakable: the fire cannot burn it, nor so much as heat it through, nor the hammer cannot break it, nor the water cannot dissolve it; and therefore the Greeks call it an adamant from its unbreakableness; and in all storms the adamant shrinks not, it fears not, it changes not its hue; let the times be what they will, the adamant is still the same. In times of persecution, a good cause, a good God, and a good conscience will make a Christian like an adamant; it will make him invincible and unchangeable. But,

[5.] Persecuting times are uniting times. Oh! the discord, the division, the wrangling, biting and quarreling that is to be found among professors in times of peace and prosperity! But when affliction and persecution comes upon them, this unites them together. Though the sheep in sunshine days feed at a distance, and wander one from another; yet when a storm comes, or the wolf comes—then they run all together; and so it is with Christians. Some religious leaders who could by no means agree when they had their freedom and liberty—yet could well enough agree when they were in prison together. Though children in a family may fall out among themselves—yet they quickly unite when a common enemy assaults them. Persecuting times unite Christians closer together in their affections, resolutions, and prayers. They who formerly could hardly be brought to eat together, or trade together, or live together, or walk together—in persecuting times will be brought to hear together, and pray together, and fast together, and communicate experiences together, and stand together, and fall together, and rise together, &c., (Psalm 83:3-9). But,

[6.] As persecuting times are uniting times, so persecuting times are truth-advancing times. Truth thrives most when it is most opposed and persecuted: Philippians 1:12-14, "Now I want you

to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly." Court, city, and country did ring of Paul's bonds, and the cause thereof. Paul's iron chain made more noise, and was more glorious, and wrought more blessed effects, than all the golden chains in Nero's court; for by his bonds and chains many of the brethren were mightily emboldened and encouraged to preach the word without fear. The brethren, when they saw that Paul preached, and kept up the exercise of his ministry, though a prisoner, and though he was in bonds and chains—could not but reason thus with themselves: *if Paul a prisoner holds up and holds on in preaching the word, though he is in bonds and chains; ah, how much more ought we who are at liberty to hold up and hold on in preaching the truth, and advancing the truth, and in spreading of the truth.* Now, by what has been said, it is most evident that persecuting times are truth-advancing times. But,

[7.] Lastly, As persecuting times are truth-advancing times: so persecuting times are a Christian's rejoicing times. A Christian's heart is never so full of joy, as it is when he is under sufferings: Acts 5:41, "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name." They counted it an honor to be dishonored for Christ; they took it as a grace to be disgraced for Jesus. Stephen found the joys of heaven in his heart as the stones came clattering about his ears (Act 7:55, 56). So Paul and Silas, when they were in prison, their hearts were so full of joy that they could not hold it in—but at midnight when others were a-sleeping, they must fall a-singing out the praises of the Most High (Act 16:25). They found more pleasure than pain, more joy than sorrow, more comfort than torment—in their bonds. The rods with which they were whipped were as rods made up all of rosemary branches. Divine consolations rise so high in

their souls—that their prison was turned into a palace, yes, into a paradise!

Eusebius tells us of Algerius the Italian martyr, how that, writing to his friend from a stinking dungeon, he writes his letter "from my pleasant orchard;" such were his divine consolations, that they turned his dungeon into a pleasant orchard. "I with my fellows," says Mr. Philpot, "were carried to the coal-house, where we lie in filth in the straw, as cheerfully, we thank God, as others do in their beds of down." Mr. Bradford took off his cap, and thanked the Lord, when his keeper's wife brought him word that he was to be burned the next day. Mr. Taylor did a dance when he was come near to the place where he was to be martyred. Mr. Rogers, the first who was burned in Queen Mary's days—sang in the flames. If men did but know by experience the sweet that is in suffering for Christ, they would desire with Chrysostom, if it were put to their choice, rather to be Paul a prisoner of Jesus Christ, than Paul enrapt up in the third heaven.

God reserves the best and strongest **wine of consolation** for a day of persecution; suitable to that 2 Corinthians 1:3-5, "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows." Oh, the sweet looks, the sweet words, the sweet hints, the sweet in-comes, the sweet joggings, the sweet embraces, the sweet influences, the sweet discoveries, the sweet love-letters, the sweet love-tokens, and the sweet comforts that Christians experience in their sufferings for Christ! And thus you see the great and glorious advantages that will redound to the people of God by all their afflictions and persecutions. But,

8. That to suffer affliction and persecution for holiness' sake, is the greatest and highest honor that you are capable of in this world. The crown of a martyrdom is a crown that the

angels, those princes of glory, are not capable of winning or wearing; and oh, who are you! What are you, O man! That God should set this crown upon your head! 1 Peter 4:13-14, "But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you." The very suffering condition of the people of God is at the present a glorious condition, for "the Spirit of glory and of God rests on them," and they must needs be glorious, yes, very glorious, upon whom the Spirit of glory dwells.

The sufferings of "the three children," (Dan 3), tended very much to their honor and advancement, even in this world; and had those vessels of honor slipped their opportunity of suffering, they had lost their glory. The apostles all along counted their sufferings for Christ their highest honor. And that is a remarkable scripture that you have in that Hebrews 11:36-38, "Some faced jeers and flogging, while still others were chained and put in prison. They were stoned; they were sawed in two; they were put to death by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated—the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground." Oh! but these were surely the most sad, miserable, wretched, and forlorn creatures in all the world. Oh no! and that is most evident if the testimony and judgment of the Holy Spirit may be received; for, verse 38, "They were such of whom the world was not worthy." The persecuting world was not worthy of their love, nor worthy of their prayers, nor worthy of their presence, nor worthy of their fellowship; and therefore God called them home, and set them down upon thrones by himself.

And to me it is very observable, that when that great apostle Paul would glory in that which he accounted his honor, glory, and excellency; he does not glory in his high office, nor in his being enrapt up in the third heaven, nor in the interest that he had in the hearts of the saints, nor in his arts or parts, etc.; but **he glories in his**

sufferings, in that 2 Corinthians 11:23-27, "I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked." Thus you see that this blessed apostle looks upon his sufferings as his greatest glory.

"To suffer for Christ is the greatest honor and promotion that God gives in this world," said old Latimer. John Noyes took up a faggot from the fire and kissed it, saying, "Blessed be the time that ever I was born: to come to this promotion." After they had fastened Alice Driver with a chain to the stake to be burned, "Never," said she, "did a necklace so well please me--as this chain." Balilus the martyr, when he was to die, requested this favor from his persecutors, namely, that he might have his chains buried with him, as the ensigns of his honor. When Ignatius was to suffer, "It is better for me," says he, "to be a martyr, than to be a monarch." Sufferings for Christ are the ensigns of heavenly nobility.

It was a notable saying of a French martyr, when the noose was around his comrade's neck, "Give me," said he, "that golden chain, and dub me knight of that noble order." "I am the most unfit man for this high office of suffering for Christ, who ever was appointed to it," said blessed Sanders. I shall with that excellent saying of Prudentius: "Their names which are written in red letters of blood in the church's calendar, are written in golden letters in Christ's register, the book of life." And thus you see on all hands, that suffering for Christ is the highest honor that you are capable of in this world: and, therefore,

there is little reason why a Christian should shrink or shrug at sufferings. But,

9. That the afflictions, persecutions, and sufferings which attend Christians in these days, are nothing compared to the fiery trials which the saints and martyrs of old have met with. For sevenfold harder measure has been measured forth to them, than is this day measured forth to us. Our sufferings are hardly to be named in comparison to those sore and heavy things are mentioned, which those precious and famous worthies of old have suffered. I may say to most Christians, as the apostle did to the Hebrews, "You have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin" (Heb 12:4). Many have—but *you* have not; you have only met with hard words, when others have met with blows and wounds; you have been only a-contending with men, when others have been a-contending with beasts; you have been only whipped with rosemary branches, when others have been whipped with scorpions; you have been only bound with silken bands, when others have been bound with iron chains. Will you be so favorable to yourselves as to compare your sufferings with the sufferings of former saints; and that you may, let me give you a little abridgment of their sufferings "of whom the world was not worthy."

History tells us, that in the ten primitive persecutions, they exercised all manner of cruelty and torments that could be devised against the Christians:

1. In the reign of Hadrian the emperor, there were ten thousand Christians crowned with a crown of thorns, thrust into the sides with sharp lances, and then crucified.
2. Others were so whipped, that their entrails were seen, and afterwards they were thrown upon sharp shells, and then upon sharp nails and thorns. And after all this cruelty, they were thrown to wild beasts to be devoured.

3. Multitudes were banished.
4. Others were pulled apart with wild horses.
5. Some were beaten and racked with bars of iron.
6. Others were cast into loathsome dungeons.
7. Some were burnt in the fire.
8. Others were knocked down and had their brains beaten out with staves and clubs.
9. Some were pricked in their faces and eyes with sharp reeds.
10. Others were stoned to death with stones, as Stephen was.
11. Some were dashed in pieces against millstones.
12. Others had their teeth dashed out of their jaws, and their joints broken.
13. Some were cast down from very high places.
14. Others were beheaded.
15. Some were tormented with razors.
16. Others were slain with the sword.
17. Some were run through with pikes.
18. Others were driven into the wilderness, where they wandered up and down, suffering hunger and cold, and where they were exposed to the fury both of wild beasts, and also to the rage of the barbarous Arabians.

19. Some fled into caves, which their persecutors crammed up with stones, and there they died.

20. Others were trodden to death by the people.

21. Some were hanged on gibbets with a slow fire under them.

22. Others were cast into the sea and drowned.

23. Some were slain by being thrown in mines.

24. Others were hanged by the feet, and choked with the smoke of a small fire, their legs being first broken.

25. Some were covered with oil, and then roasted with a soft fire.

26. Others were hung by one hand, that they might feel the weight of their whole bodies scorching and broiling over burning coals.

27. Some were shot through with arrows, and afterwards thrown into stinking prisons.

28. Others were stripped stark naked, and thrown out in cold, frosty nights; and burnt the next day.

29. In Syria, a company of Christian virgins were stripped stark naked to be scorned by the multitude, then shaved, and then torn in pieces and devoured by beasts.

30. Lastly, many women had the joints of their bodies pulled from another, and their flesh and sides clawed with talons of wild beasts to the bones, and their breasts seared with torches until they died.

And thus you have an account of thirty different ways by which the precious sons and daughters of Zion have formerly been afflicted, tormented, and destroyed! What heart of stone can read over this list

with dry eyes? And now tell me, sirs, whether your sufferings are worth a naming in that day, wherein the sufferings of the precious servants of God in the primitive times are spoken of? Oh, no! Well then, take heed of making molehills mountains, and of crying out, "Is there any sorrow to our sorrow, or any sufferings to our sufferings?"

10. I answer, That unholy people have suffered as great and grievous things for the satisfying of their lusts and pleasures, and for the compassing of some worldly good—as you have suffered, or are likely to suffer for your pursuing after holiness. Oh the hazards, the dangers, the deaths that many have run through to gratify their lusts! Petrus Blesensis has long since observed, that the courtiers of his time suffered as many vexations, with weariness and painfulness, with hunger and thirst, and with all the catalogue of Paul's afflictions that is reckoned up in that 2 Corinthians 11, as good Christians did for the truth. I have read of a Roman servant, who knowing his master was sought for by officers to be put to death, he, to save his master's life, put himself into his master's clothes that he might be taken for him, and accordingly he was taken and put to death for him, and all this out of vainglory. Ah what cutting, what lancing, what bleeding, and what searching will many men endure upon the advice of their physicians, and all for a little health, a little strength, or to preserve a wretched life for a few days, yes, for a few hours sometimes. And why then should Christians think so much of suffering afflictions and persecutions for holiness' sake, the least grain of which being more worth than a thousand thousand of those things, for which they have suffered such exquisite pains and torments?

Ah! what great things, what hard things do many men daily suffer to gratify their own lusts, and to satisfy the lusts of others! Oh the hell of horrors and terrors, which are worse than a thousand deaths, that many a sinner daily wades through to enjoy his sin! And why then should you be startled in your pursuit after holiness, because of afflictions and persecutions that may attend you? When they are

nothing compared to what many suffer from within and without, to enjoy that which will undo them to all eternity, &c. But,

11. I answer, Though persecutions may attend the pursuit of holiness—yet God has a thousand thousand ways to preserve his people, from being ruined and destroyed by persecuting hands. Several afflictions and persecutions befell Paul at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, "but out of them all the Lord delivered him." As a righteous cause led him into sufferings, so a righteous God led him out of sufferings. Both Jews and Gentiles, barbarians and Grecians, princes and people, were as madly set upon persecuting of him, as he was once madly set upon persecuting of the saints—but God delivered him from every hand of violence. Divine power and wisdom wrought gloriously for him; both in six troubles and in seven it brought him clearly off, and bravely out, not of some—but out of all his dangers and distresses, afflictions and persecutions, etc. Now,

[1.] God sometimes preserves his people from being ruined and destroyed, by laying a law of restraint upon the spirits of their persecutors, as he did upon Laban's and Esau's, that they could not hurt him; yes, instead of kicking and killing, behold kissing and embracing. God tied up those cursed dogs, and laid such a restraint upon their wrath, rage, and malice—that they could not so much as touch a hair of Jacob's head. God stopped their mouths and bound their hands, that they were not able to act anything to the hurt of Jacob. That God who laid a restraint upon the fierce wild creatures in Noah's ark, that they might not prey upon the tamer animals, and who chained up the lions from preying upon Daniel—that God chained up these two lions, that they could not make a prey of innocent Jacob. But,

[2.] God does this sometimes by setting persecutors one against another. When the Moabites were confederated with the Ammonites and those of mount Seir against Judah, God made them turn their swords against one another, and so they mutually became

their own executioners, and by this means poor Judah escaped. God sometimes saves his lambs by setting the wolf and the dog against each other. When that wolf Saul was even ready to devour David the lamb, God lets loose those dogs the Philistines upon Saul, and so by this means David was preserved and secured (1Sa 23:27). And so Paul, by setting the persecuting Pharisees against the persecuting scribes, he escaped persecution (Act 23:6-8). But

[3.] God does sometimes saves his people from persecutions by passing a sentence of death upon their persecutors: and thus by his sudden and fearful judgment upon Herod he gave rest, liberty, and quiet to his people (Act 12:23, 24). And so by his vengeance on persecuting emperors he gave rest to his people. And by giving Ahithophel rope enough, he preserved David from perishing. But,

[4.] God does this sometimes by altering and changing the very hearts and natures of their persecutors. And thus by changing Paul's nature, by turning that wolf into a lamb, that devil into a saint, he gave the churches rest throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria (Act 9:31); and this is one of the most desirable things in the world, that God would save his people from outward ruin by ruining their persecutors' sins, and by changing their hearts and saving their souls. But,

[5.] God does this sometimes by taking persecutors' feet in the same snares that they have laid for others: Psalm 9:16, "The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands. Higgsion. Selah." Higgsion selah signifies matter of great admiration, and of deep meditation; that the wicked should be snared in the work of his own hands is matter of perpetual admiration, and of most serious meditation. Who will not admire that Goliath should be slain with his own sword, and that proud Haman should hold Mordecai's stirrup, and be the herald of his honor: Psalm 7:15,16, "He who digs a hole and scoops it out falls into the pit he has made. The trouble he causes recoils on himself; his violence comes down on his own head."

It is usual with God to take persecutors in the snares and pits that they have laid for his people, as many thousands in this nation have experienced; and though Rome and her confederates are this day a-laying of snares and traps, and a-digging of pits for the righteous, who will rather burn than bow to their Baal—yet do but wait and weep, and weep and wait a little, and you shall see that the Lord will take them in the very snares and pits that they have laid and dug for his people. But,

[6.] God sometimes preserves his people from persecuting hands, by providing cities of refuge to shelter them, and by providing hiding-places to hide them in: Matthew 10:23, "If they persecute you in one city, flee to another." God has always found one city of refuge or another to shelter his persecuted people in. And so when bloody persecuting Jezebel had cut off many of the Lord's prophets, God provided an Obadiah to hide a hundred of them in a cave (1Ki 18:4, 13). God never lacks a chamber of presence, a chamber of providence, a chamber of protection, a chamber of salvation to hide his people in (Isa 26:20). I have read of one that, in the time of the massacre at Paris, crept into a hole to hide himself, and as soon as he was in there came a spider and weaved a web before the hole; the next morning the murderers came to search for him, *Search in that hole*, said one, and see if he is not there! O no, said another, he can't be there, for there is a cobweb at the hole's mouth; upon which they did not suspect his being there, by which means he was preserved from the rage and fury of those men of blood. But,

12. Lastly, I answer, That all the persecutions that you meet with on earth shall advance your glory in heaven. The more saints are persecuted on earth, the greater shall be their reward in heaven; as persecutions do increase a Christian's grace, so they do advance a Christian's glory: Matthew 5:10-12, "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be

glad, because great is your reward in heaven!" Luke 6:22, 23, "Blessed are you when men hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven!"

Those who are now opposed and persecuted by men, shall at last be owned and crowned by God; yes, and the more afflictions and persecutions are multiplied upon them in this world—the greater shall be their recompense in the eternal world. The original words, in Matthew and in Luke, signifies exceeding great joy, such as men usually express by skipping and dancing; let your hearts leap, and let your bodies leap for joy, for great is your reward in heaven. Look, as young cattle in the spring, do leap and skip for joy; so says Christ, do you leap and skip under all the afflictions and persecutions which befall you for righteousness' sake, for great is your reward in heaven.

O Christians, all your sufferings will certainly increase your future glory; every affliction, every persecution will be put into the scale of your heavenly glory, to make it more weighty in that day, wherein he will richly reward you for every tear, for every sigh, for every groan, for every hazard, and for every hardship that you have met with in the pursuit of holiness, etc. For light afflictions you shall have a weight of glory; and for a few afflictions you shall have as many joys, pleasures, delights, and contentments as there are stars in heaven or sands on the sea-shore; and for momentary afflictions you shall have an eternal crown of glory (2 Co 4:16-18).

If you have suffered for Christ on earth, you shall have glory with Christ in heaven. Ah Christians, your present sufferings are but the seeds of your future glory, and the more plentifully you sow in tears, the more abundant will be your harvest of glory. Ah Christians! Shall not the hopes of that great reward which attends suffering saints bear you up bravely, and carry you out sweetly under all the storms that may beat upon you while you are sailing heavenwards and holiness-wards? Surely yes. I hope none of you will think that I have

been too long in answering this objection, considering the present times.

Objection 5. Fifthly, Others may object and say, We would labor after this holiness, without which there is no happiness, etc. But if we should—then we must resolve to be poor, and base, and beggarly in the world. We must then resolve ourselves to fare hard, and lie hard, and labor hard, and live poor in the world—for we shall never raise an estate to ourselves by holiness and strictness, we shall never grow rich and great in the world by godliness. Nay, by driving this trade of holiness—we shall lose our trades, our customers, and those estates we now have, and quickly fall into dire poverty, etc. Now to fence and arm you against this objection, give me permission to propose these six following considerations:

[1.] First, Consider that it is not absolutely necessary that you should be rich, or high, or great in this world; but it is absolutely necessary that you should be holy. The lack of riches can only trouble you—but the lack of holiness will certainly damn you. You may be happy in the eternal world, though you are not high in this world. Many a man has gone to heaven without a penny in his purse, or good clothes on his back. Doubtless it is infinitely better with ragged, naked Lazarus to go to heaven—than it is with Dives to go rich and well-clad to hell, Luke 16:19-31. It is better to go to heaven poor, and halt, and maimed—than to go to hell healthy and rich. Poverty and outward misery with salvation, is far better than worldly prosperity and felicity with everlasting perdition. Holiness, and not riches, is the one thing necessary. If you have holiness, nothing can make you miserable; but if you lack holiness, nothing can make you happy.

Outward blessings are no infallible evidences of a blessed estate. Was Abraham rich? so was Abimelech too. Was Jacob rich? so was Laban too. Was David a king? so was Saul too. Was Constantine an emperor? so was Julian too. It is only holiness which sets the crown of happiness upon a Christian's head. But,

[2.] Secondly, Consider that it is not sanctity—but impiety; it is not holiness—but wickedness, which exposes men to the greatest poverty and misery!

Proverbs 6:26, "For by the means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread." **Whoredom** is a very costly sin, Proverbs 24:33-34, and 28:19, 22; the prodigal had quickly spent his portion among his harlots, Luke 15. Whoredom cannot be a greater *paradise* to the flesh, than it is a *purgatory* to the purse—as many great ones have found it so. Herod, that old fornicator, was so inflamed and bewitched with the immodest wanton dancing of the damsel, that he swore he would give her to the half of his kingdom, Mark 6:23-24. And it is very observable, that while Solomon, in his younger days, kept holy, chaste, and pure—silver and gold was as plenteous at Jerusalem and at court as the stones of the street; but when Solomon had given himself up to his concubines, they quickly exhausted his treasuries, and brought him to so low an ebb, that he was forced to oppress his subjects with such heavy taxes, burdens, and tributes, which occasioned the revolt of the ten tribes. [Kings 10:27-28; 2 Chron. 1:15-17; 1 Kings 12:1-20.]

Josephus, in his Antiquities, tells us of Decius Mundus, who gave a great amount to satisfy his lusts one night with a whore—and yet did not obtain satisfaction. There is no sin which has brought more men, and greater men, to beggary and misery than this has. It is a great misery to be brought to a piece of bread, to a scrap, a little bit of bread; but to be brought into so low a condition by harlots, doubles the misery; for he who is by a whorish woman brought to a piece of bread on earth, shall be brought to beg a drop of water in hell, except there be found repentance on his side, and pardoning mercy on God's.

Take another instance in that Proverbs 23:20-21, "Do not join those who drink too much wine or gorge themselves on meat, for **drunkards** and **gluttons** become poor, and drowsiness clothes them in rags." [The glutton and the drunkard were to be stoned to

death, Deut. 21:20-21. Basil calls drunkenness a self-chosen devil. When Eschines commended Philip king of Macedon for a jovial man who would drink freely, Demosthenes, being by, told him that was a good quality in a sponge—but not in a prince.] Many dukes, earls, lords, and gentlemen of great estates, have sadly experienced the truth of this scripture.

Luxurious company has brought many a man to extreme poverty. The full cup makes an empty purse; and the fat dish makes a lean money-bag. He who fills you wine with one hand, and sets before you dainty dishes with the other hand, will be sure to pick your pockets with both hands! This Caligula, the Roman emperor, found by experience; for his gluttony brought him to incredible poverty. Diogenes, hearing that the house of a certain prodigal was offered to sale, said, "I knew that house was so accustomed to surfeiting and drunkenness, that before long it would spew out the master."

There was a street in Rome called *vicus sobrius*, the *sober street*, because there was never an ale-house in it; but this, I think, is hard to say of any street in London, yes, of any street in England. Excessive drinking is now so great in our land. Ah, sirs! what is more evident than this, that drunkenness flows in England! Oh, what a deal of ground has this sin made within this few months upon English hearts! There was a time when drunkards were as rare in England as wolves—but now they are as common as swine. Ah, what staggering, reeling, and shameful spewing is to be found, both among the great ones, the priests, and people of this nation!

The prophet Hosea complained in his time, that the princes, upon their king's day, made him sick with bottles of wine, Hosea 7:5 "On the day of the festival of our king, the princes become inflamed with wine." This day of their king was either his birthday, or his coronation day; or the day wherein their king Jeroboam set up his golden calves at Dan and Bethel, as some others conceive. Now in this day of their king there was such carnal triumphing, and such pampering of the flesh, and such roaring, carousing, and drinking of

bottles of wine, that the princes drank themselves sick, drowning their bodies and souls in bottles and kegs of wine. Memorable is the king's late proclamation against all such debauched people, who, pretending to drink to his health, destroy their own by a shameful abusing of the precious creatures of God.

If the prophet Hosea were now alive in this nation, ah, what cause would he have to complain that both high and low, men and women, young and old have given themselves to this beastly sin, which unmans a man, and which besots the soul, and which destroys the body, and which proves a cankerworm to men's estates! What are most ale-houses, but hell-houses—but the devil's houses, in which the name of God is notoriously blasphemed, piety scorned, the saints derided, young ones impoisoned, and old ones hardened, and many thousand families impoverished? And why, then, should it be almost as easy a task to conquer the West Indies, to overcome the Turk, and to bring down the Pope—as it is to bring down such wretched ale-houses, as are the very nurseries of all sin, and the synagogues of incarnate devils, and the very sinks of all misery, poverty, and beggary. By these instances it is most clear that it is not holiness—but wickedness that exposes men to the greatest poverty and misery. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Consider that God can make *a little* with holiness, go a great way. [Mr. Foxe speaks of a poor woman, who being threatened that she would have but a little bread one day, and a little water on the next, replied, "If you take away my food, I hope God will take away my hunger, and then it will be all one as if I had food."] A little with holiness shall serve the turn, and then enough is as good as a feast. God can make a handful of meal in the barrel, and a little oil in the cruse, hold out a long while, I Kings 17:10-17. Just so, Deut. 8:4, "Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years." Chapter 29:5, "During the forty years that I led you through the desert, your clothes did not wear out, nor did the sandals on your feet." Their clothes in forty years' time was not the worse for wearing, their garments were not worn out with wearing, in all that time they were not grown old and so unfit to wear. Oh no;

but they were as fresh and strong, and fit for use at the last, as they were when they first came into the wilderness, and this was by a divine power that preserved them from decay. God supplied all the backs and bellies of the Israelites in such state, as if every Israelite had been a prince. When God brings his people into a wilderness condition, he will make their mercies last and hold out as long as their wilderness condition continues.

Just so, in that Proverbs 15:16-17, "Better a little with the fear of the Lord than great wealth with turmoil. Better a meal of vegetables where there is love, than a fattened calf with hatred." [Sheep can live upon bare commons, where fat oxen would be quickly starved, etc.] Chapter 16:8, "Better is a little with righteousness, than great revenues without right." Chapter 17:1, "Better is a dry morsel and quietness therewith, than a house full of sacrifices with strife." Psalm 37:16, "A little that a righteous man has, is better than the riches of many wicked." Where there is a holy God, and a holy heart—a little of the world will go far. A little will be a sufficiency to him, who with it enjoys that Holy One who is all-sufficiency itself, Phil. 4:11-20. **Though a whole world will never fill nor satisfy an unsanctified heart; yet a little, a very little of the world will satisfy and content a holy heart.** There are two things that an unholy heart can never find, it can never find any sweetness in spirituals, nor it can never find any satisfaction in temporals. But a holy heart always finds the greatest sweetness in spirituals, and is as easily satisfied with the least and poorest of temporals, Esther. 5:9-14. Gen. 28:20-21, "Then Jacob made a vow, saying—If God will be with me and will watch over me on this journey I am taking and will give me food to eat and clothes to wear so that I return safely to my father's house, then the Lord will be my God." Holy Jacob does not indent with God for costly apparel, or delicate fare; he does not make a bargain with God to be housed in luxury, and fed daintily, and clothed gorgeously, and lodged easily, and waited on nobly. ["Bread and water with the gospel is good enough," said holy Greenham.] Oh no; bread to eat and clothes to wear is as much as holy Jacob looks after.

Ah friends, **a little will serve nature, and less will serve grace, though nothing will serve or satisfy an unsanctified man's lusts.** O sirs, the very bread which a holy man eats, relishes better than all the glutton's delicious fare; and the very sheep-skins and goat-skins which he wears, wear softer and finer than all the purple and soft raiment that is in princes' houses; and the very holes, and caves, and dens wherein holy men live, are more pleasant and delightful than the stately palaces of the great ones of the world. ["It is great riches not to desire riches, and he has most, who covets least." Socrates.] Godliness and contentment does so sweeten and so lengthen out all a Christian's mercies, that he cannot but reckon himself a happy man, though he may be the poorest among many men. Let me conclude this third answer thus—

This world's wealth that men so much desire,
May well be likened to a burning fire;
Whereof a little can do little harm,
But profit much our bodies well to warm:
But take too much, and surely you shall burn;
So too much wealth to too much woe does turn.

But,

[4.] Fourthly, Consider that worldly riches and holiness do often meet together. A man may be a very holy man—and yet a rich man too. *Abraham* and *Lot* were as wealthy men as most in their time—and yet behind none for faith and holiness. *David*, and *Solomon*, and *Jehoshaphat*, and *Hezekiah* had crowns on their heads and scepters in their hands, and very great revenues at their commands, and in all these grace and greatness sweetly meet. [Isaiah 41:2. Abraham is called the righteous man.] *Job* was a very holy man—and yet a very rich man, Job 1:3, 8. If you cast your eye upon the first of Job, and survey his estate, you shall find that he had seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, five hundred she-donkeys, and a very large family; but if you will look into the last of Job, and survey his estate, there you shall find it doubled. *Joseph*,

Nehemiah, Mordecai, Daniel, and the three Hebrew children, were very gracious—and yet very high and great in the world. As every wicked man is not a rich man—just so, every holy man is not a poor man. If you will but set the gracious against the graceless, the holy against the profane, I doubt not, but for one holy man whose estate is low and poor, you will find thousands of wicked men whose conditions are beggarly and low in this world. God many times delights to confute the devil's proverb—namely, that "plain dealing is a jewel—but he who uses it shall die a beggar." Now God by heaping up riches and honor and greatness upon the righteous, gives the devil the lie, and lets the world see that holiness many times is the ready way to worldly greatness.

It is observable, that when all the sons of Jacob returned with corn and money in their sacks from Egypt, Benjamin had not only corn and money in his sack—but he had over and above the silver cup put into the mouth of his sack, as a singular pledge of his brother Joseph's favor, Gen. 44. Just so, God many times gives to his Benjamins, the sons of his right hand, not only as much of the world as he does to others—but more of the world than he does to others; he does not only give them corn and money in common with others—but he also gives them the silver cup, the grace cup; he puts in some singular temporal blessings into their sacks more than into other men's; for he is the great Lord of all, and therefore may dispose of his own as he pleases. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Consider that most men are best in a low condition. *David* was never better than when he was in a wilderness condition, for degrees of grace, and for the exercise of grace, and for communion with the God of grace. It was best with *David* when his condition was low in the world, Psalm 63:1-4. It was never better with *Jacob* than when he passed over Jordan with a staff in his hand, Gen. 32:10. *Job's* graces never shined so gloriously as when he sat upon a ash-heap, and could bless a *taking* God as well as a *giving* God, Job 1. Though *John* the Baptist was poor in the world—yet the Holy Spirit tells us that he was the greatest, Mat. 11:11. *Paul* was but

a poor tent-maker—and yet his life was in heaven, Phil. 3:20. The church of Smyrna was the poorest church—but yet the best of all the seven churches in Asia, Rev. 2:8-9.

Christ knew very well that his disciples would be best in a low condition, and therefore he fed them but from hand to mouth. He who could have turned stones into bread, could as easily have turned stones into gold, and so have made his disciples rich and great in the world—but he would not. Christ could easily have changed their rags into robes, and their cottages into stately palaces, and their barley loaves into costly banquets—but he knew that their hearts would be best when their condition was lowest; and therefore he makes them live upon common fare.

As there was none so holy as Christ—just so, there was none so poor as Christ, Mat. 8:20-21. Christ lived poor and died poor, for as he was born in another man's house—just so, he was buried in another man's tomb. Austin has long since observed, that when Christ died he made no will; he had no crown lands; all he had was a coat, and that the soldiers parted among them. Had there been any true happiness or blessedness in gold and silver, mirthful clothes, stately mansions, gorgeous attendants, or in well-furnished tables, etc., Christ, who was, and still is, the Lord of all, would certainly have been so favorable to himself, and so kind to his disciples, as not to have deprived himself or his family of that happiness and blessedness which they might have enjoyed, by enjoying the costly things of this world; but he very well knew that true happiness and blessedness was too great and too glorious a thing to be found in any such worldly enjoyments, and upon that ground, was willing to be without them himself. And in his wise providence he so ordered the affairs of his own house, that those whom he loved best should have least of those things wherein there was no true happiness.

Lazarus was very poor—but very holy; he was houseless—but not Lordless; his body was clothed with rags—but his soul was adorned with grace; he had no bread to eat—and yet he had bread to eat that

the world knew not of. While he lived, the dogs, being more kind than their master, licked his sores—but when he died, the angels carried him into Abraham's bosom. In all ages this has been an experienced truth, that **most men are best in a low condition.** Pope Martin reports of himself, that while he was a monk, and lived in the cloister, he had some evidences for heaven—but when he was a cardinal, then he began to fear and doubt whether ever he should go to heaven; but afterwards, when he came to be pope, he utterly despaired of ever going there.

Ah, how holy, how humble, how heavenly, how gracious, how serious, how zealous, how prudent, how vigilant, and how diligent have many men been while their condition was low, and poor in the world! but when under various changes they changed their brass into silver, their copper into gold, their cottages into palaces, their shops into lordships, and their sheep-skins into scarlet, etc., ah, how proud, how worldly, how earthly, how carnal, how careless, how cold, how formal, how lukewarm, how indifferent, how light, how slight, how vain, how loose—did they generally grow!

I have read of the pine-tree, that if you pull off the bark it will last a long time; but if the bark remains on, it will rot the tree. Ah, how has the bark of honor, the bark of riches, the bark of pleasure, the bark of success, the bark of applause, and the bark of preferment, etc., has rotted, and corrupted, and worsened many glorious professors in these days! And oh that, now their bark is taken off, they may with the pine-tree grow better and better! Oh, that now they may grow more *holy* than ever, and more *humble* than ever, and more *heavenly* than ever, and more *spiritual* than ever, and more *watchful* than ever, and more *faithful* than ever, and more *friendly* than ever, and more *united* than ever! etc.

Now if most men are best in a low condition, then there is no reason why any man should turn his back upon holiness because of poverty, which often treads upon holiness' heels. The cypress-tree is high—but barren; and the olive-tree is low—but fruitful. Ah, Christians, it is

infinitely better to be an olive-tree, low and fruitful, to be low in the world, and full of the fruits of righteousness and holiness; than to be a cypress-tree, high in honors, riches, and worldly greatness, etc., and to be barren of all grace and goodness. But,

[6.] Sixthly and lastly, Consider that spiritual riches, which are the best of riches, do commonly attend the poorest saints. Usually there are none so rich in spirituals, as those who are poorest in temporals; there are none who have so much to show for the eternal world as those who have least to show of this earthly world: James 2:5, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Has not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to those who love him?" Though they have never a penny in their purses, nor never a rag to hang on their backs, nor ever a bit to put in their bellies—yet they are rich heirs, and their heads are destined for the diadem. Usually the poorest saints are the richest Christians in comforts, in graces, in promises, in experiences, and in spiritual enjoyments, etc., 2 Cor. 8:1-5; Romans 5:3. The holy soul drives the freest and the greatest trade heavenwards; the holy soul may sail to any port that lies in God's dominions, and trade freely—and what enriches men like a free and a full trade? **There are infinite treasures laid up in precious promises, and all these treasuries lie open to the holy soul.** A Christian may laden his soul as deep as he pleases with the precious commodities of heaven.

I have read of Tiberius the emperor, in 577, who, seeing a cross set in a marble stone lying in the ground, commanded it to be dug up; and when it was dug up, he found a rich treasure under the cross. O sirs, under the cross of poverty there are treasures, spiritual treasures, lasting treasures, and satisfying treasures to be found. Though holiness may be attended with cross upon cross, loss upon loss, and misery upon misery, and calamity upon calamity, and sorrow upon sorrow, and vexation upon vexation, etc.—yet under every cross and every loss, etc., a Christian shall be sure to find such spiritual and heavenly treasure, that for weight, worth, use, delight, and duration, all the treasures of the world are not to be compared to it.

O sirs, what is a cup of pleasant wine to a condemned man? Or a ship's lading of gold to a drowning man? Or a sumptuous feast to a sick man? or royal robes to a diseased man? etc. No more are all the riches or treasures of this world, compared to those spiritual riches and heavenly treasures which attends the poorest saints. Austin has long since told us that, "Earthly riches are full of poverty." They cannot enrich the soul, for oftentimes where the purse is full of gold, the heart is empty of grace; and under many silken coats there are threadbare souls to be found. Now what are all the riches of this world, compared to those riches of consolation, and riches of sanctification, and riches of justification, and riches of salvation, and riches of glorification—which attends the poorest saints? Suppose that poverty should break in upon you like an armed man while you are in the pursuit of holiness—yet if the *best* of riches, if *spiritual* riches, shall attend your poverty, as certainly they shall, what cause have you to be discouraged? Surely none! And let thus much suffice for answer to this fifth objection.

Objection 6. But sixthly, Some may further object, and say, "Should we pursue after holiness, it would be a disgrace, a disparagement, and dishonor to us who are high, and great, and rich, and honorable in the earth. We are gentlemen, we are well-bred and high-born, and holiness seems to be too poor and too low a thing for such as we are to look after, etc."

Now to fence and arm you against this objection, give me permission to propose to your most serious thoughts these following considerations, etc.:

[1.] First, That holiness is man's greatest honor and excellency—and this I have made evident at large in the third motive to holiness. Yes, holiness is the crown, excellency, and glory of all a man's excellencies and glories—as has been fully proved in the fifth motive to holiness. Yes, and that which is yet more, holiness reflects honor, not only upon a man's own person—but it reflects honor also upon a man's near and dear relations, yes, upon the very country, city, or town

where he was born—as is made good at large in the sixth motive to holiness, to which I refer you for more full and complete satisfaction to this objection. [In the other motives you will find holiness to be the honor of God, Christ, and angels, etc.] But,

[2.] Secondly, Ah, how is man fallen from his primitive glory, that looks now upon holiness as his disgrace, as his discredit and dishonor, which in innocency was the top and crown of all his glory and felicity! Ah, how has sin blinded, bebested, and besotted the sons of men—that they should look upon that to be their reproach which is their highest honor in this world; and to look upon that to be their disgrace which alone puts a grace upon them; and to look upon that to be their discredit which can only bring them into credit with God, angels, and godly men! Augustine confesses that it was just thus sometimes with him, for he was stricken with such blindness, that he thought it a shame unto him to be less vile and wicked than his companions, whom he heard boast of their lewdness, and boast so much the more, by how much they were the more filthy. "Therefore," says he, "lest I should be of no account, I was the more wicked, and when I could not otherwise match others, I would pretend that I had done those things which I never did, lest I should seem so much the more abject by how much I was the more innocent, and so much the more vile by how much I was the more chaste."

Ah, what will not a soul blinded by sin say and do, when the work of holiness is not formed in him! Sin has certainly cast that sinner into a woeful lethargy, who is the father of this objection. Now, it is observed of those who are fallen into a lethargy, that their bodies are subject to a continual drowsiness, and their memories are so weak that they cannot remember anything that they speak or do; nay, it does so far debase them that they forget the very necessary actions of life. And just so has sin dealt with these objectors' souls, it has cast them under such a spiritual drowsiness, yes, it has cast them into such a deadly and fearful sleep, that it makes them forget the one thing necessary—namely, holiness.

Souls under a spiritual lethargy forget their lost and lamentable condition, they forget how far off they are from God, Christ, heaven, and salvation, and they forget how near they are to hell, to ruin, to everlasting burnings, and to utter perdition and destruction. It is observable of the blacksmith's dog, that neither the noise of hammers by him, nor the sparks of fire flying about him, nor those which land upon him, do any whit awaken him—but he snorts and sleeps on securely in the midst of all. Just so, sin has cast the sinner into so deep a sleep, that though the sparks of hell-fire in the threatenings fly about him, and the hammers of God's judgments make a noise on all sides of him—yet he is so stupefied and benumbed that nothing will awaken him to behold his spiritual and eternal hazard—but he sleeps on securely, and so will continue, if infinite grace and mercy does not prevent, until he awakes with everlasting flames about his ears.

When a man is in a deep lethargy, if you pinch him with pincers, or prick him with needles, he feels it not; if you scourge him he cries not, if you threaten him he fears not, etc. Now this is the condition of such who are in a spiritual lethargy; let the judgments of God be denounced, and let the terrors of the law be preached, they tremble not; let the flames of hell-fire flash upon their souls, they regard it not, for they are sermon-proof, and judgment-proof, and hell-proof. Now this is your very case, O sinner! who cry out that the pursuit of holiness will turn to your disgrace and discredit in the world; for were your eyes but open to see the necessity, beauty, and excellency of holiness, oh, then you would call for holiness, and cry for holiness, and search for holiness, and press for holiness, as that which is the chief ornament, and the only honor and glory of the creature. But,

[3.] Thirdly, I answer, That it is not holiness—but wickedness, it is not godliness—but impiety, which is the reproach, the dishonor, the disgrace, and disparagement of man. Proverbs 14:34, "Righteousness exalts a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people," or as the Hebrew has it, "to nations." The world usually accounts either beggarliness of estate, or badness of situation, or crudeness of behavior, or changes

in government, or dullness of invention, or some suchlike imperfections, to be the reproach of nations. But the Holy Spirit tells us that it is sin, it is sin which is the reproach of nations, which is the shame of nations, which is the contempt and scorn of nations, and which blots and blurs all the excellencies and glories of nations. Impious people makes the nations infamous; and the more impious any nation, city, or person is—the more infamous that nation, city, or person is.

Proverbs 6:32, 33, "But a man who commits adultery lacks judgment; whoever does so destroys himself. Blows and disgrace are his lot, and his shame will never be wiped away." [What an indelible blot was this still upon David—namely, that his heart was upright in all things—except in the matter of Uriah.] There is nothing that is such a blemish and such a wound to a man's honor—as sin. Sin leaves such a *blot*, such a *blur*, and such a *reproach* upon a man's name, fame, and reputation—that no art, no pains shall ever be able to wipe it out. All the water in the sea cannot wash away, nor all the rubbing in the world cannot wipe away—the disgrace, disdain, and contempt, that enormities, which wickednesses lays a people under. Jer. 24:9, "I will make them an object of horror and evil to every nation on earth. They will be disgraced and mocked, taunted and cursed, wherever I send them." It was not for their holiness, their godliness—but for their wickedness and ungodliness, that God was resolved to make them disgraced and mocked, taunted and cursed.

Proverbs 10:7, "The memory of the just is blessed; but the name of the wicked shall rot." The wickedness of the wicked heaps so much disgrace, disparagement, and dishonor upon them, that it makes their very *names* to rot and stink above-ground. Their *carcasses* do not more rot and stink under-ground, than their very *names* do rot and stink above-ground. The wickedness of the wicked will make their very names such a detestation and such an abhorring, that they shall either not be remembered at all, or if they are, they shall be only remembered as a rotten, stinking, putrified thing. As the curse of God follows the *soul* of a wicked man to hell—just so, the curse of

God follows the *name* of a wicked man on earth—so that it becomes most noisome and loathsome among the sons of men.

Sin does so debase and bebest the great ones of the world, that the prophets use to set forth wicked kings by the names of beasts—as the goat, the ram, the leopard, the bear—to note the beastliness of their conditions, and because they commonly maintain and exercise their government by brutish violence and tyranny, Dan. 7:3-7; Proverbs 28:15-16. And Christ himself, who never spoke treason nor sedition, terms king Herod a *fox* in Luke 13:32, "And he said unto them, Go you and tell that *fox*." Herod was as crafty and as subtle as a fox, he was as cruel and as fraudulent as a fox, and therefore he is very fitly termed by Christ a fox. And so Paul describes Nero by the name of a *lion*. 2 Tim. 4:17, "And I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion"—that is, out of the mouth of Nero, who for his power and cruelty was like a lion, for he was a most cruel and desperate persecutor of the Christians, and made a bloody decree, that "whoever confessed himself a Christian, should immediately be put to death as a convicted enemy of mankind." Now, by what has been said, you see that it is not holiness but wickedness that is the greatest disgrace, dishonor, and disparagement imaginable to the sons of men; and therefore there is no reason why the great ones of the world should disdain to pursue after holiness upon the account of this objection. But,

[4.] Fourthly, I answer, That this objection savors strongly of cursed pride, and of hellish loftiness and arrogance of spirit; for who are you, O great man! or what are you, O mighty man—but that you may be dishonored and disparaged for holiness' sake? What are your great swelling honors and titles—but as so many baby-rattles? And what is all your worldly greatness—but a wind that may blow you the sooner to hell? What is all your glory, but a glorious fantasy, a great nothing; and this Haman and Herod found by experience, and so did Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar. Bajazet, who was one of the greatest commanders in the world, was carried about in an iron grate to be a footstool to an insulting conqueror. And Belisarius, the most

famous general that the latter age of the Roman empire knew, and in greatest favor with Justinian his prince, was reduced to that great poverty that he was glad to beg his bread. And thus in all ages men have quickly fallen from the highest pinnacle of honor, to sit with Job upon the ash-heap.

O you great piece of vanity—who makes this objection—your true honor does not lie in your coat of arms, nor in your great titles, nor in your great lordships and manors, nor in your high birth, etc.—but in your interest in Christ, in your new birth, in your being an heir of the promises, in your title to heaven, and in your pursuit after holiness. Truly, if you should live and die without these things, it had been ten thousand times better that you had been brought up in a cave, than that you had been brought up at court; and that you had all your days lain under a hedge, than that you have sit so long upon seats of honor; and that you had begged your bread from door to door, than that you have had your full cups and full tables; and that you had been clothed with rags, than that you have put on costly robes—for **the great things of this world does but lay men the more open to great temptations, and to great provocations, even to commit the greatest abominations.**

O sirs, suppose a criminal, who is led to execution, should engrave his coat of arms upon the prison gate, would he not be accounted vain and mad? and yet such is the madness and vanity of the great ones of this world, that they endeavor with the greatest industry to leave monuments of their dignity in the prison of this world—but take no care to make provision for the eternal world, Psalm 49:10-15; and all this is out of the horrid pride and loftiness of their spirits. Psalm 10:4, "In his pride the wicked does not seek God; in all his thoughts there is no room for God." There is nothing which hinders a man from seeking after a holy God, and from pursuing after holiness, like pride. A proud heart is too stout to think of holiness, or to mind holiness, or to prize holiness, or to press after holiness. "Who is the Lord," says proud Pharaoh, "that I should serve him?" Exod. 5:2. Just so, says the proud heart, "What is holiness, that I should seek it,

and press so hard after it?" As there is no sin that fortifies the heart against holiness like pride—just so, there is no sin that weakens and disenables the heart to pursue after holiness like pride.

O you proud and lofty ones of the world, who look upon holiness as a poor, low, contemptible thing; tell me, what are all your noble births, and great estates, etc.—but **trifles** which God bestows upon the worst and basest of men? "The whole Turkish empire," says Luther, "is but a crust which God casts to a dog." Tell me whether the fly and the worm, yes, the most contemptible creature—was not man's elder brother at his first creation; and if so, why then should vain man be proud? Oh, tell me whether you have ever laid to heart that soul-abasing and soul-humbling text, Psalm 39:5, "Truly every man at his best estate is altogether vanity. Selah." "Truly" lets that in, and "Selah" shuts that up; "truly every man"—not some man—but "every man;" all men are all vanity, or "every man is every vanity." Every man is a comprehensive vanity—every *rich* man is every vanity, and every *great* man is every vanity, and every *mighty* man is every vanity, and every *noble* man is every vanity. Yes, and that which is yet more, "every man at his *best* estate," not in his childhood or decrepit old age—but in his best estate, when he is best constituted and matured, when he is most firmly fixed and settled on his best bottom—yet even then he is vanity. The original runs thus, "every man standing," that is, as some understand it, standing a-tiptoe in all his gallantry and bravery, in all his beauty and glory, and in all his pomp and majesty—is vanity, yes, every vanity.

Well sirs, remember this, that as *glow-worms* make a glorious show in the night—but when the day appears they appear to be poor, despicable, base creatures—just so, though now the high, the great, and mighty ones of the earth shine and gloriously sparkle in the darkness of this world—yet in that day when the Sun of righteousness shall arise, and manifest the secrets of all hearts to the world, and strip the great ones of all their titles of honor, and their noble parentage, and their rich and royal robes, and their troops and trains, and their crowns and chains—then they will appear to be but

base and despicable creatures. Then their poverty and misery, their nakedness and vileness will appear to all the world; then the world shall see that riches without righteousness, power without piety, and greatness without holiness, will do *the great ones of this world* no good. Oh, that you had now a heart to weep over that pride of heart, which keeps you from pursuing after holiness—so that you may not weep to all eternity in utter darkness! But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, I answer, That there are no people under heaven, who stand so much obliged to look after holiness, and to press with all their might to obtain holiness—as the rich, the great, the mighty, and the honorable of the earth.

For, **first**, why has God made them greater than others—but that they should labor to be holier than others? They are therefore *higher* than others, that they may be *holier* than others. The greatness of their outward glory calls aloud upon them to excel in sanctity; and woe to those who are resolved to be worse than others, because God has done more for them than he has for others.

Secondly, They of all men have more time, leisure, and advantages to *hear* much that they may be holy, and to *read* much that they may be holy, and to *pray* much that they may be holy, and to *confer* much with all sorts and ranks of men, that they may be holy; and therefore it concerns them above all other men in the world to be holy. Other men have neither the time nor the advantages to gain holiness as these men have.

But **thirdly**, Their examples are most powerful and prevalent with the people, either for much good, or for much evil, Proverbs 29:12. If the mountains overflow with waters, the valleys are the better; and if the head is full of disease, the whole body fares the worse. The *actions of rulers* are most commonly *rules for the people's actions*, and their examples pass as current as their coin. [Esther. 1:10-11, 15-18. It is noted in King Alphonsus's sayings, that "a great man cannot commit a small sin."] If their examples are evil, there are none so

dangerous as theirs. Jeroboam the son of Nebat is never mentioned in the Scripture, nor ever read of in the chronicles of Israel—but he draws a tail after him, like a blazing star, "who made Israel to sin."

