

THE SPIRITUAL CONFLICT.

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"But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."—Rom. vii. 23.

HAVING, in the preceding discourse treated of the principle of sin and holiness, I proceed, in the

III. Place, to explain the conflict between these in the hearts of believers, and give some marks by which it may be distinguished from the uneasiness arising in the breasts of unbelievers.

1. The cause of the strife, is the irreconcilable contrariety of those jarring principles, the one to the other. The essence of holiness, as has been manifested in the preceding sermon, consists in love to God. Sin is unyielding enmity against him. But love and hatred being very powerful, and directly opposite in their operation, a warm debate necessarily arises between them, and will subsist so long as there are any remains of sin to oppose the operations of grace. The question therefore to be resolved,

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for the assistance of solicitous enquirers about their spiritual state, are not whether they have no love to sin, and no hatred to holiness; but whether there is in their hearts a real principle of holiness, resisting the operations of sin; and what is the ground of this opposition? Believers being conformed to God in affections and views, the reason of their regard to holiness, and, consequently, of their opposition to sin, must be the same with his, viz: the intrinsic beauty of the one, and deformity of the other. They see a beauty, and taste a sweetness, in holiness, inconceivably surpassing the beauty and sweetness of all earthly enjoyments. By this, they are enabled to glorify God, by this, they enjoy the comfort of communion with him, and the perfection of this they wait and long for as the very perfection of happiness. Doubtless, souls of a mould so heavenly cannot but resent the hostile invasions, when sin, as a bold usurper, assumes the throne. They hate it, because it is hateful to God, and rises in opposition to his glory. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned," says David, "and done this evil in thy sight!" Psa. li. 4. What! Had not David sinned against his own soul? Against Bathsheba? Against Uriah? Against his whole kingdom? Against all these, no doubt; but this single thought, the dishonour his sin had done to God, overwhelms his impressions of all its other evils. Saint Paul speaks the language of every Christian, when he laments his wretchedness by reason of sin, and earnestly wrestles for deliverance from it, as a vile, an oppressive, body of death. Rom. vii. 24.

But unbelievers' debate with sin arises only from con-

science and reason declaiming against the indulgence of vicious inclinations, as subjecting them to the wrath of God. They do not oppose it from any dislike to it, or any love to holiness. Give them their carnal pleasures, and they desire no other heaven. They hate the holiness of God, and did they not fear his justice, they would not attempt the obedience of his commands in one single instance, nor refrain from any vice to which their degenerate natures are inclined. There are persons, indeed, who, without either virtue or grace, may not have a propensity to some particular vices: they may, from their natural constitution, be averse to drunkenness, and yet be wretched, covetous worldlings. One sin may also contend with another. Prodigality opposes avarice, and avarice prodigality. Yet this is only a debate between the flesh and the flesh. But grace is ever uniform, all the graces being united in perfect harmony, and materially aiding to each other.

2. This conflict, as to its *nature*, resembles both a foreign and domestic war. Carnal reasoning in the understanding, and spiritual desires in the will, mutually oppose each other, as do also faith in the understanding, and carnal desires in the will. Carnal reason pleads for the indulgence of the flesh; spiritual desires resist the flesh, and give the preference to holiness. Sensual inclinations reject the cross of Christ as too heavy; faith endures, "as seeing him who is invisible." Nor does the debate subsist only between the different powers of the soul, but is also in the very same powers; by which means each of

them seems to be set in opposition to itself. In the same understanding faith and carnal reason contend with each other, and the desires of the flesh and spirit in the same will. It is sweet to carnal desires to fulfil the lusts of the flesh; spiritual desires prefer communion with Christ, as much sweeter. Carnal reason says, To trim with the times may be useful to ourselves and the Church of Christ; faith bids us strictly follow the path of duty, and commit events to God, "whose counsel shall stand fast, and he will do all his pleasure." But as there is no spiritual light in the minds of graceless sinners to resist the dictates of carnal reason, nor holiness in their affections to resist the lustings of the flesh, their contest with sin is wholly of the foreign kind. They are altogether unacquainted with the vigorous efforts of faith and love, and their victories over carnal reasoning and affections.

