

J^r. Wilkinson's Booke *Kendals*
Solemn Warning

As TO THE *Watson*
Secure World

FROM

443-3. dd. 2.

The **GOD** of terrible Majesty.

OR,

The Presumptuous Sinner *Detected*, his
Pleas *Consider'd*, and his Doom *Display'd*.

Being an ESSAY, in which the strong Proneness of
Mankind to entertain a false Confidence is proved ;
The Causes & Foundations of this Delusion open'd
and consider'd in a great Variety of Particulars ;
The Folly, Sinfulness and dangerous Consequences
of such a presumptuous Hope expos'd, and Direc-
tions propos'd how to obtain that Scriptural and
Rational *Hope, which maketh not ashamed.*

In a DISCOURSE from DEUT. XXIX. 19, 20, 21.

By *Gilbert Tennent*, M. A.

Minister of the Gospel at *N. Brunswick N. Jersey.*

Incidit in Scyllam cupiens vitare Charybdin.

Joel ii. 1. Blow ye the Trumpet in Zion, sound an alarm in my holy
Mountain : Let all the Inhabitants of the Land tremble.

BOSTON, N. E.

Printed by S. KNEELAND and T. GREEN, for D. HENCHMAN
in Cornhill, MDCCLXXXV.

APPROVED BY THE
Solemn Declaration

TO THE

Secure World

FROM

The GOD of terrible Majesty.

OR

The Proprietary since Deceased, his
Pious Executors, and his Deem Discharge

Being an Essay, in which the strong Tendency of
Mankind to entertain a false Confidence is proved;
The Causes & Foundations of this Delusion opened
and explained in a great Variety of Particulars;
The Holy Scriptures and ancient Prophecies
of such a Nature, as will abundantly
show the justness and Reasonableness
of the following Discourse.
In a DISCOURSE



By Gilbert Tennent, M. A.

Minister of the Gospel at N. Brunswick N. York.

Printed in the City of New York

Printed by S. Kneass, at the
in Collins Street

they contract, and the Danger they incur, by their unjust Reproaches! To prevent both which, I thought it needful to propose an Answer to some general Objections, which, I foresaw, wou'd (according to humane Probability) be level'd against the following Composure.

And

1. Perhaps some may object against the Matter of it, as well as against the pointed Manner of Expression, that both are too terrible.

A. What I have advanc'd, I think I have prov'd by plain Scripture Evidence. I hope the Objector will have more Modesty than to find Fault with the sacred Oracles, because they don't sute his Palate; but if waving that antiquated, tho' graceful Vertue, he will fall soul on the holy Scriptures, I wonder not that he censures me; and as I wonder not at his Reflections against my self, so I mind them not any otherwise, than so as to esteem them, as a Pearl in my Crown, as a Badge of Honour, and a Cause of Triumph. But more particularly, the Truth is, Such be the Miseries of presumptuous and impenitent Sinners, in this, and especially in the next World, that what I have offer'd comes far short of an equal, much less of an excessive Description of them. It is a just and receiv'd Maxim that Heaven and Hell don't admit a Hyperbole. Indeed a Cherub's Tongue or Quill cou'd scarce expand or display them sufficiently. Conceive of GOD perfectly, and then you may perfectly conceive of and describe his Anger. But this is impossible for a finite Understanding, as Zophar informs us, Job 11. 7, 8, 9. Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto Perfection? It is high as Heaven what canst thou do? Deeper than Hell, what canst thou know? The Measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea! Friend, thou shalt know by Experience, either by a sound Conviction here, or by a dreadful Condemnation hereafter, that I have not equal'd, much less exceeded the Sorrows and Pains of the damned State, in the Description I have given of them.

As to the sharpness of the Style, I shall only offer this brief Apology, that the Nature of the Subject treated of, and the Security of the World require it, and instead of retracting it, I cou'd wish it were much more pointed, it falls so far short of my Desire this Way; and tho' I freely acknowledge that planting and watering are nothing to Purpose, that the most solemn Matter, and acrid Style, will not avail without the divine Benediction; yet in the mean time, I believe that God ordinarily

ordinarily uses Instruments, most suted to the Work he designs to accomplish: Blunt Instruments (in my Opinion) are not suted to pierce hard Hearts, or alarm secure Souls.

But to give a satisfactory Reply, to this Objection complexly consider'd, if possible, I shall offer to your Consideration the Sentiments of some great Lights of the Protestant Church upon this Head, with some of the Reasons they advance to confirm them by. Dr. Stillingfleet in one of his Sermons upon that Text, 2 Cor. 6. 11. Knowing the Terror of the Lord, we perswade Men; *both these Words,* "That if this Reason does not perswade Men, there is no Reason to expect any other should, if almighty Power cannot awaken us, if infinite Justice can't affright us, if a Judgment to come can't make us tremble, and eternal Misery leave no Impression upon us, what Arguments or Methods can we imagine wou'd reclaim us from our Sins?"

Bishop Hopkins in his Sermon upon Heb. 10. 30. *both these very memorable Expressions,* pag 367, 8. "There are two principal Attributes of God, which the Scripture propounds to us as the most powerful and efficacious Motives to restrain us from Sin; and they are his Mercy and his Justice: Mercy tho' it be a soft yet it is a strong Argument to encourage us to Purity and Holiness, Rom. 2. 4. He that can encourage himself in his Wickedness, upon the Consideration of the infinite free Grace of God, doth spurn these very Bowels that yern towards him, and strikes at God with his golden Scepter, yea tears abroad those Wounds that were at first opened for him, and casts the Blood of his Saviour back again in his Face. But because Ingenuity is perished from off the Earth, and Men are more generally apt to be wrought upon by Arguments drawn from Fear, than Love, therefore the Scripture propounds to us the dreadful Consideration of the Justice of God, array'd in all the Terrible Circumstances of it, that if Mercy won't allure us, Justice may affright us from our Sins. As those who are to travel through Wilderneses and Desarts, carry Fire with them to terrify wild and ravenous Beasts, to secure themselves from their Assaults, so doth the great God who hath to deal with brutish Men, Men more savage than the wild Beasts; he kindles a Fire about him, & appears to them all in Flames and Fury, that so he might fright them from their bold Attempts, who otherwise wou'd be ready to run upon his Neck, and the thick Bosses of his Buckler,

" *Job 15. 26.* There is a strange Dullness and Stupor
 " seiz'd us that we can no longer keep waking then we
 " are shook, and therefore as we use to apply Fire and
 " burning Coals to Lethargick Persons to awaken them,
 " so we have need to heap Coals of Fire upon Men's
 " Heads, to speak with fiery Tongues, and thunder Wo
 " and Wrath, and Judgments against them, that we may
 " rouse the secure and stupid World, and scorch them in-
 " to Life and Sense.

" *Learned Mr. Boyle hath these Expressions, in his Trea-*
 " *tise upon the Torments of Hell, pag. 255.* " That the fore-
 " thoughts of future Punishments, are the most likely
 " Means to excite our Endeavours to prevent it.

" *He adds a weighty pungent Reason to confirm his Senti-*
 " *ments.* " For (*says he*) this is an Argument suted to one
 " of the strongest Passions of humane Nature, our Fears.
 " Nay it's almost the only Argument that sensual and se-
 " cure Sinners seem at first capable of being affected and
 " mov'd by. If we endeavour to reclaim them to their
 " Duty, by setting before them the endearing Obligations
 " of divine Love: This is an Argument that may indeed
 " touch an ingenuous Mind, but it's likely to make little
 " Impression upon an unthankful and stupid Heart. If we
 " wou'd entice them to the Paths of Holiness, by proposing
 " to them the spiritual Joys that attend them, alas, they
 " neither understand nor relish them. If we would win and
 " attract them by displaying the Glories of Heaven before
 " their Eyes; the Objects are too Sublime and Spiritual
 " for their gross Affections to aspire to: So that we have
 " no Argument so proper as this, to set before them the
 " Torments of Hell. For these are the most easily under-
 " stood and conceiv'd, and if seriously believ'd and consi-
 " der'd, they carry the most irresistible Force to awaken
 " the Consciences of the most stupid Sinners, & convincing
 " them of the Necessity of flying from the Wrath to come.
 " For who can dwell with devouring Fire? Who can
 " dwell with everlasting Burnings? This is an Argument
 " that reaches the Principle of Self-Preservation, so deeply
 " rooted in our Natures, that strongly prompts us to flee
 " with all possible Speed, from what we apprehend to be
 " the greatest and most certain Evil. So that if any Ar-
 " gument can make Impression on an obdurate Sinner, it
 " must be this drawn from the Prospect of the eternal
 " Vengeance, as hardest Metals are soonest melted by
 " the Fire.

The P R E F A C E.

I might easily add a Number more of great Names and Arguments, but to avoid Prolixity, and also because this Objection is afterwards consider'd, I shall proceed to another Objection which is this.

Possibly some may object against the Method, that it is perplex'd and confus'd.

I answer, That perhaps the Prolixity of the Discourse, and the Numerousness of the Heads contained in it, makes it appear more so than it really is, when the whole Frame, and Relation of the several Parts to each other is complexly consider'd. Again, I confess that my Design was rather to profit a plainer Order of Men, than to please Criticks and curious Persons, whose most notable Talent is to condemn all, but what they do themselves. If I know any thing of my own Heart, my Scope was rather to wound the Heart, than to tickle the Fancy.

If any should object against the Prolixity of the following Discourse, I answer, That the Matter treated of is various, tho' the main Scope and principle Subject is but one; and many of the Heads are succinctly and briefly handled, so that I hope the well inclined Reader will be rather diverted by a grateful Variety, than surfeited and tir'd by a tedious Prolixity; and that the principal Points treated of may be found with more Ease and Expedition, I have annex'd an Index, by consulting which, the Reader may turn to what suits his Inclination best.

If any should again object, that considering the Meanness of the whole Composure, that it is but a piece of Pride and Presumption (in so critical and censorious an Age) to expose so young a Production to publick Light; I desire those Gentlemen to consider, whether they are not too bold and precipitant in passing such a hasty Judgment upon the secret Springs of another's Actions, which it's God's Prerogative and his only (who is *Cardiognostos*, the Searcher of the Hearts) to know immediately and infallibly? And pray let them consider, that all Men have not the same Taste, *Trahit sua quemq; Voluptas*: Men's Fancies as their Features are various, and Fancy through our sad Degeneracy, has too much the Ascendant over our Judgment: Others may admire what you disdain. *Pro Captu Lectoris habent sua Fata Libelli*. Books have their different Fates according to their Readers Fancies.

Further, Is it not necessary that every Member of Christ's mystical Body, should labour to advance the Interest of his Kingdom, according to their Capacity and Opportunity?

But

But more especially those of a publick Character? The Widow's Mite was kindly accepted and put into the Treasury, tho' very small, and the Donor commended, Mark 12. 42, 43. We don't find that those poor People who cou'd not bring Gold and Silver, and Purple, if they did but bring Goats Hair, and Badgers Skins, for the Service of the Temple; I say, we don't find, that such, and their Offerings were rejected, no; but on the contrary, they were accepted, Exod. 35. 5, 6, 23. If so, then perhaps a melancholy Prospect of the dangerous Security, that the Generality of Mankind are involv'd in, with an earnest Desire after their Conviction, Conversion and Salvation, will be found at the general Judgment to be the principal Occasion of the Composure and Publication of the following sheets. I profess that when I preach'd at Amboy the Substance of this Tract, in the same Order and Diction, that it now appears in to publick View, I had no Thoughts of ever letting it see a brighter Light, than the Audience that first heard it, but that it should sink with others of the like Tendency, I had preach'd there, and in other Places which I am pastorally related to, in a dark Obscurity and silent Oblivion. But some Opposition being made against some Things I had deliver'd, and being desir'd to give a Copy of what I had preach'd, while I was transcribing the original Paper, the Suitableness of the Subject, to the present secure State of the most of the gospeliz'd World, presenting it self to my Mind, had some Influence upon me; I was inclin'd to think, that were these Heads already propos'd, further enlarg'd upon, with the Addition of some others, they might be serviceable in the Hand of Christ, to awaken and direct some weaker People, who were destitute of better Helps. Now after having enlarg'd the Discourse, I was induc'd by the Importunity of some Friends, to permit it's Publication, & therather by this Consideration, that if it should please Almighty God to call me off the fleeting Stage of Time, by Death, I might leave a small, & poor Man's Legacy, to my Hearers at Amboy, N Brunswick, and other Places, either to convince or condemn the Impenitent, and to support and direct such as had learned of the Father, to know the Truth as it is in Jesus.

I am not insensible that those very Persons, for whose Good and Benefit this Tract was principally compos'd, and to whom it is especially directed, are like to be most displeas'd with the Matters contain'd in it; for many Men are so in Love with their delusive Ease, that they are willing and fond to purchase it at the dearest Rate, even at the Cost of their present and future Happiness; and as they are willingly ig-

nor any

ignorant of their present Danger, and future Misery; so they hate and oppose the most direct and awakening Methods to correct the one, and prevent the other; and therefore I wou'd earnestly beg these few Requests, of the Christless and presumptuous Reader, for Christ's sake, and for his own Soul's sake, (1.) That he would read the whole before he condemn a Part. (2.) That he would weigh the Composure, and it's several Parts, not in the Scales of Fancy, or Prejudice, but in the Balances of Scripture, and right Reason. And (3.) That he be earnest with God by humble Supplication, for Light and Direction. But I know not how to finish this prefatory Discourse, without the Addition of a particular Address to those of my Hearers, that are yet in a State of Sin and Security.

Beloved Brethren, You have often heard your Danger describ'd, you have had many a Call, by the Word, and Providence of God, as well as by your own Consciences, and are you not awaken'd yet? O strange! O mournful! Others have been (through Grace) convinc'd and chang'd effectually by the Means you enjoy, and won't these be a Witness against you at the Tribunal of Christ? What will you be able to say in your own Vindication? Then won't Blushing and Confusion cover you, and guilty Silence be your Answer? What, does the Word prove a Saviour of Life unto Life to others, and of Death unto Death to you? O dreadful! What do you intend to do dear Brethren? Will you sleep for ever? Will you sleep till Death and Hell awake you? Or do you think that you may go to Heaven in this Slumber of carnal Security? If you do you shall find your selves miserably mistaken! as is fully prov'd in the following Tract. Be not deceiv'd Brethren, The Kingdom of Heaven suffers Violence, and the violent (and they only) take it by Force, *Matth.* 11. 12. Let me address you as the Prophet Elijah did the People of Israel, *1 Kings* 18. 21. How long halt ye between two Opinions? If the Lord be God follow him: but if Baal then follow him. Or as the Shipmaster to Jonah, who was fast asleep in the midst of a great Tempest, *Jonah* 1. 5. What meanest thou, O Sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, if so be he will think upon us that we perish not, *Verse* 6. It's a just and pertinent Note of Mr. Henry, upon this Passage of Scripture, "That those who sleep in a Storm may well be ask'd what they mean?" Brethren, You sleep in a greater Storm then Jonah did; that only concern'd the Body, but this the precious Soul; that a temporal, but this an eternal Death. You are (whether you know it or not

sensibly) every Moment ready to be swallow'd up by the furious Billows of God's justly incens'd Ire, and the Vessel of your Souls like to be broken by a dreadful Inundation of His vindictive Fury and Revenge: Deut. 32. 41, 55. Rom. 12. 19. "And yet will you sleep, what Metal are you made of? What God do you fear? Or are you deaf to all the Menaces of Heaven?" Will not the Terrors of an eternal God, and an eternal Hell make you afraid? What mean you? Are you get wholly lost to Sense, to Reason, and to Conscience? Are you degenerated into Beasts? Or petrified into Stones? Are you cover'd with the Leviathan's Scales that no Arrow from the Bow of God will pierce you! Mayn't the Example of Jonas's Fellow Mariners make you ashamed? *Jonah* 1. 5. Then the Mariners were afraid, and cry'd every Man to his God, and cast forth the Wares that were in the Ship, into the Sea, to lighten it of them. But perhaps you mock at Fear, and are not affrighted, though the Heavens look black, and God's Lightnings and Thunders, from blazing, trembling Sinai, flash and groan, and roar hideously! Tho' God's Law condemn you, and your own Consciences tell you, that you shall surely perish, if ye die in the same State you are now in, yet you boldly, or rather shall I say impudently, or stupidly brave it out in the Face of an angry Heaven! And run upon the thick Bosses of God's Bucklers, and are not afraid when God's great Ordnance is level'd at your naked Bosom. You won't be perswaded by any Importunity to cast these Goods out of the Ship, (as the Mariners did) which will if retain'd sink it in Death. I mean your darling Lusts which you must forsake or perish. *Mat.* 5. 29. Again, the affrighted Mariners cry'd every one to his God, *Ver.* 5. Why don't you awake poor Souls, and cry every one of you to God, with the utmost Vehemence, as the Disciples of Christ did in a Storm, when the Waves were like to overwhelm the Vessel, Lord, save us we perish! *Mat.* 8. 25. Or as Peter's Hearers, *Acts* 2. 37. Men and Brethren, What shall we do to be saved? Sirs, Suffer me to acost you in the Language of Paul to the Ephesians, *Chap.* 5. 14. Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the Dead, and Christ shall give thee Light; for the Time past of our Life may suffice us, to have wrought the Will of the Gentiles. *1 Per.* 4. 3. Awake to Righteousness and sin not: for some have not the Knowledge of God: I speak this to your Shame. *1 Cor.* 15. 34. And especially knowing the Time, that now it is high Time to awake out of Sleep. But I can't in Regard of you add
the

the Apostle's Reason, Rom. 13. 11. For now is your Salvation nearer than when ye believed. No Brethren! I am oblig'd in Faithfulness to God, and Love to you, to tell that inasmuch as you did not, and now do not believe, that your Damnation is nearer than when ye first heard the Gospel of Christ, and Salvation by his Blood; because of your unbelieving Obstinacy and presumptuous Security.

Awake, Awake Sinners, stand up and look where you are hastning, lest you drink of the Hand of the Lord, the Dregs of the Cup of his Fury; the Cup of trembling, and wring them out, Isai. 51. 17. Awake ye Drunkards, and weep and howl, Joel 1. 5. For what can ye expect (so continuing) but to drink of that Cup of Trembling I but now mention'd.

Awake ye prophane Swearers, and remember ye will not get a drop of Water to cool your cursing cursed Tongues in Hell, when they and you shall flame in the broad burning Lake, Luke 16. 24. God has said he will not hold you Guiltless, that take his Name in vain, Exod. 20. 7.

Awake ye unclean Adulterers, and Whoremongers, and remember that without a speedy Repentance, your dismal abode shall be ever with unclean Devils, the Soul of a God shall be aveng'd upon you, Jer. 5. 8, 29.

Awake ye Sabbath-Breakers, and reform; or God will break you upon the Wheels of his Vengeance, and torture you eternally upon the Rack of his Justice, Nehem. 13. 16, 17, 18.

And let all other sorts of prophane Sinners be entreated to awake out of Sleep and consider their Danger.

Awake ye covetous griping Nabals, and read what the Apostle James says to you, Chap. 5. 1 to 6. Go to now, ye rich Men, weep and howl for the Miseries that shall come upon you. The Rust of your Gold and Silver shall bear Witness against you. Ye have lived in Pleasure upon Earth, and been wanton, you have nourished your Hearts as in a Day of Slaughter. Here we may Note by the Way, that those who live like Beasts here, and will not be induc'd by any Perswasive to repent, reform and act like Men, shall howl like Beasts hereafter, without being heard or pitied, 1 Cor. 16. 13. Prov. 1. 26.

Awake ye secure Moralists, and lifeless, sapless Formalists, who are Strangers to the Power of experimental Religion: Remember your shadowy Appearances, can't deceive the Rein trying God, Gal. 6. 7. Nor your dry Leaves of husky spiritless Duties, secure your guilty Souls, from an astonish-

ing overwhelming Inundation of his high and terrible Displeasure, Mat. 5. 20.

Awake ye base backsliding Hypocrites, and cruel Apostates, who once made a Profession of Religion, then better Things were expected of you, but ye have wickedly deceiv'd our Expectation, and ye will in the End as miserably deceive your own, if ye yet foolishly entertain any Hopes of Heaven, in the State and Course you are now in; Remember the Blackness of Darkness is reserv'd for such cowardly traitorous Runasadoes and Deserters, seeing you are ashamed of Christ, and of his Words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of you also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he comes in the Glory of his Father with the holy Angels, Mark 8. 38 Hypocrites must be cut asunder. Mat. 24. 51. Backsliders shall eat of the Fruit of their own Ways (their wicked Ways, and bitter, bitter Fruits they'll be) and they shall be filled with their own Devices, deceiv'd and damn'd by them, Prov. 14. 14. Mat. 14. 44, 45. 2. Pet. 2. 21, 22. For if they have escaped the Pollutions of the World, through the Knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again intangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning: It had been better for them not to have known the Way of Righteousness, then after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment deliver'd unto them. But it is happened unto them, according to the true Proverb, the Dog is turned to his own Vomit again, and the Sow that was washed to her wallowing in the Mire. Such Apostates for all their specious Shews and Shams, were but washen Dogs and Swine at best; that is, their Hearts were not chang'd effectually, they had and do yet retain base Qualities, like those brut Creatures, but now mention'd: Such Backsliders do pour Contempt on Christ, and the Gospel of his Grace, by bringing a bad Report upon them, they do as it were by turning their Backs upon Religion, profess to the World, that they have found some Evil in God's Ways: By this the venerable Name of God is dishonour'd, his Ways reproach'd, his People griev'd, and the Hand of his Enemies, the Wicked, strengthened. 1 Tim. 6. 1. Rom. 2. 24. Psalm 25. 3. Thus seeing your Sin is a complicated Evil, you must expect an aggravated Punishment. Heb. 10. 26, 27, 28. If we sin wilfully after we have received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more Sacrifice for Sin, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and the fiery Indignation of God to consume the Adversaries.

H. r.

Here you may observe that enlighten'd Persons are they only, that are like to commit the Sin against the Holy Ghost, a Sin which shall not be pardoned in this, nor in the next World. Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6. Neither ignorant Persons, nor gracious Persons are capable of committing the unpardonable Sin, nor the first, because it must be committed against Light and Knowledge, which they want, Heb. 10. 26. Nor the second, for it must be attended with Malice, Heb. 10. 29. Which they are secured against, 1 John 3. 9. & 5. 18. Isai. 59. 21. Jer. 32. 40. In short, a voluntary Desertion of the Profession of Religion, is a terrible Step towards the unpardonable Sin. O! Let such consider with trembling Hearts, if it is not too late, the Scriptures I have mention'd under this Head, as also these that follow. But if any Man draw back, my Soul shall have no Pleasure in him: But we are not of them that draw back unto Perdition. Luke 9. 62. No Man having put his Hand to the Plow, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God. And if they be not fit for the Kingdom of God they must be fit for the Kingdom of the Devil. O terrible Portion! Therefore repent & do your first Works. O remember whence you are fallen! and where you are a falling! Otherwise Christ will come against you quickly, in a Way of just Judgment, and fight against you with the Sword of his Mouth. Rev. 2. 5, 16. With the Sword of his Wrath. Prov. 29. 1.

Awake every of you that are yet in a Christless unconvinced State! Are you not asham'd to sleep all the Day in Sloth, while some are trembling, troubled and distress'd about their Souls, who are not greater Sinners than your selves? Nay, perhaps not near so great; what sleep? while others are crying Night and Day with Tears, and heavy Groans to God, for pardoning Mercy, who have no more precious Souls than you. Sleep! While others are labouring hard and taking Heaven by Storm! What sleep! While some are travelling fast to the heavenly Jerusalem, and rejoicing in the Way with Joy unspeakable and glorious. What will ye draw the Curtains of a carnal Security, and false Hope about you, and sleep to Death and Hell; even when the meridian Sun of the Gospel shines full in your Face, and Life and Immortality is brought to Light, and God, & Christ, his Ministers, Word, Providences, and your own Consciences, are ringing a loud Alarm, a Peal of Thunder in your Ears to awake you! That you may consider your Ways, and turn your Feet to God's Testimonies. Will you sleep with Fire in your Bosoms? (the unpardon'd Guilt of Sin) with the Curse of
God

God upon your Souls, the Heavens frowning upon you, and shut against you, the burden'd Earth travelling under you, and Hell yawning wide to devour and consume you! *Magn't I say to you as Moses to Israel, Deut. 29. 4.* Yet the Lord hath not given you a Heart to perceive, and Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, unto this Day. *O! Is it not to be fear'd that God in Justice has left you to a Spirit of Slumber? Because you shut your Eyes against the Light, John 3. That you should sleep and never awake. Jer. 51. 57.* And I will make drunk her Princes, and her wise Men, and her Rulers, and her mighty Men; and they shall sleep a perpetual Sleep, and not awake, saith the King, whose Name is the Lord of Hosts. *Prov. 6. 9* How long wilt thou sleep, O Sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy Sleep?

O Sinners! If ye wou'd but take Warning in Time, and turn to God, how pleasing would this be to the Heart of Christ? Luke 15. 5. How pleasing to the great God? Jer. 31. 19; 20. Luke 15. 20. To the holy Angels? Luke 15. 10. To the Bridegroom's Friends? Either pious Ministers or private Christians. Luke 15. 24. As the Conversion of Sinners is the Joy and Crown of godly Ministers, 1 Thes. 2. 19. So their cruel Obstinacy and Stupidity, cannot on the contrary, but be their Grief & Sorrow. O! This makes them go with aking Hearts, and cry, and moan to God and Man, Who has believed our Report, and to whom is the Arm of the Lord revealed, Isai. 53. 1. Wo is me! I am as those that gather the Summer Fruits, as the Grape gleanings of the Vintage; There is no Cluster to ear, my Soul desired the first ripe Fruit. The good Man is perished out of the Earth; and there is none upright among Men, Mic. 7. 1, 2. Pity your poor mourning Ministers, and pity your own Souls, by endeavouring to turn to God speedily. If there be any Consolation in Christ, if any Comfort of Love; if any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies, fulfil ye my Joy. But it wou'd introduce the greatest Comfort into your own Souls, Gal. 6. 16. Then God wou'd rejoyce over thee with Joy: He will rest in his Love, and joy over thee with Singing, Zeph. 3. 17. Now that you and others may be awaken'd out of your Security and directed to Christ, I have compos'd the following Discourse, which I now commit into your Hands, earnestly praying that you wou'd read it attentively, consider it solemnly, and pray over it earnestly, that it may be bless'd to you: I leave this wish you as a Warning from the great God, to convince or condemn you, as a Testimony for Truth, a Witness for or against you, as you improve it.

it. May the God of Mercy and Power, direct the Truths contain'd in it, to your Hearts, and seal them on your Consciences; by them convince you of your Danger, and turn you to himself. But let no pious experienc'd Christian needlessly terrify themselves by applying another's Portion. The Miseries hereafter describ'd are the proper Possession and Inheritance of graceless presumptuous Sinners; they do not belong to you poor Lambs of Jesus, who have been so far convinc'd of the malignant Nature, and dreadful Consequences of Sin both in Heart and Life, that ye have unreservedly and resolutely clos'd with Christ, and do afterwards bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance, such as crowns your Profession and Experiences. Is not your principal Care and Sorrow exercis'd about your Souls? If it be so, there is another Portion prepared for you, by your heavenly Father, a Portion of numerous and everlasting Blessings, Pardon, Peace, Joy, Glory, which I have given a short Description of in a Use of Consolation in the following Discourse. If any get good by this Treatise, I beg that they wou'd remember me when they are near God especially, implore Heaven that I may be made through Mercy, faithful and fruitful to Christ, to the Death. Now that some poor Souls may be deeply convinc'd of their lost Condition, and guided to Jesus, by the following Discourse, is the earnest Desire and Prayer of

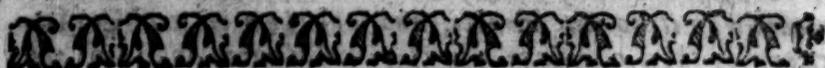
Your Servant

for CHRIST'S sake,

N. Brunswick,

June 10, 1734.

Gilb. Tennent.



Just Reprinted,

And to be Sold by *Daniel Henchman* in
Cornhill.

THE Sincere Convert : Discovering the small
Number of true Believers and the great Diffi-
culty of saving Conversion. Newly Corrected and
Amended. By **THOMAS SHEPARD**, sometime of
Emanuel College in Cambridge, since Minister of the
Gospel in *New-England*.

A Guide to **CHRIST** : Or the Way of directing
Souls that are under the Work of Conversion.
Compiled for the Help of young Ministers : And
may be serviceable to private Christians, who are in-
quiring the Way to Zion. By **SOLOMON STODDARD**,
A. M. Pastor of the Church in *Northampton*. With
an Epistle prefixed, by the **REV. DR. INCREASE MATHER**.





The Presumer Detected,

AND

His Doom Display'd.

DEUT. XXIX. 19, 20, 21.

And it come to pass when he beareth the Words of this Curse, that he bless himself in his Heart, saying, I shall have Peace, though I walk in the Imagination of mine Heart, to add Drunkenness to thirst: The Lord will not spare him, but then the Anger of the Lord, and his Jealousy shall smook against that Man, and all the Curses that are written in this Book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his Name from under Heaven. And the Lord shall separate him unto Evil, out of all the Tribes of Israel according to all the Curses of the Covenant, that are written in this Book of the Law.

AS MUCH as a great Part of Mankind securely sleep in Sin, and betray themselves into irreparable and endless Ruin, by vain and presumptuous Hopes of Mercy, I thought it my Duty to essay a corrosive Remedy to correct (if it shall please the most high God to crown so feeble an Endeavour with his successful Smiles) the Malignity of this flagrant and pernicious Evil, by detecting the general Grounds, and exposing the numerous Dangers of such fatal Delusions and destructive Mistakes.

B

To

To this End I have chosen the *Text* now mention'd, in which we have the three Particulars.

1. The *Wickedness* of the presumptuous Sinner *detected*, he walks after the *Imagination* of his Heart, and adds *Drunkennes* to *Thirst*.

2. His *confident Security* notwithstanding *described*, he blesseth himself in his Heart, saying, he shall have Peace.

3. His *dreadful Doom* from the righteous GOD *display'd*, in the 20 & 21 Verses.

And first we have a *summary Detection*, or a *Discovery* of his *Wickedness* in two Particulars.

1. He *walks* after the *Imagination* of his Heart, he follows the pernicious *Swing* of his corrupt *Affections* and labours to gratify his vain and sinful Humours and vile *Desires*. This Charge is more general.

2. He adds *Drunkennes* to *Thirst* : This is more particular. Presumptuous Sinners not only *pursue* the inordinate *Gratification* of their *sensitive Appetites* and *brutish Passions* in the *General*, but they are also under (for the most part) the *Dominion* and *Tyranny* of some darling Lust in *particular*, which they against Light and Knowledge pay a peculiar *Veneration* to. *Eph. 2. 2, 3. Rom 2 3.* The presumptuous Sinner *adds Drunkennes to Thirst*. That is, saith Mr. Pool, "Not only to *satisfy* his *Thirst*, his *Cupiscence* and *Inclination* to *Wickedness*, but even to *exceed* it, as *Drunkards* out of meer *Wantonness*, or *Inclination* to get drunk ; and as filthy Persons commit *Lewdness* with others more than their natural *Inclination* *desires*, and their *Strength* can well bear ; meerly from *a wicked Mind* and *contempt* of GOD, and because they *will* do so. Or the Words may be rendred, saith he, to *add Thirst* to *Drunkennes*, and so the *Sense* may be *this*, that when he hath *multiplied* his *Sins*, and made *himself* as it were drunk with them, yet he is not *satisfied* *therewith*, but still whets his *Appetite* and provokes *his Thirst* after more." In short, the Words plainly denote a course of Sin : A presumptuous Sinner adds Sin to Sin, goes on in a Course of *Wickedness* of one kind or other, either *open* or *secret*. Lest any be mistaken, it must be acknowledged that all presumptuous Persons are not guilty of *Prophaneness* or *Immorality*, no, no ; some of them make a fair *Shew* in the *Flesh*, are regular in their external *Conduct*, and have the strict *Form* of *Godliness*, though they are destitute of the *Power* of it ; Witness the
foolish

foolish Virgins, whose Profession and Behaviour had such an Appearance of Goodness, that the wise were much mistaken in their Opinion concerning them. *Mat. 25.*

3. His confident Security; he bleisseth himself in his Heart, even when he hears the Words of the Curse. *Psal. 36. 2.* He flattereth himself in his own Eyes until his Iniquity be found to be hateful. Though God curses him, yet he bleisseth himself. O Madnes without Peer or Parallel! Hast thou an Arm like God, or canst thou thunder with a Voice like him, *Job 40. 9* He bleisseth himself in his Heart, he flatters himself against all Scripture and Reason with the Hopes of Impunity, though he persists in his Impiety in his Heart; no wonder, seeing that the Heart of every natural Man is as foolish as false; as deceitful as wicked, *Rom. 1. 21.* *Jer. 17. 9.* Perhaps the Word Heart here may signify the Privacy as well as Stability and Firmness of his false Confidence.

1. The Privacy, if he doth not say in Words, yet he believes it in his Heart, that he shall escape God's Vengeance: But indeed some are arrived at that Degree of shameless Impudence, that they confine not their foolish and false Confidence to their vain Imaginations, but express it in Speech and Action.

2. The Stability of it; their false Hope has deep rooted Residence in their Hearts, they love their Delusions, and would as soon part with their Hearts, as part with them, *Jer. 8. 5.* *Job 18. 14.* Tho' he hears the Words of the Curse, and so can't plead Ignorance, although God's faithful Servants, frequently and plainly discover the false Foundations of his Hope; and solemnly denounce the Judgments of God, both in Time and Eternity, against him, yet in the Face of the most glaring Light, his false Confidence continues firm and unshaken; and he is no more mov'd than the Earth under him; he vainly imagines that the Almighty is not so strict and severe as he is represented to be according to his Word by godly Ministers, and therefore concludes he shall have Peace, and be finally secured from the Arrests of God's flaming Jealousy, and be introduc'd into a State of Peace and Pleasure. But

3. Let us look into the dreadful Doom of this sinful and secure Person, as it's display'd or describ'd in our Text: A Doom suted to the greatness of his Impiety, who so boldly affronts the Almighty as to call in Question his Veracity, and give the Lye to eternal Truth, *Gen 3. 4.* And as the Sin is great, so there is scarce a more dreadful Threatning

in all the *Book of GOD* denounced against such as are guilty of it, nay, is it not a compendious *Epitome* of all the rest that are *dispers'd* through every minatory *Vein* and *Page* of *sacred Scripture*. O! methinks it might like the *Hand writing on the Wall*, strike every presumptuous *Sinner* that reads or hears it, into *Belsazzar's Fit*, make their *Faces* gather *Blackness*, their *Ears* tingle, their *Hearts* quiver in their *Bodies* and their *trembling Knees* smite each other.

But more particularly, there are these horrible *Ingredients* included in the *Bowels* of it.

1. *The Lord shall not spare him*: The *Time* of his *Probation* and *Reprieve* which he so prodigally *wastes*, and *disingenuously abuses*, shall be *contracted*, and no *Mixture* of *Mercy* extended in *Judgment*. *Isai. 27. 11.* Tho' he *s pares* himself and will not *suffer* the *Thoughts* of that *Damnation* which he is with much *Labour* and *Travel* working out to *disturb* his *carnal Ease*, yet the *righteous God* won't *s pare* him, but his whole *Vengeance* shall *light* upon that *Man*, he shall *drink* the *Dregs* of the *Cup* of his *Indignation*, *Psal. 75. 8.* The *Almighty* will deal with him in *strict Justice*, without *remitting* a *Grain Weight* of the *Punishment* his *Sins* *deserve*. An awful *Example* of *God's* *righteous Severity* against *obstinate* and *presumptuous* *Offenders* we have in the *Dispersion* and other *unhappy Circumstances* of the *Jewish Nation*, which the *Apostle* admonisheth the *Gentiles* to take *Warning* by. *Rom. 11. 21, 22.* *For if God spared not the natural Branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee.*

2. *The Anger of the Lord and his Jealousy* (which is his fiercest *Anger*) shall *smoak* against him as the *Smoak* of a *Furnace*. This shews the *Blackness* of *Darkness*, the *Horrors* of that *Damnation* these *presumptuous Wretches* shall be *ingulphed* in.

2. *His Jealousy shall smoak against that Man* *Jealousy* is one of *God's* *glorious Properties*, in the *second Commandment* of his *Law*; he calls himself a *jealous God*, *visiting* the *Iniquity* of the *Fathers* upon the *Children* to the *third* and *fourth Generation*. The *Nature* of *Jealousy* is describ'd, *Prov. 6. 34, 35.* *For Jealousy is the Rage of a Man, therefore he will not spare in the Day of his Vengeance, he will not regard any Ransom, neither will he rest content, though thou givest many Gifts.* And further, in *Cant. 8. 6.* *Jealousy is cruel as the Grave, the Coals thereof, are Coals of Fire, which have a most vehement Flame.* Again, the *Prophet Nahum*

Nabum speaks excellently concerning it, Chap. 1. ver. 2. *God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth, and is furious, the Lord will take vengeance on his Adversaries, and he will set forth wrath for his Enemies. God's jealousy (first) supposeth a wrong offer'd to his Majesty by the presumers Sin.*

And,

2. Includes [his Resolution to repair and revenge it, by inflicting such Punishments as are adequate to the heinous nature of the Offence. *Isai. 1. 24 Ab! I will ease me of mine Adversaries, I will avenge me of mine Enemies.*

3. The exercise (to speak after the manner of Men) of his Glorious Attributes to that awful end. *Solomon informs us, Prov. 6. 34 that jealousy inflames Men's anger, and thereby excites their power to exert it's utmost efforts. Now when this passion is ascrib'd to God, we may rationally infer something so like this as will consist with the perfection of his Nature, viz. That all his Attributes will be engag'd and concern'd in compleating the misery and Damnation of presumptuous and impenitent Sinners: His Wisdom in projecting it; His Power in inflicting it; and His Unchangeableness in continuing it.*

O Sinner! think how horrible will thy Case be, when all that is in God will be stirred up against thee, *Isai 42 13. The Lord shall stir up his jealousy like a Man of War; He shall cry, yea roar; He shall prevail against his Enemies. If but a few drops of God's Anger was so piercing that it made patient Job utter the most dolorous Complaints, yea, even curse the day of his Birth, Job 6. 2, 3, 4. Oh that my Grief were thoroughly weigh'd, and my Calamity laid in the Balances together! For now it would be heavier than the sand of the Sea: therefore my words are swallowed up: For the Arrows of the Almighty are within me, the Poison whereof drinketh up my Spirit. The Terrors of God do set themselves in Array against me. How wilt thou bear the fiery Showers of it? Canst thou endure that Wrath that makes even the very Devils tremble and rore and cry out, torment us not before the Time. James 2. 19. Matth. 8. 29.*

3. All the Curses that are written in the Book of God: *The Curses of God, the Curses of Christ, the Curses of the Law, the Curses of the Gospel, the Curses of Time and Eternity, shall lie upon him, not only light on him to terrify him, but abide on him, to sink him into the Lake of Fire, to lanch his wretched Soul, gripe and gnaw his guilty Conscience, and prey on his damned Body throughout endless*

Ages, if he continue in that State and Course. *Mark 9.44. Gal. 3.10. Mat. 23. and 25. 41.* These Words in our Text, viz. *That Man*, carry an Emphasis with them, and seem to signify, that the presumptuous Sinner shall be made the Object of God's peculiar Displeasure: The *Mark*, and *Butt* of his *vindictive Fury*, and *amazing Severity*; he shall be made a *Spectacle of Shame and Horror*, a *Magor Missabib*, a Terror to himself and others. *Jer. 20. 4. Job 18. 14.* That Man though he *hid* himself in this World under *false Guises and Pretexs*, and would not apply the *Threats* of God to himself, he shall be *pointed out*, and *pointed at* in the next, like a *Monster* as he is, by the Hand of Justice, and made a *Monument of Wrath*, a *Vessel of Vengeance* and a *Burnt Sacrifice* to the *divine Indignation*. *Rom. 9. 22. Luke 19. 27.* *But those mine Enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me. O Horrors! Horrors! Horrors!*

4. *His Name shall be blotted out.* The Memory of the Righteous, *blossoms in the Dust, they shall be had in everlasting Remembrance*, *Psal. 112. 6.* But the Name of the Wicked quickly *rots and perisheth* in a silent Oblivion, or is remembered with *Disdain and Abhorrence*.

5. *He shall be separated unto Evil, both moral and penal.*

1. *Moral.* Having oppos'd and quench'd the Motions of the blessed Spirit, and abus'd the Means of Grace which were us'd to reform and reclaim him, God will judicially give him up to the Government of his vile Affections, that he may (being freed from former Restraints) work all *Uncleanness with Greediness*, *Rom. 1. 24, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32.* And say to him as in *Rev. 22. 11.* *Let him that is filthy be filthy still; he that is unjust let him be unjust still.* And

2. Having thus fill'd up the *Measure of his Iniquity*, he shall be given up to *penal Evil*, the *Reward of his Impiety*; *He shall eat the Fruits of his own Ways, and be fill'd with his own Devices*, *Prov. 1. 31.*

He shall be cut off from all Happiness and from the very least Hopes of attaining it, and *mark'd out* for *inexpressible and endless Misery* without any Hopes of a *Remedy* for ever. And

Lastly, All this according to the *Curses of the Covenant of Grace*, which are the most terrible.

But what is to be understood by the Curses in general? And why are the Curses of the Gospel the most terrible in particular? I answer, The *Curse* includes all the Punishments which *divine Justice* has annex'd to the Violation of

of the divine Law. The Forfeiture of all the Mercies, which are the peculiar Lot of God's chosen, and the Possession of all the Miseries of an absent God, both in Body and Mind, which are but begun upon the Wicked here, but shall be consummated in Hell. Now the Curses of the Gospel are the most terrible for these two Reasons,

1. Because that from the Gospel there is no Appeal: From the Law we may appeal to the Gospel, but when we abuse the Remedy, our Case is desperate. Acts 4. 12.

2. The Curses of the Gospel are Judgments proportion'd to the heinous Quality and crimson Hue of that Offence which pours Contempt upon the most beautiful and bright Appearances of divine Goodness and Philanthropy that ever the humane Nature was honour'd with: That Sin surely can admit no parallel, which flights the Love that justly astonish'd all the angelick Hosts, and excited them to express their grateful Resentments with chearful Halleluiah's. Luke 2. 14. Now if that Sin be without a Rival, must not the Punishment grasp'd in the Curse be suted to it's Nature? For will not the Judge of all the Earth do right? How terrible therefore will be the Case of all those miserable Souls, who shall finally fall under the Rebukes and Revenges of abused Love? See Heb. 10. from 27, to 32. That Almighty gracious God that now sits enthron'd on a Seat of Mercy, holding out the Scepter of Salvation will by his unbare Arm, and Iron Rod crush the presumptuous Abusers of his condescending Grace into Powder. Mat. 21. 44. Luke 20. 18. The Kings Arrows shall be glutted with your Blood. Psalm 2. 12. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the Way, when his Wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their Trust in him. What thinkest thou of this, O presumptuous Sinner! Is not every Word of this divine Text big with Horror! Look here you bold Rebel, here is the glittering brandishing Sword of the terrible God held before thee, which, if thou turn not speedily, shall stab thee through with eternal Death.

O presumptuous secure Sinners, hear, hear, hear your dreadful and eternal Doom! Be affected with the Thoughts of it, and fly for Refuge before it's too late, too late!

If it should be inquired, what is the Reason that the Sin and Punishment of presumptuous Souls is propos'd in the singular Number in this Text? I answer,

1. Negatively, That it is not with any Design to signify that they are small in Number; for this would contradict

a Multitude of plain Scriptures. Rev. 3. 17. Prov. 30. 12. *There is a Generation which are pure in their own Eyes, and yet are not cleans'd from their Filthiness.* But

2. *Positively*, for this Reason; that what is express'd may be more particularly apply'd, for *Generalia non pungunt*, Generals don't pierce or sting. Thus the Commands are express'd in the singular Number, that every one that reads or hears, may attend to, and apply them to himself particularly, as if directed to him by Name.

From the Words of our Text complexly consider'd, we may observe the following Position or Doctrinal Conclusion; which seems to grasp their principal Scope. Viz.

That those who go on in a Course of Sin, and yet expect Peace, are foolish, miserable and cursed Creatures.

In treating upon which, I would propose the following Order.

1. *Shew what it is to go on in a Course of Sin.* 2. *Prove that some who are guilty of this do notwithstanding expect Peace.* 3. *Discover some of the Grounds of that false Hope or Expectation* 4. *Discover the Folly, Miseries and cursed Estate of such foolish and deceived Souls.*

THE FIRST GENERAL HEAD.

I return to the first *general Head*, which was to shew what it is to go on in a *Course of Sin*. In Order to explain this more clearly, let me consider it both *negatively* and *positively* And

First, *Negatively*. By it I don't understand those Infirmities which are unavoidable by humane Nature in its corrupt and degenerate State; viz such as these following

1. The Stirrings of inward Corruptions, not indulg'd, Rom. 7. *I have a Law in my Members warring against the Law of my Mind.*

2. Defects in the Degrees of Christian Graces, either in Respect of *Habit* or *Act* A Person may have *true*, and yet but *weak* Faith: *Lord, I believe, help my Unbelief*, Mark 9. 24.

3. In the Duties of Religion; Coldness, Deadness, Wandrings of Heart in Prayer, Praises, involuntary and lamented, *For all our Righteousness is as filthy Rags*; Isai 64. 6.

Very

Very imperfect and so unable to bear the Quest and Judgment of a holy and righteous God.

Nor

4. Every Fall into gross Sins against Light, if this be (first) against the general Byass of the Heart, *Rom. 7.* Or (secondly) thro' strong Temptations, as *David's* awful Fall. Or, (Thirdly) thro' Surprize, as it was in *Peter's* Case, when he denied his Lord. Nor

5. Tho' the same Sin be sometimes repeated, *Heb. 12. 1.* *Psalms 85. 8. & 65. 3.* *Jer. 3. 1.* But this ought to be understood with the following Cautions.

1. That then a Christian is under great *Decays.* *Rev.*

2. 4. Or

2. Under strong *Temptations*, as I prov'd before. And

3. That their Hopes are much *shatter'd* and their Comforts remov'd *Psalms 51. 8, 11, 12.* They are as a Bone broken or dis-jointed, as in a Compass well touch'd with a Loadstone, the Flower-de-luce bends freely and steadily towards the North-Pole, and if it be forc'd to another Point of the Compass contrary to it's natural and general Byass, it trembles and quivers till it comes to it's wonted Place again, and then rests. The Case is even so with a gracious Soul, when thro' the Violence of Temptation, they have sinned against their God. O how do your Hearts tremble and never rest until they re-obtain the Smiles of their Father's Face, and a Sense of his pardoning Love.

4. Their Mourning is great when recover'd as *David* *Psalms 51.* And *Peter*, who is said to weep bitterly, *Mat. 26. 75.*

5. Their Care is increas'd about Holiness afterwards. *Enlarge my Heart, and then will I run the Ways of thy Commandments,* *Psalms 119. 32.*

2. *Positively.* It supposes Heart Love to, and implies the general Practice of some Sin or other. It will be much the same as to their Confusion and Condemnation (without intervening Repentance and Reformation) whither it be *secret* or *open*, whither a worldly, carnal, or ambitious Lust. The most in Youth indulge some unclean Lust, which being long practis'd against Light, hardens the Heart, grieves the Holy Spirit, and strengthens the Devils Possession of the Soul : This I believe is one great Reason why so many are Gospel proof, and sit like so many Stocks and Stones unconcern'd in hearing the most awful Truths ; nay, some by this unclean Course of Living, are come to that *Prodigy* of *Madness* and *Effrontery* as to out do the *Devils*, to laugh

The Presumer Detected

at those Things at which the Devils tremble. They have a Whores Forehead that refuses to be asham'd, Jer. 3. 3. The Apostle Peter long ago prophesied of this Crew of hardy Mortals that are thus madded against God and their own Souls. 2 *Pet.* 3. 3. So that their brutish Wickedness, tho' it shall (without Repentance) compass their Damnation, yet doth it in the mean time confirm the Truth of the Scriptures. 2 *Pet.* 2. 9, 10. But when married many chuse another Master, they serve the World with much Fidelity and Care; and under the Pretence of providing for their Families, loose the Opportunities of Mercy, and so starve and damn their Souls.