A sick head disorders all the other parts, and a dark eye benights the whole body. The evil examples of great men corrupts the air round about. The common people are like soft wax, easily receiving impressions from the seals of great men's vices. If a peasant meets with luxury in a scarlet robe, he dares be like such, having so fair a cloak for it. If the common people meet with drunkenness of a great public person, they dare be such themselves; they make no bones to sin by prescription, and to damn themselves with authority. Austin brings in some excusing their compliances with the sinful customs of those times thus, "Great personages urged it, and it was at the king's banquet." They thought it a sufficient excuse to plead the examples of great men.

And if the examples of great men are virtuous, there are none so winning and drawing as theirs. [Carus the Roman emperor used to say, "A good leader makes a good follower."] Men who are high and eminent in authority, power, and dignity, and eminent also in grace and holiness—they carry the inferior people by their examples to a *liking* of holiness, and to a *love* of holiness, and to a *pursuit* after holiness. As the biggest stars in the skies are always the brightest, and give the greatest luster to those of a lesser magnitude—just so, those who, in respect both of greatness and grace, are so many shining stars—they give the greatest light and luster to others by their shining lives. Oh, what a world of good will the gracious example of a good prince provoke others unto! It was the saying of Trajanus, "Subjects prove good by a good king's example."

Stories tells us of some who could not sleep when they thought of the trophies of other worthies who went before them. The gracious examples of great men are very awakening, quickening, and provoking to that which is good, as is most evident in all those kingdoms, countries, cities, and villages where such men live. And

therefore great men are the more obliged to be godly men, and honorable men to be holy men.

But, **fourthly**, of all men under heaven, you will have the greatest accounts to make up with God; and therefore you have the more cause to seek after holiness. Where God gives much there he looks for much, Luke 48. [It was excellent counsel that the heathen orator gave his hearers—"Let us so live as those who must give an account of all at last."] O sirs, God will bring you to an account for that talent of *honor*, and that talent of *wealth*, and that talent of *birth*, and that talent of *power*, and that talent of *authority*, and that talent of *interest*, and that talent of *time*, etc., that he has entrusted you with! How will you be able to stand in the day of account without holiness in your hearts?

King Philip the Third of Spain, whose life was free from gross evils, professed that he would rather lose all his kingdoms than offend God willingly; yet, being in the agony of death, and considering more thoroughly of his account that he was to give to God, fear struck into him, and these words broke from him: "Oh, would to God I had never reigned! Oh, that those years I have spent in my kingdom I had lived a private life in the wilderness! Oh, that I had lived a solitary life with God! How much more securely should I have now died! How much more confidently should I have gone to the throne of God! What does all my glory profit me—but that I have so much the more torment in my death!"

Well, gentlemen, there is a day a-coming wherein the Lord will call you to a strict account, both for the *principal*, and also for the *interest* of all those talents of honor, riches, and greatness, etc., that he has put into your hands! How will you be ever able to hold up your heads in this day of account, unless you experience principles of holiness in your hearts, and hold forth the power of godliness in your lives? If *Saul* was astonished when he heard Jesus of Nazareth but calling upon him, Acts 22:7-8; if *Herod* was affrighted when he thought that John Baptist was risen from the dead, Mark 6:16; if the

Philistines were afraid when they saw David's sword, 1 Sam. 21:9; if the *Israelites* were appalled when they saw Aaron's rod, Num. 7:10; if *Judah* was ashamed when he saw Tamar's signet ring and staff, Gen. 38:25-26; and if *Belshazzar* was amazed when he saw the handwriting on the wall, Dan. 5:9—oh, how astonished, how affrighted, how ashamed, and how amazed will the great ones of the world be—who live and die without holiness, when God shall bring them to the judgment bar, and command them to give an account of all the talents that he has put into their hands!

If the Carthaginians were troubled when they saw Scipio's sepulcher; if the Saxons were terrified when they saw Cadwallon's image; and if the Romans were astonished when they saw Caesar's bloody robe; ah! how will all the great unholy ones of the earth be troubled, terrified, and astonished in the great day of their accounts! There are none who will have such large accounts to give—as the great ones of the world, and therefore there are none who stand so strongly engaged to look after holiness as they do.

But, **fifthly**, the greater any men are on earth, if they live and die without holiness, the greater will be their torments in hell! All their greatness, glory, and gallantry will but sink them the lower in hell. The Scribes and Pharisees were the rich, the high, and the great ones of the times—and these Christ lays under the greater damnation, Mat. 23:14. The Germans have this proverb, "The pavement of hell, is made of the bare skulls of the priests, and the glorious crests of gallants." Their meaning is, that the more eminent any are in church or state, and do not employ their eminency, power, and authority in ways of piety and sanctity—the lower they shall lie in hell—yes, these men, of all others, shall lie lowest in hell! Rev. 18:7, "As much as she glorified herself and lived luxuriously, give her that much torment and grief!" Isaiah 47:8. Babylon's torment and sorrow must be suitable to her sin. Babylon excelled all others in pride, haughtiness, luxury, and blasphemy, etc., and her punishments must be answerable. Just so, the great, the rich, the high, and the mighty men of the world—they usually exceed all others in pride, drunkenness,

uncleanness, filthiness, oppression, vainglory, gluttony, and tyranny, etc., and according to their sins, will be their torments and their punishments in hell!

Isaiah 30:33, "Topheth has long been prepared; it has been made ready for the *king*. Its fire pit has been made deep and wide, with an abundance of fire and wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of burning sulfur, sets it ablaze." [Tophet is the name of a place in the valley lying on the south side of Jerusalem, Joshua 18:16. Now in this valley stood Tophet, wherein the idolatrous Jews used to burn their children in sacrifice to the idol Moloch, and it had that name from the drums or tabrets that their idolatrous priests used to beat upon at the time of their detestable services, to drown the hideous shrieks and lamentable cries of the poor sacrificed children!] Alas! the brick-kilns of Egypt, and the furnace of Babylon, were but as a blaze of straw, compared to this tormenting Tophet, which has long been prepared for the great and mighty ones of the earth!

Oh, how dreadful must that fire be—which is prepared by God himself, and which is kindled by the breath of the Lord, and which shall never be quenched! Such is the fire which is prepared for the great and mighty ones of the world! Oh, the *easeless*, the *endless*, the *remediless*, the *inevitable* torments which are prepared for those who are great and graceless! In hell their wanton *eyes* shall be tormented with ugly and fearful sights of ghastly spirits! In hell their *ears*, which used to be delighted with all delightful music, shall now be filled with the hideous cries, howlings, and yellings of devils and damned spirits! In hell their *tongues* of blasphemy shall now be tormented with drought and thirst; and though with the rich glutton, they cry out for a drop to cool their tongues—yet justice will deny them *drops*, who have denied others *crumbs*! In hell their *hands* of bribery, cruelty, and tyranny shall now be bound with everlasting chains, and so shall their *feet*, which were once swift to shed innocent blood. In a word, their torments shall be universal, they shall extend to every member of the body, and to every faculty of the soul.

Ah, sirs fire, sword, famine, prisons, racks, and all other torments that men can invent, are but as flea-bitings, compared to those scorpions! They are but as *drops*, compared to those *vials* of wrath! They are but as *sparks*, compared to those eternal *flames* that all unsanctified people shall lie under.

Look! as the least joy in heaven infinitely surpasses the greatest comforts on earth, so the least torments in hell do infinitely exceed the greatest that can be devised here on earth.

For a close, remember this—as there are degrees of glory in heaven—just so, there are degrees of torment in hell; and as those who are most eminent in grace and holiness shall have the greatest degrees of glory in heaven—just so, those who are most vile and wicked on earth shall have the greatest degrees of torments and punishments in hell. [Mat. 10:15, and 11:22; Luke 12:47-48.]

Now common experience tells us that the rich, the great, the high, the honorable, and the mighty ones of the world—are usually the most excelling in all wickedness and ungodliness; and therefore their condemnation will be the greater, they shall have a hotter and a darker hell than others—unless they labor after this holiness, which will be their only fence against hell, and their sure path to heaven.

But, **sixthly** and lastly, of all men on earth—the rich, the great, and the honorable will be found most inexcusable. The poor and the lowly ones of the earth will plead their lack of time, and lack of means, and lack of opportunities; they will be ready to say, "Lord, we have risen early, and gone to bed late, Psalm 127:1-2, we have labored, and sweat, and drudged, and all little enough to get bread to eat, and clothes to wear, and to keep the police from the door, and to pay every man his own. Had we had but the time, the means, the advantages that such and such gentlemen have had, and that such and such nobles have had, and that such and such princes have had, etc., oh, how we would have minded holiness, and studied holiness,

and pressed after holiness! But seeing it has been otherwise with us, we hope, Lord, we may be excused."

But what excuse will you be able to make, O you great ones of the earth, who have had time, and opportunities, and all advantages imaginable—to make yourselves holy and happy forever—and yet you have trifled away your golden seasons, and forgotten the one thing necessary, and given yourselves up to the lusts and vanities of this world—as if you were resolved to be damned?

Let me a little allude to John 15:22: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak or excuse for their sin." Just so, will God one day say to the great ones of the world: "Had I not given you riches, and greatness, and honor, etc., to have encouraged you to look after holiness, and that you might have time, and leisure, and opportunity to seek holiness and pursue it, you might have had some cloak, some excuse for your neglecting so great, so glorious, so noble, and so necessary a work. Oh! but now you have no cloak, no excuse at all for your sin. Now you can show no reason under heaven why an eternal doom should not be passed upon you." Ah how silent, how mute, how speechless, and how self-condemned, will all the great ones of the world be, when God shall thus expostulate with them! Oh, that such would seriously lay to heart Mat. 22:11-12: "And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and he says unto him, Friend, how did you get in here—not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless." By the wedding garment the learned understand holiness of heart and life. Now when the king questions him about the lack of this wedding garment, he is speechless, or as the Greek word imports, "he was muzzled or haltered up," that is, he held his peace, as though he had a bridle or a halter in his mouth; he was not able to speak a word for himself, his own conscience had passed a secret sentence of condemnation upon him, and he sat silent under that sentence, as having nothing under heaven to say why he should not be cast into utter darkness. And this will be the very case of all the rich, the great, and the mighty ones of

the world, who shall be found without the garment of holiness, when the Lord shall enter into judgment with them.

And thus you see by these six arguments, that there are no people under heaven who are so eminently engaged to look after holiness—as the rich, the great, and the mighty ones of the earth. But,

Objection 7. Seventhly and lastly, Others may object and say, "If we should we pursue after holiness—we shall be sure to be reviled, slandered, and reproached on all hands; everyone will hoot and hiss at us, we shall become a scorn and a byword to all that live in the family with us, and to all our neighbors round about us; everyone will scorn us, and hate us, and we shall be their table-talk, and their song, and the butt of their ridicule, etc.

Now that you may be sufficiently armed against this objection, I desire you seriously to consider of these five following answers:

[1.] First, That those who revile and reproach holiness, are such that have never known the necessity nor the excellency of holiness; they have never experienced the power nor the sweetness of holiness; they speak evil of things they know not, of things they understand not, Jude 10; 1 Tim. 1:7. Not to know is man's *misery*—but to speak evil of that which a man understands not is the height of *folly*; and this these revilers do. "Had they known," says the apostle, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory," 1 Cor. 2:8—just so, I say, had these revilers known the splendor, the beauty, and the glory of holiness—they would never have reviled it and scorned it. Had the Jews known the Godhead of Christ, the divinity of Christ, the glory of Christ, they would never have asked for Barabbas, and have railed on Jesus as they did. Just so, had these railers but known the worth and the weight of holiness, they would never have cried up wickedness, and decried holiness as they do.

Now, oh what shame, what folly, what vanity is it for a man to turn his back upon holiness because such revile it and scorn it—who never

knew feelingly, nor experimentally, what holiness was! Would not a man either sigh or laugh at him who would turn his back upon riches, honors, and preferments, etc., because the blind, poor, and beggarly sort of people, who never experienced what these things mean, casts dirt, scorn and reproach upon them? and is not this the present case? Surely yes!

The fox in the fable, when he could not get at the grapes, cried out, that "they were sour, they were sour!" Just so, men who cannot reach to the riches, the honors, and the great things of the world, oh, how do they cry out against these things! oh, what disgrace, scorn, and contempt do they cast upon these things! and all because they cannot reach them, because they cannot grasp them. The application is easy. It is men's ignorance of holiness, which makes them cry out so much against holiness. That heathen, Aristotle, hit the mark when he cried out, "Ignorance is the source of all sin; the very well-spring from whence all wickedness flows." For ignorance enslaves the soul to Satan, it lets in sins by troops, and then locks them up in the heart, and it shuts out all the means of recovery, etc. And who then will wonder to see ignorant people let fly at holiness? Suppose a geometrician should be drawing of lines and figures, and there should come in some silly, ignorant fellow, who seeing him, should laugh at him. Would the geometrician leave off his employment because of this derision? Surely not—for he knows that his laughter is but the fruit of his ignorance—as not knowing his science—and therefore he keeps on drawing, though the silly fellow should keep on in his laughing. O sirs, though ignorant people deride holiness, and laugh at holiness—yet be not ashamed of holiness—but hold on, and hold out in your pursuit after holiness, for they understand not the rules and principles by which you are actuated; and that is why they throw dirt in the face of holiness. But it will be your wisdom to wipe that off, and so much the more to pursue after holiness, by how much the more the silly ones of the world slight holiness, and laugh at holiness. But,

[2.] Secondly, There is no fence against an evil tongue. A man may fence himself against an evil eye, and against an evil hand, and against an evil head, etc.—but there is no fence against an evil tongue. An evil tongue is such an unruly, such a mischievous, such a dangerous, such a killing, and such a destroying member—that there is no fence against it. A man may fence off the stroke of a sword, the thrust of a rapier, and the shot of an arrow—but he can never fence off the reproach and the reviling of an evil tongue. If the heart is sanctified, the tongue is the best member in the body; if the heart is unsanctified it is the worst.

Aesop being by his master sent to buy up all the best meat he could get in the market, bought up all the tongues; and being sent again to buy up all the worst meat he could get in the market, he bought up all the tongues again. When he was asked why he did so, he answered, "that there was no flesh better than a good tongue, nor any flesh worser than a bad tongue." Which the apostle confirms fully in that James 3:2-12. [Bias, one of the seven wise men, told Amasis king of Egypt, that "the tongue was the best or worst member of the body." "The whole life of man is made up of the sins of the tongue." Basil.]

An evil tongue is wilder than the wildest beast. The horse, the donkey, the camel, the elephant, yes, the lion, the leopard, the bear, and all other beasts, have been tamed by man! But the tongue, no man, no monarch, on earth have ever been able to tame. An evil tongue, in some respect, is worse than the devil; for the devil may be shunned and avoided—but an evil tongue no man can shun; and if you resist the devil he will fly from you—but the more you resist an evil tongue the more it will fly upon you.

Proverbs 16:27, "An ungodly man digs up evil; and in his lips there is a burning fire." An ungodly man, or a man of Belial, as the original has it, "digs up evil." Such old evils that have been long since buried in the grave of oblivion and forgetfulness, he digs up to cast in the saints' faces, to reproach them with. The teeth of malice will be still a-digging to find out something against the people of God, and if they

can pick up anything out of the ash-heap of false reports to object against them, their lips presently are as so many burning beacons to discover it to all the world. Now their tongues will be set on fire by hell, and now they will labor to fire the hearts and tongues of others against the people of God.

David, who fell oftener under the sad lashes of evil tongues, compares reviling tongues to three fatal weapons: a razor, a sword, and an arrow.

1. To a **razor** in Psalm 52:2. Now you know a razor meets with every little hair, and many times instead of shaving the hair it slashes the flesh; and sometimes by missing the beard it endangers the throat. And so the reviling tongue will take the least advantage imaginable to slash and cut the names and reputations of those who fear the Lord, in a thousand pieces.

2. To a **sword**, Psalm 57:4, that cuts and wounds deep; and so does the reviler's tongue cut deeply into the names, fames, and credits of the people of God; and,

3. To an **arrow**, Psalm 64:3. The sword only cuts when we are near—but the arrow hits at a distance. The sword cannot cut except we are at hand—but the arrow may hit us when we are afar off. The reviler can easily shoot his arrows of reproach a great way off; he can shoot them from one town to another, from one city to another, from one kingdom to another, yes, from one end of the earth to the other, Psalm 73:9. When the hands are manacled, and the feet fettered and stocked—the tongue travels freely all the world over, and loads the names of men with what reproaches it pleases.

The tongue is the great interpreter of the heart; the tongue is the key which unlocks those treasures of wickedness that are in the heart; the corruptions of men's hearts commonly breaks forth at their lips, Mat. 12:34. Look! as a pimpled face is a symptom of a distempered liver, and as a stinking breath is a symptom of corrupted lungs—just

so, a reviling tongue is a symptom of a base rotten heart. [That man has commonly most of the devil in his heart—who has most of the devil in his mouth.]

When the pump works, you may quickly know whether the water which is in the fountain or well, is clear or muddy, sweet or stinking; and when the clapper strikes you may soon guess of what metal the bell is made of; and so by men's tongues you may easily guess what is in their hearts. If the tongue is vile—the heart is so; if the tongue is bloody—the heart is so; if the tongue is adulterous—the heart is so; if the tongue is malicious—the heart is so; if the tongue is covetous—the heart is so; and if the tongue is cruel—the heart is so, etc.

Men's minds are known by their mouths. If the mouth is bad—the mind is not good. He who is rotten in his talk—is commonly rotten in the heart. Of all the members of the body there is none so serviceable to Satan as an evil tongue; and therefore when all the body is full of sores, Satan will keep the tongue from blisters, so that a man may the more freely and fully curse God and die. And this was the reason why Satan spared Job's tongue, when he sadly pained all other members of his body, so that his grand design, which was to provoke Job both to curse God and to charge him foolishly, might take place; but Job's tongue was oiled with grace, and proved his glory in his trying hour; and instead of cursing, he blesses a taking God—an angry God.

O sirs, the world is as full of evil tongues, as the Nile is of crocodiles, or as Sodom of sulphur, or as Egypt of lice; and there is no fence, no guard against these evil tongues; and therefore why should any man be discouraged from pursuing after holiness, because of the revilings of evil tongues? Munster writes of men in India which speak not like men—but bark like dogs; and who regards such men? no more should we regard such foul-mouthed people who are still barking against holiness, as the dogs bark against the moon; but as the moon runs her race and holds her course, though all the dogs in the town bark ever so much at it—just so, should you pursue after holiness,

though all the tongues in the town should be barking and scoffing at you. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Consider that those who now reproach holiness will before long be of another mind; those who now revile and reproach holiness will in a short time change their minds and their tunes. When these very men who revile holiness shall come to fall under terrors and horrors of conscience, and when they shall come to lie upon their dying beds, and to have their immortal souls sit trembling and quaking upon their pale lips, and when they shall appear before the great God, and awake with everlasting flames about their ears—oh, how will they then wish that they had never reviled holiness! How will they then wish that they had prized holiness, and that they had spent their all in pursuing after holiness! Num. 23:10. Oh, how will they then charge themselves, and censure themselves, and arraign and condemn themselves, for their scorning and condemning of holiness! Oh, how will they then wish that they had never heard of holiness, nor read of holiness, nor thought of holiness! Oh, how will they then wish that their mothers' wombs had proved their tombs, and that they had rather lived and died in a land of darkness—than thus to live and die without holiness!

Now, oh, what folly and madness is it for you to neglect the pursuit of holiness, because such and such revile it, who perhaps before the next year, the next month, yes it may be the next Sabbath comes about, will wish ten thousand times over and over that they had pursued after it, and that they had made it their greatest work in this world to obtain it! But,

[4.] Fourthly, Such people who are revilers, deriders, and haters of holiness, should rather be divinely despised, scorned, and slighted—than anyways gratified, encouraged, pleased, and strengthened in their evil ways by your neglect of holiness, and by your non-pursuance after holiness. Oh, how may your neglect of holiness upon the account of revilings and scornings, strengthen the hands and the hearts of revilers and scorers! etc., Ezek. 13:19, seq.; and therefore it

is much better divinely to slight and disdain them, than by sinful omissions to gratify and please them.

See how slighting Elisha carries it to wicked Jehoram, though he was a king: 2 Kings 3:13-14, "Elisha said to the king of Israel, "What do we have to do with each other? Go to the prophets of your father and the prophets of your mother." [The prophets here spoken of were the remaining prophets of Baal, of the idolatrous groves, and of the calves of Jeroboam] "No," the king of Israel answered, "because it was the Lord who called us three kings together to hand us over to Moab." Elisha said, "As surely as the Lord Almighty lives, whom I serve, if I did not have respect for the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look at you or even notice you." It was not the great distress and danger that they were in, being likely to perish for lack of water, nor the dignity of kings, nor the number of three—but the goodness, the graciousness, and holiness of Jehoshaphat, which wrought upon Elisha to work a miracle to preserve them and their people alive. Had it not been for Jehoshaphat, the holy prophet would not have honored Jehoram with a look, no, not with a cast of his eye. These words, "I would not look at you or even notice you," are words of a very high strain, and speak out a great deal of holy loftiness, stateliness, and contempt towards king Jehoram.

And the same spirit was working in Mordecai towards wicked Haman, as you may see in Esther 3:2, "All the royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and paid honor to Haman, for the king had commanded this concerning him. But Mordecai would not kneel down or pay him honor." [The Persians' manner was to kneel down and reverence their kings, and such as he appointed in chief authority, which Mordecai would not do to this proud, ambitious, wicked Haman, though all the courtiers, and the king's life-guard, and all who attended the court did.] The Persian kings, as many other heathenish kings, were revered by their subjects with a kind of divine honor or service; and such reverence and honor the king commanded should be showed to his great favorite Haman; but this renowned Mordecai refused to do. He was so divinely noble and

stout, that he would not reverence such a wicked wretch in his heart, nor yet yield to him who outward worship that was required by the king, it being more than was due to a man. Some of the Rabbis say, that Haman had the image of some false God about him, and that therefore Mordecai would not bow before him, lest he might seem to bow to the idol that Haman carried about him: others of the Rabbis say, that Haman did make himself a god, and required such worship as was due only to the true God, and that therefore Mordecai would not reverence him, nor bow before him. And other expositors say that it was more honor than did belong to a man that they gave to Haman; and that therefore Mordecai refused to bow to him. And it is very remarkable that some of the wisest and best of heathens have forborne to come into their king's presence, because there was expected greater honor and worship to be done to their kings than was fit to be done to a mortal man. But that which is most considerable, and most probable, is this, that therefore Mordecai refused to reverence Haman, and to bow unto him, because he was a wicked Amalekite, and a bitter enemy to the people of God, and of that nation and of that stock whose remembrance God would have blotted out under heaven, *Exod. 17:14; Deut. 25:19;* and with whom the Lord had sworn that he would have war from generation to generation, until they were utterly wasted and destroyed, *Exod. 17:16,* compared with that *1 Sam. 15:3.*

It has been usual with the saints to slight such who have been slighers of Christ and holiness. ["I shall look upon Auxentius no otherwise than as upon a devil, so long as he is an Arian," said holy Hilary.] When Amphilochius the bishop came into the presence of the emperor Arcadius and his son, who was then partner with his father in the empire, he saluted the emperor with all reverence—but slighted his son, whereupon the emperor was very much displeased, and demanding the reason why he so slighted his son? the bishop answered, because he had slighted and neglected the eternal Son of God, he being at that time a professed Arian; whereupon the emperor received the bishop again into favor, and banished all Arians out of his dominions. I have read of one Maris, a godly bishop

of Chalcedon, who, being blind, and Julian, that apostate emperor, giving him some opprobrious words, calling him blind fool, because he had rebuked him for his apostasy, the good man answered thus, "I bless God that I have not my sight, to see such an ungracious face as your is."

When a great Lord of this land, who was as graceless as he was great, met Mr. Fox in London streets, and asked him how he did, Mr. Fox said little or nothing to him; whereupon says this great Lord, "Sir, do you not know me?" "No, not I" said Mr. Fox. Says the Lord, "I am such a one." "Sir," said Mr. Fox, "I desire to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified." Polycarpus meeting at a certain time with Marcion the heretic: says Marcion, "Don't you know me?" "Yes," said Polycarpus, "I know you to be the first-begotten child of the devil." And indeed, why should we prefer him before a piece of copper, that prefers a piece of gold before his God, yes, that prefers his lusts and every toy and trifle before Jesus Christ, his immortal soul, and the great concernments of the eternal world? God commanded in the old law that whatever did go with its breasts upon the ground, should be an abomination to us. Oh, how much more should we abominate that man whose heart and soul is glued unto a piece of earth, or to this or that defiling and destroying lust: Proverbs 29:27, "An unjust man is an abomination to the just: and he who is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked."

The quarrel between the seed of the *woman* and the seed of the *serpent* is almost six thousand years old, Gen. 3:15. Light and darkness, heaven and hell, are not more opposite and contrary one to another, than these are contrary one to another. That seed of enmity that was at first between them is now grown up on both sides to an abomination, and an abhorring of each other. [The antipathies which are in nature between the elephant and the boar, the lion and the rooster, etc., is nothing to that which is between the just and the unjust.] The just man says, "What have I to do with you, you son of Belial?" And the unjust man says, "What have I to do with you, you son of David?"

The original in the text last cited is observable, the just abhors the man of iniquity, that is, the man who is made up of iniquity, that is, nothing but iniquity. Now, this shows that it is iniquity in the man who makes the man to be an abomination to the just; but now wicked men they abhor the upright for their very uprightness, they abhor him who is upright in the way, and could wish him quite out of the way, and will do what they can to do away with him. The uprightness of the upright is such a terror to the wicked that they cannot but abominate and abhor the upright; and therefore, no wonder if the upright abominate them; and indeed, who can look upon wicked men, as enemies to God, as adversaries to Christ, as murderers of their own souls, as fighters against the church, as champions for Satan, and as pests and plague of a nation—and not abhor them, and not abominate them?

O sirs, not to despise the wicked, is an argument that you yourselves are wicked; and not to despise the wicked is a means to make them more wicked; not to despise the wicked is to encourage and tempt the wicked to be sevenfold more wicked; yes, not to despise the wicked, who despise God, Christ, heaven, and holiness, etc., is to despise God himself. As for such who advance the wicked, who magnify the wicked, who flatter the wicked, who strengthen the hands of the wicked, who are most in with the wicked, who joy and glory in the prosperity of the wicked, and who sigh and mourn at the downfall of the wicked; these are certainly wicked, yes, they are eminently wicked, and therefore the more to be slighted and scorned by men of integrity and sanctity. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, To neglect the pursuit of holiness upon the account of this objection, is to debase the great God, and to overvalue vain man, as if there were more power, ability, policy, and malice, etc., in worthless man to hurt and harm you, than there is power, all-sufficiency, wisdom, goodness, and graciousness in God to defend you, and secure you, and arm you against all the reproaches and revilings of slanderous tongues. Now who are you, and what are you, O vain man! that you should dare to lessen God—and greaten man;

to debase God—and exalt man; yes, to set up man above God himself, and to ungod him as much as as you can? And yet all this you do when you turn your back upon holiness, because of the revilings and reproaches of wicked men.

But I shall say no more to this objection, because I have spoken very largely to this objection in my former books. If you desire further satisfaction to this objection, turn to that treatise called "Apples of Gold," etc., and you will find seven more distinct answers to it. And see also my "Mute Christian under the Smarting Rod," and you will find eight answers more to this objection. I confess several other objections might be made against your pursuing after holiness—but because I have spoken to them at large in my former writings, therefore I shall not trouble you with them here; and therefore let thus much suffice for answer to those objections that usually men make when they are pressed home to follow after holiness.

Six evidences of the reality and power of holiness

And so I shall come now to the second part of the exhortation, and that relates to God's holy ones—to his sanctified ones—to those who have obtained holiness—to those who have experienced the principles, the power, the life, and the sweetness of holiness. And here let me exhort such, to express, declare, evidence, and hold forth both the reality and power of holiness; and that,

[1.] First, Evidence and declare the truth and reality of your holiness—by keeping yourselves free from gross enormities, from scandalous wickednesses, Romans 2:23-25. Oh, remember that one scandalous sin will obscure and cloud all your graces and spiritual excellencies. [If a sow does but wallow in one miry or dirty hole, she is filthy, etc.] Look! as one spot in the face spoils all the beauty, and one blot upon the copy obliterates the whole copy, and as one drop of ink colors a whole glass of clear water—just so, one scandalous sin will blot and blur all former acts of piety and holiness, it will stain all a man's duties and services, it will deface all a man's contentments and enjoyments, it will dash and erase out all those golden characters of righteousness and goodness that have been stamped upon the soul. The Babylonians beholding the enormities of the Jews, cried out, "These are the people of the Lord, these are come out of the Lord's land," Ezek. 36:20. David's one act of folly with Bathsheba made the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme. When one commended Alexander for his many noble acts, another objected thus against him, "Yes—but he killed Calisthenes. He was valiant and successful in the wars; ay—but he killed Calisthenes. He overcame the great Darius; ay—but he killed Calisthenes." His meaning was, that this one unjust and unrighteous action clouded and darkened all his most noble deeds. A Christian cannot after his conversion fall into a scandalous sin—but it will be objected against him by everyone, to the defacing and darkening of all his spiritual glory.

When Naaman the Syrian was cured, and as some think converted, by the prophet Elisha, he offers gold and rich garments—but he bows in the house of Rimmon. He seems to be very devout and religious—but he bows in the house of Rimmon. He promises to offer to none but the Lord—but yet he bows in the house of Rimmon. This Rimmon, like the fly in the alabaster box, spoiled all his best intentions and highest resolutions; and thus one scandalous vice disgraces all the noble virtues which are in a Christian, 2 Kings 5:1. [One flaw in a diamond takes away the luster and the price of it. If we fall but once into a puddle, it will defile us, and make everyone point at us.]

"Oh, such a man is a very holy man—but . . ." And such a one is a very gracious, experienced disciple—but . . ." And such a one is a very wise and understanding man—but . . ." And such a one is a very active, stirring saint—but—etc., This "but" mars all. If there be but one crack in the honey-glass, there the wasp will be buzzing; and if there be but one scandalous sin that a Christian falls into in all his life, how will the wicked be still a-buzzing of that about, both in city and country! O sirs, there are no sins which open so many mouths, and which saddens so many hearts, and which swell so many eyes, and that endangers so many souls—as scandalous sins do! Therefore above all keeping—keep off from them.

O sirs, as you would not harden sinners, as you would not encourage sinners, as you would not tempt sinners, as you would not stumble sinners, yes, as you would not have a hand in the damnation of sinners—take heed of scandalous sins, Romans 14:13. O sirs, as you would not provoke the great God, 1 Kings 11:9, as you would not crucify afresh the Lord of glory, and put him to an open shame, as you would not set the Comforter a-mourning, who alone can comfort you, as you would not raise a hell in your own consciences, and as you would not darken the church's glory—fly from scandalous sins as you would fly from hell itself.

I have read of holy Polycarp, that religious martyr and bishop of Smyrna, how that in the time of the fourth persecution, under Marcus Antonius Verres, when he was commanded to swear but one oath, made this answer, "Eighty-six years have I endeavored to do God service, and all this while he never hurt me, and how then shall I speak evil of so good a Lord and master, who has thus long preserved me?" And being further urged to swear by the pro-consul, he answered, "I am a Christian and cannot do it; let heathens and infidels swear if they will, I cannot do it—even if it were to the saving of my life." This holy man would rather sacrifice his life than fall into a scandalous sin. O Christians, pray and watch, and watch and pray, that you may never be left to stain your own honor, or the honor of your profession, by falling into scandalous sins!

Well, friends! remember this, it is not infirmities—but enormities, it is not weaknesses—but wickednesses, which will cast the crown from off your heads, and which will strip you of all your glory! Therefore, as you would hold fast your crown, keep at an everlasting distance from scandalous sins, etc. But,

[2.] Secondly, Evidence and declare the truth and reality of your holiness—by your cordial thankfulness for so rare a jewel, and for so great a mercy. [Psalm 103:1-5, or, as the original will bear, "bow the knee, O my soul."] O sirs, one drop, one spark of holiness is more worth than heaven and earth, and how then can you but be thankful for it? Will you be thankful to that God that made you a man? and will you not be thankful to the same God that made you a saint? Will you bless him who made you a creature? and will you not bless the same God who has made you a new creature? Will you praise him for the heavens which are but the workmanship of his hands? and will you not praise him for holiness, which is the workmanship of his heart? Psalm 8. Tell me, O Christian, is not holiness a soul-mercy? and what mercies will you be thankful for, if not for soul-mercies?

Tell me, O Christian, is not holiness of all mercies the most **necessary** mercy? The lack of other mercies might have troubled

you, ay—but the lack of holiness would have damned you; and will you not be thankful for holiness, which is the one thing necessary? Tell me, O Christian, is not holiness an incomparable mercy? What is your health, your wealth, your wit, compared to holiness? Dare you mention your birth, your breeding, your arts, your parts, your honor, your greatness, or your advancement in the world, in that day wherein holiness is spoken of? Surely not! And will you not then be thankful for such an incomparable mercy as holiness is?

Tell me, O Christian, is not holiness a **special** mercy, a peculiar treasure which God entrusts but few men with? Does not the world lie in wickedness? 1 John 5:19. Are not the multitude in all places strangers, yes, enemies to holiness? And how then can you but be thankful for holiness?

Yes, once more tell me, O Christian, is not holiness a **mercy-sweetening** mercy? Is it not the beauty of holiness, which puts a beauty upon all your mercies? Is it not holiness, which bespangles all your comforts and contentments? Oh, how sour would all your mercies taste, and how pale and ashen would all your mercies look—were it not for holiness! It is the lack of holiness which makes all a man's mercies look as ill-favored as Pharaoh's lean cows, and it is the fruition of holiness which makes all a man's mercies look as well-favored as Pharaoh's fat cows, Gen. 41:2-4; it is holiness that both puts a color upon all our mercies, and that gives a taste and a relish to them.

All our mercies, without holiness, will be but as the waters of Marah—bitter, Exod. 15:23-25; it is only holiness, which is the tree that will make every bitter sweet, and every sweet more sweet. So how then can you but be thankful for holiness? Oh, remember how far off you were from God, and Christ, and the promise, and heaven, and happiness—when you were without holiness in this world, Eph. 2:12. Oh, remember what a child of wrath, what a bond-slave to Satan, what an enemy to God, and what an heir to hell you were—when you

were an opposer of holiness, and a secret despiser of holiness—and then be unthankful for holiness if you can!

Oh, remember that now by holiness, of a slave you are made a son; and of an heir of wrath you are made an heir of heaven. And instead of being Satan's bondman, you are now made Christ's freeman; your iron chains are now knocked off, as sometimes Joseph's were, and the golden chain of holiness is now put upon you, John 8:36. And what does all this call aloud for, but thankfulness?

Thales, a heathen, gave thanks to God for three things: 1. That he had made him a man, and not a beast; 2. That he had made him a man, and not a woman; 3. That he was born a Greek, and not a barbarian. And, oh then, what cause of thankfulness have you for your supernatural being, and for all those noble principles of holiness that the Lord has stamped upon your soul! etc. Shall the farmer be thankful for a plentiful harvest, and the merchant for large returns, and the shopkeeper for a full trade, and the mariner for a good voyage—and will not you be much more thankful for holiness? Shall the *beggar* be thankful for a crust to feed him, and shall the *blind* be thankful for a dog to lead him, and shall the *naked* be thankful for rags to cover him, and shall the *aged* be thankful for a staff to support him, and shall the *diseased* be thankful for a cordial to raise him—and will not you be thankful for holiness, yes, for that holiness which is *bread* to strengthen you, and a *guide* to lead you, and *raiment* to clothe you, and a *staff* to support you, and a *cordial* to comfort you? Oh, remember that **ingratitude** is a monster in nature, a faux-pas in manners, and a paradox in grace—damming up the course of all donations, both divine and human.

Lycurgus, as Musculus observes, among all his laws, made none against the ungrateful, because ingratitude was thought a thing so vile, as not to be committed by man. The Persians and Athenians condemned the ungrateful to death. Ah, unthankful Christians, how can you think of these heathens, and not blush! Shall they bless God for *crumbs*—and will not you bless God for *crowns*? Shall they bless

God for the gifts of *nature*, and will not you bless God for the gifts of *grace*? etc. Next to a holy Christ, holiness is the greatest gift which God can give, and therefore be thankful for it, etc. But,

[3.] Thirdly, Evidence and declare the truth and reality of your holiness—by the reality of your constant pursuit after holiness—by your holding up and holding on in a way of holiness—by your perseverance in holiness. This exhortation, "Pursue with all men, and holiness," Heb. 12:14, was given forth to such as had a *spirit* of holiness, and *principles* of holiness in them; and these are the men who the holy apostle presses to press after holiness. [Hosea 6:3; 1 Thes. 3:12-13; 2 Pet. 1:5-10; Phil. 3:14-16; 2 Pet. 3:17-18.] "Finally, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God, as we have taught you. You are doing this already, and we encourage you to do so more and more." 1 Thessalonians 4:1

That holiness will do us no good, which is not made good by perseverance. O sirs, shall the *ambitious* person pursue after his honors, and the *voluptuous* person after his pleasures, and the *worldling* pursue after his gain, and the *wanton* pursue after his harlots, and the *drunkard* pursue after his full cups, etc.; and shall not Christians much more pursue after holiness? Not to go forward is to go backward; and not to grow better is to grow worse; and not to grow more holy is to grow less holy. The *crown*, the *new name*, and the *white stone*—is for him who holds out, and who holds on in his pursuit after holiness. [Rev. 2:10,17; Jude 20; 1 Cor. 9:24; Heb. 12:1, 4.]

Progress in holiness is fitly compared to a building, to a race, to the morning light, and to the increasing moon. Now, you know, *houses* are raised from the foundations to the walls, and from the walls to the first story, and then to the second story, and then to the third, and so higher and higher, until you come up to the roof. And in a *race*, you know, men run on until they come to the goal. And the *morning light* shines brighter and brighter until it becomes perfect

day. And the *moon* increases more and more until it comes to the full moon. Just so, must Christians persevere and hold on in adding grace to grace. O Christians! you must not be like to a morning cloud, nor to the early dew; you must not stand still in the ways of holiness, as the sun stood still in Gibeon, Josh. 10:13; much less are you to go back, like the sun on Ahaz's dial, 1 Kings 10:11; but as a bridegroom which comes out of his chamber, and rejoices as a strong man to run his race, Psalm 19:5. Just so, must you delight to run the ways of God's commands, Psalm 119:32; you must maintain your progress in piety, whatever comes of it.

"Her ways are pleasant ways, and all her paths are peace." Proverbs 3:17. O sirs, the way of holiness is the *safest* way, the *noblest* way, the *sweetest* way, the *cleanest* way, the *pleasantest* way, and the *happiest* way; and therefore hold on, and hold up in that way, though the world, the flesh, and the devil should cry out, "There is a lion in the way, there is a lion in the way," Proverbs 26:13.

It is said of Hannibal, that notwithstanding the rough rocks, and the craggy cliffs of the Alps—yet he proceeded onward in his design for Italy, with this resolution, that he would either *find* a way or *make* a way. Just so, must Christians hold on in a way of holiness, notwithstanding all the *rocks* and *obstacles* and *difficulties* that they meet with in that way.

It is an observation of some of the learned, that those who were marked to be preserved in Jerusalem, were marked with the letter *tau*, which is the last of all the Hebrew letters, to signify that they must run the race of holiness even to the last, Psalm 44:17-22; Ezek. 9:4. O sirs, in the face of all your sins and unworthiness, God holds on in ways of mercy towards you; and why then should not you hold on in ways of sanctity towards him? Shall Satan persevere in his enmity against holiness? and shall wicked men persevere in their opposition to holiness? and shall formalists persevere in their neglect of holiness? and will not you persevere in your pursuit of holiness?

A good *farmer* will not give over sowing until he has sowed all his land; nor will a good *physician* give over his patient until he has cured him; nor will a good *workman* give over his work until he has finished it; no more should a good Christian give over his pursuit of holiness, until he is come up to the highest perfection of holiness. Look! as God carried on the work of *creation* from day to day until he had finished it, and as Christ carried on the work of our *redemption* from day to day until he had completed it—just so, Christians should look to a daily carrying on of the work of *holiness* in their hearts and lives, until that work be perfected and completed.

The philosopher being asked in his old age, why he did not give over his practice, and take his ease? answered, "When a man is to run a race of forty furlongs, would you have him sit down at the thirty-ninth, and so lose all his pains, and the prize for which he runs? Surely not! O Christians, you are racers, and you must run to the end of your race, Heb. 12:1; [What had it availed Peter to have escaped the first and second watch, if he had stuck at the iron gate, and had not passed through that also?] It is not enough to begin well, and to run well for a time—but you must hold out in running until you come to the goal, or else you will lose all the pains and labor that ever you have taken in religion, you will lose all the *prayers* that ever you have made, and you will lose all the *sermons* that ever you have heard, and you will lose all the *fasts* that ever you have observed, and you will lose all the *tears* that ever you have shed, and you will lose all the *alms* that ever you have given—if you do not hold out to the end. If you do not persevere in well-doing, you will lose your crown, and be undone forever after all your doings. A *progress in holiness* is requisite not only to your consolation—but also to your salvation, Mat. 24:13. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Evidence and declare the truth and reality of your holiness—by a resolute standing up for purity of religion, and for purity of worship and ordinances, in opposition to all mixtures and corruptions whatever. O sirs, the great God is concerned about nothing more in all the world, than upon purity in his worship,

James 1:27. There is nothing that does so provoke and exasperate God against a people, as *mixtures* in his worship and service, Mat. 21:12-13; John 2:15-17. Pollutions in worship do sadly reflect upon the *name* of God, the *honor* of God, the *truth* of God, and the *wisdom* of God; and therefore his heart rises against them. The very spirit, life, and soul of the second commandment lies in these words, "You shall not make to yourself any engraved image," etc. In matters of divine worship God abhors that men should mix their *water* with his wine, their *dross* with his gold, their *chaff* with his wheat, etc. When once men come to be so bold as to defile his worship with their mixtures, then God is resolved to be a swift and a terrible witness against them, as you may clearly see by comparing these notable places of Scripture. [Lev. 10:1-2; Ezek. 5:11-12, and 23:38-39; Jer. 7:29-30; Ezek. 8:17-18; Rev. 22-23; Deut. 4:2, and 12:32.]

There is no sin which does so incense and provoke God to jealousy and wrath against a people, as mixtures in worship. God can bear with defilements anywhere, but in his worship and service—and that,

First, Because mixtures in worship are cross to God's express commands. Who are you, O man! who dares run cross to his commands—who can command you into the dust, yes, into hell, at his pleasure? etc.

Secondly, Because this is to accuse the blessed Scripture of insufficiency. If the Scripture are a sufficient rule to order, guide, and direct us in all matters of worship—then how do you, O man! detract from the sufficiency of the Scripture, who mingles your own or other men's inventions with divine institutions, and set up your worship along side God's worship? O sirs, the Scriptures are sufficient to direct us fully in everything that belongs to the worship and service of God. We need not depend upon the wisdom, prudence, care, or authority of any men under heaven to direct us in matters of worship.

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16-17. The Scriptures are sufficient to inform the ignorant, to confute the erroneous, to reform the wicked, and to guide and direct, support and comfort those who are gracious. Here a lamb may wade, and an elephant may swim. Here is milk for babes, and meat for strong men, and comfort for the afflicted, and support for the tempted, and ease for the troubled, and light for the clouded, and enlargement for the straitened, etc. Oh, how full of light, how full of life, how full of love, how full of sweetness, how full of goodness, how full of righteousness and holiness, etc., is every chapter, and every verse in every chapter, yes, and every line in every verse!

The Scriptures are sufficient to direct us as to all the parts of worship. As,

1. public prayer.
2. reading and expounding.
3. preaching.
4. singing.
5. the seals both of baptism and the supper of the Lord.

The Rabbis say that a mountain of matter hangs upon every word of Scripture, yes, upon every tittle of Scripture. God never sends his people to the shop of men's traditions and inventions—but he still sends them to the Scripture: Isaiah 8:20, "To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn." And in the New Testament Christ sends his hearers to the Scriptures: John 5:39, "*Search* the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me." The Greek word that is here rendered *search*, signifies a strict, narrow, curious, diligent search. We must search the Scripture as we

would search for gold, or for some precious stones which we would gladly find; we must search the Scriptures as hunters seek and search out their game. And so the apostle sends his hearers to the Scriptures, 2 Pet. 1:19-22, as to a surer word than that of revelation. All which speaks out the sufficiency of the Scripture to direct us in all matters that concern our internal or eternal welfare. Oh, that you would forever remember these two things:

(1.) First, That that which bred the Popish religion, superstition, idolatry, and pompous worship—was men's departing from the word, and not cleaving to the word as a sufficient rule to direct them in all matters of worship. And,

(2.) Secondly, That that which has occasioned all those discords, divisions, heats, heart-burnings, animosities, and contentions, etc., about ceremonies, liturgy, forms, gestures, etc., has been men's not keeping close to the blessed word of God. When men forsake this perfect rule of Scripture, where won't they run? and what won't they do? Ah, who are you, O vain man—who accuses the holy Scriptures of insufficiency—how will you blush, and be ashamed and confounded, when in the great day the Lord shall plead the excellency, and vindicate the sufficiency and authority of his blessed book, in opposition to all the mixtures of men's traditions with divine institutions?

Thirdly, God won't nor can't bear with mixtures in his worship and service, because to bring them in is to accuse and charge God with weakness and folly, as if God were not careful enough, nor faithful enough, Heb. 3:4-6, nor mindful enough, nor wise enough, nor prudent nor understanding enough, to order, direct, and guide his people in the matters of his worship—but must be beholding to the wisdom, prudence, and care of man, John 4:23-24, of vain man, of sinful man, of vile and unworthy man, of weak and foolish man—to complete, perfect, and make up something that was lacking in his worship and service, Psalm 39:5, etc.

Fourthly, God won't bear with mixtures in his worship and service, because all mixtures debases the worship and service of God, and makes the worship a vain worship, Isaiah 29:13-14; Mat. 15:3, 6, 8-9. As the mixing of water with wine is the debasing of the wine, and the mixing of tin with silver, or brass with gold, is the debasing of the silver and gold—just so, for men to mix and mingle their traditions and inventions with God's institutions, is to debase the worship and service of God, and to detract from the excellency and glory of it. The kings and princes of this world have most severely punished such, who, by their base mixtures, have counterfeited their coin; and there is a day a-coming wherein the King of kings will most severely punish all such who have counterfeited his worship and service by mixing their Romish traditions with his holy institutions.

Rev. 22:18, "For I testify unto every man who hears the words of the prophecy of this book—If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues which are written in this book." And no wonder! For what horrible pride, presumption, stoutness, and baseness of spirit is it in foolish man to be so bold with the great God, as to dare to mix anything of his own with his worship and service, which, according to divine institution, is so perfect and complete! God will never tolerate it—to see men lay their *dirt* upon his *gold*, and to put their *rags* upon his royal *robes*.

Ah, Christians, Christians, evidence your holiness by standing up for holy ordinances and pure worship—in opposition to all mixtures whatever. Oh, don't you touch a polluted worship, don't you plead and contend for a polluted worship—but let Baal plead for Baal. And though all the world should wander after the beast—yet you must not follow them! And though every forehead should have the mark of the beast upon it—yet you must abhor his mark, and whatever else it is, which but smells and savors of the beast.

It is observable that in kings' courts, that children, fools, and the crude rabble, are much impressed with fine pictures, and rich shows, and glistening gaudy clothes, etc. But such as are wise, serious, grave

statesmen—they have no regard for such poor things, they look upon those things as things which are much below the nobleness and the greatness of their spirits, who have honorable objects, and the great and weighty affairs of the state to busy themselves about. Just so, though the children, the fools, and the rabble of the world are much affected and impressed with such pollutions and mixtures as makes up a glorious pompous worship—yet you who have a spirit of holiness, and principles of holiness in you, oh, how should you slight such things, and pass by such things as things below you, as things not worthy of you—who have a holy God, a holy Christ, a holy gospel, and a holy worship to busy your thoughts, your minds, your heads, and your hearts about. But,

[5.] Fifthly, Evidence and declare the truth and reality of your holiness—by bewailing and lamenting the loss of holiness. Ah, how is this crown of holiness fallen from our heads! Lam. 5:16. Oh the leanness of souls! Oh the spiritual witherings and decays in grace and holiness, which are to be found among many Christians this day! Some complain of the loss of *trade*, and others complain of the loss of *estate*; some complain of the loss of *credit*, and others complain of the loss of *friends*. But what are all these losses to the loss of holiness? And yet how few are there, who complain of the loss of holiness. Holiness is fallen in our hearts, in our families, in our streets, and in our churches; and yet how few are there to be found, who lament the fall of holiness.

O sirs, will you lament such as are fallen from *riches* to poverty, from *honor* into disgrace, and from the highest pitch of *prosperity* to the lowest step of beggary and misery; and will you not lament such who are fallen from the highest round to the lowest round in Jacob's ladder? O sirs, will you mourn over a decayed *estate*? will you weep over decayed *friends*? and will you sigh and sob over a decayed *body*? and will you not much more lament and mourn over decayed *souls*? etc. Ah, how many have lost that love, that life, that heat, that zeal, that readiness, that forwardness, and that resoluteness that once they had for God and godliness! Rev. 2:4-5.