3. True believers have "respect to all God's commandments, and hate every false way," and, therefore, maintain a war with *every* sin. Sensible of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of their hearts, they fight not only with outward evils, but with their inbred corruptions, and with secret as well as open sins; with sins of lesser aggravations, as well as those of greater; with sins which promise worldly honour, interest and safety, as well as those which threaten the contrary. Secrecy, respect, interest, importunity, and almost every temptation conspired to persuade Joseph to comply with the solicitations of his wanton mistress; but the respect he paid to the honour and approbation of an all-seeing God had greater

influence upon his conduct, than any selfish motives whatsoever. "How (says he) shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" Gen. xxxix. 9. Deeply affected with the depravity of their natures, they enter into the secret recesses of their hearts, and bewail those iniquities of which God and their own souls are conscious. David most heartily confesses, and prays to be cleansed from, his original corruption, as the filthy source of all his actual transgressions. "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Psa. l. 5, 10.

But in nothing is the honesty of their hearts more fully evinced, than in their keeping themselves from the iniquity, which is by nature and habit their most beloved lust. Psa. xviii. With this they are willing to part, though naturally dear and pleasant to them, as a "right hand or a right eye." Against this divine grace has fixed their firmest resolutions. This is the cause of their greatest sorrows, and to obtain victory over this, affords them the greatest pleasure. But when the unconverted make any resistance at all against sin, it is generally against those sins which expose them to shame and punishment in this world; against atrocious crimes, which are most apt to affect conscience: or against some particular crimes, to the commission of which they have not a strong temptation in the flesh; or of which, through custom and education, they may have contracted a kind of abhorrence. These they may part with to pacify conscience, and retain their beloved lusts with greater ease.

But they are very little, if at all, attentive to the wickedness of their hearts, except when seized with affliction, or a pang of conscience, and even then, their sensations are soon lost, and all their resolutions soon forgotten. They pray for the destruction of sin, while they desire to indulge it; and, Felix-like, defer any proper vigorous attempts to obtain their request, till a more convenient season; or as Augustine, who in the days of his vanity, prayed to be made chaste, his heart in the meantime repeating, "Not too soon, Lord, not too soon." Oh that the youth in this assembly, would treasure up this sentence in their hearts!

4. We proceed to take notice of the *manner* in which spiritual soldiers carry on a war with sin. Possessed with an irreconcilable hatred to the camp of the enemy, they resolve to give no quarter, and admit of no correspondence with them, nor any cessation of arms. Therefore do they engage warmly, with a fixed determination not to yield. They strive for victory, and take the kingdom of heaven by holy violence; others make a feint of fighting, but *they* exert all their strength and policy. Nothing short of complete victory will afford them satisfaction. Jealous of the fair promises and alluring baits of sin and the world, they are fully resolved to reject all their deceitful enticements. In an unguarded moment, indeed, they may be surprised by a violent onset; or, by stratagem, may be taken captive for a season. Yet will not their hearts ever be reconciled to the camp and interest of the enemy. They cannot usually take pleasure in meditating upon sin,

nor commit it with the same complacency and peace of mind as graceless sinners do. Conscious of its baseness, and the comforts of which it deprives them, their pleasure is lessened in the very act. And when dragged into captivity by it, languishing after their former sweet spiritual liberties, they cannot enjoy themselves, nor be contented, until they return to the camp of Christ. Therefore exerting themselves to the utmost to shake off the bonds of their captivity, they rally again, and renew the attack with greater vigour than before. By the searchless wisdom and goodness of God, their foils are improved to the destruction of their sins, and become a means of their standing more sure. For by these being taught the strength and policy of their enemies, their own weakness, and their daily need of divine aid, they are excited to greater watchfulness, take the field with firmer resolution than ever, and cease not, until they obtain an eternal triumph. ❧

But as there is not that antipathy between sin and natural reason, as there is between sin and holiness, graceless folks soon drop the arms they seemed to have taken up against sin. It is too powerful for the strongest and best refined reason. To whatsoever degrees of improvement the natural man may attain, he has still a hearty affection for sin; therefore, a truce with it is very pleasing to him. Ready to hearken to the cravings of the flesh, and receive for truth the false colouring which Satan and a depraved fancy put upon the dalliance of his heart with sin, temptations to the commission of it easily obtain his

consent. His debate with it is like that of the wind with the tide, which may presently tack about, and go in the same direction with the tide. The hypocrite will not always call upon God. His goodness is like the morning cloud and early dew, it goeth away. Hos. vii. 4. He will either plague the church with false zeal, or degenerate into dry formality, or, abandoning religion entirely, he will fall into the most pernicious errors in principle, in practice, or in both. The unclean spirit returning with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, they enter into him, and his last state is worse than the first. Matt. xii. 43—45. Such persons in every age have given the greatest wound to religion.