But I proceed to consider the second Thing propos'd, which was, *To prove that some who are guilty of a Course of sinning, do notwithstanding expect Peace.* Both Scripture and Reason prove this, our Text is a plain Evidence of this terrible Truth. And further, John 8. 33. *We be Abraham's Seed.* But I may answer this in the Words of Christ, Ver. 39. *If ye were Abraham's Children, ye would do the Works of Abraham. We be not born of Fornication; we have one Father even God,* Ver. 41. But I may say to you, as the Lord Jesus did to them, Ver. 44. *Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Lusts of your Father ye will do.* 1 *Cor.* 6. 9. *Be not deceived, neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners shall inherit the Kingdom of God.*

The Apostle's Caution against Deceit, *Be not deceived,* plainly supposes, that these vile Persons that were guilty of the unworthy Actions and Villanies mention'd, yet notwithstanding expected Salvation; which false and foolish Conceit he labours, not only in this, but in several other Places of his Writings, to tear up by the Roots; as particularly, Gal. 6. 7, 8. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a Man soweth, that shall he also reap, For he that soweth to his Flesh, shall of his Flesh reap Corruption.* These Words suppose this, that tho' Men sow to the *Flesh*, yet that they are prone to expect another kind of Harvest, viz. A *spiritual* and *eternal*. This Expectation the Apostle asserts to be not only false & unreasonable, but a down-right mocking of the great God, Mat. 7. 21, 22, 23. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the Will of my Father*
which

which is in Heaven. Many will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name? and in thy Name cast out Devils? and in thy Name done many wonderful Works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: Depart from me ye that work Iniquity. By these Verses we are instructed that many wicked People, will not only retain their false Hopes in this World, but even have the Impudence to plead their wretched Performances with Christ himself in the next, but to very little Purpose. Joh. 9. 40. Are we blind also? said the Pharisees to Christ, and yet many of them were very wicked, neglected the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Righteousness, Mercy; and for a Pretence made long Prayers, to prey upon the poor Widows, for which our Lord told them they should receive the greater Damnation, Mat. 23. 14. So many lifeless Formalists, if they have a pretty deal of Knowledge, and are advanc'd in Years, especially disdain to have the Goodness of their State question'd; they are apt to say with the proud Pharisees, Are we blind also? To such I would return Christ's Answer, *If ye were blind, ye should have no Sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your Sin remaineth.* If you saw your Blindness, your Sins would not be so great, you would be in the Way to get them pardoned, and your dangerous State chang'd. You know the foolish Virgins had a strong, tho' false Hope, which they held to the Death: Now tho' they were outwardly well polish'd, yet it is reasonable to suppose that they indulg'd some secret Wickedness; for as Mr. Shepard saith, "As every Dog hath his Kennel, and every Swine hath his Swill, so every unconverted Man hath his Lust." Bloody *Abab* and *Balaam* the Conjuror could call God their God. The Prophet *Amos* in the 6th Chapter of his Book, 1, 3, 4, and 5. Verses, shews that there were some that put the evil Day far off, and caus'd the Seat of Violence to come near, that sared sumptuously, and liv'd merrily, that eat Calves out of the Stall, and chanted to the sound of the Viol; these he says, were at Ease in Zion, and from whence could this false Ease flow, but from their false Hope; therefore the Prophet pronounces a Curse upon them, *Wo to them that are at Ease in Zion.*

2. Reason and Experience prove this. Look over the World and into thy own Heart, and see if Congregations be not made up of the following sorts of Persons.

1. Fleshly People that serve their unclean Lusts, and walk after the Flesh.

2. Worldly

2. *Worldly*: Such as make it their principal Business to get and secure the World; their Thoughts and Affections, Speeches and Actions, are most about the Earth.

3. *Prophane Drunkards, Whoremongers, Swearers, Sabbath-Breakers, Cheats.*

4. *Sluggards and careless Galeo's.* Now han't these Men and Women the Plague sore upon them? I mean the Brand of God's Curse and Condemnation, plain and visible Signs of a damnable State. *For he that is in Christ has crucified the Flesh, with it's Affections and Lusts,* Gal. 5. 24. *He that loves the World, the Love of the Father is not in him,* 1 John 2. 15. *If we say we have Fellowship with him, and walk in Darkness, we lie, and do not the Truth,* 1 John 1. 6. and 3. 6. *He that committeth Sin is of the Devil. So then, because thou art neither hot nor cold, I will spue thee out of my Mouth,* Rev. 3. 16. And yet notwithstanding all God's Threats, the most of these People are *easy* going on very merrily in these *Paths of Death*, to the dark and *gloomy Chambers* of an eternal Hell. From whence should this Stillness flow? but that they hope to be saved, whatever God has said to the contrary: The World are going on rejoicing, as if they were all assured of their Salvation. Ask them whether they hope to be saved, and they will tell you, Yes: And the far greater Part can give no scriptural Reason of this Hope; the most foul mouth'd Russian will profess his Hopes of Salvation. O *merciful God and Father*, convince the secure deceiv'd World, of their Folly and Danger, in entertaining Hopes of Happiness, without any scriptural Foundation.

I proceed to consider the third general Head, which was *To inquire into the Grounds of their Expectation of Peace and Impunity.* And

1. Ignorance is one Cause or Ground, which is fourfold.

1. They are *ignorant of God.* They have unjust Conceptions of his *Attributes, his Justice, Mercy, Truth.* I hope I shall be saved says one, for God is a merciful God. Answer, It's true he is so, beyond the Conception or Expression of any Man or Angel: But he may be so, and you damned for your Impenitence notwithstanding. God's Mercy tho' it be great, yet it's *vouchsafed* according to the *Truth* of his *Word*, and the *Holiness* of his *Nature.* If God extended special Mercy to an impenitent unconverted Soul, so continuing he would deny his Truth and wrong his Justice, and so cease to be God. Behold O *Christless*

Christless Creature ! Thy Hopes of Heaven are bottom'd on Blasphemy : Thou think'st that God is such a one as thy self, *but he will reprove thee, and set thy Sins in Order before thine Eyes.* Psalm 50 21, 22. Thou hast heard of God by the hearing of the Ear, but thine Eye never saw what a holy, just and jealous God he is : Otherwise thy false Hopes would be soon shaken, and thou would'st loath thy self in Dust and Ashes. *Job 42 5, 6.*

2. They are *ignorant of themselves.* Some will say they have a good Heart, tho' they be not so precise in their Practice as others, if they happen to do any unworthy base Action, why they'll say they don't mean any Harm, they are no Hypocrites. I would not desire a better Evidence, of a Man's graceless & damnable State than this, *Jer. 2. 25.* For it discovers gross Ignorance of themselves, had they a Discovery of their own Hearts, they would rather speak in the Language of *Jeremiah*, Chap. 17. 9. That their *Hearts are deceitful and desperately wicked.* Or of *Paul*, Rom. 7. 24 *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Sin and Death ?* This is the Language of enlighten'd Souls, they are apt to think that there is none in the World who have so bad Hearts as they.

3. Of the *Law* in it's spiritual *Extent.* *Thy Commands*, said the Psalmist, *are exceeding broad,* Psalm 119. 96. They take chief Notice of their overt Actions ; whereas it is the special Care of a Child of God to watch the inward Motions of his Soul, and to labour after Conformity to the Law of God in them, *Rom. 7. 22.*

4. They are *ignorant of the Evil of Sin.* Many have very mean and unjust Conceptions of the vile and detestable Nature of Sin, not at all proportion'd to its Heinousness ; they are apt to think that there is no great Evil in it, because many commit it with confident Hopes of Impunity, and why may not they escape as well as others ? They see a great many as bad as themselves and worse (as they imagine) live securely. Surely think they, God is not so unmerciful as to condemn such vast Numbers of Mankind ! But must God be esteemed *unmerciful* because he only extends *Mercy* in a *Way* that is *worthy* of his *Nature* ? Or because he *punishes* the *Dispisers* of it ? Concerning the Evil of Sin, let me propose these few Particulars following to your Consideration.

1. Is there no *Evil* in that which transgresses such a holy righteous *Law*, which is the *Transcript* of the divine *Nature*, and ex aly fured to the *Condition* of our *Being* ?

So being duly observ'd, it doth really advance all the true Interests of particular Persons or Communities, *Rom. 8. 12. 1 John 3. 4.*

2. Is there not a great *Evil* in that which offends such a gracious *God*, which (to speak after the Manner of Men) is an oppressing Burden to him? *Isai. 43. 24 Thou hast made me to serve with thy Sins, thou hast wearied me with thine Iniquities.* *Amos 2. 13. Behold I am pressed under you as a Cart is pressed that is full of Sheaves.* Is there not a Contumaciousness in it's Nature to all the Perfections of *God*, a Wrong to his Justice, an Offence to Holiness, a Contempt of his Authority, an Affront to his Sovereignty, a Provocation of his Power, and an Abuse of his Mercy? Is not that an infinite *Evil*, which is oppos'd to such an infinite *Good*? By Sin the Creature neglects the *Homage*, and rejects the *Allegiance*, which is due by all the *Laws of Nature* and Reason, to his *Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor* by Sin. By Sin haughty Dust flies in the Face of *God*; defies his awful *Sovereignty*, tramples upon his *Goodness* and *Mercy*, and spurns against the *Bowels* of condescending *Grace* and *Pity*. What a horrid Spawn of the most infandous *Impieties* is grasp'd in the *Bowels* of this Monster; *Rebellion, Madness, Ingratitude* and a Train of other *Evils* too tedious to be here enumerated.

3. Is there little *Evil* in that which ruins such a precious *Soul* as Men possess? *Ezek. 16. 6. Rev. 3. 17. Rom. 6. 23. The Wages of Sin is Death.* The just Recompense of the least Offence is eternal *Death*: Can that be a small *Evil* which deserves such an infinite Punishment? *Will not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* *Gen. 18. 25.* Can that *Evil* be little which nothing else cou'd make Satisfaction for, but the *Blood* of the *Son of God*? *Rom. 5. 22.* The unspeakable *Anguish* our Lord *Jesus* bear, both in his *Body* and *Soul*, in the *Garden*, and on the *Cross*, are sufficient *Evidences* of the great *Evil* of *Sin*. Can that *Evil* be little which is the *Fountain* and bitter original of all the *Calamities, Pains* and *Pressures* we either feel or fear? Neither doth the *Number* of *Transgressors* lessen the Offence, but rather augment it, *Jer. 5. 7 9.* The *Truth* and *Justice* of *God* are free from the least *Shadow* of *Change* or *Blemish*, *James 1. 17. Deut. 32. 4. He is a Rock, his Work is perfect: for all his Ways are Judgment, a God of Truth, and without Iniquity, just and right is he.* O secure presumptuous *Sinner*! didst thou but see the holy dreadful *God* enrag'd against thee, thy Heart and

and Life full of noisome Abominations, and the Curses of God's violated Law as *Flashes of Lightning* shot from the Heavens ready to scorch thy guilty perishing Soul, and the fierce *Vengeance* of an angry God like a fiery flaming *Thunderbolt* ready to smite thee dead; it would make thy Heart tremble in thy Breast, and cause thee to cry out with the most dolorous Lamentations, O wretched lost Soul that I am, *What shall I do to be saved?* Acts 2. 37. Smite these Men and Women holy Lord of Hosts, and let them see their damnable Estate, come almighty Spirit and breathe Life into these dead: Bow the Heavens O God, and let the Blind see thy Justice and thy Grace, that the *Lame may leap as a Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb sing. In the Wilderness let Waters break out, and Streams in the Desert.* Isai. 35.

2 *Negligence.* Want of Examination of their State, or Partiality in it. Some Men being doubtful of the Badness of their State, because of their wicked Actions, do not care to look into their Bosoms, for Fear of some present Uneasiness, but will *trust* that it is good without *Tryal*. They would not do so in receiving Money, tho' it were but a small Sum, they wou'd view a fourteen peny Bill carefully to see whither it had the Signers Names, before they wou'd accept it: We may see by this what a small Price many put upon their Souls. Or they are partial in the Examination of themselves, come prepossess'd to the Work, having pass'd Judgment that their State is good before *Tryal*, and to confirm this hasty and erroneous Judgment, they'l bring the Signs of Grace in the Word, somewhat lower than they are, and advance their Experiences something higher, and thus they'l make them meet one Way or other. Or they'l try themselves only by some of the lowest Signs of Grace, (and that but laxly too) and pass by others; and these Men are so conceited of and confident in their own Judgment, that they don't care to call in the Help of experienc'd Ministers, in this arduous Affair, as the primitive Christians did, Acts 2. 37. Ay but Friends, If you had a just Value for your Souls, and your Understandings were opened as theirs were, you would be afraid of being mistaken in a Matter of such vast Concern and Importance. Distrustful of your own Judgment as they were, apply your self for Direction to some faithful Minister, or judicious and experienc'd Christian. You'l bring your Deeds for Lind to the Lawyers to be search'd by them, for Fear of some Flaw or

Defect that you can't discover; and why don't you take as much Care about your Souls, as you do about your Estates. Open your Case as it really is to an honest Soul searching-Minister this wou'd be very *pleasing* to them, and it may be very *profitable* to you. It's a common Maxim (and a very true one) that Men are apt to be partial in their own Case. This is as applicable to the Concerns of the Soul, as of the Body. It's a pity that Men who are so curious in their Searches after the Knowledge of other Things, shou'd be so willingly ignorant of themselves, which is indeed the most necessary and profitable Knowledge; without it we can't obtain the saving Knowledge of God, or an Interest in his Love, *Jer. 2. 19, 22.* Thou that boastest of thy Knowledge of Tongues and Arts, pray remember the Heathen Proverb, *Gnosthe Seauton,* Know thy self; which thou can't not obtain without impartial Self-Examination.

4. *Self-Love.* Men by Nature are Lovers of themselves, more than Lovers of God.

Now this Self-Love excites them to think the best of themselves. They know there is some Difficulty in coming to *Christ*, therefore they are inclin'd to hope this is over on the Account of their Ease; but Friends, seeing that your Conceit can't make your State good, if it be bad, is it not better to endure some present necessary and temporary Trouble, while there's Hopes of getting your State remedied, than to endure eternal Pains without Hope or Possibility of Recovery? *But this is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men love Darknes rather than Light, because their Deeds are Evil. For every one that doeth Evil hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, lest his Deeds should be reprov'd,* John 3: 19, 20.

4. *Inconsideration.* Thoughtlessness about themselves as to their State towards God and Eternity. Though the most of People are very earnest and thoughtful in the Pursuit of their carnal Pleasures, and *temporary Gain*; yet they are very indolent and careless about the Affairs of their *eternal Happiness*. They are so hurried about the Honours, Profits and Pleasures of the World, that they have no Time to seek an Interest in an endless Life. O strange Madness, unworthy of the rational Nature! but remember, O inconsiderate Soul that awful Threat of the terrible God! *Psalm 50. 22.* And may it be to thee, as the Hand-writing on the Wall to *Belsazzar*. What Matter of Lamentation is it that Men who have so noble Powers

Powers of Reason and Reflection, should exercise them mostly on Things of Light and temporary Moment and Consequence! Blessed Lord Jesus, alarm these Thoughtless and unconcern'd Creatures, incline them to bend their Minds upon eternal Things.

Consideration is undoubtedly the beaten *Road* to *Renovation*, it exalts Reason to it's due Preheminence, sets it upon the *Throne* of the *Soul*, and makes it wield the golden *Scepter* over the *Senses*, and so checks the furious *Course* of the unbridled *Passions* to Sin. By this Reason is excited to shake it self like a fetter'd *Samson*, and tear in Pieces the *Cords* of *Sensuality* wherewith it was bound. *Consideration* hath three Things especially in it. (1.) Knowledge and Understanding, when one in receiving a Message from God, understands both who speaks and what is spoken: It's the same with that, *Psalms* 94. 8. (2.) Serious Deliberation, concerning the Weight and Importance of God's Messages, the Benefit obtain'd by obeying them, and the Danger incurr'd by slighting them. *Gen.* 39. 9. *Job* 31. 14. *Isai.* 44. 19. (3.) Submission and Obedience. *Ezek.* 18. 28.

5. *Pride*. Natural Men are of the Humour of *Simon the Sorcerer*, *Acts* 8. 9. He gave out that himself was some great one. So unconverted People (tho' some of them have the Wit not to speak it in Words) yet this is the Language of their Carriage and Behaviour, that they are great ones; this is what they would give you to understand, that they are no mean Persons; nay so far from that, that they are even Wonders in the World; Every one as excellent *Calvin* observes, "carries a Kingdom in his Breast". There is this or that excellent *Property*, Attainment, or *Atchievement*, which they imagine they possess in a Degree superior to almost any other: This makes them swell like *Toads* with *Pride*: Hence they become impatient of *Reproof* or controul; when God's faithful Servants tell them of their Wickedness, they reject it with *Disdain*, as *Hazael* did *Elisha's* Message, *2 Kings* 8. 13. *What is thy Servant a Dog?* He cou'd not believe that he was so mean and vile as the Prophet inform'd him: Thus it is with many graceless People; there be such high *Tho'ts* and carnal Reasonings in them, which nothing but God's Power can subdue, *2 Cor.* 10. 5. Hence it is so difficult to perswade Men of their damnable State, *Rev.* 3. 17. *Thou thinkest thou art rich and increased in Goods, and knowest not that thou art poor, blind, miserable, and naked.*

Luke 18. 11. The Pharisee stood and pray'd thus with himself, *God I thank thee, I am not as other Men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, or even as this Publican.* If any Body had told this conceited Blade nothing but the very Truth, viz. That he was in a lost perishing State; wou'd he not have huffed them and scorn'd their Words? Yes no Doubt, as much as some of his Stamp do at this Day, *reject the Counsel of God against themselves,* Luke 7. 30. But if natural Men have Keennels of natural Wit and acquir'd Learning, this exceedingly increases their Pride, and strengthens their false Confidence. But let them know that the *Strength* of one's Confidence does not prove the *Truth* of it. I would beg of such People in the Name of God, this one Favour, that they would read and consider the following Scriptures, *Mat. 25. 8, 11, 12. John 8. 54, 55. 1 Cor. 1. 20, 21, 26, 27. And 3. 18.*

6. *Prosperity.* Some imagine that because they are increased in Wealth, their *Labours* attended with *Successes*, therefore God *loves* them, and their State is good. Thus *Ephraim*, *Hos. 12. 8. Yet I am become Rich, I have found me out Substance, in all my Labours, they shall find no Iniquity in me.* As if he should say, it cannot be that there is Iniquity in my Way, since I am so bless'd and succeed'd in my Labours. But let such remember the Words of *Solomon*, *Eccl. 9. 1. That no Man knoweth Love or Hatred, by all that is before him.* That is, no Man can know whether he is the Object of God's Love or Hatred by his outward Circumstances. The common Blessings of Providence are promiscuously conferr'd, *Job 34. 45. For he maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil, and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust.* Oftentimes the worst of Men enjoy the most of these temporary and fading Possessions. *Psalms 73. 6, 7. & 3. 4. Pride compasseth them about as a Chain, and Violence covereth them as a Garment, their Eyes stand out with Fatness, they have more than Heart could wish.* *Job 21. 7, 13. Wherefore do the Wicked live, become old? Yea, are mighty in Power? Their seed is established in their Sight with them. Their Houses are safe from Fear, neither is the Rod of God upon them. They send forth their little ones like a Flock, and their Children dance. They take up the Trimbrel and Harp, and rejoyce at the Sound of the Organ.* If many prosperous Persons would be so kind to themselves as to inquire how they came by their *Wealth*, and what *Effects* it has had upon them? it might perhaps *check* their *boasting*, and *con-*
vince

vince them that it is not the *Fruit* of God's Love, but of his Anger? *Mat. 2. 2. Iſai. 1. 5. Why ſhould ye be ſtricken any more, ye will revolt more and more.* Is not a Perſon in a deſperate Caſe, when he is given up by ſkilful Phyſicians, who having try'd many Medicines, to no Purpoſe, forbear giving any more physical Preſcriptions, but leave him as *Hopeleſs* to follow the *Guidance* of his diſeaſ'd *Appetite*? Is not this the very Caſe of many proſperous People? Pray conſider the following Particulars. Is not Wealth given in God's Anger?

1. When it's *acquir'd* by fraudulent *Meaſures*, *Zech. 5. 4.*

Or

2. When it does not *come* in answer to *Prayer*, *Matth. 6. 11.* Or

3. When it has not theſe *Effects* upon the *Poſſeſſors*,

1. When it does not make them *humble*, *Gen. 32. 10. 1 Chron. 17. 16.* Nor

2. *Thankful*, *Pſalm 116. 2.* Nor

3. *Charitable*, *1 Chron. 29. 13, 14. Luke 19. 8. 1 Tim. 6. 17, 18.* But on the contrary *Proud, Senſual, Penurious.* *Jer. 2. 31. Wherefore ſay my People, We are lords, we will come no more unto thee. Deut. 32. 15. Hab. 1. 15, 16. Jam. 2. 13. He ſhall have Judgment without Mercy, that hath ſhewed no Mercy.*

7. *False and erroneous Conceits* of all the *Chriſtian Graces, Affections, Privileges, Performances*; and particularly,

1. Of *Conviction*. Some take it to be only a *Conviction* of the *Judgment*, or *Aſſent* of the *Mind*, to the doctrinal *Truths* of *Religion*. So they will confeſs we are born in a bad State by *Nature*, but they won't own that they are in a bad and damnable State at preſent, and that thou muſt be ſenſible of before you come to *Chriſt* ſavingly, *Luke 15. 17. And I periſh with Hunger.* Or

2. That it conſiſts in ſome *Qualms* of *Conſcience*. Some *Trouble* and *Fear* about ſome groſs actual *Offences*, which like a *Sea Sickneſs* ſoon goes over, and wears off by *Degrees*, then they are *Easy*; and ſome of them will wallow in the ſame *Luſts* again, like a *Dog* licking up his *Vomit*, *2 Pet. 2. 21, 22.* But true *Conviction* muſt be of the *State* and *Heart Corruptions*, as well as of *actual Sins*, occaſioning great *Perplexity* and *Diſtreſs*; *What ſhall I do?* As a Man ſtab'd with a *Spear* asketh for a *Remedy*. *Acts 2. 37.* " Thoſe that have been often convicted, have never been " convicted, ſays Mr. *Stoddard*,

The Presumer Detected,

3. *Conversion*: Which many take to be only some *Trouble of Conscience*, and an *outward Reformation* following it, both which may be without a Spark of saving and converting Grace. *Acts* 24. 25. *2 Pet.* 2. 20. *Rom.* 2. 17, 18, 19, 20. *Conversion* is a *universal efficacious and internal Change*, which *spreads* through all the *Powers and Passions* of the *Soul*; the *Understanding* is illuminated with a *Beam of heavenly Light*, *Acts* 26. 18. What high Thoughts of God, what sweet Meditations of Christ, what humble Thoughts of themselves, have these inlighten'd Souls? *Gen.* 18. 27. *Phil.* 3. 8. What Pliableness in their *Wills* to the Will of God. *He will make his People willing in the Day of his Power*, *Psalms* 110. 3. *Lord, What wilt thou have me to do?* said convinced *Saul*. What strong *Proneness* in their *Affections* towards God and Heaven, *Psalms* 73. 25. How tender are their *Consciences*, easily sensible of the least *Offence*, as the *Eye* is of the smallest *Dust*. *Heb.* 9. 14. How holy and heavenly their *Lives*! *Rom.* 6. 14. *Col.* 3. 1, 2, 3.

4. *Of Repentance*: Which many take to be a *legal Sorrow*, with some *Care* after *Reformation*. But had not *Judas* and *Abab* a slavish mercenary *Sorrow*? Some People think that if they do but *mourn* (whatever Principle it be from) when they have committed some gross *Crime*, and take some *Care* afterwards for a while to *avoid* it, that they are true *Penitents*; but O Friend, this is far from true *Repentance*! thy *mourning* must be from *Love*. *Psalms* 51. Thy *Hatred* must be *universal* and *implacable*, *2 Cor.* 7. 11. And there must be a *thorough Reformation* after it. For it is he that *confesseth* and *forlaketh* Sin, that shall find *Me cy*. Without this you may go on *sinning* and *repenting alternately*, or by turns, and notwithstanding be *damm'd* at last eternally, *Rev.* 21. 8. & 22. 15.

5. *Of Faith*: Which some understand to be an historical Assent to the *Truths* of Christianity, or a believing that they shall be saved by the *Mercy* of God. But if one should ask them these three *Questions* concerning their *Faith*.

1. How they got it?
 2. How they keep it?
 3. What *Effects* it has upon their *Hearts* and *Lives*?
- They would be like the Man without the *Wedding Garment*, *Speechless*, or speak nothing to the *Purpose*; they have got it they don't know *how*; may be in a *Night Dream*; they don't know when they were without it, they keep it without *Difficulty*, they are strong *Believers*
about

about their *Souls*; but as to their *Bodies* and *Estates*, they dare not trust without the greatest Anxiety, even the Provision of a few Weeks; they still go on in the old Course as worldly and carnal as ever: To such I would say in the Words of the Apostle, James 2. 19. *Thou believest that there is one God, thou dost well, the Devils believe also and tremble.* If your Faith don't work by Love, and overcome the World, it is but a Fiction of your own Brain, or a Delusion of the Devil. *Obj. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,* Job 13. 15. I trust in God, I shall be saved through Christ. How know you that you trust in God? What, trust with a *whole Heart* and a *wicked Life*, that you shall be saved? This is trusting in the *Devil*: Christ hath said that such unrenewed Creatures as you are, *shall not enter into his Kingdom,* John 3. 3, 5. But the Devil says you shall. Now you trust in the *Devil*, that he will prove *faithful*, and *Christ* false; trusting that you shall be saved without complying with the Terms of the Gospel is notorious *Blasphemy*, as shall afterwards be made appear. What will you trust upon? Will you build your trust upon the Word of a damned Fiend? I am sure you have no Word of Promise in all the Scripture to trust upon, while you are in a carnal State. *All the Promises are yea, and Amen, in Christ Jesus,* 2 Cor. 1. 20. *Eph. 2. 12.* *Obj.* It's true, I have no Righteousness of my own, but Christ has died to save Sinners: He has so, but what sort of Sinners? Not such hardened Rebels, prophane *Esau's*, scoffing *Ishmael's*, or churlish griping *Nabal's*; as you are, without a Reformation: No, no, it's the penitent Prodigals, humble distress'd sinking Souls. He came to seek and save the lost Sheep of the House of Israel, such as see themselves so. He invites the heavy laden Soul to him, *Mat. 11. 28.* Whatever Christ has done or suffer'd shall never avail to the Salvation of impenitent Persons as such. *Ex-cept ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,* Luke 13. 3, 5. You do but prophane the Saviour's Blood who pretend to an Interest in it, and yet go on in a Course of Sin, for you do declare to the World that their is no Power in his Death to slay Sin. Hear ye deceived Souls what the Author to the *Hebrews* speaks to you, *Chaps. 10. 28* --- 32.

6. *Sanctification.* Some unconverted People imagine they are sanctified because of the inward Combat they have with Sin, that *Struggle* which is between their *Conscience* and their *Lusts*, they conceive to be the *Contests* between the *Flesh* and *Spirit*, which the Apostle speaks

of, *Rom. 7.* But to correct this frequent but fatal Mistake; pray observe, that there is a great Difference between them, especially in these four Particulars. Namely, Their Causes, Matter, Manner and Consequences.

And

1. In their *Causes.* The Contest of a natural Man is occasioned by one or other of the following Particulars.

1. By the *Light of Nature*, which represents the Danger of Sin in some Measure, and so restrains from the Commission of it, *Rom. 2. 14, 15.*

2. A *pious Education*, which strengthens Reason's Influence, by insinuating into the concupiscible Passions a Love to Piety.

3. By the *common Illuminations* of the *Holy Spirit*, which give additional Force to the Former, by affording a clearer View of the penal Fruits of Sin, *2 Pet. 2.*

4. By the *natural Temperament* of the Body, which creates an Aversion to some particular Evils; as for Instance, Some are naturally of a mild Disposition; now this strengthens their Aversion to a Contest with the Sin of rash Anger.

5. By the *natural Discord* there is between different Vices. i. e. Covetousness opposes Prodigality, and gives directly contrary Injunctions. The Graces of the Spirit are all harmonious, but different Lusts are jarring and discordant, every of them labours for Mastery and Dominion, and therefore oppose each other in Quest of it, as really as they unitedly oppose the Grace of Jesus, as their common Enemy.

6. Not only by the servile *Fear of Punishment* from the righteous God, *Gen. 20. 34.* But also by the *Fear of the Penalties of humane Laws*, which are without doubt a Restraint upon some.

But the spiritual Combat of God's Children against Sin arises from the *New Nature* in them, which is carried forth with an unconstrain'd steady Proneness towards those Things that are Evil, as such, *Gal. 5. 16, 17. Rom. 7. 22. 2 Cor. 7. 11.*

2. In the *Matter of the Conflict*, which in the Ungodly is gross or scandalous Evils, such as are condemn'd by the *Law of Nature*, such as are like to wound their *Character.* *Exod. 1. 17. Rom. 2. 14, 15.* Or such as cross their *Custom* or *Temperament.* Is it not common for some ungodly People to lash out Anathemas against those Sins in others, which they themselves have little or no Inclination to commit, while in the mean time, they indulge others as bad or worse, *Rom. 2. 3.* But the *Combat* of regenerate Persons

Persons is against *all Sins* whatsoever; *internal* as well as *external*, *small* as well as *great*; those that are fashionable as well as such as are more scandalous. The gracious Soul not only hates all Sin in general, and every Tendency to it, but his darling Lusts in particular, is the Object of his special Abhorrence. *Psalm* 119. 104. *1 Thes.* 5. 22. *Psalm* 18. 23.

3. In the *Manner*, respecting unconverted People the Combat is between different Faculties; as for Example, between *Conscience* and the corrupt *Inclinations* of the *Will*, or between *Reason* and *Passion*. *1 Kings* 21. 2, 4, 6. *Mat.* 7. 22, 23, 24. But the Combat of converted Persons is between the different *Parts* of the same *Power* or *Faculty*, viz. The renewed against the unrenewed, *Gal.* 5. 17. The gracious Soul with *Josepb* opposes Sin with *Love Arguments*; how shall I do this Sin and great Wickedness against God, *Gen.* 39. 9. But the unrenewed Soul opposes it with Arguments arising from slavish Fear; if I do this I shall be damned, lose my Credit, and hurt my Estate. The natural Man seeks only the Restraint of Sin, *Gen.* 20. 6. But the spiritual Man seeks the utter *Destruction* of it in *Heart* as well as in *Practice*, in *Habit* and *Act*, *Root* and *Fruits*, *Rom.* 6. 6.

4. In the *Consequences*. The *Contest* of natural Men often consists with a *Course* of Sin, *Rom.* 2. 15. And 1. 21, 22, 24, 28. compared. But that of gracious Souls always effects this, that tho' they be guilty of Sins of Infirmity, yet the *Course* and *Tenor* of their Lives is *pious* and *holy*, *1 John* 3. 9. They are *upright* in their *Aims*, *earnest* in their *Desires*, and *uniform* in their *Endeavours* after a *universal Conformity* to all the *Precepts* of the *divine Law*, *Prov.* 11. 3. *Psalm* 119. 6, 8, 20, 24. The spiritual Conflict for the most part prevents gross Acts of Sin, *Psalm* 18. 23. which the other admits, *Matth.* 23. 23, 24. Again, the spiritual Conflict hinders the *Consummation* of Sin, mars the precious *Consolation*, the present *Complacency*, and the consequent *Obstinacy*. *Gal.* 5. 17. *Matth.* 26. 75. Whereas the other admits them all, *2 Pet.* 3. 5. O presumptuous Sinner! if thou didst but impartially compare thy self with what has been offer'd under this Head (should God's Spirit concur) thou might see as clear as the Day thy deceiv'd and undone State, and that thy strivings against Sin, are but the Work of a natural Conscience; arm'd perhaps with a good Education and external Revelation, the common *Commissions* of the *Holy Spirit*, and *selfish Motives*. Is it possi-

ble that Sin should thus govern over thee, if you had the indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit? No, no. *Rom.* 6. 14. It's a Delusion to think so, and a very destructive one too. *1 John* 1. 6. How can'st thou imagine thou art sanctify'd when you neither make *Advances* in Holiness, nor *mourn* for the want of it? Are not such in the Gall of Bitterness? *Psalms* 84. 7. *Acts* 8. 23.

6. Of *Love*: Both to God and his People. And

1. Of *Love to God*. They think they always lov'd God ever since they can remember; if we ask them, Did you ever hate God? No, say they; this shews plainly that they are blind, *Rev.* 3. 17. For there is great *Malice* and *Rancour* in the Heart of every natural Man against the most *High God*, which they must see and bewail if their Eyes were opened, *Rom.* 7. 8. If they lov'd God they would love his *Laws*, his *Image*, the Duties of his *Worship*, *John* 14. 15. *1 John* 5. 3: And concerning their hating of God, pray read, *Exod.* 20. 5. *Numb.* 10. 35. *Deut.* 7. 10. and 32. 41. *Job* 15. 25, 26. *Psalms* 29. 8. *Eccl.* 68. 1. *Eccl.* 81. 15. *Eccl.* 139. 21. *Prov.* 8. 36. *John* 15. 18, 23, 24. *Rom.* 1. 30. *Eccl.* 8. 7.

2. As to the *People of God*: Some by the Force of a religious *Education*, and *enlightned Conscience*, have a *fearful Respect* to good Men; this *King Herod*, tho' a great Man and not very good, express'd to a faithful Minister, *John the Baptist*, who had reprov'd him sharply, *Mark* 6. 20. *He heard him gladly*, tho' he was a *Boanerges*: This was a great deal better than the Practice of our haughty *Rakes*, who fly from the *Light*, because their Deeds are *evil*. Wicked People may love good Men because of their *Relaxation* to them, or for their *Eloquence*, *Candour*, *Courtesy*, *Honesty*, when they don't in the mean time heartily relish their strict Holiness; but that Love to the People of God, which is genuine and sincere, is chiefly for their Holiness, and is universal to all pious Persons whatever Denomination they bear, and gradually increases in Degrees, proportionable to the Degrees of Piety we see in Persons.

7. *Hope*. They think that every Body is obliged to hope he shall be saved, whether he has Reason or not; this their Lips and Lives compar'd, too sadly verify; but this *Hope* has *Blasphemy* and *Devil Worship* in it, as I shall prove under the *fourth Head*.

8. *Sincerity*. They say, if one does but pray *sincerely* he shall be *accepted*. It is true, if the Sincerity be of the right Kind. Sincerity is twofold, moral and spiritual. The

first flows from selfish Nature, seeking it's own Preservation or Benefit, act'd either by slavish Fear or mercenary Love. The second from Grace, from the new Nature, transcendent Love to God for himself, and Aims at his Glory.

If thou hast never seen thy Hypocrisy and bewail'd o'er it, and yet, if you don't watch against it, thou art a cursed Hypocrite this very Moment: A great many blinded Souls will talk of Sincerity that know nothing of it.

9. *Charity.* This they think consists in hoping that all shall be saved, or the most part of People under the Gospel, tho' God says the contrary expressly. *Strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way that leads to Life, and few there be that find it,* Mat. 7. 14. When our Lord was ask'd whither there are few that be saved, he gave this Answer, *Many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able,* Luke 13. 24. *Many are called but few chosen,* Mat. 12. 16. In the Parable of the Sower, but one in four received the Word savingly. Now is it Charity to believe that God is a Liar? O Shame! But I'll tell you what your pretended *Charity* flows from, viz. *Gross Ignorance* of the holy Scriptures, and a *Work of God's Grace* upon your own Souls: *Want of unfeigned Love to Mankind, Sloth, Cowardize*: One or all of these are the *Fountains* of your *Charity*. If you had ever felt the *Pangs* of the *New-birth* in your selves, you would not judge of others so lightly; but it's natural for Men to weigh others in the same *Scales* they do themselves. If the Love of God and Souls burn'd in your Breasts, would you suffer People to go securely to Damnation, and never tell them their Danger? If we should pity and help our Neighbours Ox in distress, much more their precious Souls: How can true Love dwell in those Men that do not?

Obj. 1. I have no Business with them, says one, let every Tub stand on his own Bottom. Vile Man, thou speak'st in the Language of bloody Cain, Gen. 4. 9. *Am I my Brother's Keeper?* and proves thy self to be as void of Grace as he.

Obj. 2. This is the *Minister's Work*, says another, to reprove and detect Men. It is so I confess peculiarly, and wo to them if they do it not; but every Christian is a Member of Christ's mystical Body, and therefore should seek after the good of the whole, as they have Opportunity and Capacity. 1 Cor. 12. 25, 26, 27.

Obj. 3. *I hope* the most of People are *pious*; Ay, and what's the Reason, if you thought otherwise you would condemn your self? But Friend, thou speak'st in the Language of *curst Corah*, *All the Congregation are holy, every one of them*, Numb. 16. 3.

Obj. 4. But we must not *judge*. It's true we must not judge rashly, we should not judge any Man's State to be either good or bad without good Grounds from their Speech or Actions; neither are we to judge of People's final State by their present, tho' a Person be in a bad State at present he may be chang'd before Death, by the earnest Use of appointed Means. This is the rash Judgment the holy Scriptures forbids, and all unreasonable groundless Jealousies among Christians on the Account of their different Sentiments about the circumstantial Points, or smaller Matters of Religion. But the Lord Jesus has given us Liberty to judge the Tree by the Fruit, *Mat. 12. 33.* Again, By their Fruits we are told, we shall know them, *Mat. 7. 20.* And he also reproves the Pharisees for omitting the weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, Faith, *Mat. 23. 23.* The Apostle *John* confirms this, in these Words, *We know that we are pass'd from Death to Life*, 1 John 3. 14. And that *the whole World lieth in Wickedness*, 1 John 5. 19. You must not judge, you must not judge; this is all the Shield that some Hypocrites have to screen themselves from the Arrows of a just Reproof: But what's the Reason that the worst of Men should thus *disclaim* against a scriptural and rational *Judgment*? Why it's this, they themselves are guilty, they have built on a rotten sandy Foundation, and therefore don't care to be *search'd*, for fear it should disturb their pleasant *Dream*. They are therefore as much afraid of being *discover'd*, as a *Thief* is of having his House *search'd* when he has stolen Goods in it. Stand off, let them alone, they'll shift for themselves; this is the Language of their Carriage: But O Sinner, if ever God convinces thee of thy Hypocrisy, thou wilt like such faithful *Dealing*.

2. Wrong Conceptions of, or a false Dependance on the Motions of the Affections. Let us speak a few Words of these three, viz. Fear, Desire, Delight. And

1. Hast thou trembled at the Word of God? So did heathen *Felix*.

2. Hast thou Desire after the Bread that came down from Heaven? So had the carnal Jews, *John 6. 34.*

3. Hast

3. Hast thou Delight in serving God? So had those Hypocrites mention'd, *Isai.* 58. 1, 2. Read, *Heb.* 6. 4. and tremble to think what awful Advances a Christless Person may make towards *Christianity*, and yet for ever *perish*. That Fear which is saving must be *filial* and *effectual* to *restrain* from a *Course of Sinning*.

The *Desire* must be *transcendent* above all other Things; *Psalms* 73. 25. The *Delight* must be *genuine*, for the sake of Religion it self, and not the outward Benefits that may attend it.

But because too many (it's to be fear'd) rest upon this feeble Foundation, let it be consider'd, that there may be strange but ineffectual Commotions excited among the inferiour Passions of the Soul by the following Causes:

1. By the common Operations of the Holy Spirit, which many do partake of who perish everlastingly. These alarm the Conscience and move transient Affections, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6. *Hos.* 6. 4. O *Ephraim*, what shall I do unto thee? O *Judah*, what shall I do unto thee? For your Goodness is as the morning Cloud, and as the early Dew it goeth away.

2. By the Instructions and Rebukes of a natural Conscience, representing the base Nature, damning and dreadful Fruits of Sin. *Rom.* 2. 14, 15. & 6. 21. What Fruit had ye then in those Things of which ye are now ashamed, for the End of those Things is Death.

3. By the Solemnity or Novelty of the Subjects treated of. New Things tickle the curious Fancy, and so raise a short liv'd Pleasure, which is either much lessen'd or totally extinguish'd by Custom. So grave and solemn Subjects, either of Love or Terror, when they are handled with justness of Thought, and energy of Expression, how can they but excite agreeable Commotions when the blessed God is represented in Paints of Light, agreeable to the Greatness and Goodness of his Nature, and the Instances of his condescending Compassion to Mankind, as enthron'd on Love, and holding forth the Scepter of Salvation; when the Lord Jesus who is the Rose of Sharon, the Beauty of Heaven, the Wonder and Delight of the Angels, is represented in his personal and mediatorial Excellencies, how can even graceless Persons keep from sending forth some *Salies* of Desire?

So I may say of Piety, when the Scene of practical Religion is opened with all it's radiant Beauty & solemn Majesty, when its Conformity to the Perfections of the Deity, & to the Law of Nature and Reason is discover'd, as well as it's Sub-

serviency

serviency to promote our truest and greatest Interests, both in this and the future World : What Soul is so sordid and sunk into Brutality, as not to feel the Impressions of it ? But especially when the painful Passions of a *bleeding God* for *rebellious Dust*, are discoursed of with a decent *Pathos* and Concern : Won't this affect, at least in a natural Way, any Men that are not wholly lost to all Sense of Humanity ; but alas ! what is this to Salvation ? Does not any *Tragedy sooth* and *strike* the tenderest Passions ?

4. By the *Speaker's Eloquence*, which is apt to open the *Springs of Passion*, when he delivers divine Mysteries with Sublimity of Sentiment, beautiful Diction and graceful Action, with what gentle Violence do such Discourses insinuate themselves into the Affections ; but these natural Commotions are as transient as ineffectual. John 5. 35. *He was a burning and a shining Light, and ye were willing for a Season to rejoyce in his Light.* Many of Ezekiel's Hearers were pleased with his Eloquence, but not reform'd, Ezek. 33. 32. *And lo, thou art to them as a very lovely Song of one that hath a very pleasant Voice, and can play well on an Instrument : For they hear thy Words, but they do them not.*

5. By *carnal Apprehensions of divine Mysteries*, as tho' they suted our corrupt Inclinations, John 4. 15. & 6. 34.

6. By *remarkable Appearances of God*, either in Judgment or Mercy, by his Word or Rod. So we are inform'd, that when God *slew Israel, then they sought him*, Psalm 78. 34. While the wasting Hand of God was upon them, they made sute to his Majesty with an Appearance of *Devotion* ; but it was only a Shew and Pretence, as the following Verses assert, 36, 37. *Nevertheless, they did flatter him with their Mouths, and lied unto him with their Tongues, for their Heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Covenant.* When Jehovah appeared on Sinai's Mount, attended with all the *Ensigns of astonishing Majesty and awful Glory*, it had very considerable Impressions on the People of Israel ; they quickly sent divine Moses on an Embassy to the Almighty to enquire after Directions concerning their future Conduct, which they express'd a Resolution to observe ; but fail'd in the Performance of it. *Exod. 20. 18. Deut. 5. 24, --- 29.* O Sinner be warn'd by what has been now offer'd, not to trust to, and confide in these *fading Flowers of floating fleeting Passions*, which produce not the *solid Fruits of Righteousness*,

3: Of the *Privileges* of Christians, such as these following.

1. *Good Parentage*. But alas! this is a poor Egyptian Reed to lean upon. The pious Examples of good Parents will increase your Confusion and Damnation without you improve them. A Heathen could say, and that very justly, *Quæ avi et proavi, et quæ non fecimus, ipsi vis ea nostra voco.*

What our Ancestors worthily have done,
It's mean and sordid to call them our own.

I don't call those Things ours, said he, which our Forefathers have done.

2. *Good Education*. Tho' this may excite People to have some Love to Religion; *Train up a Child in the Way he shall go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* But alas! this is a poor Religion, and yet it's all that some have; these Men had they been born in Turkey would doubtless have embrac'd the Mahometan System with equal Ease; but true Christians are not born of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God, John 1. 13.

3. *Baptism* and *the Lord's Supper*. Some are so unwise as to think they are regenerated by Baptism, when their Lives prove the contrary. But the Case is so with some, that if they can't find it there, they don't know where else to seek for it, it must have been wrought then upon them they think, for they don't know of any other Time when any such Work was wrought in them: Ay, this would be an easy Way of Regeneration indeed; but we are inform'd by the Apostle to the *Galatians*, *That neither Circumcision, nor Uncircumcision availeth any thing, but the new Creature*, Gal. 6. 15. Some will plead in the Day of Christ's appearing that they have eaten and drunk in his Presence, and that he has taught in their Streets, but to no avail, Luke 13. 26, 27.

4. Some rest upon the good Opinion of others, because they have a good Name among the living, are in Esteem and Reputation with the godly. Alas! this is no sure Ground to bottom your Confidence upon, for many have a Name to live that are dead, Rev. 3. 1. It's much safer to observe the Apostle's Injunction, Gal. 6. 4. *But let every Man prove his own Work, and then he shall have rejoycing in himself, and not in another.*

4. Some

The Presumer Detected,

4. Some depend upon their Performances, or Righteousness, Negative, Positive, Comparative. And

1. Their *negative Righteousness*: Their abstaining from gross and open Immoralities, *Luke 18. 11.* Or

2. If they be defective in this, they rest perhaps upon their *positive Righteousness*: Some Virtue or other which they think they excel in: As for Instance, may be that of *Honesty*; some will say, that are otherwise loose in their Conversation, that they have never wrong'd a Man of a peny in their Life: This is well so far, if it is true, for indeed there are too few that are free from open or covert Fraud; but is it sufficient? *Mat. 5: 20.* Nay, some are so blind and vain as to think and say, they do all they can in God's Service: O what a shameless Falshood is this? What! Do you read and hear God's Word, pray, meditate, speak of divine Things as often as you can, or ought? Do ye all the Duties of Justice, Mercy, Charity that you owe to your Neighbours Souls and Bodies? Do you endeavour to keep your Hearts continually from vain and vile Tho'ts? Your Lips from all indecent Speeches? And your Lives from all forbidden Actions? Surely your Consciences, if you have any left, will witness the contrary, *James 3. 2.* Your Blindness & gross Ignorance of your selves proves the Badness of your present State, *Rev. 3. 17, 18.* *Thou thinkest thou art rich, and increased in Goods, and knowest not that thou art poor, and blind, and miserable, and naked.*

3. Some are more refined *Hypocrites*, and do depend upon their *comparative Righteousness*, with the Pharisee, *I thank thee that I am not as other Men are, Extortioners, Unjust, Adulterers, or even as this Publican, Luke 18. 11.* Other Men's Lives are not the Standard or Scale by which we shall be weighed, but the divine Law. You may be better than thousands, and yet be damned for all. *Except your Righteousness exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of God, Mat. 5. 20.*

But because *Dependance* upon our own *Righteousness* is an *Error* of pernicious *Consequence*, a *Defect* in the ground Work; For no other *Foundation* can any Man lay, save that which is laid, which is *Jesus Christ*, *1 Cor. 3. 11.* And also because it's an *Error* very difficultly discovered; many that are guilty of it in *Fact*, will deny it in *Words*; therefore I think it highly necessary before I proceed any further to essay an *Answer* to this *Question*; *How may we know whether we rest in our own Righteousness, or not?*

Ans. 1.

Ans. 1. Those rest in their own Righteousness, who being yet in a State of Nature, unacquainted with a saving Change of Heart, believe that their Performances or religious Privileges interests them in the divine Promises, *Phil.* 3. 7, 8. *Those Things*, meaning his Performances and Privileges, which he had before mentioned, which he formerly counted *Gain*, thought thereby to gain Happiness, while he was unconverted, now since he knew Christ, he counts them *Loss*; knowing that if he continued resting on them for Salvation by Way of Purchase, he should have perished for ever, been a lost Man to all Eternity. He therefore renounces in point of Dependance his former Duties and Privileges, esteems them *Dung and Dross*; cleaves to, and relies upon a *naked Jesus*, *1 Cor.* 1. 30.

2. All such as have not been slain *Dead* by the Law, rest on their own Righteousness, *Rom.* 7. 9, 10. Such as have never been made thoroughly sensible of their forlorn helpless State by Nature, *Matth.* 5. 3. *Acts* 2. 37. Such as have but a *Semi-Conviction*, they see that their Course of Life wants Amendment; this they endeavour to accomplish in their own *Strength*, and having obtained some more freedom from the gross Pollutions of the World, there they rest contented, tho' they be ignorant of experimental Religion. *2 Pet.* 2. 20. *Rom.* 5. 4, 5. *John* 8. 54, 55. *Of whom ye say, He is your God, and yet ye have not known him.*

3. Such as never were sensible of their own *Dependance* upon their Duties and Privileges, and of the great Difficulty of quitting that destructive Dependance. If one should ask some Formalists, whether ever they rested on their Duties, they would answer, no; God forbid that they should believe any such Doctrine, as the *Merits of Works*. What do you think them *Papists*, they scorn your Words. Or perhaps some would reply thus; that they neither have, nor do depend upon any thing they have done, for they know, that when they have done all, they are but unprofitable Servants, *Luke* 17. 10. O unhappy deceived Souls! this is a plain Evidence, that ye are yet in *Darkness and Death*, *Rom.* 10. 3. *For they being ignorant of God's Righteousness, and going about to establish their own Righteousness, did not submit themselves to the Righteousness of God.* That is, being ignorant (at least as to their own Souls feeling Experience) of the absolute Necessity and Sufficiency of the Mediator's Righteousness, called the Righteousness of God, because it is of his Contrivance, Ordination and Acceptance,

ceptance, and labouring to obtain Justification by the Deeds of the Law, or upon the Account of their civil, moral and religious Actions; they did not submit themselves to the Righteousness of God, did not yield to the Terms of the Gospel, and accept the Offer of Justification by Faith in Christ Jesus, but rebelliously stood it out against the Tenders of God's pure and rich Grace. O! it's a great Stoop to a proud haughty Sinner, and such we are all by Nature, to come to Christ as a helpless, hunger-starv'd Beggar, and to sue for an Alms of meer Mercy: The Truth is, it's so much against the Grain, that thousands will rather be damned than do it. What should Persons of their Worth and Character lay aside (as to Dependance) all the many Duties they have done, be contented to be strip'd naked and bare of them, and be intirely beholden to free Grace in the Matter of Justification? No, that's below them, they'l rather run the risk of Damnation upon their own *Bottom*, and beggarly Stock. All those Persons that would most sacrilegiously halve their Justification and Salvation between *Christ* and *themselves*, are *Rebels* against *God's Righteousness*, they submit not themselves to it, as the *Apostle* expresseth it. What is more common among some People than that Saying, If we do our Part, God will certainly do his: O stupid Ignorance, horrid Arrogance, and base Blasphemy! Is not this a sharing and halving with a Witness, the Honours and Purchase of our Happiness between Christ and our selves? How contrary is this perverse Doctrine and Practice to the current of the holy Scriptures? *Eph. 2. 8. Rom. 9. 16. Tit. 3. 5. Rom. 3. 23, 24, 28. And 4. 5.*

But there be other graceless Persons that having had the Privilege of a religious Education, can chatter by Rote more orthodoxly about this Matter, tho' their State towards God be not a whit better. If they are ask'd, Whether they have rested upon their own Righteousness? They can tell you, Yes; all by Nature rest on their Works; they have learn'd so from their Parents, and heard others talk so, or read it in good Books: But what avails all this? We must not only renounce the Merits of Works in *Doctrine*, but in *Practice*, by actually going out of our selves and our own Righteousness to Christ, *Phil. 3. 7, 8.* which is not to be effected without an antecedent preparatory Sense of our Self-Dependance, *Mat. 16. 24. Mark 8, 34. Luke 15. 17. Acts 2. 57.*

4. Such

4. Such as are contented with the very Performance of religious Duties, without obtaining the Presence of Christ in them. A gracious Soul will not be contented with the Duty done, without Fellowship with Jesus in it, this is his Mark. *One Thing have I desired of the Lord,* (saith the Psalmist) *that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the Days of my Life, to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his Temple,* Psalm 27. 4. Cant. 3. 1, ... 6. Psalm 63. 8. Cant. 5. 4, ... 7.