Some have fallen from their holiness by giving themselves elbow-room to sin against the checks and lashes of conscience, Psalm 51. Others have decayed in holiness by their secret resisting and smothering the gracious motions of the Spirit, Acts 7:51. Some have fallen from holiness, either by their neglect of precious means, or else by their heartless using of the means, 1 Thes. 5:20. Others have fallen from their holiness, either by the allurements and enticements of a tempting world, or else by the frowns and threatenings of a persecuting world, 2 Tim. 4:10. Some have fallen from holiness by their non-exercise of grace. Others have fallen from holiness by not discerning their first decays in grace. Just so, that, upon one account or another, multitudes in these days have fallen from that holiness which was once their glory.

If you look into families, there you shall find masters complaining that their servants are so careless, foolish, frothy, light, slight, slothful, unfaithful, proud, and lofty—that they are not to be trusted. And if you look again into the same families, there you shall find servants complaining that their masters and mistresses are so exceeding froward, peevish, passionate, worldly, neglective of duties, and careless of their souls—that it is even a hell to servants to live with them. Now, how do you account for all these sad complaints—but either a total *lack* of holiness, or else a very great *decay* of holiness? And if you look among all other relations, as husbands and wives, parents and children, magistrates and people, ministers and Christians, oh, what sad divisions, what fiery contentions, and what fearful jars are there to be found! oh, what slightings, what revilings, what under-valuings, what heart-risings, what heart-swellings, and what heart-burnings are to be found among them! And what do all these things declare—but that the glory of God has departed from Israel, and that holiness is fallen to a very low ebb?

Ah friends, were there but more holiness among you, there would be more *unity* among you, and more *love* among you, and more *sweetness* and *tenderness* among you, and more *forbearance* and *patience* among you. Oh, then you would never be *snarling* one at

another, nor *biting* one of another, nor *plotting* one against another, nor *devouring* one of another any more.

Again, if you look among men whose abilities are great, whose gifts are high, whose profession is glorious, and whose expressions and notions are very seraphical, ah, what a little holiness will you find!

O sirs, shall the men of this world vex and fret, shall they weep and wail, and shall their lamentation and mourning be like that of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo, 2 Chron. 35:24-25, and that for the loss of a little wealth, or for a punctilio of honor, or a day of pleasure, or the smiles of a prince, etc.? And will not you lament and mourn for the loss of holiness, which is the choicest jewel in a Christian's crown? *Tears*, instead of *gems*—were the ornaments of David's bed when he was fallen from his holiness, Ps, 51. And though the Persian kings would have neither mourning, nor mourning apparel worn in their presence—yet the King of kings loves to see his people a-mourning for the falls of holiness, as well as for the heights of wickedness.

When news was brought to Xenophon of his son's death, he took off his crown from his head, and wept. O my brethren, who can hear of the death of holiness, and behold the death of holiness in men's hearts, lives, and families—and not take off his crown, and weep; and not take off his ornaments, and weep until he can weep no more? etc. But,

[6.] Sixthly, Evidence and declare the truth and reality of your holiness—by pursuing, pressing, and following after the highest degrees of holiness. Oh, do not sit down satisfied with some *drops* or *sips* of holiness—but labor after the *perfection* of holiness. Oh, don't content yourselves with so much holiness as will bring you to happiness, or with so much holiness as will keep wrath and your souls asunder, or hell and your souls asunder, or eternal ruin and your souls asunder. The exhortation in the text, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness," Heb. 12:14, is an exhortation that was given

out to saints who were holy before, and the life and force of the exhortation lies in this—that those who were holy should labor to be more and more holy, they should still be adding of grace to grace, holiness to holiness, they should still be a-going on from faith to faith, and from strength to strength. [2 Pet. 1:5-13; Romans 1:17; Psalm 84:7.]

As holiness has its conception, birth, and infancy—just so, it has its full growth, and after the highest degrees of holiness, all Christians must strive. Holiness is not like to Jonah's gourd, which shot up in a night—but it is like plants and trees which grow up by degrees, (Psalm 92:14,) and after the highest degrees we must endeavor. [Only mushrooms grow up to perfection in one night.] After the prophet Elijah had traveled a day's journey in the wilderness, he sat down and slept under a juniper-tree, and there God calls upon him, "Get up and eat," 1 Kings 19:4-5; and when he found him the second time he calls again upon him, "Get up and eat, because you have a great journey to go," verse 7. O Christians, you have a howling wilderness to travel through, you have a great journey to go, you have many a mountain to walk over, and many an enemy to vanquish—even the world, the flesh, and the devil, and many a cross to bear, and many a mercy to improve, etc., and therefore you have very great cause to up and eat. I say, get up and eat, that is—grow stronger and stronger in holiness, and to walk from grace to grace, and from virtue to virtue, and to come off from your milk, and to feed upon strong meat, Heb. 5:12-14, that you may hold out to the end of your journey, and neither faint nor fall short of that great salvation which attends perfection of holiness.

This *progress in holiness* is that main thing that the apostle presses upon the believing Corinthians in that 2 Cor. 7:1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." The apostle having in the former chapter armed the believing Corinthians with many strong arguments against all communion and fellowship with idolaters, he comes at last to touch upon those great

and glorious promises which, upon the account of their high and holy calling, they were interested in, verse 16-18. He presents them as singular motives, and as choice and precious encouragements, to move them to perfect holiness in the fear of God. There is no work on earth that so well befits the heirs of such precious promises as that of cleansing themselves from all filthiness on the one hand, and that of perfecting holiness in the fear of God on the other hand.

Now this being a point of the highest concernment, and of the greatest importance imaginable to the saints, I shall therefore endeavor these three things:

I. First, To lay down some **motives** to provoke you to perfect holiness in the fear of God, etc.

II. Secondly, I shall propound some **means**, some directions, that may help you to make a progress in holiness, etc.

III. Thirdly, I shall show you how you may know whether you have attained to such a perfection of holiness as we are all to strive after, etc.

Sixteen Provocations to Increased Holiness

(1.) The first motive to whet and stir up your spirits to labor after greater degrees and higher measures of holiness than yet you have attained to—consider that notwithstanding all the means, and all the advantages, and all the opportunities that you have enjoyed to work you to perfect holiness in the fear of God—yet you have obtained but to very small measures of holiness. You are rather *babes* than *men* in holiness; you are rather *shrubs* than *cedars* in grace; you are

rather *dwarfs* than *giants* in godliness to this very day. This sad charge I shall briefly charge against you by an induction of eight particulars, thus:

[1.] First, The strength, the power, the activity, and the prevalence of SIN in you to this day does witness to your faces that you have yet obtained but small measures of holiness. Romans 7:22-24; Isaiah 59:12. O my brethren, are not many of your corruptions as powerful and as strong as they were five, ten, yes, twenty years ago—notwithstanding all the *prayers* that you have made, and all the *sermons* that you have heard, and all the *tears* that you have shed, and all the *resolutions* that you have taken, and all the *promises* that you have made, and all the *conflicts* that you have had? And what does this speak out but that holiness is at a low ebb in your souls? **O sirs, were but holiness risen to a greater height in your souls—how readily would you trample upon your lusts!**

As the house of David grew stronger and stronger—the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker, 2 Sam. 3:1. As holiness rises in the soul by degrees—sin dies in the soul by degrees. The more any man abounds in holiness—the more he abounds in his spiritual conquests over the world, the flesh, and the devil, Gal. 8:14. O sirs, your *pride* testifies to your faces, and your *self-love* testifies to your faces, and your *worldliness* testifies to your faces, and your *passion* testifies to your faces, and your *meager faith* testifies to your faces, and your *hypocrisy* testifies to your faces, and your *carnality* testifies to your faces, etc., that yet you are not got up many rounds in Jacob's ladder, Hosea 5:5, and 7:10. But,

[2.] Secondly, You have not attained to much holiness; witness that high price that you set upon the toys, the trifles, and the vanities of this world, as Jonah did upon his gourd, Gen. 24:30-31. Ah, at what a rate do men value the empty *honors*, the fading *riches*, and the fleeting *pleasures* of this world! Did not Peter prefer an earthly tabernacle (Matthew 17) above a

celestial palace, not made with hands, and eternal in the heavens? But what do I talk of Peter, when this disease had again and again and again overspread the hearts of all the disciples, as you may evidently see by comparing these scriptures together. [Mat. 17:4; 2 Cor. 5:1-2; Mat. 18:1-2; Mark 9:33-36; Luke 9:46-47, and 22 to 28.] They had dispute upon dispute—which of them should be accounted greatest. They had often sharp contests among themselves, which of them should have the greatest honor, the best office, and the highest place in Christ's earthly kingdom! Indeed their thoughts, heads, and hearts were so taken up about an outward kingdom, a worldly kingdom, that they little minded either the spiritual kingdom of God within them, or the glorious kingdom of God above them.

As the foolish Indians prefer every toy and trifle before their mines of gold—just so, many Christians, who are low in holiness, prefer the trifling vanities of this world before the glorious treasures and endless pleasures which are at God's right hand, Psalm 16:11. Oh—but where holiness is risen to any considerable height, there men will make a very footstool of earthly crowns, for Christ to get up and ride in triumph. There all the glory and glitter of this world will be but as dross and dung, "But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ." Philippians 3:7-8. There men would, like the woman, the church, in the Revelation, "trample the moon," that is, all the things of this world, which are as changeable as the moon, "under their feet," Rev. 12:1. Were there but more holiness in your hearts, all the mirthful and gallant things of this world would be more contemptible in your eyes. O sirs, if Midas was condemned to wear ass's ears, because he preferred Pan's pipe before Apollo's lute, that is, human policy before divine providence—how severely are they to be censured, who prefer the poor, low, empty nothings of this world before all the glory and happiness of the eternal world! etc. But,

[3.] Thirdly, You have attained to but little holiness; witness your fears and faintings in a day of adversity.

Though there are as many *fear nots*, as there be *fears* in Scripture—yet in a day of calamity, how easily and frequently does your *fears* get above your *faith*! Isaiah 51:12-13, and 41:10, 14. What fainting-fits do then attend you! Proverbs 24:10, "If you faint in the day of adversity—your strength is small." Look! as bodily faintness discovers bodily weakness—just so, soul faintness discovers soul weakness. It is troubles, which are the trials of a Christian's strength. Afflictions will test what sap and life we have within us. As the man is for holiness—just so, is his strength under trials. He who has *no* holiness—has no strength; and he who has but a *little* holiness—has but a little strength. He who has much holiness—has much strength; and accordingly will bear up bravely in a day of trial; his bow, with Joseph's, will then abide in strength, Gen. 49:23-24. Though Noah in the building of his ark met with many a sore *trial*, and many a sad *affront*, and many a broad *jest*, and many a bitter *scoff*; and though the people generally laughed at the good old man, thinking that he did only dream of rain; yet Noah, being eminent in holiness, his bow abode in strength, and he held on building of the ark, until he had finished the work that God had commanded.

But oh the sadness, the weakness, the faintness—which attends most people in the day of their adversity! Jer. 8:18, 21, "When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; am I black; astonishment has taken hold on me." Chapter 45:3, "You did say, Woe is me now! for the Lord has added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighings, and I find no rest." Lam. 1:22, "For my sighs are many, and my heart is faint." Chapter 5:17, "For this our heart is faint, for these things our eyes are dim." Now this faintness in the day of adversity speaks out much spiritual weakness; for where holiness is risen to a noble height, there men will bear up courageously, even in a day of calamity.

The eagle is the king of birds, and therefore the Romans, who were the greatest potentates on earth, still bore the eagle in their standards. Now the naturalist observes concerning this royal bird, that whereas all other birds make a noise when they are hungry, this princely bird makes no noise at all, though he be ever so hungry, for such is the greatness and the nobleness of his spirit, that whatever befalls him, he won't cry, and whine, and repine, as other birds will do when they lack their food; his princely spirit carries him above all hunger, thirst, or danger. Just so, men who are eminent in holiness, are men of such noble, princely spirits—that they won't faint, nor vex, nor fret, nor complain—nor whine, whatever their needs, trials, or straits may be. Such afflictions as would break other men's hearts, cannot so much as break their sleep; they still hold on their way, and whatever they meet with, they will be still a-mounting nearer and nearer to heaven. But where there is but a little holiness, there men will be like the common fowls of the air, still a-making a noise, they will still be a-crying, whining, and repining under every trial and trouble they meet with. But,

[4.] Fourthly, You have but a little holiness; witness your easy, your ready, and your frequent fallings before temptations and motions to sin. O sirs, when the temptation does but touch and take; when you are no sooner tempted but you are conquered; no sooner assaulted but you are vanquished; certainly holiness is at a very low ebb in your souls. That garrison, without all question, is very weak—which is taken at the first assault; and that soldier is but slightly armed, that is run through at the first thrust. Just so, that Christian has but little spiritual strength in him, who is worsted and vanquished upon the first appearance of a temptation. When men's *understandings* are easily corrupted with error, or their *judgments* with levity, or their *wills* with frowardness, or their *affections* with disorderedness, or their *consciences* with unrighteousness—it is a very great argument that there is but little holiness within. O sirs, men eminent in holiness, in their ordinary course, have been always eminent in the resisting and withstanding

of temptations, as is evident in Joseph, Job, Daniel, the three Hebrew children, etc. [Gen. 39; Job 1; Dan. 3 and 6.]

Austin thanks the Lord that his heart and the temptation did not meet together. The devil tempting Bonaventure, told him that he was a reprobate, and therefore persuaded him to drink in the present pleasures of this life, for, says Satan, you are excluded from the future joys with God in heaven; to whom he answered, "No, not so, Satan, for if I must not enjoy God after this life, I will labor to enjoy him as much as I can while I live." When one of the martyrs was offered riches and honors if he would recant, he gave this excellent answer, "Do but offer me something that is better than my Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall see what I will say to you." And the young convert when he was tempted, answered, "I am not the man that I was!" When Valens the emperor offered large preferments to Basil, and told him what a great man he would make him, he answered, "Offer these things to children, and not to Christians." When Bernard was tempted, "Tell me not, Satan," said he, "what I have been—but what I am, and will be—through grace." And so when Beza was tempted in the like case, he answered, "Whatever I was, I am now in Christ a new creature, and that is it which troubles you, Satan; I might have continued in my sins long enough before you would have vexed at it—but now I see you do envy me the grace of my Savior." And when Augustine was sadly reviled by the Donatists for the wickedness of his youth, he answered, "The more desperate my disease was—just so much the more, I admire the physician."

Thus men eminently holy have stood their ground in the face of all temptations and motions to sin. But, alas in these times how easily, how readily, and how frequently do multitudes fall before every temptation! As soon as Achan had but cast his eye upon the Babylonish garment and shekels of silver and wedge of gold—his fingers itched to be handling of them, Josh. 7:21. Just so, many in these days, as soon as they do but see the way to honor or preferment, or a great place, or a high office, etc., oh, how do their fingers itch, how do their souls long after these things! and though

they savor and smell ever so strong of Babylon or of Rome—yet have them they must. Such people may do well to remember, that Achan's Babylonish garment was but a shroud to shroud him, and his golden wedge was but a wedge to cleave him, and his shekels of silver were but shekels to hold him the faster, both under the wrath of God and man.

Such as can turn with every wind, and close with every worship, and bow to every idol that man sets up—have either *no* holiness, or else but very *little* holiness, in their hearts. Such as easily and readily fall before temptations from within or without, have never attained to any great measures of holiness. But,

[5.] Fifthly, You have but a little holiness; witness the strange behavior and carriage of your souls, when the Lord smites you in some near and dear enjoyment. If the Lord does but frown upon your *Joseph*, or touches your *Isaac*, or calls for your *Benjamin*, or withers your *gourd*—oh, now with Rachel you will not be comforted, or with Jacob you will go mourning into the grave, or with David you will cry out, "O Absalom, my son, my son! would God I had died for you!" or with Jonah you will tell God to his face that you do well to be angry. [Jer. 31:15; Gen. 37:35; 2 Sam. 18:33; Jonah 4:9.] Oh, now you can't look up and trust in God, you can't look up and delight in God, you can't look up and hope in God, you can't look up and solace yourselves in God, you can't look up and lie down in the good pleasure of God, you can't look up and justify God, you can't look up and say God is your God, etc.

Oh, now that God has touched you in your first-born, you can neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep. Now you can taste no sweet, nor take any comfort, nor find any contentment in any of all your enjoyments. Now that God has touched the apple of your eye, you can neither think well of God, nor speak well of God, nor behave well towards God. Oh, now nobody can please you, nor can anything satisfy you. Now you think that there is no sorrow compared to your sorrow; no cross compared to your cross; nor any loss compared to your loss,

etc. Now every sweet is bitter, and every comfort is a cross; and accordingly you behave both towards God and towards man, Lam. 1:12, 18; all which speaks out holiness to be at a very low ebb in your souls.

O sirs, were holiness but risen to some considerable height in your souls, you would with Job, who was eminent in holiness, bless a *taking* God, as well as a *giving* God, Job 1:21; and you behave sweetly and sincerely towards God, as well when he writes *bitter* things against you as when he is a-multiplying of favors and kindnesses upon you. But if when the rod smarts—you kick, and fling, and fret, and fume, and vex, and tear your comforts in pieces, and your souls in pieces, and your God in pieces, as much as in you lies, certainly the streams of holiness run low in your souls. But,

[6.] Sixthly, You have but little holiness; witness the ebbings and the flowings of your spirits according to the working of secondary causes. As secondary causes work—so you are up and down, high and low. Now you are full of hopes—and at another time you are full of fears. Now you believe—and later on despair. Now you are steadfast—and afterwards you are wavering. Now you say, "surely God will once more own us,"—and momentary you say, "truly God has forsaken us." Now you say you see the clouds begin to scatter—and later on you say you see the clouds grow darker and thicker. Now you say the winter is past, and the singing of birds has come—and afterwards you say your winter is likely to be longer than ever. [Cant. 2:11-12; Jer. 8:22, 46:11, and 2:8.] Now you say there is balm in Gilead—and at another time you say your wound is incurable. Now you say all is well—and shortly you are ready to give up all as lost, etc. And thus your hearts rise and fall according to the working of second causes.

When you have full purses, and powerful armies, and wise counselors, and great allies—then you are ready to say, "Surely our mountain is strong, and we shall never be moved!" Psalm 30:6-8. But when your bags are empty, and your forces broken, and your

counsels dissipated, and your allies fallen off—then you are ready to cry out, "Oh, now there is no hope, there is no help! "

Oh—but were you eminent in holiness, then, under the saddest and crossest workings of second causes, you would say with Asa, "O Lord, there is no one like you to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, O Lord our God, for we rely on you," 2 Chron. 14:11; and with Elisha, "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them," 2 Kings 6:16-17; and with Moses, "Stand still and see the salvation of God," Exod. 14:13; and with David, "The Lord is on my side, I will not fear what man can do unto me," Psalm 118:6. Holiness in any considerable height, will set the power of God in opposition to all the power of the world, and then divinely triumph over them, Psalm 65:6-11.

Pompey once gloried in this—that with one stamp of his foot he could raise all Italy up in arms; but the great God with one stamp of his foot, or with one word of his mouth, can raise not only Italy—but also all the angels in heaven, and all the men on earth, in arms at his pleasure. And in the power of this God, eminent holiness will enable a man to glory all the day long. Where holiness is weak, there men stand and fall as second causes work—but where holiness is eminent, there men will live upon the first cause; and, however second causes may wheel about—yet such a man will live upon him, and look up to him who has a wheel within every wheel, Ezek. 1:15-22. But,

[7.] Seventhly, You have but little holiness; witness that soul-leanness, barrenness, and unfruitfulness that is among you at this very day. Ah, how may most cry out with the prophet Isaiah, "Oh my leanness, my leanness!" Isaiah 24:16, and 10:16. "Oh our leanness, our leanness, our barrenness!" etc. Though God has waited many years for fruit—yet behold nothing but leaves. I have read of the Indian fig-tree--that its *leaves* are exceedingly broad--but its *fruit* is no bigger than a bean. Ah, how many Christians are there in these days whose leaves of profession are very broad—but their fruits of righteousness and holiness are very small.

And as the Indian fig-tree, though it be of fair and goodly dimensions—yet it wastes all its sap and juice into leaves and blossoms. Just so, many in these days, who, though they look fair, and make a goodly show—yet they waste all their spiritual sap and life—into the mere leaves and blossoms of an empty profession.

Ah, how are many of our hearts like to the isle of Patmos, which is so barren that nothing good will grow on it; all the good things that grow there is from the earth that is brought from other places.

Look! as a company of ants are very busy about a molehill, running to and fro, and wearying themselves in their several movings and turnings, this way and that—and yet never grow great; for after all their motions and stirring, they are still the same as to the slender proportion of their bodies: just so, many Christians in these days run to and fro, they run from one *duty* to another, and from one *ordinance* to another, and from one *opinion* to another, and from one *principle* to another, and from one *minister* to another, and from one *church* to another, and from one *way* to another, and from one *notion* to another—and yet they make little progress in holiness, they grow but little in the love, the life, the likeness, and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. 3:18. They are like those silly women who Timothy speaks of, who were ever learning—and yet never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, 2 Tim. 3:6-7. And they are like the country of Ozizala, which abounded with mirthful flowers—but was barren of nourishing grain. Just so, these abound in mirthful notions, and flourishing parts—but are barren of grace and holiness.

Seneca has long since observed that as the philosophers in his time grew more and more learned—just so, they grew less and less moral; and is there anything more evident in these days than this, namely, that as men grow more and more in empty airy notions, and in a pompous religion and profession—just so, they grow less and less zealous and pious.

The reason, say some, why Christ cursed the fig-tree, though the time of bearing fruit was not come, was because it made a glorious show with leaves, and promised much—but brought forth nothing. What is a barren *tree*, a barren *ground*, or a barren *womb*—compared to a barren *heart*? Many in our days are like the cypress-tree, which, the more it is watered—the more it is withered. Just so, the more many are watered with the means of grace—the more they wither; the more the dews of heaven falls upon them, and the more heavenly manna is daily rained round about them—the more lean, fruitless, and barren they grow. Such souls may do well to remember that those trees which are not for fruit—are for the fire! John 15:6; Heb. 6:8.

For a close, let me tell you that I fear, with Augustine—that many grieve more for the barrenness of their *lands*—than they do for the barrenness of their *lives*; and for the barrenness of their *trees*—than they do for the barrenness of their *souls*; and for the loss of their *cattle*—than they do for the loss of God's countenance. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, You have but little holiness; witness that great indifference and fickleness that is to be found among you. Ah, how many Christians are there in these days of gospel light who are indifferent *who* they hear, or *what* they hear; who are indifferent whether they pray or not, or walk in gospel order or not, or maintain closet communion with God or not, or enjoy the Lord's supper or not, etc. Oh, what inconstancy is to be found among many in these days! Many people are only constant in inconstancy. [Lord Paulet kept both great favor and places under Henry the Eighth, a Papist, and under King Edward the Sixth, a Protestant, and under Queen Mary, a Papist, and under Queen Elizabeth, a Protestant; and being asked how he could do so, he answered that he always imitated the *willow* and not the *oak*.]

Now they are for ordinances—and at another time they are against them. Now ordinances are precious and glorious things—and afterwards they are poor low things. Now they cry up this and that for glorious truths—and shortly they cry down the same things as

dangerous and pernicious errors. Now they cry up Paul and cry down Apollos—and afterwards they cry up Apollos and cry down Paul. Now they are for this form—and momentarily they are for that form. Now they are very zealous—and shortly they are very lukewarm. Now they are for worshiping of God according to Scripture rule—and afterwards they are for worshiping of God according to the prescriptions of men. Now they have their gales of devotion—and before long they are quite becalmed. Now they are full of life—and in a short while they are very lumpish. Now they stand fast—and afterwards they are wavering. Now they are confident all will be well—and before long they give up all as lost. Now they will lay down their lives for Christ—and at another time they are afraid to own Christ, etc.

Now what does this indifference and inconstancy speak out—but either a total *lack* of holiness, or else that holiness is at a very *low* ebb in these men's souls? Now these eight arguments do clearly evidence that *many*, oh that I could not say that *most*, Christians have attained but to small measures and degrees of holiness. But,

(2.) Secondly, To provoke you to labor after higher degrees of holiness, consider that it is possible for you to attain to greater measures of holiness, than any you have yet reached unto. Though the work is hard—yet it is *possible*; and what great things won't men attempt upon the account of a *possibility*. Now that it is possible that you may attain to a greater perfection of holiness, I shall evidence these five ways:

[1.] First, By many precious PROMISES which are scattered up and down in the blessed Scriptures; as that Job 17:9, "The righteous shall hold on his way, and he who has clean hands shall be stronger and stronger;" or as the Hebrew has it, "he shall add strength," that is, he shall go on from one degree of spiritual strength to another, he shall go on from a lesser degree to a greater degree of spiritual strength, and from a lower degree to a higher degree of spiritual strength. A holy man shall not only have his spiritual

strength *maintained*—but *increased*; he shall not only retain that spiritual strength he has—but he shall be still a-adding of strength to strength, Psalm 84:7. They go from strength to strength, or from power to power; or as the word may be read, from company to company, or from troop to troop—in allusion to the custom of the Jews, when all the males went up thrice a year to Jerusalem; now when they went up to Jerusalem, they went up with their flocks, and in troops. Now those who were lively, active, and strong—they overtook this company and that, and this troop and that—and so they went on, their power and strength increasing daily more and more, until they appeared before God in Zion. Look! as the bee goes from flower to flower to gather honey—just so, those who had a principle of grace and holiness in them, they went from one good company to another, from one troop of Christians to another—still gathering up heavenly honey as they went.

O sirs, there is no such way to perfect holiness, as to be still a-going on from duty to duty, and from *ordinance* to ordinance; from *praying* to hearing, and from *hearing* to praying; from *reading* to meditating, and from *meditating* to reading; from *public* duties to *closet* duties, and from closet duties to public duties, etc. Psalm 92:12-14, "But the godly will flourish like palm trees and grow strong like the cedars of Lebanon. For they are transplanted into the Lord's own house. They flourish in the courts of our God. Even in old age they will still produce fruit; they will remain vital and green." The promise of flourishing is repeated in these verses—to note the more than ordinary flourishing estate of the saints, even in their old age.

I have read of an old Christian, who being asked whether he grew in goodness or not, answered, "I believe I do, because the Lord has promised that his people shall bring forth fruit in old age." Pliny, writing of the *crocodile*, tells us that she grows to her dying day—just so, Christians who are rooted in Christ, and planted in the house of the Lord, they will be still growing up in grace and holiness even to their dying day. It is with real Christians as it is with *wine*—the older the better; or as it is with the *sun*—which shines most gloriously and

amiably when it is near setting. Gracious souls are like an evergreen tree, whose leaves are always green, not only in the summer of youth—but also in the winter of old age. The palm-tree is always green, it never loses its leaves or fruit, and the more it is loaded the deeper it is rooted; and so it shall be with throughout Christians.

Just so, in Isaiah 46:3-4, God has promised to carry us on to old age, "Listen to me, all you who are left in Israel. I created you and I have cared for you since before you were born. I will be your God throughout your lifetime—until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you." That God who begins a work of grace and holiness in his people's hearts—that God will perfect and carry on that work. Mothers express their tender care, love, and delight, by carrying their babes in their arms until they can walk alone. But God surpasses them in his love, care, tenderness, and divine fondness—for he will carry them even to old age. This word "I," which is six times repeated in the fourth verse, is doubtless of very great importance, and signifies not only God's eternal essence, and that he will be ever like himself—but also his unchangeableness in regard of us; for whatever our thoughts may be concerning God—yet we shall always find him one and the same; he will be as good to his people at last as he was at first, even to old age he will carry them.

Just so, in Proverbs 4:18, "The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn, shining ever brighter until the full light of day." A holy man proceeds from grace to grace, from virtue to virtue; he goes from faith to faith, and from strength to strength—until at length he shines as the sun in his strength!

Just so, in Hosea 14:5-7, "I will be to Israel like a refreshing dew from heaven. It will blossom like the lily; it will send roots deep into the soil like the cedars in Lebanon. Its branches will spread out like those of beautiful olive trees, as fragrant as the cedar forests of Lebanon. My people will return again to the safety of their land. They will flourish like grain and blossom like grapevines. They will be as

fragrant as the wines of Lebanon." The growth, the fruitfulness, and the flourishing estate of the saints in grace and holiness, is set forth by a sevenfold metaphor in these words. The similes are all plain and easy, and you may easily dilate upon them in your own thoughts; and therefore I shall pass them.

I shall conclude with that precious promise, John 4:14, "But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The Spirit in its gracious operations shall be a constant spring in believers' hearts, and it shall every day rise higher and higher, like the water in Ezekiel, until grace is swallowed up in glory! Ezek. 47:1-7. And thus you see by these choice **promises**, that it is possible for you to attain to a greater measure of holiness. But,

[2.] Secondly, The PRAYERS that have been put up upon this very account, do clearly evidence that it is possible for you to attain to a greater measure of holiness. Certainly the people of God would never have prayed for higher degrees of grace and holiness, if they had not been attainable. Now it is very observable that the spirits of the saints have run out much this way, as is evident in these instances, Phil. 1:9-11, "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ--to the glory and praise of God."

Colossians 1:9 "For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding." Colossians 4:12, "Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured." The Greek word is a metaphor from a ship, whose

sails are filled with wind. Epaphras was a humble petitioner that the souls of the Colossians might be filled with the highest degrees of grace and holiness, as the sails of a ship are filled with wind. 1 Thes. 3:12, "And the Lord make you to *increase* and *abound* in love one towards another, and towards all men, even as we do towards you." The apostle, by doubling his word, *increase* and *abound*, discovers himself to be an importunate suitor, that a double portion of grace and holiness might be given out to the Thessalonians.

Just so, in Hebrews 13:20-21, "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen." The apostle cannot beg anything for these believing Hebrews below perfection. And the apostle Peter puts up the same requests for those blessed converts who were scattered throughout "Pontius, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia."

1 Peter 5:10, "But the God of all grace, who has called us into his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you." God is called "the God of all grace," because he is the giver of all kinds of grace, and of all degrees of grace. Nothing below perfection will satisfy this great apostle, when he comes to plead for these saints. Though they had as much grace as would bring them to heaven—yet he begs such a *perfection* of grace as might raise them high in heaven. And thus it appears by the prayers of these holy men, that saints may still be rising in grace and holiness. But,

[3.] Thirdly, The EXPERIENCE of other saints does clearly evidence this, that you may attain unto higher degrees of grace and holiness than those which yet you have attained unto.

Genesis 6:9, "**Noah** was a just man and *perfect* in his generation, and Noah walked with God." Noah was not only perfect with perfection of parts; nor only perfect in respect of desires, endeavors, and aims; nor only perfect in respect of his justification before God by imputed righteousness; nor only perfect in respect of God's approbation, acceptance, and delight; nor only perfect in respect of God's design and intentions to make him so in the eternal world; nor only perfect in respect of those gifts and graces with which he was adorned and furnished for the discharge of his place, office, and work to which the Lord had called him; nor only comparatively perfect, in regard of that profane, ungodly, and debauched generation among whom he lived; but also he is said to be perfect in respect of an eminent progress that he had made in grace and holiness. He had attained to considerable degrees and measures of grace and holiness; and though his proficiency in the exercise of grace and practice of piety fell short of complete perfection—yet it rose to such a height that God could not but crown him and chronicle him for a perfect man. [Psalm 37:37; Phil. 3:11-16; Cant. 4:7; Eph. 5:26-27; Rev. 14:4-5; Proverbs 2:21, and 11:5; 2 Tim. 3:16-17.] In all ages of the world, there has been four different levels of Christians—namely, babes, children, young men, and old men. [1 Pet. 2:2; 1 John 2:12-14; Heb. 5:12-14.] Noah was not a babe, nor a child, nor a young man—but an old man in grace and holiness; and therefore he is said to be perfect. There are several grades in Christ's school—some higher, some lower. Now he who is in the highest grade may be said to be perfect, in regard of those who are in a lower or in the lowest grade. Now Noah was in the highest grade of grace and godliness, therefore he is said to be *perfect*.

And in this sense, I suppose, **Job** is said to be a perfect man: Job 1:1, 8, "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one who feared God, and eschewed evil. And the Lord said unto Satan, Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one who fears God, and eschews evil?" Job was a very considerable person; he was a man of a choice spirit, he was taller in

goodness, and head and shoulders higher in grace and godliness—than any of the saints in that age and corner of the world where he lived. Job was a man of the greatest weight and worth for holiness, in all the world. Job was a paragon; no Christians could come near him. As he was the *greatest*—just so, he was the *best* of the best of all the saints—for heights of grace and holiness. He was a giant, and all the Christians round about him were but as so many dwarfs. He was the paragon of his time; for piety and sanctity none could parallel him, none could match him.

In this sense we are to understand the apostle, both in 1 Cor. 2:6, "We speak wisdom among those who are *perfect*," and in Phil. 3:15, "Let as many as be *perfect* be thus minded." He speaks here not of an absolute perfection, for such a perfection himself disclaims in verse 12, "Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me." By the force of the original word, that is here rendered *press on*, [I *persecute*, I follow with as hot and as eager a spirit after perfection, just as persecutors do follow after those they persecute.] the apostle declares that he had perfection in chase, as it were, and that his spirit was with much heat and eagerness carried out in pursuing after it, and resolved not to rest until he had attained to it.

An *absolute* perfection is very *desirable* on earth—but shall never be *obtained* until we come to heaven. Absolute perfection is not the privilege of saints militant—but of saints triumphant; and therefore the perfection that the believing Corinthians and holy Philippians had attained to—was not an *absolute* but a *comparative* perfection; they were perfect in comparison of those who were but babes and shrubs and dwarfs in Christ.

It is a very high and honorable report which the apostle gives of the Corinthians in that 2 Cor. 8:7, "Therefore, as you *abound* in everything, in faith, in utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us; see that you abound in this grace also." And it

is a very large testimony that the same apostle gives of the Romans in that Romans 15:14, "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that you are also *full* of goodness, *filled* with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." Now the fullness the apostle speaks of is not a fullness of *parts*, for the weakest believer as well as the strongest is at first conversion renewed and sanctified in every part, though it be but in part and imperfect. But of this fullness the apostle does not speak. But then there is a fullness of *degrees*. The apostle is to be understood of a *comparative* fullness. The Romans were full of all goodness and knowledge—in comparison of those in whom Christ was but newly formed, and in whom the work of grace was but newly erected. And they were full of all goodness and knowledge now, in comparison of what they were at their first acquaintance with Christ, and first acceptance of Christ, and first resignation of themselves to Christ, and at their first marriage union and communion with Christ.

And thus you see, by the experiences of other saints, that it is possible for you to attain to higher degrees of grace and holiness than any that yet you have attained to. But,

[4.] Fourthly, It is possible for you to attain to higher degrees and pitches in holiness than any that yet you have attained unto; witness the PRAISES and THANKSGIVINGS that have been offered up to God upon their accounts who have attained to a very great height of holiness. Take a few Scripture instances for the clearing up of this particular:

1 Cor. 1:4-5, 7, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in everything you are enriched by him, in all utterance and in all knowledge; so that you come behind in no good gift."

Eph. 1:3, 7-8, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; who according to the riches of his grace, has

abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence." [Though *injuries* should be written in the dust—yet spiritual *mercies* should be written on marble, that our hearts may be the better provoked to thankfulness for them.] Here the apostle trumpets out the high praises of God, for that he had blessed them and enriched them, though not with grain, or oil, or wine, or with gold or silver, which is but red and white clay, that yet he had blessed them with all spiritual blessings—which are the choicest, the chief, and the sweetest of blessings. Spiritual blessings are right-handed blessings, they are peculiar blessings, they are blessings-sweetening blessings, for they sweeten all the blessings man enjoys. And they are blessings-begetting blessings, for they beget and bring forth many other blessings, to the enriching and adorning of a Christian's soul. And they are blessings-sanctifying blessings, they are blessings that sanctify all other blessings. And they are blessings-preserving blessings, they are blessings that will preserve all our other blessings. Spiritual blessings are peculiar blessings, they are costly blessings, they are blessings that reach to the very spirit and soul of a Christian, they are blessings that raise the spirit of a Christian, and that ennoble the spirit of a Christian, and that cheer up the spirit of a Christian, and that a thousand ways betters the spirit of a Christian! Therefore it is no wonder that the apostle's heart was so affected with spiritual blessings, and that his mouth was so filled with spiritual praises, as indeed it was.

1 Tim. 1:12, 14, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, because the grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus."

And thus you see by others' thanksgivings, that it is possible for you to attain to far higher degrees of holiness than what for the present you are raised to. The stork is said to leave one of her young ones where she hatches them; and the elephant to turn up the first sprig towards heaven when he comes to feed, and both out of some instinct of gratitude; and shall not a divine instinct enable Christians to do much more in a way of gratitude, both upon the account of

their own graces, and upon the account of those eminent measures of grace, which other saints are blessed and crowned with? Though Seiarus did dare to sacrifice to himself—yet a Christian must not dare to sacrifice to himself, nor to his duties, nor to his graces, etc.; the sacrifice of praise in regard of *grace received*, is a crown of glory which is due to none but the God of grace.

All the rivers return to the sea from whence they had their beginning. God will give you his *covenant*, and he will give you his *ordinances*, and he will give his *heaven*, and he will give you his *Son*, yes, he will give you *himself*; but his glory, his glory—he will not give unto another, Isaiah 42:8. Whatever he parts with, he is resolved that neither angels nor men shall share with him in the glory of his grace. I have read of a stork which cast a pearl into the bosom of a maid which had healed her of a wound. O sirs! when God comes to heal you of your spiritual wounds and diseases, and not only so—but shall also richly bespangle and adorn your souls with his precious graces, what can you do less than cast that pearl of praise into the bosom of God? as David did in that Psalm 103:1-6.

The best means to get more grace, is to be thankful for that grace which you have, for God loves to sow much where he reaps much. If your returns are answerable to your receipts, you will still be on the receiving hand. Thankfulness is God's payment for all his blessings, and those who truly and duly pays this payment, shall be sure to abound in the best of blessings. Thankfulness for one blessing always draws on another blessing, as saints by experience daily find. And thus you see, by these arguments, that it is possible for you to attain higher degrees of holiness than any yet you have reached unto. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, It is possible for you to attain to higher degrees of holiness, etc.; witness those choice, those rare and singular gifts that Christ has bestowed upon many of his servants for this very purpose—namely, that they may help on a growth and an increase of holiness in your hearts.

"It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-13

One main end of Christ's giving such eminent gifts to his church leaders—is that his people may be made eminent in holiness. It is not only to bring them in—but also to *build them up*; it is not only to convert them—but also to *edify* them; it is not only to begin a work of holiness—but also to *perfect* and *carry on* a work of holiness. And therefore the word is not only compared to *seed* which begets holiness in men's hearts—but also to *wine* and *milk* and *strong meat*, which helps forward the growth and increase of holiness in men's hearts.

And so the great end of the Lord's supper is not to work spiritual life where it is not—but to increase it where it is; it is not to change the heart—but more and more to sanctify the heart; it is not to begin holiness—but to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord; it is not to sow the seed of grace in the soul—but it is to cause that seed to grow and flourish in the soul. The martyrs in the primitive church, when they were to appear before the cruel tyrants, they were accustomed, as Cyprian shows, to receive the Lord's supper, and thereby they were fired with zeal and fervor, and filled with faith and fortitude, etc. Chrysostom says, that "by the sacrament of the Lord's supper we are so armed against Satan's temptations that he flees from us, as if we were so many lions that spit fire." The Lord's supper is a cabinet of spiritual jewels; and oh, then, how unmanly and inappropriate a thing it is, to hang this cabinet of jewels, which is more worth than the gold of Ophir, in a swine's snout! And how that mother can be guiltless of the death of her child, who gives him poison in a golden cup, with this caution, that she tells him it is poison, I know not; no more do I know how that minister can be guiltless of the body and blood of our Lord, who dispenses the bread of life to those who are

known to be without spiritual life—yes, who are known to be dead in sins and trespasses.

And thus you see, by these five arguments, that it is possible for you to attain to greater measures of holiness than any yet you have reached unto; and so much for the second motive.

(3.) Thirdly, To provoke you to labor after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holy you are—the more you will be the delight of God, and the more dear you will be to God, and the more beloved you will be by God. For the right understanding of this argument you must carefully distinguish between God's love of *goodwill*, and his love of *delight*.

God's love of **GOODWILL** is equal to all his saints, whether they are rich or poor, high or low, bond or free; or whether they have a *sea* of grace—or but a *drop* of grace. God's love of goodwill runs as much out to the *weakest* Christian, as it does to the *strongest*; as much to a *babe* in grace as to a *giant* in grace.

All saints are equally **ELECTED**. God never chose one man to be a vessel of glory more than another; the weakest saint is as much elected as the strongest, Romans 11:17.

And as all saints are equally elected—just so, all saints are equally **REDEEMED** by Jesus Christ. Christ *bled* as much for one saint as another, and he *sweat* as much for one saint as another, and he *sighed* and *groaned* as much for one saint as another, and he *trod the wine-press of his Father's wrath* as much for one saint as another, Isaiah 53:3-12. Christ paid as great a price for his lambs—as for his sheep, 1 Cor. 6:19-20. Christ paid as great a price for Lazarus in his rags—as for David in his royal robes.

And as all saints are equally redeemed—just so, all saints are equally **EFFECTUALLY CALLED**; one saint is as much called out of the kingdom of darkness as another, and one saint is as much called to

Jesus Christ as another, 1 Pet. 2:9. In effectual calling, God looks with as favorable an eye upon one as he does upon another.

And as all saints are equally called—just so, all saints are equally JUSTIFIED, 2 Cor. 5:19-20; though one saint may be more *sanctified* than another—yet no saint is more *justified* than another. The weakest believer is as much justified and pardoned before the throne of God as the strongest is; that pure, perfect, matchless, and spotless righteousness of Christ is as much imputed to one saint as it is to another, 1 Cor. 1:30.

And as all saints are equally justified—just so, all saints are equally ADOPTED, Gal. 4:4-6; the weakest believer is as much an adopted son of God, as the strongest believer in the world is. God is no more a father to one than he is to another. In human families, the babe in the mother's arms is as much a son—as he who is of riper years. Thus you see that God's love of goodwill is equal in all his saints. "Those He predestined, He also called; and those He called, He also justified; and those He justified, He also glorified." Romans 8:30.

But God's love of **DELIGHT** runs out more to some saints than it does to others; for those who have *much* holiness are much beloved—but those who have *most* holiness are most beloved, John 14:21-23. The greater you are in holiness, the greater will you be beloved of God. "O Daniel, you are *greatly* beloved," Dan. 9:23. And why does God *love* more, and *delight* more in Christ, than he does in all the angels and saints in heaven, and in all the upright ones who are on earth? Because Christ is more eminent and glorious in holiness than all created beings are; he is more the express image of his Father's person, and the brightness of his Father's glory than others, and therefore he is more beloved than others.

It was an excellent observation of one of the fathers, namely, that God loved the humanity of Christ more than any man, because he was fuller of grace and truth than any man. Now for the further clearing up of this great argument, Consider—

First, that the more holy any person is—the more excellent that person is. All impurities are diminutions of excellency. The more *mixed* anything is—the more abased it is. The more you mix your **wine** with water—the more you abase your wine; and the more you mix your **gold** with tin—the more you abase your gold. But the purer your wine is—the richer and the better your wine is; and the purer your gold is, the more glorious and excellent it is. Just so, the purer and holier any person is, the more excellent and glorious that person is. Now the more divinely excellent and glorious any person is, the more he is beloved of God, and the more he is the delight of God. But,

Secondly, the more holy any person is—the more that person pleases the Lord. Heb. 11:5. Fruitfulness in holiness fills God with joy. The *farmer* is not so much pleased with the fruitfulness of his fields, nor the *wife* with the fruitfulness of her womb, nor the *father* with the thriving of his child—as God is pleased with the fruitfulness and thriving of his children in grace and holiness! Now certainly the more God is pleased with any person, the more he loves that person, and the more *pleasure* and *delight* he takes in such a person. If God is most pleased with holiness—he cannot but be most delighted in those who are most holy. But,

Thirdly, the more holy any person is—the more like God he is, and the more like to God he is, doubtless, the more he is beloved of God. It is likeness both in nature and grace that always draws the strongest love. Though every child in the family is the father multiplied, a second edition of the father—yet the father loves him best, and delights in him most—who is most like him, and who in feature, spirit, and action, does most resemble him to the life. And so does the Father of spirits also, he always loves those best, who in holiness resemble him most.

There are four remarkable things in the beloved disciple John, above all the rest of the disciples: [John 13:23, 18:16, and 19:26-27.]

1. That he lay nearest to Christ's bosom at the table.
2. That he followed Christ closest to the high priest's palace.
3. That he stood close to Christ when he was on the cross, though others had basely deserted him, and turned their backs upon him.
4. That Christ commended the care of his virgin mother to him.

Now why did Christ's desire, love, and delight—run out with a stronger and a fuller tide towards John, than to the rest of the disciples? Doubtless it was because John did more resemble Christ than the rest; it was because John was a more exact picture and lively representation of Christ, than the others were. But,

Fourthly, the more holy any man is, the more communion and familiarity that man shall have with God; as you may see in Moses. Moses was a paragon for meekness and holiness: Num. 12:3, "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth." There was no man so slighted, wronged, provoked, teased, perplexed, and troubled by that wicked, unthankful, unbelieving, and murmuring generation—as Moses was! And yet he did neither rail at them nor revile them; he did neither storm nor rage, he did neither fret nor fling! And though he had a sword of justice in his hand, and might easily have avenged himself on them—yet he would not—but exercised all patience, tenderness, goodness, and sweetness towards them. Oh the lowliness, the meekness, the holiness of this man Moses! And oh the freeness, the friendliness, the openness, and the familiarity of God with Moses!

Deut. 34:10, "There has never been another prophet like **Moses**, whom the Lord knew face to face." To give you a little light into these words: some of the Rabbis observe that Moses surpassed all the other prophets, not only in sublimity of prophecies—but also in excellency and number of miracles; for Moses within one age wrought seventy-six miracles, when all the rest of the prophets from

the beginning of the world quite down to the ruin of the first temple, wrought only seventy-four. As for those words, "whom the Lord knew face to face," you are *not* to understand them thus, that God has a face as man has, nor that Moses had a view of the essence of God, which is invisible; for in this sense no man has seen God at any time, John 1:18; and indeed the least beam of God's essential glory and majesty would have swallowed up Moses alive, 1 Tim. 6:16. But these words, "whom the Lord knew face to face," are to be understood of God's speaking to Moses in a free, friendly, familiar, and plain manner. God did speak to Moses by a clear articulate voice, even as one man speaks to another when they speak face to face.

And so when Aaron and Miriam were swelled with pride and envy, and began to bespatter Moses, and to pick a hole in his coat; and attempt to cloud, eclipse, and diminish his glory, see at what a high and noble rate God speaks of Moses; see how God magnifies and exalts and lifts up Moses! "At once the Lord said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, 'Come out to the Tent of Meeting, all three of you.' So the three of them came out. Then the Lord came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the Tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When both of them stepped forward, he said, 'Listen to my words—When a prophet of the Lord is among you, I reveal myself to him in visions, I speak to him in dreams. But this is not true of my servant Moses; he is faithful in all my house. With him I speak face to face, clearly and not in riddles; he sees the form of the Lord. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?' The anger of the Lord burned against them, and he left them." Numbers 12:4-9.

Now here you see how God owns Moses, and stands up for Moses, and pleads for Moses, and tells Aaron and Miriam to their faces that Moses was his greatest favorite, and that he had far greater respect for Moses than he had for them, and that there was not a man in all the world whom was so intimate with him as Moses, and who had so much of his ear and heart as Moses had. God did appear to other prophets in dreams and visions, which were transient—but with

Moses God will speak mouth to mouth, God will speak to him without an interpreter, he will speak to Moses more familiarly and frequently than he did to others by visions, and more clearly, plainly, and assuredly than he did to others by dreams. God here engages himself to hold a more close, familiar, friendly, and constant fellowship and correspondence with Moses, than with any others in the world. Moses was blessed with as clear, and with as full, and with as apparent sight of God, and communion with God—as he was able to bear and comprehend.

Some of the learned are of opinion, that Christ conversed with Moses in a human shape, as he had done with Abraham before; they conjecture that the Lord Jesus did very friendly and familiarly show himself to Moses with that very same face and form of human nature, which he afterwards assumed, [Gen. 18 and 32:30, etc.] but this I dare not press upon you as an article of your faith. And whether Moses had one hundred and seventy-three familiar conferences with God, which none of the prophets had, lies upon those Rabbis who assert it, to prove; but this is granted on all hands, that Moses was a special favorite, and a man in high communion with God, and one who had very clear and eminent discoveries and manifestations of God.

And so **Abraham** was a man of great holiness, and a man eminent in his communion with God. God owned him as a friend, as an honorable friend, as an eminent friend, as a bosom friend, as a peculiar friend, and as a faithful friend, Isaiah 41:8; and therefore he made him one of his privy council, and opened his heart and his secrets to him: "And the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do?" Gen. 18:17. Abraham is styled the *friend of God* in a special way. Though God had many friends—yet it was Abraham, who was his *singular* friend, his *darling* friend, his *rare* friend, etc., and accordingly God was most free, and full, and rich in the communications of his favors and secrets to Abraham. It was not enough for Abraham to be of God's court—but he must be also of his cabinet council.