5. Spiritual warriors make use of the *whole armour* of God. Truth or sincerity of heart and conversation is the guide of their lives. For a breast-plate, they put on the exercise of universal righteousness and holiness. Their feet are shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, *i. e.*, all their conduct and pursuits are influenced by gospel principles and motives. For an helmet they take the hope of salvation, which bears up their spirits amidst every danger, and fortifies them against every furious attack. Above all, they take the shield of faith, wherewith they are enabled to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. Through faith they receive of Christ's fulness, and grace for grace—grace to resist and overcome every temptation, and every sin: so clear, so sweet, and so glorious are its views, that they kindle in their hearts the warmest affection for its objects, while they disengage them from the

pursuit of carnal pleasures. By this, they see that spiritual objects infinitely transcend the value of every thing below the sun. By this, they take a distant prospect of heaven, and converse with invisible glories far beyond the reach of sense. And by this, their eye is steadily fixed on the crown of life promised to those who overcome. This, therefore, is the very spring of all the strength, courage, and vigour necessary for the spiritual warfare.

In the hand of faith they carry the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. This is a piece of armour, which never fails them—armour with which, after the example of the Captain of their salvation, they overcome the tempter. Soon as they present to the devil the sword of the Spirit, like a coward he flies off. Are they, in a gloomy hour, tempted to think their sins are so heinous, they cannot be pardoned? The word of God informs them, that, “where sin abounded, grace much more abounds.” Does Satan take the advantage of their spiritual pride, to excite them to trust their own strength and goodness? This informs them, that “all their own righteousnesses are as filthy rags,” and that “Christ alone is the Lord, their righteousness and strength.” In a long night of desertion, they are supported with the promise, that “the vision will speak, though it seem to tarry.” And as an encouragement to prayer, the Holy Ghost is promised to be in them, as “a Spirit of grace and supplication.” Nor are they called to perform any duty, resist any temptation, endure any suffering, nor is there any circumstance they can be in whatsoever, but there is still something in God’s word

suit to that very case. It is therefore a noble mean to assist them in the spiritual warfare. And as often as they forget their sword, or fail in the proper use of it, so often their adversary obtains an advantage of them.

Finally, sensible of their own utter insufficiency for their duty, they constantly wait at the throne of grace, in all sorts of earnest addresses to God, for skill to use their armour, and strength to vanquish all their enemies. Jacob-like, they wrestle with God, until they obtain a blessing, the Holy Ghost helping their infirmities, and enabling them to make known their requests, with groans which cannot be uttered. But carnal persons use carnal weapons, or spiritual weapons in a carnal manner. They consult carnal reason more than the word of God; and instead of a dependence upon Christ, they trust their own goodness, strength, and wisdom; careless about holiness of heart, they rest in their outward reformatations, and duties, or in some common, superficial impressions made by the Holy Spirit upon their minds. As the Jews followed Christ for the loaves, they sometimes make a show of following him only from worldly views. They profess religion to obtain character and interest among men, or gain the favour of particular persons, upon whom they have a dependence. But let the hopes of their gain be over, and their care about religion is over. Slavish fears of hell, and mercenary hopes of heaven, are their highest inducements to perform any duty, or resist any sin. The sweetness and intrinsic excellence of the exercise have no influence at all upon them.

THE IMPROVEMENT.

I. What has been said saps the foundation of the hypocrite's hope, and may afford assistance in solving a case of conscience, which often perplexes doubting Christians. They are puzzled to reconcile the prevalence of sin, which they sometimes feel in their own hearts, with their interest in the divine promise that it "shall not have dominion over them." Rom. vi. 14. But it is the allowed and usual sway of sin, against which the promise affords them security. Now it may, at times, bring them into captivity, though it does not generally rule in them, nor will they live in friendship with it by any means. When the Holy Spirit withdraws, in just resentment for their untenderness, they may apprehend that they feel in their hearts the workings of blasphemous thoughts, unbelief, self-righteousness, and various carnal propensities, almost in their full strength. They may also be so far left of God, as to fall into very heinous crimes. At such seasons conscience may be exceedingly benumbed; and though they do not entirely cast off a regard to religion, yet their desires after Christ are very languid; and when they attempt to seek him like the spouse upon her bed, they do it in a careless, trifling manner. Yet they cannot be easy while at a distance from him. They are sold under sin, and this is their burden. Rom. vii. 14, 24. All the while they live in it, they do that which they allow not; that which they hate. Rom. vii. 15. Their spark of