5. Such as labour not to get their whole Heart fixed upon God in the Duties of Piety, rest in them; such as take not special Notice of their inward Coldness, Stupidity and Wandrings of Heart, and are not grieved for such Indispositions, for this is surely the *Plaint and Practice* of the Godly, Rom 7. Psalm 119. 10. *With my whole Heart have I sought thee, O let me not wander from thy Commandments.* Psalm 86. 11. *Unite my Heart to fear thy Name* Psalm 80. 18. & 119. 25, 37, 40, 50.

6. Such Persons as are embolden'd in Sin by the Duties of Religion, rest in them; and this I fear is the Case of many: Otherwise how could Persons that are but very broken in their Lives, go on with such Courage and Confidence in their Way, notwithstanding what may be said to them of the Danger of it. This doubtless is the Cause when Conscience chides and checks them for the Breach of any of God's Laws, they take a *Vomit* of Prayer, (like a sick Dog) confess their Fault, mourn over it, and resolve to do so no more, and perhaps for a little *Spurt* take more Pains to avoid it in Practice; then the *Storm* is over, all is clear again in their Notion; they imagine their Sin is pardoned; surely God won't be so cruel as to condemn such sincere Penitents as they, just for a few Frailties, seeing every one has his Failings; *Nemo sine Crimine vivit.* What dost thou conceit O Hypocrite! that one may have *Communion* with God in Duties, and live such a sensual, carnal, worldly Life as thou dost? Thou art strangely mistaken if thou dost: Hear what the Apostle *John* tells thee, 1 John 1. 6. *If we say we have Fellowship with him, and walk in Darkness, we lie, and do not the Truth.* James 1. 26. *He that bridles not his Tongue, his Religion is vain.*

7. Such as cannot appeal to God concerning their Sincerity in divine Worship: Rom. 1. 9. *God is my Witness, whom I serve with my Spirit in the Gospel of his Son.*

8. Such as get no Strength by them to resist Sin with Magnanimity and Success, and to endure Affliction with Composure

posure and Calmness, rest in them. *Isai. 40. 31. But they that wait on the Lord shall renew their Strength, they shall mount up with Wings as Eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and walk and not faint. Gen. 39. 9. James 1. 2, 3. Luke 21. 19.* I have insisted the longer on this Head, because a Mistake here is of dreadful Importance, *Debile Fundamentum fallit Opus*, a rotten Foundation ruins the Fabrick: And thus it is when we build upon any thing that's ours, *Isai. 64. 6. James 3. 2. & 2. 10. Gal. 3. 10. Acts 4. 12. Dan. 9. 18.*

8. Some on false Reasonings and Pretexts, such as these following,

1. There's none of you all *Perfect*. It's true a *Perfection of Degrees* cannot be attain'd in this Life, so that all sinful Inclinations or Motions should be entirely eradicated out of the Soul, *not as tho' already attained, Phil. 3. 12.* But notwithstanding a *Perfection of Parts* is attainable; we may thro' Grace get every Part of the Soul in some measure changed, and the Frame of all the Christian Graces infused, the Dominion of Sin broken, both in Heart and Life, in Love and Practice, *Rom. 6. 14.* and advance by the growth of these Graces, nearer and nearer to Perfection. *Grow in Grace* (saith the Apostle) *and in the Knowledge of the Lord Jesus, 2 Pet. 3. 18.* Now these Things, O Hypocrite, you want, and therefore that Plea can't excuse thee or hide thy Shame.

2. But all are *Sinners*: yes, but all are not *unconverted Sinners*. Some through the Goodness of God are *Penitent*; now there is as great a Difference between these two, as between *Heaven* and *Hell*, for they are doom'd by the great Judge of Heaven to these two very distant Places of Abode.

3. All have their *Failings*: Yes, but do you call your gross Wickedness *Failings*? Your Covetousness, Carnality, habitual Passion &c. Friend, you may palliate your Crimes as you please, but remember, if you go on in a Course of any known Sin, you are at present in a State of Death, *1 John 3. 8.* And by and by you shall appear before an impartial God, who will judge according to *Truth*, and sentence you to that Damnation you deserve, without sincere Repentance prevent, *Rev. 21.*

4. But I don't *justify my Faults*: ay and yet commit them; why then you condemn your selves and sign your own Mitimus, and own the Justice of God, in your Destruction, *Rom. 2. 3. And thinkest thou this, O Man, that judgest*

Judgeth them that do such Things, and dost the same, that thou shalt escape the Judgment of God? And if thou dost justify them against thy Conscience, thou fightest against the God that made thee, wages War with Heaven and thy own Mind, and therefore art damned already, *Rom. 14. 23.*

Obj. 5. There's no Body certain of Salvation.

Ans. This is a great Falshood, as may appear by these Considerations following.

1. If Certainty or Assurance of Salvation were unattainable, to what Purpose then should we be enjoined by God to give Diligence to make our Calling and Election sure, *2 Pet. 1. 10.*

And

2. To what Purpose should so many Signs and Characters of saving Grace be laid down in the Word, and we commanded to examine our selves, and prove our selves? *1 Cor. 11, 28.* But the Apostle *Paul* thought strange of the contrary Opinion, *Know ye not*, says he, *that Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates*, *2 Cor. 13. 5.* As if he should say, It's a strange Thing indeed, if you don't know your gracious State.

3. To what Purpose, then is the *Spirit of Adoption* which testifies with our Spirits that we are the Sons of God? *Rom. 8. 16.* The new Name, the hidden Manna, which none knoweth but him that hath it, *Rev. 2. 17.* But he that hath it knows it.

4. How came the ancient Christians to obtain it, if it be not attainable, and to call the contrary the *Spirit of the World*? *1 Cor. 2. 12.* It's well known by Men of any Letters that this, the Body of the Protestant Churches have given their unanimous *Suffrage* to, and that the contrary is the darling Notion of the Antichristian Romish Church.

But what is the Reason you so strenuously oppose the Doctrine of *Assurance*? Possibly it's this, thou art a Stranger to a Work of God's Grace in thy own Soul, and to preserve thy false Peace, thou thinkest that every Body is like thy self; this is some of thy *Charity*, who art apt to accuse others as censorious Judges; but how can we know? How can we know? I can't see: Friend, it's no Wonder you can't see, when you are blind, *1 Cor. 2. 14. Rev. 3. 17.* But whether you can or not, others through Grace can, as clearly as ever they saw the Sun in his meridian *Bloom* and *Beauty*, without an intercepting Cloud: The Sun remains no less bright and orient, tho' some *Batts* or *Moles* should reproach him and say, he wants Light. But if you want to know how these Things can be, get converting Grace; it's to little

Purpose to attempt to paint the beautiful Colours of the Morning to a Man born blind. You don't know that you have Grace, how do you know that which is not, you are so humble as to question your State, sometimes when you are forc'd to it by the Gnawings of a guilty Mind, perhaps for some gross Offences ; but your Humility must lead you further before ever your Heart be changed, even to condemn your present State as Christless, *Luke 15. 24.*

6. Well if our State be bad, we can't change it our selves. It's true, we can't ; but we can seek a Change after some sort, and if we do not we perish deservedly ; from him that hath not shall be taken away even that he hath ; that is, he that improveth not the Gifts that God has given him, shall be condemned. This the Parable of the Talents confirms ; if the impotent Man had not continued at the Pool, it's probable he would have missed Healing

7. But we must wait God's Time : yes, but in God's Way, otherwise you wait for the *Devil* instead of God ; There's no Promise in all the Book of God without sincere asking.

8. I delign to turn to God afterwards. This is the rotten *Plumb* with which many stop the *Merits* of their accusing Conscience, and so sleep in *Death*, and dream of Happiness, while they are possessed by Satan, and led Captive by him at his Will, in those Paths which lead to the Chambers of Hell, *Eph. 2. 2.* But Friend, thy promising to turn to God afterwards, supposes that you imagine you have Power to repent when you think fit, which is very False and Groundless. Art thou certain, O Sinner, that thou shalt live one Day longer ! May be God will say to thee, as to the rich Man in the Gospel, *This Night thy Soul shall be required of thee* : What Horrors would possess thy guilty unprepared Soul, if the pale ghastly Messenger should Arrest thee, & deliver his awful *Summons* that you must appear immediately before the great and holy God, to give an Account of thy *Stewardship* ! Would not the Frame of thy present Projects be broken, and you sunk in inexpressible *Amazement* ? While thy Soul sat trembling on thy livid Lips, going to leap it knows not where, like that Pagan, *Dubius morior quo vadam nescio* ; thy Eye strings breaking, and thy Blood chilling in thy frozen Veins : Many have been thus surpriz'd, and why may'st not thou among the rest ? However, Time to come thou knowest is uncertain, and wilt thou lay the Weight of thy Salvation upon an Uncertainty ? You would not do so about thy temporal Affairs.

Affairs. But suppose you should have a longer Time, and you wilfully abuse this, is there any Promise that God will give you the Grace of Repentance then? No, but Threatnings to the contrary, *Prov. 29. 1. And Chap. 1. 22, to 29.* Thy resolving afterwards and not now is Hypocrisy, *1 Pet. 4. 3.* And you know their Doom. By this Delaying you are guilty of Rebellion against God, by disobeying his positive Commands, *Heb. 3. 15. 2 Cor. 6. 2.* And preferring the Devil and thy Lusts before him, by serving them first. By this thou harden'st thine own Heart, strengthen'st the Devil's Possession, and grieve'st the Holy Ghost, *Heb. 3. 15, 16. And 4. 7. Acts 8. 23. Prov. 3. 28.*

9. If one ask some People concerning the Reasons of their Hope, they'l say, they have no *Learning*, they can't express their *Minds* as they would, but they have good *Thoughts*; so you may Friend, and have very bad Actions, thro' the general Course of your Life; it is not by thinking well, but doing well that you can reasonably expect Happiness, *1 John 3. 7, 8. Heb. 12. 14.* Balaam the Wizard had good Thoughts and Wishes as well as you, and remained a Wizard still. But you have no Learning you say, more is the Pity, if you had Opportunities to obtain it; but it is not School learning that I ask thee about, but that which Christ teaches every believing Soul. Your Answer, Friend, supposes that you believe that all the difference between godly Ministers and graceless People consists in naked, barren Speculations: I confess indeed there have been and yet are too many such lifeless Ministers who preach like the old Pharisees their Predecessors without *Authority*, and without *Effect*, their cold Sermons that freeze and languish on their Lips, are like a Parrot's Prattle; but Christ will preserve (let Earth and Hell do their worst) a Number of faithful Soul-searching Ministers in his Church to the End of Time, who know the Truth as it is in Jesus, and speak to others out of the Treasures of their Souls Experience, and who find their Speeches blest'd by the promised Presence of the Lord Christ to the Conviction and Conversion of precious Souls: what tho' you see some Hirelings seeking with eager and impatient Haste their Gain from their Quarter, looking after the Fleece as their principal Mark, notwithstanding all their specious Pretences, yet it is cruel and unjust to charge the whole with the Faults of some. If there was a saving Work of God's Spirit in thee, you would be able to speak something

thing of it, if your Gifts be so mean, why can you talk so freely about other Things.

10. But some will further plead that they have but poor *Memories*: What then do you think that all a Christian's Skill in discoursing about experimental Christianity lies in the Strength of his Memory? If you do, you are mistaken, for every one that comes to Christ is learned of the Father, John 6. 45. Now as the Instructions of God are more powerful and refreshing, so they are more permanent and abiding than the Lessons of any Man or Angel, John 5. 25. *Jer.* 15. 16. God's Word was sweeter to the Psalmist than Honey, and more precious than refined Gold, *Psalm* 19. 10. And 119. Verses 103, 127. Again he informs us, that God's Commands made him wiser than his Enemies, for they were ever with him, *Psalm* 119. 98. The Instructions of Creatures are transient, like the Impressions of a Seal upon Water? but God's Teachings are durable, like the Impressions of a Seal upon Wax, or like the Engravings of a Signet, or Sculptures on Marble, *Exod.* 18. 11. *Hog.* 2. 23. O Man, if thou had ever felt the Power of converting Grace, all thy Knowledge of Religion would not consist in barren Speculations attain'd by the Force of thy natural Understanding, and retain'd by the Strength of thy Memory, but there would be some indelible Impressions writ on the Tables of thine Heart, 2 *Cor.* 2. 3.

11. If I thought much on these Things you tell me, I should grow Crazy. Friend, thou art much mistaken; I persuade thee to walk in the Paths of true Wisdom. Is not the Fountain of Wisdom, the blessed God, the best Judge in this and all other Cases? He informs us that his Fear is the beginning of Wisdom, and that those have a good Understanding who depart from Evil, *Job* 28. 28. With what Front can you talk of your Fear of being distracted, when ye are so already, *Luke* 15. 17. And when he came to himself; which supposes that he was without the Exercise of his Reason before his Conviction of Sin, and Conversion to God. *Prov.* 1. 22. How long ye simple ones, will ye love Simplicity, and the Scorners delight in their Scorning, and Fools hate Knowledge? Would you not count him a mad Man who would drink Poison in Sport, or knowingly rush his naked Bosom upon the sharp Point of a drawn Sword? This you do daily. Fools make a Mock at Sin, *Prov.* 14. 9. Would you not reckon him a mad Man, who being justly condemned by the supreme Magistrate to be burnt for Murder or Treason, that would laugh or dance all the Way

to the Stake and Faggots, as if he was going to a *Wedding* or to receive a *Crown*? This is the Practice of thousands of graceless Sinners, they rejoyce all the Way to Hell.

A wise Man (1.) proposes such an *End* in the Enjoyment of which he may be happy. (2.) Pursues proper *Measures* to attain it. (3.) Improves the right *Season* of using these Means.

But you Chrifless Souls either, 1. *Propose* such an End as can't make you happy in it's Enjoyment: Such as the airy Honours, brutish Pleasures, or transient Profits of Time and Sense, the *Trinity* which the presumptuous World court, cares and adore. Or

2. If you propose God to be your last End, as you pretend, yet you do not *use* proper Means to come to the Enjoyment of him, you walk not in the Way of *Holiness*, which is the only *Path* to eternal Happiness, *Heb. 12. 14.*

And

3. You foolishly *neglect* the present most seasonable *Opportunities* of improving Means to secure that End, which deserves your most earnest *Labour*, and highest *Love* and *Esteem*; contrary to the Prophet's Advice, *Isai 55. 6. Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found, call upon him while he is near.* The brute Creatures may shame thee of thy sordid Neglect, *Jer. 8. 7, 8, 9. Tea the Stork in the Heaven knoweth her appointed Times, and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow observe the Time of their coming, but my People know not the Judgment of the Lord. How do ye say, We are wise?* *Jer. 8. 8.* You are commanded to learn Wisdom of the *Ant*, *Prov. 6. 6. & 30. 25.* who in the *Summer* Season with great Industry *prepares Food* for the approaching *Winter*; but alas! too many are like the *indolent Grasshopper*, who spend the *Summer* Season in *singing*, which the *Ant* busily improves in gathering to it's *Winter Store*: They spend their Days in Jollity and Merriment, which others improve to better Purposes; and so are found unprepared for that *Eternity* which puts a final *Period* to their groundless *Mirth*, and turns it into everlasting *Sorrow*.

But what if some foolish ignorant Enemies of God and Righteousness should call you a crazy Person, for your necessary Concern about your Salvation, which they are apt to do, because of their *Blindness* and Blockishness in such Matters, *1 Cor. 2. 14.* and their *Spire* against God's Image, *Rom. 8. 7.* Is it not better to be called a Fool, than to be one? Are not the Hopes of an eternal Weight of Glory

and Crown of Life, able to support you under such frothy Sufferings by unreasonable Men? If with the *Camelion* you will change your Colours for this, and bend with the Willow to every adverse Blast, thou art an hypocritical Time-server, unfit to be a Disciple of the holy Jesus, *Mat* 10. 37, 38, 39.

12. If I should pore so much on these melancholly Matters, I should certainly fall into *Dispair*. Did not you hear of such and such that fell into this dreadful Gulph, God keep me from that terrible Sin? Answer. But pray, Friend, what makes thee so mighty *zealous* against this Sin, more than the contrary Extreme, *Presumption*? which is more than equally *fatal*: O *Dispair*! God keep me, is a terrible Sin. What *Dispair*! have Mercy upon us! But Friend, without such *Flame* and *Heat*, let us talk a little soberly of the Matter, and inquire into the Reasons of thy great Aversion against this Evil.

Don't it proceed from *Love* to thy own *Ease*, more than *Zeal* for *God's Honour*? Yes it does; and if ever thou comest to know thy self, thou wilt confess it: My Reason is this? If it was only upon the Account of the Sin you had this great Aversion, you would equally abhor *Presumption*, because it's equally Derogatory to the divine Honours, as will appear under the fourth Head. But why sayest thou that you should certainly fall into *Dispair*, if you thought much on these Things? Why some have dispaired by thinking upon them: Well, what tho' some ignorant Persons thro' the violent Temptation of the Devil have dispaired, does this necessarily infer that thou shalt also?

2. It's their *Sins* that occasions their *Dispair*, not their *Sorrow* for Sin, and religious *Meditation*.

3. What though some did *Miscarry*, is this enough to beat thee off from all Endeavours after Repentance and Holiness? Some have dispaired about the World, for *the Sorrow of the World worketh Death*, 2 Cor. 7. 10. Will you therefore quite forsake all Care about the World upon this Account? I suppose not. Why then will you do it in a Matter of greater Weight and Concern? Are not many Vessels lost at Sea, and yet the Merchants won't leave trading.

I feel a shivering in me when I read or hear such Sermons as this, now if I did not put away such melancholly Thoughts, my Uneasiness would increas, & I should certainly sink into *Dispair*! O deceived Soul! What you call melancholly Thoughts are the Motions and Convictions of

the Holy Spirit, *John* 16. 8, 9, the Calls of Christ which thou labourest to *quench* and *murder*. If these were improved and increased by Meditation and Supplication, the Issue (in all Probability) would be thy Conversion and Salvation, *Joel* 2. 13, 14. But the Way thou takest, however Right it may seem in thine own Eyes, ends in Death. For there is a Way which seems right to a Man, but the End thereof are the Ways of Death, *Prov.* 14. 12. Yea some Formalists are so blind in this Matter, that having conceived (tho' without a Foundation) a good Opinion of their present State, mistake the Convictions of the Holy Spirit, for the Temptations of the Devil, and so under a Notion of opposing the Devil, they fight against God: When God and their own Consciences tells them the Truth, viz. That their State is damnable, because they want a sound Conviction, and the Experiences of God's special Love. They look upon it to be an Insinuation of the Devil, and so oppose it, and thereby ruin themselves.

But how knowest thou, O Sinner! that thou shouldst certainly fall into Dispair, by thinking solemnly about thy Soul's State? Which of the three thousand that were convicted by Peter's Sermon fell into Dispair? Nay, it's so far from this, that a necessary Sorrow for Sin, and Concern for thy Salvation is the Way to prevent a final and fatal Dispair, as being a Compliance with the positive Commands of God. *Plow up the fallow Ground of your Hearts,* *Jer.* 4. 3. *Rent your Hearts and not your Garments,* *Joel* 2. 13. *Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep, let your Laughter be turned into Mourning, and your Joy into Heaviness,* *Jam* 4. 9. A necessary Preparative for Conversion & Salvation. *Luke* 15. *Acts* 2. *Rom.* 7. But by putting the evil Day far off, thou preparest the Way for endless Dispair, by grieving the Holy Spirit, *Heb* 10. 26. *Hos.* 6. 1, 3. The Reason why thou art so much afraid of Dispair, is because it is so painful to Nature, and Presumption so Easy, a sweet Poison: O poor Sinner! be informed that on this very Account thou art in much more Danger of being ruin'd by Presumption than Dispair. The holy Scriptures that afford us an historical Account of above four thousand Years, yet inform us of but two that perished by Dispair, viz *Cain* and *Judas*. Now if thou believest and considerest that but the smallest Number are saved, how many Millions must have perished in that Time by Presumption.

While many labour to avoid one extreme, they split upon another, *Incidit in Scyllam cupiens vitare Charybdin:*

He

He that *Charybdis* pointed Cliffs would fly,
Does often by the *Sylla* wounded lye.

I have been the longer upon this Head, because it is so commonly made use of by wicked People to guard themselves against all necessary Sorrow for Sin: That ravenous Lyon the Devil, makes great use of this to betray Souls into remediless Ruin.

13 But I must serve God with a chearful Heart, must not I? Yes, yes, Friend; you may rejoyce when you have Reason for it; when your Peace is made with God, Eccl. 9. 7. *Go thy Way, eat thy Bread with Joy, and drink thy Wine with a merry Heart, for God now accepteth thy Works.* When thou art reconciled to God, and thy religious Services are accepted, then may'st thou eat thy Bread with Joy, but before this you have no Reason to rejoyce, but on the contrary, great Cause of Sorrow and Mourning, Hos. 9. 1. *Rejoyce not, O Israel, for Joy, as other People: For thou hast gone a whoring from thy God.* Before you taste the Sweetness of redeeming Grace, and pardoning Love, what Reason of Rejoycing? You may say with Solomon, of *Laughter*, it is mad, and of *Mirth* what doth it? Eccl. 2. 2.

Your taking Comfort to your selves, or a Minister's speaking Comfort to you before you are soundly convinced and effectually changed, is like sowing the Ground before it is plow'd. As Bishop *Brownrig* has justly observed.

But has not pious People the most Reason to rejoyce? Yes they have, but what is that to thee, till thou be such thy self? *Light is sown for the Righteous, and Gladness for the upright in Heart*, Psalm 97. 11. Tho' they have not always a present Harvest, for those Sins of Infirmitie will blast their Evidences, which thou pass'st lightly over. *Why art thou cast down, O my Soul, and why art thou disquieted in me?* Psalm 42. 5.

O secure Sinner, consider I beseech thee in the Name of that God who made thee, that awful Threat of the Son of God, *Wo to you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep*, Luke 6. 25. O Man or Woman whosoever thou art, who go on in a Course of carnal Mirth and Follity, before thy Peace is made with God, remember thou art under the heavy Curse of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, which shall be by and by consummated in thy utter Ruin, except thou repent and reform. *For while you say, Peace, Peace, sudden Destruction shall come upon you like travail upon a Woman*

Woman with Child. It would be a much wiser Course for you to labour to *sow in Tears that you may reap in Joy.* Psalm 126. 5.

But if thou wilt contrary to all Reason and Scripture, obstinately persist in thy Course of groundless *Mirth*, and Jollity; then let me address you in the Words of Solomon, Eccl. 11. 9. *Rejoyce O young Man in thy Youth, and let thy Heart cheer thee in the Days of thy Youth, and walk in the Ways of thy Heart, and in the Sight of thine Eyes: but know thou that for all these Things God will bring thee into Judgment.* Pursue the corrupt Dictates of thy vain Imaginations, and gratify thy sensitive Appetite to the utmost. *Quicquid libet licet.* Swim in Pleasures and dream of Happiness; but know as from God that this Course (without Repentance) will prove thy Ruin. Thou hast to do with a God that will not let thy Wickedness go unpunished.

There are many People who if you begin to talk of Religion, especially that which is experimental (they can bear with doctrinal and polemical Matters pretty well) are immediately struck dumb, like the Man without the Wedding Garment, they lose the Use of their Tongues for a Season, but when the Subject of Discourse is changed, and some political or worldly Affair comes upon the Board, then the *Creatures* are mightily refresh'd, then they begin to understand what is spoken, and breathe in their own *Element*, they find the Use of their Tongues immediately, and begin to be so warm and zealous, that partly out of sincere Affection to the Subject of Discourse, or Desire to shew their Wit and Eloquence, that they hardly give another Time to speak. This Man has a *bright Notion*, and that Woman has a *pert Turn*, which they travail in great Pain to bring to the *Birth*, but cannot get opportunity: Is this thy Ease, O Man! then thou art a Stranger to the living God, *Matth. 12. 35.*

14. But I pray to God often, and God has promised to hear those that ask in his Son's Name; ask and ye shall receive, knock and it shall be opened. In Answer to this, I pray thee in the Name of that God who made thee, and who will by and by judge thee in Righteousness, that you would solemnly consider the following Particulars: viz That your Prayers and other Duties are *cursed*. I know you are apt to gnash your Teeth at this, and to say, as some of your own *Mould* did long ago, away with such a *Fellow from the Earth*, that speaks after this Manner, *Acts 22. 22.* Or complain with that unhappy Man that was bereaved of his

Ephod,

Ephod, They have taken away my gods, and what have I more? Judges 18 24. Miserable and deceived Souls! you make a Christ of your graceless Prayers as the carnal Jews did of old, Rom. 10. 3. For they being ignorant of God's Righteousness and going about to establish their own, they did not submit themselves to the Righteousness of God. But this Reed of Egypt won't support your sinking Souls from endless Ruin. Now, to understand what I have advanced, consider that there are two Things, of which all Duties are constituted, the Matter and the Manner: The Matter is the Substance of the Duty, the Manner is the Way of Performance, the Principles from which the End or Design for which, the Manner in which a Person acts. As for Example, in charitable Gifts; when one gives seasonably to proper Objects, the Matter of this Duty is good, because it is commanded, but the Manner may be and often is at the same time very Evil and Wicked; instead of Love to God, Desire of Obedience to his Command and the Illustration of his Glory, Compassion to the Indigent; Pride and Ostentation, or a natural Greatness of Mind, Generosity of Disposition, or a mercenary View to compensate some Crimson Guilt they have contracted, and ingratiate themselves into the divine Favour, are the corrupt Fountains from which this gilded Action glides: But indeed the Spirit of the World possesses the Children of this Generation to that Degree of Baseness that they are in no great Danger (many of them) of being Guilty of performing this Duty in a wrong Manner; for they lay aside both Matter and Manner.

But to prove that their Prayers are cursed, besides what has been spoken, consider these following Particulars.

1. *That the Prayers of the Wicked are an Abomination to the Lord, Prov. 15. 8. Is not he that hates God wicked? But every unconverted Soul does so, tho' the most of them won't acknowledge it, Rom 8. 7. John 3. 6. Now is not Abomination a high Degree of Hatred, and what is God's Hatred but his Curse?*

2. *Whatsoever is without Faith is Sin, Rom. 14. 23. But no unconverted Sinner has saving Faith, 2 Thes. 3. 2. It's impossible to have this radical Grace, and yet be unconverted, for Faith works by Love, Gal. 5. 6. Therefore their Prayers are Sin, at least in the Manner of Performance: Now is not Sin the Object of God's Hatred, the procuring Cause of his Curse and Vengeance? Hab. 1. 13.*

3. Our Lord Jesus informs us, Luke 6. 43. That a corrupt Tree bringeth not forth good Fruit. Then it must needs bring forth bad, there's no Medium; this is explain'd in the following Verses. Now is not every unconverted Man a corrupt Tree, in a metaphorical Sense? *John 3 6.* All their good Actions, little else but the Shew of Goodness, "Splendid Sins," as *Austin* of old justly observed; until a Man be severed by the Sword of the Law and Spirit in a sound Conviction from the wild Olive, the first Adam, and implanted by Faith in the second Adam, all their Fruits are but wild Grapes; their Vine is of the Vine of Sodom, and of the Fields of Gomorrah, their Grapes are the Grapes of Gall, their Clusters are bitter; their Wine is the Poison of Dragons, and the cruel Venom of Asps, *Deut. 32. 32, 33.* It's true, there is such an Appearance of Goodness in these Performances of Unbelievers, that they often deceive themselves with these lifeless Husks, but God who is a pure Spirit will accept of no Worship but that which is suited to his Nature, *John 4. 24. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in Spirit and in Truth.*

4. The Prophet *Isaiah* in the first Chapter of his Book, Verses 11, 12, 13, 14. confirms beyond reasonable Contradiction what I have advanc'd under this Head; he shews that these religious Services which were even of divine Institution under the jewish OEconomy were notwithstanding abominable and loathsom to God, because of the People's Wickedness that performed them, as the Verses before cited, with that which immediately follows, do make evident.

5. The Prayers of unconverted People are Idolatry, when they pretend to worship God, they worship themselves: that which is the last End of a Worshiper is his chiefest Good, for the last End and the chief Good are convertible Terms. Now Christless People aim at their own Interest, as their last End in divine Worship, the main Springs of their religious Services are mercenary & selfish; Self bears the Ascendant in their Breasts above the Glory of God: *Phil. 2. 21. For all seek their own, not the Things which are Jesus Christ's.* When our Lord informs us that we must deny our selves, and take up his Cross in Order to be his Disciples, *Matth. 16 24. Mark 8. 34. Luke 9. 23.* This necessarily presupposes that Self governs unrenewed Persons. Are not the terrible Execrations

grasped in our Text directed like a pointed Thunderbolt against such guilty idolatrous Creatures?

6. Mockery. *Hos. 7. 14. And they have not cried unto me with their Heart, when they howled upon their Beds.* It is pertinently observed by Mr. Henry on this Text, "That *Moses* is said to cry to God when he spake not a Word, only his Heart prayed with Faith and Fervency, *Exod. 14. 15.* But those made a great Noise and said much, and yet did not cry to God, because their Heart was not right with him, not subjected to his Will, devoted to his Honour, or employed in his Service". Hence the same excellent Person observes, "That those do not pray to God at all, that do not pray in the Spirit. The Expression shews how displeasing to God their Prayers were, like to the Howlings of Dogs or Wolves to us, for to these Creatures it's probable the Expression alludes; It's very likely that *Saul* pray'd thousands of times when he was a Pharisee, but no Notice was taken of those Prayers; but so soon as he was convicted, *Ananias* was commanded to go to him; *Go to Saul of Tarsus, for behold he prayeth, Acts 9. 2.* Yes, yes, he prayed now after another Manner than when he was a secure Pharisee; I'll warrant you, his Heart quiver'd in his Body, and the Tears trickled down his Cheeks amain. If he was such a weeping Preacher afterwards as he informs us, *Acts 20. 31.* no doubt these crystal Fountains were open'd then at his Conviction.

7. Again, I might add that the Prayers of the Wicked are like Offering of strange Fire, for which God severely punished the Sons of *Aaron* with sudden and awful Death, *Lev. 10. 1, 2.* If there be any Warmth in your Devotion, it proceeds not from the Coals of God's Altar, but Sparks of your own kindling, *Isai. 50. 11.* O thou unconverted Man or Woman, God might justly strike thee dead immediately with the Spear of his Vengeance as he did *Nadab* and *Abihu*, for thy Offering of strange Fire before the Lord in these graceless Prayers which you think so much of and rest upon! And now what do you think O Man! Will such Prayers, or other religious Duties as these are intitle you to any Promise of Mercy? No surely.

8. But we are expressly inform'd that natural Men and Women are excluded from having (at present) any interest in the Promises of the New Covenant. *Eph. 2. 12. 2. Cor. 1. 20.* Reason also confirms what the Scripture vouches: The Promises give a claim of right to the Benefits of the Covenant. Now in any conditional Contract, how can the Party

Party contracting have an interest in the benefits of the Contr: & until he complies with the terms upon which these benefits are suspended? But supposing an unconverted Man by the improvement of his Powers to the highest Pitch (which I believe was never done by any of them) could on that account lay claim to the Promises of Salvation, then these Consequences must necessarily follow,

1. That Salvation is of Works, contrary to the tenor of the holy Scriptures, Eph. 2. 8. *We are sav'd thro' Grace, and that not of our selves, it is the gift of God: thro' his Mercy hath he saved us, and not by works of Righteousness which we have done.* Tit. 2. 5. *Not of Works lest any man should boast.* Rom. 3. 27, 28 *Who hath made thee to differ from another?* 1 Cor. 4. 7. *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.* The Covenant of Grace would be nothing else but the Old Covenant of Works, new vamp'd and furbish'd.

2. The spotless Sovereignty of God stain'd, his Will dependant on the fickle Creatures Nod.

3. The fulness and perfection of Christ's Satisfaction mar'd, and the orient beauties of redeeming Grace vail'd, and the Creature have cause of boasting and thanking himself for his Salvation, more than his Redeemer.

Again, Would it not be a shrewd reflection upon the untainted Holiness of the blessed God to annex the Promises of Happiness to the deform'd and wretched performances of his Enemies, which are so far from being able to bear their own weight in the Court of Justice, that they are (because of the corrupt manner of performance) the objects of his infinite abhorrence? If the Church's Righteousness is call'd *filthy Rags, Pillars of Smoke*, Isai. 64. 6. Cant. 6. 3. tho' they proceed from *faith* and *love*, how vile and base then are the performances of such who are void of these two noble and necessary Graces, and possess'd of two very opposite qualities, viz *unbelief* and *hatred*, 2 Thes. 3. 2. Rom. 8. 7. How canst thou therefore, O Man! apply to thy self these Promises? *Ask, and thou shalt receive* &c. what sort of asking and seeking is there meant? is it not by *Faith*? and from *Love*? and a *new Nature*? Yes surely, for it is not every one that sayeth, *Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven.* Many shall seek to enter, but shall not be able, Mat. 7. 21. Luk. 13. 24. Now how canst thou ask with *Faith*, or from *Love*, and a *new Nature*, who art dead in Sin? Eph. 2. 1. and whilst destitute of these noble and necessary

necessary Graces? I would not have thee to conceit that thy earnestness flowing from Self-love (which thou vainly callest *Sincerity*) will intitle thee to the Promises of Salvation; there is no Warrant for this in all the Book of God, as I have prov'd before; but alas! I fear thousands rest on this sandy Foundation, being born under a Covenant of Works. They still retain a *tincture* of it, and expect *Justification* by it: That Covenant was written on the tables of Man's Heart, whereas the Covenant of Grace is entirely owing to divine Revelation; not the least *Signature* of it on the Hearts of graceless Men, not the least Glimpse betrayed by the Law of Nature, therefore they can't understand it till they be inlightened by the Holy Ghost, and therefore according to the Proverb, *Ignorantia Cupido*, There is no Desire after an unknown Thing. But it may be objected if this be the Case, why then our Prayers signify nothing at all. I deny the Consequence, and indeed by thy Objection if you speak as you think, you prove your self to be a mercenary graceless Person: May not your Prayers be useful and necessary, though not meritorious? If they intitled thee to Happiness, they wou'd include a Merit of *Congruity*; for Shame, would a Protestant plead for the Merits of Works? The Duties of an unconverted Person, if earnestly and perseveringly performed, do lay them under a *Probability* of Mercy, *Joel 2. 14. 2 Tim. 2. 25. Acts 8. 22.* This peradventure is a sufficient Motive of Action in a Matter of such Weight as our eternal Happiness is: Are not Men mov'd by a meer probability of obtaining what they seek, to earnest Labours in Matters of infinitely smaller Moment and Consequence? The Farmer willingly endures great *Fatigue* in cultivating his Land, and after all he is not sure of a *Crop*: The Mariner exposes himself to infinite Toil and Hazard, in traversing the foaming Deep, for that perishing Gain which he is not sure of obtaining; and so it is in other Occupations. Is not the Wisdom of God exceedingly display'd in annexing but a Peradventure of Mercy to the religious Performances of Christless People in the following Consideration. Our Way to the heavenly Jerusalem lies between these two dangerous Rocks, viz. *Presumption* and *Despair*; the first on the right hand, and the other on the left; one of which we are in great Danger of being ruin'd by; now to preserve us from *Presumption* on the one hand, and prepare us by a necessary *Poverty* of Spirit, for the Mediator's Righteousness, there is but a *Probability* attending

tending the Endeavours of Unbelievers, and to preserve from Dispair on the other, and excite necessary Motion, there is a probability, for *hope* is the *Spring* of *Motion*: When all *Hope expires*, motion *ceases*, but awful fear is a very necessary Companion of conditional Hope in graceless People, in order to humble them, and strip them of their own Righteousness, and so to prepare them as objects of Mercy for the Righteousness of the Lord Jesus, *Phil.* 3. 9. *Mat.* 5. 3. The Church of *England* confirms what I have offer'd under this Head in her 13th Article.

15. Pretext. If one is speaking about the necessity of a sound and deep Conviction, in order to obtain the New Birth and Eternal Salvation; Some Hypocrites will immediately reply, that the *Spirit* has *different ways* of *working*, and produce that text, *Joh.* 3. 8. *That the Wind bloweth where it listeth, &c.* Hence they infer, tho' falsely, that they themselves are in a good State, tho' they can give no account how they came by it; and thus they securely rest in a damnable Condition. In answer to this, it is confess'd,

1. That God has a variety of Seasons in which :

2. Various Instruments by which he works upon Sinners Hearts, *Psal.* 110. 3. *1 Cor.* 3. 5. And

3. That different Persons feel Pains under Conviction, different both in *Measure* and *Duration*. But what then? God's Work is substantially the same in all, as God is One, *Ezek.* 11. 19. Every one must see so much of the *Evil*, and feel so much of the *Bitterness* of Sin, and the *Insufficiency* of his own *Righteousness*, as to be heartily willing to forsake them, and actually embrace a naked Jesus, *Rom.* 5. 20. *John* 1. 12. They must see and feel so much of the Misery of their lost and undone State as will make them restless and distressed until they obtain Pardon, *Rom.* 8. 15. Are not the Terms of Mercy equal and uniform? Where is there any Exception mention'd in the Scriptures, that any one who comes not up to them shall be saved? Is not the blessed God consistent with himself? Now this may shew thy Falshood and Hypocrisy in pretending to true Christianity, when thou hast never been *struck dead* by the Law, *Rom.* 7. 9, 10, 11. never *experienc'd* a powerful and universal Change of Heart and Life, which every one must feel or be *damned* eternally; that Hope which maketh not ashamed, is built upon Experience, and is attended with a Sense of Christ's Love; and the sanctifying Influences of the Spirit, *Rom.* 5. 4, 5. *1 Pet.* 1. 3. *Had* be-

gotten us again to a lively Hope. 1 John 3. 3. *And every Man that hath this Hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure.* Neither does that Text before alledged, viz. *John 3. 8.* enervate but rather establish what I have offered; that the Holy Spirit in the Conversion of the Elect works,

1. *Arbitrarily*, as an absolute Sovereign and free Agent, both as to the *Persons* to whom he grants his blessed Influences, as well as in Respect of the *Season* and Measure of them, 1 Cor. 12. 11. *The Wind bloweth where it listeth.*

And

2. *Mysteriously*, as to the manner of his Operations. Hence it's said, *Ye know not whence it comes, or whether it goes*: Thus he that experienceth a work of Conversion is not able to declare or express with words fully to another what he feels in himself, either as to the *Order* or *Degree* of the Spirit's Operations; yet this very Scripture asserts that the Holy Spirit works *powerfully* and *sensibly*; we can feel the Wind, and hear the sound of it: tho' the Causes of Conversion be hid, its Effects are patent and evident: When the Soul is made to grieve for Sin, and groan under a burden of Corruption, to pant and gasp after Christ, and cry, *Abba, Father*; then we hear the sound of the Spirit, and know he is at work. But,

3. Presumptuous Sinners offer many pretexts to palliate their Sins, both of Commission and Neglect, by which their native horrors are lessen'd in their apprehension, and their false hopes confirm'd; as particularly,

1. For Drunkenness: Tho' this be a very monstrous Evil, that sinks a Man beneath his *Species*, by divesting him of, and dethroning his *reason*: and thereby levelling him with the *Brute Creation*. I say, tho' it breaks the Constitution, wastes the Estate, wounds the Conscience, makes a Man an easy prey to his greatest Enemies, the Devil and his Lusts; tho' it be as contrary to our temporal as eternal Interest, equally opposite to the *Law of Nature* and of *God*: A Sin which is the *Shame* and reproach of *humane Nature*, bereaving it of its native grandeur and dignity, making Men worse *Fools* than *Brutes* or *Idiots*, because their folly is the effect of their vicious Choice; whereas the other was the lot of their *Creation*. *Prov. 20. 1. Luk. 21. 34. Eph. 5. 18.* Yet alas! this monstrous Evil is too frequent and flagrant in this part of the World at this Day. But if notwithstanding all the Warnings God gives you by his Word and Rod, you will still continue in your shameless *Vomit*, adding *Drunkenness* to *Tyranny*, and yet expect *Peace*:

Remember

Remember that all the Curses that are written in this Book will be upon you, and your Names shall be blotted out from under Heaven. God will make you drunk with the Wine of his Wrath, and cause you to stagger and reel into Hell: He will make you spue and fall that you shall never rise again. *Jer.* 25. 27, 28. *2 Cor.* 6. 9, 10. Hear ye Sons of Shame and Death, what the great God says to you, *Psal.* 75. 8. For in the hand of the Lord there is a Cup and the Wine is red, it is full of mixture, he poureth out of the same, but the dregs thereof all the wicked of the Earth shall wring them out and drink them. *Deut.* 32. 42. I will make mine Arrows drunk with Blood. But notwithstanding the fordid nature, destructive and damning Consequences of this Sin, daring Sinners have the front to advance some Pleas to paliate it, and thereby they strengthen their false Confidence.

1. Some will alledge, that they have Wealth sufficient to bear out such Expence, and therefore why may'nt they enjoy their own? they don't wrong any body.

Ans. You wrong your selves, and that in your dearest Interests, your Souls, Honours, Bodies, Estates; you prodigally exhaust your Substance, blemish your Character, mar your Reason, the grand Characteristick of the humane Nature, by which we are distinguish'd from, and advanc'd above the brutal Herds; fear your Consciences, and weaken your Constitutions: And is not this very base and heinous? *Hos.* 7. 11. *2 Tim.* 3. 13. And is not thy Prodigality as great a wrong to thy near Relatives? who have an Interest in thy Substance, as thy Wickedness in it is their Grief and Vexation? And is it not a wrong to the Poor and Needy, who have (*in foro poli*, in the sight of God) a right to some part of thy Estate? What, does the Bulk of thy Estates (which can add no real or intrinsick Worth to the Possessor) give thee a Letter of Licence to violate the Laws of God and Nature, as well as thy own Constitution? Will Reason vouch such a claim of Right, and prove the Patron of Rebellion and Suicide or Self-Murder, on such a Foundation, which is a strong excitement to the contrary Virtues: does not encrease of Wealth (being God's free Gift) encrease our Obligations to God? And can that which augments our Obligations to God and his Service, utterly dissolve them? And is this reasonable? Accurate Mr. Flavel in his Treatise of Personal Reformation proposes this Question to such Persons, which I believe you will not easily answer: "Whether you think

" that spending the reduncancy or overplus of your Estates
 " in Excess and Drunkenness be the very End that God
 " aim'd at in bestowing such Things upon you with such
 " a bountiful Hand, and whether the Expence of it this
 " way will please Him, as well as if you fed the Hungry,
 " and cloath'd the Naked with it? and brought the
 " Blessing of those that are ready to perish upon you and
 " your Families?

2. Others will alledge that it was Trouble occasion'd
 their first falling into this Course, being Melancholly and
 oppress'd with Grief upon the account of their Spiritual or
 Worldly Concerns; they drunk excessively to support
 their drooping Spirits; this being frequently repeated, in-
 duc'd a habit which they can't break.

Ans. This method as to the Soul, is *Murder*, and in re-
 gard of temporal Trouble, it's *Madness*.

1. I say, in respect of the Soul, it's *Murder*, for thereby
 God's *Authority* is contemn'd, and the *Motions* of his Spi-
 rit quench'd; which its both our Duty and Interest to
 comply with & observe. 2 *Thef.* 5. 19. *Quench not the Spirit.*
 The Metaphor alluded to in this Place of Scripture is that
 of Fire, to which God's Spirit is frequently compared in
 the sacred Oracles, because of the analogical or like Ef-
 fects he produces in the Hearts of his own, as a Fire does
 upon gross Bodies, *dissolving* their native *Hardness* into in-
 genuous *Sorrow* for Sin, *Psalms* 51. 4, 17. *consuming* their
Corruption, *Isai.* 44. and *enflaming* their *Affections* with the
 pure and chaste *Flame of divine Love*, *Cant.* 2. 5. Now as
 Fire may be quenched two Ways, either by neglecting it,
 or casting Water upon it; so may the common Motions of
 the Holy Ghost be quenched, either by neglecting to com-
 ply with them, and so slighting them, contrary to that Di-
 rection, *Isai.* 55. 6. or positive Acts of Sin against them
 which is a piece of the most affronted Wickedness, and
 God daring Impiety: To such we may apply the Words of
 devout *Stephen* to the obstinate Jews, *Acts* 7. 51. *Ye stiff-*
necked and uncircumcised in Heart and Ears, ye do always
resist the Holy Ghost, as your Fathers did, so do ye. If those
 that resist a lawful Magistrate in the just Ex-cution of
 his Office, *shall receive to themselves Damnation*,
Rom. 13. Won't a double *Damnation* be your Portion (so
 con nuing) who resist the King of Kings and Lord of
 Ior s, off ring Salvation to you in the most condescending
 Manner possible? *Isai.* 50. 18. *Rev.* 3. 20. *Heb* 10. 28, 29.
 Is it not the most horrible *Murder* thus to destroy your

own Souls? But miserable Man! this Method you take for a Cure, does but increase the Disease and render it worse; your Case will be as bad as that of *Ephraim*, *Hos. 5. 3.* *When Ephraim saw his Sickneſs, and Judah his Wound, then went Ephraim to the Affyrians, and ſent to King Jareb, yet he would not cure you, nor heal you of your Wound.* Inſtead of going to the Creator, they apply'd to, and confided in the Creature; but to no Purpose. Hear and tremble at the Judgment that the righteous holy God threaten'd to inflict upon that wicked People for flying to wrong Physicians in their Diſtreſs, in the following Verſe, *For I will be to Ephraim as a Lyon, and as a young Lyon to the Houſe of Judah; I, even I, will tear and go away, and none ſhall reſcue him.* Remember Sinner, it will take thee a great deal of Pains to get thy Conſcience murder'd, and thereby obtain compleat Furniture for Hell and the Devil. *For the Way of Tranſgreſſors is hard,* *Prov. 13. 15.* And is not that a fine Portion, worthy of thy Sweat and Labour? Perhaps before thou get'tſt thy Conſcience ſear'd, even by this Courſe, that it will ſcare thee ſo with it's ghastly Groans, that you'l be oblig'd to choak it with a Halter, as thy great Grandfather *Judas* did before thee: But alas! this will but open it's Mouth the wider in the other World to thy eternal Grief and Anguiſh.

2. As to temporal Concerns, it's *Madneſs*, becauſe inſtead of curing the Diſeaſe, it makes it more deſperate by increaſing it's Cauſe. It's true, it gives ſome preſent Eaſe by unbending and relaxing the labouring Mind from it's Burden of anxious Cares for a very little time, by intoxicating and clouding the rational Powers, and giving the Aſcendant to the inferiour and brutiſh Paſſions, but as ſoon as this Paroxyſm or Fit of Madneſs is over, the Force and Fumes of the Liquor exhausted and ſettled, and Reaſon again enthroned, and freed from the tyrannical Encroachments and rebellious Mutinies of Senſe; the Diſeaſe returns with double Violence, for the Cauſe of their Miſery is augmented by a needleſs Diminution of their Subſtance, and Addition of new Guilt; ſo that like *Paul's* Veſſel they are between two Waves in great Danger of being ſunk and ſhipwreck'd, *Acts 27. 41.* Poor Souls! if you went to God in your Troubles and humbled your ſelves before him, confeſſing your Sins as the meritorious Cauſe of your Sufferings, peradventure he would pity and pardon you, *Joel 2. 12, 13, 14.* This would be a bleſſed Iſſue of your Troubles indeed? Believe it Friend, God's Love can

sweeten the bitterest Cups of Calamity and Affliction, and keep the Soul calm and serene in the midst of the greatest Disasters and Difficulties, *Psalms* 46. 2, 3. Application to God in Trouble is what he justly expects of you, *Hos.* 5. 15. And it's often his gracious Design in sending them to alarm you out of your enchanted Slumbers, and drive you to himself. Does he not send Afflictions as *Physick* to purge away your *Filth*? As a *Fan* to winnow away your *Chaff*? As a *Furnace* to consume your *Dross*? *Isai.* 27. 9. And is not Application to God in Affliction the forest and speediest Way to find Relief. *Psalms* 37. 5. *Commit thy Way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass.* *Psalms* 91. 1, 4. *He that dwells in the secret Place of the most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. He shall cover thee with his Feathers, and under his Wings shalt thou trust.* But alas! What a sad Infatuation has Sin brought upon Men's Understandings! That though they retain a natural Desire after Happiness, *Who will shew us any Good?* *Psalms* 4. 6. Yet the most concert and pursue wrong Measures, to attain it, they forsake God the Center of the Soul, and wander endlessly in vain Pursuits after empty Creatures, *Jer.* 2. When one is found by Experience defective, they grasp after another; thus they travel in *mazy Labyrinths* to no Purpose: The best of Creatures have but a limited Goodness, and so can never satisfy the expanded Wishes of a rational immortal Spirit: None but the *blessed God* himself who is an Ocean of all desirable Perfections and Excellencies can give it a Fullness of Rest and Delight. *Psalms* 116. 7. *Hos.* 2. 7. The Soul can find no more Satisfaction over all the flowery Fields of sensitive Delights, than *Noah's Dove* upon the deluge Waters; but *Christ* is an *Ark* in which wearied Doves may rest. *Mat.* 11. 28.