It was always a social principle—that sweet and intimate friendship cannot be extended to many. Friends usually go by *pairs*. And thus you see that the more holy any man is—the more communion that man shall have with God—and the more communion any man has with God—the more beloved of God shall that man be. The highest communion is always attended with the highest love. But,

Fifthly and lastly, the more holy any man is—the more actually ripe and fit for heaven that man is. A Christian at first conversion is but rough cast—but as holiness is increased—just so, he comes more and more every day to be prepared, polished, squared, and fitted for a full and glorious fruition of God in heaven, Job 5:26. Though the least degree of grace and holiness puts a man into a *habitual* preparedness and fittedness for heaven—yet it is only an eminency in grace and holiness, which puts a man into an *actual* preparedness and fittedness for heaven. The richer in grace—the riper for glory! The higher you are in holiness—the fitter you are to enter into the joy of your Lord! Though the least drop or grain of holiness is enough to keep a man from dropping into hell—yet it is only matured holiness, which actually prepares and fits a man to go to heaven, Mat. 25:19-24.

Now, doubtless, the more actually ripe and ready any man is for heaven—the more pleasure and delight God takes in him. The more the vessels of grace are fitted for glory—the more delight God takes in them. When God set himself upon the creation of the world, in the close of every day's work, except the second, God set his seal, "that it was good;" but when he had perfected and completed the whole creation, and cast an eye upon all together, then he concludes, "that it was *very* good." "And God saw all that he had made, and "behold it was *very* good," or "extremely good," so some, or "very pleasant and delightful."

The work of creation was so curiously and gloriously framed, and so full of admirable rarities and varieties, that it raised delight and pleasure in God himself. Whereupon Augustine observes that even to

every grace, yes, of the least degree of grace, he says it is "good;" but when he beholds the graces of his saints fresh and flourishing, your faith acted and strengthened, your repentance daily renewed, your humility increased, etc., then he concludes that all is "*very* good."

O sirs, if the Lord Jesus Christ is so ravished with one of his spouse's *eyes*, and with one *chain* of her neck, Cant. 4:9; with the least *drops* or *sips* of grace, or with the least *grains* of grace and holiness; oh, how much more will great measures of grace and holiness enthrall him and ravish him!

Well! for a close of this argument, remember this, that as the *sun* shines hotter on some climates than it does upon others, and as the *dew* falls more upon one place than another, and as the *water* overflows some pastures more than others—just so, God's love of delight and pleasure shines hotter and brighter upon some Christians than it does upon others; and these I have showed you to be such who are most eminent and excellent in grace and holiness. And thus much for this third motive.

(4.) Fourthly, To provoke you to labor after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more your holiness is increased—the more the great God will be honored and glorified. Mat. 5:16, "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven." Fruitfulness in holiness sets the weightiest crown of glory upon the head of God: John 15:8, "Herein is my Father glorified—that you bear *much* fruit." The more eminent any person is in holiness, the more clearly and convincingly he proclaims God before all the world to be a *rich* God, a *full* God, a *bountiful* God, an *overflowing* God. There is nothing that works men to admire God so much, and to exalt God so high—as a Christian's fruitfulness in holiness. "Oh, how good must that God be, whose servants are so good," said the heathen! Oh, how glorious in holiness must that God be, whose people are so holy!

Look! as the *thriving child* is a credit to the mother, and the *rich servant* is an honor to his master, and a *plentiful crop* is the praise of the farmer—just so, that Christian who *thrives* in grace, who *grows* rich in holiness—is the greatest credit, and the highest honor, and the sweetest praise to God in the world! The tree in Alcinous's garden had always blossoms, buds, and ripe fruits, one under another. O sirs, those trees of righteousness that have not only the *blossoms* and *buds* of holiness upon them—but also the *ripe fruits* of holiness one under another—they are the greatest honor and glory to God in the world!

Isaiah 61:3, "They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord *for the display of his splendor.*" What will men say when they shall behold your eminency in sanctity? Will they not say, "Certainly God is no hard master—harvesting where he have not sown and gathering where he has not scattered seed, Mat. 25:24. Certainly he keeps a noble house—his tables are richly spread, his cups overflow, he feeds, yes, he feasts his servants with the choicest rarities and varieties which heaven affords: witness their thriving and flourishing estate in grace and holiness." And thus you see that the more your holiness is increased, the more highly the God of heaven will be exalted and magnified. But,

(5.) Fifthly, To provoke you to endeavor after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holiness you have—the more he will give you. At first God gives holiness where there is none; and where this holiness is *improved*—there God will be still augmenting and increasing of it. Do you but make it your business to "perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord," Heb. 6:7, and the Lord will not fail to make new and fresh additions of more grace and holiness to that you have! Psalm 84:11, "The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from *those who walk uprightly.*" Mark those words, namely, that "the Lord will give *grace* and glory," that is, grace unto glory, he will still be adding more grace to what you have, until the *bud of grace* is turned into the *flower of glory!* Until your grace on earth commences to glory in heaven!

The more holiness any man has—the more still God will give him: Mat. 13:12, "For whoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance." He who has principles of grace and holiness laid into his soul—he shall find a plentiful increase of those sanctifying and saving principles; he shall have more abundance; his *spark* of holiness shall grow into a *flame*; his *drops* of holiness shall be turned into a *sea*; and his *mite* of holiness shall be multiplied into *millions*!

The greater harvest of holiness a Christian brings forth—the greater increase of holiness shall he experience; every exercise of grace and holiness is always attended with new increase of grace and holiness, Mat. 25:29.

Look! as that arm is greatest and strongest, which is most used and exercised—so that particular grace which is most exercised and used is most strengthened and greatened.

Look! as earthly parents, when they see their children to improve a little stock to great advantage, then they add to their stock, they increase their stock, they double their stock. Just so, when the Father of spirits sees his children to improve a little stock of grace and holiness to the great advantage of their souls, then he will increase their spiritual stock, he will be still a-adding to their stock, yes, he will double their stock! John 15:2, "Every branch that bears fruit he prunes it—that it may bring forth *more* fruit." Such as are fruitful—shall be made more fruitful. Christ will take most pains to make them better—who are already very good. Of all Christians in the world, there are none who have so much grace as *humble* Christians have—and yet God delights to pour in grace into their souls, as men pour liquor into empty vessels, James 4:6. Humility is both a grace, and a vessel to receive more grace. And thus much for this fifth argument. But,

(6.) Sixthly, To provoke you to labor after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holiness you attain to—the greater will be your heaven of joy and comfort in this

present world. Though the least spark of true holiness will certainly bring a man to heaven—yet it is only an eminency in holiness which will make a man walk *comfortably* to heaven.

The more holiness any man has—the more he shall **enjoy God**, in whose presence is fullness of joy, Psalm 16:11; and the more any man enjoys the presence of God—the greater will be his heaven of joy in this world. Look! as a little star yields but a little light—just so, a little holiness yields but a little comfort; and look, as the greatest stars yields the greatest light—just so, the greatest measures of holiness always yields the greatest comforts. Divine joy ebbs and flows—as holiness ebbs and flows.

Soul comfort rises and falls—as holiness rises and falls. Great measures of holiness carries with them, the greatest evidence of the reality of holiness. The more clearly and evidently the reality and sincerity of a man's holiness rise—the higher will the springs of joy and comfort arise in his soul. Great measures of holiness carry with them the greatest evidence of a man's union and communion with God; and the more evident a man's union and communion is with God, the more will that man's soul be filled with that joy that is unspeakable and full of glory, 1 Pet. 1:8.

In great measures of holiness, a man may see and read most of the *love* of God, the *face* of God, the *favor* of God, and the *heart* of God, Acts 9:31; and the more a man is blessed with such a sight as this is, the more will that babe of grace, *divine joy*, spring in his soul. The greater measures of holiness and sanctification any man attains to—the clearer and brighter will the evidences of his justification be. Now the clearer evidences any man has of his justification, the stronger will be his consolation, Romans 5:1-3, and 8:30, 33-35; and indeed the strongest waters of consolation do always flow from a clear sight and a true sense of a man's justification. No man lives so comfortably, no man bears the cross so sweetly, no man resists the devil and the world so stoutly, nor no man will die so cheerfully, as he who lives and dies in a clear sight of his justification.

The more holiness any man attains to, the more his **fears** will be scattered, his doubts resolved, and all those impediments removed that commonly bar out joy and comfort; and what will be the happy issue of these things—but the bringing in of a sea of joy and comfort into the soul! It is not riches, nor honors, nor applause, nor learning, nor friends, nor a great name in the world—but an eminency in holiness, that can highly raise the springs of divine joy in a Christian's soul. Though the windows of the temple were broad without but narrow within—yet the joy and comfort of a Christian that is eminent in holiness is broad and full within, though it be narrow and contracted without. O sirs, as ever you would have your joy full—labor for a heart filled with holiness. Your comforts will be always few and low—if your holiness be low. Why have the angels always harps in their hands, and hallelujahs in their mouths—but because they have attained to a fullness of holiness? But,

(7.) Seventhly, To provoke you to labor after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holy any person is—the more the Lord will reveal and manifest himself, and his mind and will, unto him. John 14:21-23; Hosea 6:3. **Ezekiel** was a man of eminent holiness, and a man who had glorious visions, and deep mysteries, and rare discoveries of God, and of the great things that should be brought about in the latter days, revealed to him. And **Daniel** was a man of very great holiness: and oh, what secrets and mysteries did God reveal to him! [See 2, 4, 6, 8-12 chapters of Daniel.] Many of those great and glorious things which concern the destruction of the four last monarchies, and the growth, increase, exaltation, flourishing, durable, invincible, and unconquerable estate of his own kingdom, was revealed to him.

Among all the apostles, **Paul** was a man of the greatest holiness, and of all the apostles Paul had the most glorious revelations and discoveries of God manifested to him, 2 Cor. 12:2, 4. Witness those glorious revelations that he had when he was caught up into the third heaven, into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, or *wordless words*—such as words were too weak to utter, such as was not

possible for man to utter, and that, either because they transcended man's capacity in this life, or else because the apostle was forbidden to utter them; they being revealed to him, not for the public use of the church—but only for his particular encouragement, so that he might be the better able to encounter all the hardships, difficulties, dangers, and deaths that would attend him in the conscientious discharge of his ministerial work.

Some of the ancients are of opinion that he saw God's essence; for, say they, other things in heaven might have been uttered—but the essence of God is so great and so glorious a thing, that no man or angel can utter it or declare it. But here I must crave permission to enter my dissent against them, for the Scripture is express in this, that no man has thus ever seen the Lord at any time, John 1:18; 1 Tim. 6:16; 1 John 4:12; and that no man can thus see the Lord and live. And as great a favorite of heaven as Moses was—yet he could only see the *back parts* of God, he could only behold some lower representations of God.

Others say, that he heard the heavenly singing of angels and blessed spirits, which was so sweet, so excellent and glorious, that no mortal man was able to utter it, and this of the two is most probable; but no man is bound to make this opinion an article of his faith.

This, I think, we may safely conclude—that in this rapture, besides the contemplation of celestial mysteries, he felt such unspeakable delight and pleasure, that was either like that, or exceeding that, which Adam had in the terrestrial paradise. Doubtless, the apostle did see and hear such excellent and glorious things, as was impossible for the tongue of any mortal man to express or utter.

And so **John** was a man of most rare holiness, and Christ reveals to him the general state of his church, and all that should befall his people—from John's time unto his second coming. Christ gives John a true representation of all the troubles, trials, changes, mercies, and glories that in all times, and in all ages and places, should attend his

church—until he comes in all his glory. About sixty years after Christ's ascension, Christ comes to John and opens his heart, and unbosoms his soul, and makes known to him all that care, that love, that tenderness, that kindness, and that sweetness, which he would exercise towards his church, from that very time to the end of the world. Christ tells John, that though he had been absent and seemingly silent for about threescore years, that yet he was not so taken up with the delights, pleasures, and glory of heaven, as that he did not care what became of his church on earth. Oh, no! And therefore he opens his choicest secrets, and makes known the most hidden and glorious mysteries to John, which ever were made known to any man. As there was none who had so much of the heart of Christ as John—just so, there was none who had so much of the ear of Christ as John. Christ singles out his servant John from all the men in the world, and makes known to him all the happy providences, and all the sad occurrences that were to come upon the followers of the Lamb, so that they might know what to pray for, and what to expect, and what to wait for. He also declares to John all that wrath and vengeance, all that desolation and destruction, which should come upon the false prophet, and the beast, and upon all that followed after them, and who were worshipers of them, and who had received their marks, either in their foreheads or in their hands.

We read of holy **Polycarp**, that as he lay in his bed he saw in a vision the bed set on fire under his head; and thus God did forewarn him, and manifest to him, what manner of death he would die, and accordingly it happened, for he was burnt for the cause of Christ, and rejoicingly sealed the truth with his blood.

John **Huss** was a man eminent in holiness—he was born in Prague, and was pastor of the church of Bethlehem. His name, Huss, in the Bohemian language, signifies a *goose*; at his martyrdom, he told them, that if they roasted him in the fire, out of the ashes of the goose, a hundred years after, God would raise up a swan in Germany, who would carry the cause on for which he suffered, and whose singings would affright all those vultures—which was exactly fulfilled

in Luther—whose name in the Bohemian language signifies a *swan*—for God raised him up as a famous instrument in his hand, who carried on that glorious cause with mighty success.

Luther was a man of great holiness, and being one time more than ordinarily earnest with God in prayer, he came down to his friends, and told them with a very great confidence, that it should go well with Germany all his days; he knew what was done in heaven—by that which God had done in his own heart, and accordingly it happened. The last martyr who was burnt in Smithfield, told the people that they should be of good comfort, for he was fully persuaded that he was the last who would suffer under Queen Mary, and so he was.

Thus you see that men of greatest holiness have had the clearest and choicest manifestations and discoveries of God, and of his mind, made known to them. Suitable to that choice promise that you have in Jer. 33:3, "Call unto me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty"—or hidden—"things," [hidden, as bunches of grapes are hidden under the leaves of the vines.] "which you know not." God will make known to his holy ones the most hidden and abstruse things; and the more holy they are, the more they shall know of the most secret and mysterious things of God. John 7:17, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine." Christ will be most open to those who are most obedient to him; they shall know most of the doctrine of Christ who are most complying with the will of Christ.

David was a man of great holiness, as is evident by that glorious testimony that God has given of him in that Acts 13:22, "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart, who shall fulfill all my will"—"all my wills;" to note the eminency, transcendency, universality, and sincerity of his obedience. Now if you will but look into that 2 Sam. 7:27, there you shall see how the Lord declares and makes known himself and his intentions towards him; "O Lord Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant." But the Hebrew is more full and excellent; in the original it runs thus,

"Lord, you have revealed this to the ear of your servant." Now the emphasis lies in those words, "to the ear of your servant." When God makes known himself and his intentions to such as are eminent in holiness, he does it in their ear. God tells David in his ear, that "he will build a house for him," that is, that he would continue his kingdom to him, and to his posterity after him. This was blessed news, and this God tells in his ear.

Such as are our *special friends and favorites*—we often whisper to them in the ear. When we would acquaint them with our most secret and weighty purposes, intentions, and resolutions, we give them a whisper in the ear. Such people who are eminent in holiness, are the great favorites of heaven, and God tells them in the ear of many a rare secret, which all others are kept ignorant of.

Well, sirs, for a close, remember this—that there are no people on earth who are so prepared and fitted for the clearest, fullest, and highest manifestations of God—as those who are eminent in holiness! Nor are there any who set so high a price upon the manifestations of God—as men who are eminent in holiness! Nor are there any who are so able to bear the revelations of his will—as men who are eminent in holiness! Nor are there any who will make such a humble, faithful, constant, and thorough improvement of all that God shall make known to them—as men who are famous for holiness. Therefore, as ever you would have God in an eminent way to manifest and reveal himself and his mind unto you—oh, labor after a greater measure of holiness! But,

(8.) Eighthly, To provoke you to labor after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holy a man is—the more singular delight and pleasure God will take in all his pious duties and services. [Generally it was the custom of the Eastern countries to *wash* before worship. The very heathen gods would be served in *white*—the very emblem of purity.] Holiness puts a divine savor upon all a man's services. There are no duties so sweet as those who have most holiness in them

Mal. 3:3-4, "He will sit and judge like a refiner of silver, watching closely as the dross is burned away. He will purify the Levites, refining them like gold or silver, so that they may once again offer acceptable sacrifices to the Lord. Then once more the Lord will accept the offerings brought to him by the people of Judah and Jerusalem, as he did in former times." After the Lord Jesus Christ has been to his people as a refiner's fire, and as fuller's soap, that is, after he has refined, scoured, and purged his people from their drossiness, filthiness, earthliness, selfishness, and sensualness, etc., then "they may once again offer acceptable sacrifices to the Lord."

Look! as *light* makes all things pleasant and delightful to man—just so, holiness makes all a man's duties and services pleasant and delightful to the Lord: Zech. 13:9, "This third I will bring into the fire; I will *refine* them like silver and test them like gold. They will call on my name and I will answer them; I will say, 'They are my people,' and they will say, 'The Lord is our God.'" When God has refined his people as silver is refined, then he will bow his ear, and open his hand, and grant them the desires of their hearts. Oh the pleasure and delight which God takes in the prayers, tears, hearings, readings, meltings, mournings, and repentings—of such who are eminently purged and sanctified!

The more holiness any man has, the *less of the flesh, pollution, and corruption* there is in all his duties and services; and the less there is of the *old man* in all our holy offerings—the more they are the delight of God. The more holiness anyone has, the less there will be of *man*, and the more there will be of *Christ* and the *Spirit* in all his duties and services; and doubtless, the less there is of *man*, and the more there is of *Christ* in duties—the more pleasant and delightful they will be unto the Lord.

The more holy any man is, the more there will be of his **heart** in his duties, and the more a man's heart is in his duties, the more pleasant and delightful they will be to God. God is a Spirit, John 4:23-24, and he is only delighted with those duties wherein the spirit of a man is.

The heart is the presence-chamber of the King of heaven! It is his bed of spices; it is his royal throne—on which he delights to sit and rule. A sanctified heart in duties shall prevail with God for crowns; when a silver tongue shall not prevail with God for crumbs.

The more holy any man is, the more delight and pleasure he will take in pious duties and services. The more a man's natural strength is, the more easily he walks, and the more delightfully he works. The fuller the wings are of feathers, with the more ease and pleasure the bird flies—just so, the fuller the soul is of holiness, the more easily, the more pleasantly, and the more delightfully will it walk, yes, run, yes, fly in all the ways of God's commands! Every yoke of Christ is easy, and every command of Christ is joyous to a man who is eminent in holiness. [Psalm 40:8, and 119:32; Mat. 11:29; 1 John 5:3.]

Now the more any man delights and takes pleasure in pious duties and services—the more God delights and takes pleasure in his pious duties and services. The more a Christian's heart is affected with the duties of piety, the more the heart of God will be affected with those duties. Look! as there is no duty which affects the heart of God, which does not first affect our own—just so, all those duties and services which are divinely pleasing and delightful to our noble part, they are also pleasing and delightful to God himself. The very heathen, as several authors report, had their pots of water set at the doors of their temples, where they washed before they went to sacrifice, having this notion and opinion among them—that their gods did best accept and most delight in those sacrifices that were offered by those who had washed themselves pure and clean. Sure I am—that the great God, who is the God of gods, is most pleased and delighted with those sacrifices of prayers and praises which are offered up with the purest hands, and with the cleanest heart; and therefore, as ever you would have God to take singular pleasure and delight in all your duties and services—labor after an eminency in holiness. But,

(9.) Ninthly, To provoke you to labor after higher degrees of holiness, consider that many who have been won over to Christ after you—do now in holiness much excel you. Are there not many *children* who have been in Christ but yesterday, as it were—and yet how do they outstrip their parents, not only in abilities—but in piety, who have been in Christ many years before them? And are there not many *servants* to be found who have not been in Christ seven years, who yet are more holy, more humble, more heavenly, more spiritual, more serious, and every way more gracious than their masters, who have been in Christ long before them? And are there not many poor, neglected, despised, and scorned Christians, who have been converted and sanctified but a few years—who yet are more fearful of sinning against God, and more careful of pleasing God, and more studious of glorifying of God, and more wise, and watchful, and circumspect in their walking with God, and more laborious and diligent in the use of all holy means whereby God may be exalted and lifted up in the world—than many great and rich Christians in the world, who yet have been in Christ very many years before them?

Paul had some kinsmen who were in Christ before him, as you may see in that Romans 16:5, 7, "Greet my dear friend Epaenetus, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia. Greet Andronicus and Junia—they were also in Christ before me." And yet in grace and holiness he excelled them all. [2 Cor. 1:12, and 11:22-30; 1 Thes. 2:2-13.] You know many men in riding a journey do often set out after their neighbors—and yet they not only overtake them—but also get into their inns many hours before them. And among seamen, is there anything more common than for those who set sail some days after others—yet to get into their ports before them? Just so, there are many Christians who have set out heavenwards and holinesswards after others—and yet they have not only overtaken them—but also in grace and holiness gone far before them.

As Christ, in his youth, excelled all the doctors in the temple, Luke 2:46-48—just so, many Christians, even in their youth, as I may say,

do excel other Christians, who, in respect of their years and opportunities, might have been doctors in Christianity. [Jerome writes of Paulinus, that in the first part of his life he excelled others, and in his latter part he excelled himself.] In this great city you have very many who have begun trade many years after others—and yet they are grown far greater and richer than those of their same trade, who have begun many years before them; and doubtless there are very many in this city who have begun the trade of Christianity, the trade of godliness, long after others, who yet are grown greater and richer in grace and holiness than those who have for very many years driven that trade. And oh, how should this alarm all such to double their diligence, and to strive and labor as for life to be eminent in holiness, yes, to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord! But,

(10.) Tenthly, To provoke you to labor after higher degrees of holiness, consider that there are no people under heaven who are so strongly obliged and engaged to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord as you are, for you are the only people on earth who are made partakers of the divine *nature*; and who have a more excellent *spirit* in you than the men of this world have; and who have more excellent *principles* in you—as knowledge, wisdom, faith, love, self-denial, humility, etc., to help on the advance and increase of holiness, than others have, whose souls are strangers, yes, enemies, to those noble and divine principles. [2 Pet. 1:4; Dan. 6:3; 1 Cor. 2:12.]

You are the only people on earth upon whom all exhortations and commands to *grow* in holiness, to *increase* in holiness, and to *perfect* holiness in the fear of the Lord—does most immediately, most directly, most eminently, most roundly, and most fully fall, as you may easily see by comparing these scriptures together. [Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 7:1, and 13:11; Col. 2:7; Heb. 6:1; 1 Cor. 15:58; Jude 10.] O sirs, how gloriously should that *house* be adorned with holiness, which is of God's own building! And how fruitful should those *vineyards* and gardens be, which are of God's own planting! And how full should those *wells* be, which are of God's own digging! And

how sweet should those *flowers* be, which are of God's own planting!
And how ripe should those *fruits* be, which are of God's own grafting!

O sirs, shall the *eagle* fly higher and higher; shall the *sun* shine brighter and brighter; and shall the *giant* refreshed with wine run swifter and swifter; and shall the *woman* who is with child grow fuller and fuller, and greater and greater? And shall not you who are the people of God's holiness—*fly* higher and higher in holiness, and *shine* brighter and brighter in holiness, and *run* swifter and swifter in the ways of holiness, and *grow* fuller and fuller, and greater and greater in the births of holiness?

O sirs, holiness in a Christian is not like a *star* in the sky, nor a *stone* in the earth, nor a *bullet* in a gun, which is always the same. But holiness is like to the *seed*, which, being sown in the furrows of the earth—first springs up into a *blade*, and then into an *ear*, and then into *ripe corn*, Mat. 13:23; Mark 4:28. Holiness is like to the *waters* in Ezekiel's sanctuary, which rise by degrees, Ezek. 47:3-4. First, it rose to the ankles, then to the knees, then to the loins, and then to a mighty river that could not be passed over. Holiness is like to the house of David, which grew stronger and stronger, 2 Sam. 3:1; and like to the cedars of Lebanon, which grow greater and greater, Hosea 14:6-7.

O Christians, there are none who are so strongly obliged to go on from *faith* to faith, and from *strength* to strength, and from *holiness* to holiness—as you are, Romans 1:17. Oh! you must labor to be filled up to the brim with holiness, Col. 1:13, and 2:7. Oh! you must strive to equalize the first three of David's worthies, 1 Chron. 11:21. Oh! you must endeavor to be like the brethren of Gideon, everyone resembling the children of a king, Judges 8:18. Oh, that you could all say as Elihu once did, "For I am full of words, and the spirit within me compels me; inside I am like bottled-up wine, like new wineskins ready to burst," Job 32:18-19. O my brethren—to be as full of holiness as new bottles are full of wine, or as the moon is full of light,

or as the black clouds are full of rain, or as mother's breasts are full of milk—is the greatest happiness in this world.

O sirs! there are no people on earth who are engaged to *love* the Lord with such a vehement love as you, nor to *trust* in the Lord with such an inflamed faith as you, nor to *hope* in the Lord with such a raised hope as you, nor to *delight* in the Lord with such ravishing delights as you, nor to *long* after the Lord with such earnest longings as you, nor to *fear* before the Lord with so great a trembling as you, nor to be so *zealous* for God with such a burning zeal as you, nor to *mourn* over sin before the Lord with so great a mourning as you, nor to *hate* all things which are contrary to the nature of God, the being of God, the command of God, and the glory of God—with such a deadly hatred as you.

Well, remember this, namely—it is no little sin for any Christian to sit down satisfied under a little measure of holiness, considering the many and the great obligations which lie upon him to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. But,

(11.) Eleventhly, To provoke you to labor after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holiness any man attains to—the more bold, courageous, resolute, manly, and heroic that man will be for God and godliness. 2 Cor. 1:8-12. Holiness ennobles the heart, it raises the heart; and the higher the springs of holiness rises in the heart—the higher it raises the heart, and the more it steels the heart for God and godliness. The more holiness any man has, the more resolutely he will set himself against sin, and the more divinely he will scorn the world, and the more courageously he will trample upon temptations, and the more heroic he will be under all his afflictions. Men of greatest holiness have been men of greatest boldness; witness Nehemiah, the three Hebrew children, Daniel, and all the holy prophets and apostles. Proverbs 28:1, "The wicked flee when no man pursues—but the righteous are as bold as a lion," yes, as a *young* lion, as the Hebrew has it, which is in his hot blood and fears nothing.

Great holiness made **Daniel** not only as bold as a lion—but also to daunt the lions with his boldness.

Luther was a man of great holiness, and a man of great boldness: witness his standing out against all the world. When the emperor sent for him to trial at Worms, and his friends dissuaded him from going, he said, "I will surely go, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; yes, though I knew that there were as many devils in Worms to resist me, as there be tiles to cover the houses—yet I would go!" And when Luther and his associates were threatened with many dangers from opposers on all hands, he lets fall this heroic and magnanimous speech, "Come let us sing the 46th Psalm—and then let them do their worst."

Latimer was a man of much holiness, counting the darkness and profaneness of those times wherein he lived, and a man of much courage and boldness; witness his presenting to the adulterous King Henry the Eighth, for a New Year's gift, a New Testament with this motto wrapped around it, "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge!"

Taylor, the martyr, was a very holy man, and being persuaded by some of his friends not to appear before Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester—but to flee. "You flee," said he, "and do according to your consciences—but as for myself I am fully determined, by God's grace, to go to the bishop, and to tell him to his beard that he does evil."

Colonus, the Dutch martyr, called to the judge who had sentenced him to death—asked the judge to lay his hand upon his heart, and then asked him whose heart beat faster, his or the judge's. Here was a man of a heroic spirit indeed.

Basil was a man of great holiness, and a man of a most manly and courageous spirit. When the emperor sent to him to subscribe to the Arian heresy, and to engage him, promised him great preferment, to

which Basil replied, "Alas, your speeches are fit to catch little children with—who mind such things—but we who are nourished and taught by the holy Scriptures are readier to suffer a thousand deaths than to allow one syllable or tittle of the Scripture to be altered!" And when the emperor threatened him with imprisonment, banishment, and death, he answered, "Let him threaten children with such things; as for my part, I am resolved that neither threatenings nor flatteries shall silence me, or draw me to betray a good cause, or a good conscience."

Charles the Ninth, king of France, who had a deep hand in that barbarous and bloody massacre of many thousands of the saints in France; soon after that horrid tragic and perfidious slaughter was over, he called the Prince of Conde, and proposed to him these three things, "Either to go to mass; or to die immediately; or to suffer perpetual imprisonment." To which he returned this noble, bold, and heroic answer, namely, "That by God's help he would never choose the first, and for either of the other two he left to the king's pleasure and God's providence."

John, Duke of Saxony, was eminent in Christianity, and he did heroically assert and maintain the cause of God against all opposition in three imperial assemblies. When it was told him that he would lose the favor of the Pope, and the emperor, and all the world besides, if he stuck so fast to the Lutheran cause; he gave this noble answer, "Here are two ways," said he, "I must serve God or the world, and which of these do you think is the better?" and so put them off with this pleasant indignation. And when the States of the empire forbid all Lutheran sermons, he presently prepared to be gone, and professed boldly, that he would not stay there where he might not have liberty to serve God.

And thus you see by all these famous instances that the more eminent any people are in holiness, the more bold, resolute, courageous, and heroic they will be for God, and for the things of God; and therefore, as ever you would be men of high courage and

resolution for God, labor to be high in holiness. Such men who in all ages have been eminent in holiness have been like Shammah, one of David's worthies, who stood and defended the field when all the rest fled. But,

(12.) Twelfthly, To provoke you to labor after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holiness any man attains to—the more serviceable and useful he will be in his generation. David was a man eminent in holiness, and as eminently serviceable in his generation: Acts 13:36, "For David after he had *served* his own generation by the will of God, fell asleep." Men who have but a little stock of holiness—will be but a little serviceable in their generation; but men who have a great stock of holiness—will be greatly serviceable in their generation. Men who have but little farms, and little stocks—are but a little serviceable to their country; but men who have great farms, and large stocks, and rich revenues—are greatly serviceable to their country. What a world of good sometimes does one rich man do in a town, a city, a country! Just so, one saint who is rich in grace and holiness! Oh, what a world of good does he do to all who are round about him!

Merchants who have great stocks, trade to the East and West Indies, and so enrich their country; whereas those who have but weak estates can only barter with their neighbors at home, and so are instruments but of little public good. A candle enlightens the room—but the sun enlightens the whole world. The more holiness any man has, the more fit for public use that man will be, 2 Tim. 2:21. As there was none so holy as Christ—just so, there was none of so public a spirit as Christ; he went up and down doing good, Acts 10:38; he laid out himself, and he laid down himself for public good; he healed others—but was hurt himself; he filled others—but was hungry himself. A man who is eminent in holiness, will be of his mind—who was rather willing to beautify Italy than his own house.

Moses was a man of great holiness, and of famous use in his generation, Num. 14:11-14, 19-20. Ah, how often did he turn away the

fierce anger and indignation of God from sinful Israel! Deut. 9:14; and oh the famous deliverances and glorious salvations that God brought about by his hand! Psalm 106:23. *Nehemiah* was a very holy man, and he laid out himself and his great estate for public service, Neh. 5:14, seq. *Mordecai* was a very pious man, and a man famously serviceable in his generation, Esther 4. Esther 10:3, "Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to King Xerxes, preeminent among the Jews, and held in high esteem by his many fellow Jews, because he worked for the good of his people and spoke up for the welfare of all the Jews." King Jehoshaphat and Joshua, were men of eminent holiness, and of singular use and service in their generation.

Men who have *no* holiness, and others that have but a little holiness, will be still a-carrying on a private interest of honor, or profit, or friends, or relations—and this we have seen evident among us in these latter days; and therefore, as ever you would be eminently serviceable in your generation, labor after an eminency in holiness. But,

(13.) Thirteenthly, To provoke you to labor after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the greatest degrees of holiness are usually attended with the highest degrees of honor. Grace is called glory, and the greatest measures of grace are commonly crowned with the greatest degrees of glory, 2 Cor. 3:18. *Abraham* was a man eminent in grace and holiness, and he was highly in honor among the people: Gen. 23:6, "You are an *honored* prince among us;" or as the Hebrew has it, you are a *prince of God* among us, that is, you are a *notable* prince, you are an *excellent* prince.

Job was a man who had attained to a very high degree of holiness, Job 1:1-2; and he was highly honored among the people: Job 29:25, "I chose the way for them and sat as their chief; I dwelt as a king among his troops." In all weighty matters Job was the only man, he was chosen by all, and advanced by all above all, in all assemblies and places of judicature, etc. Whoever was of the committee, Job was

still chairman; whoever was of the council—Job was still president; and whoever was of the court—Job was still king, yes, he dwelt as a king in the army. Job was guarded as a king in the army, and *honored* as a king in the army, and *beloved* and admired as a king in the army, and *obeyed* and *served* as a king in the army, and *feared* and *reverenced* as a king in the army. I might give you further instances of this in Joseph, Moses, Nehemiah, Mordecai, the three Hebrew children, and Daniel—but I shall forbear.

Faith is but a piece, a part, a branch of holiness; and yet, oh, what an honorable mention does Paul make of the Romans' faith, in Romans 1:8, "First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the world." The Roman Christians had attained to an eminency in faith, and the report thereof sounded throughout the Roman empire, yes, throughout the world, for there being a great resort to Rome from all parts of the world, and by everyone's discoursing and admiring of the Romans' faith, their faith came to be spread abroad among all the churches all the world over.

Look! as Christ's fullness of grace was his highest glory in this world—just so, a Christian's fullness of holiness is his highest honor in this world, Psalm 45:1-2. O sirs, there is no such way to be high in honor and renown, both in the consciences of sinners and saints—as to be high in holiness. Jewel was a man eminent in holiness, and his holiness set him high in the very judgments and consciences of the Papists. The dean of the college, though a Papist—yet speaks thus of him: "In your faith I hold you a heretic—but surely in your life you are an angel." Among the very heathens, those were most highly honored, who were most excellent and eminent in moral virtues. Aristides was so famous among the Athenians for his justice, that he was called Aristides the Just, etc.,

O Christians, it is your highest honor and glory in this world, to be so eminent and famous for holiness, that men may point at you, and say, "there goes such a one the *wise*, and there goes such a one the *humble*, and there goes such a one the *heavenly*, and there goes such

a one the *meek*, and there goes such a one the *patient*, and there goes such a one the *contented*, and there goes such a one the *just*, and there goes such a one the *merciful*, and there goes such a one the *zealous*, and there goes such a one the *courageous*, and there goes such a one the *sincere*, and there goes such a one the *faithful*, etc."

Well, for a close, remember this, that though great places, great offices, great revenues, and great honors, etc., may exalt you and set you high in the uppermost seats and rooms among men—yet it is only an eminency in holiness which will exalt you and set you high in the consciences of sinners and saints. But,

(14.) Fourteenthly, To provoke you to labor after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the times wherein you live, calls for this at your hand. Jer. 51:5, "The land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel." Ah, how is this land filled with sin, yes, with the worst of sins, against the Holy One of Israel! Hell seems to be broken loose, and men strive to exceed and excel one another in all kinds of wickedness. Oh the scarlet sins which are now to be found under many scarlet robes! Oh the black transgressions which are now to be found under many black robes of ministers! Oh the new-found oaths, the hellish blasphemies, the horrid filthiness, and the abominable debaucheries which are committed daily in the face of the sun! Ah how shameless, how senseless are sinners grown in these days! Jer. 3:3, "You have a whore's forehead, and refuse to be ashamed." Sin everywhere now appears with a whore's forehead.

Ah, what open opposition does Christ meet with in his gospel offices, members, ways, worship, and works! Mat. 24:12; ah how does all iniquity abound, and how bold and resolute are multitudes now in dishonoring of God, in polluting his ordinances, in destroying their own souls, and in treasuring up of wrath against the day of wrath! etc., Romans 2:5.

Now the worser the times are—the better every Christian must labor to be; the more profane the age is wherein we live—the more holy we must endeavor to be. O sirs, how else will you recompense the great God, if I may so speak, for all the dishonors which are cast upon him by the matchless looseness and wickedness of the present times? how else will you shine as lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation? "You are to live clean, innocent lives as children of God in a dark world full of crooked and perverse people. Let your lives shine brightly before them." Philippians 2:15. How else will you convince the consciences, and stop or button up the mouths of wicked and unreasonable men? 1 Pet. 2:15. How else will you be the Lord's witnesses against this sinful and adulterous generation? Isaiah 43:10, 12, and 44:8. How else will you manifest your great love to Christ, and your exceeding tenderness of the honor and glory of Christ? How else will you give an undeniable testimony of the glorious operations of the Spirit in you? Psalm 18:20-25. How else will you satisfy your own consciences that your hearts are upright with God? And how else will you with Noah condemn a wicked world? Heb. 11:7.

Well, Christians, remember this, it is more than time for you to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, when so many thousands labor day and night to perfect wickedness in despite of the Lord; it is time for you to be angels in holiness, when multitudes strive to exceed the very devil in wickedness. Since Christ was on earth, there has been no times that have called louder for the perfecting of holiness than the present times wherein we live. But,

(15.) Fifteenthly, To provoke you to labor after higher degrees of holiness, consider how the men of the world study and strive to abound and increase in worldly blessings. Oh, what ado is there among worldlings to lay house to house, and field to field, to make a hundred into a thousand, and a thousand into ten thousand, etc., Isaiah 5:8. Many men rise early and go to bed late, yes, they cross and wound their consciences, and decline their principles, and endanger their immortal souls—and all

to add to their worldly stores, Psalm 127:1-2. This age is full of such Ahabs, who covet their neighbors' vineyards, yes, they will wade through Naboth's blood to procure them, 1 Kings 21. And how many rich fools are there among us, who instead of minding their souls, and providing for eternity, mind nothing, nor talk of nothing—but pulling down their barns, and building of greater ones! Luke 12:16-21. What struggling is there for places of honor; what desperate ventures for rich commodities; and what high attempts there are for large possessions! Oh the time, the strength, the energy— which many spend in an eager pursuit after earthly things! Psalm 4:6.

Oh, how sad it is to consider that Satan shall have more service from a worldling for an ounce of gold, than God shall have for the kingdom of heaven! though the world in all its bravery is no better than the cities which Solomon gave to Hiram, which he called *Cabul*, that is, *displeasing* or *dirty*, 1 Kings 9:13; yet, oh, how mad are men upon it! Though all the great, the mirthful, and the glorious things of the world may fitly be resembled to the fruit which undid us all, which was fair to the sight, smooth in handling, sweet in taste—but deadly in operation! Yet, oh, how fond are men of these things! and how do most long to be touching and tasting of them, though a touch, a taste, may exclude them out of paradise forever! O sirs, what fools in folio are they, who dare hazard the loss of a paradise for a wilderness; of a crown for a crumb; of a kingdom for a cottage; and of pearls for trifles! and yet such fools are all those who spend themselves in multiplying and increasing of their earthly enjoyments.

In Gen. 13:2 it is said, that "Abraham was very *rich* in cattle, in silver, and in gold;" but according to the Hebrew it runs thus, "Abraham was very *heavy*, in cattle, in silver, and in gold," to show that riches, that gold and silver, which is the great god of the world, are but heavy burdens, and rather a hindrance than a help to heaven and happiness. Gold and silver, which are but the yellow and white guts and garbage of the earth, is fitly called by the prophet, "thick clay," Hab. 2:6, which will sooner break a man's back than satisfy his heart;

and oh, what folly and madness is it for a man to be still a-loading of himself with the clay of this world!

Though the horse is loaded with rich treasure all the day long—yet when night comes he is turned into the dark stinking stable, with an empty belly, and with his back full of galls, sores, and bruises. Just so, though vain men may be loaded with the treasures of this world during the day of their life—yet when the night of death comes, then they shall be turned into a dark stinking hell, with consciences full of guilt and galls, and with souls full of sores and bruises; and then what good will all their treasures do them?

Though the rich man in the Gospel lived sumptuously—yet when he died he went to hell, Luke 16. Though mammon, as Aretius and many others observe, is a Syriac word, and signifies wealth, riches; yet Irenaeus derives mammon of *mum*—which signifies a spot, and hon—which signifies riches, to show that riches have their spots; and yet, oh, how unwearied are men in their adding of spots to spots! Men, in their pursuit after things of this world, seem to act by an untired power, they are never weary of heaping up bags upon bags, nor of enlarging their tents, nor of increasing their revenues, etc.

Now, oh, how should this provoke every gracious soul to be adding of grace to grace, and holiness to holiness! Oh, let not the men of the world outdo you, let them not out-act you! Oh, let not nature excel grace! Oh, let the muckworms of this world know that divine principles are too high and noble to be matched, or to be out-acted by anything that they can do! O sirs, shall *children* grow in your families, and *oxen* grow in your stalls, and *fish* grow in your ponds, and *grass* grow in your fields, and flowers grow in your gardens, etc., and shall not holiness grow in your hearts? Well, friends, remember this, it is infinitely better to be poor men and rich Christians, than to be rich men and poor Christians. But,

(16.) Sixteenthly, To provoke you to labor after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holiness you

attain to in this world—the more weighty and heavy, the more bright and glorious will be your faithful ministers' crown. O sirs, as you rise higher and higher in holiness—just so, the springs of joy rises higher and higher in your ministers' souls, 2 John 4. O Christians, it is neither your seraphic notions, nor your pompous profession; it is neither your good words, nor your sweet looks; it is neither your civilities, nor your courtesies, which raise joy in your ministers' hearts, or which will add to your ministers' crown—but an increase of holiness will do both, Romans 15:14.

The Thessalonians were rare Christians, they were very eminent and high in holiness, as you may see in 1 Thes. 1:5-8, and they were the apostle's "joy and crown of rejoicing," as you may see in chapter 2:19-20, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For you are our glory and joy." The apostle tells these raised, these renowned Thessalonians, that as they were now his hope, his glory, and joy—so at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ they would be his joy, and crown of rejoicing.

Look! as Christ has his thousand shekels of silver—just so, his faithful laborious ministers have their two hundred shekels of silver, and that indeed is a great reward: Cant. 8:12, "But my own vineyard is mine to give; the thousand shekels are for you, O Solomon, and two hundred are for those who tend its fruit." Oh, what an honor is it for faithful ministers to have a fifth part of that reward that Christ has himself!

In this 12th verse Christ compares his vineyard, his church, to that of Solomon's, which is mentioned in verse 11, and though doubtless Solomon's vineyard was one of the rarest, choicest, and fruitfulest vineyards in all Judea—yet it was very inferior to Christ's vineyard. And that partly because Christ's vineyard cost him a dearer and a greater price, even the price of his blood, 1 Pet. 1:18-19, than ever Solomon's cost him.

And partly because his vineyard serves to more spiritual, high, honorable, and noble ends, than ever Solomon's did, 1 Tim. 3:15, namely, the glory and exaltation of God, the propagating of truth, the bringing forth of the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, the bringing in of sinners, and the building up of saints, Gal. 5:22-23; and partly because his eye is still upon it, and his protection is still over it, and his presence is still with it, Psalm 121:3-8. Isaiah 27:2-3, "Sing about a fruitful vineyard: I, the Lord, watch over it; I water it continually. I guard it day and night so that no one may harm it." But Solomon's eye was not always upon his vineyard, neither was his hand of protection always over it, neither was his kingly presence always with it.

And partly because all Christ's treasure is laid up in his vineyard, his church. His treasures of grace, his treasures of mercy, his treasures of comfort, his treasures of goodness, etc., Eph. 3:10, 17-20, is all laid up in his church; but Solomon, as rich and as glorious a king as he was—yet he had no such treasures laid up in his vineyard. Solomon never made his vineyard his treasury.

And partly because his vineyard was given to him forever, as an everlasting inheritance; but Solomon's was but temporary and mutable, Psalm 2:7; John 6:39, and 17:6, 8, 12.

Now all those who are painstaking and faithful laborers in Christ's vineyard, shall receive a noble, a liberal compensation and recompense for their labors. No man shall shut a door nor open a door in Christ's vineyard for nothing; no man shall labor an hour there without a reward. All faithful ministers are fellow-laborers with Christ in the spiritual husbandry; they dig with Christ, and they plant with Christ, and they prune with Christ, and they water with Christ, and they watch with Christ, 1 Cor. 3:8-9; and therefore Christ will allow them a fifth part of the glory and reward with himself. As he has his thousand pieces of silver—just so, he will see to it that they shall have their two hundred pieces of silver. A thousand is the

number of perfection, and here it may note that fullness of glory that Christ should have. And the two hundred may note that very great proportion of heavenly glory that all the faithful laborers in Christ's vineyard shall have, who have helped forward the flourishing estate of that vineyard, Mat. 19:27-29.

Look! as the thriving of the child adds to the comfort and the credit of the nurse, and the fruitfulness of the field adds to the pleasure and delight of the farmer, and the health and increase of the flock adds to the joy and reward of the shepherd—just so, the increase of holiness, the thriving, the fruitfulness of souls in holiness, adds to the credit and comfort, to the pleasure and delight, to the joy and reward of faithful painstaking ministers, who are nurses, farmers, and shepherds, in the language of the Holy Scriptures. Though it is true that faithful ministers are a sweet savor to God, both in those who are saved, and in those who perish, 2 Cor. 2:15, though their labor, whether it hits or misses, is accepted, and shall be rewarded by the Lord, as the physician has his fee, though the patient dies, and the nurse has her wages, though the child doesn't thrive, and the vine-dresser has his hire, though the vines doesn't bear fruit—yet the more they win men to heaven, and the more by their means the work of holiness is carried on in the hearts and lives of men—the weightier will be their crown of glory, and the greater will be their joy and rejoicing in the great day of our Lord, Isaiah 49:15.

O sirs, did you but see your faithful ministers' tears, did you but hear their heavy sighs and groans, were you but acquainted with their fervent and frequent prayers on your behalf, did you but believe how they beat their brains, and how willing they are not only to spend themselves—but even to spit out their very lungs in the service of your souls, how would you call upon your own souls to add holiness to holiness—yes, charge your own souls to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord! Well, friends, as ever you would add to your faithful ministers' comfort here, and to their joy and crown at the coming of our Lord—labor after higher degrees of holiness.

Degrees of Glory

Lastly, To provoke you to labor after higher degrees of holiness, consider that the more holiness you have here—the more happiness you shall have hereafter. The more *grace* you have on earth—the more *glory* you shall have in heaven. Now before I come to make good this argument—namely, that some saints shall partake of more glory in heaven than others shall—give me permission to premise these few things to prevent mistakes.

First, That the object of their happiness, which is the eternal blessed God—will be one and the same to all saints. All glorified saints shall have but one God among them all. God shall be no more one saint's God than he shall be every saint's God in heaven, etc.

Secondly, That the beatifical vision shall be seen by all the saints, and communicated to all the saints; they shall all have a happy and blessed fruition and possession of God. All the vessels of glory shall be filled to the brim with a clear sight of God, and with a full enjoyment of God; and yet doubtless, for all this, some saints shall *apprehend* more of God than others, and *comprehend* more of God than others, and *enjoy* more of God than others. Though all shall be filled with those everlasting springs of pleasure and delight that are at God's right hand, Psalm 16:11—yet some shall be able to take in more of those pleasures of paradise than others shall. Though all the widow's vessels were filled to the brim with oil—yet, doubtless, some being greater and larger than others, they accordingly contained more oil than others, 2 Kings 4:3-8; and so it will be with the saints when they come to heaven. There shall be no lack of glory to any of the saints in glory. **All the saints shall be filled with glory—according to their capacity.** If you bring a thousand vessels of different sizes to the sea, the sea fills them all. Though their sizes differ, and some are bigger, and others lesser—yet all are filled, every little vessel has its fill as well as the greater—just so, every saint shall

have his fill of glory when he comes to glory; the felicity of every saint shall be perfect God will be all in all to all saints, Psalm 17:15.

Thirdly, All saints shall be freed from all evils alike; they shall all be freed from the aching head, and from the unbelieving heart; they shall all alike be free from the evil of sin, and from the evil of sufferings; there shall not be a saint in glory that shall ever feel a pricking brier or a grieving thorn, Ezek. 28:24; there all sorrow shall be removed from all their hearts, and all tears shall be wiped from all their eyes, Rev. 7:17.

Fourthly and lastly, The degrees of glory that saints shall have in heaven shall *not* be given out to them upon the account of their merits, or the dignity of their persons, or the worthiness of their works—but upon the account of God's mere mercy and grace, who in the day of retribution will delight to crown his own gifts, not our merits. And where he shall find the greatest measures of grace and holiness, there he will, of his own free mercy, bestow the greatest measure of glory. [When God crowns us, he does but crown his own gifts in us. Augustine.]