spiritual life, however smothered, is not wholly extinguished. Though they sleep, their hearts wake, and they know the voice of their Beloved when he knocks for entrance. Cant. v. 2. His endearing voice, speaking to them in reproofs, directions, invitations, and promises, revives their decaying graces, and excites them to seek Christ with carefulness and importunity until they find him, and are enabled to say, "My Beloved is mine and I am his." Cant. v. & vi. 3. And when enlarged by divine grace, they are most watchful against every sin, especially against a relapse into their former backslidings. They are daily subject to invincible human infirmities; nor shall they ever in this life obtain a perfect freedom from the body of death; yet they are scarcely, if at all, guilty of repeating the same gross offences. We hear of Noah's drunkenness but once, and but once of David's adultery. They may, indeed, repeat the same offence, before they are restored by actual repentance: as Peter thrice denied his Lord; but we read of his denying him no more after he went out, and wept bitterly.

But to be repeatedly guilty of the same crimes; to live in the constant practice of sin; to roll it as a sweet morsel under your tongue, or to allow it the peaceable possession of your hearts, is inconsistent with a state of grace. "Whosoever is born of God, cannot sin (in this sense); for his seed remaineth in him." 1 John iii. 9. And though you may sometimes attempt to resist its operations, yet has it the full consent of your souls, if arguments drawn from shame and punishment have greater influence

to restrain you from it, than those drawn from the love of Christ, the beauties of holiness, and the intrinsic vileness of sin itself.

2. This subject points out your duty, who have enlisted in the spiritual warfare. Be diligent, faithful, and courageous in fighting "the good fight of faith." In order to this, it will be of great advantage to be well acquainted with the motions, the strength, the stratagems of your enemies. You wrestle not only with flesh and blood, but with principalities, and powers, and spiritual wickednesses. Eph. vi. 12. All the embattled troops of hell conspire with the world and your own wicked hearts to plot your ruin. Sometimes the devil succeeds in his hellish designs by crafty wiles, and sometimes by violent assaults. It is one of his crafty wiles to paint sin as duty, and duty as sin. Under the notion of greater purity, he persuades people to refrain from ordinances purely administered. When offended with fellow professors, he slyly insinuates that resentment is a Christian duty. But whatsoever varnish he puts upon it, a desire of revenge is generally at the bottom, rather than the glory of God, the interest of the church, or the good of an offending brother. Sometimes he persuades them, that they may please their imaginations without much danger, by indulging them in painting a fanciful scene, whereby their affections are ensnared before they are aware, and they are inclined to the commission of some base iniquity, contrary to their first design or expectation. Now he fills them with great disquietude, by painting their difficulties in the strongest colours; now, leading

them into the fools' paradise, he so tickles their minds with scenes of vanity, that they forget the evil day till it comes upon them with double distress. One while he would seem to turn advocate for heaven, persuading them their sins are so heinous that they cannot be forgiven consistent with the divine honour; at another time, concealing the turpitude of sin, and fixing their minds intensely on their good affections and good deeds, he excites in them spiritual pride and self-confidence. When he cannot seduce them by crafty wiles, he attempts to overcome them by storm, before they have time to fortify themselves against his violent assaults. Taking the advantage of a critical juncture to raise their fears, he suddenly hurries them into sin in order to screen themselves, or escape an apprehended danger, as in the case of Peter, when he denied his Lord with oaths and cursing. He plays upon them with all his fiery darts, such as blasphemous injections, temptations to part with Christ, or question the reality of religion; fiery darts, indeed, and most painful, the poison whereof seems to drink up their exhausted spirits. By such means as these, Satan will try to gain ground upon you; to prevent which, you ought to learn the nature of his temptations, and the means by which they may be repelled. Learn your weak side, and guard it well, for on this quarter the attacks of the enemy are most likely to succeed. Be constantly careful to mortify all the deeds of the body, especially your constitutional sin. In this, nature affords the tempter a double advantage against you; this has the command of other lusts. Take

the leader, then, and the whole band will be easily routed. In order to assist you in finding it out, I shall give you some of its leading characters. It is that sin, which you have most frequently wished were no sin ; that on account of which you have been enabled to endure the greatest difficulties ; that for which conscience is most apt to accuse you, and for which invention is most ready to find out excuses ; it is that sin which disturbs you most in your secret retirements, crowds first upon your thoughts in the morning, employs them most in the silent watches of the night, and most easily carries away your heart at any time.