As to what you object about the habitualness of your Sin, and therefore your Inability to abstain from it; I answer, That though contracted Habits be hard to be broken, yet they may by the moer Strength of Nature; they may *incline* but can't *force* the Will. The Jews had a very vicious Habit of Idolatry, yet after the *babylonish Captivity* they reformed from that darling Lust, tho' in the mean time they indulged other Wickednesses, *Rom.* 2.

3. If any should alledge (tho' there are but few so Vulgar as to speak it, whatever they think) that they find so much *Pleasure* in this *Practice* that they don't know how to leave it. Answer, What true Pleasure can there be in

Excess,

Excess, which creates an unnatural *Ferment*, and thereby oppresses Nature, and induces a Train of noisom and destructive Diseases, which often occasions Pain and puts a fatal Period to human Life? If there be any Pleasure in such Excesses, it's a very inconsiderable, transient, irrational and delusive One, only the Gratification of a vicious diseas'd Appetite, by which the Distemper is increas'd, and God offended. But pray compare your pretended Pleasures with the manly Delights of Temperance, which taste sweetest, and last longest, because they preserve Nature in it's just Elevation and Element; and compare those imaginary Pleasures with the real Pains of Body and Mind here, and the endless Sorrows of the next State, which that Practice occasions, and see whether they will ballance them.

4. Some plead that it's not so much Love to the Liquor as to good *Company* and Conversation that makes them go to such Places; as also that their Business calls them there. Answer, Is good Company no where else to be found but in Taverns? I doubt these are not the proper Places to find such as are truly good, for those will endeavour to avoid Places of Temptation as much as possible, *1 Theff. 5. 22.* To pray that we may not be led into Temptation, as we are directed, *Matth. 6. 13.* and yet to run afterwards unnecessarily into it, is not this to put a *Jest* upon the *Almighty*, and endanger our own *Safety*? Does not *Joseph* and *Jehosaphat* witness this? As to the Pretence of Business, it's but a Pretence with the most; Business for the most part may be done elsewhere, but if some Business requires thy Presence in a Tavern, is *Drunkenness* a necessary Qualification to manage it with *Discretion*?

5. Some may advance this *Excuse*, that they are oblig'd to resort to such Places sometimes, and drink an extraordinary *Glass*, lest they should incur the odious Charge of *Phanatism*. This is just what ancient *Salvian* says of the People of his Time, "*Coguntur esse mali ne viles habantur,*" "They are forc'd to be wicked, lest they be esteemed mean and vile". The Rev. Mr. *Flavel* gives a very good Answer to this Excuse in the following Words: "Gentlemen I assure you, says he, that Phanaticks (as you call them) have Reason to thank you for the Honour and Justice you have done them, in acknowledging them to be none of the Men of your hellish Society, but Persons of a more sober and honourable Character: And I appeal to your Reason, says he, Whether it would not
F 4 " be

" be more for your Honour to wear the unjust Title of a
 " Phanatick, than the just Censure of a drunken Sorcerer.
 2. For Worldly mindedness: They'l immediately trumpet
 up that text of Scripture, 1 Tim. 5. 8. that *if any provident is
 not for those of his own House, he is worse than an Infidel.*
 They deal with pious Ministers, and private Christians, in
 who meddle with them about this matter, as the Devil
 did with our Saviour, " that damn'd Fiend came with a
 " Bible under his Arm, and Scripture in his Mouth; " as
 as Mr. *Burket* expresseth it; and tells our Lord *it's written*;
 Mat. 4. 6. The Passage refer'd to by the Devil, is that of
 the Psalmist, Psal. 91. 11. *For he shall give his Angels charge
 over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.* The scope of which is
 only to shew, that God by the ministration of Angels,
 would afford Protection to his People in all lawful ways;
 but the Devil extended, and apply'd this falsely to all
 unlawful and presumptuous ways; therefore he advis'd our
 Saviour to cast himself down from the Pinnacle, and yet
 expect the Angelick Protection. So these Misers, follow-
 ing their black Master's example; do pervert that sacred
 Scripture before mention'd, which only requires a mode-
 rate careless Care for their own and their Families Sup-
 port; yet this Text they'l rack on the Tenters, in order
 to Patronize their idolatrous anxiety about the *World*, as
 they'r faithful *drudgery* to *Mammon*, which is to that de-
 gree, that it often interrupts their Family and Closet
 Devotion. These *Nabals* get up early to Worship their
 God; I mean the World: they have no time to Worship
 the God of Heaven in their Families; no, no, that might
 give some interruption to their more weighty Affairs,
 which is to get a large Estate: Therefore the Service of
 Jehovah must bend and bow to their Friend *Mammon*,
 whom they most heartily affect. Thro' the Day their
 Brains are rack'd with a vast variety of Projects, how to
 put every thing to the best Advantage; the Feet of many
 are tired with motion, and their Hands with action in
 their Lord's Service; however in the mean time one thing
 they don't forget, unless a great hurry of Business prevent,
 which is to fill their Bellies at proper Seasons, and that
 perhaps without fear, *Jude* ver. 14. When the Even comes
 on the Labouring Men repair to their Beds, and the Gen-
 tle try to their Bottles for Refreshment, so that the Service of
 God is miserably neglected; One is too much fatigued,
 and the other's Head is fill'd with Matters of greater Con-
 cern, he wants to tell a merry, or prophane Story to his
 Friends

Friends for their Edification; and some are so zealous in this Affair that they can't sleep in the proper Season, but imitate their *Brethren* the *Bats*, by waking in those dark times, when others take their rest according to stated order of Nature, and after their midnight *Revels* are snoring in deep Sleep, when Phebus has bless'd the Earth with his benign Rays, and run a considerable part of his diurnal Circuit; I say, they are Sleeping when honest Men are about their necessary Labours; but Darkness is the fittest vail to shreen those brutish Actions which would *blush* before the *Light*, and the *Day*.

2. But I have a large Family, I must *provide* for them: Well who hinders thee; but pray do this in God's way. *Seek first the Kingdom of God*, Mat. 6. 33. Let your care be moderate; *be careful for nothing*, Phil. 4. 6. I must *provide* for my Family; and will you under this pretence lose the Opportunities of Mercy? and so damn your Souls in order to get a *Snare*, I mean a *large Estate* for your Children. You have a better prospect of getting necessary Sustenance for your Family, secur'd in God's way, than in any other; for Godliness hath the Promise of this Life, as well as the Blessings of the next, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. The Successes of all our Projects and Labours are the issues of a wise and all-governing Providence; it's God's Blessing that makes Rich, *Prov.* 10. 22. Without this the most blooming Attempts prove abortive: If *the Lord watch not the City, the Watchers watch in vain*, Psal. 127. 1. It's in vain without the Smiles of Providence to rise up early, or to sit up late, or eat the bread of Carefulness. Psal. 127. 2. *For the Race is not to the Swift, nor the Battle to the Strong*, Eccl. 9. 11. If all Events be thus under the direction of Providence, then surely the most easy and certain Method to Advancement is to get an Interest in the lasting Favour and Friendship of that God who sits at the *Helm* of Government, and *rowls* the unerring *Wheels* of Providence, so as to illustrate his *Glory*, and advance his *People's Happiness*. *Non caeco impetu voluntur rotæ*: The *Wheels* of Providence are not governed by a blind Fortune, or Chance. You must *provide* for your *Families*; who has ever heard you say, you must *provide* for your *Souls*? Is not that Provision a matter of infinitely greater importance? O! that you were as sensible of your *Souls* wants as you are of your *Bodies*, it would be happy for you. But if you had a necessary, rational and parental Affection to the *Souls* of your *Children*, you would express it otherwise by

by Instructing them in the knowledge of the great Principles of Christianity, exciting and entreating them to practical Piety, and confirming your reasonable Instructions by pious Examples. Children have Eyes as well as Ears, to see what you do, as well as bear what you say: If they don't hear you Pray and Read God's Word in your Families; in short, unless they see you Pious in the course of your Conversation, how can they think you are any other wise than in *Jest*, when you speak to them about Religion, when they see you make a *Jest* of it your selves. Some Men are like Nebuchadnezar's *Image*, whose Head was of Gold, but its Feet, partly of Iron and partly of Clay; they hold perhaps sound Opinions respecting Religion, but have a base Earthly Practise, *Dan. 2 32, 33*. It's an awful Expression of famous *Hopkin's*, "That some Men talk as if Angels sat on their Tongues, but in their Lives they are Devils."

You that are Heads of Families, if after your own Conversion to God, you might be a mean (thro' Grace) by your good Instruction and Example, of their Spiritual Life, to whom you have been an Instrument of a Natural Life, would not this be better than to provide them an Estate, at the Expence of your own, and their Salvation? But alas! it's matter of great Lamentation! that many Parents are worse to their Children than the *Sea Monsters*: These irrational Animals by an instinct of Nature, draw out their Breasts to their Young, *Lam. 4. 3*. But you who have Reason and Revelation, besides that natural tenderness, do not feed your Children out of the Breasts of both Testaments: You give them Learning, you say, and what should you do *more*? There is much more to be done, than just to learn them to Read, and then leave them to themselves, like the cruel *Ostrich*, as I have shewn before.

Pretext 3. But I get an Estate that I may do good with it in the World: Ay, this is a gilded Pretext. But what Good do you do now with what you have? Little or nothing perhaps, some insignificant *trifles* not worth mentioning, no ways proportioned to your Ability; But you'll say, you han't it to spare; ay, and you would have less to spare if your Possessions were ten times greater, for your greedy Desires would increase more than in Proportion to the Increase of your Wealth; you would be but a Beggar then: For as *Seneca* well observes, "Compare the richest Misers Possessions with his Desires, and he is a Beggar."

"Beggars". Remember the poor Widow's Mite, and be ashamed of thy Hypocrisy. But shall I tell thee thy View in labouring to get a large Estate? *Pride* is one Motive, you want to be a little demi god in the World, a sort of an independant Being, by having many depending on thee, courting thy Smiles, and trembling at thy Frowns, caressing thee by all the humble Arts of Endearment, hanging on thy Lips, and listning to thy Haughty, and perhaps but Shallow Discourses, with the profoundest Silence, as to *Apollo's* Oracles. A second is *Luxury*, that you may live with more Ease, Gaiety and Voluptuousness, in order to compass a comparative Happiness here, a sort of Turks Paradise. And would you have a Happiness in this World? Well thought of indeed; for if you don't get it in this, you are not like to get it in the next by your present Course, 1 *John* 2. 25.

4. Pretext. I am in *debt*, and must not I labour to pay my Debts? Yes, yes, Friend, there's no doubt of it, but in the mean time, you should consider that you are in *debt* to the *great God*, both to his Mercy and Justice. Does not your Life and Being, and all your Supports in both freely flow, from the forfeited *Springs* of his unmerited *Goodness*? And are you not in debt to his *Justice*, by breaking his *Law*, and flighting his *Gospel*, affronting his *Majesty* and abusing his *Mercy*? You are perhaps afraid of the Sheriff or other civil Officers siezing of you, and putting you in a temporal *Prison*; but miserable Soul, unless you get your *Debts discharged*, the *Judgment* that is past against you *revers'd* by the meritorious *Passion* of Jesus, unless you get reconcil'd to your Adversary, the Almighty God, while you are in the Way, quickly the *grim Serjeant* Death will *arrest* you, and you shall be cast into the *Prison* of *Hell*, where you shall not come out till you pay the uttermost Farthing, *Matth.* 5. 25, 26. O Friend! Is there not more Reason to be afraid of being *bound* in these heavy *Chains* of Darkness and Death, than any other Confinement. You who through eager Desire and Labour to secure this World, neglect the Concerns of another, are like the *Dog* in the *Fable*, "who having a piece of Beef in his Mouth, and seeing the Shadow of it in the Water, dropt the piece that was in his Jaws, and catch'd at the Shadow."

5. Pretext. Say what you will, I must *wind the main Chance*. Ay! is this World then the main Chance, the chief Business we should pursue and esteem? Why then

bug

bug it, and make much of it, scrape and gnaw your Dog's Bone as much as you will; I believe no Child of God (when he is himself) will begrudge you your Portion.

6. Pretext. I only seek a moderate Support, says another. Ay, I suppose you'll say so: There's hardly anyBody worldly-minded, if their Sayings were worthy of Credit, but their Actions gives their Lips the Lie. It's as impossible to persuade a Worldling that he is such a One (without preventing Grace) as to wash an Ethiopian white. But pray Friend, if your worldly Care is so moderate, why do you run so fast, why are you so prodigiously vext at small Disappointments, and complain more about the Scarcity of Money than about the Absence of Christ, and the decay'd State of Religion? Why do you sometimes neglect the Duties of Piety in your Haste? Why are you as hot as Fire when your temporal Interest is touched, but as cold as a Stone about the Interest of Christ's Kingdom? According to those awful Prophecies, Phil. 2. 21. *That in the latter Days, Men shall be Lovers of themselves, more than Lovers of God.* And 2 Tim. 3. 2. *For Men shall be Lovers of their own selves, Covetous, Boasters, Proud, Unthankful, Unholy.*

3. For their Carnality, Presumers alledge *David's Fall*: In answer to this, it ought to be consider'd,

1. That was through strong Temptation.

2. Not repeated.

3. That his Repentance was very great, *Psalm 51.*

4. That the Judgments of God pursued him for it.

A gracious Person honestly labours against all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, 2 Cor. 7. 1. As a living Spring will not long continue mudied, but is still working out the impure Mixtures that defile it. *Christ is the Pattern* which a devout Soul copies after, him he follows though it be *haur passibus Aquis*, at a distance. 1 John 2. 3. *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself so to walk, even as he walked.* Heb. 12. 12. He will not follow any others, any further than they followed Christ, 1 Cor. 1. 1. 1 Pet. 2. 21. But the presumptuous Sinner copies after the *Bless* of pious People; *Noah, Lot, David, Solomon, Peter*, did so and so, and yet were saved, and therefore why should I doubt the goodness of my present State, or future Happiness, though I be guilty of this or that Failing, Drunkenness, Whoredom, Covetousness, habitual Passion, &c. I would not desire a plainer Sign of a presumptuous Sinner doom'd to *Darth*, and posting to *Hell*, than this. 2 Pet. 2. 10. These shall be especially

pecially punished, who walk after the Flesh, in the Lust of Uncleanness. We are expressly told that neither Fornicators, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind, shall inherit the Kingdom of God, 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. That such God will judge, that is condemn or damn, for so the Word *crinei* is sometimes rendred, 1 Cor. 11. 29. Heb. 13. 4. Is it not lamentable that these Falls of God's People which were recorded for the Support of distress'd disponding Penitents in their Return to God, and as Beacons and Warnings to excite us to avoid the like Offences, should be abused and perverted to a very contrary Design, as Enducements to Sin, & Supports to a false Confidence. "But if you must needs cut your Throats because others have cut their Fingers, who can help you? Many can fall with pious People, but they can't rise with them by Repentance and Reformation.

Excuse 2. It's but a *trick* of Youth, a *Foible*, to kiss a pretty Maid. Answer, It's the common Practice of wicked People to transfer the Names of *Vertue*, and put them upon *Vice*, in order to lessen it's Horror, lest their guilty Consciences should be shock'd, and so mar the Pleasure of their brutish Enjoyments, by beholding it in it's native Dress: In like manner do they represent *Vertue* under the odious Characters of *Vice*, that being thus arrayed in a *Fools* or *Knaves Coat*, they may with the greater Liberty point the *Arrows* of their *Anger* and *Disdain* against it; but these artful *Guises* are as far from altering their distant and opposite Natures, as they will be from securing the Contriver and Users of them, from the punishment their Crimes, and the Extenuation of them demerits. *He that hideth his Sins shall not prosper.* Prov. 28. 13.

But to shew that Uncleanness is no *Foible*, but a very notorious abominable and destructive *Evil*, pray consider these following Particulars, viz That it emasculates and darkens the *Mind*, emaciates and dishonours the *Body*, hardens the *Heart*, and sears the *Conscience*, wastes the *Substance*, wounds the *Reputation*, and damns the *Soul*. Prov. 6. 32, 33. *But whoso committeth Adultery lacketh understanding; he that doth it, destroyeth his own Soul, a wound and dishonour shall he get, and his reproach shall not be wiped away.* 1 Cor. 6. 18. *He that committeth Fornication sinneth against his own Body.* Read those Places of Scripture. Jer. 5. 8. 9, 23, 29. Eph. 5. 3, 7. Prov. 5. 3, 12. Prov. 2. 16, 20. Job. 7. Numb. 25. 1, 4. Prov. 6. 32, 33.

Excuse

Excuse 3. It's what almost *all practise*, and especially People of the best *Sense and Fashion*. *Answw*. Tho' it must be confess'd that there is too great reason to *fear* that this Sin is too common and flagrant in this perverse Age; yet there is reason to *hope* that a considerable Number are preserv'd from the Infection. As to what you offer further that the People of Sense and Fashion practise this. I answer, That it's to be fear'd the Assertion has too much Truth in it, *viz*. That many of those who make a gay and great Appearance and splendid Figure in the World, who would be esteem'd indeed the only Men of Sense (as if their Judgment must of necessity be proportioned to the *bulk* of their *Estates*, the *height* of their *Imaginations*, or the *loftiness* of their *Looks*) are guilty of it. But supposing them to be possess'd of a large Stock of natural Wit and acquired Learning, as it's confess'd some of the Devil's Children have; but not so much as many of them conceit neither: Some of Satan's *Brats* are meer *Dunces*, tho' they would all be esteem'd *Solomon's*: I say, do they shew their Wit in rejecting the Government of Reason, and the Laws of God, in the pursuit of brutish Pleasures? But what patronage can you get from them? Must not every Man answer for his own Sins? (*Ezek. 18. 4. Dan. 12. 13.* If they have much Wit and Knowledge, and live in defiance of it, does it not heighten their Sin? and won't it their Condemnation? *Joh. 3. 19.* Can the commonness of any Vice lessen it's malignant qualities? Can it be imagin'd that respect of Persons will be shewn to People according to their Civil Distinctions here, at the General Judgment? No surely, the most of the great Ones will be in a most woful plight in that Day. See *Rom. 6. 15, 16.* Their Rank and Quality does not free them from the common *Vicissitudes* of Fortune in this World, Sickness and Death shews no respect to their Greatness; and when enter'd the Grave the Worms feed as freely on their *Hearts*, as the Heart of a Beggar; and then People are as free with their (mostly) *infamous Characters*, as the Worms are with their *pamper'd Bodies*. Now if their Greatness can't help them in this World in the foresaid respects, how much less in the next?

Excuse 4. Some will pretend that they are induc'd to this Sin by a kind of *Necessity*, for they are not able they say to maintain a Wife credibly, but when they get their Substance increas'd by Trading, then they intend to marry and reform. In answer to this, I would propose these Six *Queries*.

Quer. 1. If those Remedies which God has appointed, and which if faithfully us'd might prove sufficient preventives of this Vice, such as *Fasting, Prayer, Temperance* in Eating and Drinking, *Diligence* in the Business of our particular Calling, and the avoiding all the *Incentives* to this Vice, such as *lewd Company, prophane Books, wanton Pictures, &c* have not been try'd; is it not meer sham and notorious Hypocrisy to pretend Necessity in such a Case? But remember God will not be mock'd.

Quer. 2. Seeing all our *Successes* are under the Divine *Direction*; is the *affronting* of God's Majesty and the *Violation* of his *Laws* a right *Method* to obtain his *Successful Smiles*? But if any should obtain Success in such a way, it's attended with the Curse of God, *Mal. 2. 2.* Now is it not better to want such success, than have it? However you may dream at present, I'm sure you'l think so in the issue.

Quer. 3. Is not a little with *Peace* of Conscience in God's appointed way of Marriage, better than a great abundance in his *Wrath*, attended with inward *disquiet*? The Psalmist answers this Question in the Affirmative, *Psal.*

37. 16

Quer. 4. Is not the Practice of Wickedness the way to *Discredit* and *Shame*? *1 Sam. 2. 30* For them that honour me, I will honour, and they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed. *Rom. 6. 21.* What fruit had you then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is *Death*.

Quer. 5. Is it not highly probable that a habit of *Uncleanness* before Marriage will ensnare you after it, to your own, and your Family's ruin and dishonour? *Prov. 2. 18, 19.* For there is no bounds to *Lust*, but *Grace* and the *Grave*.

Quer. 6. Is it not very likely that if you persist wilfully in any known Sin, that God will forsake you, desist striving with you, and deny you in Justice, that *Grace* without which you cannot reform. *Rev. 22. 11.*

4. In behalf of *Swearing*: Some will alledge these following Pleas,

1. They *Swear* to the *Truth*. What then, one may Swear *vainly* to confirm what is *true*, and that they do when they Swear unnecessarily and customarily, in common Discourse? This customary Swearing gradually wears off the *dread* of God's Majesty, and insensibly leads to *Falshood* and *Perjury*; an *Evil* that makes those *Monsters* that

commit

commit it ridiculous, for who would not suspect him that suspects himself. Was there ever a greater Monster in Nature, than the rash Swearer? A Man that perhaps professes much *Wisdom*, and *Penetration*, one that thinks (probably) that all the sober part of the World are *Fools*, in comparison of his *Wisdom*; and yet in one of his witty Flights, he sells his Soul to the Devil for nothing, for a Sin that is neither attended by Pleasure or Profit, and is very desirous that *Beelzebub* should have his Bargain immediately, which he expresses in his strange Acts of Devotion, praying that God would damn (*boresco referens*) him, or the Devil take him: Friend, you need not be so earnest with God to damn you; without Doubt his *Holiness*, his *Justice*, his *Truth* will oblige him to grant you your *Petition* without much *Importunity*; you need not fear but he will seal your *Mittimus* for *Tophet*, and cast such *Vermin* as you are among the *Devils* your *Companions*; there you shall have cursing enough, and be obliged to gnaw your Tongues for *Pain*; those wretched Instruments by which you have reflected so much Dishonour upon the God that made you: One would think your other Wickedness would be enough to procure you that Portion, without much other Labour, and is this your great Wisdom? Is *Hell* such a comfortable *Place*? And is the *Devil* such a beneficent *Master* and pleasant *Companion*? I believe if you felt but one single *Gripe* of the Damned's Torments, "if GOD and the Devil had a Blow a piece at you;" as *Hopkin's* expresseth it, you would not think so. It affords Matter of the greatest *Surprize*, and deepest *Sorrow*, to consider that some who go under the Name of Christians should outdo the very *Pagans*, those Devil-worshippers, in this horrible *Heaven-daring*, *God-provoking*, *Soul-damning* Wickedness! As I am informed, the Indians about us have no swearing Words in their Language; But some silly Creatures, when they get a little worldly Pelf, a fashionable *Coat*, a bob *Wig*, and a *Banjan*, the Devil himself can scarcely outdo some of them in *Pride*; with these Accoutrements, they not only huff and strut it over their Fellow-Creatures, some of whom are perhaps in all valuable respects their Superiours, but even enter the Lists with *Omnipotence*! and defy their Maker; they disgorge the foam of their envenom'd *Malice* against the most high God! by *gracing* (as they foolishly imagine) their smutty Speeches with horrid *Imprecations*! They are no mean Mortals: When they have got such extraordinary *Trappings*, the

Laws

Laws of Nature and Religion (in their notion if their Lives may be allowed to interpret their Sentiments) are beneath their *soaring Fancies*, which are busied with Matters of greater Importance, viz. *Catching of Flies*; as it's storied of a Roman Emperor: No, no, they leave the Restraints of Religion (which they count Shackles) to Persons of a *vulgar Mould*. Thus as the Wise Man observes, *The Prosperity of Fools destroy them*, Prov. 1. 32.

Plea 2. But perhaps some may plead, that they don't Swear, only attest what they say by their Faith and Truth. I answer, This includes not only prophane Swearing, but Idolatry also in its bosom: If a necessary lawful Oath be a part of God's Worship, as it certainly is. *Deut. 6. 13. Isai. 45. 23. Jer. 12. 16. 2 Cor. 1. 23. Heb. 6. 16. Rev. 10. 6.* Then it's Idolatry to give this part of divine Worship to the Creature, which is due only to the Creator. The design of an Oath is an *appeal to God*, concerning the *Truth* of what we speak: Now when this is done with *Solemnity*, God is *glorified*; for by this *appeal* we acknowledge the *Perfections* of his Nature, particularly, his *Omniscience, Omnipresence, Justice*. Now when any Swear by a Creature (which Faith and Truth are) we ascribe to Creatures the Attributes of God; this the Lord highly resents, *Jer. 5. 7. How shall I pardon thee for this? Thy Children have forsaken me, and sworn by those that are no God's. Consider O Sinner! God will not hold them guiltless that take his Name in vain: The Curse shall enter into the Swearers House, and there rest, Zech. 5. 4.*

Plea 3. Some will say they mean no harm, it's only a *Custom* they have got, which they can't easily leave. Answer, Whatever they mean, they do harm by breaking God's positive *Law*, contemning his *Authority*, and exposing themselves thereby to his *Curse and Vengeance*, for he has said, he will not hold them guiltless that take his Name in vain; and surely he will make good his Word to their Confusion, except they repent. As for the *Pretext of Custom*, it's so far from lessening, that it very much heightens their Wickedness. If a Man convicted of Felony, and arraigned at the Bar, should plead in his own Defence that he was so us'd to Thieving, he could not help it; would this alleviate his Crime? or save his Neck from the Halter? No certainly, the Judge would be apt to answer, as it's storied of one, "that if he, meaning the Criminal, was accustomed to Stealing, he himself had a custom of *Condemning* such; and that therefore he must
G Dye."

"Dye". Vicious Habits are acquir'd by frequent Acts; and therefore do exceed single Facts, as much in heinousness as in the number of Acts of which they are formed; a Fountain exceeds all the Streams that flow from it. To conclude this Head, it's very surprizing! that Men who pretend to Manners should offer such an incivility in Conversation as to treat with dishonour and contempt the Name of One whom all the sober part of Mankind esteems and revere, and therefore can't but suffer by the insolent Affronts that are cast upon him; such a Practise is no less than an unmannerly and cruel Persecution of those we converse with; if they be not Men quite abandon'd to all sense of honesty and honour.

5. For Sabbath Breaking, some will alledge that the strict Observation of the Sabbath is Ceremonial. Aye! it's Ceremonial I suppose in your esteem or opinion to keep from talking Worldly Discourse on the Lord's Day. O carnal Creature! consider that awful Speech of the Great God by his Prophet Isaiah, *Isai. 58. 13.* which will either convince thee, or condemn thee: Is it not moral and rational that the whole of that Day which is set apart for the Worship of God should be spent in it? It's true the Works of Necessity and Mercy are lawful to be done on Sabbath Days; but is thy chattering Worldly, or worse Discourse, either of them? But I suppose when you are kept a pretty while in hearing of a Sermon, and other parts of Divine Worship, from your darling the World; you are out of your Element, like a Fish out of the Water panting for breath; and may be you gave several gasps in the Meeting House, to fetch your breath, which was almost spent. I mean that your greedy hearts went several times after your Covetousness while you presented your Bodies before God, *Ezek. 33. 31.* But as soon as ever you come out of the Church Door, and may be before it, there must be a word of Refreshment about your God Mammon, then it goes pleasantly: Ha! you breathe in your own Air, but if you are kept from speaking your own Language, what a Weariness is it. *Mal. 1. 13.* It's said also what a weariness is it, and ye have snuffed at it, saith the Lord. You esteem that Day a Burden, which is the Queen of Days to others; "So Ignatius styles it in his Epistle to the Magnisians." How highly did the Psalmist value a Day in God's Courts, even above a thousand elsewhere *Psal. 84. 10.* But O! how few are of this Divine Temper at this Day! It's matter sufficient to alarm all our Mourning

ing Powers! and make our softest Passions bleed! to see how horribly the Sabbath is prophan'd in this Part of the Land! and especially by such whose Duty it is to shew a better Example: This Day which should be spent in a faithful attendance upon the Duties of Divine Worship, is spent by some in travelling about Worldly Business, or Visiting, or Walking for Diversion: Won't the jealous God revenge such Heaven daring Impieties? *Ezek. 20. 13, 16, 24. Lam. 1. 7. Ezek. 22. 8, 14.* But to render those inexcusable who wilfully persist in this perverse practise, let me add a few Words more under this Head to prove the Morality of the Sabbath. And

1. The Command concerning it, is put among the Moral Precepts, and confirm'd by such Reasons as are Moral and perpetually binding.

2. It's essentially necessary at all times to promote the publick Worship of God; as the very Opponents of this Truth confess.

3. It was engraven on Tables of Stone, to shew its perpetual duration.

4. Instead of being abolish'd, it's confirm'd in the New Testament, *Mat. 17. 18, 19.*

5. A Sabbath was instituted from the Creation of the World, *Gen. 2. 2, 3. Heb. 4. 34.*

6. A Sabbath was observ'd after the Fall before the Law was given upon Mount Sinai, *Exod. 16. 19.* to the 31st verse.

6. As to the neglect of Family Worship, some will rather question the Divinity, or necessity of that Duty, than their own Carnality, and Hypocrisy; which is very unreasonable: as will appear by the following Particulars. That this Duty is a part of Instituted Worship is evident,

1. From the Examples of pious Families: *Adam* after the Fall Sacrificing and prescribing Sacrifices to his Children, *Cain* and *Abel*. Of *Noah* Sacrificing after the Flood. Of *Abraham* teaching his Posterity, *Gen. 17. 19.* Of the *Jaylor*, *Acts 16. 31, 33.* Of *Cornelius*, *Act. 10. 2.* Of *Joshua*, *24th*. Chapter of his Book and *15th*. verse. Of *Daniel*, *Dan. 6. 10.* This was shadowed forth by the Morning and Evening Sacrifice, which was under the Jewish Economy continually offer'd to God.

2. By Precept: When we are commanded to say, *Our Father*, *Mat. 6. 9.* which Prayer being plural in the manner of expression, supposes more than one present. We are commanded to pray with *all* Prayer, *Eph. 6. 18.* But

this is one kind of Prayer. Hence it was that the Families of Christians were call'd Churches, or Churches in their Houses, *Rom. 16. 5. Phil. 4. 22. 1 Cor. 16. 19. Col. 4. 15.* We are commanded to pray *without ceasing, 1 Thes. 5. 17.* The Servants of Solomon are said to stand continually before him, tho' it was only at stated times. *David's* comfortable Speech to *Mephibosheth*, that he should eat bread at his table continually, *2 Sam. 9. 7.* signifies only his eating there at set times, otherwise his Speech would have been big with terror and punishment instead of comfort. So *Jehoiachin* King of *Judah* is said to eat bread continually in the presence of the King of *Babylon* all the days of his Life, *Jer. 52. 33.* Sure no body can be so vain as to imagine that he ate every minute; then indeed his Life would not have lasted long at that rate of gormandizing. So then this Command of God concerning Praying without ceasing, at least signifies our being always in a praying Frame, and more especially our punctual observance of the stated Seasons of Prayer.

3. By the Divine Threatning for the neglect of it, *Jer. 10. 25. I will pour out my fury upon the Heathen that know me not, and upon the Families that call not on my Name.* Observe here the dangerous Condition of Prayerless Families, they are the Objects of God's Indignation: Pour out thy fury upon the Heathen.

2. The neglect of this Duty is a *Pagan Practise*: Upon the Heathen. Truly 'tis worse than that of the *Mehomitans*, for they Pray five times a Day.

3. The neglect of Family Religion is a plain Evidence of *gross Ignorance*, and want of acquaintance with God. We may without breach of Charity under the patronage of this precious Scripture call those People Heathens, who neglect this Duty; and indeed they are so in fact, tho' perhaps they are Christians in Name, who neglect this Duty totally or frequently, and yet have had Opportunity of being instructed concerning its necessity and usefulness. Where we have a *Tent* God should have an *Altar*, upon which should be offered spiritual Sacrifices.

4. Don't Reason confirm what I have advanc'd on this Head? Is there no Family Sins to be confessed, no Family-Mercies to be implored and acknowledged? Is not this Practice of excellent Tendency, not only to your selves, but also to your Children and Servants? Therefore we are bid to train up a Child in the Way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it, *Prov. 22. 6.* How will you

you be able to give an Account of the Charge committed to you before the great God, who neglect to instruct, admonish and pray with your Children and Servants: If they perish through your neglect of Instruction, either by *Precept* or *Practice*, are you not guilty of their *Blood*? O Friends! consider if in that great Day of God, when you shall appear before the *flaming Tribunal* of the *Lord Jesus*, would it not be terrible to hear some of your Children and Servants accusing and cursing you, as the Instruments of their Ruin, thro' your vile Neglect of this Duty, and other wicked Practices? And this indeed is likely enough to be your *Case*, if you don't alter your *Course*.

If it be objected, 1. That such a Course of praying wou'd be *formal*: I answer, It's your own *Fault* if it be so. I am sure that praying frequently, if with necessary Caution and Solemnity is the appointed Way and Mean to obtain vital Religion, *Matth. 7. 7. Luke 11. 9.* I suppose indeed that this Duty is coldly and superficially performed by some carnal People, and no better can be expected of them while they remain in that State, unless it be some Sparks of their own kindling, *Isai. 50. 11.* And sometimes under the *bidings* of *Christ's Face*, true Christians may *languish* in their *Devotion*, which *Sloth* may much increase: *By Night on my Bed I sought him, Cant. 3. 1.* which is much to be *lamented*! But does this make the Duty, in it self consider'd, the less worthy of the Esteem of conscientious Persons? This Argument militates as much against stated hearing of the Word, reading the Scriptures, spiritual Conferences, which are commanded Duties, *Heb. 10. 25. Rom. 10. 14, 15. John 5. 39. Isai. 8. 20. Acts 17. 11. Mat. 3. 16.* We don't undervalue natural Food because we partake of it frequently, or because others abuse it.

Object. 2. I pray now and then when I am in a good *Frame*. O Hypocrite! I doubt thy *Frame* is little worth; that which don't come in God's Way, (I mean in the Way of earnest Seeking) it is generally either a Delusion of the Devil, or at best some transient Sorrow, occasioned by the gnawing of thy natural Conscience for some Wickedness thou hast committed, such as the Pagans have as well as thou, *Rom. 2.*

Object. 3. If any should object that he wants *Ability*; let him ask Wisdom of God, who gives liberally and upbraids not, and it shall be given him, *James 1. 5.*

Object. 4. But if any should alledge that their *Families* are so imbarass'd with Difficulties that they can't perform it with *Convenience*. I answer, *That he who observes the*

Wind shall not sow, Eccl. 11. 4. Through many Tribulations we must enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, Acts 14. 22. While there is a tempting Devil, and an alluring wicked World, there will be Hindrances in the Way of Duty, and Furtherances to Evil; he that will not endure Difficulties and Death it self for Truth and Duty, is no Disciple of Christ Jesus.

Obj. 5. I should be scoffed at, if I should carry on Family Religion. And what then, that is but a light Suffering for the precious Jesus; if your Head was to be laid on the Block for this Practice, which is much more, you would run the Risk of it, if you were a Child of God, Remember Daniel: If you profess not Christ before Men, how do you think he will profess you before his Father and the holy Angels?

7. For neglecting to hear the Word of God, some will offer the following Pleas.

1. The Minister is an odd sort of a Man, he speaks of nothing but Hell and Damnation. Answer, Was not John the Baptist a terrible Preacher? Behold the An is said to be the Root of the Tree, every Tree, saith he, that bringeth not forth good Fruit shall be hewn down and cast into the Fire, Mat. 3. 10. O Generation of Vipers, Mat. 12. 34. Was not Christ himself an awful Preacher? It's true he pronounced Blessings upon his Disciples, and so do his faithful Ministers, Mat. 5. But how many bitter Curses did he thunder out against the Pharisees, that self-righteous Generation, that built upon their own Works? Mat. 23. 13, 17. In the Compass of four Verses, he denounces four Curses upon them. With what Solemnity and Frequency did our blessed Lord inculcate the grisly Horrors and endless Pains of the damned World! Mat. 8. 12. Was not this the Practice of the Apostles? Knowing the Terrors of the Lord, we persuade Men, 2 Cor. 5. 11. Upon which Text, learned Seilingfleet justly observes, That if the Terrors of God and Eternity will not persuade Men to forsake their vicious Courses, nothing else will. The great Necessity of using Terror appears from the following Considerations.

*1. The Holy Spirit begins with Conviction. John 16. 8, 9. Now should not Ministers follow the Order of the Holy Spirit's Operations on the Soul? Does not natural Reason reach this, and Men's Practice in other Affairs? In Buildings, don't Men dig deep, and lay the Foundation first? For that ancient Proverb is most just, *Stabi Opus melius si ben. fixa B. sis*, The Superstructure will stand the better if*

the

the Foundation be well laid. To preach Comfort to Men before a sound Conviction, is as ridiculous as if a Mason should pretend to erect a fair Fabrick in the airy Regions. Do not Men plow the Ground before they sow it? This Similitude the Holy Spirit uses in the Word, Jer 4. 3. *Plow up the fallow Ground of your Hearts, and sow not among Thorns.* Would it not be very ridiculous for a Husbandman to sow his Ground before he plowed it, or to cast Seed upon a stinty Rock? It's every whit as ridiculous for Ministers to preach Comfort to unconvinced Souls. *There is no Peace saith my God to the Wicked,* Isa. 48. 22.

2. Unconverted People have a clearer Notion of Pain, both bodily and mental, than of the Pleasures and Comforts of a pious Life, for they have had the Experience of the one, but not of the other; they have no just Notion of the ravishing Sweets of Religion, either in this Life or that to come; for a Stranger doth not intermeddle with those Joys, *Prov. 14. 10.* Now is not a Person more apt to be affected with those Things he knows, than with the Things he knows not?

3. Unconverted People are govern'd by selfish Principles, fill'd with Hatred against the good God; as I prov'd before. How then can it be reasonably expected that such Persons will be much moved by Love Arguments when they are without that noble generous Passion in any Degree of Eminence towards God? Is not Love Loves Loadstone? A Man never loves God truly and transcendently until he feels the warm Beams of God's Love glowing in his Breast: *We love him because he first loved us,* 1 John 4. 19. As the Sun shining upon Glas has it's Rays reflected or retorted, so a Believer's Love to Christ is nothing but his own reflected. It's true, ungodly People may have some transient Motion of the Affections when they hear a Love Subject passionately handled, but these Affections are like the morning Cloud and early Dew, *Hos. 6. 14. & 13. 3.*

Object 2. But such a Minister is uncivil in his publick Discourses, he does not treat Mankind with Manners and Discretion. In answer to this, Let me crave leave to inform you, that one can hardly call a wicked Man out of his Name: Won't you allow us the Liberty to learn Manners in Christ's School? Is not his Word the best Directory for the Manners of Christians? I hope you won't have such a hardy Front as to call Christ and his Apostles unmannerly Persons, and why should you any that follow their Examples? Pray read and consider what *Epistets of Shame*

and *Ignominy* our Lord and his Servants gave those Men; Christ call'd wicked Persons, blind Guides, Fools and Blind, *Mat. 23. 16, 17.* Hypocrites, 23. Serpents, & a Generation of Vipers, 33. Foxes, *Luke 13. 32.* Whited Walls, *Acts 1. 23. 3.* The Apostles called them Dogs, *Phil. 3. 2.* Beware of Dogs, beware of evil Workers, *Rev. 22. 15.* For without are Dogs, and Sorcerers, and Whoremongers, and Murderers, and Idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a Lie. Ye are Beasts, *1 Cor. 15. 32.* The Ox and the Ass is prefer'd before you in some Respects, *Isai. 1. 3.*

Object. 3. Ministers should endeavour to draw People by Degrees by a mild winning Way, they should offer Milk to Babes: Yes, yes, this is the Way to gain them to themselves, but not to Christ. Your Advice Friend, is the old Story over again, pray hear what God says of it, *Isai. 30. 9, 10.* That this is a rebellious People; lying Children that will not bear the Law of the Lord, which say to the Seers, we see not, and to the Prophets, Prophecy not unto us righteous Things; speak unto us smooth Things, prophesy Deceits. Is it proper think you for a Physician to act according to the Humour and Advice of a distemper'd Patient? If one that is in a Lethargy, a little before he falls into his Fits should advise his Phylician, that whatever he did, before to give him easy Medicines; do you think that a Man of any Sense or Conscience would follow that Direction? I think not. Thus Christless Persons are all of them before their Conviction in this lethargick Sleep, which they don't care to be roused out of, because of the Pain occasioned by such an Alarm. Suppose a Man were sleeping securely and dreaming pleasantly, while the House was a Fire over his Head, would it not be a Deed of Mercy, to awake such a Person? Yes, I suppose you'll allow this. Now suppose you your selves endeavour'd by a sudden Alarm to rouse that Man (for I charitably presume you would allow the Exercise of some Zeal to save a Man's Life from the devouring Flames) you would not surely go to whisper in his Ear some soft round about Discourse, that his House was you feared not in the best Condition possible, it might perhaps take Damage if suitable Care were not taken to prevent it. I say would you go thus about the Bush with the poor Man in a Time of such Danger? No, I believe not: I fancy you would take a rougher Method, without Ceremony or Grimace. Now what if this Man should return your Courtesy and Kindness to him in Distress with a Blow on your Face, while the poor Creature was but half awaked

awaked out of his sweet Sleep, being ignorant of his good Design: The Case applies it self. This truly is much the Condition and Carriage of a secure Christless World. If a Person that was cachectick or under a bad Habit of Body, should advise the Physician to give him Elixirs and Cordials continually, because he had a natural Aversion against Physick, either Emetick or Cathartick; should the Physician observe this Direction, and would it effect a Cure? If one that had an old Ulcer, or a mortify'd Leg or Arm, would pray the Chyrurgeon to lay by his *Probe* and *Saw*, for he could not bear to see those Instruments, they always terrify'd him, but if he must shew them at any Time, to let the World know that he had a good *Set of Tools*, and thereby establish his *Character*, that he would intreat him that this should be but seldom, and that he would keep them at a due Distance, and in the mean time, use emollient lenitive Medicines; would it be proper to observe these Directions think you, to avoid the groundless Charge of Cruelty, & incur deservedly that of Murder or Fraud?

Object 4. But you'll object, that *Milk* should be offer'd to *Babes*: Yes, yes, by all Means, I have nothing against it, but I hope you don't think any are Babes before they are born; I dare be bold to say, if you were regenerated by the Holy Ghost, & so Babes in Christ, you would love the Doctrines of Conversion, Faith, Repentance, as the Child the Breast, for these are the first and great Principles of practical Religion. But how can you think you are Babes when you are unacquainted with the *Pangs* of the *New-Birth*. Nay, perhaps instead of the experimental Knowledge of this *great* and *noble Change*, you are apt to question whether such a Thing be attainable; whether the Notions of People about it don't consist very much, if not altogether in Fancy, Melancholly or Enthusiasm; and may be in your great Wisdom you are apt to flear or smile at the mentioning of such a Change; and yet in the mean time, you pretend to believe that *Christ* speaks of *Truth*, *John 3. 9.* I pray you reconcile your *Faith* and your *Wisdom* together if you can, and see if the one be not *Fisshion* and the other *Madness* and *Malice*. But is there not Children in another Sense? Yes, yes, there be Babes in Knowledge, and such are you for all your *Conceits*; otherwise you would not slight and disgust those *Doctrines* and *Methods* of *Application*, which have the directest *Tendency* to promote your *Happiness*. But suppose we should humour you for *Gain*, and tell you pleasant and smooth Stories,

Stories, and if we spoke any Terror to the Wicked now and then by the by, we should immediately upon the Heels of it, before the Wound was half opened, apply a healing Plaster, and so daub with untempered Mortar, Ezek. 13. 10. 11. *Because, even because they have seduced my People, saying Peace, and there was no Peace. And one built up a Wall, and others daub it with untempered Mortar, say unto them that daub with untempered Mortar; that it shall not stand.* I say, if we should sow Pillows under every Arm-hole, ver. 18. by a short, general and undistinct Application of our publick Discourses, contrary to Paul's Direction to Timothy, 2 Tim. 2. 15. And labour to heal the Wounds of the Daughter of Zion slightly, Jer. 6. 4. & 8. 11. *They have healed also the Hurt of the Daughter of my People slightly, saying, Peace, Peace, when there is no Peace;* for Fear any poor Souls should be convicted and saved from the Wrath to come. You would be apt to say, O that is a fine Minister, indeed, he is not always thundring about Hell and Damnation, he is a Man of Sense and Learning, I believe he shews the Way to Heaven with Moderation, he does not lead People into a Wilderness, and there leave them; you would court such a Man's Conversation which you would find according to your Hearts Desire, worldly and vain, may be a little Religion spoken of by Chance, and that of the doctrinal and controversial Parts (not the experimental), they'll take care to avoid that) of Religion, and that offered with haughty, or light Air, which leaves no lasting Impression on the Audience; these are the fine Men that the World is bless'd with, Hosannah, Hosannah! O the Blindness and Madness of an insatuated World! Such Soul Murderers, and dry Nurses are the only Men fit to be esteemed and caressed! You would fly the Company of a faithful Minister, as you would do a Lyon; because his pious Discourses gall you, and you are afraid poor Souls of being converted. But I say, suppose we should tell you such pleasant Tales, would this alter the Nature of Things? No I believe not, (the Nature of God and divine Truth remain invariable; for all our Notions this Method would only expose us to the awful Charge of Blood-guiltiness, and you and us both, to an unexpected and therefore aggravated Damnation, Ezek. 33. 8.

Object 5. Perhaps some will say, that it's dangerous to hear such Men that preach Terror: Why what Danger I pray; is there Danger of your being convicted of your damnable State, and your being converted to God? Are you

you

you afraid of this? if you are, you are *Fools* for your Pains.

Object. 6. No, I am not afraid of that, but I am afraid of being drove into *Dispair*; such a Time when I was in the Meeting, the Sermon struck me with such Terror that my very *Blood* chill'd in my *Veins*; I could hardly keep from trembling. Very well Friend, I am glad to hear that the Word of God had reach'd you; I wish you had trembled thoroughly, and improved it for your Salvation, *Isai. 66. 2.* Friend, you need not be so much afraid of being drove into *Dispair*; you are in much more Danger of the contrary *Extreme, Presumption*, as I have shewn before in another Part of this Discourse.

Object. 7. I am not so much afraid my self, I don't much mind such *Fellows* (*Acts 17. 18.* what will this *Babler* say?) as some poor weak People; they are in great Danger of being hurt by such Men; Ha, you are a charitable Man then as you suppose! but it's the backward Way, a *blind, bloody Charity*. Some now a-days are like the *Pharisees* of old, who would neither enter into the Kingdom of Heaven themselves, nor suffer those that are entering to enter, *Mat. 23. 13.* But pray remember [the Words of *Solomon*, *Prov. 26. 12.* *Seest thou a Man that is wise in his own Conceit, there is more Hope of a Fool than of him.*

Object. 8. Such a Way of preaching *Terror, Terror*, I am sure will never do any *Good*. I answer, that a blind Man can't judge of Colours well; stay till you be brought home to Christ your self, and be the Means under God of bringing others to him, and then you'll have other Thoughts of this Matter. The Apostle informs us that by the Foolishness of preaching God saves them that believes, *1 Cor. 1. 21.* By that way of preaching which is judged Foolishness by a carnal World; for in the Wisdom of God, says the Apostle in the forecited Place, the World by Wisdom knew not God.

Object. 9. He's a weak Man say some: Well be it so, tho' in the mean time, the most of People are but poor Judges of ministerial Accomplishments, which is too evident from the sudden Admiration and Applause some *Quacks* and *Petty Forgers* in Divinity, that have neither *Grace* nor *Learning*, have gain'd from the unthinking *Populace*: I say, suppose they are weak in Gifts, yet if they are sincere, and preach the sound Truths of Christ, though not with such bright *Eloquence* and rhetorical *Diction* (which *Varnish* perhaps they designedly conceal) as some others,

others, they should not be despised; wholesome Food is not to be slighted for the want of curious Sauce; it's a Sign of a distempered vitiated Palate when the Sauce is liked better than the Meat.

Object 10. But some Men preach new and strange Doctrine, that Men must be *convicted* and *converted*, or new born! Ay, Is this new Doctrine? It is as old as *Adam*, he after his woful Fall was convicted; when God came into the Garden in the cool of the Day, he heard his Voice and was afraid, and strove to hide him, being ashamed of his Nakedness, and therefore endeavour'd to cover it with (but sorry Vail) Fig-leaves: This is the very Practice of a convinced Soul at this Day; *Adam's* Posterity follow their degenerate Parent's Footsteps, when they hear God's Voice by his Word they are afraid; for his Word is like a sharp two-edged Sword, which pierces to the dividing of Joynts and Marrow, *Heb.* 4. 12. This Sword goes out of Christ's Mouth, *Rev.* 1. 16. & 19. 15. God's Word is as a Hammer and as Fire, which break the Rock in pieces, *Jer.* 23. 29. I say, when this is brought home to Sinners Hearts, it can't but create Fear and Pain; then does the convinced Soul fly from God as *Adam*, instead of flying to him: Some endeavour to drown the Voice of God and Conscience with a Hurry and Noise of worldly Business, as *Cain* laboured to divert the Reflections of his guilty Mind by building of Cities: Some fly to Diversions, as troubled *Saul* to his Fiddle, to drive away those Ghosts which damp their Mirth and appale their Jollity; some drink away their Troubles; I fear too many get their Wounds skin'd over by these Methods, I now mentioned: so that they go on in their merry jovial Course again: But if these Expedients don't prevail, but still their Wretchedness is discovered, then they'll endeavour with all Speed to patch and sew together the Fig-leaves of their Prayers, and Charity, good Thoughts, and Honesty to hide their Shame. But if God has designed Mercy for you, he'll shew you the Insufficiency of such poor Provs to lean a sinking Soul upon. What, are these strange and new Doctrines that have been inculcated from the earliest Times, and are urged all over the Book of God? *Deut.* 30. 10. *Jer.* 4. 3, 4, 14. *Joel* 2. 13. *Acts* 2. 37. *John* 3. 3. and a thousand more Places of Scripture I might mention to the same Purpose, if there was any Necessity.