Well, friends, remember this, you must always carefully distinguish between the *essence* and substance of glory, and between *degrees* and measures of glory. Now the essence and substance of glory, which consists in the saints' full communion with God, and in their perfect conformity to God, and in their universal subjection to God, and in their everlasting fruition of God—is common to all the saints, so that no one saint shall have more of the essence and substance of glory than another has—yet the degrees and measures of glory shall be distributed to some more, to some less. Now that there shall be different degrees of glory in heaven, answerable to the different degrees of grace and holiness that the saints reach to here on earth, and that God will at last proportion his rewards according to the different degrees of labor, service, and sufferings of his people in this world, may be made evident,

1. By clear **scriptures**;
2. By **arguments**.

Now there are several **SCRIPTURES** that speaks out this truth. Take these for a taste:

[1.] First, **1 Cor. 3:8**, "Now he who plants and he who waters are one: and *every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor.*" The apostle having compared his own and Apollos' work together, adds, "That both should receive their reward according to their work"—that is, as their work differed—just so, should their reward differ. Though they both preached one and the same doctrine, and had both one and the same design and purpose, namely, to bring in souls to Christ, and to build up souls to Christ—yet according to their different degrees of labor—just so, should be their different degrees of reward. Though no man should work in God's vineyard for nothing—yet he who was most faithful, diligent, and laborious in planting or in watering God's husbandry, should have the greatest reward. Paul and Apollos shall at last receive their different reward according to their different labor; or they shall each of them receive, according to their proper work.

[2.] A second scripture is **1 Cor. 15:41-42**, "The sun has one kind of glory, while the moon and stars each have another kind. And even the stars differ from each other in their beauty and brightness. It is the same way for the resurrection of the dead." It is very observable that the comparison runs between the glorified condition of some saints that shall rise, and other some that shall rise in the great day. Just so, that look, as one star differs from another star in glory—just so, one saint shall differ from another saint in glory at the resurrection of the dead. Though every star is bright, shining, and glorious—yet some stars are more bright, shining, and glorious than others are. Just so, though every saint will shine gloriously in heaven—yet some saints shall have a greater luster, glory and shine upon them than others shall. Look! as some heavenly bodies are more

glorious than others—just so, in the morning of the resurrection some saints shall be more glorious than others, etc.

[3.] A third scripture is **2 Cor. 9:6**, "But this I say, He who sows sparingly shall reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall reap bountifully." A sparing liberality shall be attended with a sparing reward, and a bounteous liberality shall be attended with a bounteous reward. Look! as the harvest answers the measure of seed that is sown—just so, that he who sows but little reaps but little, and he who sows much reaps much—just so, saints' reaping at last will be answerable to their sowing here. All men's charities shall at last be rewarded proportionable to the several degrees of it. He who gives a pound shall have a greater reward than he who gives a penny. He who sows thousands shall reap more than he who sows hundreds. He shall have the most plentiful crop in heaven, who has sowed most seed here on earth, etc. They shall have interest upon interest in heaven, who sow much on this side heaven.

[4.] A fourth scripture is **Luke 19:12-20**. Now in this parable you have a great Lord going into a far country; but before he goes he gives ten minas to ten of his servants to trade with until his return. Now upon his return, he who had increased his mina to ten minas was made ruler over ten cities, verse 17; and he who made five from his one mina was made ruler over five cities, verse 19. Here he who improved their mina most, received the greatest reward. The nobleman in this parable is our Lord Jesus Christ, who is truly and highly noble, he being co-eternal and co-equal with his Father, in respect of his deity; he was born a king, and is now King of kings, and Lord of lords, and Prince of the kings of the earth. The far country that he is gone to is heaven, for there he went at his ascension. Now when he shall return from heaven to judge the living and the dead, he will then bring men to an account, to a reckoning about their improvement of all the gifts and graces that he has entrusted them with; and, according to the different improvement that men shall make of their talents—just so, shall be their reward.

He who makes the greatest improvement of his mina, he shall have the greatest reward, he shall be ruler over ten cities, that is, he shall be very highly honored and exalted. And he who makes a lesser improvement, he shall have a lesser reward, he shall be ruler over five cities. He who makes a great improvement of a little, he shall, if I may so speak, sit at Christ's *right* hand; but he who makes a lesser improvement, he must be contented to sit at Christ's *left* hand. God will proportion out men's reward at last answerable to their improvement of that treasure which he has put into their hands. Yet this does not infer *merit of works*—but a gracious disposition in God to encourage his servants in a way of well-doing, etc.

[5.] A fifth scripture is **Daniel 12:3**, "Those who are wise will shine as bright as the sky, and those who turn many to righteousness will shine like stars forever." [From this very text, your English commentators conclude that there are degrees of glory in heaven, etc.] The glory of heaven is here laid out in shining terms, for look how gloriously the shining of stars does excel the shining of the sky. Just so, some saints shall as far outshine others in glory, as the stars do now outshine the sky. Look! as the stars are a more beautiful and glorious part of the orb than the sky is—just so, some saints shall have a great deal more beauty and glory upon them than others shall. And look, as there are different degrees of glory between the glory of the sky and the glory of the stars now—just so, there shall be different degrees of glory between one glorious saint and another at last. All the saints shall at last shine as the sky—but those who by their doctrine, instruction, and life, turn many to righteousness, these shall shine as the stars, forever and ever. Some of the highest seats in glory shall be for such "who turn sinners from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Jesus Christ," Acts 26:18.

It is very observable, that as the apostles were very eminent in this work—just so, Christ has given it under his own hand, that they shall sit upon twelve thrones, as so many kings, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, Mat. 19:28; Luke 22:28-29. They had done and suffered more for Christ than others, and therefore Christ will put a greater

glory upon them than upon others. Though many learned men differ about the interpretation of those words, "you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel"—therefore I dare not peremptorily conclude this or that to be the sense of them. Yet this is most plain and evident in the text, that the apostles are under a promise of some peculiar and more eminent degree of honor, glory, and dignity, than others are under.

Look! as their service to Christ was a special and eminent service—just so, Christ promises them a special and eminent reward. Every man of them shall have his particular throne, and everyone of them shall have the honor and dignity of judging—that is, of governing and ruling the twelve tribes of Israel. Look! as ambassadors and chief counselors and presidents have the highest and chief seats in the kingly assembly—just so, the apostles shall have the highest and the chief seats in the general assembly and church of the first-born in heaven, Heb. 12:22-23. They shall sit, as it were, on the throne, or on the bench, with Christ—so highly and greatly shall they be exalted.

If we cannot hit upon the exact meanings of the reward here promised—yet we may safely and easily gather from the description of it that there shall be different degrees of glory in Christ's kingdom of glory. The apostles followed Christ through great tribulations and afflictions, and they continued with him in all his temptations; they forsook all, to follow him; and after they had faithfully, laboriously, successfully, and very eminently served him—they made themselves an offering for him, as I have formerly showed you, and therefore Christ will at last in a more eminent way exalt them, and glorify them, than he will others who have never *seen* that of Christ, nor *received* that from Christ, nor *done* that for Christ, nor *suffered* that for Christ—as they have done.

Degrees of *glory* shall at last be proportioned out answerable to those degrees of *service* which in this life men have been drawn out to. Such a thing as this the apostle Paul does more than hint, if I mistake not, in 1 Thes. 2:19-20, "For what is our hope, or joy, or

crown of rejoicing? Are not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For you are our glory and joy." The crown that Paul speaks of here is not that common crown of righteousness, nor that common crown of life and immortality, nor that common crown of glory which all the saints shall be crowned with at last; [2 Tim. 4:8; James 1:12; Rev. 2:10; 1 Pet. 5:4.] But he speaks here of an apostolic crown, of a special, peculiar crown, that should accrue to him upon the account of his serviceableness to their souls; and of this crown he speaks again in that Phil. 4:1, "Therefore, my brethren, my dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved." He calls the Philippians his crown, and that partly because their spiritual growth, constancy, and perseverance was now his glory among other churches—but mainly because they should be his particular crown of rejoicing in the great day of our Lord Jesus. He knew that the Philippians' profit would be his crown and his advantage another day. The apostle alludes here to the custom of the Romans, who, as they had their common crowns of ivy and laurel, etc.—and these were such that their horses which won the race were often crowned with, which occasioned Theocritus to say, "See what poor things the world glories in; for, as their conquerors are crowned—just so, are their horses!" Just so, they had their peculiar, their special crowns, which were the rewards of their conquerors that had done special service for their country.

Just so, there are common crowns that belong to all the saints, as saints—as the crown of *righteousness*, the crown of *life*, and the crown of *glory*. And as there are these common crowns—just so, there are special and peculiar crowns, that they shall be crowned with, who are exercised in more high and excellent services than others have been employed in; and this is the crown that here the apostle speaks of. He knew very well that his reward should be answerable to his work, for though God never did, nor ever will, reward men *for* their works, as if they were the *meritorious* cause of the reward—yet he will for degrees reward them *according* to their

works. There are peculiar crowns, special crowns, for those who have done peculiar and special services for Christ on earth.

[6.] A sixth scripture is **Mat. 5:11-12**, "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven." Suffering saints, persecuted saints, shall be sure of great rewards. God will reward his people, not only their innocence, integrity, patience, and courage under their sufferings—but the more their sufferings, revilings, and persecutions are multiplied in this world, the more shall their recompense and reward be multiplied in the eternal world. It is true, **Christ has many lovers of his crown—but few bearers of his cross.** All would reign with him—but few care to suffer for him. But yet it is as true on the one hand—namely, that those who bear most of his cross shall be greatest sharers in his crown; those who suffer most for him on earth shall be most blessed and rewarded by him when they come to heaven.

Look! as the consolation of the saints rises higher and higher in this world, even as their sufferings rise higher and higher, 2 Cor. 1:4-5—just so, the glory of the saints shall rise higher and higher in the eternal world, as their sufferings rise higher and higher in this world. Tertullian writes of the persecuted Christians who cry out, "Your cruelty is our glory, and the harder we are put to it, the greater shall be our reward in heaven!" One speaking of the martyrs said, "look how many sufferings they have—just so many crowns they shall have!" For every suffering—God shall set a crown on their heads. "By how much men's sufferings have been greater," says Chrysostom, "by so much the more their crown shall be bright and resplendent!"

"The greater conflicts and buffetings which any saint has endured, the greater shall be his reward, and the more ample shall be his glory," says Austin. As Christ has many crowns upon his head, suitable to the multitude of his sufferings and victories—just so, Christians at last shall have crowns suitable to the multitude of their sufferings, and suitable to those famous victories which they have

gained over a tempting devil and a persecuting world, Rev. 19:7. Certainly it will be but justice, that they should receive the weightiest crown who have bore the heaviest cross, 1 John 5:4, and 2:13-14.

[7.] The seventh and last scripture that I shall produce is **Mat. 10:41**, "He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward;" that is, say some, they shall be partakers of the same reward which is laid up for the prophets. Without all question, these two things lie fair in the text:

First, That there is some special and eminent degrees of reward due unto a prophet above other men. And,

Secondly, That he who shall entertain a prophet, and perform any offices of love and favor to him under that name and notion, he shall be partaker of that reward. He who receives a prophet, as he is God's messenger, and employed in his service, and sent about his errand, and not upon any carnal or worldly respects—he shall receive a prophet's reward; that is, he shall receive either such a reward as the prophet himself shall receive at last, or he shall receive such a large, ample, and noble recompense as is fit for one to receive, who received a prophet as coming from the Lord.

Look! as such who give an honorable reception to the ambassadors of kings or princes, do highly raise themselves in the favor and esteem of those kings or princes who had sent them—just so, those who receive the faithful prophets of the Lord, as the ambassadors of God, they shall be highly interested in the favor of God, and as nobly be rewarded by God.

I might produce several other scriptures that echo to the same purpose as these seven do—but enough is as good as a feast; as that Mark 6:20; John 14:2; Mat. 20:20-24.

I shall, therefore, in the second place come to the **reasons** that may further evidence and confirm this great truth—namely, that there

shall be different degrees of glory in heaven. Among many other reasons that might be given, I shall only give you these five.

[1.] First, There are diversities of degrees of angels in heaven. There are cherubim and seraphim, and there are angels and archangels. Now the cherubim and seraphim are a lower rank and order of angels, and the archangels are a higher rank and order of angels. And the apostle speaks clearly of several ranks and orders of invisible creatures in that Col. 1:16. Here you have an enumeration of thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers. And so in Eph. 1:21, "Far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion." These principalities and powers are the blessed angels who minister before the Lord, and who are subordinate unto one another; and here they are reckoned up by ascending: *power* is above principality, and *might* above power, and *dominion* above might. To define those orders and degrees of angels with which God is environed, is a work too high and hard for me, and though the Papists and several schoolmen are so bold as to define their particular offices and orders—yet I dare not be wise above what is written. **Where the Scripture is silent—I love to be silent; and where the Scripture has no tongue—there I desire to have no ears.** [Mat. 9:34, and 12:34; Mark 3:22. The very supposition of order supposes inequality and disproportion.]

There is an order in HELL, an order among the devils, and therefore you read in three scriptures of the *prince* of devils, and so much also that expression imports that you have in that Mat. 25:41, "The devil and his angels," which intimates a prince among those unclean and damned spirits. Now shall there be order in hell and confusion in heaven? Shall there be order among the evil angels, and shall there not much more be order among the good angels? Certainly that God who is the God of order, and who has *made* all things in order, and who to this day *keeps* all things in order here below—will never allow the least disorder and confusion to be among those princes of glory who stand continually before him. He who denies order in heaven, denies heaven to be heaven; and he who grants order in heaven,

grants degrees of glory in heaven. Though there is no difference between the angels in *nature*—the angelical nature being alike in all—yet in *office*, there is a great deal of difference in the glory of the angels, for God employs some of the heavenly host in more high, noble, and excellent services than others, and answerable thereunto shall their reward be. Though all angels shall share alike in the essential and substantial glory of heaven—yet there is an additional glory, an overplus of glory, which shall be conferred upon the angels, answerable to the several and various services that they have managed and engaged in.

Now the Scripture tells us plainly that "in heaven we shall be like the angels," Mat. 22:30; and therefore if there be degrees of angels, and if the angels in heaven shall have a different glory and reward, according to the work in which they have been employed, then the glory of the saints in respect of degrees shall be different also. But,

[2.] Secondly, There are degrees of torments in hell, and therefore, by the rule of contraries, there shall be degrees of glory in heaven. Now that there are degrees of torments in hell is most evident from several plain scriptures, as from Mat. 10:14-15, "If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake the dust off your feet when you leave that house or town. I assure you: It will be *more tolerable* on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah than for that town." Sodom and Gomorrah shall have an easier and cooler hell than such cities shall have, which have despised the offers of grace, and the offers of mercy. [Contempt of Christ and his gospel, is worse than sodomy.] It is very observable, that the punishments that God in this life has inflicted upon the Jews for their contempt of Christ, and his everlasting gospel, have been more terrible than his raining hell out of heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah: for suddenly, and in a moment, God consumed them, and burnt Sodom and Gomorrah up. But God has for above this sixteen hundred years been a-raining hell out of heaven upon the Jews; he has for a long time vexed them with all manner of adversity, and to this very day he has made them, all the world over, a spectacle of his

dreadful severity. But all those plagues and punishments that the Jews have been and still are under, are but flea-bitings and scratches on the hand—compared to those dreadful and astonishing judgments which God, in the great day of account, will inflict upon all Christ refusers and gospel-despisers! "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." John 3:36

And so chapter 11:20-23, "Then Jesus began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent. "Woe to you, Korazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day!" The more mercy has been upon the bare knee entreating sinners to repent, the more earnest the Lord Jesus has been in wooing sinners to believe on him and to resign up themselves wholly and only to him, the more clearly and sweetly the everlasting gospel has sounded in sinners' ears, and the more near, and the more often heaven has been brought to sinners' doors—and yet they have bid defiance to all, and hardened themselves in their sins—with the greater violence and with the more dreadful vengeance shall such be plunged into the lowest hell.

And so in Mat. 23:14, "Woe unto you, scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites, for you devour widows' houses, and for a pretense make long prayers; therefore you shall receive the *greater* damnation." Hypocrites shall be double damned; the hottest and the darkest place in hell is reserved for them. "Give him his portion with hypocrites;" for number and weight, there are no torments in hell, compared to the torments of hypocrites. Counterfeit sanctity is double iniquity, and therefore it is but justice that the hypocrite should have double torment.

And so in Luke 12:47, 48, "That servant who knows his master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants, will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." Sins against light and knowledge are sins against the noblest remedy. They waste and wound the conscience most, they most open sinners' mouths to blaspheme against God, and they most harden sinners' hearts in sinning against God; and every way they dare God most, and provoke God most—to strike with an iron rod, and to whip the knowing transgressor, not with rods, but with scorpions.

It is very observable, that the more light and knowledge men sin against in this world—the greater judgments God gives them up to, even in this life, Romans 1:21-23. Oh, how much more, then, will God in the great day give them up to the greatest judgments, who have given themselves up to the greatest sins! Certainly the professors of this age, yes, of this city, whether they go to heaven or hell, will be the greatest debtors that shall be in either place—the one to the free *grace* of God, and the other to his *justice*. **That those who have most of hell in their mouths, and most of hell in their hearts, and most of hell in their lives—should have most of hell in their souls at last, is but justice.**

I shall conclude this second argument with a saying of Augustine, "Look!" says he, "as in heaven one is more glorious than another—just so, in hell one shall be more miserable than another." Now if there be degrees of torments in hell, which I suppose the scriptures but now cited does undeniably prove, then, doubtless, there will be degrees of glory in heaven.

[3.] Thirdly, God in this life dispenses the gifts and graces of his Spirit unequally among his saints; to some he gives two talents, to others five, and to others ten. Hence it is you read both of a weak faith, and of a strong faith. "Why are you afraid,

O you of little faith?" and, "O woman, great is your faith;" and, "Truly, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." [Mat. 25, 8:10, 26, and 15:28.]

And hence it is that you read both of *weak* Christians, and of *strong* Christians. "He who is weak in the faith receive;" "another who is weak eats herbs;" "and to the weak, I became as weak, that I might win the weak;" "we then who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves;" "when I am weak, then am I strong." [Romans 14:1-2; 1 Cor. 9:22; 2 Cor. 12:10; Heb. 5:13-14; 1 Pet. 2:2, and 5:1.]

And hence it is that you read of *babes*, and of *children*, and of *young men*, and of *old men*, in the Scripture. Saints are of different growths. Some are but *babes* in gifts and grace, others are *children*, others *young men*, and others *old men*. God distributes the good things of this world unequally among the sons of men, as to some more, to others less; to some great things, to others little things; to some high things, to others low things. God unequally distributes spiritual blessings among his dearest children; to some he gives more light, to others less; to some a greater measure of love, to others a less; to some a greater degree of joy, to others a less, etc. Some saints shine in grace and holiness as the skies, and others shine in grace and holiness as the stars; some shine in grace and holiness as the moon, and others shine in grace and holiness as the sun; and all this springs from those different measures of grace and holiness which God bestows upon his people.

Now doubtless men may as well plead for equal degrees of *grace*—as they may for equal degrees of *glory*; they may as well plead for an equal share in the good things of this world—as they may plead for an equal share in the happiness and blessedness of the eternal world. Doubtless as God dispenses his gifts and graces unequally in this life—just so, he will dispense his rewards unequally in the next life. As men's gifts and graces are different here on earth—just so, their glory shall be different when they come to heaven. Without all question,

they shall have the whitest and the largest *robes* of honor, and the heaviest and the brightest *crowns* of glory—whose souls are most richly adorned with grace, and whose lives are most eminently bespangled with holiness.

The more grace and holiness any saint has here, the more he is prepared and fitted for glory; and the more any saint is fitted *for* glory, the more that saint shall at last be filled *with* glory. The greatest measures of grace and holiness do most enlarge the soul, and widen the soul, and capacitate the soul—to take in the greatest measures of glory; and therefore the more grace, the more glory, the more holiness, the more happiness, a saint shall have at last. Certainly God will crown his own gracious works in his children proportionable to what they are—but they are different and unequally in all his children in respect of measures and degrees; and therefore God will set different crowns of glory upon the heads of his children at last. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Those who have more grace and holiness than others, they are more like God than others. They bear his glorious image in a greater print, they have a brighter character of God upon them, and they are the most lively picture of God in all the world.

Now we know, though parents love their children well, and wish all their children well, and provide for all their children well—yet commonly they love them most, and provide for them best, who resemble them most. Parents cannot but love those children most, and lay up for them most, who have most of themselves in them; and I cannot see how God can do otherwise than love them most, and provide for them best, who most resemble him to the life. The nature of God is a holy nature, and so there lies a holy necessity on his nature to love them most, who have most grace and holiness in them, Psalm 45:7.

Look! as it is natural to God to hate wickedness—just so, it is natural to God to love holiness; and as the higher men rise in wickedness, the more a holy God hates them—just so, the higher men rise in holiness, the more a holy God loves them. Now the more any are like God, and the more they are beloved by God, the higher doubtless in glory shall they be advanced by God. The best and the largest portion is laid up for that child that is most like his father. The more any man in holiness resembles God on earth, the greater and the larger portion of glory that man shall have when he comes to heaven. But,

[5.] Fifthly and lastly, To deny degrees of glory in heaven, and to say that God will not suit men's wages to their works, nor their rewards to their services, nor crown the highest improvements of grace with the highest degrees of glory, is to render useless many glorious exhortations which are scattered up and down in the Scripture. 1 Cor. 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." If this were not a truth that I have been all this while asserting, why then, when men meet with this exhortation, they may say, "Why, it is no great matter whether we are *steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord* or not; for if we are, we shall never advance our reward in heaven, we shall never add pearls to our glorious crown, we shall never add one mite to our happiness and blessedness; and if we are not, we shall be as high in heaven, and our reward as great, and our crown as weighty, as theirs shall be who are *steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord.*" [2 Cor. 7:1, and 9:6; 2 Pet. 3:18; John 15:8; 2 Pet. 1:5-7.]

And so the denial of degrees of glory in heaven will take off also the edge of all those other exhortations of *perfecting holiness*, of *sowing liberally*, of *growing in grace*, of *bringing forth much fruit*, and of *adding virtue to virtue*, etc. Yes, this will cut the throat of all divine endeavors; for who will labor to be rich in grace, and to be much in service, and to abound in all the fruits of righteousness and holiness,

when none of all this will turn to a man's advantage in the eternal world? If he who sows little shall have as great a harvest as he who sows much; if he who is dull and negligent in the work of the Lord shall have as great a reward as he who is active and abundant in the work of the Lord; if those trees of righteousness which bring forth much fruit shall have no greater a recompense than those trees of righteousness which bring forth many leaves of profession but little fruit, etc., who would sow much, and who would be active and abundant in the work of the Lord, and who would bring forth much fruit? truly but few, if any.

The truth that I have been laboring to make good, namely, that there shall be different degrees of glory in heaven, and that God will proportion men's reward to their work, and that he will measure out happiness and blessedness to them at last, according to the different measures of grace bestowed upon his people, and according to the work, service, and faithfulness of his people in this world; this truth, I say, held forth in its luster and glory, is a marvelous encouragement, and a mighty provocation to all sincere Christians—to labor after the highest pitches in Christianity, and to be very eminent in grace and holiness; for what man is there, who will not reason thus, "the more grace the more glory; the more holiness the more happiness; the more work the more wages; and the greater my service shall be here, the greater shall be my reward hereafter. Therefore, O my soul! grow in grace, perfect holiness, and abound in the work and service of the Lord, knowing that your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord." And thus I have given you the reasons that prove that there shall be degrees of glory in heaven.

Now I have nothing further to do upon this point—but to give a few brief answers to such **objections** as are commonly raised against this truth, that I have asserted and proved.

Objection 1. First, Some object and say, That one Christ bought us all, and that all our portions are bought by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that therefore all believers shall share alike in

the inheritance of the saints in light. Now to this objection I shall answer,

[1.] First, That all saints shall be equal sharers in the substantial and essential glory of heaven, etc. But of this I have spoken before; and, therefore,

[2.] Secondly, Though a father buys a rich inheritance for all his children—yet this lays no necessity nor obligation at all upon him to allot to everyone of his children an equal portion. Just so, though our Lord Jesus Christ has by his blood purchased a rich inheritance for his children—yet this lays no necessity nor obligation at all upon Jesus Christ to divide this rich inheritance by equal portions among his children. It is true that Christ has purchased all with his blood; and it is as true that he may divide his purchase among his people as he pleases. If every man may do with his own as he pleases, why may not Christ? Must he needs be bound, when others are free?

[3.] Thirdly and lastly, I answer, That as it is true that the merits and satisfaction of Christ is the ground and foundation of our reward, and that alone which makes our works capable of a reward—just so, it is as true that our works are the subject to reward, and this is most agreeable to the compact that was made between Christ and his Father—that everlasting happiness and blessedness, that eternal glory and felicity, should be measured out to the saints according to their different measures of grace, and different degrees of service that they have been engaged in this world, and all this upon the credit of Christ's blood. Certainly there is nothing under heaven, below the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, that can make differing works capable of a different reward.

The Papists are most sadly wrong, for they are so blind and bold as to affirm that the more grace any man has, the more glory he *merits* by his grace. These men make *degrees of grace*, and not the blood of Jesus Christ, to be the *meritorious* cause of degrees of glory; and therefore of all men I think they are furthest from glory. Certainly

this is the believer's glory, and his crown of rejoicing, that all recompenses and rewards shall flow in upon him, not upon the account of his merits—but upon the account of Christ's blood; and thus much shall suffice to have spoken by way of answer to this objection.

Objection 2. But now, in the second place, I shall come to answer their grand and main objection; and that is taken from that parable in the 20th chapter of Matthew, where the kingdom of heaven is compared to a vineyard. Now in this parable there is mention made of a farmer that called several laborers into his vineyard, at several hours in the day; some he called at the first hour, and some he called at the third, and some at the ninth, and some at the eleventh. Now when they all came to receive their wages, the story tells us that he gave every man a penny, he gave every man an equal reward. Those who labored from the first hour, and those who labored from the third hour, and those who labored from the sixth hour of the day—had no greater a recompense than he who came in at the eleventh hour, and so had labored but one hour in the vineyard, and bore but little if any of the heat of the day. From whence the objectors conclude that there are no degrees of glory in heaven—but that all shall have glory alike, happiness and blessedness alike; every man shall have his penny, every man shall have an equal reward, and no man's penny in heaven shall be brighter or bigger than another's.

Now, by way of answer to this objection, give me permission to premise these three things:

First, That this parable of the householder, in giving to every man a penny, has no reference at all to heaven, nor to the reward, nor to the glory that shall be conferred upon the elect, and this I shall clearly and fully prove by these four following arguments:

[1.] First, This inferential particle, "for," in verse 1, shows that this parable is inserted to expound the former conclusion, namely, "that the first shall be last, and the last shall be first," and therefore the

end of the parable is concluded with the repetition of the same sentence, verse 16, "the last shall be first, and the first shall be last." Christ by this parable would teach his hearers, that there is no reason why those who are first called in respect of time should boast or triumph over others, because he can easily call the uncalled at pleasure, and either make them equal with them, or else prefer them before those who are first. The scope of Christ in this parable is not to set forth the equality of celestial glory, it is not to prove that the happiness and blessedness of the saints shall be equal in heaven—but the very drift of the parable is to show, that those who are first called and converted have no cause at all to despise the uncalled and unconverted, or to trample upon them with the foot of pride, considering that they who are yet in their sins, and in an unconverted and unsanctified estate—may yet be called, and either made equal to them, or preferred before them. But,

[2.] Secondly, Interpreters do generally agree in this, that by the farmer we are to understand God himself, and by the laborers—men upon earth, and by the vineyard—the church of God; and several of them say, that *by the five hours in the parable we are to understand the five ages of man.*

First, By those who were called in the morning and sent into the vineyard, we are to understand those who in their childhood are called and converted; they are such who begin to seek the Lord, and to serve the Lord, even as soon as they are capable of the use of reason; as Samuel did, and as Josiah did, and as Timothy did.

Secondly, By those who are called at the third hour, we are to understand those who are converted and turned to the Lord in their youth, in the prime, the spring and morning of their days.

Thirdly, By those who were called at the sixth hour, we are to understand those who are turned to the Lord in their strength, and in their full and perfect age.

Fourthly, By those who were called at the ninth hour, we are to understand those who are converted and turned to the Lord in their declining age.

And fifthly, By those who were called at the eleventh hour, we are to understand those who are converted and turned to the Lord in their decrepit old age, when they have one foot in the grave, and there is but a short step between them and eternity, when, with the thief upon the cross, they are even ready to be turned off of the ladder of life.

Now the vineyard being the church, all that this parable proves is no more but this, that whether men are called into the vineyard of the church either sooner or later—either at the first hour, or at the ninth, or eleventh hour: yet this shall neither greaten nor lessen their reward; for if they are called at the first hour, their recompense shall be ever the greater upon that account, or if they are called at the eleventh hour, their reward shall be ever the lesser upon that account; the reward shall not be different according to the different times of men's being called and converted, and that this parable proves; but the reward shall be different according to the diversity of our works, and that my former arguments prove.

[3.] Thirdly, If the penny that everyone had in the parable be meant of glory, then it will roundly follow, that murmurers shall be saved and glorified as well as others, for the murmurers had their penny as well as the rest: verse 10-12, "But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more, and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and you have made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day." The Greek word which is here rendered murmured, signifies to grunt as swine grunt. They grumbled and grunted, and they grunted and grumbled; and pray tell me what should such swine as murmurers are do grunting and grumbling in heaven? doubtless the crown of glory is too bright,

too noble, too glorious, and too weighty a crown to be set upon murmurers' heads. Heaven would be no heaven if there were but one grunter or murmurer there.

In heaven all the vessels of glory shall be full, and there shall not be the least shadow of envy or repining there. In the streets of that new Jerusalem above, none shall ever complain that others have too much, or that they themselves have too little. Every glorified saint shall sit down fully satisfied and contented with his portion there. Now should we understand *the penny* to be a glorified estate and condition, then this would unavoidably follow, that many shall be brought to a state of glory which are not elected, nor sanctified, nor prepared for glory; but this can never, nor must never be granted; and therefore without all question this parable does no way hold out that state of glory and felicity which all the called and chosen of God shall have at Christ's coming to judge the quick and the dead. But,

[4.] Fourthly, The penny that is here mentioned in this parable cannot, nor may not, be interpreted so as to signify an equality of glory, or an equality of happiness and blessedness, that the saints shall have in heaven, because such an interpretation, such an exposition, is cross and contrary to the common and received rules of interpreting and expounding of Scripture. Now, among other rules which are to be observed in the interpreting and expounding of Scripture, there are these two:

FIRST, You must so interpret and expound one text of Scripture, that you do not set it at strife and variance with another text of Scripture; for though there is a *seeming* contradiction between scripture and scripture—yet there is a blessed harmony and a glorious agreement between all the parts of Scripture. It is a very dangerous thing so to interpret Scripture as to raise contests and opposition between scriptures and scriptures; it is an evil thing to raise up scripture against scripture, and so to interpret one as to make it affront another. Woe to him who by his interpretations of Scripture proclaims the scriptures to be at open war among themselves. Now

to interpret the penny in the parable so as to make it signify an equality of glory and happiness among the saints in heaven, is to set this scripture at variance and strife with all those scriptures that I have produced to prove an inequality in the glory and happiness of the saints in heaven, and therefore such an interpretation is rather to be abhorred than to be received. But,

SECONDLY, Another rule that is to be observed in the interpreting of Scripture is this—we must always interpret those scriptures which are more dark and mysterious, by those scriptures which are more plain and clear; and not interpret those scriptures which are plain and clear by those who are dark and mysterious, for this were to darken counsel by words without knowledge, Job 38:2.

Those who interpret the penny in the parable to signify an equality of glory among the saints in heaven, they transgress this second rule; for they must then interpret all those clear and plain scriptures that I have brought to prove degrees of glory in heaven by this dark and mysterious parable, whereas they should interpret this dark and mysterious parable, if I may so say, by those plain and clear scriptures that I have already cited; and therefore their interpretation must be rejected.

It is true, of some parables we may say as Gregory does, namely, that they rather require a *practicer* than an *interpreter*, Psalm 49:4, and 97:2; John 16:29. And it is as true that other parables are so dark, obscure, and mysterious, that we shall never understand them without the sweat of our brows and the beating of our brains, and such a parable this seems to be, and therefore we must interpret the parts of it rather by other clear scriptures, than to make clear and plain scriptures bow to this—which seems to have a veil upon it. And thus you see by these arguments, that the penny in the parable has no reference at all to heaven, nor to any equality of glory that shall be among the saints there.

Secondly, Chrysostom's counsel on the text should be eyed and followed. Says he, "We should not strain every particular of a parable—but only consider the scope of Christ in the propounding of it, and accordingly apply it." We look not on every particular color in a well-drawn picture—but on the whole piece. Just so, when we come to view a parable, it is enough that we cast our eye principally upon the general intention and scope of it. He who is very exact and curious to view and observe every particular circumstance about parables, may easily draw blood, instead of milk, out of the breasts of parables. Parables are like to the scroll which Ezekiel saw in a vision spread before him, which was written within and without; without the history was written, and within the mystery was written, Ezek. 2:10. Now though the outside, the history, of a parable be like the golden pot—yet the inside, the mystery, of a parable is like the manna that was hidden therein, and it is the manna, the manna, that we must seek after. It is our wisdom to cast a special eye upon the inside of parables, upon the mystical reference that parables have, than to lie poring upon the outside of parables.

Therefore, the scope of this parable is not to prove that there is an equality of glory in heaven—but to reprove the Jews, who, being called into the Lord's vineyard early in the morning, repined and murmured that the Gentiles, who were called in at the latter end of the day, who were called in some thousand years after them, that they should through the riches of grace have an equal share with them in the reward, and stand upon as good and as noble terms with God as themselves, who had so long bore the heat of the day. God, to show that his gifts, his grace, and his rewards are free, will give his pennies as well to those who have labored but a little—as to those who have labored much; and this is no prejudice at all to his truth and justice, that his grace is free. But,

Thirdly and lastly, That by the penny we cannot, nor we may not, understand everlasting happiness and blessedness—but some other reward that hypocrites may attain to as well as sincere-hearted Christians; and the reason is obvious: for he who was sent away for

his envious grumbling and grunting, was sent away also with his penny, "take your penny and be packing." [Some by the penny do understand worldly honor, and the estimation and approbation of men.] By the penny some pious interpreters do understand some competent gift or other, whatever it were, which might be well managed and improved to advantage. The vineyard is the church, and everyone that is called to labor in the vineyard is called to labor in the use and improvement of ordinances. Now everyone that is laborious in the use of ordinances shall be sure to get something; no man shall kindle a fire on God's altar for nothing. And yet it many times comes to pass that those who have been called and converted long before others, do yet make no greater, nor any better earnings on it than those do, who have been called and converted long after them. He who is called at the first hour sometimes gets no more than he who is called at the eleventh hour. It is in the trade of Christianity, as it is in other trades. Now you know that many men who have been set up in this or that trade ten, nay twenty, years before others—yet they many times make no more earnings, no more advantage of their trade, than those who have set up but the other day, as we say.

Why, so many who have been called long to the trade of Christianity before others—yet they make no more earnings, no more advantage of that trade, than those who have been called to it but yesterday, as I may speak. His gifts, his gain, his earnings, who is called in at the eleventh hour of the day, is many times equal to his that was called in at the first hour of the day. Yes, I have formerly proved that sometimes many who are called later than others, do yet in gifts and grace excel those who were called long before them.

Now these objections being answered, that truth stands firm, like mount Zion, namely, that the more holiness you have here, the more happiness you shall have hereafter; the more grace you have here on earth, the more glory you shall have when you come to heaven.

Eight Means, Helps, and Directions for Progress in Holiness

And so I come to the next thing proposed, namely—to acquaint you with some **means, helps, and directions** which may enable you to make a **progress in holiness**, and to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. And,

[1.] First, If ever you would perfect holiness, if ever you would attain to higher degrees of holiness than any yet you have attained to, then **labor to be more and more sensible of your spiritual needs and deficiencies of grace and holiness**. Ah Christians! you must be often in casting up your accounts, and in looking over the defects of your holiness. He who has most holiness—yet lacks much more than what he has attained to. Witness the prevalence of his corruptions, witness his easy falling before temptation, witness his aptness to faint in the day of affliction, witness his staggering in the day of opposition, witness his shifts in the day of persecution, and witness his actual unpreparedness and unfitness for the day of his death. The more any Christian sees himself defective in holiness, the more he will labor after holiness.

Psalm 119:59-60, "I *thought* on my ways—and turned my feet unto your testimonies: I made haste, and delayed not to keep your commandments." The Hebrew word which is here used for *thinking*, signifies *to think on a man's ways accurately, advisedly, seriously, studiously, minutely*. This holy man of God thought exactly and minutely on all his purposes and practices, on all his doings and sayings, on all his words and works, and finding too many of them to be *short* of the rule, yes, to be *against* the rule—he turns his feet to God's testimonies; having found out his errors, upon a diligent search, a strict scrutiny, he turns over a new leaf, and frames his course more exactly by rule.

O Christians! you must look as well to your spiritual needs as to your spiritual enjoyments. You must look as well to your layings *out* as to your layings *up*. You must look as well forward to what you *should* be—as backward to what you *are*. Certainly that Christian will never be eminent in holiness, who never has an eye to behold his little holiness. He who is more affected with that little holiness he has, than he is afflicted about those great measures of holiness that he lacks, will ever be a puny dwarf in holiness. The more sensible we are of our own weakness and emptiness, the more pleasure God will take to fill us with his own fullness, and to perfect in us the work of holiness. But,

[2.] Secondly, If ever you would perfect holiness, if ever you would attain to higher degrees of holiness, then **set the Lord always before your eyes, set yourselves always as in his presence.** Psalm 41:12; 1 Sam. 2:1, 3. David was a man who was very high and eminent in holiness; but how came he to so great a height? why he tells you how, in that Psalm 16:8, "I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved." [Athenodorus, a heathen, could say that all men ought to be careful in the actions of their lives, because God was everywhere, and beheld all that was done. 1 Kings 20:39; Psalm 39:1; Jer. 20:10; Job 10:12.] David did not by fits and starts set the Lord before him; "but he *always* set the Lord before him in his course." He had his eye upon the Lord, and so much the Hebrew word imports: *I have equally set the Lord before me*; that is the force of the original word, that is, I have set the Lord before me, at one time as well as another, without any irregular affections or passions, etc. In every place, in every condition, in every company, in every employment, and in every enjoyment, I have set the Lord equally before me; and this raised him, and this will raise any Christian, by degrees, to a very great height of holiness.

Psalm 119:168, "I obey Your precepts and decrees, for all my ways are before You." The Hebrew word that is here rendered kept, signifies to keep carefully, diligently, studiously, exactly. It signifies to keep as

men keep prisoners, and to keep as a watchman keeps the city or the garrison, yes, to keep as a man would keep his very life. But now mark what was the reason that David kept the precepts and the testimonies of the Lord so carefully, so sincerely, so diligently, so studiously, and so exactly. Why, the reason you have in the latter part of the verse, "for all my ways are before you." O sirs! it is as necessary for him who would be eminent in holiness—to set the Lord always before him, as it is necessary for him to breathe.

In that 31st chapter of Job, you have a very large narrative of that height and perfection of holiness which Job had attained to, and the great reason that he gives you for this is in the 4th verse, "does not he see my ways and count all my steps?" The eye of God had so strong an influence upon his heart and life, that it wrought him up to a very high pitch of holiness. The *scholar* writes most exactly while his teacher's eye is upon him; and the *child* walks most exactly while his father's eye is upon him; and the *servant* works most exactly while his master's eye is upon him; and so certainly all the sons and servants of the most high God do hear most exactly, and pray most exactly, and walk most exactly—when they set themselves most as in the presence of the great God, who is all sight, who is *all eye!*

Ah friends! as ever you would be high in holiness, possess your hearts with a serious apprehension of God's presence, set yourselves daily as in his sight, as under his eye; and remember, though a man may easily baffle his *conscience*, and put out his light; and deceive the *world*—yet he shall never be able to baffle or deceive the eye of God's omniscience. You shall as soon get out of the reach of his *hand*, as you shall get from under the view of his *eye*. God has his windows in all our bosoms, and exactly and narrowly observes all that is done *within* us, and all that is done *by* us! If the serious consideration of his all-seeing eye will not influence us to labor after the highest degrees of holiness, I know not what will.

It was Seneca's advice to his friend Jucilius that whatever he was doing he should imagine that Cato did behold him. But my advice to

you shall be this, upon every occasion, in every condition, and in every action, "set the Lord always before you." If the sharp and severe eye of a holy man, or of a holy friend, or of a holy relation will so overawe you, and so exceedingly influence you to the best of actions; then certainly *the sharp, piercing, and all-seeing eye of God* will do much more; and therefore let the Lord be always in your sight. But,

[3.] Thirdly, If ever you would attain to higher degrees of holiness, then **fix and settle yourselves under a holy ministry; resign and give up yourselves to his ministry, who makes it his great business and work to preach holiness, to promote holiness, to countenance holiness, to encourage holiness, to exalt holiness, and to remove all obstructions that may anyway hinder the progress of holiness.** Some ministers spend their time rather to please than to profit, and to tickle their hearers' ears than to touch their hearts, Isaiah 30:11. From these turn aside! Some ministers make it their work rather to destroy churches than to build them up in faith and holiness. From these turn aside! Gal. 1:23. Some ministers make it their business to delude and deceive the simple, by venting and setting forth the devices of their own heads, and the deceits and visions of their own hearts, Phil. 4:14; Jer. 14:14. How many are there in these days whose *glorious visions* are but *golden delusions*, and whose *seraphic phrases* are but *brain-sick phantasies*, and whose *new notions* are but *new nothings*. From these turn aside!

Some ministers, after they had been seemingly washed, return with the dog to his vomit, and with the sow to her wallowing in the mire, Gal. 2:18; 2 Pet. 2:20-22. They say that if tame foxes break loose and turn wild, they do more mischief than any. Julian was once a professor—but turning back to heathenism, he drew more from the faith by his fraud than his predecessors did by force. From these turn aside!

Some ministers cry up the *commandments* of men above the commandments of God; and set up the *ordinances* of men above the ordinances of God; and prefer human *institutions* before divine institutions. From these turn aside! Mat. 15:1-7; Mark 7:1-14.

Some ministers have a vein of scorning and reproaching, of disdainng the reputations of those faithful ministers of Christ who upon all accounts excel them, and whom upon a dying bed, and before a judgment-seat, they will wish that they had *imitated* and not *envied*, 2 Cor. 10:10. These labor to darken and obscure others—that their own sun may shine the brighter. These labor to lessen others' reputation, hoping thereby to greaten their own. These admire themselves and despise others. These look upon themselves as the greatest doctors, and upon all others as the worst of dunces. From these turn aside!

Some ministers spend their time and their strength in studying and preaching of dry and sapless controversies, which are so far from bettering of men's hearts, and from reforming of men's lives—that they leave men as much, and many times more, under the power of sin and dominion of Satan than they were before. From these turn aside!

Some ministers stand most upon easy things, and little things, upon things of least worth and weight, and in these they will be very incessant and precise—and yet readily pass over the great and the weighty things both of the law and of the gospel, 1 Tim. 1:5-7; Mat. 23:23, and 6:3-5. They stand more upon circumstantials than upon substantials; upon a saint's day than upon a Sabbath-day; upon an Easter offering than upon offering up of themselves to the Lord; upon a pipe, a vesture, a gesture—than upon saving of immortal souls. From these turn aside!

Some ministers speak two words for Christ and ten for themselves. They are very zealous to fleece their flocks—but have no heart or desire to feed their flocks, 2 Pet. 2:1-4; Rev. 18:11-13. They mind

men's goods more than their good. They are more for the serving of themselves than the saving of souls. Just so that they may be clad attractively, and dine deliciously, and live lazily—they care not though millions of souls go to hell yearly! To pick your purses they will flatter your consciences! So it may go well with them in this world, they care not what becomes of you in the eternal world. From these turn aside! Ezek. 34.

Some ministers take more pains to make proselytes than to make men holy, Mat. 23:15; they make it their great business to win over men to their opinions, when they should be a-winning of men over to Jesus Christ; they make it more their work to convert men to their way, than they make it their work to better men's hearts, or mend their lives, or save their souls. They will compass sea and land to make men one with themselves—and yet think all that time and pains lost that is spent in endeavoring to make men one with Christ. These are ripe for hell, and resemble the prince of darkness to the life, for as he—just so, they, will spare no pains to gain proselytes. From these turn aside!

Give up yourselves to their labors, who make it the top of their glory to preach holiness, to advance holiness, to magnify holiness, and to practice holiness; and this will be an excellent means to raise you up to higher degrees of holiness. But,

[4.] Fourthly, Be most in with those who are most eminent and excellent in holiness. Let the delight and joy of your hearts run most out to those who are still adding to their stock of holiness. Thus it was with that princely prophet, in Psalm 16:3, "As for the holy people who are in the land, they are the noble ones in whom is all my delight." The disciples, by discoursing with Christ, had a holy flame raised up in them: Luke 24:32, "And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and opened to us the Scriptures?" And when Paul met Silas and Timothy, he burned in spirit, Acts 18:5. These two men were eminent

in holiness, and by their company and communion, the zeal and courage of the apostle Paul was very much heated and raised.

Look! as one flaming faggot may kindle a thousand—just so, one precious saint, in whom grace is strong, and holiness is high, may, by a divine and secret operation, convey heat and life, power and vigor, into all who touch him, or come near unto him; even as the loadstone by a secret operation conveys power and vigor into iron. The prayers, the conferences, the counsels, and all the examples of a man eminent in holiness—will mightily help on the work of holiness in their hearts, where the streams of holiness runs but low.

Look! as rich and costly banquets do refresh, and raise, and strengthen the spirits of those who are weak and faint—just so, men who are rich in grace and holiness will raise and strengthen the spirits of those who are weak in grace, and who, for lack of greater measures of holiness, are apt to faint. Look! as young plants will not thrive under dropping trees—just so, such as are weak in holiness will never thrive so long as they only associate themselves with those who are weak. Look! as many times one rich man makes many poor men rich—just so, many times one man rich in holiness makes many rich in holiness. Therefore, as ever you would abound in holiness, look not so much at *gifts* as at *grace*; look not so much at saints' *outsides* as at their *insides*; look not so much at their *external garb* as at their *internal worth*; and always make them your choicest and your chief companions, who most excel in grace and holiness. Their tongues, their lips, their lives, will still be a-dropping divine marrow and fatness, and therefore be sure to keep most company with them. But,

[5.] Fifthly, If ever you would attain to higher degrees of holiness, then **be much in the exercise and actings of that holiness you have.** All the honor and glory that God has from us in this world is from the exercise of holiness. Look! as the frequent actings of sin is the strengthening of sin—just so, the frequent actings of holiness is the strengthening of holiness. Look! as the non-exercise of

holiness brings upon the soul a decay of holiness—just so, the exercise of holiness breeds in the soul an increase of holiness. Holiness is always made more and more perfect by exercising it.

Look! as wells are the sweeter for drawing, and fountains the better for overflowing—just so, holiness is sweetest and best when it is drawn into action. Look! as the running water is the best and sweetest water—just so, the active Christian is the best and sweetest Christian. That musical instrument which is most frequently used, always makes the sweetest melody; and so does that Christian that is most frequent in the exercise of grace and holiness. We get nothing by dead and useless habits; talents hidden in a napkin gather rust; the noblest faculties wither, when not improved in exercise; and therefore the apostle exhorts Timothy to *stir up* the gift of God which was in him, in 2 Tim. 1:6. The words are an allusion to the fire in the temple, which was always to be kept burning. Paul would have Timothy to be always a-blowing his spark into a flame. [The Greek word signifies to rekindle, or revive. When the world, the flesh, and the devil go about to put out that divine fire that should be always flaming in our hearts, we must do all we can to foster it and keep it burning.]

Look! as *fire* is preserved and maintained by blowing and stirring of it up—just so, *holiness* is preserved and maintained in the soul by being stirred and blown up in the soul. The habits of grace and holiness are like dull coal-fires, which, if they are not now and then blown and stirred up, will certainly die and go out.

O Sirs! it is not the *having*, but the *husbanding* of holiness, which brings glory to God. For a man to have holiness of heart, and not to put it in practice, is the same as for a man to have a talent, and to wrap it up in a napkin. If the grace and holiness in the saints are not brought forth into exercise, into action, it is just as if they had no such grace and holiness at all. Holiness without of action is like a candle under a bushel, which yields no warmth to a man, nor any light to others. Though gold be gold in the mine, and though it be the

most precious and desirable metal in the world—yet so long as it is only in the mine what profit or advantage have we by it? but now, when it is dug out of the mine, and becomes a treasure in men's hands, and is fitted for use and service—then it brings profit and advantage to men, and then the luster and glory of it appears. Just so, though grace and holiness are truly in the heart, in the mine—yet what profit or advantage is there in grace and holiness, until they are brought forth into action, into exercise? Until then, all the luster and glory of grace and holiness lies hidden and obscure. The more holiness is brought into action, the more holiness will be augmented and increased; and therefore, above all, look to the frequent exercises and actings of that holiness you have; and this will be a ready way to turn your *drop* of holiness into a *sea*; and your *spark* of holiness into a *flame*; and your *penny* of holiness into a vast treasure. But,

[6.] Sixthly, If ever you would attain to higher degrees of holiness; if ever you would perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord, then **be much in secret prayer, be much in closet duties.** Mat. 6:5, 9. Christ takes a great deal of pleasure to hear and to see his people pour out their souls before him in secret. Cant. 2:14, "O my dove! who are in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see your countenance, let me hear your voice; for sweet is your voice, and your countenance is lovely."