Watch against and resist the very first motions of sin. Lay restraint upon the first sallies of corrupt affections and wandering thoughts. Whenever you find imagination begin to be pleased with tempting baits, to devise excuses for the indulgence of the flesh, or for the neglect or careless performance of duty, then you may be assured you are falling into temptation, and that it is high time for you to be upon your guard. Immediately check the dalliance of your hearts with forbidden objects, and hold not the least correspondence with the enemy. Want of care, in this point, was the source of the numerous train of miseries, into which the whole human race are plunged.

Take unto you the whole armour of God. Be skilful, be constant, be active in the use of every part of the spiritual armour. It is a shame for a soldier to loiter, or suffer his arms to lie by him rusty. If you quit your arms, or turn your backs, you will, doubtless, fall a prey

to your enemies. Armour is provided for every part except your back, to teach you that you must maintain the war with courage, and persevering constancy. There is no discharge in this warfare, while you are in your enemies' country, or any of them infest your borders; but thousands of them every moment besiege your hearts. The Christian life is a life of progress, in order to which the continued exercise of grace is necessary, especially of faith, which is the life of every grace. The various ordinances are conduits for the communication of divine influences to mortify your corruptions and quicken your graces. These are appointed as means to lead your minds away from the world, and fix them upon spiritual objects, the beauty of which kindles in the heart a growing affection for them; but a growing affection for spiritual objects is the life and increase of holiness, and the increase of holiness is the destruction of sin, your mortal enemy. If, then, you neglect to stir up the gift of grace God has bestowed upon you, by neglecting the means appointed for that purpose, you will decay in spiritual strength, and your enemies will prevail against you.

Finally, follow the directions and example of your Leader, and keep close by his standard. A brave general is the life of war. But in Christ you have the most glorious example to influence all your conduct, and aid for the performance of all your duty—an example of diligence, watchfulness, zeal, courage, wisdom, and faithfulness in fulfilling all righteousness and resisting every temptation. Continually imitate this worthy pattern, and look to the Captain of

your salvation for all the succours you need. He has every supply to give, and you have an oath and promise that "as your day is so shall your strength be." Keep close by the camp of Christ, for if you carelessly wander from it, you will fall into the hands of your enemies. Follow "the footsteps of the flock." Spiritual example and spiritual conversation are noble means of promoting the spiritual life. It is an unspeakable advantage to have brave assistants in the field of battle; their heroism inspires their fellows to noble actions. But those who are with our Lord "are called, and faithful, and chosen;" whose faith follow, and imitate them as far as they imitate Christ. Tread in the steps of those worthy heroes, who have trod the paths of virtue and grace before you, and having distinguished themselves by their noble achievements, now gloriously triumph before the throne.

Did you need motives to excite you to duties so necessary and so noble, I might observe to you the glory of the cause which you have espoused. You have enlisted to fight the battles of the King of glory. The royalties of heaven have been invaded, and you are called to resist the bold invader. Consider also the dignity of your character—a brave soldier has been a glorious character in every age; but what is the glory of the Alexanders, the Scipios, and all the renowned heroes of antiquity, to the glory of the spiritual soldier—a soldier under the Lord of hosts! To subdue one corruption is greater glory than to conquer a kingdom—a world! Yes, greater glory than to conquer ten thousand worlds! How great the glory, then, to

obtain victory over your innumerable lusts, the countless temptations of an ensnaring world, and the prince of darkness himself, with all his furious, infernal forces ! Besides, you go not a warfare at your own charge. Your armour is provided, and everything you need for the warfare. Take a view of what it is for which you fight—not for a spot of earth—not for a temporal throne or kingdom—not for a crown of yellow dust—No ! but for an everlasting kingdom ! for a crown of glory which fadeth not away ! Nor is it for another you fight, but for yourselves. Every spiritual soldier shall reign for ever as a king. “To him that overcometh,” saith Christ, “will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” Rev. iii. 23. And the more valiant you are for the Lord of hosts, your crown will shine with the more distinguished brightness. Oh, the dignity of the martyrs’ crown ! the glory of their reward, who have gone to heaven through a sea of blood ! The eternal weight of glory you have in prospect as a reward of victory, is sufficient to awaken all your strength, to rouse all your resolution, and inflame all the ardour of your breasts. Nor do you proceed upon uncertainties ; the Captain of your salvation has secured to you the victory. Upon the cross he triumphed over all his enemies, and yours. In dying he conquered death, and him that has the power of death ; and now he is exalted to his eternal throne, he holds the keys of hell and death. Courage, then, O Christians ! courage—You shall be more than conquerors through him that loved you, and washed

you in his own blood ! To arms ! to arms ! A few strokes more, and you win the crown for ever !