Object 11. But a great many understanding People speak against this way. What then; so it ever has been, and will

will be, *Act. 28. 24. Gal. 4. 29. 2 Tim. 3. 12. 1 Cor. 11. 26. 27.* Is Truth to be weighed by the multitude or paucity of its Friends, or Opponents? or in the Sanctuary's Scales, and Ballances of right Reason? If you believe this or that because the generality do so, especially the Men of Figure and Fashion, your Faith is but Historical and Humane, and of no avail; for as we should not follow a multitude to do *Evil*, *Exod. 23. 2.* So we should not follow a multitude to believe *lies*, or with the blinded Papists, pin our Faith upon another's *Sleeve*. It becomes a wise Man to search impartially into the grounds of his Faith, and having found them sufficient, he should stand as a Rock, impregnable, against the furious incursion of all the Waves that may assail him.

Object. 12. But I don't like that Minister at all. May be it's because he disturbs your false Peace, and tells you your Wickedness. *There is one Micajah by whom we may inquire of the Lord; but I hate him, for he doth not prophesie good concerning me, but evil,* *2 Kin. 22. 8.* My Friends, if you consulted your own Interest, you would not suffer Fancy, or a groundless Prejudice, to turn the Scale of your Judgment. If he is a faithful Man, you should not slight him for that which deserves your esteem; I mean his Warmth and Fidelity in his Master's Service. Pray remember the words of the Lord Jesus, *He that despiseth you, despiseth me,* *Luk. 10. 16.* But if you will persist in this unreasonable Practice, it will in the issue turn to your *loss* and his *gain*. But if he is a Time-server, a Flatterer, a carnal Worldly Man, he is not worthy of your love, *Job. 10. 5.*

Object. 13. But I can read at Home, I have very good Books. Have you so; then you have reason to be thankful for that Priviledge; but is there no other times to read these good Books but the time of publick Worship? Should one Duty prevent another? If it may suffice to stay at Home and read good Books, then why are publick stated Meetings enjoy'd? *Heb. 10. 25.* and to what purpose was a Ministry appointed? which is to continue to the end of Time, *Eph. 4. 11, 12, 13. Mat. 28. 19.* If we might ordinarily obtain Happiness without a Gospel Ministry, would not this infer an unworthy Reflection upon the Wisdom of Christ the Legillator, that he has appointed an unnecessary Order of Men? Why are we injur'd (if reading is sufficient) in the *10th* of the *Romans*, *Ver. 16. 1;* *That Faith comes by Hearing?* and that we can't

can't bear without a Preacher; and that he can't Preach without he be sent. Why did the blessed God direct *Cornelius* by his Angel to send to Joppa for *Peter*, and learn Instruction of him? *Acts* 10. 5, 6. Could not the Lord have Instructed him by an Angel? Yes surely; but it was his Pleasure (for our Instruction) to do otherwise, to which we should without murmuring submit. Did not the Lord also send *Ananias* to *Saul* to teach him the things that concern'd his Happiness? *Act*. 9. 11. Could not the Almighty have instructed him after the same miraculous manner he convinc'd him? Yes doubtless, but it was his Pleasure to do otherwise, *1 Cor.* 1. 21. Those that won't seek Happiness in the stated Gospel Order which God has established, he is not like to find it. *2 Cor.* 10. 5. *Prov.* 29. 18. Small trifling Excuses will keep some from hearing the Word: A little Rain, or Cold: But these petty Difficulties would not hinder them from travelling much further to a Fair, or Market, or Vendue, to secure a good Bargain: What did I say, a bad Bargain it is surely, when you barter Truth and Conscience for unjust Gain, striving at the Cost of your Salvation to get things below their real worth.

Object. 14. I took Physick that Day, and so I could not come. *Ans.* Why did you take the prophylactick or preventing Physick on the Sabbath, rather than on any other Day? Could you not have delay'd Bleeding, and taking of Physick till Monday with Safety? (I except immergent Cases) yes you might; but was it not to save time for your grand Concern, the World, that you took this method; and so prevented your selves of an Opportunity of Hearing the Word. Is not this a pretty Contrivance now? a sensible notion! Ay, I suppose those that use it, think so; for they have sav'd one Day for their Friend Mammon, which would otherwise have been lost in going to Meeting. Some People think it's all clear Gain that they can by hook and by crook scrape off the Lord's Time or Worship: but will they (cunning Fellows!) think so at last? When they lose their Souls by the Bargain. For are not they guilty of Rebellion, and Theft? by prophanely breaking the positive Law of God; and hypocritically stealing the Time dedicated to his sacred Service, and appropriating of it most sacrilegiously to their civil Business? Don't such a practice argue that we value the Business and carnal Comfort of this transitory Life, above the Service of, or Communion with God? and

if so, how can ye expect to enjoy the God, whose Authority and Love ye thus disdain.

Object. 15. Some Friends came to see me, whom I was under Obligation to, and whom therefore I could not in civility leave. *Answ.* The Pretext is plausible, the poisonous Pill is gilded, and will suit a distempered Palate well; but consider in answer to it the following Queries.

Quer. 1. Are those Friends, who keep you from seeking God's Favour and Friendship in his appointed time and way? *Quer. 2.* Are you under such Obligations to any Mortal, as you are to God? Should not you therefore be more afraid of displeasing him, and damning your own Souls, than of disobliging an unreasonable Creature?

Quer. 3. Why can't you take your Friends with you to Meeting, if they will go? if not, is it not better to leave them, than to go to Hell with them out of Compliment?

Quer. 4. Is not more regard and reverence due to God, than to any Creature? Therefore is it not the best Manners to serve Him first? *Quer. 5.* Is Feasting and carnal Merriment a proper Means to prepare the Soul, for fellowship with God here, or hereafter? *Quer. 6.* Do you think in your own Conscience, that your excuse will be accepted by a holy and righteous God.

Object. 16. I'm asham'd to go in such poor Cloaths as I have. *Answ. 1.* This shews Pride; (for you have no reason to be asham'd of any thing but Sin, and will one Sin excuse another?) *2.* Will the badness of your Coat or Cap, or Gown, hinder your profiting by the Word and Ordinances, if you attend? no surely; a bad Heart is more like to do that. *Heb. 4. 2.* *3.* May you not be carried off by Death before you get new Cloaths? *4.* Does God regard Apparel? *Jam. 2. 1, 2, 3.* How can you think then that such a pretext will excuse you? *5.* If you are Poor in this World in Purse, and Apparel, should not you then rather seek God in his appointed way, that you may obtain Spiritual and Eternal Robes and Riches, that you ben't Poor in both Worlds?

Object. 17. The Meeting is far off. *Answ.* Don't you go as far about Business, or Diversion in the Week time? And is not the Salvation of your Souls a matter of greater Consequence, than any Worldly Business? deserving greater Pains, Travel, and Labour to secure it?

Object. 18. I must stay at Home one part of the Day, at least, to take a nap, for I am us'd to it. *Answ. Quer. 1.* Is Sleeping the way to keep the Sabbath holy? Then Sluggards

Sluggards are well off, they must needs be very pious People. *Prov.* 26. 14. *Quer.* 2. Is it a natural or spiritual Rest that God principally requires in the Fourth Command? If the Sanctification of the Sabbath consists chiefly in a natural Rest or Cessation from Labour, then your Ox or Ass can keep it as well as you. *Quer.* 3. Whether such Indolence don't shew a manifest and notorious disregard to God's Authority, as well as to your own Happiness. *Quer.* 4. Can't you watch a few Hours upon a Lord's Day for your poor Souls? If you won't, Sleep on; and take your Rest, till Death and Hell awake you. *Mat.* 26. 45. *Quer.* 5. Will your custom in Sloth, alter or lessen its vile and heinous Nature?

Now your indifferency about hearing God's Word, proves to your Faces that you are the Sons of Death; for those that are born of God hunger after the Word, as a Child after the Breast. *1 Pet.* 2. 2. *How amiable are thy Tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts; my Soul longeth; yea even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord; Psal.* 84. 1, 2. But if you chance to be there, which is perhaps but seldom; your Soul longs, and even faints to get out again, that you may get Home to pay some Devotion to your Bellies, I mean to swill them with warm Food, and feed your hungry Souls with some zealous, worldly or idle Discourse. What a different frame is this from that of the Psalmist; and yet you are fine Christians in your own notion. I warrant you would storm, and huff, and fret, and grind your Teeth with anger and disdain, if any body would be so faithful as to tell you the Truth, viz. that you are in a damnable Condition; but O remember the *very Lord Jesus* will revenge your slighting of his precious Word and poor Servants; you may think as light of this as you please, when your Bellies are full, and Death and Sicknes seems afar off, and you among your graceless jolly Companions. But by and by you will see things with other Paints of Light; a *table Scene* will open (if you continue in your old course) that shall fill your Souls with everlasting horror and confusion, without hopes of remedy. Remember you haughty Wretches, the jealous God will grind you to Powder, except ye repent and reform, *Luk.* 13.

8. For Passion: Some will plead (1.) that text, *Eph.* 4. 26. (this is borrow'd (says Mr. Henry) "from the Septuagint Translation of *Psal.* 4. 4. where we render it, "Stand in awe and sin not: Here is an easy Concession, "faith

saith he, for as such, we should consider it rather than as a Command; If we would be angry and Sin not, we must be angry at nothing but Sin: But if our Spirits have been ruffled by insolent Affronts, they should be quickly calm'd, for Anger only rests in the bosom of Fools, *Ecc. 7. 3.* Anger is sinful, (1.) When it is without just provocation given, either for no Cause, or for no good or great and profitable Cause. Some will be all in Flames and Fury for the least trifling Offence, and perhaps for none at all, but what their own brooding jealous Minds groundlessly project, "like the Clouds (as *Hopkins* very justly represents it) that break into Thunder and Lightning, when all the Fire and Sulphur is bred only in their own Bowels". (2.) When it exceeds due Bounds, either as to *Degree* or *Duration*, when it comes to be outrageous and revengeful, seeking the Hurt of those we are offended with, this is Murder, *Mat. 5. 22, 23.* *ES. 15. 19.* Such Persons tread the Steps of bloody *Cain*; their raging Anger is kindled from the Gulph beneath, *Jam. 3. 6.* Also it's sinful when it continues long: Hence we are commanded not to let the Sun go down on our Wrath, *Eph. 4. 26.* for then it degenerates into Malice and Rancour. (3.) When it's without any good Design, meerly to shew an arbitrary Authority and gratify an arrogant brutish Passion, then it's base and criminal: For one that is lawfully angry seeks to reclaim the Offender, and clear himself, *2 Cor. 7. 11.* Tho' I confess somewhat is to be allowed on the Account of Men's Temperaments, yet it is certain that powerful Christianity alters Men's wolfish, swinish and Lyon Qualities, and makes them like those of the Lamb and Dove, *John 21. 15.* *Cant. 2. 14.* Why should not the Power of sinful Anger be broken by converting Grace, as well as of Uncleaness, and other base Affections? Surely he that is in Christ has crucified the Flesh with the Affections and Lusts, *Gal. 5. 24.* *Rom. 6. 14.* Neither will the Instance of *Jonah's* foolish and peevish Passion, which was but once that we read of, and that doubtless bitterly bewail'd, palliate or excuse your Course of Passionateness. That Man or Woman who is ordinarily guilty of this Wickedness upon almost every Temptation, is in a State of Sin and Death, whatever Pretences they have to Religion it matters not, for no evil Habit of any Kind whatsoever is consistent with true Grace and divine Life, *1 John 3. 6.* He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly, *Prov. 14. 17.* They have never been in the School of Jesus, otherwise they would have

learned Meekness of him, *Mat. 11. 29* Can it be thought that the Dove of Heaven, the Bird of Paradise, will dwell in an angry Bosom? How soon will some Men be angry, blaze and foam, when any trifling Business respecting their Family concerns, is out of Order, by the Neglect of any of the Servants, who at other Times perhaps, can hear the great God dishonour'd with Temper and Calmness? Is not this a plain Evidence of their hypocrisy and damnable Condition? *Seneca* calls rash Anger "a short Phrensy or "Madness", and indeed it is so; it is such a Phrensy as rends the Nerves of civil Society and taints all it's Sweets with *Marah's* Waters. The Instances of some of the Pagans Moderation may serve to shame many pretended Christians, and confound their false Hopes: "When *Socrates* was provoked by one of his Servants, he said, Sir-
"rah, I would beat you if I were not angry". Remarkable is that also of *Philip* King of *Macedon* when the Athenians sent their Ambassadors to him, they were received with this Complement, Tell me Gentlemen, said King *Philip*, what I shall do to oblige the Athenians? *Demochares* one of the Ambassadors told him, that he would take it for a great Obligation if he would be pleased to hang himself; while the Standers by were filled with Indignation, the King sent the Ambassadors back with this Message; that it's worse to speak such Things than to hear and forgive them.

Object. 2. Such a Man has wronged me, and does not ask Forgiveness. What then, you ought to forgive him nevertheless; otherwise how can you pray the Lord's Prayer, Forgive us our Trespases as we forgive them that trespass against us; you pray for God's Vengeance upon you in this Petition, if you still retain some Rancour and Enmity against your Neighbour? Again, Forgiveness is necessary to obtain Pardon of God, *Mat. 6. 14, 15. & 18. 35.* Indeed there is some difference between Forgiveness and full Reconciliation; though we should bear no angry Resentments against an Offender, but on the contrary Thoughts of Peace, Love and Benevolence: *If thine Enemy thirst give him drink. Overcome Evil with Good, Rom. 12. 20, 21.* Yet it's against the Law of Prudence to receive him suddenly into wonted Familiarity. *The prudent Man foresees Evil and hides himself, Prov. 22. 3.*

9. The next Particular that I would speak of, is that of *Charity*; but before I propose the Pleas of some graceless People about the Neglect of this Duty, let me offer a
Word

Word concerning it's Necessity and Excellency, which altho' it be a Digression, is nevertheless a necessary one.

And

1. To make charitable Distributions of the good Things of Providence which we enjoy, for the Relief of the Poor and Indigent, is necessary by the positive Law of God; *To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased*, Heb. 13. 16. *Cast thy Bread upon the Waters*, Eccles. 11. 1. "Cast your Seed upon low Places"; so some understand it, alluding to the Husbandman (saith Mr. Henry) who spares some of the Bread-Corn he has for his Family to sow his Land, knowing that without this he can have no Harvest another Year". This Text certainly imports our giving to such who are not able to requite us. "This for that, is rather a Truck than a Benefit," says *Seneca*; we should send our Gifts a Venture, as Merchants do that trade by Sea, they won't sink intirely in the Waters: Indeed the Conscience of giving with a good Design, is a present Recompence.

2. By the Nature of God: Which is our Honour, our Duty and Interest to imitate. *God is love*, 1 John 4. 8. both essentially and communicatively; his *Being* is Love, and his Ways of Providence express much Goodness and Beneficence to Mankind in general, and to his People in particular; *He makes his Sun to rise upon the Evil and the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and Ujust*, Mat. 5. 45. *Acts* 4 17. *Psalms* 103. 13.

3. By the Law of Nature and Humanity. That Men by the Constitution of their Nature are framed for Society, appears beyond Controversy, from their natural Propensity to communicate their Notions and Ideas to one another, the Necessity they labour under of mutual Solace and Support, also from their common Wants and Fears. Now that Offices of mutual Love and Beneficence are the *Cement* of Society, the Bands and *Sinews* by which it is preserved is as evident,

4. By the Example of Jesus in that peerless and transcendent Prodigy of his dying Affection to a lost World, *Col.* 3. 12, 13.

5. This Duty is excellent in it's Nature, 1 Cor. 13. 1. *Though I speak with the Tongues of Men and Angels, and have not Charity, I am become as sounding Brass, or a tinkling Cymbal; all my Pretences are vain,*

6. It's excellent in it's Effects and Rewards ; this is the Way to invite Strangers to fall in Love with Christianity. The ancient Christians were very famous for this Practice, and saw the blessed Fruits of it. Also it's an Excitement to others to shew us the like Courtesy in our Necessity. It's pleasing to God when suitably performed ; for what is done to the least of Christ's Members, he takes it as done to himself, *Mat. 25. 40.* It introduces Peace (that Flower of all the Blessings of Life) into our Breast here, and us into the Kingdom of Peace and endless Life hereafter ; hence we are bid to make *Friends of the Mammon of Unrighteousness, that when we fail, they may receive us into everlasting Habitations,* *Luke 16. 9.* *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy,* *Mat. 5. 7.* and on the contrary, *He that won't shew Pity to others in Distress, shall cry himself and not be heard,* *Prov. 21. 13.* *Mat. 18. 23, --- 35.* But notwithstanding what has been advanced, some will frame the following Excuses.

Excuse 1. What I have is my own, and I have it for my own Use, *Shall I take my Bread and my Flesh, and give it to I know not who ?* This is *Nabal's Plea,* *1 Sam. 25. 11.* Hold Friend, you are mistaken ; though you have a civil Right to what you possess, yet the original and sovereign Claim of Right belongs to God, whose Tennant and Steward thou art, and to whom you must quickly be accountable for the Use thou hast made of those Talents the great Lord of the Universe intrusted thee with, whether thou hast brought forth Fruits unto thy self or him ? *Luke 16. 2.* Whether thou hast used thy Estate to feed thy own and thy Childrens Pride and Luxury, or to refresh the Bowels of the Poor and Needy ? O Man ! if those Bottles of the Heavens, I mean the Clouds, had their Waters for themselves, the Earth would soon be as Iron, and thou perish for want of Bread ! but thou seest how they refresh the parched Earth with their balmy Dews and refreshing Showers : Are the Heavens thus indulgent to the labouring Earth, and shall thy Bowels be as Brass, void of compassionate Relentings towards the Indigent, *who are Bone of thy Bone,* *Gen. 29. 14.* What does the Sun get by travelling his steady Circuit round the Globe ?

Excuse 3. But I am Poor ; What then ? the less is required indeed. but yet something is necessary to be given to the distressed, in Proportion to what God has given thee ; the poor Widow gave her two Mites, *Mark 12. 42.*

Excuse 5.

Excuse 3. I should be despised if I did not give as much as others. Friend, Remember it's to God you must approve your self, 2 *Tim.* 2. 15. The Judgment of one God and one Conscience in our Favour is infinitely better than the Applause of the whole Earth, and will make the Mind firm and impregnable amidst all the Storms of Reproach and Ignominy; if you will not suffer with Christ, you shall not reign with him: No Cross, no Crown.

Excuse 4 My Children may want it, I must buy Lands for them; I have Taxes to pay, and a great many Things to do with the little I have. Friend, your feeding the Hungry, and cloathing the Naked, instead of hindring your making necessary Provision for your Children, will secure their Support, by bringing the Blessing of Heaven upon your Labours, for what you give to the Poor you lend to the Lord, *Prov.* 19. 17. which he will repay with Interest. But further, let me tell you in the Words of the wise Man, *Ecc.* 11. 4. *He that observeth the Wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the Clouds shall not reap.* "If we stand magnifying every little Difficulty and seeming Danger, we shall never do the Work God requires of us; if the Husbandman should decline sowing for every flying Cloud, and reaping for the sake of every blast of Wind, he would make but a poor Account of his Husbandry at the Years end. Now the Duty of Charity is as necessary as that of Sowing and Reaping, and attended with infinitely greater Advantages; and those Discouragements from selfish Nature, which obstruct the Performance of it, are like flying Clouds, or passing Blasts, which a resolute Mind will easily encounter and Surmount.

Excuse 5. I am in Debt, how can I be charitable?

1. It's to be feared that many run themselves into Debt by taking Money at Interest in order to purchase great Estates for their Children, they join House to House, and Farm to Farm, *Isai.* 5. 8. and like the Horse Leach are never satisfied; they with eager and impatient Haste seek great Things, contrary to the Prophet's Advice to *Barak*, *Jer.* 45. 5. *Embarrass* themselves in Difficulties at present to obtain that End; now while they are under these Emergencies which they have unnecessarily involved themselves in, they think they are free from the Obligations to charitable Actions, as if one Sin would excuse another.

2. Perhaps thy Debts are inconsiderable compar'd with thy Estate: There be scarce any Men of Business and Trade in the World, but what are in Debt, less or more,

and perhaps continue so during Life; for as soon as one Debt is paid, another is contracted: So that at this rate you'l never find a time for Charity. This is a vile *deceit*, but God won't be *mock'd*: but if thou art really Poor and in Debt, and knowest not well how to pay it, *do Justice, love Mercy*, Mich. 6. 8. Hof. 12. 6. The blessed God won't have Robbery for a Burnt Offering; where there is a willing mind, God accepts according to what a Man hath, and not according to what he hath not, 2 *Cor.* 8. 12. Because *David* had it in his Heart to build the Temple, tho' he did not put his Design in Execution for want of Opportunity, yet it was accepted as done, 1 *Kin* 8. 18. But it must be in the mean time confess'd, that having the absolutely necessary Supports of Life, we should venture the Abridgement of the accessory and additional Comforts of it, much more the extravagancies of pompous Apparel and delicious Meats and Drinks, by supplying the Wants of our indigent Brethren, by supporting humane Nature in distress.

Excuse 6. But this Man, or that Woman is not an Object of Charity, a great many go about that are meer Cheats. Answ. A greedy Mind will always have an Excuse ready to protect the Purse. But more particularly, I confess that wise Caution is necessary in the choice of the Object; and a special regard should be shewn in our charitable Donations to Pious Persons: We should express respect to all, but especially to those that are of the Household of Faith, *Gal.* 6. 10. But you should consult more with the Divine Oracles in such Cases than with your Covetous Hearts; otherwise you'l never do much Good in the World. What tho' you happen to miss the right Object after necessary Examination, you'l not miss the Reward, if your design be Pious. *Mat.* 10. 42. There be a number of Professors in this Age, that carry large *Lamps*, but there's little of the *Oyl* of *Charity* in them; in regard of the talking, praying parts of Religion, they make a blazing appearance; they are very ready in these Duties, for they are cheap, and touch not the Pocket, but tell them there is this or that to be done for the poor Saints, or Church of God, and their Hearts sink within them, like their great Grandfather *Nabal's*, 1 *Sam.* 25. their *Zeal* languishes like an expiring Candle in the Socket, they begin to grow sorrowful, like the Young Man in the Gospel, *Mat.* 19. 22. Then they hypocritically wish they could do any thing, but— Now with what Face can these Men talk of
Religion,

Religion, or imagine they have any true Grace in their Hearts, if this be customary. *Jam. 2. 14, 15, 20. Jam. 1. 27.* O thou Earth-Worm! thou discoverest thy rottenness and hypocrisie in this, for all thy pretended Devotion; thy Faith has not overcome the World, 1 *Job. 5. 4.* Hear and consider, O Deceiver! what the Great God speaks to thee in those Scriptures, *Jam. 2. 13. He shall have Judgment without Mercy, that hath shewed no Mercy. Prov. 21. 13. Matth. 45. ver. 41. to the end.*

If some warm Blades give two Pence, or a Groat, or Six Pence to a poor Christian, they think they have discharged a good Conscience: I believe they have indeed banish'd it, and given it a Bill of Divorce. If they were not stone-blind, could they imagine that that was sufficient Charity which was not at all proportion'd, neither to the ability of the Giver, or the wants of the Receiver; may be fifty times as much would be counted little, if spent upon their own, or their Childrens Lusts or Superfluities. I believe, since the Creation of the Earth, there never was a more merciless, selfish Age than this, but thereby the Scripture is verified, as I have before made evident.

10. Another cause of the Security and false Hope of wicked People, is the Devil; *the God of this World has blinded the eyes of those that believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel should shine unto them, and they should be saved, 2 Cor. 4. 4.* The Devil has many artful and politick *Methods* to compass the ruin of Mankind, and among others, this one of very fatal tendency, viz. that he endeavours by all the sly and subtle *Measures* of Insinuation to strengthen the groundless hopes of secure Souls: This method he us'd with our grand Parent, *Eve*, *Gen. 3. 4.* and found it wofully successful, even to the total overthrow of Man's *innocency* and *happines*s: And the Serpent said unto the Woman, *Ye shall not surely die*: The same Path that crafty and malicious Enemy of Mankind travels with almost equal *Success* as to Individuals, and less difficulty in his dealings with *Adam's* degenerate Posterity. When God's faithful Servants tell wicked People, that if they continue impenitent, they must expect nothing but God's fierce Vengeance; Satan insinuates a very contrary Lesson: You shall not perish; God is merciful; Christ has dy'd for Sinners; what, an't you Christians? Believers? Baptized Persons? Don't believe these precise Fellows. Now when the solemn *inclosure* of the *penalty* is remov'd

from the *Precept*, Sin, which is a transgression of it, becomes less formidable, and thereby Sinners are induc'd to make bold with it, to their Cost, as Flies that sport themselves with their wanton Flights about a Candle, till they drop down dead.

11. Another cause of the delusive hopes of many, is the bad Advice of wicked People : Some of whom are busy, and successful Factors for the Devil, in helping him to accomplish his bloody Designs against themselves & others : Some like the perverse Pharisees of old, will neither enter into the Kingdom of Heaven themselves, nor suffer those that are entering to enter ; Matth. 23. 13. *Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites.* The Psalmist David was very sensible of the bad influence of wicked Society, and therefore he abandons them with the utmost Indignation ; *Depart from me ye workers of Iniquity, for I will keep the Commandments of my God,* Psal. 119 115.

Some wicked Wretches will endeavour to jeer and laugh Men out of their Salvation, but there be none that have common Sense would be thus fool'd out of an Estate. If some Imps of the Devil see any concern'd about their Salvation, they'l give them such a Salutation as this ; What are you beginning to be precise too ? There's no need of so much pains and bustle to get to Heaven. *Cant. 5. 9.* God is very merciful ; I tho't you was a Man of more Judgment, than to be bewitched by such People : Away with such melancholy Whims, you'l be fit for Bedlam by and by if you go on at this rate ; Drink a Glass of Wine, Brother, and serve God with a cheerful Heart : What do you think none will be sav'd but a pack of such canting precise Fellows ? God help the World then indeed, what will become of the most of your honest Neighbours, and the greatest part of the Earth at this Rate ? What needs all this Sorrow, you have never wronged any Body, or committed Murder or Treason : You know there is no Body of Sense that minds those fantastical Enthusiasts *Answ. O Murderer !* I may say to thee as the Apostle to *Elimas*, Acts 13. 10. *O full of all Subtilty, and all Mischief, thou Child of the Devil, thou Enemy of all Righteousness ; wilt thou not cease to pervert the right Ways of the Lord ?* Consider, as thou wilt answer it to the great God, these few Queries in *Answ.* to thy pernicious, though crafty Harangue.

1. If we should not be precise, as thou scoffingly terms Christian Circumspection and strict Holiness ; why are we commanded to walk circumspectly, *Eph. 5. 15.* Does not the

the original Word *Acriboos* signify strictly, or precisely? *Wherefore are we commanded to be holy as God is holy, perfect as he is perfect?* (1 *Pet.* 1. 15, 16. *Mat.* 5. 48.

2. If there be no need of so much Pains about Religion, why are we commanded to *fight*? 2 *Tim.* 6. 12. to *run*? *Heb.* 12. 1. to *wrestle*? *Eph.* 6. 12. to *strive*? *Luke* 13. 24. in order to obtain Happiness? Do not these Metaphors import the utmost Intenseness? Why are we inform'd that *the Kingdom of Heaven suffers Violence, and the Violent take it by Force*? *Mat.* 11. 12. *and that many shall seek to enter and shall not be able,* *Luke* 13. 24.

3. Is Conformity to the Will of a wise God the Way to Folly? Then white is black, and black is white: And is not this *the Will of God, even our Sanctification*? 1 *Thes.* 4. 3. Is it Folly to secure the greatest Good by the seasonable and earnest Use of appointed Means? Then God grant, I ever may be such a Fool! I know you have a great Conceit of your Wisdom! All ungodly Men have some of the Devil's Pride; and perhaps the Father don't much outdo some of his Children in this; but remember those Words of the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 3. 19. *For the Wisdom of the World is Foolishness with God: For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own Craftiness.*

4. As to the Paucity of the saved, it has been before consider'd; the holy Scriptures do evidently declare that the far greater Part of Mankind, nay of those that live under the Gospel, shall be damned eternally; neither does this eclipse the Mercy of God, as some carnal People imagine. no, but on the contrary, the distinguishing Nature of God's Mercy magnifies it exceedingly in the Thoughts of the redeemed, as many thousands have experienc'd. God might have pass'd by the fallen Race of Man, as he did by the fallen Angels, and damned them to eternal Pains for the Rebellion of their pro-parent and sœdral Head, *Adam*, and made his righteous Severity triumph in their endless Woes; therefore it's wondrous Grace (which does indeed astonish all the Heavens!) that any of *Adam's* guilty Race should be saved from Hell and Death!

5. Thy calling the Work of God's Spirit, in changing and renewing the Heart, *Enthusiasm*, is the Fruit either of thy Ignorance or Malice, or of both complexly, contrary to the tenor of the holy Scriptures, which expressly assert such a Change to be absolutely necessary, as I have prov'd before, as well as contrary to the united Testimony of the protestant Churches; in this Speech thou belcheest forth
thy

thy serpentine *Venom* against the Apostles and all the faithful in every Age, both before and after Christ's coming, for all of them experienc'd this Work of God which thou ignorantly or invidiously callest Enthusiasm; and the Reason why thou ascribest to the Devil the Work of the Spirit of God, is because it detects thy Hypocrisy, scorches and pains thee with it's Warmth. But O Man! are you not afraid of blaspheming the Holy Ghost after this Manner, lest thy Sins never be forgiven thee either in this World, or that to come, *Heb. 10 26.*

6. What tho' this or that Person has never been guilty of Overt Fraud, Murder or Treason; supposing they had never been guilty of any gross Immorality; what does not that *Fountain* of Iniquity, that *Spawn* of Sin, that *Body* of Death, that *Seed-Plot* of Corruption which we are born with, afford sufficient Cause for the deepest Sorrow? Yes it does; and if ever thy Understanding be inlightened, thou wilt feel this Truth, *John 3. 6. Psalm 51. 5. Job 24. 4. Isai. 48. 8. Rom. 7. 24. & 3. 9.* Are there not many who have not committed the Crimes mention'd externally, who are yet guilty of them in a spiritual Sense? Has not every unconverted Sinner (of adult Years) wronged himself, been guilty of Soul-Murder, by not improving the Opportunities of Salvation? Also are they not all guilty of Rebellion against the King of Heaven by disobeying his Laws? and don't those Sins require great Sorrow?

As to the last Particular of the Charge; consider these Places of Scripture, *John 7. 48, 49. Have any of the Rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? but this People who know not the Law are cursed. 1 Cor. 1. 26, 27. Not many wise Men after the Flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called, but God hath chosen the foolish to confound the wise, the weak to confound the mighty. Acts 28 22. But as concerning this Sect, we know that it is every where spok'n against.* The People of God are called the Congregation of the Poor, *Psalm 84 19.* But to proceed, ungodly People will further object against those that have the Life of Christianity, in order to seduce convinced Souls, and prejudice others against Piety, either

1. That they are imprudent or immoderate in their Zeal: Graceless People are for much Moderation, as they miscall it, in the Cause of God and Religion; but as to their worldly Interest, which they like much better, they will drive like *Jehu*; their pretended *Moderation* in religious Affairs, is nothing else in plain English, but that *Luke-*

warmness

warmness which God hates, *Rev. 3. 16.* Let it be consider'd that Prudence is two-fold, carnal or spiritual: Carnal Prudence aims at Self-interest as it's principal Mark; and forms it's whole Scheme so as to advance it; that it's always imprudent in those People's Esteem, which indangers their Honour or worldly Interest, *James 3. 15. Phil. 3. 19.* 2. Spiritual Prudence has for it's main Mark, the *Glory of God*, and the Interest of his Church; which the Person that is possess'd of this noble Quality, eyes and pursues in all his Transactions, whatever becomes of his own Honour, and worldly Interest. A sincere Soul will venture that, and stand for *Christ's Interest* in all Weathers. *Acts 21. 13.* When the Apostle *Paul* is said to become all Things to all Men, to gain some; I suppose his Compliance was not in any Thing really criminal, or with a covert View, to gain them to his own Interest, but to *Christ's*. I suppose every one that believes the Scriptures will own that this Apostle excelled in the Vertue of Prudence to a great degree of Eminence, and yet he could not keep the People still and quiet where he preach'd: There was generally an Uproar and Tumult among the People, where he declared his Master's Truths. *Acts 13. 45, 50. 14. 4, 5, 19 & 16. 20. & 17. 2, 5, 6. & 18. 6. & 19. 8, 9, 29.* I suppose there is the same Rancour and Malice in natural Men's Hearts against God and his Truths now that there was then, only that it is under some Restraint in some by their Education, but Education does not change the Heart. Can it be imagined but that graceless Persons, when the Word is closely, powerfully and successfully spoken, will growl (many of them) and shew their Teeth, if they don't bite; for *Christ did not come to send Peace on Earth, but a Sword, Mat. 10. 34, 35, 36. Luke 12. 51 to 54* But there be some so prudent in our Age, that they have found out a new Way to Heaven, a Way which *Christ and his Apostles* never trod; for they pretend to go there without bearing the *Cross of Christ*; but except they lay aside this perverse shifting off the sweet and precious *Cross of Jesus*, tacking about with every blast, they'l never come into the Haven of the blessed; *For he that lives godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer Persecution, 2 Tim. 3. 12.*

The Prudence of many is nothing else, but that carnal selfish Craft which God disdains, *1 Cor. 3. 19, 20.* It's better I think to act so as to have the Apostle's Testimony, *That in Simplicity and godly Sincerity, not in fl shly Wisdom, we have had our Conversation in the World, 2 Cor. 1. 12.* Or
2. To

2. To draw away People from vital Christianity, they will say, that such as are pious are foolish, as *Festus* said of *Paul*, Acts 26. 24. *Paul thou art beside thy self; much Learning doth make thee mad.* So the Wicked treated the Prophets of the old Testament to prejudice People against them: *Wherefore came this mad Fellow unto thee;* said the Captains of the Host to *Jehu*, concerning the Prophet, 2 Kings 9. 11. Also *Hos.* 9. 7. *The Prophet is a Fool, the spiritual Man is mad, for the Multitude of thine Iniquities, and the great Hatred.* Which of the Prophets, said dying *Stephen*, have not your Fathers persecuted? Acts 7. 52. And was not the blessed *Jesus* deemed foolish, not only by the malicious *Pharisees*, but by his own Relations? *John* 10. 20. *And many of them said, He hath a Devil, and is mad, why bear ye him?* *Mark* 3. 21. *And when his Friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him, for they said, He is beside himself.* Wicked People are apt to say of pious Christians, I believe some of them are sincere, they mean well, but they are weak: But if one of your own Crew that has no Learning, and hardly common Sense, that is pretty well rigg'd with fashionable Apparel, begins to squirt some petty Puns and pert Squibs against living Religion, O that is a Man of Sense and Learning! a pretty, a very pretty Fellow. Your Concession that some Christians are sincere is extorted from your gall'd Consciences by the shining Holiness of their Lives, *Mark* 6. 20. The latter flows freely from your stupid Ignorance, or serpentine Malice. *1 Cor.* 2. 14. *The natural Man cannot understand the Things of the Spirit of God, for they are Foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* *Gen.* 3. 15. *Rom.* 8. 7. O conceited Hypocrite! Hear thy Doom from God, *Isai* 5. 21. *Wo unto them that are wise in their own Eyes, and prudent in their own Sight. Verse 20. Wo unto them that call Evil Good, and Good Evil, that put Darkness for Light, and Light for Darkness; that put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter.* Or

3. They'll object, that they are Hypocrites, and endeavour to prove this Charge by their Weeping in divine Service, and strict and sober Life. O! the malicious Madness of the ungodly World, who would make those Things to be Signs of Hypocrisy, which are the great Evidences of Sincerity! By this Method they would make Christ an Hypocrite; for he was a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief; he mourned and wept often; but never laughed, that we read of, *Luke* 19. 41. Also the mourning Prophet

phet *Jeremiah*, *O that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears*, Jer. 9. 1. And the Apostle *Paul*, Acts 20. 31, 19. *Therefore watch. Remember that by the space of three Years I ceased not to warn every one Day and Night with Tears.* Yea and all true Penitents are bid to turn unto God with *Fasting, and with Weeping, and with Mourning*, Joel 2. 12. We are informed that all Tears shall be wiped away, Rev. 7. 17. *For the Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living Fountains of Waters, and God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes.* But pray, how shall Tears be wiped away from the dry Eyes of those that have not wept? What will those hard hearted dry eyed Christians do with God's Book and Bottle, Psalm 56. 8. *Put thou my Tears into thy Bottle; Are they not all in thy Book?* However you slight the Tears of poor Penitents, the great God takes notice of them; 2 Kings 20. 5. *I have heard thy Prayer, I have seen thy Tears; behold I will heal thee!* Jer. 31. 18. *I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself.* We are informed how wrestling *Jacob* prevail'd with his God, Hof. 12. 4. *He wept and made Supplication unto him.* Holy *Paul* was not of your grumbling Temper and Disposition, as to the Tears of others; no, he was pleased with and mindful of *Timothy's* Tears, 2 Tim. 1. 4. *Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy Tears, that I may be filled with Joy.*

You'l say perhaps, what can't they be sincere without Weeping in publick, I weep my self sometimes in private: O Pharisee! I believe that's but seldom, and that when you are under the gnawings of a guilty Conscience, or some worldly Trouble; but pray Friend, are your Tears thus at your Beck, that you can open and shut those Fountains when you please? Then indeed they are Crocodile Tears, little worth, and your selves very Hypocrites, for all your pretended Sincerity.

Or

4. They'l object thus, I don't like those People that weep so in the Worship of God; it looks very childish and effeminate. Answ. The Reflection is hardy and prophane, for by this you would represent Christ, his Prophets and Apostles, as a mean spirited dastardly Company, void of a generous Greatness of Mind. King *David* was a Man of a brave and gallant Spirit, as appears by his martial and heroick Exploits recorded in sacred Scripture; and yet how oft did he weep and mourn for Sin. Psalm 42. 3. *His Tears were his Meat.* But what is the Reason thou dost not like those that weep in divine Service? You'l

say perhaps, that it hinders their Elocution, or that it seems hypocritical; no, no, it does not hinder but help their Speech. As to the second Particular, I have before consider'd it, only let me add one Word; Though I confess it is our Duty to conceal from others Observance as much as is possible our Brokenness, yet we must not quench the inward Motions of the Holy Spirit; when the blessed God is thawing our frozen Hearts by his Word and Spirit, should we suppress his Work, oppose his Love Motions for Fear some carnal People should call us Hypocrites, and so be guilty of real *Murder* and fighting against God, to avoid the groundless Charge of *Hypocrisy*, and incur the awful Displeasure of an holy and almighty God, to evite the Scoffs and Taunts of silly blind Worms?

But shall I venture to tell you the true Reason of your Disgust at such Things, why it is this; thou art a hardened Sinner thy self, thy stony Heart was never removed, and a Heart of Flesh given thee, according to that new Covenant Promise, *Ezek. 36. 26.* Thou knowest a Stone is dry, insensible, impenetrable, but Flesh is tender, soft and flexible, easily susceptible of the least Impressions. Now because thou wantest the Heart of Flesh thy self, and seest others broken in the Service of God, it pains thee by detecting thy Stupidity; this Pain you like not, and therefore to prevent the Effect, you reflect against the Cause. When a short Discourse upon Morality is preached with swelling Diction, and graceful Cadence (*Jude Verse 16. Their Mouth speaketh great swelling Words, having Men's Persons in Admiration because of Advantage*) without any Life or Energy: O then you'll say, that's a fine Sermon indeed, because it has scorched thy guilty Conscience no more than a painted Fire would thy Body! O hard hearted Hypocrite! If thou knew the soul-ravishing Sweets which the Children of God enjoy in their Meltings of Heart by the Presence of their Master and Father, thou would'st not snuffle and fret at their Contrition, *Psal 51. 17.* but bewail thy own Obstinacy; they have more Comfort in their Tears, than thou hast in all thy carnal Mirth and Jollity.

As to what you object about the Strictness of their Lives, consider the Words of the Apostle *Peter, 1 Epist. 4. 4.* *Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same Excess of Riot, speaking Evil of you.* I suppose you find your selves so guilty of gross Wickedness, that through the Greatness of your *Charity* and *Vertue* which you

you boast of (though groundlessly) you are apt to think that these that do appear more reformed, do but appear to be so.

Or

4. Some will charitably alledge to forward the foresaid Delign, that they are all Knaves in their Hearts; this Man will tell one Story, and the other another; I had some Dealings with such a Man, one of the Saints, and he bit me; another tells an awful Story of the Fraud, or other Wickedness of one of the New-born; then they all laugh, ha! ha! ha! I thought so, I believe they are all alike if they were but discovered, a pack of Rogues; ho! is this your large Charity that would grasp in the Heathens in it's Bosom? Yes, yes, you'll extend your Charity to all the Sons of Belial, for like rejoyces in like: But remember the Word of God mentioned by the wise Man, Prov. 24. 24. *He that sayeth to the Wicked thou art righteous, him shall the People curse; Nations shall abhor him.* None are excluded from your blind and graceless Charity; but the proper Objects of true Charity, viz. pious People, them you don't like, especially if they are very strict, holy and faithful, you watch for their halting, Jer. 20. 10. as the Cat does for poor Mouse; you search their Practice as narrowly as Laban did Jacob's Stuff, and when you find any Thing that will bear a Reflection, then you rejoyce and spread it abroad among your Kindred, (2 Sam. 1. 20. *Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the Streets of Askelon, lest the Daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.*) But what are the Reasons of this Joy?

1. Malice; that old Enmity God put between the Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent, Gen. 3. 15. A Man that bears Malice against another rejoyces in his Disgrace.

2. Another is this, it gives Ease to your guilty Consciences which were gall'd by their just Reproofs, or holy Life. But to answer your Charge more fully.

3. It must be confess'd, that as there always has been, so there will be Hypocrites in the visible Church to the End of Time, chaff mix'd with the Wheat till the last winnowing Season comes, and the Son of Man takes the Fan of Judgment in his Hand, and makes a thorough and final Separation: But what then? Is it not unjust to infer a general or universal, from a particular? Is it not contrary to the Laws both of Reason and Religion? *Ex particulari non licet sylogizari* Prov. 17. 15. *He that justifieth the Wicked and he that condemneth the Just, even they both are an Abomination*

Abomination to the Lord. But it's thy unhappiness, Friend, to be under that Curse of the Almighty, mention'd *Isai. 5. 20.* *Wo unto them that call Evil Good, and Good Evil, that put Darkness for Light, and Light for Darkness, that put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter.* *Ver. 23.* *Which justify the Wicked for Reward, and take away the Righteousness of the Righteous from him.* But you shew your foolish, tho' invenom'd Spite, by charging the whole Body of Christians because of the Enormities of some Hypocrites; because there was a *Judas* among the Apostles, were they therefore all *Judas*? But we need not wonder at thy Folly, when we consider that *as it was of old, so it is now, he that was born after the Flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit,* *Gal. 4. 25.* *Cain's Club* won't be left altogether unoccupied while any of his cruel Brood are on this side Hell.

2. Some pious Persons through Unwatchfulness, or Negligence, are sometimes betray'd by Surprize into those Failings, which they bitterly bewail; but they may, and do obtain pardon of a gracious and merciful God, of those unindulged and involuntary Defects and Infirmities upon the Exercise of true Repentance, *Jer. 3. 1.* Tho' God may visit their Transgressions with the Rod, and their Iniquity with Stripes: Nevertheless his Lovingkindness he will not utterly take away, or suffer his Faithfulness to fail, *Psalms 89. 31 to 35.* *Isai. 54. 7, 8.* *John 10. 27, 28.* *Rom. 11. 29.* Yet they will never obtain pardon of a merciless World; The Moon though it be a bright Body, is not without her Spots; these Blemishes wicked People represent in an unjust and glaring Light, after the Example of their Father, *who was a Liar and a Murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the Truth,* *John 8. 44.* But is it their Failings you detest? No, no, unless it were in something that concerned your worldly Interest; it is their Piety that you are offended with, and shoot at with your barbed Arrows of Reproach, under the specious Pretext of this or that Fault, real or imaginary, which you charge them with, *1 John 3. 12.* *Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his Brother: And wherefore slew he him? but because his own Works were evil, and his Brother's righteous.* Indeed you are angry because they are not worse than they are; if it were their Sins you only found fault with, as you pretend, why don't you find fault with your own Crew who are ten times worse? No, no, these are your Brethren in Iniquity, Children of the same Father and Family, these must be

be spared and an *Apology* framed to palliate, their crimson Guilts, and *Bear Skins* put upon Christians (as in ancient Times by the Pagans) that the Dogs may bark at them, bait, and worry them; but because some pious People "break their Shins, as Mr. *Baxter* observes, will you break "your Necks?" And does this look like Prudence in such wise Men as you imagine your selves to be?

3. Wicked People will class among the Pious, such as they will not own, and then accuse them with their Faults, which is very unjust and deceitful, Psalm 37. 12. *The Wicked plotteth against the Just, and gnasheth upon him with his Teeth.* And

4. Sometimes the Sons of Belial do devise notorious Fallhoods against God's People in order to blacken their Character, Jer. 18. 18. *Come and let us devise Devises against Jeremiab.*

The 12th Particular. Another Cause of the false Hope of many is the daubing of unconverted Ministers.

1. By their *false Preaching*, or by their preaching those erroneous, nature soothing, but Soul-damning Doctrines of Free Will, universal Grace, and universal Redemption, by which ignorant self conceited graceless Sinners are held fast in the Chains of the Devil, & excited to erect a *Babel* on their own *Bottom* and Foundation which may reach the *Heavens*. O! astonishing Madness, can such a sandy Fabrick bear the Shocks of God's impartial Judgment? May the holy God confound the Language of those arrogant Mortals, which is so directly contrary to the Language of his sacred Oracles, and of his People's repeated Experiences. *Eph. 2. 1, 8, 9. Rom. 5. 6. Rom. 1. 16. 2 Cor. 3. 5. Matth. 11. 25, 26. Acts 13. 48. John 10. 26. & 17. 9, 11. 24. Rom. 8. 29, 30. & 9. 11, 12, 13. Eph. 1. 3, 4, 11. 1 Pet. 1. 2. Jude ver. 4. Rom. 7. 18.* Or,

2. By *concealing* the contrary *Truths* of Christ, altho' they say they believe them, through vain *Pretexts*; what is this but holding the Truth in Unrighteousness, *Rom. 1. 18*. Perhaps they'll object that the preaching of such (generally) despised Truths, would do more hurt than good. "What is "this but to impeach the Wisdom of God, and arraign it "at our Bar, and prefer our Craft before it," as the reverend and learned *Calvin* well observes in his Institutions. To what Purpose were these Truths indicted by the Holy Ghost, if not to be preached and made known; yea and insisting on such Subjects, whatever is muttered to the contrary, is sometimes crown'd with remarkable Successes.

Let me crave leave to insert a Passage here to this Purpose, which I heard of the reverend and pious Mr. *Moody* of *Tork* in *New-England*; "He told me, That famous Mr. *Stoddard* of *Norhampton*, after some considerable Time of Coldness and Unsuccessfulness in his publick Labours, chose that Text, *John 10. 26. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my Sheep.* From which Words he rais'd this Observation, That one Reason of Men's not receiving the Lord *Jesus Christ*, was their non-Election. This Sermon he informed me (tho' upon so grating and displeasing a Subject) was followed with a very remarkable out-pouring of the Holy Spirit, to the Conviction of many." What though the Fan of *Christ's Word* separate some light Chaff from the Wheat, is the Wheat any thing the worse for that? Tho' some Men of corrupt Minds, loose or formal Lives be offended and leave our Assemblies, is this any other Treatment than *Christ* himself met with? His Doctrine was so severe that many disgusted it, and forsook him, *John 6. 65, 66, 67. From that Time many of his Disciples went back and walked no more with him. Matth. 15. 12, 13. Then came his Disciples and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended? But he answered and said, Every Plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. John 6. 60. This is an hard saying, Who can bear it? 2 Tim. 3. 5. Having a Form of Godliness, but denying the Power of it, from such turn away. Luk. 13. 17. Whose Fan is in his Hand, and he will thoroughly purge his Floor, and will gather the Wheat into his Garner, but the Chaff he will burn with unquenchable Fire. 2 Tim. 4. 3, 4. For the Time will come, when they will not endure sound Doctrine, and they shall turn away their Ears from the Truth, and be turned to Fables. And must *Christ's Ministers* desist preaching Truth, in order to humour the People, I think not. *Gal. 1. 10. Or do I seek to please Men, for if I get please Men, I should not be the Servant of Christ. Jer. 5. 30, 31. A wonderful and a horrible Thing is committed in the Land, the Prophets prophesy falsely, and the Priests bear rule by their Means, and my People love to have it so, and what will ye do in the end thereof?**

If any should again object, that treating upon such Truths in the Infancy of Churches, is unseasonable: In answer to this, I would propose the following Queries.

Query 1. Did not *Christ* and his *Apostles* preach them in the Infancy of the Gospel Church?

Query 2.

Query 2. Are they not *fundamental* or principal *Truths* of *Christianity*? And do not *Artificers* first lay the *Foundation*?