Look! as secret meals are very fattening—just so, secret duties are very soul-enriching. Secret prayers are the pillars of smoke, whereby the soul ascends to God out of the wilderness of this world. Secret prayers are the wings of the soul, whereby it flies to God in a more still and silent way for the increase and augmentation of holiness. The tender dew which falls in the silent night, will abundantly more cause sweet herbs to flourish and grow, than great showers of rain which fall in the stormy day. Just so, *secret* prayer will abundantly more cause the sweet herbs of grace and holiness to grow and flourish, than all those more *open and visible duties of religion*, which too too often are mingled and mixed with the sun and wind of pride and hypocrisy.

O sirs! Secret prayer is Jacob's ladder, where you have God in his fullness and holiness descending down into the soul. Secret prayer is that ladder whereby the soul ascends to the highest pitch of communion with God. Witness Ambrose, who was accustomed to say, "I am never less alone than when I am all alone, for then I can enjoy the presence of my God most freely, fully, and sweetly, without interruption." And witness that heaven-born lady [Lady Brooke, the great friend of Sibbes, and of the Puritans generally.—G.] who spent most of her time in secret duties, in closet communion with God; and when people of great importance came to visit her, she would so entertain them as she would be sure not to omit her set times for secret prayer. She would rather rudely take her leave of them, as some called it, than omit her closet communion with God. She had found such rare advantages by closet duties, that she would not upon any terms neglect them, or in the least turn her back upon them.

It was a most sweet and divine saying of Bernard; "O saint! Your husband, Christ, is bashful, and will not be intimate in company. Retire, therefore, by meditation into your closet, or the fields, and there you shall have Christ's embraces." O sirs! it is an experienced truth, that there is no such way to be rich in grace, and to be high in holiness—as by driving and maintaining a secret trade with God, Cant. 1:11-12. When did *Peter* have that glorious vision and manifestation of grace—but when he was alone, and on the housetop a-praying? Acts 10:11-12. And when was that soul-ravishing, that soul-cheering, and that soul-strengthening message despatched by the angel to *Daniel*, namely, that he was greatly beloved of God—but when he was alone a-praying? Dan. 9:20-23. And doubtless, many thousand saints have had their hearts melted, their corruptions weakened, their fears scattered, their doubts resolved, their holiness raised, and their assurance sealed, while they have been in closet duties.

Look! as men many times gives their best, their choicest, and their richest gifts in secret—just so, does God many times give the choicest discoveries of his love, and the sweetest dainties and delicacies of

glory, and the richest measures of grace and holiness to his people in secret. [Compare these scriptures together, Mat. 14:23; Mark 6:46; Luke 5:16, and 6:12; Mat. 26:26, 36, 39, 42, 44; Luke 22:32, 44, 45; John 17:17.]

Look! as there were none so holy as Christ—just so, there were none so much in secret prayer as Christ.

Look! as many men in this famous city, by driving a secret trade, a private trade, gain very great estates, beyond what many do who drive more public trades—just so, many Christians who drive a secret trade, a private trade with God in their closets; they grow abundantly more rich in grace, in holiness, in communion with God, and in all gracious experiences, than many other Christians who make a great deal of bustle in the world, and who are much in the public trade of Christianity, namely, hearing the word, meetings, family duties, etc.—but very rarely shall you find them in their closets. As ever you would be eminent and excellent in holiness, keep up your private trade with God, maintain your closet communion with the Holy One of Israel. But,

[7.] Seventhly, If ever you would attain to higher degrees of holiness, then **fall with all your might, upon subduing and crucifying your most raging corruptions, and your most daring lusts.** "Therefore, put to death whatever in you is worldly: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry." Colossians 3:5. Oh do not defer! Oh do not delay the work of spiritual mortification! Oh do not think that you can both fight and overcome, fight and triumph in one day! Oh do not think that your golden and your silver idols will lay down their weapons, and yield the field, and lie at your feet, and let you trample them to death without striking a blow! Isaiah 2:20. Oh remember that besetting-sins will do all they can to keep their ground, and therefore you must arise with all your strength against them, and crush them to powder, and burn them to ashes! Oh deal with them as they dealt with the Levite's concubine—force them to death, and cut them to pieces! Judges 19. Oh leave not

the *palm*, or the *skull* of this cursed Jezebel undevoured, undestroyed! 2 Kings 9.

Oh deal with your most enraged lusts as the Philistines dealt with Samson—pluck out their eyes, and force them to grind in the mill of mortification, until their strength is utterly consumed and wasted. While Saul lived and kept the throne, and was in his strength, little David was kept exceeding weak and low; but when Saul was dethroned and slain, little David quickly grew stronger and stronger, 2 Sam. 3:1. Just so, all the while a darling sin lives and keeps the throne in the heart, grace and holiness will be kept exceeding weak and low; but when your darling sin is dethroned and slain by the power and the sword of the Spirit, grace and holiness will quickly grow stronger and stronger, and rise higher and higher, Romans 8:10, 13.

When men would have a rough field fitted for the plough, and fitted to bring forth fruit, will they not first fall with all their strength, and with all their might, upon grubbing up by the roots the strongest trees, and the sturdiest oaks, knowing that when these are grubbed up, weaker trees will easily fall? Just so, as ever you would have your hearts and lives full of the fruits of righteousness and holiness—fall with all your strength, and with all your might, upon grubbing up by the very roots your beloved sins, your strongest lusts—and then the rest of your corruptions will easily fall. When Goliath was slain, the Philistines fled, and were easily brought under control. When a general in an army is cut off, the common soldiers are quickly routed. Down but with your darling sins! and then the conquest of other sins will be easy.

When a man has eaten poison, nothing will make him thrive, until he has vomited up the poison which he has eaten. It is not the most wholesome food, the choicest dainties, nor the richest cordials—which will increase the health and strength in such a person; until his poison is vomited out. Beloved sins—they are **the poison of the soul**, and until these are vomited up, and cast out by sound

repentance, and the exercise of faith in the blood of Christ, the soul will never thrive in grace and holiness! All the wholesome food of the gospel, and all the dainties and cordials of heaven, will never beget divine health or strength in their souls—who will not part with their darling sins! And therefore, as ever you would be strong in the grace of the Lord, draw up all the strength that ever you are able to make, and with the greatest courage, fall on upon your bosoms-sins, and never cease until in the strength of Christ you have got a complete victory and conquest over them.

In the law it was the *blood* of the sacrifice, and the *oil*—which cleansed the leper; and these are tokens of the blood of Christ and the Spirit of grace. Ah friends! as ever you would be cleansed from your darling sins, which do so exceedingly hinder the increase of holiness—be often in looking upon a crucified Christ, and in the application of his blood to your own souls.

I have read of five men, who being asked what was the best means to mortify sin, gave these answers. Says the first, "The best means to mortify sin is to meditate of **death**." Says the second, "The best means is to meditate on the **judgment-day**." Says the third, "The best means is to meditate on the **joys of heaven**." Says the fourth, "The best means is to meditate on the **torments of hell**." But says the fifth, "The best means is to meditate on the death and sufferings of Christ." Doubtless the last man hit the nail on the head! The daily sight of a bleeding, groaning, dying Savior—is the only thing which will subdue and mortify darling sins!

"Education," says Lactantius, "may cover vices—but it never cuts off vices; it may hide a lust—but it can never quench a lust. Just as black patches may cover some deformities in nature—but they can never cure them." **Ah sirs! if you do not kill your darling sins, they will kill your precious souls!** When Sennacherib's army was destroyed by an angel, Isaiah 37, and he returned home with a hook in his nose and a bridle in his lips, he inquired of one, what he thought the reason might be, why God so favored the Jews; to which

he replied, "That Abraham their father, was willing to sacrifice his beloved son to death at the command of God; and that ever since that time God favored that people." "Well", said Sennacherib, "if that is it, I have two beloved sons, and I will sacrifice them both to death, if that will procure their God to favor me." Which when his two sons heard, they (as the story goes,) slew their father, being more willing to kill than be killed, Isaiah 37:38. O friends! you must kill or be killed! If your beloved sins are not mortified, they will prove the death and ruin of your immortal souls! Therefore never leave looking up to a crucified Christ, until virtue flows from Him to the crucifying of those special besetting sins which do most obstruct and hinder the growth and increase of holiness. But,

[8.] Eighthly and lastly, If ever you would attain to higher degrees of holiness, then **dwell much upon the holiness of God**. Oh, be still a-musing, be still a-pondering upon the holiness of God. Certainly, if there are any means under heaven to raise you up to higher degrees of holiness, it is this; and therefore keep always a fixed eye upon the infinite and most glorious holiness of God. Now that this direction may the better work, premise with me these eight things concerning the holiness of God:

First, Premise this with me, that **God is ESSENTIALLY holy**, and in this sense, none is holy but himself. [Mat. 19:17, There is none good but God, that is, there is none *essentially* good but God, etc.] Now essential holiness is all one with God himself. God's essential holiness is God's conformity to himself. Holiness is not a *quality* in God—but his *essence*. Whatever is in God, is God. Holiness in angels and saints is but a quality—but in God it is his essence. The fallen angels keep their natures, though they have lost their holiness; for that holiness in them was a quality, and not their essence. Look! as created holiness is the conformity of the reasonable creature to the rule—just so, the uncreated holiness of God is God's conformity unto himself. God's holiness and his nature are not two things, they are but one. God's holiness is his nature, and God's nature is his holiness. It is God's royal prerogative to be essentially holy.

The most glorious creatures in heaven, and the choicest souls on earth, are only holy by participation: 1 Sam. 2:2, "There is none holy as the Lord." God's holiness is so essential and co-natural to him, that he can as soon cease to be, as cease to be holy. Holiness in God is a substance—but in angels and men it is only a quality. The essence of the creature may remain when the holiness of the creature is lost, as you may see in Adam, and the fallen angels; but God's essence and his holiness are always the same. His very nature is holy, and therefore it is that he is called Jehovah, and "I am," because what he is really, that he is essentially, Exod. 3:14.

Though men, for our information, do distinguish between the attributes of God and the nature of God—yet in him they are the same. Look! as the *wisdom* of God is the wise God, and the *truth* of God the true God, and the *power* of God the powerful God, and the *justice* of God the just God, and the *mercy* of God the merciful God, and the *mightiness* of God the mighty God, and the *righteousness* of God the righteous God, and the *graciousness* of God the gracious God—just so, the *holiness* of God is the holy God. God's nature and his name are one and the same. God is essentially holy, and that is the epitome of all his glory. But,

Secondly, As God is essentially holy—just so, **God is UNMIXEDLY holy.** The holiness of God is a *pure* holiness, it is an *unmixed* holiness: 1 John 1:5, "God is light, and in him is *no* darkness at all." There are no mixtures in God. God is a most clear, bright-shining light; yes, he is all light, and in him is no darkness at all. The moon, indeed, when it shines brightest, has her dark spots and specks—but God is a light that shines gloriously without the least spot or speck. [Plato calls God the horn of plenty, and the ocean of beauty, without the least spot of injustice, etc.]

Now, look, as that darkness which has not the least light attending it is the grossest, the thickest, Egyptian, darkness that can be—just so, that light that has not the least cloud of darkness attending it must be the most clear, splendid light that possible can be; and such a light

is the Holy One of Israel. It is very observable, the apostle, to illustrate the perfect purity and sanctity of God, adds a negative to his affirmative, "In him is *no* darkness at all," that is, God is so pure, that not the least spot, the smallest speck, can cleave to him; he is so holy, that no iniquity can be found in him; there is no defect nor default in the nature of God. He is a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and righteous is he. As Moses spoke in that Deut. 32:4, God is a pure, a most pure being, without the least potentiality, defectability, or mutability, and therefore in the highest sense he is in God; no evil can dwell with him, or come near unto him. God stands at such a distance from iniquity, yes, he so abhors it, that he never did, nor ever will, bestow a good look upon it: Hab. 1:13, "You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity."

There are four things that God cannot do:

1. He cannot lie;
2. He cannot die;
3. He cannot deny himself;
4. He cannot look with a favorable eye upon iniquity.

God does indeed look upon iniquity with a *hateful* eye, with an *angry* eye, with a *vengeful* eye, and with a *vindictive* eye—but he never did nor will look upon iniquity with an eye of delight, or with an eye of approbation. Witness his hurling the fallen angels out of heaven, and his banishing of sinning Adam out of paradise.

By all this you see that the holiness of God is a pure holiness, it is a holiness without mixture. But all the holiness that is in the best and choicest saints in the world is but a *dreggy* holiness, a *mixed* holiness, a *weak* and *imperfect* holiness; their unholiness is always more than their holiness. Ah, what a deal of *pride* is mixed with a little humility, and what a deal of *unbelief* is mixed with a little faith, and what a deal of *peevishness* is mixed with a little meekness, and

what a deal of *earthliness* is mixed with a little heavenliness, and what a deal of *carnalness* is mixed with a little spiritualness, and what a deal of *harshness* is mixed with a little tenderness!

Oh, but the holiness of God is a pure holiness, it is a holiness without mixture, there is not the least drop nor the least dreg of unholiness in God. It is true the gods of the heathen were such as had been impure, beastly, filthy men, and therefore several writers have taken a great deal of pains to convince heathens of their impiety and folly in worshiping such for gods, upon whom they fastened many horrid, ridiculous, lascivious, and impious actions, and therefore they conclude against them, that they are no gods. It is most certain that the true God, that he who is the High and the Holy One, cannot be charged with any iniquity, no, nor with the least show or shadow of vanity.

In God there is wisdom without folly, truth without falsehood, light without darkness, and holiness without sinfulness. But,

Thirdly, As God is unmixedly holy—just so, **God is universally holy**. He is holy in all his ways, and holy in all his works; his precepts are holy precepts, and his promises are holy promises, and his threatenings are holy threatenings, his love is a holy love, and his anger is a holy anger, and his hatred is a holy hatred, etc. His nature is holy, his attributes are holy, and all his actions are holy; he is holy in punishing, and holy in sparing, he is holy in justifying of some, and he is holy in condemning of others, he is holy in bringing some to heaven, and holy in throwing others to hell; God is holy in all his sayings, and God is holy in all his doings, God is holy in whatever he puts his hand to, and he is holy in whatever he sets his heart to; his frowns are holy, and his smiles are holy, his liftings up are holy, and his castings down are holy; when he gives, his givings are holy giving; and when he takes away, his takings are holy takings, etc. But,

Fourthly, As God is universally holy—just so, **God is eminently holy**. He is transcendently holy, he is superlatively holy, and

therefore he is said to be glorious in holiness, "Lord, who is like You among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, revered with praises, performing wonders?" Exodus 15:11. There is no fathoming, there is no measuring, there is no comprehending, there is no searching, of that infinite sea of holiness which is in God. As neither men nor angels can set banks or bounds to God's holiness—just so, neither men nor angels can sound to the bottom of God's holiness. All that holiness that is in angels and men is but a spark—compared to God's flame; it is but a drop—compared to his sea; it is but a flicker—compared to his sun; it is but a mite—compared to his millions, etc. O sirs! you shall as soon stop the sun in its course, and change the day into night, and raise the dead, and make a world, and count the stars of heaven, and empty the sea with a cockle-shell—as you shall be able either to conceive or express that transcendent holiness which is in God.

This glorious name or title, the "Holy One of Israel," is ascribed to God about thirty times in the Old Testament, and all to show that he is most excellent and transcendent in holiness; and the seraphim which stood before the throne cried out three times, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord Almighty," Isaiah 6:3, to show that God is most eminently and superlatively holy; for so thrice holy in some languages is most holy. For holiness, God is incomparable; there are none to be compared with him, neither are there any among angels or among men, yes, or among the gods, who are like unto him. "Lord, who is like You among the gods? Who is like You, glorious in holiness, revered with praises, performing wonders?" Exodus 15:11. God's holiness is **infinite**, it is so super-eminent and so super-excellent that it can neither be limited, nor lessened, nor increased.

If men should blaspheme or reproach the Lord, he would be never the worse, he would be never the less holier than he is; and if men should bless him and worship him, he would be never the better, never the holier. Unto perfection there can be no addition. A drop taken out of the sea can no ways diminish the sea, Neh. 9:5. He is exalted above all blessing and praise! All the angels in heaven and all

the men on earth cannot add one ray, one beam of glory to the essence of God, to the holiness of God.

As God is *goodness* in the very abstract, and *justice* in the very abstract, and *mercy* in the very abstract, and *righteousness* in the very abstract, and *loving-kindness* in the very abstract—just so, he is *holiness* in the very abstract, so that no man can flatter him or add unto him; and hence it is that God glories in the attribute of his holiness more than in any other attribute, "For thus says the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose **name** is Holy," Isaiah 57:15.

When God would lift up himself in all his glory, he does it by declaring that his name is holy; and so when God would **swear** by himself, he swears by his holiness: Amos 4:2, "The Lord God has sworn by his holiness." Look! as the great men of the world are accustomed to swear upon their honor when they would give us the greatest assurance of what they will do, because such oaths are looked upon as most sacred and inviolable—just so, the great God swears by his holiness, because his holiness is his greatest honor, and because he has no greater, nor no better, nor no choicer, nor no sweeter, nor no more precious things to swear by. "Let me," says God, "be never owned as a God, nor honored as a God, nor trusted as a God, nor feared as a God, nor valued as a God—if I do not inviolably keep my promises, and make good my threatenings, having sworn thereunto by my holiness."

Now you know the scripture says, "When God could swear by no greater, he swore by himself," Heb. 6:13—just so, I may say, when God could swear by no greater attribute, by no greater excellency, he swears by his holiness, that being the epitome and the glory of all.

Look! as all the *wisdom* of the creatures, compared with the wisdom of God—is but folly; and as all the *goodness* of the creatures, compared with the goodness of God—is but wickedness; and as all the *fullness* of the creature, compared with the fullness of God—is

but emptiness; and as all the *power* of the creature, compared with the power of God—is but weakness; and as all the *righteousness* of the creature, compared with the righteousness of God—is but unrighteousness—just so, all the *holiness* of the creature, compared with the holiness of God—is but unholiness.

Man's highest purity is but impurity, when it is compared to the purity of God, yes, the very holiness of angels, compared with the holiness of God, is chargeable with folly, Job 4:18. That fullness of holiness that is in angels or saints is only the fullness of the *vessel*—but that fullness of holiness that is in God is the fullness of the *fountain*. That fullness of holiness that is in angels or saints is but the fullness of the *branches*—but that fullness of holiness that is in God is the fullness of the *root*. That fullness of holiness that is in angels or saints is but the fullness of *sufficiency*—but that fullness of holiness that is in God is the fullness of *redundancy*. But,

Fifthly, As God is infinitely holy, transcendently holy, superlatively holy—just so, **God is originally, radically, and fundamentally holy**. The divine nature is the root, original, and spring of all holiness and purity. All that holiness which is in angels and men flows from God, as the *streams* from the fountain, as the *beams* from the sun, as the *branches* from the root, and as the *effect* from the cause. There is no holiness to be had, but from the Holy One. He is the author and original of all the holiness that ever was, or that is this day in the world. All the seeds of holiness, and all the roots of holiness which are to be found in angels or men, are of the Lord's sowing and planting, Phil. 1:11. All that holiness that the angels had in heaven, and all that holiness that Adam had in paradise, and all that holiness that Christ had in his human nature, and all that holiness that ever any saints have had, *was* from God; and all that holiness that any saints now have *is* from God. The divine nature is the first root and original fountain of all sanctity and purity, James 1:17.

Ministers may pray that their people may be holy, and parents may pray that their children may be holy, and masters may pray that their servants may be holy, and husbands may pray that their wives may be holy, and wives may pray that their husbands may be holy; but none of these can give holiness, none of these can communicate holiness to their nearest and dearest relations. God alone is the giver and the author of all holiness. If holy people could convey holiness into others' souls, they would never allow them to go to hell for lack of holiness. To hand out holiness to others is a work too high for angels, and too hard for all mortals; it is only the Holy One who can cause holiness to flow into sinners' hearts; it is only he who can form, and frame, and infuse holiness into the souls of men.

A man shall sooner make a man, yes, make a world, and unmake himself, than he shall make another holy. It is only a holy God, who can enlighten the mind, and bow the will, and melt the heart, and raise the affections, and purge the conscience, and reform the life, and put the whole man into a holy gracious frame and temper. But,

Sixthly, As God is originally, radically, and fundamentally holy—just so, **God is independently holy**, Isaiah 44:24; Rev. 1:18. The holiness of God depends upon nothing below God. God is the Alpha, the fountain from whence all holiness springs, and he is the Omega, the sea to which all glory runs. As all our holiness is from God—just so, all our holiness must terminate in the honor and glory of God. It is God alone, who is independently holy. All that holiness that is in angels and men is a dependent holiness; it depends upon the holiness of God, as the streams depend upon the fountain, the beams upon the sun, the branches upon the root, and the members upon the head. God is One beginning, upon whom all things depend. God has his being only of himself, and it is he alone who gives being unto all other things. God is the first cause, and without all causes himself. The very beings which angels and men have, they have by derivation from God. And it is the first cause that gives unto all causes their proper operations: Isaiah 44:6, "I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God."

God never had a cause of his being, as all other creatures have. He is a glorious being, a holy being, without all causes, either efficient, or formal, or material, or final; and therefore he must needs be independently holy.

Look! as the *power* of God is an independent power, and the *wisdom* of God an independent wisdom, and the *goodness* of God an independent goodness, and the *righteousness* of God an independent righteousness—just so, the *holiness* of God is an independent holiness. And as it is the glory of his *power*—that his power is an independent power, and the glory of his *goodness*—that his goodness is an independent goodness—just so, it is the glory of his *holiness*—that his holiness is an independent holiness. And look, as all that *power* which angels and men have, depends upon the power of God; and as all that *wisdom* which angels and men have, depends upon the wisdom of God; and as all that *goodness* which angels and men have, depends upon the goodness of God—just so, all that *holiness* that angels and men have depends upon the holiness of God, etc. Philo could say that God is such a fountain that he breaks forth with the streams of his goodness upon all things—but receives nothing back again from any to better himself therewith. There are none in heaven, nor any on earth, who are absolutely independent—but God alone.

Seventhly, As God is independently holy—just so, **God is constantly holy, he is unchangably holy**. He was holy yesterday, and he is holy today, and he will be holy forever. What is natural is constant and lasting. Now God's holiness is natural to him; it is as natural for God to be holy, as it is for us to breathe, yes, as it is for us to be unholy. God can as well and as soon cease to be, as he can cease to be holy. Holiness is his nature as well as his name; and therefore his holiness cannot decay, though ours may. Whatever we may lose of our holiness—yet it is certain that God can never lose one grain of that holiness that is in him.

Here our holiness ebbs and flows—but the holiness of God never ebbs—but is always a-flowing and overflowing, there is still a full tide of holiness in God. Though the saints cannot fall from that seed of holiness, which is sown in their hearts, 1 John 3:9—yet they may fall from some degrees of holiness that they have formerly attained to. Those who have been old men in holiness, may fall from being *old* men—to be but *young* men in holiness; and those who have been young men in holiness may fall from being young men to be but *children* in holiness; and those who have been children in holiness may fall from being children to be but *babes* in holiness, 1 John 2:12-14; 2 Pet. 2:1-3. But that holiness which is in God is never subject to any decayings, abatings, or languishing. That spring, that sea of holiness that is in God, is incapable of diminution or of augmentation.

Plato could say that God is one and the same, and always like himself. And it was a custom among the Turks to cry out every morning from a high tower, God always was, and always will be; and so salute their Mahomet. O sirs, God has been always holy, and God will be always holy. Whatever men may lose—yet God is resolved that he will never lose his honor nor his holiness. But,

Eighthly and lastly, As God is continually holy—just so, **God is exemplarily holy**. [Lev. 20:26. Remember this—you and I must answer for *examples* as well as *precepts*.] He is the rule, pattern, and example of holiness: 1 Pet. 1:15, "Be holy, as I am holy." God's holiness is the great example and pattern of all that holiness which is in the creatures. God's holiness is the copy that we must always have in our eye, and endeavor most exactly to write after. Carnal friends, and this blind world, and Antichrist, and such as love to lord it over the consciences of others, will be still a-presenting to you other examples and patterns—but it is your wisdom and your work to cast them all behind your backs, and to trample them under your feet, and to follow that form and pattern that the Lord has set before you; and that is, to be holy as he is holy. All our holiness is to be brought to the touchstone of the holiness of God, as the standard and

measure of it; and therefore, oh what cause have we to be still a-perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord!

And thus I have done with the second thing, namely—means to increase holiness, and to raise you up to the highest pitches and degrees of holiness.

Twelve Evidences of High Degrees of Holiness

And so I come to the next thing proposed, and that was—to **lay down twelve signs or evidences whereby people may know whether they have attained to any high pitch or eminent degrees of holiness or not.** Now, sirs, if you desire in good earnest to know whether you have attained to any high degree of holiness or not, then seriously weigh these following particulars, and test yourselves by them.

[1.] First, The more a man can warm his heart at the promises, and cleave to the promises, and rest upon the promises, and suck marrow and fatness and sweetness out of the breasts of the promises—when divine providences seem to run cross to divine promises—the greater measure of holiness that man has attained to. Where there are but little measures of holiness—there every seeming contrariety to the promise troubles a man, and every little cloud that hangs over the promise will mightily perplex a man, etc. But where holiness is raised to any considerable height, there that man will suck honey out of the flint, he will suck sweetness out of the promise—even then when providence looks sourly upon the promise; yes, when providence seems to bid defiance to the promise.

Witness **Jacob**, in Gen. 32:6-8, compared with verse 9,11,12, "And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying—We came to your brother Esau, and also he comes to meet you, and four hundred men with him. Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed. And Jacob said—O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which said unto me—Return unto your country, and to your kindred, and I will deal well with you. Deliver me, I pray you, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me. And you said—I will surely do you good, and make your seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude." Now here you see holy Jacob, in the midst of all his fears and frights, in the midst of all his perils and dangers, in the midst of all his damps and dreads, and in the midst of all cross, astonishing providences, he turns himself to the breasts of the promise, and sucks marrow and sweetness out of those breasts. Jacob puts the promise into suit, he pleads with God upon his own promises, and so bears up sweetly under dark and dismal providences.

And so did **Moses** in Num. 10:29, "And Moses said unto his father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it to you. Come with us, and we will do you good: for the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel." Moses had been almost now forty years in the wilderness, and many thousands were fallen on his right hand, and on his left; yet says he to his father-in-law, in the face of all those dismal providences, "come along with us," and be as eyes unto us, and we will certainly do you good, verse 31. But his father-in-law might have objected, "Alas! what good can I expect in a wilderness condition, where so many are weak, and so many are sick, and so many thousands are fallen asleep; and where all the people are every day surrounded with a thousand dangers, difficulties, and deaths?" "Well," says Moses, "though all this is true—yet go along with us, and be serviceable and useful to us, and we will do you good; for the Lord has spoken good concerning Israel." Here this holy man Moses turns himself to the promise, and in the face of all sad providences, he draws comfort and encouragement from the promise.

And so did **Jehoshaphat**, in 2 Chron. 20. When the children of Ammon, and Moab, and mount Seir came against him to battle, he turns himself to the promise, verse 7-9, and gathers life and spirit from thence.

And so did **David**, in Psalm 60. In the 1st, 2d, and 3d verses, you have a narrative of many cross and dreadful providences—and yet in the face of them all, holy David sucks strong consolation out of the breasts of the promise, verse 6, "God has spoken in his holiness, I will rejoice: I will divide Shechem, and mete out the valley of Succoth." God has promised in his holiness, that David would be king over all Israel, and therefore, notwithstanding all strange providences, David triumphs in the promise, and looks upon himself as master of all those strongholds which are mentioned in verse 7-9.

And so **Abraham**, he wanted a son, and God promised him an Isaac. Now in the face of all his own deadness, and natural inabilities as to generation, and Sarah's deadness and barrenness, Romans 4:17-21, he turns about to the promise; and his faith and holiness being high, he draws sweetness and satisfaction from thence. Notwithstanding present providences, the naked promise was a well of life and salvation to him.

O sirs! it is an argument of a very great measure of holiness, when troubles and difficulties vanish upon the sight of a promise; when all things work quite cross and contrary to sense and feeling. Now for a man to embrace a promise, to hug a promise, to kiss a promise, and to draw contentment and satisfaction from a promise—argues a great degree of holiness. It is a very hard and difficult thing for a man exactly to take the picture of divine providence at any time; for many are the voices and the faces of providence, and there are as great deeps in *providences*, as there are in *prophecies*. And many texts of *providence* are as hard, as dark, and as difficult to be understood, as many texts of *Scripture* are. It is as hard to reconcile the *works* of God, as it is to reconcile the *word* of God, Psalm 36:6; Romans 11:33; for as in the word of God there are many seeming contradictions.

Just so, in the works of God there are many seeming contradictions; for here one providence smiles, and there another frowns; here providence lifts up, and there providence casts down; here providence strokes, and there providence strikes; here providence leads towards Canaan, there providence leads towards a wilderness; here providence leads towards Zion, and there providence leads towards Babylon; here providence looks very fair, and there providence severely threatens; here providence is bright and lovely, and there providence is dark and dreadful.

Now under all such providences, for a man to run to a promise, and to draw out life, and strength, and sweetness from a promise—is a clear evidence of a very high pitch of holiness that such a person has attained to. I have read of an emperor that put on a new suit every day. O, sirs! when the great God shall every day apparel himself in strange changeable providences, now for a man to hang upon the breasts of a promise, and to suck milk out of a promise, argues a very great increase of holiness. But,

[2.] Secondly, The more a man can overcome evil with good upon holy and gracious accounts—as upon the account of God's command, God's honor, the credit of the gospel, and the conviction, conversion, and salvation of souls—the greater measure of holiness such a person has attained to. To return reproach for reproach, reviling for reviling, and cursing for cursing, and scorning for scorning, and defaming for defaming—is exceeding natural to us. But to love those who hate us, to bless those who curse us, to do good to those who abhor us, and to pray for those who persecute us, and who despitefully use us—according to Christ's express command in Mat. 5:44—are things exceeding *contrary* to nature, and exceedingly *above* nature. [Austin says that "Christ made a pulpit of the cross, and the great lesson he taught Christians was to love their enemies."]

The power of grace and holiness appears in nothing more than in bringing the heart to a sweet and ready subjection to such commands

as are most cross, and contrary to flesh and blood. As those are in Romans 12:17-21, "Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." And so in 1 Thes. 5:15, "Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else." To return good for evil, and kindnesses for injuries, to behave ourselves courteously, humbly, meekly, tenderly, and sweetly towards those who behave themselves discourteously, proudly, passionately, harshly, and sourly towards us, argues a very great degree of holiness.

David was a man eminent in holiness, and he was good at this good work, as you may see in that 2 Sam. 1:24, "O daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet and finery, who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold." He does not envy against Saul, nor insult or rejoice over Saul's death, as many carnal and unsanctified hearts would have done, nor he does provoke or stir up the daughters of Israel to rejoice in the death and destruction of such a tyrant—who had hunted him up and down as a partridge, and who had often designed his ruin, and who had always returned him evil for good, and who had bathed his sword in the blood of Abimelech the high-priest, and in the blood of eighty more of the priests of the Lord, and who had forsaken the Lord, and gone to a witch, yes, to the devil, for help in his need.

Oh no! David conceals what was bad, and remembers what was good; he passes over those things that were condemnable, and he instances only in those things that might make his memory most acceptable, commendable, and delightful among the weaker gender, namely, Saul's clothing them in scarlet and finery, and adorning their garments with ornaments of gold.

And just so, **Joseph** was a man eminent in holiness, and he was good at this hard work; as you may see in Gen. 50:16-23. And **Moses** was a man of great holiness, and he was good at this difficult work; as you may see in Psalm 106:16, 23, 33, compared together. And **Stephen** was a man full of the Holy Spirit, and he was good at praying for those who made a prey of him, Acts 7:60. And **Paul** was a man of the same mind and mettle, as you may see by comparing the 2 Cor. 11:24, with the Romans 9:1-3. And Eusebius affirms that when Paul was beheaded, under Diocletian the emperor, he prayed both for Jews and Gentiles, for the multitude assembled, and also for the judge and executioner, that his death might not one day be laid unto their charge.

Calvin was a man of great holiness, and therefore though Luther (who was a man of a most violent, bitter, passionate spirit) had woefully wronged him, and reviled him—yet, says he, "let Luther hate me, and in his wrath call me a thousand times a devil—yet I will love him, and honor him, and acknowledge him a choice and precious servant of God."

Mr. Foxe, who wrote the "Book of Martyrs," was so famous in the practice of this hard piece of Christianity, that it became a proverb: "If any man would have Mr. Foxe do him a good turn, let him do him an injury, and he will be sure to do him a good turn for it."

"Send me to my toads again, in the dungeon, where I may pray for your lordship's conversion," said Mr. Sanders the martyr, to the bishop of Winchester.

Thus you see that the more eminent any people are in holiness, the more they overcome evil with good; the more good they will do those who do evil to them; and thus to do, is but to conform to Christ your head, for he shed tears for those who were to shed his blood, and he gave them his blood to drink, who gave him gall to drink and vinegar to drink. That man is almost got up to the very epitome of holiness,

whose soul is habituated to overcome evil with good, upon holy and precious accounts.

Well, Christians, the more you can overcome evil with good, the more certainly your hearts are filled with good. That man's heart is full of the fruits of righteousness and holiness, that, upon divine considerations is accustomed, not to be overcome of evil—but to overcome evil with good. But,

[3.] Thirdly, When men in the main—I say, in the main—are as holy out of pious duties, as they are in pious duties; when in the main of their lives they are as spiritual, as heavenly, as humble, as gracious, as serious, as watchful, as circumspect, etc., as they are in their most pious performances and duties; this argues not only the *truth* of holiness—but a very high degree of holiness. Moses' face did shine as gloriously when he came *off* from the mount, as ever it did shine when he was *upon* the mount, Exod. 34:29-30, 33, 35. O sirs! if when you come off from the mount of duties, there remains some rays and shinings of God upon you, it is an argument that the waters of sanctity are risen to a considerable height in your souls, Ezek. 47:2-6. Ah, how lively, how warm, how enlarged, how holy, how humble, how heavenly, how spiritual, how serious, how zealous, how pious, how gracious are many in pious duties, in ordinances; but ah! how dead, how cold, how straitened, how unholy, how proud, how worldly, how carnal, how slight, and how irreligious are they out of pious duties, out of ordinances. Now, certainly, these have either no holiness at all, or else they have attained to but a very little measure of holiness. But now, when a man in the main, when a man in his course is the same *out* of duties, out of ordinances—that he is *in* duties, in ordinances—it is a very great and glorious argument that such a person has in a very great measure perfected holiness in the fear of the Lord. But,

[4.] Fourthly, The more a man can divinely joy and rejoice under tribulations and afflictions—the greater measure of

holiness he has attained to. It is a mercy not to grumble, not to mutter, not to murmur, not to fret, not to faint, not to despond, not to despair. It is much to be silent under afflictions, and to be quiet and patient under tribulations. Oh—but to divinely joy and rejoice under afflictions, under tribulations—argues a very great height of holiness, Romans 5:3-4, "And not only so—but we *glory* in tribulations also, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope." That *glorying* and *rejoicing* are both the same in the New Testament, is sufficiently known; they differ only in degrees, glorying being a step above rejoicing. It is much to rejoice in tribulations—but it is more to glory in tribulations; yes, to glory in them as an old soldier glories in all those marks and scars of honor which he has met with in the service of his king and country; and yet to this height, the believing Romans were raised—which argues a very great measure of holiness in them.

And so in 2 Cor. 7:4, "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation," or as the Greek runs, I do over-abound exceedingly with joy, I have a superabundance of joy in all our tribulation; and so in chap 12:9-10, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ might rest upon me: therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong." Paul rejoices and glories more in his heavy afflictions, and in his various tribulations, than he did in his glorious and mysterious revelations. The more he was afflicted and distressed, the more he had of the visible presence of Christ, and the more he had of the glorious assistance of Christ, and the more he had of sweet communion and fellowship with Christ, and the more he had of the choice supports and singular comforts of Christ—and therefore he takes pleasure in all the pressures which were upon him.

And so in James 1:2, "My brethren, count it *all joy* when you fall into various afflictions." O sirs! to be divinely merry in misery, to rejoice in the cross as men rejoice in a crown, to rejoice in adversity as

others rejoice in prosperity, to rejoice in a stinking prison as others rejoice in their stately palaces, to rejoice in shackles as others rejoice in liberty, to rejoice in needs as others rejoice in abundance, to rejoice in reproaches as others rejoice in their honors, etc., is very much; but to be joyful in such cases, not with a little joy—but with *exceeding great joy*—is more. "All joy" is a Hebraism, and it signifies great joy, full joy, exceeding joy, perfect joy. Oh! thus to rejoice, and that not only when you fall into some afflictions—but when you fall into divers afflictions, argues a very great measure of holiness.

But ah! how rare is it to find such souls in these days, who cannot only bear the cross—but also rejoice in the cross; who cannot only bear reproaches—but also wear reproaches as their crown and glory. But,

[5.] Fifthly, The more extensive a man's obedience is to divine commands—the greater measure of holiness that man has attained to. Caleb had a very great measure of the spirit of holiness upon him; and he is said to have followed the Lord *fully*; that is—*his obedience was full, universal, resolute, and constant to the end.*

The contrary is affirmed of **Solomon** in 1 Kings 11:6, "And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father," that is—his obedience was not so full, so universal, so sincere, so resolute, and so constant as David his father's was. **Zacharias** and **Elizabeth** were people of great holiness, and their obedience was very extensive; for they walked blameless not only in some—but in *all* the commandments, and not only in all the commandments—but also in all the ordinances of the Lord, Luke 1:5-6. Their obedience was of such a universal extent and latitude, that it comprehended and took in all the duties both of their general and particular callings; they had an eye to the duties of the second table, as well as they had an eye to the duties of the first; and they subjected themselves to the duties of their particular calling, as well as to the duties of their general calling. As they had an eye to

mint, anise, and cumin, Mat. 23:23, that is, to the lesser and lower duties of religion—just so, they had an eye to the greater and weightier duties of religion, namely, judgment, mercy, and faith, etc.

But some at their first conversion, and while they remain weak in grace and holiness—their obedience is more strait and narrow; for commonly they spend much, if not most, of their time in praying, fasting, hearing, reading, Christian conference, etc., and neglect a hundred other duties which are incumbent upon them; they are very forward and warm in the duties of their general calling—but very cold and remiss in the duties of their particular calling; they are very frequent and fervent in some duties, and very rare in other duties. But the more they grow in grace and holiness, the more extensive will their obedience be, and the more their hearts will be dilated and extended to all the duties both of the first and second table. But,

[6.] Sixthly, The more a man conflicts with heart sins, with spiritual sins, with invisible sins, with sins which lie most hidden and obscure from the eyes of the world—and the more spiritual victories and conquests a man obtains over them—the greater measure of holiness that person has certainly attained to. When the heart rises with all its strength and might against secret pride, secret self-love, secret bubblings of lusts, secret carnal confidence, secret murmuring, secret hypocrisy, secret envy, secret self-applause, secret malice, secret hatred, secret snares, secret temptations, etc., it is an evidence that holiness has grown up to some considerable height there. [2 Chron. 32:26; Psalm 119:80; 2 Cor. 12:7-9; Psalm 30:6-7; Romans 7:23-24; 2 Cor. 7:1.]

A **little** grace, a little holiness, will work a man to conflict with gross sins, with outward sins, with bodily sins, with open sins, which everyone may set their eyes on. Yes, where there is **no** grace, no holiness at all, the light of nature, the common convictions of the Spirit, the laws of men, the eyes of men, the threats of men, the examples of men, a smarting rod, and good education, may work men to conflict with such sins. Oh, but when all the strength and

might of the soul is engaged against those very sins that lie not within the sight or reach of the most sharp and piercing men in the world—but in the heart, and about the heart, and are only obvious to God's omniscient eye, this argues a great degree of holiness.

And therefore Augustine hit the mark when he said that it is the hardest thing for a man to fight with his lusts—especially his heart lusts, his spiritual wickedness. And he has long since complained that we do not tame "the beasts in our own bosoms". Oh, it is an easier thing to tame all the beasts in the world than it is to tame the beast in the bosom. All the beasts in the world may be tame and brought under control, by a human power, James 3:7—but no power below that power which raised Christ from the grave, can tame the beasts that are in our bosoms. [Heraclius's motto was, "It is *God* who gives victory!"]

Now look, as **conflicts** with heart sins, with spiritual sins, etc., argues some eminency in holiness—just so, **victory** over heart sins, over spiritual sins, over those sins which lie most remote from the eyes of others, argues a very great degree of holiness. When a Christian does not only *resist* heart sins—but *vanquishes* heart sins; when he does not only *combat* with heart sins—but *conquers* heart sins; when he does not only *fight* with heart sins—but also *overcomes* heart sins; when he does not only *wrestle* with heart sins—but also *overthrows* heart sins—this speaks out holiness in its growth. It was a good saying of Cyprian: "There is no greater pleasure—than to have overcome a sinful pleasure; neither is there any greater conquest—than to conquer one's own corruptions." And it was an excellent saying of Eusebius Emesenus: "Our fathers overcame the torments of the *flames*; let us overcome the fiery darts of our *vices*." And indeed it is an easier thing to overcome fiery flames, than it is to overcome those flaming lusts and corruptions which are in our own hearts.

Philosophy may teach us to endure hardships, as it did Calanus in Curtius, who willingly offered his body to the fire, to the flames; but

it is only grace, it is only holiness, that can enable us to overcome our lusts, our heart lusts. We read of many who, out of greatness of spirit, could offer violence to nature—but were at a loss when they came to deal with their corruptions.

I remember a notable saying of Ambrose, speaking of Samson. Says he, he broke the bonds of his enemies—but he could not break the bonds of his own lusts; he choked the lion—but he could not choke his own wanton love; he set on fire the harvest of strangers, and himself being set on fire with the spark of one immoral woman, lost the harvest of his virtue. And this saying of Ambrose puts me in mind of a great Roman captain, who, as he was riding in his triumphant chariot through Rome, had his eyes constantly on a harlot who walked along the street, which made one say, "Behold how this noble captain, who conquered such potent armies, is himself conquered by one silly woman!"

Oh, it is not philosophy, nor morality, nor civility, etc.—but holiness, but sanctity—which will make the soul victorious over iniquity. The more victories and conquests a man makes upon heart sins, upon spiritual sins, upon secret sins—the greater measures of holiness that person has certainly attained to. But,

[7.] Seventhly, The more a man is exercised and busied in the most internal and spiritual duties of religion—the greater measures of holiness that man has attained to. You know there are external duties of religion, and there are internal duties of religion. There are **external** duties of religion—such as public preaching, hearing the word, reading the word, fasting, singing of psalms, Christian conference, communion of saints, and receiving the Lord's supper, Mat. 6 and 23. Now such Christians who have but small measures of grace and holiness, and hypocrites and formalists who have not the least measure of true grace and holiness—these are most commonly exercised and busied about the external duties and services of religion; but very seldom, very rare, shall you

find them in the more inward and spiritual duties of religion, Isaiah 1:11-19, and 58:1-5; Zech. 7:4-7.

But then, as there are external duties—just so, there are **internal** and **spiritual** duties—such as self-examination, self-resignation to God, self-loathing, self-judging, divine meditation, praying in the Spirit, watchfulness over the heart, and making application of the blood of Christ, the death of Christ, the grace of Christ, the love of Christ, and the word of Christ to a man's own soul.

Now the more any Christian is exercised and employed in these internal, spiritual, and evangelical duties and services, the greater heights and degrees of holiness that Christian is grown to: Phil. 3:3, "For we are the true circumcision, who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." These Philippians were eminent in grace and holiness, as you may see in chapter 1. And they place no confidence in circumcision, nor in any such outward performances or services—but they were much in the exercise of grace, and in worshiping of God in the spirit, and in rejoicing in the person of Christ, the natures of Christ, the offices of Christ, the discoveries of Christ, the communications of Christ, the glorious operations of Christ, the precious promises of Christ, and in the heart-warming and heart-cheering blood of Christ.

Now to be much exercised in the most internal, spiritual, and evangelical duties of religion—argues a very great height of holiness. But,

[8.] Eighthly, The more spiritual, internal, and intrinsic principles, motives, and considerations, carries a person on in pious duties and services—the more holy that person is. When a man is carried on in the duties of religion, from a sense of divine love, or from a sense of the special presence of Christ with his heart, or from a sense of the excellency and sweetness of communion and fellowship with God, or from a sense of the graciousness and goodness of God towards him, or from a sense of singular influences

and visits from God, or from a sense of the choice and precious discoveries of God, or from a sense of the beauty and glory of God, etc.—this argues a very great measure of holiness, that such a person has attained to. [Psalm 119:1-3; 1 John 1:1-4; Isaiah 38:16-17, 19-20; Psalm 63:1-3.]

The more the sweet looks of Christ, the secret visits of Christ, the private whispers of Christ, the divine joggings of Christ, the blessed love-tokens of Christ, and the holy kisses and glorious embraces of Christ—does incite and provoke a person to pious duties, the greater degrees of holiness that person has reached to. But it is an argument that the streams of holiness runs but low, when external motives and considerations have the greatest hand in carrying a person on in pious duties. The more bare custom, the eye of the creature, the favor of the creature, the example of the creature, the applause of the creature, the rewards of the creature, or the keeping up of a man's abilities, or the keeping up of a man's name, esteem, and reputation in the world does influence a Christian's heart to pious duties—the less holiness that Christian has.

Yes, it is considerable, that outward motives and natural principles have carried many *heathen* to do many great and glorious things in the world. Did not Sisera do as great things as Gideon? the difference did only lie here, that the great things which Gideon did, he did from more spiritual principles and raised considerations than any Sisera was acted by. And did not Diogenes trample under his feet the great and glorious things of this world, as well as Moses? the difference did only lie in this, that Moses trampled under his feet the mirthful and gallant things of this world from inward, holy principles, and from high and glorious considerations and motives; whereas Diogenes did only trample upon them from poor, low principles, and from carnal and external considerations.

I have read of one Cosmus Medici, a rich citizen of Florence, that he confessed to a near friend of his that he built so many magnificent structures, and spent so much on scholars and libraries—not for any

love to learning—but to raise up to himself the trophies of *fame* and *renown*. And many of the Romans have done very great and glorious things for their country—but all from natural principles, and from carnal and external motives and considerations, as for a great name, a puff of honor, a little applause, etc., and therefore their most glorious actions have been but **shining sins**, Jer. 32:23. God always writes a *nothing* upon all those services wherein men's principles and their ends are selfish or wicked or base.

It was a notable saying of Luther, "One work of a Christian," says he, "is more precious than heaven and earth, and if I might have my desire, I would rather choose the lowest work of a country Christian, or poor maid, than all the victories and triumphs of Alexander the Great and of Julius Caesar, because whatever a saint does, though it be ever so small—yet it is great and glorious, because he does all in faith and by the word." And says the same author further, "Let our works be ever so small, servile—yet if done out of love to the Lord—they will be all glorious, yes, such as shall remain to all eternity." O sirs, all our works and services must be wrought *from* God, *for* God, in God, and *according* to God—or else they will be but splendida peccata—**splendid sins!** Well, the more spiritual and internal the principles, motives, and considerations are, which carry a Christian on in pious duties, the greater measure of holiness has that Christian arrived to. But,

[9.] Ninthly, The more solid, precise, exact, and accurate a Christian is in pious duties and services—the greater measure of holiness that Christian has attained to. And the more any Christian grows in holiness, the more spiritual, the more savory, the more exact and accurate he will grow in all his pious services and performances. The more a Christian's heart is endeared to pious duties, and the more his heart is affected with the heavenly nature of pious duties, and the more easily, the more holily, the more freely, and the more spiritually he performs pious duties—the more he is thriving and grown in holiness.

A young **carpenter** gives more blows, and makes more *noise* and chips than an old experienced workman does—but the old experienced workman does his work more solidly, more exactly, and more accurately than the young carpenter does. Just so, many *young* Christians, who are but newly entered into the trade of Christianity, and who are raised up but to a very small degree of sanctity, these may multiply duties upon duties, these may abound in pious performances, these may be much in adding of service to service; but yet the *aged* and experienced Christian in grace and holiness does pious duties more solidly, more spiritually, more exactly, and more accurately than the young Christian does.

We must never judge of an eminency in holiness by the number or multitude of our duties—but by the seriousness, the graciousness, the solidness, the spiritualness, the holiness, the heavenliness, and the accurateness of our hearts in duties.

A young **musician** may play longer and more quick and nimble upon an instrument than an old musician can—but yet the old musician plays with more art, accurateness, skill, judgment, and understanding than a young musician does. Just so, *young* Christians in grace and holiness may hold out longer, and be quicker and nimbler in pious duties, than others who are more aged in grace and holiness; but yet those who are *aged* in grace and holiness perform pious duties with more spiritual art and accurateness, and with more divine skill, judgment, and understanding, than they do, in whom the spring of holiness runs low.

A young **scholar** may write more paper, and make more letters than his master does—but yet his master writes more understandingly, exactly, and accurately than the young scholar. Just so, many young converts may run over more duties than others—and yet others may perform duties more understandingly, and more exactly, and more accurately than they do.

Let the duty be ever so *short*—yet if there is much spiritualness, holiness, brokenness, seriousness, and accurateness in it—it will carry all before it—it will win the blessing and obtain the crown; when the *longest* duties, wherein there is no such frame nor temper of spirit, shall not prevail with God at all, Zech. 7:4-6; Isaiah 58:1-6. It argues a very great measure of holiness when the soul is habitually carried on in pious duties with much solidness, seriousness, spiritualness, exactness, and accurateness. But,

[10.] Tenthly, The more any man makes it his great business and work, in all his duties, ways, and walkings—to approve himself to God, and to be acceptable with God—the greater height of holiness that man has attained to. Jer. 12:3; Psalm 17:2.