3. I shall finish this discourse with an address to graceless sinners—to you who still continue in Satan's interests ! Each of you I address under this character, who live in the practice of any known sin of heart or life ; who live in the neglect of any known duty to God or man ; who take pleasure in the service of Satan, and in the conversation of those who join with him in his conspiracy against heaven ; who never felt the arrows of conviction stick fast in your hearts, nor ever have dropped the weapons of your rebellion ; who have never by faith enlisted with Christ, nor ever engaged in the spiritual warfare. You are enemies to Christ, and join in confederacy with his bitterest enemies. Christ has set up a standard in our guilty world, and by the offers of the gospel invites your flight to it. Satan has also set up a standard in opposition to Christ, and by the various corruptions of your nature, the allurements of the world, and his sly insinuations, he binds you to his interest. His promises are fair but false. He makes large promises of much comfort in the world and in the indulgence of your filthy lusts. He persuades you that there is no great danger, nor any necessity for so much earnestness about religion as ministers urge you to : there is enough time to repent, God is merciful, and will not be severe to mark small offences against you. True, God is merciful, blessed be his name ! but he is just as well as merciful ; and never, never will he exercise mercy to the prejudice of his justice ! If you continue in your sins,

you shall perish. If you expect to be happy, you must renounce all your lusts, and all the vanities of this deluding world. You must enlist in the spiritual warfare, put on the armour of Christ and wear his livery. You must have common friends, common enemies, and common interests with him. And can all this be done by a few lazy wishes, and ineffectual resolutions? No! to obtain true religion, is not so easy to corrupt nature as some imagine. Indolent souls have no claim to it. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." You must deny yourselves, take up your cross and follow Christ, if you expect to enter into heaven. You must strive, you must wrestle, you must fight, for the crown. Rouse, then, O sinner! rouse from your fatal security! an hour's delay may cost you an eternity of sufferings!

Your present warfare is most base, dangerous, and unreasonable. You commit hostilities against the "Lord of lords and King of kings;" his royalties you have invaded, his authority contemned, trampled upon his laws, and cut off your allegiance to him. You have revolted from his government, turned enemies to his crown; and, were it possible, would not only dethrone Jehovah, but destroy his being: for "the fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Oh, your horrid ingratitude against the parent of your being—the God of all your mercies! By his power you live, and every moment of your life you receive countless favours from the unwasted treasures of his goodness; and yet you join against him with cursed demons who, for

their base revolt, were damned to the bottomless pit. And this is all the wages you shall receive, if you persevere in your present warfare.

Your conduct is not only wicked, but weak, and the consequences of it will be terrible to your souls if persisted in. You rebel against Him, who in one moment can dash you in pieces as a potter's sherd. The pillars of heaven totter, and the everlasting hills bow before him! If he look on the mountains, they smoke, and the most obdurate devils in hell tremble at his presence! How, then, shall worms of the dust bear up under the weight of his wrath? Why should you attempt the unequal war? Are you a match for Jehovah? Can you thunder with a voice like his? Can you bear the lightning of his glittering spear? He has levelled all the artillery of heaven against you! prepared his instruments of death! fixed his arrows upon the string! whet his sword—his sword edged with all the flaming vengeance of God! Harness yourselves for the battle, O ye rebels! Clothe you with all your hellish armour, your hardness of heart, your presumption, your atheism and infidelity, your horrid oaths and imprecations, and try if they will be any defence in the day of his anger, in the day when he shall come forth to avenge the injuries of insulted majesty! Oh, what language, what idea can paint the displeasure of incensed Deity! Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish is its mildest voice! But to all this punishment you are exposed, my poor, thoughtless, deluded fellow mortals! If you turn not from the evil of your ways, the tempest of his fury shall beat upon your naked souls, in one eternal, unremitted storm.

Drop, then, O guilty sinners! drop the weapons of your rebellion! submit to the Lord Jesus Christ! Touch his peaceful sceptre, lest he break you in pieces with his iron rod! The flag of mercy held out in the gospel invites you over to the camp of Christ; the glory of the cause in which you are called to engage invites you; and all the rewards of victory invite you—rewards the most glorious and most certain. If you enlist in the spiritual warfare, you shall overcome through the blood of the Lamb and the word of his testimony. You shall triumphantly enter the new Jerusalem with palms of everlasting victory.