Query 3. Are they not a part of *God's Counsel*? And should not *Ministers* deliver the whole *Counsel* of *God*, as they have *Ability* and *Opportunity*?

Query 4. Does it not look like a *shuffling* of *Christ's Cross*, a slavish mercenary *Fear* of incurring the *People's Anger*, for a *Minister* who stately labours in a *Place*, to conceal those *Truths* of *God* for many *Years* standing?

Query 5. Has not the *Practice* of delaying and consulting with *Flesh* and *Blood* in such *Matters* a visible *Tendency* to eradicate those *Truths* out of the *Christian Church* in process of *Time*, when the *People* know not whether their *Ministers* believe them or not?

3. By their *soft* and *smooth* *Way* of *Preaching*; some *Ministers* being what *God* witnesseth of the false *Prophets* of old; *Foxes in the Deserts*, *Ezek. 13. 4.* Crafty and covetous *Creatures*; they know the *Way* to insinuate themselves into the *People's Affections*, and thereby obtain *Honour* and *Gain* of them, is to suit their *Sermons* to their *Humours*; now the general *Inclinations* of poor ignorant graceless *People*, is to hear of nothing but *Love*, *Peace*, *Promises*, *Comforts*, *Isai. 30. 18. Speak to us smooth Things.* They want *Preachers* only to scratch the *Itch* of their *Curiosity* with quaint *Notions*, and smooth *Stories*, *2 Tim. 4. 3.* And such *Chapmen* they too often meet with through the *Iniquity* of the *Times*, (*O Tempora, O Mores*) who by feigned *Words* make *Merchandize* of them; there has been too many such in all *Ages*, *Ezek. 13. 10, 10 17.* Those *Prophets* that *Jehovah* complains of in the *Places* of *Scripture* now quoted, with so solemn an *Emphasis*, "They gave out, *Lana Vaticinia et Verba Lactis*, comfortable " *Words* and milky *Words*," as *Mr. Greenhill* terms it in his *Paraphrase*; They cried *Peace, Peace*; the downy *Pillows* of the false *Propheteresses* were soft enough to make *Sinners* sleep in *utramvis Aurem*, on both sides of the *Head*. But will not the *jealous* holy *God* tear down such deceitful *Daubings*, with their *Authors* and *Abettors*, by the *Storms* of his inflamed *Vengeance*!

Were not *God's Prophets* of old (and is there not as much need of it now? he is stone blind that sees it not) bid to cry out and not to spare, to shew *God's People* their *Transgressions*, and the *House* of *Jacob* their *Sins*? Are not *Ministers* called the *Salt* of the *Earth*? Has not

Salt a biting, painful Quality? I can't but believe that much of that Salt is turned into Sugar (in our Times) *Job 33. 23. Matth. 7. 22, 23. & 5. 13. Ye are the Salt of the Earth, but if the Salt have lost his Savour wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under Foot of Men.* Is not the Word (when duly preached and blessed) quick and powerful, sharper than any two edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder Soul and Spirit, Joints and Marrow, *Heb. 4. 12. Acts 2. 37.*

4. By their general and undistinguishing way of Preaching. In the Application of their Discourses some will often class their Audience into one common mass, which Proteus like, often changes Shapes; for perhaps in one and the same Sermon, they'll speak to them as if they were all Converted People, & all of a sudden again, may be but a few moments after, they'll address them as Unconverted; and if they happen to drop a few awakning Expressions against some gross Immoralities, immediately (as tho' they were afraid poor Sinners would be convinc'd of their undone state) they advance a daub of untempered Mortar in great haste, I mean misapply'd Comfort; and so they plaister and smooth it over to make all easy again, *Ezek. 13. 22. They strengthen the Hands of the Wicked that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him Life:*

What does this perverse dealing mean? Is it fear of convicting themselves, or of the People's Anger? or ignorance, that makes these Men go on at this bloody rate? How solemnly does the Great God speak against the false Prophetesses that labour'd to deceive the Jewish Nation, *Ezek. 13. 18, 19, 20 Wo to the Women that sow Pillows to all Arm holes: And will ye pollute me among my People for handfuls of Barley and pieces of Bread, to slay the Souls that should not die, and to save the Souls that should not live.* If they make any particular Application at all, perhaps it's to make the Hearts of the righteous sad, and strengthen the Hands of the Wicked, *Ezek. 13. 22.* especially if they have offended them, and that may be by telling them nothing but the very truth. Have there not been such in the World that have bit with their Teeth, and cried Peace, and prepar'd War against such as did not put into their Mouths, *Mic 3. 5.* Ministers may preach till they're gray headed, nay to Dooms-Day, before ever they be the means of bringing one Soul to Christ, at this rate.

Should not those that serve at God's Altar follow his directions in dividing the Word of Truth aright? *2 Tim.* 2. 15. in giving every one his Portion in Season, *Luk.* 12. 42. Shewing difference between the clean and unclean? *Ezek.* 22. 26. *Lev.* 10. 10. *Ezek.* 44. 23.

2. By their *Lives*, (1.) Light or loose Carriage, frothy, chaffy, jocosse Discourse. *Zeph.* 3. 4. *Her Prophets are lights and treacherous Persons.* *Eph.* 5. 4. Should not those that bear the Vessels of the Lord be clean? *Isai.* 52. 11.

(2.) Through the neglect of that precious Duty of Examination, or enquiring into the State of their Flocks. *Prov.* 27. 23. *Be thou diligent to know the state of thy Flocks, and look well to thy Herds.* *Act.* 20. 20. *And how I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shew'd you, and have taught you publickly and from house to house.* Too few it's to be fear'd use the necessary plainness of *Nathan* to *David*, *Thou art the Man*, *2 Sam.* 12. 7. or of *John the Baptist* to *Herod* concerning his *Herodias*.

O! that God would excite Ministers to be more painful in this part of their Work: Some thro' Grace have found this *Method* attended with rich *Successes*. It's true, the Practice is imbarrafs'd with many Difficulties and Discouragements; but what then, God will support his faithful Servants in their Work, and sweeten their Labours by his presence here, and afterwards more fully recompence them in the uninterrupted enjoyment of his Majesty: If Souls are worth Christ *Blood*, they are well worth our *Pains*. What tho' we should be requited with *hatred* and *reproach* by some, is the Disciple above his Master, or the Servant above his Lord? Are these trifling Sufferings to be compar'd with the eternal Weight of Glory? *2 Cor.* 4. 17. Blessed be God that the faithful Servants of Jehovah, who turn many to Righteousness, however they are traduc'd and slighted here, will *shine as the Brightness of the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever*, *Dan.* 12. 3.

(3.) By a groundless and cruel *Charity*, either fondly believing that such Persons are true Christians, who only have the *form* of Christianity, but are strangers to experimental Religion. *2 Tim.* 3. 5. *Rom.* 5. 4, 5. which (notwithstanding of it's fair face) hath a very pernicious tendency, because it deprives them of the opportunity of labouring by private Conversation to detect and convince Such Men of their damnable Estate: but on the contrary makes them the unhappy Instruments, probably by discourse of confirming People in their delusions; Or 2. by carry-

ing themselves towards such by Speech and Practise, as tho' they did believe it, when they do not, thro' a mercenary love to them, for what they get of them, or slavish fear of incurring their displeasure, if they told them the truth, which is much worse than the former; because by it they counter-act their own Consciences; the former may be the fruit of ignorance, but this of selfish craft and sordid meanness of Spirit,

(4) By their lax and promiscuous admission of unworthy Guests to the Holy Sacrament, by which the Ordinance is prophan'd. Mat. 7. 6. Give not that which is holy to Dogs; precious Souls endanger'd and deceiv'd, 1 Cor. 11. 29. Perhaps the People have a high opinion of their Minister's Judgment, and therefore they think themselves safe if they have it in their favour, which they'l doubtless conclude when they are admitted to such a sacred Ordinance by him: Let these Ministers preach as plainly and pungently about unconverted People as they can, will such People apply it to themselves, no, they'l imagine he means others.

But I hasten to

The 13th Particular, that strengthens the false hopes of some wicked People, and confirms them in their wicked Courses, is the wicked Examples and Customs of the greatest Number where they dwell, and especially of the *Grandees*; those that are famous for their *Wit*, *Learning*, or *Wealth*. Many unthinking irreligious People are altogether for the Religion that is in *fashion*, be it what it will; they square their Conduct according to the Customs of the Places they live in: according to that Proverbial saying, *Cum fueris Rome, Romano vivito more. Cum fueris alibi vivito more Loci*. When we are at *Rome*, we must do as the Romans do. When they are in a Place where Religion is honour'd, then they put on a religious *Cloak* for gain; follow Christ in Profession and outward Performances, for the *Loaves*; but when they happen to be in a Place where Piety is discountenanc'd, especially by the Men of Figure and Distinction; as alas! it is in too many at this Day; then they are apt to say of it, as the cruel Jews of Jesus, away with it, away with it, crucify it, crucify it. Poor Wretches! they won't stand one brunt for Christ, his precious Cross they fly from as a Scare crow, and therefore can't be his Disciples, *Luk. 14. 27*. But if ever they have felt the power of Piety, or the Sweetness of Christ's Love, they would not thus *swift* with every *Wind*, and sail with the Tide, tho' it were to *Topher's Gulph*, and turn with the Times;

as that Chancellor in *England*, who being asked how he had kept in favour, during such different Reigns; he reply'd, *Natus sum ex salice non ex quercu*: I am of the pliable Willow, not of the stubborn Oak; no, they would rather fall as Victims to the Rage of Men, or be sent up as Holocausts or Burnt Offerings to God, than forsake any known Truth or Duty of Religion: True Piety would inspire them with the brave and generous Resolution of magnanimous *Joshua*, Josh. 24. 15. *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this Day whom you will serve: But as for me and my House we will serve the Lord.* I am determined in this Matter, cost me what it will; whether you will concur with me or not. O that God would effectually perswade us to entertain such a Resolution and Temper of Mind; it's such a purpose and practise as well becomes a great Mind: It shews a sneaking Meanness and Baseness of Spirit to follow the Customs of Places blindfold whether good or bad; and to come into mercenary and servile Compliances, is unworthy of the rational Nature; but if you will be damned for Fashion sake, or Company sake, who can help you? Pray read and consider what *Seneca* speaks on this Head; "Let us not follow like Beasts," said he, but rather govern our selves by Reason than Example. It fares with us in humane Life as in a routed Army, one stumbles first, and then another falls upon him, and so they follow one upon the Neck of another, till the whole Field become one Heap of Miscarriages, and the Mystery is, that the Number of the Multitude carries it against Truth and Justice, so that, saith he, we must leave the Crowd if we would be happy; for the Question of a happy Life is not to be decided by Vote; nay, so far from this, that the Plurality of Voices is still an Argument of the wrong Side: The common People, says he, content themselves with what is usual, never examining whether it be good or not; by the common People is intended the Man of Title, as well as the clouted Shoe, for I do not distinguish them, said he, by the Eye, but by the Mind.

But I proceed to consider the *fourth* General proposed, which was to shew *the Folly, Misery and cursed State of such deceived Persons.* And

1. More generally: Are not those who trust in their own Hearts, Fools? Yes surely. Prov. 28. 26. *He that trusteth*

trusteth in his own Heart is a Fool, yea a cursed Fool, Jer. 17. 7. Now do not all presumptuous Persons trust in their own Hearts? *Prov. 12. 15. The Way of a Fool is right in his own Eyes; but he that hearkneth to Counsel is wise.* Also, *Prov. 14. 12. & 16. 25. & 21. 2.* Presumptuous Persons have nothing else to trust to but their deceived Hearts; for both Scripture and Reason opposeth their groundless Confidence.

2. Is it not a Folly to believe Lies, and expect Protection by them? This is the very Case of presumptuous Souls, *Isai. 28. 15. For we have made Lies our Refuge, and under Falshood have hid our selves.* Pray read and consider what God saith in the 17. Verse, *Judgment also will I lay to the Line, and Righteousness to the Plumet, and the Hail shall sweep away the Refuge of Lies, and the Waters shall overflow the hiding Place.* The Prophet informs them that this tottering Fabrick would fall and bury the Builder in it's Ruins. the Waters should overflow it; every other Refuge but Christ shall be overwhelmed; as every thing else beside the Ark was in the Flood of *Noah*, even the highest Mountains were covered, the Ark rested on lofty *Ararat*.

It is strange to consider what a prodigious pitch of Security and Presumption Sinners may arrive at. *Isai. 28. 15. We have made a Covenant with Death, and with Hell are we at Agreement, when the overflowing Scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us.* See they are as secure and unconcerned about the Approaches of Death, as tho' they had made an Agreement with it upon a valuable Consideration, that it should not come till they sent for it, and as little afraid are they of Hell: What is the Reason of this? Why, they made *Lies* their Refuge, they trusted to and depended upon these false and sandy *Props*, which the faithful Servants of God told them would deceive them, but which they themselves and their soothing false Prophets looked upon as substantial *Fences*: But what was the Issue of this vain Confidence and foolish Dependance, I have before considerd.

3. Is it not a Folly to pretend to feed upon Ashes? This presumptuous Sinners do, *Isai. 44. 20.* They put a grand Cheat upon themselves by pretending to feed their precious Souls with their delusive Hopes, which can no more nourish or support them than Ashes the Body; and yet they will fully persist in this Self-deceit, and will not be undeceived, or say, Is there not a Lie in my right hand? They will not be perswaded, many of them, so much as to suspect

suspect the Goodness of their present Condition, by the most rational and passionate Addresses of God's Servants! but hold fast their Delusions in their right hand, with a strong and eager *Gripe*, as their chief *Good*; and he that would assume the Boldness for their Benefit, to strike them on the Fingers to make them quit their *Hold*, would perhaps get their Fist in his *Face* as the Reward of his Labours, which they would call Impertinency, Pride, or some other Nick-name; but surely Self suspicion is the first Step to Conversion: Is there not a Lie in my right hand?

4. Is it not a Folly to entertain that with Complacency, which instead of doing us any real Service, will do us the greatest Injury possible; if your false Hopes would save you, I would neither trouble you nor my self in telling you the Danger of them; but instead of this, they will fix you more in the Snare of the Devil, heighten your Sin, secure and aggravate your Damnation, while you say, Peace, Peace, sudden Destruction shall come upon you, as travail upon a Woman with Child, *1 Thes. 5. 3.* Your false Hopes indeed may put you out of *Fear*, but they increase your *Danger*, by making you unapprehensive of it, unconcern'd about it, and so negligent of the earnest Use of those Means which are necessary to obtain an Escape. *Zech. 1. 11.* *Amos 6. 1.* They keep you from a sound and deep Conviction of your lost Estate, which is absolutely necessary to a saving Conversion, *Luke 15. 17.* *Acts 2. 37.* *The whole need no Physician* (in their own Imagination) *but the Sick, Matth. 9. 12.* *Mark 2. 17.* *Luke 5. 31.* *The Lord Jesus came not to call the Righteous* (self-righteous Pharisees, whole hearted People) *but Sinners, Sin sick, broken hearted Penitents, Mark 2. 17.* *Psalms 5. 17.* I know it is hard for you, poor Souls, to quit your sweet *Delusions* and to come under the *Blows* of God's Hammer, *Jer. 23. 29.* *Job 11. 20.* *But the Eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their Hope shall be as the giving up of the Ghost.* When a Godless Sinner is dying, it is with great Reluctance and Regret, he quits his Life; his Soul is torn away from him against his Will; indeed it is so only with such as are awakned, as for others, they die like Lambs, tho' they are damn'd as Wolves, *Psalms 49. 14.* They go off quietly to their own Place, and never awake till they get beyond all Hope among the damned Spirits. But tho' it be hard, yet it's absolutely necessary, as I prov'd before; What Folly is it to trust to that which will fail

fail us in Eternity. Job 8. 11, 12, 13, 14. *So are the Paths of all that forget God, and the Hypocrites Hope shall perish, whose Hope shall be cut off, and whose Hope shall be a Spider's Web: Can the Rush grow without Mire? Can the Flag grow without Water?* In these Verses Bildad compares the Hope of Hypocrites to a *Rush* and a *Spider's Web*: Now to illustrate the Folly and Unprofitableness of entertaining presumptuous Hopes, I shall a little inquire into the Reasons of these Similitudes. And

1. A *Rush*, resembles a Hypocrite's Hopes in these three Things.

1. As the *Rush* grows up out of the *Mire* and *Water*, so the presumptuous Sinner's Hopes springs from unworthy Conceptions of God, false Apprehensions of himself, and other base Originals before mention'd, and is generally attended with an earthly or unclean Practice.

2. Tho' the *Rush* has a *beautiful Appearance*, yet it's *hollow* and good for nothing; Hence the Proverb of any Thing that's insignificant, Not worth a *Rush*: So the Hypocrite, tho' he has a *fair Outside*, yet he has a *hollow Heart*, and an unprofitable Practice: In short, He is a worthless Creature, fit for little else but to cumber the Ground in this World, and to serve for Fewel in the next, and his Hope is as insignificant as himself.

3. Tho' it looks *green* and gay, it soon withers, sooner than the *Grass*: So your Confidence, tho' it seems strong at present, will quickly vanish and leave you bereaved.

And

2. A *Spiders Web* resembles a Hypocrite's Hope in four Particulars,

1. In respect of its *Original*: As the *Spider* weaves her *Web* out of her own *Bowels*; so the Hypocrite builds his Hope upon those *frames* of Heart which are but Sparks of his own kindling, those Performances, which are the *fruits* of his own *power*, those Conceptions of the Almighty which are the *birth* of his corrupt fancy. Thus you see he *weaves* his *hope* out of his own *Bowels*; it's a Creature of his own coining and framing: Whereas the true Christian, as Mr. *Henry* observes, "is like the laborious *Bee*, he fetcheth in all his Comforts from the heavenly dew of God's Word.

2. In respect of the *Pleasure* he takes in it: The *Spider* is pleas'd with it's *Web*, flies to it as a House of Defence, as well as sports in it as a place of Pleasure; and do not presumptuous Sinners flatter and please themselves with

the hopes of Heaven, and fly to their false Confidence, as a secure refuge?

3. In respect of the *use* he makes of it: Doth not the crafty Spider make use of it's Web as an ensnaring Engine to catch any suitable Prey which comes within it's reach? and thus do not presumptuous Hypocrites cheat and impose upon many with their specious pretences?

4. In respect of it's *weakness*: The Spider's Web tho' it's artfully woven, and consists of a great many Threads, it is extremely weak; so is the Presumer's hope, notwithstanding the conceit he has of it, it is as insufficient to bear the winnowing of Christ's *Fan*, as the Spider's Web is to bear the Strokes of a *Broom*; their hopes shall certainly fail and perish, and they with them, when they expect the most comfort from them.

But the sinfulness and folly of indulging and retaining presumptuous Hopes will appear more fully by the following Particulars,

1. It's *Mockery*: *Be not deceiv'd, God is not mocked, for what a man sows, that shall he also reap*, Gal. 6. 7. What *madness* and impudent effrontry is it to *mock* such an *Omnipotent God*, who can in a moment speak you dead or damned, who can immediately blow you with the breath of his Indignation as light Chaff to Hell, and burn you with unquenchable Flames. Job 4. 9. *By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed.*

2. *Blasphemy*. Rev. 2. 9. By denying God's *veracity*; tho' the *Almighty* has told them that such who commit the Wickedness they are guilty of (so continuing) shall perish everlastingly. 1 Cor. 6. 9. Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. yet they believe they shall be saved, tho' God has expressly reveal'd that without the *New Birth* there is no *Salvation*; that no duty or privilege, opinion or practice will avail without it, John 3. 3, 5. Gal. 6. 15. Yet they expect Happiness tho' they are Strangers to this Work, and indeed seek not earnestly after it; what is this but confronting the *Almighty*! Flying in the Face of God, challenging him to do his Worst, by calling him, implicitly, a *Liar*! Won't God's revenging Severity burn against those bold Blasphemers, his Jealousy smother against them, and all the Curses of his Book be upon them, and their Name be blotted out from under Heaven? If God *will not hold them guiltless that take his Name in vain*, Exod. 20. 7. *And that he will by no means clear the Guilty*, Exod. 34. 7. What will the holy God do to those that wound, rend and tear his

his Being, by denying one of his glorious Attributes ! Remember O Sinner, *It is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living God !* Thou hadst better be under the united Rage of all the Devils in Hell, and Men on Earth, than feel the Iron Gripes of one GOD, for their Power and Anger is finite, but God's is infinite and eternal ! Heb. 10 30, 31. But may be you'll say, I don't deny God's Truth, or expect to be saved without Conversion. Answer, Perhaps thy Falshood and Fraud would appear, if I should but ask thee two Questions ; as first, Whether your Peace be made with God ? May be after much Reasoning, you would confess the Truth, that it was not. And yet if I should ask you another Question ; Do you think that you should be saved if God carried you off by Death in this State ? Yes you would say, you hope so, through God's Mercy. O Hypocrite ! thou hast belched forth Blasphemy and Idolatry in this one Sentence : You hope that through the Mercy of God, he will prove a Liar, and falsify his Trust ; this is the Meaning of thy Speech, O Sinner ! it's big with Horror and infandous Baseness ! Art thou not afraid that God will stab thee dead immediately with the Spear of his Vengeance ! Or cause the Earth to open it's Mouth and swallow thee up quick, as it did proud rebellious *Corah* and Company, *Numb. 16 32.* Again, there is Idolatry in thy Speech ; thou hast unjust Apprehensions of God's Mercy, as if he would make it triumph in the Ruin of his Truth. *Psalms 50. 21.*

3. *Devil Worship.* I suppose that when you speak of the Pagans worshiping the Devil, you little think your selves are guilty of the same horrible Wickedness. The Truth of this Charge appears by the following Consideration, viz. That Faith, as all confess is an Act of Worship, but you believe the Devil the Father of Lies and Deceit, rather than the faithful God who is Truth it self. When God tells you in his Word, which shall stand, when the Heavens and the Earth shall shake, that if you continue in this State and Course, you shall be damned. And the Devil tells you, you shall not ; now you believe Satan the Enemy of your Souls, and discredit the God that made you by his Power, fed and preserved you by his kind Providence. Thus you worship the Devil, O miserable Souls ! how great is your Sin and Folly ? And how compleat and horrible will be your Misery, when you shall be sent to enjoy the gloomy gods you adore ? *Matth. 25. 41.*

4 Hypocrite

4. *Hypocrisy*; by professing Christ in *Word*, and in *Works* deny him; you bow the Knee in *Pretence* as the Jews did of old, and then crucify him in *Practice*; you salute him with a hail Master, as *Judas* your Predecessor in Impiety, and then betray his Interest; you come to God with your Lips, while your Hearts are far from him, *Matth.* 15. 8. & 27. 29. & 26. 49. I know the prophane Herd of Mankind imagine themselves to be far from Hypocrisy, because they say, they shew what they are; they do so indeed demonstrate themselves to be the genuine Children of their Father the Devil, *John* 8. 44. But at the same Time they declare their Wickedness as *Sodom* without *Shame* or *Blushing*, *Isai.* 3. 9. *The shew of their Countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their Sin as Sodom, they bide it not: Wo unto their Souls.* *Jer.* 6. 15. *Were they ashamed when they had committed Abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush: therefore they shall fall among those that fall, at the Time that I visit them, they shall be cast down, saith the Lord.* *Jer.* 8. 12, 13. I say at the same Time, they declare their Wickedness, they profess Christianity, and expect Salvation by it, and yet while they are Christians in Pretence and Profession, they are incarnate Devils in Practice: Now is not this notorious Hypocrisy, to profess one Thing and do another, to look one Way and row another, to pretend Friendship to Christ and at the same Time stab his Interest, dishonour his Name, and discredit his Truth by your impious Speeches, and brutish Lives. And besides what has been offered under this Head, it ought to be consider'd, that all who want spiritual Sincerity must needs be Hypocrites: I confess indeed that prophane Sinners are not of the most pollish'd Kind. However though these seem to be at Variance, yet they are Children of the same Father and Family, and like to inherit the same Portion. Hear your Doom from God ye Hypocrites! *Matth.* 24. last. *And shall cut him asunder, and shall appoint him his Portion with Hypocrites, where shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.* Hear you deceitful rotten hearted Professors, who despise weeping here for Sin, remember (that so continuing) ye shall weep in Hell, where there is no Hope: Here penitential Tears for Sin attended with a Reformation from it, probably would be a mean of obtaining Pardon, *Joel.* 2. 13, 14. But there, poor Souls, your Tears will be like *Esau's* shed in vain! there you will gnash your Teeth, i. e. when you are shut up in the Gulph of everlasting Misery, then you

you will be filled with Self-revenge and Indignation against your own Madness in hypocritically slighting such a Happiness as was tendered to you by the Son of God, that you would even tear your selves in pieces if you could. Can you without shivering think upon that awful Scripture? *Matth. 22. 12, 13. Then said the King to his Servants, bind him Hand and Foot, and take him away, and cast him into utter Darknes.*

5. Murder.

1. You murder your own Souls, thro' the Misapplication of the Portions of God's Word, as particularly by applying the Promises when you should apply the Threatnings. You snatch at the Children's Bread, when you have no right to it. Now as a Remedy misapplied hurts rather than heals, so it is in this Case, you turn those Means of Grace which were designed for the Salvation of Men, into a Savour of Death unto Death, and to be a Means of your Damnation, *2 Cor. 2. 16.* Thus you imbrue your Hands in your own Blood; God will by no Means clear such barbarous Butchers, so continuing. But

2. They also murder others, partly perhaps, by neglecting the seasonable Instruction of such as they are under a Relation to, *Prov. 22. 6.* And partly by their contradictory Practice; *Jacob's Voice* with the *Hands of Esau*, a *Saint abroad*, at *Home a Devil.* May not this be a great Stumbling Block to those that know their perverse *Pranks*. Perhaps such a Stumbling Block as some of their own *Relations* may fall over, and never rise again. O if these Men had any true Love to God, their own Souls, or the Souls of their Relatives, would they not either lay down their *Lamps* or reform their *Lives*.

6. Infidelity. They do not believe whatever they pretend. God's holy Word, the Lord Jehovah, points out their Condition as plainly as the Nose upon a Man's Face, and yet they won't believe, consider and apply it. *Jer. 8. 6. I bearkned and heard, but they spake not right, no Man repented him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done? Every one turneth to his Course, as the Horse rusheth into the Battle.* *Heb. 4. 2. But the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with Faith in them that heard it.* The Eye that sees others, sees not itself. Hear presumptuous Sinners what God speaks to thee, *Mark 16. 16. He that believeth not shall be damned.* And *1 John 5. 10. He that believeth not, hath made him a Liar.*

7. Fraud

7. *Fraud.* O presumptuous Sinners! you are guilty of Self-deceit, of Soul-deceit: To cheat another in any temporal Matter is a villanous and very criminal Evil, justly exposing the nocent Person to *Shame* and *Contempt*, as well as to the *Loss* of the civil *Law*; it is a Sin which is the Dishonour of Humanity, extremely prejudicial to all the Interests of Society; yet as bad as it is, it is not so monstrous and unnatural as to cheat our selves, and that in a Matter of infinitely greater Moment: Our Neighbour's Loss is temporary and reparable, but this is irreparable and eternal. As Suicide, or Self-murder is justly accounted more unnatuaal and monstrous than the Murder of another, so is this Self-deceit, which tho' it affords some present false Ease, yet persisted in, introduces the Soul into a *Labyrinth* of endless *Anguish*, *Luke 6. 25.* Remember, O Deceiver! that God's Curse is upon you, *Mal. 1. 14. Cursed be the Deceiver.*

8. *A Confederacy with the Devil.* Those Spirits having broken the Law of their Creation, are now justly deprived of the Happiness they were once instated in, and reserved in Chains of Darknes for the Judgment of the great Day, *2 Pet. 2. 4.* Knowing their Doom to be irrevocable, and that some of the lapsed and degenerate Race of *Adam* are advanced to that height of Happiness they had forfeited by Sin: They are fill'd with Rage and Malice against God, which not being able to execute upon him immediately, they therefore labour to displease him mediately by seducing that darling Creature, whom he hath been pleased to honour, with such distinguished, as well as undeserved Love. This is the grand Design these malicious Spirits are in pursuit of, and imploy all their Power and Policy about, *1 Pet. 5. 8. 2 Cor. 2. 11.* Now when Men embrace their false, though subtle Insinuations against their own Souls, believing their Suggestions concerning the Goodness of their present State, or the Certainty of their future Happiness against the plain Testimony of the holy Scriptures, as the presumptuous Sinner doth: Is not this a notorious Confederacy with these infernal Ghosts against God, and his own Soul.

9. By this you not only *secure* but *heighten* your Damnation; it may indeed help you to some present *Ease*, but alas! this transitory Delight will soon *expire* in easeless and endless Pain. Your presumptuous Hopes makes you thoughtless of the Misery you are making fast Approaches to. Now the less you expect such a Portion, the greater will

be your Pain; for "Surprisals, as Dr. *Stillingfleet* well observes, confound Men's Thoughts, daunt their Spirits, and betrays the Succour that Reason offers." What a great Disappointment, think you, was it to the foolish Virgins, who had such strong Hopes of Happiness, as Death it self could not shake, to have the Marriage Chamber-door shut against them, *Matth. 25. 12.* Instead of ascending the flowry Hills of Paradise, to be sunk into the Depths of Hell; and would not the same Disappointment strike you with the same *Surprize*? For God's sake, consider, that the *Strength* of your Hopes does not prove their Truth or Goodness: This you may learn from the sad Instance of the foolish Virgins; but alas! how difficult is it to persuade deceived Souls, to quit their false Confidence; when they are with *Ephraim* settled on their Lees, like Wine which has done working, in which there is little or no Motion, *Jer. 48. 11.* One may as well pull a *Bear* by the *Tooth* as meddle with some of them. It is as easy without sovereign Grace intercept, to shock the Earth of it's Foundations, as to overthrow their vain Confidence. They have often heard Threatnings, and therefore are used to them, and hardned by them. All the *Thunders* from *Sinai*, and *Curses* from Mount *Ebal*, are no more to them than the *Cracks* of Children's *Squibs* or Potguns; no, no; they have heard of these Things long ago; now the Frequency of hearing the most awful Truths, lessens their Terror; Custom deadens and stupifies the Passions, or makes their Motion more faint and languid; "like Mariners at Sea, they are much afraid of Storms at first, but afterwards they grow more hardned and unconcerned", as one expresseth it. Gospel Sinners will in process of Time grow hardy and fearless, under the most awakening Sermons; like the Smith's Dog, that will lie and take his Rest near the Anvil, when the glowing Sparks are flying about like Hail: What should such Men as they begin their Religion now, no they scorn it; it's proper only for weak, silly People that know no better to be frighted by Terror, but it is beneath men of their Sense to be startled at such Trifles, as God's fierce Vengeance and an everlasting Hell; ah! but for all your Haughtiness, if but one Curse, or the Guilt of one Sin was brought home in it's native Weight and Terror to your Conscience, it would make you tremble like a Leaf shaken with the Wind. *Prov. 18. 14* *A wounded Spirit who can bear?* Guilty *Gaal* thought the Shadows of the Mountains were Men, *Judges 9. 36.* But none

none besides the Almighty can perswade presumptuous Sinners to forsake their pleasant, though pernicious Dreams and Delusions. Grant *gracious God*, that poor bewildred, beaum'd and deceived Souls may be convinced of their Sin, Folly and Misery, in entertaining groundless Confidences about their present and future State.

Having before considered the Folly and Sinfulness of the presumptuous Sinner's Hope and Practice; let us now inquire into the Miseries of his Estate and Condition, while under those Delusions. These for Order's sake may be distinguished into two Kinds, viz. *Privative* and *Positive*; His privative Miseries are principally these two, viz. *Loss of the Image of God*, and *Communion with God*.

As to the first of these, Every presumptuous Sinner is deprived of the Image of God, which is the greatest Beauty, the highest Excellency and Ornament of the humane Nature; because the nearest Resemblance of the Divine. Those moral Excellencies that once the humane Soul possess'd, it's now bereaved of, until it be sanctify'd by the Holy Spirit, and made nigh by the Blood of Jesus, *Eph. 2. 12, 13. Eccles. 7. 29.* But to understand more fully the Extent of this Loss, let me propose a few Particulars concerning the Nature of that Image, innocent Man was honoured with: What was it but the Conformity of Man to God, or the Resemblance he bare in his *Measure* of the divine Excellencies and Perfections? This Resemblance appeared in three Things.

1. In the Nature and Effence of the Soul, for it's Spirituality, Invisibilty, Immortality and Simplicity, are faint Emblems of such like Properties and Perfections, which shine with a superiour Lustre in the divine Nature, *Acts 17. 28, 29.* This may be called the *natural Image of God* in Man, which can't be lost while the Soul endures; but there is little Reason to glory in that, because the Devils possess it as well as wicked Men.

2. In the Faculties of the Soul, in the Conformity of all it's Powers and Passions to the Nature and Will of God, in those divine Gifts and Excellencies with which the Soul was cloath'd, such as *Wisdom* in the *Understanding*, or a perfect Knowledge of Things divine and humane, *Col. 3. 10.* which appeared in *Adam's* giving Names to all the Creatures, suited to their different Natures; without this he would have been unfit to manage and sustain the Government of the inferiour Creatures which he was advanc'd to.

Sanctity in the *Will*; by which it is inclin'd to love and pursue after God and Goodness, to hate and avoid Evil, and the Appearance of it: Not only to perform with Delight and Pleasure the *Homage* due to God, but also the *Duties of Justice and Mercy* due to Man, *Eph. 4. 24.* capable to perceive what was true, and inclinable to embrace what was good.

Order and Harmony amongst the *Affections*; both as to the *Nature* of their *Objects*, and their *Degrees of Intensity*, their silent and steady Submission to the superiour Powers, without that Reluctance or Discord which Sin has since introduced, this may be called the *moral Image* of God.

3. There was also this *accessory* Part of God's *Image*, viz. The Power of *Government* over the inferiour Creatures, wherewith our first Parents were invested by God, *Gen. 1. 26.* which may be called the *civil* or political *Image* of God; as being a Representation and *Shadow* of this glorious *Sovereignty*; *Adam* was as it were God's *Vice Roy* upon Earth; but this Privilege as well as the moral *Image* is lost by Sin; the Beasts revolt from their wonted Subjection, and want to avenge their Maker's quarrel with Mankind. To conclude this Head, let me mention a few Expressions of the learned and eloquent Dr. *Bates* in his *Harmony*: "He enjoyed, saith he, (speaking of *Adam* in "his innocent State) Nature in it's original Purity, crown'd "with the *Benediction* of God before it was blasted with "the *Curse*, the World was all Harmony and Beauty, be- "coming the Goodness of the Creator; the Earth was "liberal to *Adam* of all it's Treasures; the Heavens of "their Light and sweetest Influences; he was seated in "Eden, a Place of so great Beauty and Delight, that it re- "presented the celestial Paradise, which is refresh'd with "Rivers of Pleasure: But his supreme Happiness consist- "ed in the Exercise of his most noble Faculties on pro- "per Objects." See what we have lost by Sin! If we could with *Niobe* weep incessantly; nay, could we shed chrystal Seas of Grief; if all our moisture were spent in the bitterest Lamentations; Were our Heads Waters and our Eyes Fountains of Tears; nay, were our Tears turn'd into Blood; it were too little to bewail our fatal, fatal Loss! Wo is us, the *Crown*, the sparkling *Diadem* is fallen is fallen from our Heads; our Hearts, and we are justly left bereaved of our primitive Innocency, Happiness and Beauty; and were it not that the God of Pardons and
Compassions

Compassions had opened a Scene of redeeming Love in JESUS ! to restore apostate Man to some degree of his primitive Honour and Excellency, we should have had a whole Eternity to spend in fruitless *Esau* like Complaints, without the very least Glimpse of Hope to allay their Bitterness: But you presumptuous Sinners not having embrac'd JESUS the Angel of the Covenant, nor experienc'd the Power of converting Grace, are still languishing under the Ruins of *Adam's* Apostacy, destitute of the Image of the holy God, without which you can never enjoy him, who is infinite in Purity & glorious in Holiness, *Heb. 2. 14. Isai. 6. 3. Exod. 15. 11.* While you want God's Image, are not you deprived of your greatest Honour, your highest Excellency, and sweetest Enjoyment? What greater Honour than to be like the pure and holy God, and what greater Happiness than by this Conformity, to enjoy the refreshing Smiles of his reconciled Face? Is it not a sinful Want, because occasioned through our own Default? *Adam* being the Representative and federal Head of his whole Posterity; the Covenant being not only made with him personally, but with us in him; his Actions being of a publick Nature and Concern, we sinned in him, and fell with him in his first Transgression, *Rom 5. 12, 18, 19.*

O Sinner! all the other Wants thou complaineest so much about are inconsiderable and trifling, when compar'd with this! they are but temporary and momentous, but the Consequences of this are durable and eternal: Many of these are but imaginary, or not so necessary, but that you may live, and perhaps comfortably without having them supply'd: But this Want is not only real, but of absolute Necessity to be remedy'd; otherwise your Persons and Services will never be accepted, *Heb 12. 14. Isai 1.* You are apt to be deeply sensible of, and much affected with other Wants, & perhaps make great Complaints about small Matters; but alas! Friends, these are but Summer Brooks, when compared with this immense Ocean. This! this! deserves your most manly Thoughts and Reflections, your greatest Care and your deepest Sorrows. Think upon, and apply to thy guilty Conscience that solemn Threatning of the holy God, *Ezek. 16. 23. And it come to pass after all thy Wickedness, Wo, Wo, unto thee saith the Lord God*

2. Presumptuous Sinners are deprived of Fellowship and Communion with God: alas! miserable Souls, you know not what it means experimentally: I confess if you have

Learning, you may talk something about it by Rote, coldly and by guesses, as the blind Man shoots at the Mark; but you do not know feelingly what it is to receive the Emanations of God's special Love into your Bosoms; the pure and precious, and Soul ravishing Streams of those Waters of Life, that gently flow from the Throne of God and the Lamb, descending into and satiating of your longing panting Souls, and flowing in you as a Well of Waters, springing up to eternal Life, *John 4. 14. Psalm 23. 2.* And exciting the most flaming passionate Commotions of Love, Desire, Delight and Gratitude. *Cant. 2. 5. & 8. 6. and 5. 5, 6. & 2. 3, & 5. 16.* You know not unhappy Souls, what it is to drink of the divine Nectar, and living Waters, or to feed upon the hidden Manna, and ambrosial Sweets, that attend the presence of the descending God.

For

1. How should you have *Communion* who yet retain your *Enmity* against him? *Amos 3. 3. Can two walk together except they be agreed?* There can be no *Communion* without *Reconciliation*, if ever the *Friendship* was broken, which is the present Case; and though you are not willing to allow this Charge, your Practice proves it, your quarrelling with God's Image, viz. strict Holiness, shews your Disgust at the Original or Prototype, your slighting of, and contending with God's Children, shews you hate their Father, *1 John 4. 20.*

2. Where there is *Communion*, there is also a *Communion* of such Things that are peculiar to one, as if common to both; this appeared eminently among the primitive Christians, *Acts 2. 44, 45.* As the blessed God freely communicates his precious and permanent Love to his People, *Jer. 31. 3.* So his People are willing to spend and be spent for him; they take joyfully the spoiling of their Goods, knowing that in Heaven they have a better and an enduring Substance, *Heb. 10. 34.* And count not their Lives dear that they may win Christ; defend and promote his Interest, *Acts 20. 24.*

3. Where there is *Communion*, there is also a friendly and familiar Conference; Christ speaks to his People by his Word and Spirit, and they know and hear his Voice with great Desire and longing, *Cant. 5. 2. & 4. 5, 6.* and follow him, *John 10. 4, 5.* And they speak their Hearts to him, by Sighs, Tears, Groans, Prayer and Praise, *Ezek 9. 4. Isai 35. 10. Psalm 42. 3. Isai. 38. 5. Psalm 58. 9. Rom. 8. 26. Job 22. 26, 27. Psalm 22. 23.* They cry to him

him with a Child like Love, and humble Boldness, Abba, Father, Father, dear Father, *Rom. 8. 15.* But O how far are you from this, instead of the Suffering Dearb, may be you are not willing to suffer *Reproach* for his Truth, but will rather *cruckle & shift*, & come into carnal *Compliances*. Perhaps instead of Willingness to suffer the Loss of your Goods by Persecution (which Loss is indeed the greatest Gain) that you count it all lost that you give to a poor distressed Member of Christ's Body mystical ; you part as difficultly with a small Matter out of your Purfes, or Pocket-Books for charitable and pious Uses, as with the Blood out of your Veins. Is it likely that such Earth-Worms should have Communion with the Almighty ? As to that familiar Converse with God I but now mentioned ; you are perhaps such Strangers to it your selves, that if any made use of it in your Hearing you would, may be, suspect them, quarrel with them, and condemn them under the guiled *Pretext* of making too bold with the *Almighty* ; as if *Children* might not *speak* in their own *Language*, O strange ! It appears also that you are destitute of *Communion* with *God*, because you want *Conformity* to *God* in *Heart* and *Practice*, *1 John 1. 6.* *2 Cor. 6. 14, 15.* Now how great is this Misery, unhappy Sinner ! whilst thou livest in a State of Estrangement from *God* who is the Fountain of Happiness, the *God* of Consolation, *with him is the Fountain of Life*, *Psalms 36. 9.* *Yea his Lovingkindness is better than Life*, *Psalms 63. 3.* *All our Springs are in God*, *Psalms 87. 7.* So that in keeping at a Distance from him, thou dwellest far from thy own Life and Happiness.

Now in Order to get thy Heart affected with this woful *Want*, Defect and Loss, consider solemnly these following Particulars.

1. Thou hast no true *Comfort* in *Difficulties*, no *Covenant* *God* to go to, thou must bear thy Burden alone ; is not thy State doleful ? Can you be contented in such a Condition ? But on the contrary, what a blessed Privilege is it to have such a *compassionate Friend* to make our *Moan* to in all our *Distresses*, and with the strongest *Assurances* of obtaining *Succour* from him, *Psalms 12. 5.* *Isai. 65. 24.* *Hab. 2. 3.*

2. Can those that want Communion with *God here*, reasonably expect to enjoy him *hereafter* ? No surely. If *Strangers* had not *Admittance* into the *jewish Temple*, *Num. 1. 51.* which was but an obscure *Type* of *Heaven*, how much less will they be *introduced* into *Heaven* it self ?

3. It's a Resemblance of the Punishment of the *damm'd Angels*, and *damm'd Souls*, for these abandoned wretched Spirits have no Enjoyment of God's gracious Presence, in that *burning Lake*, wherein they are ingulphed. Indeed thy outward sensual Enjoyments blunt the Edge of thy present Misery, but quickly thou wilt be stript bare of all thy carnal Comforts, for ever bereaved of the Bones and Husks, in which thou confided and triumph'd, and thy naked Soul shall feel the Fierceness of his Revenge; the unallayed Horrors of an ever absent God, unless thou repentest. Does not universal Nature mourn, when the Sun has hid his rosie Face, but for a small Time in an Eclipse, and appears in a funeral *Dress*? What then think you, must the Mourning of the *damm'd* be, who are shut up in thick Darkness, and deprived of all Hopes of ever enjoying God?

4. How awful will be the *Appearance* or *Approach* of *Death* to you while you remain in such a Condition? Won't pale *Death* terrify your secure Consciences, and put you in great Disorder? What can ye expect but that fearful and amazing Sentence, *Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels, I know you not*, Matth. 25. 41. & 7. 23.

Is not the gracious Presence of God the *Quintessence* of all desirable Comforts? O! what inexpressible Misery is it to be without God! (who as he is the best Friend at all Times, so he is the only Friend at some Times) it is bad in *Life*, worse at *Death*, and worst of all in *Hell*.

Eph. 2. 12. But I proceed to consider the *positive Miseries* of presumptuous Sinners.

You are under the *Power of Sin*, *Eph. 2. 2, 3* or *Rom. 3. 19.* *John 3. 6.* *Rom. 6. 20.* *For when ye were the Servants of Sin, ye were free from Righteousness.* In their unconverted Estate, the Apostle informs them, that they were Drudges to Sin, and free from Righteousness, not by a Liberty given, but taken, *Rom. 8. 12.* *For the Law of the Spirit of Life which is in Christ Jesus has made me free from the Law of Sin and Death.* Here he asserts his present Freedom through the Covenant of Grace in Jesus, from the Guilt and Power of Sin, which necessarily supposes his former Bondage to both, while in a State of Nature. While Men remain in this sad and doleful Condition, they are by repeated Transgressions against Light and Love, contracting new Guilt, and thereby aggravating their

their Damnation, Rom. 2. 4, 5. *Or despisest thou the Riches of his Goodness and Forbearance, not knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance, but after thy Hardness and impenitent Heart treasurest up unto thy self Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.* But your whole Lives and all your Actions, are not only tainted with, and under the Dominion of Sin, but your Souls in all their Faculties are corrupted and governed by it; your Minds are darkned and alienated from the Life of God through Ignorance, Acts 26. 18. Eph. 4. 18. & 5. 8. The bright and beauteous Morning Star never appeared to those bewilder'd benighted Souls, have never felt (in a saving Way) the warming and enlightening Beams of the Sun of Righteousness, ushering the joyful Dawn of an everlasting Day into the glooming Hemisphere of their beclouded Souls: And is not this dark Condition a State of extreme Danger, and awful Horror? John 12. 35. *He that walketh in Darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.* Let there be never so many Dangers in the Way, they can't be discerned in the dark; they are like to be felt before they are feared; Is not this the Reason of the great unconcernedness and presumptuous Security of the ungodly World, they see not, alas! they see not their Danger, that the pale Horse is just at their Back with Death upon him, and Hell following after him, Rev. 6. 8. Otherwise they would weep rather than laugh, mourn rather than rejoyce, tremble and cry out wherever they are, rather than sing and be jovial, according to the common Course of this World, Eph. 2. 2. Eccles. 2. 2. O Man! Can'st thou be easy in this dark and doleful Condition, which is so exceeding dangerous, that thou knowest not but that the next Hour (or in a few Hours at least) thou may'st be in Hell, past all Hope; thou knowest not but that this Day or Night, Sicknes and Death may snap the feeble Thread of thy momentary Life, trip up the Heels of thy false Hope, and sink thy wretched Soul among the Devils? Is it not dangerous to have the Guide and Leader among the Faculties blinded and vail'd with a Muffler of Ignorance and Darkness? *If the Blind lead the Blind, are they not like to fall both together into the Ditch,* Luke 6. 39.

2. A State of Darkness is a State of awful Horror, the Horrors of Death! The Horrors of Hell! The Horrors of Sin! and the Curse environ you! and not the least Grain

of *solid Comfort*, or *Glimpse of sure Hope* while you so remain, *Eph. 2. 12.* to support your sinking Souls.

I assure you Friends, if God should open your Eyes, you would be astonished at your past and present Stupidity! O Man! thou art in a worse Condition than the poor Egyptians, when they were encompassed with thick Darkness; for that Darkness was but temporary, external, palpable; but thine is internal, insensible to thee, and will prove eternal, unless Repentance opens a brighter Scene: Their's lasted but three Days, but perhaps thine has lasted twenty, thirty, forty, fifty or sixty Years: They were afflicted with their's, *Exod. 10. 16.* But perhaps you are contented with thine; thy Case is worse than that of *Paul* and his Fellow-Mariners, when they were almost shipwreck'd, *Acts 27. 20.* and neither Sun or Stars appeared in many Days:

1. Their Danger and Distress only respected the temporal Life, but thine, the eternal.

2. They were very apprehensive of their Danger, Verse 20. *All Hopes we should be saved was then taken away*; but may be your false Hopes were never shock'd at the Foundation yet. *Isai. 57. 10.* *Thou art wearied in the Greatness of thy Way, yet saidest thou not, there is no Hope, thou hast found the Life of thy Hand, therefore thou wast not grieved.* So, many Persons now a Days, if their Conscience checks them, they can soon cure themselves by their Prayers, they find the Life of their Hand, they depend upon their Doings for Justification and Salvation, this strengthens their false Hope, and keeps them from being sufficiently griev'd; but the Fig leaves of a Man's own Righteousness, will be found to be a very defective Robe, *Isai. 27. 20.* *For the Bed is shorter than that a Man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower, than that he can wrap himself in it.*

3. They us'd with Earnestness, proper Means to obtain Relief, *Acts 27. 16, 17, 18.* but you sleep in Sloth in infinitely greater Danger.

4. The Continuance of their Danger was but for a few Days, but thine is like to last to Eternity at the Rate thou goest on.