David was a man of great holiness; and how studious and industrious he was to approve his heart to the Lord you may see in Psalm 139:23-24, "*Search* me, O God, and *know* my heart: *try* me and *know* my thoughts; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." [The Hebrew word signifies a very strict, careful, diligent search and inquisition, etc.] The psalmist knew that God had an eye upon him, both at home and abroad, both at bed and at board, both in public and in private, both in his family and in his closet; he knew that God had an eye in every corner of his house, and in every corner of his heart, and therefore he appeals to God, and he opens his heart to God, and nobly ventures upon the trial of God, "*Search* me, O God, and *know* my heart," etc. This frequent repetition and doubling of words, "*Search* me, O God, and *know* my heart, *try* me and *know* my thoughts," etc., does not only note the earnestness and seriousness of David's spirit in prayer—but also the soundness, the uprightness, the plainness, and the sincerity of David's heart—in that he was very willing and ready to submit himself to the search, trial, examination, and approbation of God.

And so **Peter**, that great apostle of the Jews, makes it his great business to open himself to Christ thrice together, "Lord, you know

that I love you, Lord; you know that I love you, Lord; you who know all things, you know that I love you," John 21:15-17. Christ best knew the reality and sincerity of Peter's love, and therefore Peter appeals to him, as to a judge who would be sure to judge righteous judgment, "You know that I love you."

And so the apostle **Paul**, speaking in the name of his fellow-apostles, says, "Therefore we *labor*, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him," 2 Cor. 5:9. The Greek word which is here rendered *labor*, is a very emphatic word. It signifies to labor and endeavor with all earnestness and might, to endeavor with a high and holy ambition, to be approved of by God, and to be accepted of God, judging it to be the greatest honor and the most desirable happiness in all the world to be graciously owned, approved, and accepted of the Lord. As ambitious, industrious, and laborious as Haman was to be highly accepted with king Ahasuerus—yet he was not more ambitious to be accepted with the king, than the apostles were ambitious to be accepted of the King of kings.

O sirs, when in every *sermon* you hear, and in every *prayer* you make, and in every *fast* you keep, and in every *action* you do, and in every *way* that you walk, and in every *mercy* that you enjoy, and in every *cross* that you bear, etc.—you make it your great business and work to approve yourselves to the Lord—and that though the world should discountenance you, and friends hate you, and near and dear relations reject you—that yet you may find blessed acceptance with God—this argues holiness to be upon the throne. When in all your dealings and tradings with *God*—you make it your heaven to approve yourselves to God; and when in all your transactions with *men*—you make it your happiness to approve yourselves to God—it is an argument that the springs of holiness have risen high in your souls. But,

[11.] Eleventhly, The more a man lives by the rule of whether an action is spiritually beneficial—the greater measure of holiness that person has attained to. John 16:7; 2

Cor. 8:10. Weak holiness has only an eye upon the rule of *lawfulness*—that is, whether an action is lawful or not. But raised holiness has one eye upon the rule of lawfulness, and the other upon whether the action is spiritually beneficial. Weak holiness says, "Oh, this is lawful, and that is permissible!" Oh, but raised holiness says, "Is this spiritually beneficial? is it beneficial as well as lawful?"

That angelical apostle, Paul, always had his eye upon whether an action was spiritually beneficial or not: 1 Cor. 6:12, "Everything is permissible for me—but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me—but I will not be mastered by anything." And so chapter 10:23, "Everything is permissible—but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible—but not everything is constructive."

Many things may be *lawful*, which yet may be unnecessary or unwise for our place, state, calling, and condition in the world. It was lawful for the apostle to eat meat—but it was not beneficial for him to eat meat; when his eating of meat would make his weak brother to sin, or grieve, or stumble, or fall, Romans 14:21. And therefore he resolves that, rather than he will eat meat—that he will never eat meat while the world stands, 1 Cor. 8:13.

The more unchangeably resolved any person is to live by judging whether an action is spiritually beneficial or not—the greater measure of holiness that person has certainly attained to. The streams of holiness runs low in that Christian's heart—who only lives by the rule of lawfulness—and never lives by judging whether an action is spiritually beneficial or not. It argues a very great height of holiness for a man to make as much conscience of living by the rule of whether an action is spiritually beneficial or not, as he does of living by the rule of lawfulness. For a man to be often a-looking over his *natural* actions, his *moral* actions, and his *pious* actions, and to be still a-putting this question to himself, "O my soul! do you eye what is most spiritually beneficial?" Such a frame and temper of spirit speaks out much of Christ and holiness within.

Oh the sins! oh the sorrows! oh the shame! oh the reproach! oh the troubles! oh the travails! oh the trials, etc., which might have been prevented—had we more minded and followed whether an action is spiritually beneficial or not. But,

[12.] Twelfthly and lastly, The more a man can deny himself—when he has an opportunity, power, and authority to raise himself, to greaten himself, to seek himself, and to lift up himself—the greater measure of holiness that man has attained to. Providence put many a rare and fair opportunity into **Moses'** hand, whereby he might have raised himself, and have greatened himself in the world—and yet then, even then, he denies himself. "By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible." Hebrews 11:24-27. [Exod. 32:9-15; Deut. 9:13-14, 18-20]

Nehemiah was a man of the same mind and mettle. He stood upon the advantage ground to have greatened himself, and to have lifted up himself as others had done before him. But instead of this, he lessens himself, he denies himself, he degrades himself, and being of a very noble, generous, public spirit, he turns his back upon his own worldly interest, and keeps a very free and bountiful table, upon his own expense, and not upon the account of a public purse. "I would like to mention that for the entire twelve years that I was governor of Judah—neither I nor my officials drew on our official food allowance. This was quite a contrast to the former governors who had laid heavy burdens on the people, demanding a daily ration of food and wine, besides a pound of silver. Even their assistants took advantage of the people. But because of my fear of God, I did not act that way. I devoted myself to working on the wall and refused to acquire any land. And I required all my officials to spend time working on the

wall. I asked for nothing, even though I regularly fed 150 Jewish officials at my table, besides all the visitors from other lands! The provisions required at my expense for each day were one ox, six fat sheep, and a large number of domestic fowl. And every ten days we needed a large supply of all kinds of wine. Yet I refused to claim the governor's food allowance because the people were already having a difficult time." Nehemiah 5.

And so **Daniel** was one in spirit with the former: Dan. 1:8-11, When God had brought him into high favor with the prince of the eunuchs, and given him a great deal of heart-room there—yet upon no terms would he defile himself with the king's food, or comply with the requests of the prince. It argues a great deal of holiness for a man to deny his temporal self, to dethrone his temporal self—when he stands upon the advantage ground to advance his temporal self, and to enthrone his temporal self in the world, Rev. 4:10-11.

I have read of Trajan the emperor, how he sent Eustochius, one of his chief captains against the barbarians, who having vanquished them, returned home. The emperor being very joyful at this good news goes to meet him, and brings him gloriously into the city. Now Eustochius being high in the emperor's favor, it was but ask and have, speak and speed; but on this very day of pomp, triumph, and glory, he chose rather to suffer the martyrdom of himself, his wife, and children—than to offer sacrifice to Apollo; and so denies himself, and all his present pomp and glory, when he might greatly have enriched himself and advanced himself. Nothing speaks out greater measures of holiness, than for a man to deny himself—when he may seek himself, and exalt himself.

I have read of a godly man, who was much in pious duties; who being sorely tempted by Satan, and to whom Satan said, "Why do you take such pains? you watch, and fast, and pray, and abstain from the sins of the times. But, O man! what do you do, more than I do? Are you no drunkard?—neither am I! Are you no adulterer?—neither am I! Do you watch? why, let me tell you, I never sleep! Do you fast? why, I

never eat nor drink. What do you do, more than I do?" "Why, I will tell you, Satan," said the holy man, "I pray, I serve the Lord, nay, more than all this, I deny myself!" "Nay, then," says Satan, "you go beyond me, for I am proud, and I exalt myself." And so he vanished.

Oh the excellency of self-denial! and oh the holiness and the happiness of that man who can deny himself, who can debase himself, who can even trample upon himself—when he has power and authority in his own hand to greaten himself and to exalt himself! *Power* and *authority* will try what mettle men are made of. Ah, how many have there been among us, who, when they have had no power nor authority in their hands to help themselves, have seemed to be great deniers of themselves; but no sooner had they power and authority in their hands—but ah, what self-love, what self-interest, what self-seeking, and what self-exalting was to be found among them! Oh, how have many among them, instead of loving God to the contempt of themselves—have loved themselves to the contempt of God! And who, instead of debasing themselves that they might exalt God—have debased God that they might exalt themselves! And who, instead of losing themselves that they might find God—have lost God that they might find themselves!

These put me in mind of the abbot, who lived strictly, and looked demurely, and walked humbly—so long as he was but a *monk*. But when, by his seeming sanctity and humility, he had got to be *abbot*, he grew most intolerable proud and insolent, etc. And being asked the reason of it, he confessed that his former humble demeanor was but to see if he could find the keys of the abbey. How many such abbots we have had among us—you all know! Ah, how rare is it to find a man to deny himself, when he is advantaged to seek himself. Such a man is worth *gold*—but this *iron* age affords few such *golden* men. Where this frame of spirit is—there the streams of holiness runs deep.

And thus much for this use of trial and examination.

Twelve Consolations to All who Have Real Holiness

And so I come now to the last use of this doctrine, and that is for **comfort and consolation** to all those who have this genuine holiness, without which there is no happiness. O sirs! open wide the everlasting doors of your souls, that not a *river*—but a *sea* of joy and comfort may flow in upon you. For,

[1.] First, Know for your comfort—that genuine holiness is the seal of your eternal election. Some are elected to glorious offices in this world, others are elected to eternal glory in the heavenly world. Judas was chosen to be an apostle on earth—but not to be a saint in heaven, John 6:70; but the Thessalonians were elected to eternal glory in heaven, though they were not chosen to any glorious offices here on earth, 1 Thes. 1:4. It may be you are a poor creature, who never was, nor ever are likely to be, elected to any noble or honorable employments, either in church or state.

Oh, but if you are a holy person, then know for your everlasting comfort, that your genuine holiness is a genuine seal of your eternal election. It is the counterpart as it were, of all that gracious love, grace, and eternal favor which God bears unto you: Eph. 1:4, "He has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world—that we should be holy." God did not choose us either because we *were* holy, or because he foresaw that in time we *would be* holy—but he chose us to that very end that we *should be* holy. Look! as Esther was first chosen out among the virgins, Esther 1, and then purified and decked with rich and royal ornaments and garments, before she was brought into the presence of the king: so God first chooses poor sinners, and then he purifies them, and adorns them with the rich and glorious garments of grace and holiness, Psalm 45:13, so that they may be fit to enter into his royal presence!

1 Thes. 1:4, "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." Verse 5, "For our gospel came not unto you in word only; but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit." Verse 9, "And how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God." When the gospel comes in power and in the Holy Spirit, and turns people from idols to serve the living God—it is a clear and evident sign of their election. Genuine sanctification is a sure evidence, a fair copy of a man's election. Look! as the original is known by the picture, and the cause by the effect—just so, election is known by genuine sanctification.

A Christian need never put himself to the charge of making a ladder to climb up to heaven, to search the records of glory, to see whether his name is written in the book of life, in the book of election or not. Rather, he should make a strict and diligent inquiry whether he is really and thoroughly sanctified or not; for where there is genuine sanctification, there the glorious image of God's election is in the golden characters stamped upon the soul. A man may have his name set down in the chronicles—yet lost; engraved in durable marble—yet perish; set upon a monument equal to a Colossus—yet be ignominious; inscribed on the hospital gates—yet go to hell; written in the front of his own house—yet another come to possess it. All these are but writings in the *dust*, or upon the *waters*—where the characters perish as soon as they are made; they no more prove a man eternally happy, than the fool could prove Pontius Pilate eternally happy because his name was written in the Apostles creed. But in *genuine sanctification*, a man may see his name so clearly written in the book of God's election, as that it shall remain legible to all eternity. But,

[2.] Secondly, If you are a holy person, if you have that genuine holiness, without which there is no eternal happiness, then know for your comfort—that the Lord takes singular pleasure, delight, and delight, both in your holiness and in your person. Psalm 149:4-5, "For the Lord *delights* in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation. Let the faithful rejoice in this honor. Let them sing for joy as they lie on their

beds." The Hebrew word signifies pleasure, delight, enjoyment, contentment, etc. Oh! God takes singular pleasure, singular delight, singular enjoyment, and singular contentment in all his saints, in all his sanctified ones! Holiness is the express image of God, and therefore he cannot but take pleasure in it, and in all those who bear it!

Zeph. 3:13, "The people of Israel who survive will do no wrong to each other, never telling lies or deceiving one another. They will live peaceful lives, lying down to sleep in safety; there will be no one to make them afraid." Well! here are glorious characters of their holiness; but what pleasure, what delight, etc., does God take in these holy ones? Why, certainly very much, as you may see in verse 17, "The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, *he will rejoice over you with singing!*" Look! as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, Isaiah 62:4-5—just so, will the Lord rejoice over his holy ones! Look, that delight, enjoyment, and contentment which the bridegroom takes in his bride—the same, yes, greater, God takes in all his sanctified ones. Yes, look, as a fond father joys over his dear child that he carries in his arms, or dandles upon his knee with singing: so God will joy over all his holy ones, which are his fondlings, with singing; such is the singular delight, satisfaction, and enjoyment which he takes in them.

Look! as the *farmer* delights much in that ground which was once barren—but is now fruitful; and as the *captain* takes a great deal of pleasure in that soldier who once deserted—but is now returned, and fights valiantly and resolutely against all opposers and adversaries; and as the *father* takes a great deal of joy, contentment, and satisfaction in the return, reformation, and amendment of his prodigal son, Luke 15—even so, a holy God is wonderfully delighted, pleased, enamored, and even overjoyed, when such as brought forth nothing but the thorns and briers of wickedness, Heb. 6:7-8—does now bring forth the pleasant fruits of righteousness and holiness, Heb. 2:10; and when such as have run from Christ the captain of

their salvation, and run from their profession, and run from their principles, and run almost from everything that is good—shall now return to the captain of their salvation, and fight it out most valiantly and resolutely against the world, the flesh, and the devil; and when such as have proved prodigals, and spent all that portion, all that stock, and all that treasure that they have been entrusted with—shall now break off their sins, and humble themselves, and reform their lives, and mend their ways! God is so infinitely pleased and delighted in these, that he records their names in heaven: "However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven!" Luke 10:20. It is matter of the greatest joy in the world, for a man to have his name enrolled in heaven. Look! as it is the sinner's hell that his name is engraved in the book of damnation—just so, it is the believer's heaven that his name is engraved in the book of election. "And anyone whose name was not found recorded in the Book of Life was thrown into the lake of fire!" Revelation 20:15.

I have read of a senator who, relating to his son the great honors that were assigned to some soldiers whose names were written in a certain book, whereupon the son was very importunate to see that book. His father shows him the outside, and he earnestly desired him to open it. "No," says the father, "by no means, for it is sealed by the council." Then says the son, "Please tell me if my name is written there!" His father replies, "No! because all the names of those soldiers were kept secret in the breasts of the senators." The son, studying how he might get some satisfaction, desired his father to acquaint him with the merits of those soldiers whose names were written in that book. The father relates to him their noble achievements, and worthy acts of valor, wherewith they had eternalized their names. "Such honorable people are written in this book," said he, "and none but such must be written in this book." Whereupon the son, consulting with his own heart that he had no such trophies to show—but had spent his time in courting of ladies, rather than in encountering of knights, and that he was better adapted for a dance than for a march, and that he knew no war drum

—but only the violin, nor had he any courage—but to be drunk and rant. Hereupon he presently retired himself, repented, entered into a combat with his own lusts, and subdued them, and became temperate, brave, valiant, and virtuous. Now, when the soldiers came to receive their wreaths, their crowns, their honors, etc., he steps in and demands a wreath, a crown for himself. But being asked upon what grounds his demand was grounded, he answered, "If honors be given to conquerors, then they must be given to me too, for I have gotten the noblest conquest of all." And it being asked to explain, he answered, "These other soldiers have subdued strange foes, and conquered their outward enemies—but I have subdued myself, I have conquered the enemies which were in my own bosom!"

O sirs, there are no men's names written in the book of life but theirs who by grace and holiness have subdued and brought under their sinful selves, and who have conquered the corruptions which are in their own bosoms, that is, in respect of their dominion. There are many who are exceeding inquisitive to know whether their names are written in heaven or not. I would say to such, there is no such way to know this—as by your holiness. Have you broken off your sins by sound repentance? Has the gospel changed your inside and your outside? Has it made you a new creature, and turned you from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to Jesus Christ? etc. Then, without all question, your name is written in heaven, and you are the person who has the greatest cause in the world to rejoice! [Phil. 4:3; Heb. 11:38.]

Again, the holy Christian is the best man in the world, nay, he is such a one "of whom this world is not worthy," and therefore God cannot but take singular pleasure and delight in him. Many there are, who are accounted deep scholars, great linguists, profound philosophers, good grammarians, excellent mathematicians, sharp logicians, cunning politicians, fine rhetoricians, sweet musicians, etc.. But the truth is, he is the best *grammarian*, who has learned to speak the truth from his heart; and he is the best *astronomer*, who has his thoughts in heaven; and he is the best *musician*, who has

learned practically to sing out the praises of God; and he is the best *arithmetician*, who knows how to number his days; and he is the best *philosopher*, who every day grows holier and holier; and he is the best skilled in *economics*, who trains up his family in the fear of the Lord; and he is the best *politician*, who is as good at taking and giving Scriptural counsel; and he is the best *linguist*, who speaks the language of Canaan; and therefore God cannot but take the greatest contentment and satisfaction in such.

Again, the holy Christian is the only man for whom God has wrought the greatest miracles. He can tell you that he was **blind**—but now God has given him eyes to see *sin* to be the greatest evil, and *Christ* to be the choicest good. He can tell you that once he was so **deaf**—that though God called very often and very loud upon him, by his word and by his works, by his rods at home and by his judgments abroad, and by his Spirit and conscience that were still a-preaching in his bosom—sometimes life, sometimes death, sometimes heaven, and sometimes hell—yet he could not hear! But now God has given him a hearing ear, so that now he can with delight hear the sweet music of the promises on the one hand; and with a holy trembling listen to the voice of divine threatenings on the other hand. He can tell you that once he was so **dumb**—that if he might have had the whole world, he could not have spoke a good word for God, nor for his ways, nor for his people, nor for his ordinances, nor for any of his concernments in the world. Oh! but now his tongue is as the pen of a ready writer, Psalm 45:1, and he is never better than when he is a-speaking either of God, or for God and his concerns. Now he can contend for the faith, and speak for saints, and plead for ordinances; and though in some cases he may lack power to *act* for God—yet he never lacks a *tongue* to speak for God. The spouse's lips drop honeycombs, in Canticles 4:11; "And the tongue of the just is as choice silver," in that Proverbs 10:20. Yes, his tongue is a tree of life, whose leaves are medicinal, in that Proverbs 12:18. He can tell you that once he was so **lame**—that he was not able to move one foot heavenwards or Christ-wards, or holiness-wards, etc. But now his feet delight, not only to go—but to *run* in all the ways of God's

commands, Psalm 119:32. Yes, he can tell you that once he was **dead**—as to all his soul-concerns—but now he is alive, and the life that he leads in the flesh, is by faith in the Son of God, who has loved him and given himself for him, Gal. 2:20.

It was by a miracle that the river Jordan was driven back; and it is no less a miracle to see a sinner that was accustomed to do evil, habituated now to do good. That the tide of sin, which before did run so strong, should be so easily turned, that the sinner who, a little before was sailing hellward, and lacked neither wind nor tide to carry him there—should now suddenly alter his course, and tack about for heaven—what a miracle is this! To see the earthly man become heavenly, a carnal man become spiritual, a loose man become precise, a proud man become humble, a covetous man become liberal, and a harsh man become meek, etc., is to behold no less than miracles. To see a vile sinner, begin to live cross and contrary to himself in the ways of Christ and holiness, should be as astonishing in our eyes—as to see the sun go backward—or the dead to raise themselves! Now how can God but take infinite delight and pleasure in his holy ones, considering the many miracles that he has wrought both in them and for them?

Again, there are no people under heaven, who take any real pleasure, delight, contentment and satisfaction in God—but those who are genuinely holy. "I delight greatly in the Lord; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." Isaiah 61:10

The covetous man takes pleasure and delight in his money-bags. The **ambitious** man takes pleasure and delight in his honors. The **voluptuous** man takes pleasure and delight in his lusts. The **malicious** man takes pleasure and delight in his revenge. The **envious** man takes pleasure and delight in the harms which befall others. The **drunkard** takes pleasure and delight in his cups. The

adulterer takes pleasure and delight in his harlots. The **gamester** takes pleasure and delight in his shifts and tricks. The **worldling** takes pleasure and delight in his fopperies and fooleries. It is only the **holy** man who takes pleasure and delight in God. To delight and take pleasure in God, is a work too high, too hard, too spiritual, and too noble--for any but holy people! [Job 22:25-26; Cant. 2:3, and 7:6; Pa. 33:2, and 48:11; Isaiah 41:16; Joel 2:23; Hab. 3:18; Zech. 10:7.] To delight and take pleasure in God, is a work too high, too hard, too spiritual, and too noble—for any but holy people. There are none *headed*, nor *hearted*, nor *spirited*, nor *anointed*, nor *principled*, for taking pleasure in God—but holy ones.

Abraham did not take more pleasure in his Isaac, nor did Jacob take more delight in his Joseph, nor did David take more satisfaction in his Absalom, nor did Jonah take more contentment in his gourd—than a holy man—when he is himself—takes pleasure, delight, satisfaction, and contentment in God; and therefore how can God but take pleasure and delight in him? Shall the child take delight in the father, and shall not the father delight again in the child? and shall the wife take pleasure and satisfaction in the husband, and shall not the husband take pleasure and satisfaction again in her?

Look! as God hates those who hate him—just so, he takes pleasure in those who take pleasure in him. Now what a singular cordial and comfort is this to all God's holy ones, that God takes singular pleasure, delight, satisfaction, and contentment in them! What though the world hates you, and scorns you, and despises you, and prefers every Barabbas and Judas before you—yet cheer up your spirits with this cordial, and warm your hearts at this fire—that God takes singular pleasure and delight in you! What does the child care—though others slight him—so long as his father at home delights in him? What does the wife care—though others despise her—as long as her husband at home honors her, and takes pleasure in her him? What does the innocent person care—though the malefactor at the bar rails upon him—as long as the judge upon the bench acquits him him? What should a Christian care—though all the world should

abhor him—as long as the Lord takes singular pleasure and delight in him? But,

[3.] Thirdly, if you are a holy person, if you have that genuine holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for your comfort—that your genuine holiness is a substantial evidence of your genuine union with Christ.

All true holiness is the immediate fruit of our genuine union with Christ. [John 17:20-21, and 15:5; Eph. 4:16; 1 Pet. 2:4-6; Eph. 5:25, to the end.] Upon our union with Christ, Christ is made not only wisdom, righteousness, and redemption—but he is also made sanctification to us, 1 Cor. 1:30. Christ and a holy person are one, as father and son are one, and they are one, as the vine and the branches are one, and they are one, as head and members are one; and they are one, as the foundation and the building are one; and they are one as husband and wife are one, and that which speaks out their oneness, their union, is their holiness. He who is in Christ is a new creature, 2 Cor. 5:17. He who is ingrafted into Christ, he who is initiated into Christ, he who is united unto Christ, he is a new creature; he has a new head, a new heart, a new lip, a new life, a new spirit, new principles, and new ends; he can truly say with that convert, "I am not the man that I was! I was a lion, holiness has made me a lamb! I was a wolf, holiness has made me a sheep! I was a raven, holiness has made me a dove!" etc. And what does all this speak out but a man's being in Christ—but a man's union with Christ? Renovation speaks out union, and union speaks out renovation. Renewing by Christ speaks out the soul's in-being in Christ, and the soul's in-being in Christ speaks out the soul's renewing by Christ. Look! as there could be no depravation but from our union with the first Adam—just so, there can be no renovation but through our union with the second Adam, Col. 3:10. But,

[4.] Fourthly, If you are a holy person, if you have that genuine holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for your comfort—that God will certainly bless all your blessings to you, and he will bless every estate and

condition to you. Psalm 34:12-14. Most men have many blessings—but it is only the holy man who has his **blessings** blessed unto him: Gen. 22:17, "In blessing I will bless you," says God to holy Abraham, that is, I will bless your blessings to you. The holy person is in covenant with a holy God, and therefore all the blessings of the covenant are his. All those who partake of the *holiness* of the covenant, they shall certainly partake of the *blessings* of the covenant. [Psalm 50:5, and 105:42; Ezek. 36:25-26; Zech. 3:3-4; Psalm 84:11; Proverbs 12:21, etc.] Now this is one of the blessings of the covenant, that all our blessings shall be blessed unto us.

O Christian! all your *right* hand blessings shall be blessed unto you, and all your *left* hand blessings shall be blessed unto you; all the blessings of the *upper* springs shall be blessed unto you, and all the blessings of the *lower* springs shall be blessed unto you; and all the blessings of the *throne* shall be blessed unto you, and all the blessings of the *footstool* shall be blessed unto you. [A little, blessed by God, is better than a world enjoyed. If you are a holy man, the God of all mercies—and all the mercies of God, the God of all comforts—and all the comforts of God, are yours, and what would you have more?]

And as all your blessings shall be blessed unto you—just so, every estate and every **condition** shall be blessed unto you; you shall be blessed in *health*—and blessed in *sickness*; blessed in *strength*—and blessed in *weakness*; blessed in *wealth*—and blessed in *want*; blessed in *honor*—and blessed in *dishonor*; blessed in *life*—and blessed in *death*; you shall be blessed at *home*—and blessed *abroad*; blessed at *board*—and blessed at *bed*; blessed *lying down*—and blessed *rising up*; blessed in *liberty*—and blessed in *bonds*.

Look! as all the *blessings* of a wicked man are cursed unto him; and as all the *relations* of a wicked man are cursed unto him, and as all estates and *conditions* which are incident to a wicked man are cursed unto him—just so, all the *blessings* of a holy man are blessed unto him, and all the *relations* of a holy man are blessed unto him, and all

estates and *conditions* which are incident to a holy man are blessed unto him. [Proverbs 3:33; Mal. 2:1-3; Lev. 26; Deut. 28.] Isaac tills the ground, and sows his seed, and God blesses him with a hundredfold, Gen. 26:12; and Cain tills the ground, and sows his seed—but the earth is cursed to him, and commanded not to yield to him her strength, Gen. 4:12. But,

[5.] Fifthly, If you are a holy person, if you are one who has that genuine holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for your comfort—that your holiness is a glorious witness and evidence of your effectual calling. 1 Pet. 1:15, "But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God—who chose you to be his children—is holy." Many are *externally* called who are not *internally* called; and many are *ineffectually* called who are not *effectually* called, 1 Pet. 2:9. But now, genuine holiness—that speaks out an *internal* call, an *effectual* call—a call out of darkness into marvelous light; it speaks out such a call as makes sinners saints, slaves sons, enemies friends, and strangers favorites. As Joseph, a stranger, was called out of a prison, a dungeon, and made a very great favorite in Pharaoh's court, Gen. 41—just so, genuine holiness is a glorious witness and evidence that you are effectually called out of the prison of sin, and the dungeon of wrath, and made a favorite to the King of glory! 2 Tim. 1:9; 1 Pet. 5:10; Gal. 4:6.

The **author** of this call is a holy God. Our holy calling depends upon the purpose of God, the power of God, and the grace and good pleasure of God. The **means** of our holy calling are the Spirit of God and the word of God. The **ends** of our calling are holiness and the glory of God. O sirs, you are not called upon the account of your parents' faith or nobility, nor upon the account of any intrinsic virtues in you, nor upon the account of any extrinsic services done by you—but upon the account of God's peculiar election and particular calling; and therefore by holiness make good the honor of your high calling.

And if any should object against you—the baseness of your birth and poor outward state, put them in mind of your high and holy calling, and ask them what they think of Lazarus, who is now asleep in Abraham's bosom. And if others should object against you your former wickedness, and cast your sins as dirt and dung in your faces, let them know that Paul can tell them from heaven, that though once he was a wretched blasphemer, and a bloody persecutor, that yet now he is a glorious saint in heaven. But,

[6.] Sixthly, If you are a holy person, if you are one who has this genuine holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for your comfort—that your holiness is a blessed evidence of your adoption and sonship. John 1:12; Romans 8:17. If you are a holy person, then from a child of wrath—you have become a child of God, a child of love; and from an heir of hell—you have become an heir of heaven; and from a slave of Satan—you have become a son of God. Gal. 4:4-5, 7, "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons, therefore you are no more a servant—but a son." Romans 8:14, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God." The leadings of the Spirit are all holy leadings, and there are none who are the sons of God but such as are under the holy leadings of the Spirit of God: Phil. 2:15, "That you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world." There are none worthy of this title of honor—namely, the sons of God—but such who in the main of their lives and conversations are blameless and harmless, without rebuke, and who are as shining lights in the world.

There are two ways whereby we may know *fire* to be real fire, and that differences real fire from painted fire, or from imaginary fire; the first is by the *heat* of it, and the other is by the *flame* of it. Now, though sometimes it so happens, that the fire does not flame—yet at that very time you may know it to be real fire by the heat it gives.

Just so, there are two ways of knowing our adoption; the first is by the spirit of adoption, crying "Abba! Father! in our hearts," Gal. 4:6; and the other is by our sanctification and holiness, Romans 8:16. Now, though sometimes it may so fall out that the flame, the witness of the spirit of adoption, may be lacking—yet the heat of sanctification and holiness remains, and we may have recourse to this fire, and warm our hearts at it, and sit down satisfied and assured of our adoption. For as fire may be known to be fire by its heat, though it lack a flame—just so, though the spirit of adoption do not witness our adoption to us—yet we may know our adoption by our genuine sanctification and holiness.

Every holy person is a high-born person, for as his divine birth—just so, his divine adoption is high, very high, exceeding high, yes even as high as heaven itself, John 3:5, 8, and 1:12-13. It is a very high honor to be the son of a king, yes to be the son-in-law of a king, for so David reckoned it: 1 Sam. 18:23-24, "Is it a light thing to you to be a king's son-in-law, seeing that I am vile and lightly esteemed?" Oh then what an honor it is to be the son of God, to be the son of the King of kings, and Lord of lords! Rev. 1:6. It is a very high honor to be God's *servant*, and so David accounted it, as you may see in 2 Sam. 7:5, 8. And so did Theodosius the emperor, and Constantine the Great, and many others account it. Oh then what an honor must it be to be God's *son!*

The blessed apostle cannot speak of this high privilege but with great admiration; as you may see in 1 John 3:1, "How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!" It is an infinite condescension in God, to honor us with the title of *sons*, and therefore we should never think of it, nor ever speak of it—but with much admiration. O sirs! what matter of admiration is this—that the great and glorious God, who has many millions of glorious angels attending Him—that He should *look* upon all holy people as His sons, and *love* them as His sons, and *delight* in them as His sons, and *clothe* them as His sons, and *feed* them as His sons, and *protect* them as His sons, and *stand by* them as His sons, and *lay up* for

them as His sons, and *lay out* Himself for them as His sons! O sirs! what matter of admiration is this—that those who have not deserved a smile from God, a good word from God, a bit of bread from God, or a good look from God—should be made the sons of God!

What manner of love is this—that those who have so highly provoked God, walked so cross and contrary to God, were so exceeding unlike God, preferred every lust, and every toy and vanity before God, fought many years under Satan's banner against God, refused all the offers of mercy which have been made by God--that those who have deserved to be reprobated by God, damned by God, and to be thrown to hell by God—that these should be made the sons of God! Oh stand and wonder! Oh stand and admire the freeness of His grace, and at the riches of His grace! But,

[7.] Seventhly, If you are a holy person, if you are one who has that genuine holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for your comfort—that you are an undoubted heir of everlasting glory. [Romans 8:16-18; James 2:5; 2 Tim. 4:7-8] Romans 8:29-30, "For those God *foreknew* he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son," (that is, in holiness,) "And those he *predestined*, he also called; those he *called*, he also justified; those he *justified*, he also *glorified*." Holiness is a most sure pledge of glory: 2 Thes. 2:13, "God has chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit;" Mat. 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God;" 1 John 3:2-3, "When he shall appear, we shall be like him" (that is, in glory) "for we shall see him as he is. And every man who has this hope in him, purifies himself, even as he is pure."

He who has a genuine hope, a lively hope, of being like to Christ in glory, and of reigning with Christ in heaven—will set seriously upon the work of self-purifying. There is no hope, compared to that hope which runs out into holiness, and which leads the soul on to the highest degrees of purification, and which enables a man to set up Christ's purity as the most perfect pattern and exact copy for his

imitation. Titus 3:4-7, "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life."

Holiness is an infallible forerunner of glory; it is the first fruits of that eternal happiness and blessedness, which God has laid up for his children in the highest heavens. And oh, what cause of joy and gladness should this be to every holy heart! What though you should never more have a good day on earth; what though all the springs of comfort should be dried up on your right hand and on your left hand; what though God should never more smile on you in this world; what though the remaining part of your life should be filled up with crosses, losses, troubles, and trials; what though God should let Satan loose to tempt you, and wicked men grow strong to oppress you, and friends turn enemies to grieve you; yes, what if you should go to your grave with tears in your eyes, and with sorrow in your heart; yet as long as you are sure that you are an heir of glory, and that all the happiness of heaven is yours, and that your crown is safe, and that you shall be forever filled and satisfied with those everlasting pleasures and delights which are at God's right hand, Psalm 16:11; you have cause to joy and rejoice in the midst of all your sorrows and sufferings, yes, to glory and triumph in the hopes and expectations of a kingdom which shakes not, of a crown which withers not, of riches which corrupt not, and of an inheritance that fades not away. [Heb. 12:28; 1 Pet. 1:3- 4. See my "String of Pearls" on that very text.]

O sirs! it is not all the silks of Persia, nor all the spices of Egypt, nor all the gold of Ophir, nor all the treasures of both Indies, nor all the crowns and scepters in the world, no, nor even the worth of ten thousand worlds—which can be compared with that glory which is treasured up for all God's holy ones. They have an inheritance

reserved in heaven for them, which cannot be moth-eaten, nor spoiled by hostile invasion, nor wrung from them by force, nor won from them by law, nor mortgaged for debt, nor impaired by public calamity, nor plundered by thieves and robbers, nor changed by kings or parliaments, no, nor robbed by death itself; and therefore, what infinite cause of joy and rejoicing have all such who are interested in such an inheritance, and in such a perfect happiness and complete blessedness which is reserved in heaven for all God's holy ones?

Oh, what a singular comfort must this be to a Christian, in the midst of all his miseries and distresses, when he is able to look upon God, and say, "This God is my God forever and ever, and he shall be my guide to glory," Psalm 73:24; and when he is able to look up to heaven and say, "This is my inheritance!" Yes, when he is able to look upon all the glory and happiness of the eternal world, and to say, "All this glory and happiness is mine, for I have that holiness that is the pledge of it, and the first fruits of it in my own soul. It was an observable saying of Macarius; "Those who are anointed with the spiritual oil of gladness," says he, "have received a sign of that incorruptible kingdom, namely, God's Spirit, for a pledge, they are the secretaries of the heavenly king, and relying confidently upon the Almighty, they enter into his palace, where the angels and the spirits of holy men are, although they be yet in this world; for although they are not yet come to the entire inheritance, which is prepared for them in that world—yet they are most sure of it by that pledge which they have newly received, as sure as if they were already crowned, and had the key of the kingdom in their own possession!"

It was a very sweet and comfortable speech which the emperor told to son in his childhood, when he took him by the chin and said, "You my son, shall one day sit upon a throne!" Just so, it is very sweet and comfortable for the saints to consider, that however low and contemptible they may be in the eyes of the world, that yet there is a day a-coming when they shall sit upon a throne, and be crowned with glory, and reign with Christ to all eternity. But,

[8.] Eighthly, If you are a holy person, if you have that genuine holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for your comfort—that all things shall be sanctified unto you. Tit. 1:15, "Unto the pure all things are pure—but unto those who are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." When a man's heart is once sanctified, then all things are sanctified to him; when a man's spirit and way are clean and pure, then all things are clean and pure to him. O sirs! this is so great and so glorious a privilege, to have all things sanctified to us, that it is more worth than a world, yes, than many worlds. Next to a man's interest in Christ, he cannot beg a greater mercy than this—that all things may be sanctified to him—that is, that all things may so work as to make him more and more holy: that every *cross* may make him more holy, and that every *comfort* may make him more holy; that every *mercy* may make him more holy, and that every *misery* may make him more holy; that every *ordinance* may make him more holy, and that every *providence* may make him more holy; that every *affliction* at home may make him more holy, and that every *judgment* abroad may make him more holy. Every condition is sweet when it is sanctified to us; sickness is as sweet as health when it is sanctified to us; *weakness* is as sweet as *strength* when it is sanctified to us; and *poverty* is as sweet as *riches* when it is sanctified to us; and *disgrace* is as sweet as *honor* when it is sanctified to us; and *bonds* are as sweet as *liberty* when they are sanctified to us; and *death* is as sweet as *life* when it is sanctified to us. Look! as no condition can be a happy condition which is not a sanctified condition—just so, no condition can be a miserable condition, which is a sanctified condition. Now this is only the holy man's privilege, the holy man's mercy, to have every estate and every condition sanctified unto him; and this indeed is the cream and crown of all our mercies to have them sanctified unto us, ay, and every bitter will be sweet, yes very sweet, when it is sanctified unto us.

What though your **mercies**, O Christian, are fewer than others', and lesser than others', and leaner than others', and shorter than

others'—yet you have no reason to complain, as long as your mercies are sanctified mercies. What though though your **trials** are greater than others', and your burden is heavier than others', and your sorrows are deeper than others', and your crosses comes thicker than others'—yet you have no cause to complain, as long as they are sanctified. Are you a holy person? Oh then remember for your comfort—that every bit of bread you eat is sanctified, and every draught you drink is sanctified, and every suit of clothes you wear is sanctified; the beds you lie on are sanctified, and the stools you sit on are sanctified; the very air you breath in is sanctified, and the very ground you tread on is sanctified; every penny in your purse is sanctified, and every dollar in your shop is sanctified; whatever you have at home is sanctified, and whatever you have abroad is sanctified. And oh! how should the sense of these things sweeten all your bitters, and turn your hell into heaven, and wipe all tears from your eyes, and turn your sighing into singing, and your mourning into rejoicing, etc. "We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose." Romans 8:28. But,

[9.] Ninthly, If you are a holy person, if you have that genuine holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for your comfort—that you are a person very high in favor with God, you are one of his special treasured people. Deut. 14:2, "You have been set apart as holy to the Lord your God, and he has chosen you to be his own special treasure from all the nations of the earth." "He gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for Himself a special people, eager to do good works." All God's holy ones are his treasured ones, God has a peculiar respect for their **persons**: Dan. 9:23, "O Daniel! you are greatly beloved," or as the Hebrew word, signifies, you are a man of desires. Now Daniel is called a man of desires, because the desires of God run out strongly after him, as one who was singularly beloved of him, and as one who was highly in favor with him.

And as God has a peculiar respect for their persons—just so, he has a peculiar respect for their duties and **services**: Proverbs 15:8, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord—but the prayer of the upright is his delight." God takes more delight to hear the prayers of the upright, and to grant the prayers of the upright, than the upright takes delight to pray. However burdensome and troublesome their prayers may be to others—yet they are still delightful to God; but more of this in the next particular.

And as God has a peculiar respect for their services—just so, he has a peculiar respect for their **tears**, for he puts them into his bottle, Psalm 56:8. And as he has a peculiar respect for their tears—just so, he has a peculiar respect for their **names**, for he writes them in his book, Luke 10:20. And as he has a peculiar respect for their names—just so, he has a peculiar respect for their **blood**, Psalm 116:15; and this Cain found by woeful experience, from the cry of his brother's blood.

O sirs! God by making of you holy, has made you like himself, like his Son, like his Spirit, and like his most glorious angels, which excel in strength; and what does this speak out but God's special favor? God makes many rich, and many great, and many honorable, and many mighty, and many wise, and many noble, and many beautiful, and many successful, whom he will never make holy. But in making of you holy, God has made you spiritually great, rich, honorable, wise, and beautiful, etc., Eph. 1:3, and this speaks you out to be highly in the favor of God. Holiness is a singular fruit of God's special favor and love. God has a common favor and love for all men, yes, for the worst of men; witness that common preservation, and common protection, and common provision, which he grants to them. But God has a special love and favor, and this runs out only to his holy ones, Eph. 2:4-5. Holiness is a divine beam, a heavenly drop, a choice pledge of God's special favor and love. O sirs! though the world may slight you, and enemies revile you, and friends disfavor you—yet let this support you, let this rejoice you—that you are God's treasured possession! "For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The

Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession." Deuteronomy 7:6. But,

[10.] Tenthly, If you are a holy person, if you are one who has that genuine holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for your comfort—that all your duties and services are very pleasing, delightful, and acceptable to the Lord. Acts 10:4; Mal. 3:3; 2 Tim. 2:21; and this roundly follows upon the former, for whenever a man's **person** comes to be accepted of God, and to be in favor with God—then all his **services** and sacrifices comes to be acceptable to God; Gen. 4:5, "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof, and the Lord had respect unto *Abel*--and to his *offering*." God had first a respect to his person in Christ, and then to his offering; and so his sacrifice was accepted for the man, and not the man for the sacrifice: Heb. 11:4, "By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead."

God will always welcome the holy man into his presence, and he shall always have his ear at command, Isaiah 45:11; God will still be a-warming his heart, and a-cheering up his spirit, and a-satisfying of his soul, in meeting of him in all holy means, and in giving gracious answers to all his requests: Isaiah 66:5, "You welcome those who cheerfully do good, who follow godly ways." Proverbs 21:8, "The guilty walk a crooked path; the innocent travel a straight road."

When God has cleansed a man's heart, and sanctified his nature, then his work, his pious work, is right; it is then right in the eye of God, and in the account of God, and in estimation of God; and therefore his petitions are as soon granted as they are offered, (Isaiah 65:24,) and his requests performed as soon as they are mentioned. Psalm 32:5, "I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and you forgave the iniquity of my sin, Selah." [Selah here is a special

note of observation, to work us to a serious marking of the things which are mentioned, as things which are of special weight, and of highest concernment to us.] Holy David had an inward purpose and resolution to confess his sin—but before he could do it God throws him his pardon: "you forgave the iniquity of my sin." God loves to be beforehand with his people in acts of grace and favor. God's eye and his ear was in David's heart—before David's confession could be in his tongue.

Oh the delight of God! Oh the pleasedness of God, with the duties and services of his holy ones! Psalm 4:3, "But know that the Lord has set apart him who is godly for himself: the Lord will hear, when I call upon him," that is, the Lord will approve of my prayer, he will accept of my prayer, he will delight in my prayer, and he will answer my prayer when I call unto him; and what more can the godly man desire? Psalm 61:1, "Hear my cry, O God, attend unto my prayer." Aquinas says that some read the words thus, "Attend unto my songs"—and so the words may be safely read from the Hebrew word, which signifies to shout or shrill out for joy—to note that the prayers of the saints are like pleasant songs and delightful strains in the ears of God. No mirth, no music can be so pleasing to us—as the prayers of the saints are pleasing to God, Cant. 2:14: Psalm 141:2, "Let my prayer come before you as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." What is more sweet, what is more pleasing, and what is more perfuming than incense? why, the prayers of the saints, as they are in the hands of a mediator, are as sweet and pleasing to God—as incense that is made up of the choicest and sweetest spices are sweet and pleasing unto us, Rev. 5:8, and 8:3-4.

1 Pet. 12, "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers;" or rather, as the Greek has it, "his ears are to their prayers," that is, when their prayers are so faint and weak that they cannot reach to God, that they cannot travel as far as heaven—then God will come down to them, and lay his ears, as it were, unto their prayers! Oh, what matter of joy and comfort is this to all the holy seed, that God will graciously bow his ears to their

prayers, when he turns his back with the greatest disdain and indignation upon the most costly sacrifices of the wicked!

O precious sons of Zion! who are daily lamenting and mourning over the weaknesses which cleaves to your best services—know for your comfort and joy, that though with Moses you can but stammer out a prayer, or with Hannah weep out a prayer, or with Hezekiah chatter out a prayer, or with Paul sigh and groan out a prayer—yet the Lord will own your prayers, and accept your prayers, and delight in your prayers. [God once accepted of a handful of meal for a sacrifice, and of a bit of goat's hair for an oblation. Artaxerxes, the Persian monarch, accepted with a cheerful countenance a little water, as a present from the hand of a poor laborer, etc.]

Oh, what a rare comfort is this for a Christian, to consider, that when he is under outward needs and inward distresses; that when he has sickness upon his body, and reproach upon his name, and death knocking at his door—that in all these cases, and in all other cases, he may run to God as to a father, and tell God how it is with him, and when he has done that, he may sit down satisfied and assured of audience and acceptance in heaven! O sirs! this is a privilege of more worth than a thousand worlds! Had unsanctified people as many kingdoms to give as they have hairs on their heads, they would give them all for an interest in this privilege, when guilt and wrath is upon their consciences, and when the arrows of the Almighty stick fast in them, and when the terrors of death are round about them, and when the dreadful day of their account is every moment remembered by them. Oh! if it is so great a favor to have the ears of an earthly king at our pleasure, what a transcendent favor must it be to have his ear at our pleasure—who is King of kings and Lord of lords! and yet this favor has all his saints. But,

[11.] Eleventhly, If you are a holy person, if you are one who has that genuine holiness, without which there is no happiness, then know for your comfort—that Jesus Christ will certainly preserve your holiness. Next to Christ, holiness is

a Christian's choicest jewel, and this holiness, Christ will be sure to preserve. Self-preservation is natural to all creatures. Holiness is Christ's creature, Christ's image; and therefore he will certainly preserve it and maintain it. Christ cannot neglect himself, he cannot be lacking to himself. Now holiness is himself; and therefore if there is but a spark of holiness in a dunghill of corruption, Christ will certainly own it, nourish it, and preserve it. He who is once really holy shall be forever holy. Let the world, the flesh, and the devil, do what they can, the holy seed shall still remain in all God's sanctified ones. [Phil. 1:6; Heb. 12:2; 1 Thes. 5:23, and 3:12-13; Eph. 5:25-27; 1 John 3:9.]

Though a holy man may fall sadly, lamentably, frequently, foully—yet he shall never fall totally, he shall never fall finally, because that holiness which is in him, is a lasting, yes, an everlasting and abiding principle, which can never be destroyed or extirpated. A wicked person may be turned into a holy man—but a holy man can never be turned into a profane person again. A change into holiness, is an unchangeable change; the state of holiness is an unchangeable state.

It is true, the fallen *angels* quickly lost that stock of holiness that God had put into their hands; and *Adam* lost all his holiness upon the turn of a hand. He broke and proved a bankrupt almost as soon as God had set him up in paradise. But the state and condition of all the saints is a better and a safer state and condition than either the angels' or than Adam's was; and that partly because their state was mutable though perfect—but the state of the saints is an unchangeable state, though it be for the present an imperfect state. And partly because God put that stock of holiness which the angels and Adam had into their own hands—but now the saints' holiness is not a stock put in their own hands—but in Christ's hands! For not only their persons, but their holiness is "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation," 1 Pet. 1:5. As Christ is to manage our salvation for us—just so, he is to manage our grace and holiness for us; and therefore, as he will most certainly make sure the one—just so, he will as certainly preserve the other. Once a son of God--forever

a son of God! Though the servant may be turned out of doors—yet the son abides in the house forever, as Christ speaks, John 8:35. He who is once sanctified shall be forever blessed.

Holiness is an abiding seed, an immortal seed. It is a royal gift, which being once given, shall never be taken away from him who has it. I readily grant that the *strength* of holiness, and the *luster* and *shine* of holiness, and the *sense* and *feeling* of holiness, and the *comfort* and *sweetness* of holiness, and the lively stirrings and operations of holiness, may be somewhat abated and lessened in the soul; but the seed of holiness, the substance of holiness, always remains in a converted soul, Romans 11:29, "God's gracious gifts and calling are irrevocable." There is always a divine fire—though sometimes it may lie under the ashes; there is always life and sap in the root—though there may be neither leaves nor blossoms on the tree. It is true, the best of saints may have their spiritual winters. And it is as true, that after their winter, there will certainly follow a spring of holiness.

It is most certain, that the *truth* and *principle* of holiness remains—under all a Christian's infirmities, darkneses, weaknesses, eclipses, clouds, failings, waverings, and wanderings; and the reasons are clear, because that great and glorious principle of holiness flows from God's unchangeable love, and is a fruit of the everlasting covenant, and the price of Christ's blood, and depends and hangs upon a perpetual union and communion with Christ, and is a sure pledge of a man's eternal enjoyment of Christ, and is always maintained and upheld by the everlasting arms of Christ, Deut. 33:26-27; Gen. 49:22-24.