5. Though the Vessel was tossed like a Tennis-Ball by the impetuous Winds and Waves, much as the Psalmist describes that Case, *Psalms 107. S. 26. 7.* Yet they had Anchors to cast out in their Distress, Verse 29. *They cast four Anchors out of the Stern, and wished for the Day.* But thou be in the Sea of God's Wrath, and ready to be blown every

every Moment by the furious Gusts of his Indignation into Hell, thou hast not one Anchor to cast out in thy Distress; no true Hope fixed within the Vail, *Heb. 6. 19. Eph. 2.*

12. The Anchor thou trustest to (I mean thy false Hope) is hollow, drossy and brickle, it won't hold thy Stormstead Soul during one Blast of the breath of God's Indignation: Surely all his Billows shall go over thee, except thou gettest another Anchor of sound Metal, *Psalms 42. 7. Job 18. 14. His Confidence shall be rooted out of his Tabernacle; and it shall bring him to the King of Terrors.*

6. Those distressed Mariners wished for the Day, but may be you are so far from wishing the Day-break of Conviction, that you put away the evil Day far off, and fly from the Light because your Deeds are evil, *Amos 6. 9. John 3. 19, 20.*

7. Those People were so distressed about their Danger and Misery, not only because of the Storm, but also because the Lights of Heaven were blown out, and that they wanted the Sun's Warmth, and the Direction of the Stars (for they had not then found out the Virtue of the Load-Stone, that they eat nothing (no stated Meals) for fourteen Days together, *Verse 33.* And thou perhaps hast hardly ever fasted one Day, or may be scarce missed a Meal about thy Soul Concerns, though thou hast continued in the Valley of the Shadow of Death these many Years; never having felt one Heart-changing, Life-giving Ray from the Son of God the Sun of Righteousness; or never beheld by an Eye of Faith the Morning-Star of Salvation: O shame! See *Joel 1. 14, & 2. 5. Matth. 9. 15. Luke 5. 35.*

More particularly, the Mind is darkned and blinded in it's Apprehension of Things, *Eph. 4. 18.* as well as erroneous in it's Judgment concerning them, *Isai. 5. 20. Wo to them that call evil good, and good evil.*

3. It's Reasonings are frequently false and carnal, though often crafty and subtle, *2 Cor. 10. 5. Luke 16. 8.*

4. It's Designs and numerous Projects, selfish, mean and mercenary, *2 Tim. 3. 2, 4. James 3. 15.*

5. The Thoughts vain and vicious, *Jer. 4. 14.* They are continually Evil, either as to Matter or Manner, *Gen. 8. 21.* Presumptuous Sinners do vainly imagine that God does not take such strict Notice of their Actions, nor is so severe in punishing them; as his faithful Servants represent him to be. *Psalms 34. 7, 10, 11. Jer. 4. 4. Psalm 50. 21. These Things thou hast done and I kept Silence; thou thoughtest*

est that I was altogether such a one as thy self, but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine Eyes. Let such Sinners remember the Text that I am speaking from, If you walk after the Imaginations of your Heart, and yet expect Peace; all the Curses that are written in the Book of God shall lie upon you.

6. The Memory is corrupted, forgetful of Good, and retentive of Evil, Jer. 4. 14.

7. The Conscience is wofully depraved, Tit. 1. 15. Unto the Pure all Things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure. Mat. 6. 22. The Light of the Body is the Eye, if thine Eye be evil, thy whole Body is full of Darkness, if therefore the Light that is in thee be Darkness, how great is that Darkness? But

2. As your Understandings are filled with Ignorance and Darkness, so your Wills are possessed of Obstinacy and Forwardness in Evil, John 5. 40. Amos 6. 10. and Aversion to God, Psalm 14. 34. Isai. 48. 4. Because I know thou art obstinate, thy Neck an Iron Shew, and thy Brow Brass. The Wills of presumptuous Sinners have a strong Proneness to Sin, and a great Aversion against that Law by which it is restrained and condemned, Rom 5. 7. & 7. 11. Mal. 3. 14. In short the Will is

1. Perverse in it's Inclinations, Zech. 7. 11. But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the Shoulder, and stopped their Ears that they should not hear. Hos. 11. 7. And my People are bent to backsliding from me, though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him.

2. As the Will is perverse in it's Inclinations, so it's obstinate in it's Designs, Jer. 8. 5, 6. I hearkened and heard but they spake not aright; no Man repented him of his Wickedness, saying, what have I done? Every one turneth to his Course, as the Horse-rusherth into the Battle. They hold fast Deceit, they refuse to return. Also Jer. 2. 25. I have loved Strangers and after them will I go.

3. Foolish in it's Choice: choosing either real Evil, or but apparent Good, Jer. 2. 12, 13. Be astonished, O ye Heavens at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my People have committed two Evils, they have forsaken the Fountain of living Waters, and hewn out unto themselves Cisterns, broken Cisterns, that can hold no Water.

4. Inordinately eager in it's Enjoyments, Eph. 4. 11. Who being past feeling have given themselves to work all Uncleanness with Greediness.

3. The Affections are wholly averse to the Pursuit of God and divine Things, *Isai.* 30. 10. 2 *Tim.* 4. 3. *Job.* 21. 14. Averse to the Law of God and Obedience to it, *Rom.* 8. 7. *Jer.* 6. 17. *Eccl.* 7. 26. And on the contrary fix'd on sensitive Delights, *Gal.* 5. 24. 1 *Tim.* 5. 6.

4. The Life is framed according to the Customs of the World, the corrupt Desires of the Heart, and Examples of Predecessors, *Rom.* 12. 2. *Eph.* 2. 2. 2 *Pet.* 2. 12. *Jer.* 16. 12. *Zech.* 1. 4. *John.* 8. 33. But in the mean time, lest any be mistaken, know, that all unconverted and presumptuous Sinners are not equally guilty of outward Abominations, no, no, there are some who by Reason of their mild Temper, good Education, and the common Motions of the Holy Spirit, make a more guilded Appearance, and fairer shew in the Flesh than others, and yet are in the same woful State with the Prophane, *Rom.* 2. 17, 18, 19, 20. *Rev.* 3. 17. Some presumptuous Sinners are visibly dead, others seem to themselves and others to live, *John.* 9. 40, 41. *Matth.* 23. 2, 10 8. See Friends what a lamentable Disorder Sin has brought into the Soul's Faculties, how has it clouded the Mind, and hardned the Heart, *Ezek.* 36. 26. fear'd and stupify'd the Conscience, 2 *Tim.* 4. 2. Is not your Case lamentable, who dwell under the Dominion of such a Tyrant, who is worse than the very Devil himself? For is it not Sin that made him who was once a glorious Angel, a deformed Devil? Is it not Sin that has cloathed him with all his hellish Qualities of Rage and Spite, against God and all Goodness? Does not the Tyrant Sin enslave? *Tit.* 3. 3. pollute? *Prov.* 13. 5. poison? *James.* 3. 8. *Deut.* 32. 32. wound? *Isai.* 1. 6. infatuate? *Luke.* 15. 17. plague? 1 *Kings.* 8. 38. And will it not destroy and damn your precious Souls for ever, unless Repentance intervene and prevent the fatal Blow? *Luke.* 13. 3. O therefore confess it with David, *Psalms.* 51. 7. Behold I was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me. Mourn over it, with holy Paul, *Rom.* 7. 24. O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Sin and Death? Without this hereditary and contagious Corruption, the bitter Fountain from which all our actual Evils proceed, the Enemy could not have so much Power over us to entice and seduce us, *Matth.* 4. 10. Therefore we have Reason to ascribe our actual Sin and Ruin, not so much to Satan, and the Allurements of the World, as to this Sin that dwells in us, *Rom.* 7. 20.

And

And now, Friends, Can you imagine that such unclean Creatures, even pieces of Pollution as you are, over whose Hearts and Lives, Sin, both original and actual, reigns and governs, who are covered with Bruises and putrifying Sores, from the Crown of your Heads to the Soles of your Feet, *Isai. 1. 5, 6.* can possibly be admitted to the immediate and eternal Embraces of an infinitely pure and holy God, in the State and Case you are in; no poor Sinners, *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, Gal. 5. 6. Without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord, Heb. 12. 14. Hab. 1. 3. Thou art of purer Eyes than to behold Evil.*

2. You are in the Possession of Satan. It's true, the Devil is not your Lord or Master, *de Jure*, or by lawful Right, but he is *de Facto*, in Fact, he hath usurp'd the Possession of your Souls, and obtain'd it partly by your own Consent, and partly by God's judicial Tradition; *While the strong Man armed keeps his Palace, his Goods are in Peace, Luke 11. 21.* Mr. Henry observes upon this Place of Scripture, "That the Heart of every unconverted Sinner is the Devil's Palace where he resides and rules. *Eph. 2. 2.* "That all the Faculties of the Soul are his Goods, being employed by him in the Service of Sin, that there is a kind of Peace in an unconverted Soul, while the Devil as a strong Man keepeth it; the Sinner, saith he, hath a good Opinion of himself, is very secure and merry, has no doubt concerning the Goodness of his State, nor any dread of the Judgment to come; he flatters himself in his own Eyes, and cries Peace to himself. Before Christ came, all was in Peace, because all went one Way, but the Preaching of the Gospel disturb'd the Peace of the Devil's Palace, *Mat. 10. 34. Rom. 7. 9. For I was alive without the Law once, but when the Commandment came, Sin reviv'd and I died.* The Apostle here shews, that while he was unconvinced, he was in a deep Slumber, indulging a false Hope, & retaining a false Peace, but when the Commandment came, when the Law was brought home to his Soul and Conscience, by the almighty Power of the Holy Spirit, Sin reviv'd in his View and Apprehension, and he died, lost that false Peace, and false Hope he before indulg'd, *Rom. 7. 11.* Is not this a lamentable Consideration! that the Devil thus erects his Throne in all presumptuous unconverted Sinners Hearts, and there sways his wicked Scepter! and has all the Powers and Passions of the Soul to lacque to his Nod, and observe the least Intimations of his Pleasure, with the profoundest Submission and

and Alacrity, like the Centurions Servants; that he should be thus strongly intrenched in this *Garrison*, with all the *Bulwarks* and *Barriers*, of Ignorance, Ambition, Presumption and Prejudice, *Rev. 3. 17. 2 Cor. 10. 5. John 5. 40.* So that none but the Lord Jesus Christ can dispossess him, and spoil him of his Armour; and this he doth by *Storm*, *Luke 11. 22.* firing the great *Guns* of his broken Law, and the *dreadful Curses* of his slighted Gospel, from *Sinai* and Mount *Ebal*; For the Law was a *Schoolmaster* to bring us to *Christ*, *Gal. 3. 24.* The Devil won't quit an inch of Ground, with his Will, he won't leave the *Fort* totally, till it be all in a *Flame* about his *Ears*. It is true, he may make a voluntary *Retreat* (having left strong Guards behind) for a little Season, only with Design to lead the Sinner into a dangerous *Ambush*; and obtain a stronger Possession by changing his Coat, or Colour of black into white; instead of a black he becomes a white Devil; that is, he suffers his deluded Slaves and Vassals to quit the Pollutions of the World, and rest in a Form of Piety, then the Room is garnished, *Luke 11. 24, 25, 26.* How woful must the Case of such possessed Souls be, considering their King and Commander, the Devil, is a *powerful, politic, malicious and deceitful Enemy*?

1. *Powerful.* It is in respect of this, that he is called a strong Man armed; Principalities, Powers, and Rulers of the Darkness of this World, that is of darkned People in it, *Eph. 6. 12.*

2. *Politick.* In Regard of his Policy, he is called a Serpent, the old Serpent, *Rev. 12. 9.* Hence we read of his Devices, *Eph. 6. 11.* which are many indeed, and deceive the whole World, *Rev. 12. 9.*

3. In regard of his *Malice*: He is call'd the great Dragon, *Rev. 12. 9.* a roaring Lion, going about seeking whom he may devour, *1 Pet. 5. 8. Rev. 12. 12. Wo to the inhabitants of the Earth and of the Sea, for the Devil is come down, having great Wrath, because he knoweth he hath but a short time.* These once glorious, but now miserable, miserable Spirits, having lost, thro' Sin, their primitive innocency and happiness, and all hopes of being reinstated into the divine Favour, are possess'd of a settled rancour against the blessed God; and they having no sufficient power to make him feel the effects of their revenge, He being infinitely exalted above the reach of their rage; they therefore endeavour to glut, or rather gratify their Malice and excite his Displeasure, by labouring to betray that race

of

of Creatures which it pleased God to advance above themselves. 2 Pet. 2. 4. Jude ver. 6. 1 Pet. 5. 8. The malicious Devil is a more cruel *Task Master* than the Egyptian *Pharoah*: His Service is the basest Slavery, he has no pity upon his *Drudges*, gives them no rest, hurries them sometimes to such dishonourable Actions, as shorten their Lives, and makes their Death unlamented; *There Name is blotted out from under Heaven*; either quite extinct and forgot, or remembered with abhorrence.

4. A *deceitful Enemy*. Rev. 12. 9. He makes it his business to cheat and deceive: He promises fine things to his *Votaries*, but never performs; for he was a *Liar and a Murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the Truth*, Joh. 8. 44. The Devil's Baits are all a *Sham*: Was it not so in his tempting of our Lord? *Matth. 4.* He shewed him all the Kingdoms of the World, and said unto him, *All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.* O Hell hatch'd Impudence! and deceit! fit for none but him that express'd it. What! the *Creator* to worship a *Creature*! and that of the vilest *Mould*; by a sinful *Degeneracy*! for *Corruptio optimi, est, pessima*. The best things being corrupted, grow the worst: And what was this offer of Satan, but a meer *Shadow, a Phantasm*? For its very probable he shew'd *Christ* only an airy *Map* of the *World's Splendor and Gaiety*, labouring thereby to strike the *fancy*; for it can't be reasonably imagined that any *Mountain* is so high as to afford a prospect of all the numerous and spacious *Kingdoms of the Universe*; and what humane sight could extend so far at one *View*? It's likely there was a *juggle* and cheat in the *Offer*, and such are Satan's *Baits* generally. O! that we could imitate the *Lord Jesus* in rejecting his *Temptations* with abhorrence! sending him away in haste, and shutting our *Ears* against his falacious *Charms*, *Matth. 4. 10. Get thee hence Satan.* All you unconverted presumptuous Sinners, that are here present before God, are possessed with the Devil: May be you would be afraid to see the Devil in any bodily shape; but alas! poor Souls, you have him *Night and Day* in your *Hearts*! O! all-powerful and most compassionate *Lord Jesus*, who came from thy *Father's Bosom* to destroy the Works of the Devil, eject by thy *Word and Spirit* these Devils out of these possessed Souls, that are now in thy *House of Prayer*.

3. You are under the *Guilt of Sin*; which is thy liability to punishment upon the account of the *Law* thou hast broken.

broken. Joh. 3. 18. *He that believeth not is condemned already*; which signifies, saith Mr. Henry,

1. "A certain Condemnation; they are as sure to be condemned in the Judgment of the Great Day, as if they were condemned already."

2. "A present Condemnation: The Curse has already seiz'd them; the Wrath of God is now fastned upon them."

3. "A Condemnation grounded upon former Guilt. He is condemned already; for he lies open to the Law for all his Sins, the condemning power of the Law stands in full force against all presumptuous Sinners, because they have no interest in the Provision made by the Gospel; not having comply'd with its Terms. Rom. 3. 19. *For we know that whatsoever the Law sayeth, it saith to those that are under the Law, that every mouth may be stop'd, and the whole World may become guilty before God.* Consider, O Sinner! how many Sins hast thou committed, in Thought, Word and Action! Are not thy Sins in number as the Stars in the Firmament? The Drops of Water in the Ocean? the Sands upon the Sea-shoar? the Hairs upon thy Head? Sins against the Law and Gospel; Sins against Knowledge, against Mercy, against Vows, Purposes, Promises, Warnings and repeated Engagements; and that not one of them Pardoned, or ever shall, 'till thou quit thy presumptuous Hope, and get thy Heart changed: Consider seriously, how many thy Sins in Thought must be, when they keep pace with the winged Moments, and every of them evil, till you be converted to God. Not only thy vain, vile and presumptuous Thoughts are evil, Jer 4. 14. *O Jerusalem! wash thy Heart from wickedness; how long shall vain Thoughts lodge within thee,* Matth. 15. 19, 20. but also thy Thoughts upon God, and Christ, and Piety, are sinful as to the manner, and in strict Justice deserve eternal Damnation, Luk. 6. 43. *For a good Tree bringeth not forth corrupt Fruit, neither doth a corrupt Tree bring forth good Fruit,* Matth. 7. 17, 18. *And God saw that the Wickedness of Man was great on the Earth, and that every Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart was only evil continually,* Gen. 6. 5. And remember *the Wages of Sin is Death,* Rom. 6. 23. How many are thy Sins of Neglect & Omission, which are base and damnable; for *he that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is Sin,* Jam. 4. 17. Sin with a witness, heinous, highly aggravated Sin. *Matth. 25. 25, 26.* Oh! how numerous are thy Sins of Commission! Search your

your past Lives, and see with horror and regret the vile Abominations you have committed ! Don't you remember Sinner, this and that time you broke the Laws of God ? You sinn'd presumptuously. Jer. 8. 9. *They were as fed Horses in the morning, every one neigh'd after his neighbours Wife. Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? and shall not my Soul be avenged on such a Nation as this!* Gal. 5. 19, 20, 21. Rom. 1. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32. And remember that for Sins of Presumption, there was no Sacrifice to be offer'd under the Law, Deut. 17. 12. Numb. 15. 30, 31. Hear and tremble ! at what the jealous God speaks by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, the 24th. Chapter of his Book, 12, 13, and 14 verses. *She hath wearied her self with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her ; her scum shall be in the Fire. In thy filthiness is lewdness : because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee. I the Lord have spoken it, it shall come to pass, and I will do it, I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent ; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings shall they judge thee, saith the Lord God.*

Observe,

1. She had wearied her self with *Lies* ; trusted to, and depended upon false props, such as fail'd her in extremity ; and she had wearied God with her false and ineffectual purposes of Amendment and Reformation, like *Felix*.

2. She was *unreformed* by the methods of *Cure*. God had us'd means to reclaim her, but neither the Word or Rod, Food or Physick, had any saving influence ; *Her Scum*, i.e. her Wickedness was not remov'd, she was not thoroughly purg'd, notwithstanding all the means used with her ; but *in her filthiness was lewdness* ; she was obstinate and impudent, abus'd the good Prophets, and despis'd their Warnings and Threats, hut hug'd the Daubers in her bosom, who prophesied Peace, Peace, and Plenty, much Wine and Strong Drink, as honest Mr. *Cradacet* observes. Math. 23 37. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that killest the Prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy Children together, even as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her wings, and ye would not.* How were *Jeremiah* and *Micajah* abus'd, Jer. 20 2, 10. 1 Kin. 22 8, 24. 1 Kin. 17. 3 & 19. 2. Luk. 11 49, 50, 51. While in the mean time, the filthy tho' numerous gang of *Baal's* Priests were carels'd and honoured. And as the Jewish Nation were thus abusive to the true Prophets, so were they hardned,

rather

" than reform'd by Afflictions, they grow'd and snarl'd at
 " the Stone; gnaw'd and bit the Chain wherewith they
 " were bound, like a mad Dog; murmur'd against, and
 " quarrel'd with the Almighty and one another, but espe-
 " cially with the faithful Servants of God, that were fre-
 " quently a sounding with an ungrateful knell, Death and
 " Destruction in their Ears. Now because they were ob-
 " stinate in Sin, God gives them up to Destruction, ceaseth
 " striving with them, and causeth his fury to rest upon
 " them: *Thou shalt not be purged any more, till I cause my
 " fury to rest on thee.* This Sentence he ratifies by his Truth.
 Whether this be not the Wickedness that many now a
 days under the Gospel commit; I leave it to God and
 your own Consciences to judge and determine: And if
 this be your Sin, why you should not expect the same Pu-
 nishment, I can see no reason, seeing the Nature of God
 and Moral Evil remains the same invariably and eternally.
 O Sinner, thou hast not only broke the blessed Law of
 God by innumerable Transgressions, but has slighted the
 precious Gospel of the Son of God, in which are the
 highest triumphs of pure Grace and pardoning Love, that
 a God could express, or a Creature receive. Not only
 wounded thy self by Sin, but rejected the remedy for Sin;
 a Balsom provided by infinite Cost, and Expence of the
 rich Treasures of amazing Mercy and condescending Ma-
 jesty. *Job. 5. 40. Eccl. 3. 20. Eph. 3. 18, 19. Job. 1. 14.*
 Will not your abus'd Privileges hasten and heighten your
 Damnation? *Rom. 2. 8, 9. Indignation and Wrath upon
 every Soul of Man that doth evil, of the Jew first, and also
 of the Gentile.* You have not only perhaps abus'd Afflictive
 but also comforting and prosperous Providences, in-
 stead of being led by the Goodness of God to Repentance
 and Reformation, as it is both your Duty and Interest;
 you have despis'd it; and after the hardness of your impen-
 nitent Heart treasur'd up to your selves Wrath against the
 Day of Wrath, and the revelation of the righteous Judg-
 ment of God, *Rom. 2. 4-7.* I say, instead of being led by
 God's Goodness to Repentance, Gratitude and Reforma-
 tion; you have been led perhaps to Pride, Luxury, Obsti-
 nacy and Self-dependance. *Deut. 32. 15. But Jeshurun
 waxed fat and kicked; thou art waxen fat, thou art grown
 thick: Then he forsook God which made him, and lightly
 esteem'd the rock of his Salvation.* Some translate the word
 Jeshurun, *Upright.* It seems this People had the Name
 of Piety before their Prosperity, but then they justly lost
 it,

it, their inside was turned outward, then they shew'd in *Act*, what they had in *Hearts* before, viz. *Sensuality, Pride, &c.* The Rattle Snake in the Wintertime, keeps very still and harmless; but when he begins to feel the warm beams of the Sun, he shews his Speckled Skin, and makes a terrible rattle with his Tail, artfully moving his horrible Head that's environ'd with his Body, ready to give any Body that would molest him a mortal gripe with his invenom'd *Tusks*. Observe what is asserted of *Jesburun*.

1. *They waxed fat and thick*, big and unweildy, unfit for business, and unconcern'd about it; stupid and indolent, indulging themselves in the inordinate use of sensual gratifications, as if they had no other *God* to adore and serve, but their *Bellies*: Thus the *Prosperity of Fools destroy them*, *Prov. 1. 22.*

2. *They kick'd*; grew insolent and arrogant, lifting up the heel against *God* himself, when he check'd them, either by his *Prophets* or *Providences*, as an untam'd *Heifer* or *Bullock* unaccustom'd to the *Yoke*, *Jer. 31.* When a poor *Horse* that has hardly any thing but *Skin* and *Bones*, is put into a rank *Pasture*, by and by he begins to be fat and wanton, and capers about at an unaccountable rate, worse a great deal than *Horses* that have always been kept in pretty good *Case*, quite forgetting former *Poverty*, one cannot come near them to put the *Bridle* on them, but he's ready to get his *Heels* in his *Face*; he's in danger of his *Life* or *Limbs* that would come close to such *Creatures*; they leer and kick so strangely. Is not this a just Emblem of the *Carriage* of some *Men* in their *Prosperity*. *Prov. 19. 29* & *9. 12. Isai 29. 20. Prov 4. 9.* But such as kick at *Instruction* and *Reproof*, should remember that they kick against the *Pricks*, *Act 9. 5. Prov. 29. 1.* and that their fading grandure won't be able to protect them from the *arrests of Vengeance*.

But may be some will frame *Evasions* to palliate their *Guilt*, or utterly deny the *Charge*. Such I would answer in the words of *God* by *Jeremiah*, *Chap. 2. ver. 22, 23.* *For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine Iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God. See thy way in the valley, Know what thou hast done? Your Iniquities are seal'd up among God's treasures; as Indictments are put up in a Bag in a civil Court of Judicature, to be open'd at the Grand Affize; Deut. 32. 34. Job 21. 19.* And all your *Pleas* will never be able to justify your *Conduct*; no, for your *Sin* is written with a pen of *Iron*,

Iron, and with the point of a Diamond, both in the Book of God's Remembrance, and in the Book of your Conscience, with such indelible Characters as nothing but the Blood of Jesus can extinguish and deface. *Hearken unto me ye stout hearted, that are far from Righteousness, Isai. 46. 12.* Is not the Case so as I have described it? Have you not been long under the *Hammer*, and not yet broken? Long in the *Furnace*, and not yet melted and refined? Under the milder Aspects and more indulgent Smiles of Providence, have you not been elated with Pride; or emerg'd in carnal Security, and pernicious obstinacy against Advice and Counsel? And perhaps in the mean time paying your Devotion to your own Ingenuity and Industry, as the Authors of the Successes that attended your essays. *Hab. 1. 16.* *Therefore they sacrifice to their Net, and burn incense to their Drag.* And perhaps instead of relieving the Poor, grinding their Faces, gathering all you can into your Drag, and rejoicing in your unjust Gain. *Hab. 1. 13. Jer. 1. 15.* The Apostle gives a doleful description of the Wickedness of Unconverted and Presumptuous Sinners. *Rom. 3.* from the 10th to the 19th. ver. *There is none righteous, no not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. Their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace they have not known. There is no fear of God before their eyes.* But besides these Sins mentioned, let me tell thee, O presumptuous Sinner! that thy *natural* Actions are all of them sinful and abominable: I mean, thy eating, drinking, sleeping; because not done with a design to honour God, *1 Cor. 10. 31.* Also thy *civil* Actions, the labours of thy particular Calling; for the support of thy Self and Family. *Prov. 21. 4.* *A high Look, and a proud Heart, and the Plowing of the Wicked is Sin.* Their Labours are good and necessary as to the *Matter*, but sinful in the *Manner*, because not done with a view to God's honour; and also thy *religious* Services, as I have before designedly prov'd in this Discourse.

But let me mention in the last place, *Original Sin*, the hereditary Leprosy, Pollution, and Deformity of thy Nature, which is more awful (tho' least consider'd by thee,

because of thy blindness) than all the Evils before spoken of, because it's the corrupt Fountain from which they all issue and proceed. Now as the Spring is more than all the Streams that flow from it, so is this greater than all actual Transgressions. Rom. 7. 24. *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of Sin and Death!* What sayest thou to all this Charge! O Man, dost thou feel yet, and groan under thy Misery! Why the guilt of innumerable Sins lie like Mountains of Lead upon thy wretched Soul, a weight enough to sink all the Angels of Heaven into the depths of Hell, if imputed to them, and laid on them: And yet dost thou not tremble! Remember that *the Wages of Sin is Death*, Rom. 6. 23. The Guilt contracted by one vain Thought, is infinite, because the Sin is committed against an infinite God, and therefore cannot be remov'd but by an infinite Atonement. Shouldst thou Pray, were it possible, a Million of Years, Weep an Ocean of Tears, and wear thy self to a Skeleton by Fasting, and other mortifying Duties, it would not compensate the wrong offer'd to God by that vain Thought, for Justice requires an exact proportion between the Guilt contracted and Satisfaction paid; Ten Thousand Rivers of Oyl will not do, nor the first Fruits of thy Body for the Sin of thy Soul, Mich. 6. 7. If it be so, then what shall become of thee, who has committed so many Abominations! The Lives of all the Angels in Heaven, and all the Men on Earth, would not be sufficient to repair the injury thou hast offer'd to the Divine Majesty, for the reason before mentioned. O dost thou not feel thy misery yet! I suppose not, for cast a Mountain upon a dead Man, and he feels it not! O Gracious God! Smite in Mercy the guilty Consciences of these secure Sinners, let them be distrels'd, blessed Jesus, with a sense of their Guilt and Sin, until they find the sweetness of thy pardoning Love, and atoning Blood.

4. Presumptuous Sinners are under the *Wrath of God*, Eph. 2. 3. We are by Nature Children of Wrath. It is the breadful Portion and Inheritance you are born to, until you be new Born, John 3. 3, 6, 36. *He that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him.* O Friends, consider, it's not the Wrath of Men, which (tho' they are never so potent) is but trifling comparatively, but the Wrath of a God, whose Wisdom is unsearchable, whose Power is infinite, and whose Existence is unchangeable and eternal; it's not a transient, fading,

fading, fleeting Passion, but permanent and abiding Wrath; and that not at a Distance, but upon you. It's true, you feel but little of the Effects of it now, but you shall very quickly; *Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish*, Luke 13. 3, 5. You shall not see Life, you shall not have a Prospect of that Life Christ has purchased by his Death, unless it be to aggravate your Loss of it; all that Wrath you made your selves liable to by the Violation of the Law, if not removed by the Grace of the Gospel, is bound upon you: Old Debts lie undischarged, and new ones contracted; something done almost continually to fill up the Measure; and nothing to empty it; thus the Wrath of God abides; for it's treasured up against the Day of Wrath, *Rom. 2. 5*. The Psalmist informs us that *God is angry with the Wicked every Day*, Psalm 7. 11. And who are wicked, if presumptuous unconverted Sinners are not? As God's Mercies are fresh and new every morning to his People, so his Anger is renewed and impregnated every morning against the Wicked, because of their repeated Provocations; God hates and loaths them in their greatest Bloom of Honours and prosperous Successes, when they are *caress'd* by a mercenary, flattering and sycophantick Crew, that have a Dependance on them, and make Merchandise of them; and to that End pay their cringing Devotions, not so much to their Persons, as to their Bags or Bills; I say God loaths them even in the Time of their greatest Gaiety, Advancement and superficial Devotion, *Prov. 13. 5. Zech. 11. 8*. But to awake you out of your deep and dead Sleep, consider, O Sinners! that the Wrath of God which you are under and expos'd to, has these following Qualities, viz. It's incomprehensible, terrible, unavoidable, intolerable and eternal.

1. It's *incomprehensible*. It is utterly impossible for the Mind of Man to conceive it, or his Tongue to express it: *Who knows the Power of thine Anger? even according to thy Fear, so is thy Wrath*, Psalm 90. 11. It is impossible for the most winged, soaring Fancy in its utmost Flight and Projection, to reach the Extent of God's Anger, it is as incomprehensible, as its Cause efficient: God himself, *our God is a consuming Fire* to the Workers of Iniquity, *Heb. 12. 29*. Damned Sinners really feel in Hell, more than they feared on Earth; the strongest, brightest and boldest Images which are used in Scripture to convey to our Minds the damned's Torments, fall exceeding short of the Horrors of that infernal Furnace; even as all the Scriptural,

or any other Metaphors that can be formed to represent the Happiness of Heaven, do faint and languish before the Beauty and Brightness of that celestial Paradise, in this World; because it is a Time of Tryal and Probation; there be but small Effusions of God's Anger; hence Men entertain mean Thoughts of it, and the more indulge their vicious Courses, Eccl. 8. 11. *Because Sentence against an evil Work is not executed speedily, therefore the Heart of the Sons of Men is fully set in them to do evil.* This Abuse of God's Goodness and Patience, is surely the basest Ingratitude, the most prodigious Madness, for thereby they treasure up to themselves Wrath against the Day of Wrath, Rom. 2. 5. *Austin's* Observation upon this Head is very excellent; "If no Sin were punished here, saith he, no Providence would be believed, if all Sins were punished here, no future Judgment would be expected."

2. God's Wrath, which thou art exposed to, O presumptuous Sinner! is severe and terrible. Lam. 1. 12. *Isai. 13. 9. Behold the Day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with Wrath and fierce Anger.* Therefore they were bid to howl because the Day of God was at Hand, Verse 6. *With the froward God will shew himself froward,* Psal. 18. 26. As Sinners have a Day now which they mispend and abuse, thinking to carry all before them; so God has a Day in which he will avenge all those Injuries and Affronts; the great God laughs at your foolish Confidence; for he knows that his Day is coming, *Psalms 37. 3.* a Day in which his severe Justice will have a solemn Triumph. God's Wrath hath a consuming Fierceness, it makes an easy Prey of guilty and impenitent Sinners, as the burning Flame doth of dry Scrubbe. The Word *Jealousy* in our Text, imports God's fiercest Anger, his *revenging Severity; his Jealousy shall smoke against that Man.* He that duly considers that God being wrong'd by the Creatures Sin is bound by his Justice and Truth to vindicate his own Honour, and the Authority of his Laws, by inflicting the Punishments annex'd to the Violation of them; Punishments exactly proportioned to the Delinquents Crimes, both in Regard of their Multitude and Heinousness: For inflexible Justice and inviolable Truth, will not loose one Grain Weight of a full Compensation paid by the Sinner, personally, or a Surety in his Room and Stead; now presumptuous Sinners not having comply'd with Christ's Terms, those Conditions of Self-denial, and taking up his Cross, *Matth. 16. 24.* upon which redeeming Love and Grace is offered,

offered, can have no Interest in or saving Benefit by the great Sacrifice of Christ's Blood, while they continue in this State, therefore full Satisfaction will be required of them personally. I say, he that considers the Multitude and Aggravations of his own Sins of Neglect and Commission, original and actual, against Love and Light, Purposes and Promises, and the Exactness of divine Justice suiting the Penalty according to the Number and Quality of the Offences, must needs confess that God's Wrath is exceeding terrible. O Sinner! Sinner! for Christ's sake consider! that it is the Wrath of an *infinite, just, jealous and tremendous God*, who is clothed with irresistible Power and stern Majesty and Wrath, that shall fully avenge the Quarrel of *abuse* Mercies. Zech. 7. 11, 12, 13. *Yea, they made their Hearts as an Adamant Stone, lest they should hear the Law, and the Words which the Lord hath sent in his Spirit by the former Prophets, therefore came great Wrath from the Lord of Hosts. Therefore it came to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so I would not hear, saith the Lord of Hosts.* It is observable here, that as those unhappy People gave a deaf Ear to God's *Intreaties* by his Servants, so the Almighty suited their Punishment to their Sin: He gave a deaf Ear to their *Prayers*; they hardned their Hearts as an Adamant Stone, as a Diamond, which is said to be the hardest of Stones to be wrought upon; what is so inflexible as a presumptuous Sinner's Heart, for by going on in an impenitent Course, they add to a natural, which is common to all Unbelievers, Ezek. 36. 26 an acquired Hardness. *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin, or the Leopard his Spots, then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil?* Jer. 13. 23. And thereby provoke the righteous God to inflict a judicial and penal Hardness, which is a most tremendous Judgment, Isai. 6. 9, 10. *And he said, Go and tell this People, hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not; make the Heart of this People fat, and their Ears heavy, and shut their Eyes, lest they see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Hearts, and convert and be healed.* Hof. 4. 17. *Ephraim is joined to Idols.* This Man and that Woman obstinately cleaves to their Lusts, after frequent Warnings & Intreaties, let them alote to my Curse & Vengeance; let them go on in their Sin and Security, I will use no more means to reclaim them, Prov. 29. 1. *He that being often reprov'd, hardneth his Neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, & that without Remedy.* Rev. 22. 11. *He that is unjust, let him be unjust*

still, be that is filthy, let him be filthy still. For God's Spirit shall not always strive with Man, Gen. 6. 3. Wo unto thee Sinner, if thou be thus forsaken of God, it had been better for thee if thou hadst never been born! It may indeed seem easy at present to be left without Controul to the pernicious Swing of thy corrupt Desires, as it seems pleasant to the Ox to be Stall-fed, or to be put into a fat Pasture, little dreaming of the Knife that shall quickly terminate his Delights; But alas! unhappy Souls, it will be bitter and fatal in the Issue, when the jealous God will smite you dead eternally with the Ax of his flaming Wrath, *Matth. 3. 10.* Then you shall eat of the bitter Fruit of your own Ways, and be filled with your own Devices, *Prov. 1. 31.*

3. It is unavoidable Wrath, if ye continue in your presumptuous Impiety; you can't fly from it, but by flying to Jesus, the City of Refuge, the precious Zoar, by the Wings of a sincere Desire and strong Affection. Indeed there is a safe Shelter for poor storm-stead, moneyless Sinners, under the balmy Wing of our redeeming God Immanuel! *Isai 55. 1. Matth. 11. 28. Mal. 4. 2. But unto you that fear my Name, shall the Son of Righteousness arise with Healing under his Wings, and ye shall go forth, and grow up as Calves of the Stall.* In and through the blessed Lamb of God, the fatherless may find Mercy, and the weary rest. *Hos. 14. 3. 4. Matth. 12. 21.* In the Shadow of this almighty Jesus, penitent returning Prodigals may find a secure and refreshing Protection from all the burning drops of God's stormy Vengeance. *Isai. 32. 2. & 33. 16. Psalm 36. 7, 8, 9 & 91. 7.* But such as neglect this Salvation, how can they, how should they escape the Wrath of a jealous and justly enraged God? *Heb. 2. 3. Heb. 10. 28, 29.* If those that despised Moses Law died without Mercy, of how much sorer Punishment think ye shall he be thought worthy of, who hath trodden under Foot the Son of God? God will surely render Vengeance to such guilty Rebels: Hath he not sworn that they shall not enter into his Rest, *Psalm 95. 10, 11.* They shall no more escape the just Wrath of the Almighty, without the Condition before mentioned, than a travailing Woman her Pains. *1 Thess. 5. 3. For when they shall say, Peace, Peace and Safety, then sudden Destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a Woman with Child, and they shall not escape.* Which Way can they avoid Jehovah's Anger!

1. Not by Flight, for God is omnipresent: If they should take the Wings of the morning, and flee to the utmost Ends of the Earth or Sea. If we ascend to the beights of Heaven,

or descend into the depths of Hell, there his right arm would find us, Psalm 139. 7, 8. Nor

2. By Frauds. The most dark and obscure Recesses can't screen us from the Cognifance of that God who is all Eye, *Panopthalmos*, to whom Darkness is as the Light, and Midnight as the Noon-day; *All Things are naked and open to the Eyes of him with whom we have to do*, Heb. 4. 13. O presumptuous Sinner! the Thoughts of this might justly strike thee with the utmost Horror, Shame and Confusion! when thou art a going about thy Closet curtain Wickedness, that the *holy God* is looking on thee during the whole Scene of thy brutish Uncleannels, with the utmost Hatred and Abhorrence, *Hab. 1.* that thy own Conscience keeps the black Records of thy Villanies which shall be opened before the *holy Trinity*, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, before the vast Assembly of holy Angels and Saints, wicked Men and Devils, to thy Confusion and Damnation. *Then shall the secret Things of Darkness be brought to light*, Rom. 2. 16. 2 *Pet. 2. 10.* Neither will Lies and Deceit secure thee, because God is infinite in Knowledge: *Who can by searching find out God, or know the Almighty to Perfection?* Job 11. 7. Nor

3. By Power; for he is omnipotent, infinite in Strength. *Hast thou an Arm like God, or canst thou thunder with a Voice like him*, Job 40. 9. *Isai. 42. 13.* *The Lord shall go forth as a mighty Man, he shall stir up Jealousy like a Man of War, he shall cry, yea roar, he shall prevail against his Enemies, he is wise in Heart, and mighty in Strength: Who has hardened himself against him, and prospered? Which removeth the Mountains, and they know it not, which overturneth them in his Anger, which shaketh the Earth out of her Place, and the Pillars thereof tremble, which commandeth the Sun and it riseth not, and sealeth up the Stars: Which alone spreadeth out the Heavens, and treadeth on the Waves of the Sea*, Job 9. 4, --- 8. The most potent and crafty Men that ever the Earth bore are infinitely unequal to contend with God, either by *Dispute* or *Combat*: The Lord Jehovah acts both in the Kingdoms of *Nature* and *Providence* with absolute *Sovereignty*, according to the Counsel of his good Pleasure, *Eph. 1. 11.* When it pleased the all powerful God, the Heavens and the Earth must start out of their native nothing, and appear in their present Frame and Order; an incontestible Proof of the Infinity of his *Wisdom*, and *Almightiness* of his *Power*; indeed these divine *Perfections* are written in very legible *Characters* upon every *Leaf* of

of the great *Volume of Creation*, the Heavens, and Earth, and Sea, and all the different Ranks of Beings they contain, during the divine good Pleasure; the inanimate Parts of the Creation, observe and keep their stated Order; the Earth rests on its Axis, the Sun and Moon run their wonted Circles; but by the least beck of his Will, Nature's Laws are broken and reversed; the massy ponderous Globe of Earth totters at its deep Foundations, and the everlasting Mountains are scattered, Hab. 3. 6. The Sun is vail'd with Sable, and forgets to shed his beamy Light and Warmth, or stands still in the midst of Heaven, and all the Creation groan and mourn, and appear in a funeral Array, as in the Time of our Lord's Crucifixion; and in Joshua's Time, did not the Sun still? Josh. 10. 12, 13. *Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou Moon, in the Valley of Ajalon.* O Sinner! How can'st thou stand it out with this God, who has all the Powers in Heaven and Earth at his Beck?

4. The *Wrath of God is intolerable*, such as can't be endured without the most exquisite Anguish, such as would soon indeed consume the sinner, and reduce him to nothing, were it not that the righteous God supports and continues their Being to lengthen out their Pains, that his Justice may receive Satisfaction: Were it not that God upholds them with one Hand, while he scourges them with the other, they would soon cease to be; the Wrath of God when it touches the Conscience but lightly in this World, makes Men rage like Madmen, and roar like Bulls in a Net, *Isai. 51. 20.* Was it not so with both the *Spirits*, and *John Child*? What will it be when all their false Hopes and carnal Comforts are entirely removed, and they shut up in endless *Despair* and *Horror*. If we can't bear a wounded Spirit, *Prov. 18. 14.* How shall we bear to be broken in the Place of Dragons? *Psalms 44. 19.* If you can't bear the light touches of God's Finger, in a short Fit of Sickness, how will you endure the Weight of his unbear'd Arm, the fierce Lashes of his iron Rod? If the gentle Whip daunts and appalls you, won't being scourged with Scorpions confound you! *Can your Heart endure, or your Hands be strong in the Day that God shall deal with you?* *Ezek. 22. 14.* *Who among us shall dwell with the devouring Fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting Burnings,* *Isai. 33. 14.* The Prophet *Nabum* gives a very elegant Description of the Fierceness and Intolerableness of God's Anger towards the Wicked, in the first

Chapter of his Book, from the second to the seventh Verse; pray read those Verses: In them we have a very beautiful and magnificent Display of God's glorious, though terrible Majesty, his inflexible Justice, irresistible Power, and awful Severity to the damned World.

5. God's Wrath is eternal to such presumptuous Sinners as sin away the Seasons of Grace. It lasts as long as God endures, *Matth. 25. 41, 46. Rev. 14. 11. And the smoke of their Torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no Rest, Day nor Night.* When millions of Years are elapsed, their Torments are but a beginning! O if there were any Hopes of being freed from those inexpressible Pains, when as many thousands of Years are spent as there be Grains of Sand by the Sea-shore, or Drops of Water in the great Ocean, it would give a sensible Allay to their Torments; this would be a dreadful Portion, the very Thoughts of it is sufficient to make ones Heart tremble in their Body, and their Blood chill in their Veins! but even this! even this! cannot be obtained from an inexorable provoked God; no these damned Wretches, shall never, never, never come out of their burning Brimstone Vaults.

And

6. In all this boundless Space of infinite Duration, not one Moment's Ease or Intermission! O awful! O terrible! Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! our Thoughts are lost in Obscurity & Darkness, when we think of thee. What finite Understanding can grasp thee? Secure presumptuous Sinners, what say you to this? Can you stand the Shocks of the Almighty's Fury? Can you endure the burning Vials of God's Wrath to be poured forth into the Vessels of your Souls throughout a never ending Eternity? Why don't you, poor Souls, tremble and quake, and cry mightily to God for pardoning and converting Grace? For as sure as your Souls are in your Bodies, so sure shall you burn and fry as Brands and Faggots in those everlasting Flames of God's Wrath and Jealousy, unless you quit your false Hopes, and get a Change of Heart and Life!

O Man! if thou art but under a small fit of bodily Sickness, how slowly do the Minutes roll, one Night seems to be as long as a Week, and a Week as long as a Month; Time seems to fleet with such a heavy Wing, even tho' thou hast thy Friends weeping over thee, or sympathizing with thee, a Physician to attend thee to project and pursue thy Cure, and some refreshment in Meats and Drinks, and among other Comforts, this is none of the least.

least, that thou hast hope of freedom from thy present Malady, that thy Pain will expire, and you enjoy succeeding Health and Ease: This! This! supports thy Spirits, and abates the sharpness of thy Pain. But, O Friend! how much more tedious will the Day of Eternity be, when instead of pity, which is a cheap and universal Lenitive to Persons in Misery. *Solamen est miseris—* God, Angels, and Saints will laugh at thee, and rejoyce in thy Damnation. *Prov. 1.* That God, who now offers you Pardon and Pity with the most condescending importunity; that Jesus who now courts you by the most endearing Methods to embrace his Love, and thereby obtain your own Life and Happiness, will then laugh at the deserved ruin thou hast brought upon thy self, by thy obstinate refusal of his Mercy, and a course of Impiety. *Isai. 30. 18. Rev. 3. 10. Prov. 1. 26.* And Saints and Angels will see such justice and impartiality in God's proceedings against you, that they can't but approve and seal his damnatory Sentence against you, and rejoyce that his Justice has so bright a display in your Destruction. *1 Cor. 6. 2.* For do ye not know that the Saints shall judge the World. You shall have no Friend in Heaven or in Earth, and as few in Hell; instead of those Comforts and Refreshments I mention'd, to have the ministrations of malicious Devils using all their power and craft to increase your Pain; and instead of Hope, to be rack'd with black Despair; knowing certainly that your Pains will never have a Period. *Good God!* is not this solemn and terrible! O! how can unhappy Souls who are yet in a presumptuous unconverted state pretend to believe this, and yet live in Security? You would do a great deal to prevent being burnt alive in this World; I'm perswaded you would serve (as a bond slave) a severe Master, your whole Life, to escape this Death! O! won't you do that which is much less to escape the fiery Oven of God's Vengeance, which will burn to Eternity? whereas the other flame will soon expire, viz. Will you not serve Jehovah from your Hearts? who is indeed a beneficent Master, and most indulgent Father, whose Service is real Liberty, *Job. 8. 36.* But besides what has been offer'd concerning the awful qualities of God's Wrath, in order to awaken, if it be possible, secure Sinners, let me propose the five following Particulars, which serve to heighten our Conceptions of the terrors of it. And,

God's

1. God's Wrath is terrible because of his *Highness* and *tremendous Majesty*. Job 13. 11. *Shall not his excellency make you afraid, and his dread fall upon you?* And Job 31. 23. *Destruction from God was a terror to me, and by reason of his highness I could not endure.* Is not Men's anger fear'd according to their Degree and Character? Thus we are inform'd by Solomon, Prov. 16. 14. *That the wrath of a King is as Messengers of Death.* The eminent Dignity of his distinguish'd Station strikes People with a greater dread of his displeasure, than of the anger of such who are of an inferiour Order, and less distinguish'd Figure. Now if the Wrath of a temporal King be as a messenger of Death, how much more terrible is the Wrath of him who is *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the high and lofty One that inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is holy.* Iſai. 57. 15. *For as much as there is none like unto thee, O Lord, thou art great and thy Name is great in Might, who would not fear thee, O King of Nations,* Jer. 10. 6, 7. Men's Wrath is trivial and of short Duration, it must needs expire with their fleeting Breath, though they may possibly with an immortal Revenge, yet their transitory fading Life will not admit such a malicious Prosecution; but the Wrath of God is permanent and eternal. Jer. 10. 10. *But the Lord he is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King, at his Wrath the Earth shall tremble, and the Nations shall not be able to abide his Indignation.* So terrible will be the Majesty of God to Man, at the general Judgment, that all Nature will faint before him, Rev. 20. 11. *And I saw a great white Throne, and him that sat on it, from whose Face the Earth and Heaven fled away.*

And,

2. Because of his *Holiness* and *spotless Purity*, Exod. 15. 11. He cannot look on Sin with any Complacency and Delight, but with the utmost Abhorrence and intense Hatred. Hab. 1. 13. *How will then the presumptuous and ungodly Sinner stand before this Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts?* Iſai. 6. 3, 1 Sam. 6. 20. Psal. 1. 5. *Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the Judgment, nor Sinners in the Congregation of the Righteous.* Surely the Wind of his Indignation shall hurl them into the burning fiery Lake. Psal. 1. 4. Matt. 25. 46. Rev. 20. 14.

3. Because of the *depth* of his *Wisdom*, whereby he perfectly knows the *Nature, Number, and Aggravations* of your Sins, and how to proportion Punishments according to their Guilt and Heinousness. Psal. 44. 20, 21. Can't

his

his infinite Understanding project, as easily as his Power compass, such Methods and Measures, such Tortures as will keep you in an inexpressibly exquisite and eternal Rack?

4. Because of the *insanity* of his Power and Sovereignty. Job 9. 4. *He is wise in heart, and mighty in Strength.* The most high God is the absolute Sovereign of the Universe, He has the whole Creation under his controul, He manages the Globe with utmost ease & pleasure, & brings about all those Revolutions in the Kingdoms of Nature, Grace & Providence, which yield both surprize & delight to the inquiring Mind. A very ample confirmation thereof, the Psalmist gives in the 19th. Psalm; in it we have a very beautiful and poetical description of God's Power, ver. 4. *The Voice of the Lord is powerful, the Voice of the Lord is full of majesty, it breaks the Cedars, and makes Lebanon and Sirion skip like a young Unicorn; divides the flames of fire, and shakes the wilderness of Kadish.* Thunderbolts and Earthquakes cause very terrible Convulsions in the frame of Nature, rases Trees; levels their proud and lofty Tops, and tosses the Earth of it's Axis, makes it reel and stagger like a drunken Man, so that Men's fix'd Estates enter into the List of their Moveables. Men often want power to make others feel their angry Resentments, otherwise their anger would be much more formidable than it is; but God's Power is of equal extent with his Wisdom, infinite, and incomprehensible, *Psal. 62. 11. He can speedily issue all the Counsels of his Mind, maugre the fiercest opposition of Men and Devils. Isai 46. 10. My Counsel shall stand, and I will do all my Pleasure.* And

5. The Sufferings that the Lord Jesus bore, shew the intolerableness and severity of God's Anger: Did it not extort a *crimson Shower* from all the pores of his *blest Body!* in the Garden of *Gethsemane?* Luk. 22. 44. and a *grievous outcry* on the *Cross!* enough to rend the Earth and Heavens! *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani: My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Matth. 27. 46. Now if God did not spare his own Son, when he only stood in a Sinner's room or stead, being personally spotless and innocent, *Heb. 7. 26.* How much less will he spare you who continue in Sin and slight his love? If God's anger extorted *Tears* and *Blood* from *Christs Body*, and heavy *Groans* from his *oppressed Heart*; *My Soul*, said he, *is sorrowful, even to Death.* Mat. 26. 38. tho' he was guiltless and supported by his *Divine Nature*; how will it prey upon you, who shall be fill'd with *Guilt* and cover'd with

with *Shame* ! Persons of such a feeble frame and texture, and utterly destitute of all Succour ! O ! think solemnly of this before it is too late ! before the Sun of Mercy sets, and an everlasting Evening spreads its sable Wings over you, and hide you in utter Darkness, and eternal Death, where you shall never enjoy the least glimpse, or dawn of Light and Day. *Rev. 14. 10. 2 Per. 2. 17.* But

5. Presumptuous Sinners are in a state of Death ; tho' they be naturally alive, and perhaps very chearful and jovial, *Amos 6. 3, 4, 5.* yet they are dead Men and Women ; not only dead, *legally*, *Joh. 3. 18.* doom'd by the Law to eternal Death, or an everlasting Separation of their Souls and Bodies from the gracious presence of God, *Psal. 9. 17. Job. 3. 36.* but *spiritually* dead, void of a principle of divine Life, *Eph. 4. 18. being alienated from the Life of God.* *Eph. 4. 2, 8 Col. 1. 21.* Say what you will against this great and awful Truth, you have the Signs and Characters of *Death* upon you ; which having a tendency by the blessing of God to convince you of, and humble you for your present Misery, I shall endeavour to insist upon them a little particularly. And

1. A dead Man is without *Sense* or feeling. So are you without the necessary sense, and apprehension of your danger : So our Text affirms ; *They expect Peace, tho' they walk after the imaginations of their Hearts.* Would you not conclude one to be Dead naturally, if a Person beat upon him with a Hammer, or stab'd him with a Sword, and yet he felt it not ! This alas ! Dear Friend is thy very Case : How often has the threats of God's Law, which as Fire and a Hammer breaks the rocky Hearts of God's Elect in pieces, *Jer. 23. 29.* been denounc'd in thy hearing, without any saving effect ? thy Heart remaining whole within thy iron Breast ! How often has the two-edged Sword of God's Word been pointed at thy Bosom, and yet thou remainest unconcern'd, almost as a Stone : If there was the least spark of Life in thee, wouldst thou endure such a weight of Guilt, as is enough, if it were imputed to them, to sink Thousands into Hell, and yet go so lightly under it, as if nothing ail'd thee ! As if thou did not bear one single grain weight ; no, no, Sinner ; as sure, as God lives, thou art Dead : If thine Eyes which are shut with blindness and seal'd with Death, were but open'd, thou wouldst soon feel the *Sword* of God in thy Heart, and cry out with the most dolorous and heavy *Groans.* *What shall I do to be sav'd ? Act. 2. 37.* O poor lost Sinner that I am,

am, where shall I fly for rest and refuge? Merciful and Gracious God, pity, pity, and pardon me.