To say that the saints may fall totally and finally from all that grace and holiness they have, is to say,

(1.) That the surety of the new covenant is grown very poor and weak, which is very little less than blasphemy, and quite contrary to that Heb. 7:21-22.

(2.) It is to say that the promises are yes and nay, quite contrary to what the apostle affirms in that 2 Cor. 1:20.

(3.) It is to say that the power of God is grown exceeding weak and contemptible, yes, it is to make sin and Satan stronger than God, which is quite contrary to the current of Scripture, 1 Pet. 1:5; John 10:27-31.

(4.) It is to say that the decree of God is mutable, which is cross and contrary to the apostle in that 2 Tim. 2:19.

(5.) It is to say that God's free, eternal, and everlasting love has become changeable and inconstant, which is expressly cross to that Jer. 31:3; Mal. 3:6; John 13:1, with many other scriptures. Therefore that Arminian principle, which states that *the saints may fall totally and finally from grace and holiness*—is to be forever detested and abhorred. But,

[12.] Twelfthly and lastly, If you are a holy person, if you are one who has that genuine holiness without which there is no happiness, then know for your comfort—that all things shall work together for your good. Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose." All the *afflictions*, and all the *temptations*, and all the *desertions*, and all the *oppressions*, and all the *oppositions*, and all the *persecutions*, which befall a godly man, shall work for his good, Rev. 2:10. Every cross, every loss, and every disease, which befall the holy man shall work for his good. Every device, every snare, every method, every depth, every stratagem, and every enterprise of Satan against the holy man shall work for his good. They shall all help to make him more humble, more holy, more heavenly, more spiritual, more faithful, more fruitful, and more watchful, 2 Cor. 12:9-10. Every day of prosperity, and every night of adversity shall work for the holy man's good. Every storm and every calm, every bitter and every sweet,

every cross and every comfort, shall work for the holy man's good. Hosea 2:5-7.

When God gives a mercy, that shall work for his good; and when God takes away a mercy, that shall work for his good. When God gives him large temporal goods, that shall work for his good; and when God cuts his temporal goods short, that shall work for his good. Yes, all the falls and all the sins of the saints shall work for their good. "As I get hurt by my graces—just so, I get good by my sins," said famous Mr. Foxe. Oh the care, the fear, the watchfulness, the tenderness, the zeal, the revenge—which God raises in the souls of his saints by their very falls! 2 Cor. 7:8-13. Oh the hatred, the indignation, and the detestation—which God raises in the hearts of his children against sin, by their very falling into sin! Oh what love to Christ, what thankfulness for Christ, what admiration of Christ, what cleaving to Christ, what exalting of Christ, and what drawing from Christ—are saints led to by their very falls! Oh what exercise of grace, what increase of grace, what magnifying of grace, what liftings up of divine power, and what a high price are holy men led to set upon the precious blood of Christ—and all by their falls!

It is the glory of God's holiness—that he can turn spiritual diseases into holy remedies! He can turn soul poisons into heavenly cordials! He can prevent sin by sin, and cure falling by falling!

One calls Romans 8:28 "the holy blind man's promise." And I may call it the holy lame man's promise, and the holy deaf man's promise, and the holy dumb man's promise, and the holy needy man's promise, and the holy sick man's, and the holy languishing man's promise, and the holy dying man's promise. Oh the comfort, oh the sweet, oh the contentment, oh the satisfaction, which this promise has afforded to many a precious saint, when other promises have not been at hand!

O Christian, what though friends and relations frown upon you, what though enemies are plotting and conspiring against you, what though

needs, like an armed man, are ready to break in upon you, what though men rage and devils roar against you, what though sickness rages in your family, and death stands every day at your elbow—yet there is no reason for you to fear or faint, because all these things shall work for your good! Yes, there is wonderful cause of joy and rejoicing in all the afflictions and tribulations which come upon you, considering that they shall all work for your good.

O Christians! I am afraid, I am afraid, that you do not run so often as you should, to the breasts of this promise, nor draw that sweetness and comfort from it—that it would yield, and that your several cases may require.

And thus I am done with this use of **comfort** and **consolation** to all God's holy ones. You see what comfort, what consolation, yes, what strong consolation, waits upon all God's sanctified ones. I have been the longer upon this use—because the times require it, and the condition of God's people calls for the strongest cordials, and the choicest and the sweetest comforts.

Seven Positions Concerning Holiness

And now I have nothing to do, but to lay down **seven positions concerning holiness**, which may be of singular use for the preventing of some objections and mistakes, and for the giving of satisfaction, especially to such in whom the streams of holiness runs low, and who are still a-lamenting and mourning under the imperfections of their holiness, etc.

1. Wherever genuine holiness is—it will appear, it will discover itself, it will show itself. Eph. 4:15-16. It is the very nature of grace and holiness to manifest itself, and therefore it is set forth in Scripture by the names of *light*, which shines abroad; Mat.

5:16, and of *ointment* and *perfume*, which cannot be hidden; Proverbs 27:9; Cant. 3:6; of *leaven* and *salt*, which permeates its own nature and relish upon a whole lump. And it is very observable, that when the Holy Spirit was given, he was given in tongues, fiery tongues, and with a rushing of a mighty wind, all of which have a quality of self-manifestation, and notifying of themselves to others, Acts 2:1-5.

Take a river that is dammed and stopped up—yet if the course of it be natural, and if it commonly runs downward, it will at length bear down all, and ride and run triumphantly over all that is in its way. Just so, though genuine holiness in a day of temptation, desertion, and affliction, etc., may seem to be dammed and stopped up—yet at length it will make its way through all, and over all, and show itself in its native colors. Though fire for a time may lie hidden under the ashes—yet at last it will flame forth, and show itself to be fire. Holiness is a divine fire, and though in some cases it may for a time seem to be hidden, it will at length break forth, and show itself to be holiness. I have not faith enough to believe that that man was ever genuinely holy, whose holiness is still hidden under a bushel, or in a dark lantern. Look! as natural life cannot be so hidden, but that it will discover itself a hundred hundred ways—just so, holiness, which is a Christian's spiritual life, cannot be so hidden, but it will discover it a hundred hundred ways.

2. Holiness rises by degrees; it rises gradually in the souls of the saints. Though the first Adam was made a man, a holy man, yes, a man perfectly holy, and all at once—yet the holiness of all who are interested in the second Adam rises by degrees. [Job 17:9; P. 92:12; Mal. 4:2; Hosea 14:5-7.] It is true, in the creation of the world all the creatures were made in their full and perfect growth and strength at once; but in the new creation, holiness, which is God's own creature, is carried on by degrees, Luke 2:52. Look! as **Christ** increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man by degrees—just so, that babe of grace, holiness, increases in the soul by degrees. Look! as the **seed** which is sown in the furrows of the earth first

springs into a *blade*, and then into an *ear*, and then into *ripe grain*, Mat. 13:23; Mark 4:28—just so, that immortal seed, holiness, which is sown in the furrows of a Christian's soul, springs and grows by degrees. Look! as the **waters** in the sanctuary rise first to the ankles, then to the knees, then to the loins, then to the chin, and then to a river that was not passable, Ezek. 47:3-5—just so, holiness rises higher and higher in the soul by degrees.

Look! as the morning **light** shines more and more unto the perfect day, Proverbs 4:18—just so, the light of holiness shines more and more clear, and more and more bright, until all darkness and imperfection be swallowed up in perfection. Look! as the **body** of a man grows and increases by degrees in stature and strength, until it comes to its full growth and perfection, Eph. 4:16—just so, grace and holiness will grow and increase by degrees, until *grace* is turned into *glory*, until *holiness* be turned into *everlasting happiness*.

Though the ocean is full—yet the bottle cannot be filled but by degrees. We are poor narrow-mouthed bottles, and therefore what we take in of holiness must be by degrees. Our incapacity is so great, that at present we are in no way able to take in a fullness of holiness; and therefore God drops in now a drop and then a drop, now a little and then a little—as we are able to take it in.

Indeed, to difference the state of *grace* from the state of *glory*, the state of *holiness* from the state of *everlasting happiness*, it is necessary that holiness should be communicated to us by degrees. An absolute fullness of holiness will make an absolute fullness of happiness. When our holiness is perfect, our happiness shall be perfect; and if this were attainable on earth, there would be but little reason for men to long to be in heaven.

3. There is a great deal of preciousness in the least degree of holiness. For,

[1.] It is the special work of the Holy Spirit; and this I have showed you already at large; and therefore it must needs be precious.

[2.] It is a part of the divine nature; it is a beam of God, a spark of glory, and therefore it must needs be precious.

[3.] There are many choice and special promises which are made over to the least degrees of holiness, as you may see by comparing these scriptures together; [2 Pet. 1:4; Mat. 12:20; Isaiah 40:10-11, and 60:22; Isaiah 35:3-4; Joel 3:10; Mat. 5:3-6; Romans 14:1, and 15:7.] and therefore the least degree of holiness is very precious.

[4.] It gives a man a right to precious privileges, and to all the precious ordinances of Christ's house. Ergo, etc.

[5.] It is a fruit of the special love and favor of God. A man may read more of the heart of God, and of the special love of God towards him in the least spark of holiness, than he can in his highest worldly enjoyments. A man may read that special grace in the least degree of holiness, which he can never read in the honors, profits, pleasures, delights, and contentments of this world. Ergo, etc.

[6.] The least degrees of holiness gives a man as great a right, and as good a title to everlasting happiness and blessedness, as the greatest degrees of holiness does; [The little hand of a child may hold a pearl, as well as the hand of the greatest giant in the world.] and the reason is clear, because the promise of happiness and blessedness is not made over to *degrees* of holiness—but to the *truth* and *reality* of holiness; and therefore he who has but the least spark of true holiness may plead the promise, and apply the promise, and suck marrow and sweetness out of the promise—as well as he who has the greatest measures of holiness in the world. The promises of salvation are not made over to the *strength* of faith—but to the *truth* and *reality* of faith, John 6:35. It is nowhere said that only he who believes with the faith of an Abraham shall be saved—but it is often

said, "He who believes shall be saved;" that is, he who believes *truly*, though he does not believe *strongly*, shall be saved. Ergo, etc.

[7.] When unholy people are under terrors of conscience, and upon their dying beds, and when they shall stand before a judgment-seat, had they as many worlds to give as there be stars in heaven, and as there are sands in the sea, they would give them all for the least spark of true holiness; [A little holiness is like a diamond, very little in bulk—but of a very high price and value, etc.] and therefore, without all question, the least degree of holiness must be very precious, considering what a price men would give for it, were it in their power to purchase.

[8.] The least degree of holiness shall at last be blessed with a happy triumph over the strongest corruptions. The least degree of holiness will lead the soul to Christ; it will bring the soul into communion with Christ; it will work the soul to lean upon Christ, and by degrees to draw that life, that virtue, and that vigor from Christ, which will enable a Christian not only to combat, but to conquer even Goliath himself; and therefore the least degree of holiness is doubtless very precious.

[9.] The least degree of holiness will render a Christian in some measure serviceable and useful to the turnings away of the wrath and judgments of God from a people or nation, and for the bringing down of favors and blessing upon a land, [Gen. 18. The least finger is of use to the whole body.] when all the power, authority, greatness, grandeur, and glory that wicked men have in their hands, can do just nothing—either to the diverting of wrath, or the obtaining of mercy; and therefore the least degree of holiness is precious. But,

[10.] Tenthly and lastly, The least degree of holiness is a sure pledge and pawn of greater degrees of holiness, which in time you shall attain to. The tallest oak was once an acorn; the wisest doctor was once in his A-B-C book; and the greatest giant was once a child. Your *spark* in time—shall be blowed up into a *flame*; your *drop* in time—

shall be turned into a *sea*; and your *penny* in time—shall be multiplied into dollars, and your dollars into hundreds, and your hundreds into thousands, and your thousands into millions!

And now tell me, Christians, whether these ten things do not sufficiently prove that there is a great deal of preciousness in the least degrees of holiness. Oh, that you who have but a little holiness would be often a-warming of your hearts at this heavenly fire! And oh, that you who have a great deal of holiness would not despise those who have but a little holiness! Oh, that you who bring forth a hundredfold, would not despise those who bring forth but thirtyfold! And oh, that you who have ten talents would not despise those who have but two talents, considering that there is a great deal of preciousness in the least degree of holiness.

4. All saints are not alike holy. Some are more holy, and others are less holy; in some saints the springs of holiness runs low, in others the springs of holiness rise very high. Holiness thrives not alike in all saints. In the parable some brought forth thirty, some sixty, and others a hundredfold—and yet all was good ground, Mat. 13:8, 23. And in that other parable, everyone had not ten talents—some had but five, others two, others but one, Mat. 25:14-15; Luke 19:12-21. God never distributes holiness alike to all. To some he gives more, to others less, according to the good pleasure of his grace. God never intended that all should thrive alike in holiness. Though there were many who feared God in Nehemiah's time—yet he tells you that his brother Hanani feared God above many, Neh. 7:2. And though Job's three friends came to visit him in the days of his sorrows, namely, Eliphaz, Zophar, and Bildad, were doubtless all holy men, Job 1:8—yet they fell very much short of Job in grace and holiness, as is evident not only by that high testimony that God himself gives concerning Job, "That there was none like him upon the earth, a perfect and upright man, one who feared God, and eschewed evil;" but also throughout that whole book of Job.

It is true, all saints are equally justified, and equally pardoned, and equally reconciled, and equally accepted—but all saints are not equally sanctified. All saints are not of equal standing in the house of God. All saints have not been partakers of equal means, all saints have not had equal gales of the Spirit, all saints have not alike acted that holiness they have; and, therefore, no wonder if all saints are not alike holy. David's worthies were not all of equal strength, nor all the stones in the building are not of equal proportion, nor all the members in the natural body are not of equal magnitude; and so it is also in the mystical body of Christ. In God's house there are vessels of gold, and vessels of silver, 1 Cor. 3:12 Tim. 2:20, that is, there are some who are more eminently sanctified and purified than others are.

You read in Scripture of babes—as well as of strong men; of lambs—as well as of sheep; of plants—as well as of trees. Besides, you read of a *little* faith, and of *smoking* flax, and of a *bruised* reed, and of a *grain* of mustard-seed. And what does all this evidence—but that God gives different measures and degrees of grace and holiness to his people? Christ has not *work* alike for all saints to do, nor *burdens* alike for all saints to bear, nor *mercies* alike for all saints to improve, nor *temptations* alike for all saints to resist, nor *difficulties* alike for saints to grapple with, nor *dangers* alike for all saints to encounter with, etc., and therefore he gives not a like measure of holiness to all—but to some more, to others less, according as their condition requires; some saints stand in need of a great deal more grace and holiness than others do. Their place, calling, condition, and employments in the world, calls for a greater stock than others need.

One man may better keep house with a hundred a year, than another who has a great family and great resort to his house, can do with a thousand a year; and so it is here. A little may serve a little farm—but it must be a great stock that must serve a great farm. A little stock of holiness will serve some Christians—but it must be a great stock of holiness that must serve to supply the necessities and the lacks of

other Christians; and therefore God gives different measures and degrees of holiness among his people as their needs require.

Look! as one sinner excels another in wickedness—just so, one saint excels another in holiness; and therefore let not those who have much holiness despise those who have but little; nor let not those who have but a little holiness censure or judge those who have more holiness than themselves. All that holiness which any man has, whether it is little, or whether it is much—is all of grace, it is all of free-grace. Therefore let every man improve it, be thankful for it, and walk humbly under it. [Read the 77th and the 88th Psalms. And indeed most of the psalms of David are a full proof of this position, as all may see that will but read them with a spiritual eye, and with an understanding heart.]

5. A Christian may be more eminently holy at one time than at another; he may thrive and increase more in holiness at one season than at another. Two men do not more differ one from another, than the self-same Christian at several times differs from himself! Now, the spring-tide of holiness is risen high, very high; yet at another time, the streams of holiness runs exceeding low. Now, he is fully freighted with high thoughts of God, with honorable thoughts of Christ, with precious thoughts of the saints, with pious thoughts of the Scripture, with delightful thoughts of ordinances, with serious thoughts of providences, and with ravishing thoughts of eternity; yet at another time you shall have him filled with such hard thoughts of God, with such dishonorable thoughts of Christ, with such low thoughts of the saints, with such slight thoughts of the Scripture, with such undelightful thoughts of ordinances, and with such confused thoughts of providences, and with such muddy, dark, and unpleasing thoughts of eternity—as if he were really another man. [Besides the examples of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Job, and Peter, with the experiences of all other saints in all ages, speaks out this truth.]

Now he is very lively and quick, very cheerful and thankful, very fruitful and faithful. Now he is very fearful of offending God, and very careful of pleasing God, and very circumspect and watchful in his walking with God, as if he were a man fully resolved instantly to move from present holiness to eternal happiness; but now, if you please to look on this man at another time, when he is either deserted of God, or tempted by Satan, or worsted by the world, or enthralled by his lusts, and ah, how unlike himself will you find him? For now he is spiritually flat, and dull, and dry, though not quite dead; now he is much spiritually straitened and shut up; now he can neither joy in God, nor delight in Christ, nor find sweetness in ordinances, nor any taste or relish in any of his mercies. Now his apprehensions are dark, his thoughts are dismal, his meditations are confused, his words are unadvised, and his ways are crooked.

Now he says, "The Lord is my portion," and at another time he says, "Will the Lord cast off forever, and will he be favorable no more?" Now he believes, before long he doubts. This hour he hopes, the next he fears; today he is upon the mount, joying and triumphing, tomorrow you shall have him in the valleys, mourning and sighing. Thus, many clouds, many eclipses, many varieties, and many changes, pass upon God's holy ones in this life.

A child, a tree, a plant, shoots up sometimes more in a month than they do in many months. Just so, does many a child of God: many a tree of righteousness, and many a plant of renown, shoot up more in holiness in a month sometimes than they do in many months at another time; they thrive and flourish in holiness more in a year sometimes than they do in many years at another time. Look! as many a man gets more money in one year than he does afterwards get in seven—just so, many a Christian gets more grace and holiness sometimes in one year than he gets afterwards in seven.

No saints have at all times alike the same blessed gales of the Spirit. It is just with a holy soul as it is with a ship; sometimes the ship has a very fair and fresh gale of wind, and then she cuts her way through

the proud waves of the sea, and the passengers sail very speedily and merrily towards their desired port; but in a short while, the wind is slack, and veers about to another point of the compass, and then the passengers are all dejected, or frightened—and they sail but slowly and heavily towards their desired harbor. And so it is with a holy heart: sometimes the gales of the Spirit blow very fair and sweet, very strong and powerful, upon a gracious soul—and then a Christian sails most sweetly, most speedily, and most successfully on in a way of holiness, and towards his port of happiness. But in a short while, the Spirit is either resisted, or grieved, or neglected, or quenched, or vexed, or disobeyed; and then his gales, his influences, his breathings, are slacked, and then a poor Christian sails but very slow on in a way of holiness, then he does but even creep towards the harbor of everlasting blessedness.

Again, no saints have at all times alike the same external helps, advantages, and opportunities of being holy, and of thriving in holiness. It may be they have not the *word* so clearly, so powerfully, so sweetly, so faithfully, nor so frequently preached to them as formerly they have had. Or it may be they have not other *ordinances* so lively, so purely, so spiritually, so evangelically dispensed to them as formerly they have had. It may be they have had stones instead of bread, and bones instead of flesh, and chaff instead of wheat, and muddy water instead of choice wine—and then no wonder if they do not thrive in holiness as they did when God rained manna every day about their tents, and when they were fed with the best of the best that their heavenly Father's table, wine-cellar, and house did afford.

When children have not as good food, and as good exercise, as they have formerly had, no wonder if they thrive not as at other times. And so it is here: look, as no men have always the same helps, the same advantages, the same opportunities to grow great, and rich, and high, and honorable in the world, that sometimes they have had—just so, no Christian has always the same helps, advantages, and opportunities to grow rich and high in holiness, as sometimes he has had. It may be he has not that communion and fellowship with the

people of God that once he had, or if he has—yet it may be their *communion* is not so pure, so holy, so lively, so heart-warming, so soul-enriching, as once it has been. Or it may be he has not as good *counsel* as formerly, nor as good *examples* as formerly, nor as good *encouragement* as he has formerly had to be holy. Or it may be their calling, employment, and outward condition is so altered and changed from what once it was, that they have not that time for closet duties, and to wait on public ordinances, that once they had. Or it may be bodily infirmities, weaknesses, diseases, aches, and ailments are so increased and multiplied upon them, that they cannot make that improvement that once they did of those very advantages and opportunities, that yet, by a hand of grace, is continued among them.

Now these cases being incident to the people of God, there is no reason to wonder, if at some times saints are more holy than they are at others; and if at some seasons they shoot up more in holiness than they do at others. The serious weighing of this position may serve to prevent many fears and scruples, many debates and disputes, that often rise in the hearts of Christians upon the often ebbings and flowings of holiness in their souls.

6. There will come a time when in this world, holiness shall be more general, and more eminent, than ever it has been since Adam fell in paradise. The Scripture speaks clearly, roundly, and fully to this: Deut. 30:5, 6, 8, "The Lord your God will bring you into your own land, and the Lord your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed, to love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul—and you shall return and obey the voice of the Lord, and do all his commandments." This gracious promise was made to the Jews over two thousand years ago—and yet to this very day it has not been fulfilled; and therefore there will certainly come a time wherein God will make it good. Isaiah 11:6, "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, etc., and they shall not hurt, etc., for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." This glorious promise has not been made good to this

day—but there is a time a-coming wherein it shall be accomplished. Isaiah 35:8, "There shall be a highway, and it shall be called a way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it." Isaiah 59:21, "This is my covenant, my word and my spirit shall never depart from you forever." Isaiah 60:21, "Your people shall be all righteous." Jer. 32:40-41, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yes, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and whole soul." Just so, Ezek. 36:23-30; Mal. 4:1-2; 2 Pet. 3:13.

And so the prophet Ezekiel, speaking of the glorious state of the church in the last days, Ezek. 44:7, 9, adds, "Thus says the Lord, no stranger uncircumcised in heart shall enter into my sanctuary." Zeph. 13, "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouths." Now the context clearly shows that these words relate to the glorious state of the church on earth, and they have never yet received their accomplishment—but shall in the last days, for he is faithful who has spoken it: Zech. 14:20-21, "Upon all shall be holiness to the Lord." I have opened this text pretty fully to you already in my former discourses on holiness, and therefore shall pass it by now. Rev. 21 verse the first and verse the last, "And I saw a new heaven, and a new earth, and I saw the holy city New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven. Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, etc., and there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defiles, etc.—but those who are written in the Lamb's book." I have formerly proved by several arguments, that this chapter cannot be understood of heaven—but must necessarily, and beyond all dispute, be understood of the glorious state of the saints on earth, which they shall certainly enjoy in the last days. By all these scriptures it is most evident that there will come a time when holiness shall be more general, and at a fuller height than ever yet it has been since man fell from his original holiness; and therefore pray and wait, and wait and pray, look and

long, and long and look—for the breaking forth of this day of glory upon the world.

[7.] Though the people of God ought to be holy at all times—yet there are some special times and seasons wherein God calls aloud for holiness, more than he does at other times, and wherein he looks, and expects that his people should be eminently holy, as well as genuinely holy.

Question. But what are those special times and seasons wherein God calls loudest for holiness and most for holiness?

I answer, they are these:

[1.] First, After great and sore falls. Oh, now God calls aloud for holiness. **David** after his great falls, greatly humbles himself before the Lord, Psalm 51. **Job** after his bitter cursing and heavy complaining, abhors himself in dust and ashes, Job 3 and 42:4-5. **Hezekiah**, after his great miscarriage, did chatter like a crane and mourn as a dove. Isaiah 38:14. **Peter** after his hellish cursing, his desperate swearing, and his hideous lying—goes out and weeps bitterly, Mat. 26. Just so, Origen, after he had denied the truth, and sacrificed to an idol, he came to Jerusalem, and being desired to preach, and having opened his Bible, the first scripture that his eye was fixed upon was that Psalm 50:16-17, "What have you to do to take my word into your mouth, seeing you hate to be reformed?" whereupon he shut his book, sat down, and fell into a passion of weeping, and so came out of the pulpit, as not being able to speak to the people.

After great falls God expects and looks that his people should be more fearful of sin than ever, and more careful of pleasing and honoring of him than ever, and more resolute in resisting of temptations than ever, and more constant and abundant in a way of duty than ever, and more thankful and fruitful under mercies than ever, and more quiet and silent under afflictions than ever, and more

stout and courageous in the face of all opposition than ever, and more wise and circumspect in their walkings than ever, and more vigilant and diligent to prevent and avoid future falls than ever. How else will the honor of God be repaired, and the glory of religion be vindicated, and the credit of the gospel be raised, and the grieved saints be rejoiced, and young beginners in religion be afresh encouraged, and secure sinners be awakened, convinced, and converted? But,

[2.] Secondly, When God shows singular mercy to his people, and when he does great things for his people—then he expects and looks that his people should be a holy people, and then he calls loudest for holiness. Exod. 19:3-5, "Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine." Here Moses makes use of a very elegant expression, to show the singular love, care, kindness, and goodness of God towards his people, "He carried you upon eagles' wings." The eagle is a very princely, noble bird, she fears no birds from above to hurt her young ones, and because she fears the arrow from beneath, therefore she carries her young ones upon her wings—just so, that there is no hurting, nor harming, nor no killing of them—but by shooting through the body of the mother eagle. Other birds carry their young ones in their talons, and so expose them to danger—but the eagle carries hers upon her wings, that they may be safe and secure. Moses, to show how choice and watchful God was of Israel, and how much he stood upon their safety and security, tells them that he carried them upon eagles' wings; so that none of their enemies might ruin or destroy them, yes, that they might not so much as in the least hurt or harm them. He carried them out of Egypt, and he carried them through the Red Sea sweetly, swiftly,

strongly, and tenderly, as the eagle carries her young ones when danger is at hand.

Now God having expressed such love, such care, such affections, such tenderness, such sweetness, and such kindness to his people, he looks and expects that they should be a holy people, and therefore he strongly urges them to obey his voice indeed, and to keep his covenant. Now what is it for a man to obey God's voice indeed, and to keep his covenant—but to be really holy, yes, to be eminently holy? Just so, in that 10th chapter of Deuteronomy, where Moses had made a large narrative of the singular favors and mercies of God to Israel in the eleven first verses of that chapter, he falls in the 12th and 13th verses upon pressing of them to be a holy people. "And now Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you—but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul? To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes, which I command you this day." The word in the 12th verse rendered *require*, signifies to ask, to request, or petition a person. Now here Moses brings in God, asking, requesting, and petitioning of Israel that they would fear him and walk in his ways, etc., and what is that but that they would be a holy people to him, that had done such great and glorious things for them? The word in the 13th verse rendered *keep*, signifies to keep carefully, diligently, faithfully to keep, Job 12:12; 1 Kings 20:39, as watchmen keep the city, or as soldiers keep their garrisons, or as jailers keep their prisoners. Now God would have his people thus to keep his commandments and his statutes, and this God would have them to do so, upon the account of those high acts of favor and grace that he had showed unto them; and thus to keep his commandments and his statutes, what is it but to be a holy people, yes, to be a very holy people unto the Lord?

And so in Ezra 9:13-14, "What has happened to us is a result of our evil deeds and our great guilt, and yet, our God, you have punished us less than our sins have deserved and have given us a remnant like this. Shall we again break your commands and intermarry with the

peoples who commit such detestable practices? Would you not be angry enough with us to destroy us, leaving us no remnant or survivor?" **Free and rich mercy calls hardest and most sincere duty.** The more merciful God has been to his people, the more fearful they should be of offending of him, and the more careful they should be in pleasing of him. Divine blessings should be the greatest obligations in the world upon a Christian to keep at a distance from sin, and to keep close to a holy God. The greater the mercy is, and the more miraculous the deliverance and the salvation is, which God crowns his people with, the greater are the engagements that God has put upon them to be a holy people to him.

Just so, in that 116th Psalm, David gives in a bill of particulars in the eight first verses; he gives you a choice narrative of the singular favors and blessings of God, both in respect of his inward and his outward man. God had been good to his soul, and he had been kind to his body; he tells you of God's *sparing* mercy, and of his *preventing* mercy, and of his *preserving* mercy, and of his *delivering* mercy, and of his *supporting* mercy, and of his *multiplying* mercy, and of his *pardoning* mercy; he tells you that God has heard his prayers, and wiped off his tears, and preserved his feet from falling, and his soul from death. And then in the following words he tells you what his resolution is upon the whole: "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living," verse 9th, or rather, as the Hebrew has it, "I will walk before the face of the Lord." The Hebrew word that is here rendered *walk*, signifies a continued action, or the reiteration of an action. David resolves that he will not only take a step or two with God, or walk a pretty way with God, as Orpah did with Ruth, and then take his leave of God, as Orpah did of her mother, Ruth 1:10-15; but he resolves, whatever comes on it, that he will walk constantly, resolutely, and perpetually before God, or before the face of the Lord.

This walking before the face of the Lord implies a very exact, circumspect, accurate, and precise walking before God; and indeed no other walking is either suitable or pleasing to the eye of God. But is this all that he will do upon the receipt of such amazing mercies?

Oh no! for he resolves to take the cup of salvation, and to call upon the name of the Lord, and to offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, vers. 13, 17. But is this all that he will do? Oh no! for he resolves that he will presently pay his vows unto the Lord in the presence of all his people, vers. 14, 18. But is this all that he will do? Oh no! for he resolves that he will love the Lord better than ever and more than ever, vers. 1-2. He loved God before with a genuine love—but having now received such rare mercies from God, he is resolved to love God with a more *raised* love, and with a more *inflamed* love, and with a more *active* and *stirring* love, and with a more *growing* and *increasing* love than ever.

And so the apostle in that Romans 12:1-2, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercies, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God--this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will." When this great apostle would work up the Romans to a full resignation of themselves to God and to his service, and would fence and arm them against the sinful fashions, customs, examples, dispositions, and practices of a corrupt and wicked world—he sets the mercies of God before them. The apostle very well knew that there was no such spur to holiness, nor any such preservative against wickedness, as this was. The apostle could have set *threatenings* before them, and the *curse* before them, and *wrath* before them, and former and latter *judgments* before them, and *hell* before them; and yet he passes over all these things, and presents the mercies of God before them, as the most effectual means under heaven to engage them to holiness, and to fortify them against all sinful conformity and worldly vanity.

O sirs! you are all under several amazing mercies this day. You are out of hell, and is not that an amazing mercy? You have many mercies that others lack, and is not that an amazing mercy? Yes, God rains manna every day about your tents when others wander several

miles, and are too often put off with stones instead of bread, and is not that an amazing mercy? That wicked men's hearts should be so full of wrath, rage, revenge, envy, and malice, and you cast at their feet and yet not trod to death, is an amazing mercy. That you should *stand* when others fall, that you should be *faithful* when others are false, that you should *persevere* when others backslide, that you should be for God when so many are for Baal, and that you should be followers of the Lamb when so many thousands are dancing after Antichrist's pipes, are all very rare and amazing mercies; and calls aloud upon you to be holy, yes, to be eminently holy, etc. But,

[3.] Times of personal afflictions are times wherein God calls aloud for holiness. When the rod of God is upon our backs, it highly concerns us to look that our *words* are full of grace, and that all our *ways* and *works* are full of holiness. Now God looks that his people should be divinely *fearful* of offending him, and divinely *careful* in pleasing of him, and divinely *willing* to resign up themselves to him, and divinely *patient* in waiting on him, and divinely *humble* in submitting to him, and divinely *wise* in justifying of him, and divinely *resolute* in serving of him. Heb. 12:10, "God afflicts us for our profit, that we might be made partakers of his holiness." Why, they were before partakers of his holiness, that is true; and these words declare that the great reach and design of God, in all the afflictions that he brings upon his people, is to make them more and more holy; and therefore for Christians to be *proud* under the rod, and *carnal* under the rod, and *worldly* under the rod, and *froward* under the rod, and *stupid* under the rod, and *wanton* under the rod, and *wicked* under the rod—is to cross and frustrate the great design of God in afflicting of them. In afflictions God looks that his people should shine brighter and brighter, and grow better and better, and holier and holier. Oh, there is nothing which pleases God more, which delights God more, which affects God more, or that wins upon God more—than to see his people a holy people in the days of their afflictions!

Jer. 2:2-3, "Go, and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying—Thus says the Lord—I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved me and followed me through the desert, through a land not sown. Israel was holy to the Lord, the firstfruits of his harvest; all who devoured her were held guilty, and disaster overtook them." God was wonderfully affected and taken with the *love* of his people, and with the *kindness* of his people, and with the *holiness* of his people—when they were in their wilderness condition. Look! as *stars* shine brightest in the darkest nights, and as *torches* are the better for beating, and *spices* the sweeter for pounding, and young *trees* the faster rooted for shakings, and *vines* the more fruitful for bleeding, and *gold* the more glittering for scouring; just so, God looks that his children's graces should shine brightest in the darkest nights of afflictions, he looks that his children should be the better for his fatherly beating, and the sweeter for being pounded in the mortar of affliction, and the faster rooted in grace and holiness, by all divine shakings, [Well waters are hottest in winter.] etc.

In times of affliction God looks that his children should be true salamanders, which live best in the fire. Where afflictions hang heaviest, he looks that there corruptions should hang loosest; he looks that that grace and holiness which lies hidden in nature, as sweet water does in rose leaves, should then be most fragrant, when the fire of affliction is put under, to distill it out, etc. But,

[4.] When people who are under a great profession, or in church communion, shall fall presumptuously and scandalously, when they shall not only do weakly—but *wickedly*, when not only infirmities—but *enormities* may be justly and righteously charged upon them; when such people walk so loosely, and vainly, as that they occasion the name of God to be blasphemed, religion to be scorned, the gospel to be despised, profession to be abhorred, the saints to be reviled, and new believers to be discouraged, and the ungodly in their wickedness to be hardened and confirmed; oh, this is a time wherein God calls aloud upon his people to be holy! Oh, now God expects an extraordinary measure of

holiness in his people! Oh, now he looks that his people should rather walk like angels, than live like saints, so that they may in some measure repair and make up the sad breaches that have been made upon his honor, and the credit of religion; and that they may live profession into honor and esteem once more in the world. Such blessed effects as these, the horrid sin of the incestuous person did work in the hearts and lives of the Corinthians, as you may see by comparing these scriptures together. [1 Cor. 5:1-3; 2 Cor. 2:4-8, and 7:11.]

O sirs! in these days are there not many who have made a very high profession, who have shined as the stars in the skies—who are now fallen from their profession, from their principles, and from all things which are godly? How many now do build the things that they have destroyed? What betraying of *Christ*, what betraying of *truth*, and what betraying of *saints* is there this day among many who have pretended very high to religion! How many now approve of those things which before they would never own; and who justify those things now, which they have formerly condemned; and who comply with those things now, which formerly they have abhorred; yes, who contend for those things now, for which they have formerly suffered? And, therefore, certainly these are the very times wherein God calls aloud upon his people to be holy, yes, to be eminently holy, etc. But,

[5.] In all our approaches, addresses, and drawings near to God—God calls aloud for holiness. Lev. 10:3, "Among those who approach me I will show myself holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honored." There is nothing more evident than this throughout the Old Testament, that the people of God were always to sanctify themselves when they were to draw near to God. John 4:23-24. God is a holy God, and there is no drawing near to him without holiness; the worship which God stands most upon, and which is most pleasing and delightful to him—is spiritual worship, and none can offer this but a holy people. Such as draw near to God without holiness may, if they were not deaf, hear God saying to them, "What have you to do to take my name into your mouths, seeing you hate to

be holy? Who required these things at your hands?" Psalm 50:16-17; Isaiah 1:12.

The Persians every morning worship the rising sun, and the Turks their Mahomet, and the Papists their images, and some of the Indians worship the first thing that they meet with in the morning, and others of them worship a red rag, and others of them worship the devil. [The Romans taught that a man might be saved in any religion. Isaiah 29:13-14; Mat. 15:8-9.] The Romans used to worship Jupiter, a hurtful god among them, not because they loved him—but because they would not be hurt or harmed by him. And Praxiteles the painter made the silly people worship the image of his strumpet, under the title and pretense of Venus. And truly all the worship that you offer to God is little better, if you draw near to him with your body, without holiness in your soul.

O sirs, remember that in all your *public* duties God calls aloud for holiness, and in all your *family* duties God calls aloud for holiness, and in all your *closet* duties God calls aloud for holiness. Times of drawing near to God, should be always times of much holiness. You may come to a duty—but you will never come to God in a duty—without holiness. You may come to an ordinance—but you will never come to God in an ordinance—without holiness; and therefore, in all your drawings near to God, remember that God calls for holiness in a special manner then. But,

[6.] When God eminently appears in the execution of his judgments upon wicked and ungodly men—oh, that is a time that God calls aloud for holiness. When he is a-raining hell out of heaven upon unholy people, God now looks that his people should be holy, yes, eminently holy. Just so, in that Exod. 19:4, 5, "You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians," you have been eyewitnesses of my dealings with them in Egypt, you have seen how I have followed them with plague upon plague, because they did so sorely oppress you, and would not let you go to worship me and serve me according to my own prescriptions, Exod. 24. And when

they were judgment-proof, you saw me drown them in the Red Sea before your eyes; and upon this very ground he urges them to obey his voice, and to keep his covenant, verse 5.

And just so in Rev. 15:1-4, "I saw in heaven another great and marvelous sign: seven angels with the seven last plagues--last, because with them God's wrath is completed. And I saw what looked like a sea of glass mixed with fire and, standing beside the sea, those who had been victorious over the beast and his image and over the number of his name. They held harps given them by God and sang the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb: "Great and marvelous are your deeds, Lord God Almighty. Just and true are your ways, King of the ages. Who will not fear you, O Lord, and bring glory to your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship before you, for your righteous acts have been revealed." In this and the following chapters the utter overthrow of Antichrist is described. In this chapter you have a new vision of the gospel's restoring, and of Antichrist's ruin. By the *sea of glass mingled with fire*, we are to understand the fiery trials, and dreadful persecutions by fire and faggot, which Antichrist will inflict upon sincere and faithful Christians. The allusion is to the Red Sea, and Pharaoh's persecuting of Israel; but the addition of fire is plainly to distinguish the Pope's persecution from Pharaoh's; for though Pharaoh did sorely oppress the people of God both in their liberties and consciences, and though he had plotted and contrived a way to destroy their male children—yet he was never so cruel, he was never so bloody, as to burn the people of God with fire and faggot, as Antichrist has done in all ages.

But now mark, when the vials of the wrath of God come to be poured out upon Antichrist, yes, upon whatever smells of Antichrist, or looks like Antichrist—why then, the people of God will in a very eminent way lift up God as the great object of their fear, and then the generality of the nations shall be so deeply affected with the dreadful, amazing, and astonishing judgments of God upon Antichrist, that they shall repent, worship him, and give glory to him! O sirs! when

God strikes *slaves*—the *sons* should tremble. Great judgments upon sinners speaks out a great deal of the justice and holiness of God; and the more the justice and holiness of God appears, the more holy his people should grow. Ah, Christians! had you grown more holy by those severe judgments of God that has been inflicted upon others before your eyes, you had not been under those smart rebukes of God that now you are under this day! But,

[7.] When men are called forth to war by God. Oh! that is a special time and season wherein God calls aloud for holiness. The man of war must have holiness written upon the bridles of the horses, Zech. 14:20. When men carry their lives in their hands, they had need of holiness in their hearts; when in every encounter a man must expect to enter upon a state of eternity, he had need be very holy, so that if he should fall in the encounter, he may be sure to be eternally happy. [The Romans lived more orderly in time of war than in the times of their greatest peace.]

Deut. 23:9, 14, "When the army goes forth against your enemies, then keep from every wicked thing. For the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you, and to give up your enemies before you: therefore shall your camp be holy, that he sees no unclean thing in you, and turn away from you." When the sword devours on both hands, when it eats the flesh of nobles, and drinks the blood of nobles; when it feeds upon the flesh of the poor, and drinks the blood of the needy—then every soldier had need be a saint. When an eternity of *glory* or *misery* is every moment before every soldier, every soldier had need walk very accurately, he had need live very holily.

Mark, though the people of God were to keep themselves from every wicked thing at all other times—yet when they went out against their enemies, then in a special manner it highly concerned them to keep themselves not from some—but from every evil thing, or rather, as the Hebrew has it, from every evil word. He who is in danger of death every step he takes, and who carries his very soul in his hand, had

need precisely to abstain not only from every evil work—but also from every evil word, as here God expressly charges Israel to do. When God finds holiness in Israel's camp, then God will quickly give up Israel's enemies into Israel's hands; but when the camp becomes a den of iniquity, then God will depart from the camp. And when God, who is the bulwark of a camp, has departed—all the world cannot preserve that camp from being destroyed.

The Lamb looks that all those brave hearts that engage with him against Antichrist, should be called, and chosen, and faithful, Rev. 17:14. There is no armor compared to that of holiness. Let a man be ever so well mounted, clothed, armed, weaponed—yet if he is unholy, he lies naked and open to all disasters, calamities, and miseries. O sirs! it is one of the most dreadful things in the world, to hear such a-cursing, swearing, lying, and damning of themselves, and to see such a-giving up themselves to work all manner of wickedness with greediness—who carry their lives in their hands every hour in the day! Yes, at whose elbows damnation stands every moment! O sirs! when God gives the sword a commission to eat flesh, and drink blood, to slay both old and young, to spare none who come before it, and to pity none who come near unto it—it highly concerns all men to be holy. This is a special season wherein God calls aloud for holiness.

I confess I am for peace and *truth*, for peace and *righteousness*, for peace and *holiness*; and am against all war; but whenever the Lord shall call forth his people to fight his battles against Antichrist, and to smite Daniel's image in pieces—it concerns them very much—to be a holy people, yes, to be eminently holy, as they would have the *presence* of God with them, and the *power* of God engaged for them, and the *mercy*, *goodness*, and *blessing* of God following and prospering of them, 1 Sam. 25:28; Dan. 2:31, et seq. Though he who goes to war had need carry his purse with him—yet he must be sure to leave his sins behind him, or else his sins will do him more mischief than all his enemies, for they will set God against him; and how can straw and stubble possibly stand before a consuming fire?

I have read of Xerxes, who, viewing almost an innumerable army of men, he fell a-weeping, saying, "Where will all these men be within a hundred years?" He wept to think that all that mighty army would be in their graves within a hundred years. Ah, what cause of weeping is there, when we behold the multitudes in the world, considering that within a few years, yes, months, for anything we know—most of them may be in hell—except there is found repentance on their sides, and pardoning mercy on God's side—they are so abominable, debauched, and wicked. "As He approached and saw the city, He wept over it." Luke 19:41. But,

[8.] When God has separated and severed his people from the corrupt and sinful customs and manners of the world, and brought them into fellowship with himself, and into gospel-communion with one another—oh, then, in a special manner he calls aloud upon them to be holy. Lev. 20:23-24, 26, "Do not live by the customs of the people whom I will expel before you. It is because they do these terrible things that I detest them so much. But I have promised that you will inherit their land, a land flowing with milk and honey. I, the Lord, am your God, who has set you apart from all other people. You must be holy because I, the Lord, am holy. I have set you apart from all other people to be my very own."

Distinguishing mercies should breed and nourish distinguishing lives. O sirs, it is not for you who are separated and severed from the world by God—to be proud, and carnal, and formal, and distrustful, and hypocritical, and earthly, and froward, etc., as the world is! it is not for you to deny your principles, to debauch your consciences, to change your notes, to turn your coats, to defile your souls, to blot your names, and to scandalize your profession! O sirs, if God has called you, and separated you, and severed you from the world—it highly concerns you not to *think* as the world thinks, nor to *speak* as the world speaks, nor to *judge* as the world judges, nor to *walk* as the world walks, nor to *worship* as the world worships—but so to think, speak, judge, walk, and worship as may make most for the honor of

God, the glory of the gospel, and as best befits those who have had the honor and the happiness of being called, and separated and severed by God from the world. But,

[9.] When the day of the Lord draws near, and when we look for the accomplishment of great things—oh, then, God calls aloud upon his people to be holy. "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him." 2 Peter 3:10-14

The nearer the day of Christ is to us, and the more great and glorious things we expect from God, the more holy, the more spotless, and the more blameless we must labor to be, Isaiah 65:17-20. I know there are many who look for new heavens and a new earth, that is, for a glorious church-state here on earth, wherein shall dwell righteousness. It is certain that the highest heavens, where God keeps his royal court, was never without righteousness. Righteousness has been always the habitation of his throne; righteousness has always dwelt in the highest heavens; and, indeed, heaven would be no heaven, yes, it would rather be a hell than a heaven—if righteousness did not always dwell there.

The palace of the great King will be always new, fresh, shining, and gloriousness; but, indeed, the earth in all ages, have been full of injustice, unrighteousness, wickedness, tyranny, cruelty, and oppressions; so that righteousness seems to have been banished out of the world, ever since Adam fell from his primitive righteousness

and holiness. Oh—but there is a glorious day a-coming, wherein the earth shall be full of righteousness and holiness, as I have formerly proved at large from other Scriptures.

Now, Christians, the more great and glorious things you expect from God, as the downfall of antichrist, the conversion of the Jews, the conquest of the nations to Christ, the breaking off of all yokes, the new Jerusalem's coming down from above, the extraordinary pouring out of the Spirit, and a more general union among all saints, the more holy, yes, the more eminently holy in all your ways and actings it befits you to be. Many there are, who will talk high, and speak big words, and tell you stories of great things that they expect and look for in these days, which are the last of the last times; and yet if you look into their lives, you shall find them loose, and vain, and what not? Oh, that these would forever remember, that the more great and glorious things we expect and look for from God—the more holiness God expects and looks for from us; and therefore as we would not have God fail our expectation, let us not frustrate his, and the higher your expectation rises, the higher always let your holiness rise—for there is nothing that will hasten that desirable day of glory upon the world like this. But,

[10.] Lastly, When you draw near your end, when there are but a few steps between you and the grave, between you and eternity; when you have but a little time to live, when death stands at your back, and treads on your heels, and knocks at your door; when the eyes begin to grow dark, when the grinders begin to cease, when the keepers of the house—the hands and the arms—begin to tremble, and when the strong men—the legs and thighs—begin to bow and stagger, and totter, as being too weak to bear the body's burden, Eccl. 12:2-5. Oh then! what a holy people should you be!

This very consideration had a very great influence upon that great apostle's spirit, "So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you

now have. I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things." 2 Peter 1:12-15 [There is a sinful sluggishness and drowsiness that often hangs upon the best of men, and therefore they stand in much need of being awakened and roused up, to look after their spiritual and eternal concernments.]

The apostle having the sentence of death in himself, oh, how does he bestir himself, and how does he stir up all that grace and holiness that was in his heart, yes, in all his ministerial and apostolical gifts, and all to better himself, and to make those who were genuinely holy, to be eminently holy! Peter being very sensible of the near approaches of death, did very earnestly desire, and greatly endeavor so to act his part before he went off the stage of life, that when his head was in the dust, and his soul in heaven—those saints that should survive him might be very famous in grace and holiness.

O sirs! when once the gray hairs of holiness and righteousness are upon you, it highly concerns you to shun the very shows and appearances of evil, so that you may not spot nor stain the honor of your white head. I have read of Joshua, that valiant soldier, that when he was a young man, and in the prime and flower of his days, when his "bones were full of marrow," as Job speaks, that then he was least in vigor and valor for God, and how that sometimes in cases of imminent danger he would hide himself; but when he grew older, and found the strength of nature declining and decaying, then he bestirred himself exceedingly for God.

O sirs! when you have one foot in the grave, God calls aloud upon you to bestir yourselves exceedingly for His honor and glory, and for your own internal and eternal welfare! Solon was not ashamed to say that he learned much in his old age. And Julianius, the lawyer, was accustomed to say that when he had one foot in the grave, he would have the other in the school. O sirs! shall *nature* do more than

grace? Shall *morality* excel genuine *piety*? It was the glorious commendation of the church of Thyatira that her last works were greater than her first, Rev. 2:19, "I know your works—your love, faithfulness, service, and endurance. Your last works are greater than the first." Oh, the happiness of that man who is best at last—who brings forth most of the fruits of righteousness and holiness in old age. Oh, the blessedness of that man whose *faith* is more strong at last than at first; and whose *love* is more inflamed at last than at first; and whose *hopes* are more raised and elevated at last than at first; and whose *knowledge* is more clear at last than at first; and whose *zeal* is warmer at last than at first; and whose *thoughts* are more heavenly at last than at first; and whose *heart* is more spiritual at last than at first; and whose *communion with God* is more high at last than at first; and whose *life* is more holy at last than at first!

If there be any man in the world that is ripe for heaven, and that enjoys a heaven in his own soul on this side heaven, this is the man whose graces, and whose gracious works, are more at last than at first. Well, Christians, forever remember this, the nearer death makes her approaches to you, the louder God calls upon you to be holy.

And thus, by a hand of grace, which has been in me, upon me, and with me—I have showed you what those special times and seasons are, wherein God calls loudest for holiness, and so, according to my weak measure, I have given *out* all that the Lord has graciously given *in*, concerning that most necessary, that most noble, that most glorious, and that most useful point of points of holiness; and therefore I have nothing more to do but earnestly to pray that what has been spoken and written may be so blessed from on high, that it may work mightily to the internal and eternal welfare both of writer, reader, and hearer—so that, when their race is run, and their work done here on earth, they may be everlastingly blessed with a happy sight of the beatifical vision of God in heaven! Amen.

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