2. Without *Breath*. Where there is any natural Life, there is *Breath*, *Psal.* 104. 29. *Ezek.* 37. 5. So where there is any spiritual Life, there is longing and breathing after God. *Lam.* 2. 56. *Hide not thine Ear at my breathing, at my cry, after Righteousness*, *Matth.* 5. 6. after *Christ*, *Cant.* 5. 6. *My Soul fail'd when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him.* Also the 4th & 5th verses. *My beloved put in his Hand by the hole of the Door, and my bowels were moved for him; I rose up to open to my Beloved, and my Hands drop'd with myrrh, and my Fingers with sweet smelling myrrh upon the handles of the Locks.* But thou art without transcendant and effectual desires after *Christ* and *Heaven*, *Job* 21. 12, 13, 14. *Rev.* 3. 16. Thou canst not speak (and have truth on thy side) in the Language of devout *Asaph*, *Psal.* 73. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none on Earth that I desire besides thee.* No, thy religious desires, if thou hast any, are but lazy, inconstant, ineffectual; *Balaam*-like wishes, *Numb.* 23. 10. *Let me dye the Death of the Righteous, and let my last End be like his.* Yes, yet, he wanted to dye their Death, because he knew it was a transition to endless Joys, and never fading Pleasures; but not to live their Life, because of the Difficulties that attend it, thro' the Corruption of Nature. Are not presumptuous Sinners the very brood of *Balaam*, his faithful Followers in this absurd and fruitless practise?

3. Without *Strength*. Can a dead Man move or act? So unregenerate Sinners are in a helpless forlorn State, *Rom.* 5. 6. as unable to remedy their Misery, as they are insensible of it, *2 Cor.* 3. 5. Thou canst no more change thy self, than a dead Man can raise himself out of his Grave; you are like the dry Bones the Prophet speaks of, *Ezek.* 37. 4. in respect of *Ghostliness*, *Insensibility*, *Impotency*: Could these Bones put Sinews and Flesh upon themselves? No, it was God only, that by his Word and Spirit could put a Shaking among them, and Breath into them. So it is God alone that can convince thee soundly of thy Misery, and breathe divine Life into thy Soul. Miserable Man! thou liest polluted in thy Blood and Gore, in a helpless and loathsome State, and there you must lie and perish eternally. No Man, no nor Angel can help thee, unless the God that made thee, whose Law thou hast broken, and whose Love thou hast so disingenuously abus'd, pities thee, and says to thee in thy Blood, Live,

Ezek.

Ezek. 16. 6. O Sinner! Sinner! Sinner! What a woful State is this? to be miserable and yet insensible of it! to be miserable and unable to remedy it! or so much as aright to desire an *Escape*. Let all the Patrons of Free-Will, those Painters of degenerate Nature, talk to Eternity, they will never be able to invalidate this solemn Truth.

4. A dead Man is without *Motion*. Life is the Spring of Motion; Life and Motion are inseperable, both in Grace and Nature; *in him we live and move*, Acts 17. 28. *Col. 2. 1.* Indeed graceless Persons may move about the outward Duties of Religion, but not spiritually from right *Principles*, and for right *Ends*, viz. Supreme Love to Christ and the Glory of God. Deceive not thy self, O Man! with Sparks of thy own kindling in this Matter, lest thou lie down in eternal Sorrow, *Isai. 50. 11.* I mean, with mercenary, selfish, slavish, languid Motions of the Soul towards Christ; Motions chiefly occasioned through the Desire of Happiness, or Fear of Misery.

5. A dead Man is destitute of *Sight*; he sees not, his Eyes strings are broke, his Eye-lids closed. Thus it is with thee, O presumptuous Sinner! *Rev. 3. 17.* *1 Cor. 2. 14.* *Thou hast Eyes but seeest not*, *Isai. 43. 8.* Bring the most beautiful and orient Colours to a dead Man, and will he be affected with them? No, no; how should he? he sees them not. So it is with you, when God's Servants endeavour to paint before you the fair Flowers of the celestial Paradise, the blooming Beauties of the heavenly Eden, with a scriptural Pencil, why are you no more affected with them than in hearing a Romance, perhaps not so much? And has not the Description of Hell's Horrors as little Influence on your *Fear*, as the other on your *Love*? Is it possible, O Sinner! that you should sit so unconcerned in hearing such Truths that are of eternal *Weight* and infinite *Moment*, if you had a just Apprehension of their Nature and Consequences? No surely. I may say to thee as the blessed Jesus to the Woman of *Samarita*, *John 4. 10.* *If thou knewest the Gift of God (which is Christ) thou wouldst have asked, and he would have given thee living Water.*

6. *Hearing*. Cry as loud as you will in the Ears of the Dead, and can they hear? No, that almighty Voice (and no other) which raised a dead *Lazarus* can awake them; and thus it is with presumptuous unconverted Sinners, *Isai. 6. 9, 10.* They are like the deaf Adder that won't

listen to the Charmer's Voice, charming never so wisely, *Psalms* 58. 5. But when the Day of God's Power comes, *then the Dead hear the Voice of the Son of God, and those that hear shall live.* *Psalms* 110. 3. *John* 5. 25. & 10. 27, 28. If it were not for the Hopes of this almighty Power going with the Word, the Ambassadors of Christ could have no more Hopes of perswading Sinners to embrace the Son of God, than of perswading those that are naturally dead to arise and quit the Graves in which they lie entombed.

7. A dead Man has no *Taste*. So poor presumptuous Sinners, you have no abiding Relish for the heavenly *Manna*; you taste not the Sweetness of Christ and divine Things, for you are soon weary of, or but indifferent about the Use of those Means whereby they are obtained; such as hearing of the Word, Prayer, Meditation, pious Conferences. Or you rest securely in the Husk, or outside of these Duties, *Rom.* 2. 17, --- 20. Ay, but living gracious Persons taste the Sweetness of them, and of the precious Promises, *1 Pet.* 2. 3, 7. *2 Cor.* 7. 1. *2 Pet.* 1. 4. They are ravish'd with the dear Love of the Lord Jesus, his very Name yields balsamick Sweetness to their Hearts, *Cant.* 2. 3. & 1. 3.

8. A dead Man is void of *Beauty*. O what a sudden and strange Alteration does Death make on the most comely and beautiful, their ruby Cheeks and Lips soon turn pale and livid; and that Face that charm'd the Beholders, now strikes them with a ghastly Horror. It is pertinently observed by Mr. *Flavel* on this Subject, "That although *Abraham* had a very tender Respect to his Wife *Sarah* when alive, yet when dead, he wanted her to be buried out of his Sight," *Gen.* 23. 4. She then wanted her wonted Charms, whatever, natural, civil or religious Accomplishments: Unbelievers have (as it is confess'd some of them make a fairer Shew in the Flesh, than some others that are far better than they in other Respects; they are mild, affable, candid, courteous, just and regular in their external Conduct, and observant of the outward Duties of Religion) yet for the Want of good internal Principles they are loathsome, both to God and good Men, *Deut.* 32. 19. *Zech.* 11. 8. *Psalms* 15. 4. "These Ornaments, as accurate Mr. *Flavel* observes, are but just like Roses to adorn a dead Corps." As to your outward Performances and Attainments which you rest in and are proud of, pray remember those two Places of Scripture, and may the Al-

mighty

mighty grant that they may be as a Sword in your Bowels, making you continually uneasy, until your Sins be pardoned, and your Hearts changed, they are these following, Gal. 6. 15. Matth. 5. 20. Read and consider them, and pray over them.

9. *Void of Fear.* Hang a dead Man over the most terrible *Precipice* and flaming *Furnace*, he fears not, let the Danger be never so great and imminent; whereas one that had any Life, or Sense, would shiver to see these Things at a Distance. Now are not many presumptuous Sinners as void of Fear, though they are exposed to vastly greater Dangers: It may be justly said of many of them, as *Job* speaks of a fierce Horse in the Time of Battle, Job 39. 22, 23 *He mocketh at Fear, and is not affrighted, neither turneth he his Back from the Sword, the Quiver rattleth against him, the glittering Spear and the Shield, he swallows up the Ground with Fierceness and Rage, neither believeth he that it is the sound of the Trumpet.* Some obstinate Sinners are carried with such vehement Passion in Pursuit of their beloved Lusts, and are so hardned by them, that tho' God's Servants, and their own Consciences represent the Wormwood and the Gall, the Pain and Anguish, the Possession of every abhorred Evil, and the Loss of all desirable Good, their Sins will cost and produce, let them hang up the dreadful *Sword* of God, and blow the terrible *Trumpet* of his Judgments, describing the fatal Issue that will certainly succeed such Practices continued in; yet these Sinners will not believe or desist the Pursuit of their impious and impenitent Courses, but rather mock at Fear, and slight the rattling of the Quiver, Spear and Shield; and thereby act more foolishly than *Balaam's* Ass. What remains for such affronted Rebels, but to leave them to feel what they will not fear, *Prov* 29. 1.

10. *Speechless.* So presumptuous Sinners cannot speak the Language of Canaan, unless it be by rote; they are indeed generally very awkward in this Matter; It is true, they may learn to speak something at the second Hand, by reading practical Books, and hearing others talk about Religion; but these Lessons not being learned by the Holy Spirit, they are apt to forget them, and so to be at a Loss; or if they don't, their Speeches are but cold like themselves, when they would pronounce *Shibboleth*, they are apt to mince it and say *Sibboleth*. And it is admirably strange to see how they will discover themselves sometimes, or the Badness of their State to a judicious Christian

by that very Discourse by which they would appear to be religious, or obtain their favourable Opinion of their Piety. *Prov. 20. 5.* If we may not have a satisfactory, tho' fallible, Knowledge of the present State of those we converse withal, how shall we exercise a special Regard to such that are true Christians, as we are enjoined? Is not the Spiritual Man said to judge all Things, *1 Cor. 2. 15.*

11. Dead Men neither *hunger* nor *thirst*; neither do presumptuous Sinners hunger after Christ and Holiness; but on the contrary, hate them whatever they pretend: How can they love Christ who slight and abuse his poor Members. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* *Acts 9. 4.* How is it possible that those should truly love Holiness, who undervalue and scoff at such in whom it shines, and seek to quarrel with them; the more holy and zealous a Man is, the less they like him; is this like hungering after Righteousness? Moderate Men, that is lukewarm People, they like very well, because they are of the same Mould with themselves, but it is the Property of living and gracious Persons to hunger after Righteousness, *Math. 5. 6.* and after the Lord Jesus, *Psalms 42. 1, 2. & 63. 1, 2, 8. & 84. 2.*

12. Dead Men are *gnaw'd* by *Worms*: So wicked Men are stung and grip'd by their guilty Consciences a little here, but what are these gentle murmurings (which yet they don't like to hear, and therefore use all the Arts of Diversion to extinguish) to its loud roarings, stinging gripes, and fierce scourges, whereby it will lash and torture the Soul in the World of Spirits, where all the opium of Stupidity, Atheism, and all sensitive Delights, which give some allay and diversion to its Censures here, will be forever remov'd. And now presumptuous and secure Sinners; let me address you in the Language of *Paul* to the Ephesians, *Chap. 5. 14. Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the Dead, that Christ may give thee light.* O will you sleep the sleep of eternal Death! Will you continue in Sin and Security, till you awake in Flames! *Horrible! Fierce! Devouring! Consuming! Suffocating! and Everlasting Flames!* Endless! Eafeless! remediless Torments! O Holy and blessed Jesus! Seize these stupid, breathless Souls by thine Almighty Power; Open their Eyes that are shut with blindness, and seal'd with Ignorance; Open their Hearts that are lock'd with unbelief and prejudice: Speak to them, *Gracious God*, by thy Word and Spirit, as thou once did to a dead *Lazarus*, that they may hear and live; Merciful Father, thy poor Messengers cannot persuade

swade the Dead to live, they will be deaf to all our entreaties, and still abide in Death, notwithstanding our utmost Importunities, unless thou concur; but *Gracious God*, tho' they are too hard for us, they are not for thee; thy glorious Power and rich Grace can make a speedy and saving alteration on them; Turn them! turn them! *Almighty and most dear Father!* and give them divine Life.

6. Under the *Curse*. O! Presumptuous Sinner! thou art under the *Curse* of that Law which thou hast broken. Gal. 3. 10. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the Book of the Law to do them.* You are under the *Curse* of that Gospel you have slighted. Joh. 3. 18. *He that believeth not is condemned already.* Mar. 16. 16. *He that believeth not shall be damned.* God the Father, and the Lord Jesus in whom you pretend to trust, *Curse* you: Our Text asserts, that all the *Curses* that are written in the *Book* of God, shall lie upon you, and that you are *curst*, according to all the *Curses* of the *Covenant*: And 1 Cor. 16. 22. *If any Man love not the Lord Jesus Christ let him be Anathema Maranatha; accursed till that Jesus whom they slight, comes in his own and his Father's Glory, to publish their contempt of his Ways, Truths, Servants.* In the 23^d. Chapter of *Matthew* you may read what *Curses* Christ himself pronounced upon presumptuous Sinners.

But in order to awaken secure Souls, give me leave to be more particular under this Head.

1. O Presumptuous Sinner! thou art under a *Universal Curse* in *Body* and *Soul*, in the *Gifts* of *Nature* and *Providence*, in thy *Priviledges* and *Performances*: And first, thy *Body* in all its *Parts* is *Curst*, Deut. 28. 15, 16, 17, 18. *Curst* are thy *Eyes*, which are *Windows* to let in *Temptations* to *Sin*: *Curst* is thy *Heart* which burns with base and filthy *Lusts*; *Curst* are thy *Hands* which are polluted with *Wickedness*, perhaps with *Bribery* and *Cruelty*; *Curst* are thy *Feet* which are swift to carry thee forwards in wicked *Courses*; *Curst* is thy *Tongue*, which hath us'd deceit, both with *God* and *Man*, the *Poison* of *Asps* is under thy *Lips*. Read *Rom.* 3. from ver. 11, to 20.

2. Thy *Soul* is *Curst* in all its *Powers* and *Passions*. *Isai.* 3. 9. *The shew of their Countenance doth witness against them, and they declare their Sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Wo to their Souls, for they have rewarded Evil unto themselves.* More particularly,

Thy Understanding is Cursed, *Isai. 5. 20, 21.* Art thou Ignorant in a Land of Light, in the midst of Opportunities of obtaining Knowledge; this heightens thy Guilt, *Isai. 27. 11* This is a People of no understanding; therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour. And *2 Thes. 1. 7, 8, 9* When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. *Joh. 3. 19, 20* And this is the Condemnation that Light is come into the World, and Men loved Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds were Evil; for every one that doth Evil hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, lest his Deeds should be reprov'd

Hast thou Knowledge? why thy Knowledge abus'd will increase thy Damnation, *Luk. 12. 47* And that Servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepar'd not himself, neither did according to his Will, shall be beaten with many stripes. *Jam. 4. 17.* Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is Sin. Sin exceedingly aggravated Thy Knowledge thus abus'd, makes thee but more like the Devil, thy Master; who is an intelligent, but wicked Spirit: thy Subtilty is under the crafty Serpent's Curse, whose Seed thou art; upon thy Belly thou goest, and eatest of the Dust, and feedest on Ashes; for a deceitful Heart hath turned thee aside, and thou knowest not that there is a Lye in thy right Hand, *Isai. 44. 20* Thou thinkest thou art rich and increased in Goods; and knowest not that thou art poor, and blind, and miserable and naked, *Rev. 3. 17.* Thou art wise to do Evil, but to do Good thou hast no knowledge, *Jer. 4. 22.* Thy Will is under the Curse of Obstinacy, *Joh. 5. 40.* Thou hast been as the deaf Adder under all the Thunders of the Law, & Charms of the Gospel; thou hast been as little affected (to any purpose) when the beautiful Landskip of Heaven, and the flaming Tophet has been opened to thee, as a blind Mole would be, if a curious Picture was held before it: but hast contented thy self with Balaam's wishes, or Judas's sorrows, without any saving closure with Jesus Christ, *Joh. 1. 11.*

Thy Conscience is Cursed with blindness and pollution. *Tit. 1. 15.* But unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure, but even their Mind and Conscience is defiled. It is not yet purged from dead Works to serve the living God, *Heb.*

Heb. 9. 14. Is not thy *Love accursed*, which has been more set upon the momentary Enjoyments of Sin & Sense, than upon the blessed Jesus? 1 Cor. 16. 12. *Cursed is thy Desire*, which has been more for Earth than Heaven. Psal. 4. 6. *There be many that say, who shall shew us any good.* *Cursed is thy Delight*; which has been taken up with the practise of wickedness, while the Duties of Piety have been wearisom to thee, Eph. 4. 15. Mal. 1. 13. *Cursed is thy Hatred*; which instead of being fix'd upon Sin and Impiety, has been terminate upon God and his People, and the practice of Holiness, Rom. 8. 7. Prov. 29. 27. *An unjust man is an abomination to the just, and he that is upright in the way is an abomination to the wicked.* Isai. 59. 15. *Tea truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey.* *Cursed is thy Sorrow*: which is either that Worldly grief about temporal Losses and Difficulties, which works Death, 2 Cor. 7. 10. Or if spiritual, as to its object, namely, upon the account of Sin, its ineffectual to reform thee from it in Heart and Life; it's like the sorrow of Cain, Judas, Esau, Ahab. *Cursed is thy Shame*: which wanders from its right object; thou art asham'd to own the despis'd Truths and Ways of Christ and Piety in religious Places, or before irreligious Persons, that are great in Wealth and Power; but thou art not asham'd perhaps in the mean time, to declare thy Sin as Sodom: Thus thou gloriest in thy Shame, and art asham'd of thy Glory, Phil. 3. 19. *Cursed is thy Fear*; which is more concern'd about the displeasure of Man, whose breath is in his Nostrils, whose foundation is in the Dust, who are crush'd before the Moth, Isai. 2. 22. Job 4. 19. than the displeasure of a great and dreadful God, whose Power is equal to his Anger, Dan 9. 4. Psal. 62. 11. More occupied about those things which are seen and temporal, than about those things which are unseen and eternal, namely the Bread that perisheth, than that which endures for ever, John 6. The loss of worldly Possessions in this, more than the loss of an everlasting Crown in the next Life; contrary to the directions of the Lord Jesus, Mat. 10. 28. Mat. 6. 24, 25, 26, 32.

3. The Gifts of Nature, are *accursed* to thee; as Beauty, Health, Strength, Wit, Knowledge; because abus'd to Sin.

And 1. What avails the external *Beauty* of the Body, without the internal splendor of Holiness upon the Soul, is it not very vain and momentary. Psal. 39. 11. *Despis'd by God,* 1 Sam. 16. 7. Do not even some Beasts, as well

as the most wicked Men, excel in it ; does it not allure thee to Unchastity, or Pride, *Prov.* 13. 30. and is it not therefore accursed to thee. Many People that dote upon their Beauty, either real or imaginary, are like a loathsome Carrion in the account of an Holy God. 2. Does not your *Health* beget carnal Security, suppress pious Meditation, obstruct your Repentance and Conversion, by exciting you to put the evil Day far off, *Amos* 6. 3, 4, 5. And therefore is not your *Health* accursed to you? What avails Health of Body, while the Soul is Sick unto Death, *Eph.* 4. 18. This is your woful Case.

3. Your Strength is what God regards not. *Job* 36. 19. *Psal.* 147. 10. It's common to Beasts, and unable to sustain you in distress, *Psal.* 33. 16. It gives occasion to vain Glory, and is spent by you in the Service of Sin. *Eph.* 4. 19. 1 *Job.* 2. 16. and is therefore accursed to you.

Your Gifts of Mind, whether natural or acquired, pregnant natural Wit, or Learning, stir up your Pride and Self confidence, and thereby obstruct your embracing *Jesus*, and the *Truth* as it is in him, 1 *Cor.* 8. 1. 1 *Cor.* 1. 22, 23, 26. 2 *Cor.* 10. 5. and therefore are accursed to you.

4. The Gifts of Providence : Riches, Honours, Pleasures, Authority, are accursed to you. *Mal.* 2. 2. *If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give Glory unto my Name, saith the Lord of Hosts. I will even send a Curse upon you, and I will curse your Blessings, yea I have curs'd them already, because ye do not lay it to heart.* This includes all the gifts of Nature and Providence which I have mentioned. *Psal.* 11. 6. *Upon the Wicked he shall rain Snares, Fire and Brimstone, and a horrible Tempest shall be the portion of their Cup.* So that whatever their Condition be in this World, it is a snare to their Souls ; their *Prosperity* lifts them up, and makes them contemn God, *Job* 21. Their *Adversity* makes them murmur against him, *Jer.* 8. 21. *Are ye Rich? Cursed are ye in the City and in the Field. Cursed is your Basket and your Store, the fruits of your Body, and the fruits of your Land, the increase of your Kine, and the flocks of your Sheep,* *Deut.* 28. 16, 17, 18. *In the fulness of thy Sufficiency thou shalt be in want,* *Job* 20. 22. Thy Table is a snare and a trap to thy Soul ; every Morsel thou eatest is cursed, *Psal.* 69. 22. Is not thy Wealth food for thy proud and sensual Lusts? Is it not the Devil's *Bait*, by which he leads thee captive to Sin, the *thorn* by which he torments thy earthly anxious Soul? It's strange to see Men growing prouder and

and

and prouder as their Debts increase : yet alas ! it's too common ; for the most do not behave themselves as Stewards for, and Tennants under God, in the management of their Substance ; but as absolute Lords of what they possess, as if no Account were to be given of their Disbursements : But if any imagine so, they will find themselves under a grand mistake. *Luk. 16. 1, 2.* But let the ungodly know that their Prosperity thus abused and perverted, serves but to fatten them for the Slaughtering Knife of God's Vengeance. *Isai. 34. 2. Jer. 12. 3. Prov. 1. 32.* Art thou honour'd by Men ? Alas ! what is this ! while the Soul of a God hates and abhors thee ! *Psal. 11. 5, and 10. 3. Rev. 3. 16.* His Sword shall be bathed in Heaven, and it shall come down upon the People of his Curse to Judgment, *Isai. 34. 5.* Art thou in Authority, vested with a Civil Power of governing others, and yet governest not thy self ? Remember the abuse of your Authority will expose you to the greater Vengeance. *Job 12. 19, 21.* [Your Honour and Authority serve but to lift you upon a higher Pinnacle, that you may get a greater and more fatal fall : *Quo altiora eveuntur Lapsa graviore ruunt.* Are you Afflicted ? it's a doleful presage of your Damnation ; a small drop of that scalding Ocean of Wrath which shall burn your Souls to Eternity in that dismal Gulph, where the Worm of your accusing, upbraiding and condemning Consciences shall never dye ; and the Fire with which you shall be cover'd as with a Sheet of Lightning, shall never be quenched. *Mark 9. 44.* unless you repent and reform. *Psal. 7. 12, 13.* If ye turn not, he will whet his Sword, he hath bent his bow and made it ready. Dost thou Rejoyce ? Wo to thee, thou shalt mourn by and by without hope, and grind and gnash thy Teeth with Devils without End. *Luk. 6. 24, 25.* But wo unto you that are Rich, for ye have received your Consolation : Wo unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger : Wo unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep. Art thou Secure ? thy sinful Slumber shall end in awful roarings, if not mercifully prevented by convincing and converting Grace, 1 *Thef.*

5. Your religious Priviledges are also accursed to you by your abuse of them. *Matth. 11. 21, 22.* Wo unto thee Chorazin, wo unto thee Bethsaida ; it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of Judgment than for you. The Word is a favour of Death unto Death to you, *2 Cor. 2. 16.* and the Sacraments Seals of Damnation, *1 Cor. 11. 29.*

That

That the Performances of presumptuous Sinners are accursed, I have prov'd before in this Discourse by several Reasons, which I shan't now resume. And to conclude this Head, let me aduce a few Scriptures more to confirm what has been offer'd under it, concerning the Universality of that Curse which rests upon unconverted presumptuous Sinners. *Deut.* 27. 28. *Chapters.* *Mat.* 23. *Rev.* 8. 13. *Amos* 6. 1. *Heb.* 6. 8. *Isai.* 3. 9, 11. *Ezek.* 16. 23. *Isai.* 30. 1. *Isai.* 45. 9. *Mich.* 2. 1. *Jud.* 11. *Hab.* 2. 6. *Jer.* 11. 3. *Es.* 17. 5. *Psal.* 119. 21. *Jer.* 48. 10. *Job* 24. 8. *Mal.* 3. 9.

2. Without intervening Repentance, you shall be under a judicial Curse. *Matth.* 25. 41. What sorrow and astonishment shall possess presumptuous Sinners! when Zion's King, the exalted Lord Jesus shall arise from the Seat of Beauty and Throne of Majesty, which he now adorns, and where he's now admir'd and ador'd with the highest Honours, deepest Reverence and strongest Affections by all the Hosts above, and descend visibly with a shout from the Third Heavens (attended with all the State and Grandure of a God, appearing in his own, and in his Father's Glory, encompass'd with Millions of Saints and Angels) to the middle Regions of the Air, and there be enthron'd on a body of blazing Light. *Rev.* 1. 7. *Behold he cometh with Clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all the Kindreds of the Earth shall wail because of him.* *Luk.* 9. 26. *For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he shall come in his own Glory, and in his Fathers, and of the Holy Angels.* *1 Thel.* 4. 16. *For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Arch Angel, and with the Trump of God.* And *2 Thel.* 1. 7, 8, 9. *When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*

What inexpressible Anguish must possess the Wicked, when being raised out of their Graves, and their wretched Bodies and Souls shall be united, not to enjoy their former lawless Delights, but to feel the Doom they have thereby deserved! With what Reluctance shall these miserable Caitiffs be drag'd by the Devils to the dread Tribunal, to receive their final Sentence from the Judge of the

the whole Earth? They shall call to the Hills & Mountains to cover them, but in vain, nothing shall be able to hide them from the Face of the Lamb that sits upon the Throne, Rev. 6. 16. What *Fear* must needs possess their Hearts, what *Shame* cover their Countenances when they shall look on that Lord Jesus whom they have so affronted and offend'd, arrayed with infinite Power, great Glory and stern Majesty? What a magnificent and solemn Description does the Prophet *Daniel* give of the Judge's Appearance, and the judicial Process, Dan. 9. 10. *I beheld till the Thrones were cast down, and the ancient of Days did sit, whose Garment was white as Snow, and the Hairs of his Head like the pure Wool, his Throne was like the fiery Flame, and his Wheels like burning Fire, a fiery Stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministred unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him, the Judgment was set and the Books were opened; viz. of God's Precepts, Remembrance, and their own Consciences, in which will be found nothing but what was in Ezekiel's Roll, Mourning and Lamentation and Wo, Ez-k. 2. 10. It is probable the Apostle John alludes to this in the first Chapter of his Revelations, Verses 13, 14, 15, 16. In the midst of the seven Candlesticks, one like unto the Son of Man, cloathed with a Garment down to the Foot, and girt about the Paps with a golden Girdle; his Head and his Hairs were white like Wool, as white as Snow, and his Eyes were as a Flame of Fire, and his Feet like unto fine Brass, as if they burn'd in a Furnace, and his Voice as the sound of many Waters, and he had in his right hand seven Stars, and his Countenance was as the Sun shineth in his Strength. Yea, so terrible will be the Majesty of the incarnate God, that universal Nature shall languish in his Presence, the Heavens and Earth shall flee from his Face. Rev. 20. 11. *And I saw a great white Throne, and him that sat on it, from whose Face the Earth and Heaven fled away.* How shall ungodly Sinners then stand before him in Judgment, and hear their secret Wickedness openly exposed, 1 Cor. 4. 5. and their Persons publicly sentenced and curld, Matth. 25. 41. *Go ye curld into everlasting Burnings, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* What Words can be conceived more full of Horror than these? They were wont in their Life-time to bid God depart from them, Job 21. 14, 15. Therefore now they shall be commanded to depart from God, and all their unseasonable Pleas for Acceptance will be fruitless, Matth. 7. 22, 23. *As they loved Curlding, so it shall come upon them;**

for they must depart with a Curse into Fire! prepared Fire! *Isai.* 30. 33. Everlasting Fire! to dwell with the Devil and his Angels, their sworn Enemies! procurers of their present Misery, who will doubtless triumph in their Pains, and use all their hellish Art to aggravate them after the fatal Sentence is pronounced, which will extort piteous Groans and loud Laments from all the damned's inmost Bosoms; then will succeed the universal Conflagration, which will put the whole Frame of Nature into the utmost Confusion and Disorder. Some learned Men, particularly, *Dr. Stillingfleet*, and *Mr. Burnet*, have observed, "That it is highly probable there will be a great Analogy between the two Deluges, that which has been by Water, and that which will be by Fire": And so doubtless there will: As to the former the Windows of Heaven were opened above, and the Abyss below, which concurring, occasioned the Inundation of the Earth; so that the Conflagration Showers of liquid Fire shall be rained down upon the Earth, as God did once upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, *Zeboim* and *Admah*, and the sulphureous Matter which is hid in the Heart of the Earth; these Fountains of Fire which have sed *Etna* and *Vesuvius* being opened and enflamed, will set the whole Earth and visible Heavens on Fire: What a rueful Plight must the damned be in then? How will they yell and roar after they have received their dreadful Doom, when such a Scene of Horror is opened before them, and they shall see the World breaking forth into Flames every where around them, and feel it trembling underneath them? For the Vapours that are confined in it's Bowels seeking vent, and meeting with Obstructions, will cause the whole Globe (it's probable) to reel and stagger like a drunken Man; what a melancholly Prospect must it be for these undone Creatures to hear the great Ocean roar with the most hideous Murmurs, to see the Lights of Heaven veil'd with Darkness, and in the mean time the Air to blaze with portentous Comets? Think solemnly, O presumptuous Sinners, how shall you endure to hear the loud and terrible Blast of the Arch-Angel's Trumpet, which shall reach the utmost Ends of the Earth and Sea, and pierce the silent Recesses of the darksome Grave, and alarm it's sleeping Inhabitants out of their iron Slumbers? Will not the horrible Cracks and Thunders of the groaning dissolving Heavens, the astonishing Convulsions of the trembling burning Earth, returning to it's original Chaos, the roarings of millions of damned

damned Men and Women, hopeless of Escape from that Wrath with which they shall be clad, as with a Coat of flaming Sulphur, daunt your Spirits, confound your Confidence, and sink your abandon'd Souls into the dreadful Gulph of endless Desperation?

3. *Extreme and terrible*; especially in the next Life: Then this Curse shall be more bitter to thee, than the Jealousy Water to the adulterous Woman, which made her Belly to swell, and her Thigh to rot; so that she became a Curse among her People: It shall come into thy Bowels like Water, and like Oyl into thy Bones; it shall cover thee as a Garment, and gripe thee as a Girdle, *Numb. 5. 27. Psalm 109. 18, 19.* For then ye shall be deprived of that *personal Beauty*, and *moral Excellency*, which the People of God shall then be adorned with; When the Lord appeared upon the Mount of Transfiguration, his Countenance shone as the Sun, and his Garment was bright as the Light, *Matth. 17. 2.* What an amazing Splendor then and dazzling Brightness, must proceed from the Bodies of the glorified, which shall be conformed to the Body of Jesus, *Phil. 3. 21.* And what superior Beauty must shine in their Souls, when their Graces are perfected, and the most excellent Dispositions continually excited towards God and Goodness. But instead of these, it's highly probable, that those whom God curses shall be covered with a Deformity suitable to their Abject and most wretched State; having their corrupt Dispositions much increased and enraged, and their moral Varnish quite removed: they shall appear like Devils incarnate, *Matth. 25. 28, 29.*

2. Damned Souls shall be bereaved of the gracious Presence of the blessed God, whose Lovingkindness is better than Life, *Psalms 53. 3.* And all the delightful Enjoyments of the heavenly World; which the brightest Images in the whole System of Nature, are not able to convey adequate Ideas of to our Understandings, in this embodied State; for here we see darkly as through a Glass, *1 Cor. 13. 12. Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive what God hath laid up for those that love him, 1 Cor. 2. 9.* The Believer's beholding of the various and transcendent Perfections of the glorious God, and the blessed Jesus, eternally engaged to advance his Happiness, must necessarily create an agreeable Wonder and rapturous Pleasure; when all the dark Scenes of Providence shall be opened, and the Beauties of redeeming

redeeming Grace displayed, must not every pious Breast be filled with a joyous Transport? What reciprocal Motions of a strong and steady Affection to God must needs result from the uninterrupted Communications of divine Love? but alas! these unhappy Souls whose woful Fate it shall be to be cursed by Christ judicially at the grand Assize, shall be plunged into the Damnation of Hell, and there eternally bereaved of the aforesaid Enjoyments, and perpetually racked with very contrary and tormenting Passions; such as Sorrow, Hatred, Dispair, Horror. The Understandings of the Wicked will be enlarged, many of their former Mistakes shall be corrected by sad Experience, their Minds being freed from the Obstructions of gross Bodies, will doubtless be more keen in their Operations and Conceptions of the height of that Happiness they have forfeited, and the depths of that Misery they have incurred: Now proportionable to their Apprehensions of the Greatness of their Misery, will be their bitter Reflections upon the procuring Causes of it. Your Consciences which now for the most part sleep in your sinful and secure Bosoms, shall then be awakened with a Vengeance against you, whose Rebukes will indeed be hard to be endured, but impossible to be avoided: In this World they had many Arts to extinguish it's just Reflections, worldly Projects and Labours, sensitive Pleasures, carnal Counsel, and a false Confidence, which they industriously improved for that End, and perhaps attained it to their content: the Amusements of this Life, or the Hopes of a better (tho' against all Scripture and Reason) made them easy and unconcerned, tho' in the midst of Danger; but now when all these carnal Comforts and groundless Hopes are forever, and at once removed, the Soul strip'd naked of those Dependencies in which it used to trust and triumph, how will it sink into the depths of Sorrow, the Horrors of Dispair.

Especially

1. When the Memory suggests the *Greatness* of that *Glory* they have lost; some Beginnings of which they have seen at the general Judgment, when the Persons of the Righteous were honoured with the most joyful Congratulations, and their Bodies adorn'd with the brightest Splendors, shining like so many Stars about the Son of Righteousness, advanced to the greatest State and Magnificence, seated on resplendent Thrones near the Son of God, the great Judge of the whole Earth, Luke 15 28 *Then shall you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of God, and you your selves shut out.*

2. When

2. When the Memory suggests the frequent Offers of that Happiness they enjoyed under the Gospel of Christ, and the importunate Intreaties of God himself, and his faithful Servants, that they would accept of them, Hof 11. 8. *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zebodim? Mine Heart is turned within me, my Repenings are kindled together.* As also the frequent Warnings they had, both by the Word and the Rod, of the Danger that would ensue their Refusal; How shall we escape?

And (3) That contrary to all the Laws of Reason and Gratitude, they obstinately refused the offers of Life, abus'd the Opportunities of Mercy, embrac'd their own Ruin with open Arms, fondly sought after naked Destruction, and were laborious in the pursuit. Will not these Considerations aggravate the Misery of the Damned? and awake all their painful Passions? As Particularly,

1. Their Sorrow: When the damned consider, and are forc'd to confess that they perish deservedly, and that their Destruction is just, being but the natural and necessary Consequence of their own voluntary and vicious Choice; Will not Grief in all it's awful Forms fill all the darksome Regions of the Damned with heavy Groans and dolorous Complaints? O wretched Soul that I am, who have been deaf to Instruction, and despised Reproof, who have courted Destruction, and made a League with Death! Cursed be the Day that ever I was born! Once Mercy was in my Offer, but I slighted my own Happiness, and barter'd it away for Trifles of no Moment or Duration, like *Judas* and *Esau*, and now it is gone, gone for ever! The Sun of Salvation is set, and never will rise more, and I am left in Darkness and in Death, justly bereaved of that Mercy I despised! When unfortunate *Esau* miss'd but a temporal Blessing of his Father, *He cried out with an exceeding great and bitter Cry, Bless me, even me, O my Father, Gen.*

28. Now what extreme Agonies do you think will possess you (continuing impenitent) when instead of a Blessing you shall have a bitter Curse, and all your petitioning shall be as vain as *Esau's*.

The Causes of Sorrow, as Dr. *Bate's* justly observes, is the Loss of some valued Good, or the Sense of some present Evil". Now proportioned to the Greatness of the Causes must be their Effects. How deep then must be the Sorrow of the Damned, who are deprived of the greater

greater Good, God himself, and expos'd to the greatest penal Evil, his Anger and highest Displeasure?

2. Your Shame: Is not the Cause of Shame, the knowledge of ones faults, and their folly and degeneracy in them. *Tacita sudent precordia culpa;*

" The Guilt which from unseen Pollution springs,

" Pale sweating horror in their Bosom brings,

and the more publickly your Crimes are expos'd to others observance, does it not sharpen the piercing stings of your shameful reflections? What shame then must cover the Faces, and perplex the Hearts, of presumptuous Sinners? when they appear before the flaming, and severe Tribunal of a holy, jealous God? and hear the whole Series of their past Wickedness which they here labour'd to conceal, (and were easy if they could accomplish that design) there open'd in all its aggravated Circumstances to the hatred and contempt of a vast Assembly of Spirits: Shall not the Damned retain some sense of this throughout Eternity?

3. Their hatred and self revenge; when they remember the condescending Methods that Mercy us'd with them, the *court* the Great God made to them for their Salvation, which they by their cruel and presumptuous Obstinacy render'd ineffectual, they will be ready to tear out their own Hearts, or dig out their bowels, if they could effect it.

4. Their Fear: They shall not only be tormented with the remembrance of past Mercies abus'd, and with the sense of present Pains, but with the fears of future Miseries, for they shall have a sure Prospect of the Eternal and uninterrupted duration of their present Torments.

Rev. 14. 10, 11 *The same shall drink of the Wine of the Wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his Indignation, and he shall be tormented with Fire and Brimstone, in the presence of the holy Angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: and the smoke of their Torments ascendeth up forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night.* All the Afflictions of this Life are allay'd and temper'd with some Mercies, and desirable Enjoyments; but in Hell, which is the proper center of Misery, there will be Misery without any mixture of pity or Mercy: All the groans of the Damned cannot incline the Compassions of a justly offended and inexorable God. *Isai. 37. 36*

Then farewell Hope and Happiness, and all Good for ever! Another additional ingredient or circumstance of

the

the Damned's Torments, will be the Place where they are inflicted, a Place where the thickest darkeſt and intenſeſt Heat for ever reign, a Place where not the leaſt dawn of *Light* is allowed thoſe forlorn Wretches, unleſs what ſerves to diſcover the Inſtruments of their Pain, a Place where damned Men and Devils are blended together in one promiſcuous Throng, and the former perpetually expoſed to the cruel Tyranny of the latter; *Who among us ſhall dwell with devouring Fire? Who among us ſhall dwell with everlaſting Burnings?*

14 The Curſe will be irrevocable and eternal, except they repent. Go on a little longer in your vicious Courſes, in flighting God's Love, breaking his Law, and quenching the Motions of his bleſſed Spirit, and your Caſe will be paſt Remedy; for God's Spirit ſhall not always ſtrive with Men, *Gen. 6. 3.* Hence we are bid to *call upon him while he is near, to ſeek him while he may be found, Iſai. 55. 6.* which intimates plainly that if he be not ſought while he is near, while he ſtrives with us by his Spirit, he may be ſought afterwards but in vain; though his Mercy wait long, yet it will not wait always, his abuſed Patience will have a Period, and perhaps quickly with thee.

O presumptuous Sinner! if thou perſiſteſt any longer in thy Impiety, thou may'ſt expect that Chriſt will give thee that final Curſe, which he gave the Fig-tree, *Mark 11. 13, 14, 20, 21.* Let never Fruit grow on thee more. And ſay to thee as to *Ephraim* of old, *Ephraim is joined to Idols, let him alone, Hoſ. 4. 17.* And to thoſe mentioned, *Rev. 22. 11. Let him that is filthy be filthy ſtill. Becauſe I have purged them, and they were not purged, therefore I will not purge them any more, till I cauſe my Fury to reſt on them, Ezek. 24. 13.* If this happens to be thy Caſe, then wo to thee that ever thou waſt born! Pray conſider that the Time of God's gracious Viſitation (wherein he offers Mercy) does not always laſt ſo long as a Man's Life, nay that it frequently thro' their Obſtinacy expires before it. The longeſt Period of Patience that we find afforded to any, was that which the old World was made the Subject of, which contained the Space of one hundred and twenty Years, *Gen. 6. 3. 1 Pet. 3. 19, 20.* Yet this was not the ſixth Part of the Time they uſually liv'd before the Flood; ten or twelve Years are longer to us, than one hundred and twenty was to them, comparing the different Ages Men ordinarily liv'd to then, and now. Now if the Curſe may

may be vendred through Men's Obstinacy Irrevocable in this World, it will surely be eternal in the next; this the holy Scriptures are very full and express in asserting. See *Isai* 33. 14. *Dan* 12. 2. *Mark* 18. 8. *2 Thess* 1. 9. *Heb* 6. 2. *Mark* 9. 43, 44. *Jude* 13. *Rev.* 14. 11. If it be objected, that the Words Eternity, or, ever and ever, only signifies a limited Space of Time: It is true, they do so in some Places of Scripture; but it is as true that in many other Places they signify an endless Duration, as where Eternity is ascribed to God, *Psalms* 9. 7. *19.* 10. and 146. 10. and eternal Happiness to pious Persons, It would be as ridiculous as blasphemous, to say, that God shall live but for a few Ages, and as absurd to imagine that the Godly should be happy but for the same Space. Now in the narrow Compas of one Verse, we find the same Eternity ascribed to the Torments of the Damned, as to the Happiness of the saved; *These shall go away into everlasting Punishment, but the righteous into Life eternal,* *Matth* 25. 46. which not only the Identity of Expression, but the *Antithesis*, or Law of contraries obliges us to believe is of the same Extent: If we may limit the Duration of the one, we may with equal Reason the other. But it is objected, that it's contrary to the Justice and Goodness of God to inflict an infinite Punishment for a finite Offence: In answer to this, let the following Particulars be consider'd.

1. That though Sin be finite subjectively in respect of the Person, by which, and the Time in which it is committed, yet it is infinite in regard of it's Object, for it is committed against an infinite God, an Affront to infinite *Sovereignty*, a Disparagement of infinite *Wisdom*, and an Abuse of infinite *Love*, and therefore deserves in Justice an infinite Punishment. In short, Sin is a most pregnant and complicated Evil, containing in it a direct Contradiction to, and vile Reflection upon all the Perfections of the Deity, an unnatural Revolt from his Government, which we are bound to obey by the strongest Ties of Reason and Gratitude, because of his creating, preserving, providing and redeeming Love, and that upon the meanest Existents, the shadowy Honours and perishing Profits of a vain World, and the brutish Pleasures of Sense. Is it not a Maxim in all Courts of Judicature, that the Offence increases in its Heinousness in proportion to the Dignity of the Person offended; for if no Distinction of Persons be allowed respecting the civil Authority with which they are

are invested, then all Order and Government is destroy'd, and a Babylonish Anarchy introduced in its Room. If it be thought just and lawful among Men (as Mr. *Stackhouse* observes) for very great and outrageous Crimes to inflict such Punishments upon Offenders that the civil Government may be preserved, as shall affect the whole Duration of their Lives, (which is all of their Beings we have any Power over) it can't sure be thought unjust in God to inflict such Punishments upon Sinners as shall affect the whole Duration of their Beings, because there is manifestly in this Case as great a Difference in their Crimes, as in the Duration of their Punishments.

2. It is rational and agreable to the divine Wisdom that such Penalties should be annexed to the Breach of the divine Laws, as do over ballance all Incentives to Vice, that the Subject's Obedience may be effectually secured, the Sovereign's Honour inviolably maintain'd, and the Ends of Government obtained. But temporary Punishments are not sufficient to procure this Obedience; therefore the Denunciation of *eternal* is necessary.

The second Proposition which only needs Proof, may be thus confirm'd: If through the obstinate Pravity of Men's Natures, and the numberless Enticements to Sin, the Denunciation of *eternal* Punishments has but little Influence on the most; how much less would a Punishment of a vastly shorter Duration. It is a just Observation of Dr. *Tillotson* and Mr. *Jenkins*, "That if the Law be good and necessary, and cannot so effectually be obey'd without a severe Punishment to enforce it, the Severity of the Punishment is so far from being a Cruelty, that it's a just and wise Provision to secure Obedience to the Law, and to procure the Benefit designed by it's Institution."

3. Men have brought into their Natures a Disposition to sin eternally. It is very probable, that were they allowed to live here for ever, they would act as perversly as they do at present (unless the Almighty changed them by that Grace which they had forfeited, by their sinful Obstinacy) nay worse, if worse can be, than the Pitch some have come to; if they knew they should be indulg'd with so long a Duration here; for then all the Restraints which are drawn from the Brevity and Uncertainty of their Time, as well as from the Terrors of Death, and that State of Rewards which immediately ensues it, (which gives some Check to the most) would be entirely removed.

The Saying of Gregory upon this Head is remarkable; "It becomes the Justice of our Judge (saith he) that they who in this Life would never be without Sin, should in the next never be without Punishment."

4. God does but deal with Men in this Case according to their Choice. Is it not reasonable that the Almighty having made Creatures that are capable of moral Service, should give them a Law to direct them in it, enforc'd by such Rewards and Punishments, as are suitable to excite to the Obedience of it, or deter them from Disobedience? Now if the Penalty be no greater in weight or duration than the Reward, who can with any reason find fault? especially considering that none shall be obliged to endure it, but such as voluntarily choose the way that leads to it; if you don't like the Wages of Sin, pray avoid the Work; but if you will choose your own ruin, who can you blame but your selves? It's but equal, that those who slight an endless Life, should be punished with an endless Death.

5. It's necessary for the preservation of the divine Honour, and agreeable to the Order God has established of communicating his Favours, that Criminals who expect his Mercy, should sue for it, repent of, and reform from their Wickedness; but the Damned are so far from this, that they will perpetually increase their Abominations; for their Enmity against God, which is now in a great measure conceal'd, shall be then enflam'd by the severity of their Torments; their *impatience* to endure them, and *inability* to avoid them. This will excite them to belch forth bold Blasphemies against the blessed God, with the most fierce and furious transports of implacable, tho' impotent Malice; that if their power were equal to their desire, they would tear him from his Throne. Rev. 16. 10, 11. *They gnaw'd their Tongues for pain, and blasphem'd the God of Heaven, because of their pains and sores, and repented not of their Deeds.* In Hell, we are told by the Lord Jesus, *will be weeping and gnashing of teeth,* Mat. 8. 12. Intense Indignation, as well as great Sorrow. Now if the wickedness of the Damned continue, will not God's irrefragable Justice incline him to continue their deserved Punishment?

7. Thy Case is extremely dangerous, tho' thou art not sensible of it: Thou art like a Man sleeping on the top of a Mast in the midst of the Sea, Prov. 23. 34. Every moment in danger of Death. Would it not make your Heart ache, and your Bowels bleed to see a poor Creature securely slumbering on the Round top of a Vessel in the time of a Storm,

Storm, when the Sea-being vext with the Winds, rowls Mountains high? or would you not be affected with the sight of one hanging over a burning Furnace by a small Thread? or walking fearlessly on the brink of a fatal Precipice without the least discovery of the neighbouring danger? every step ready to tumble into a violent and cruel Death? O Friend, this is thy very case! Thou art every moment in danger of being sunk in the Sea of God's Wrath! and swallowed up with the Billows of his Indignation! Tho' thou art secure and unconcerned, thou hankest over the Gulph of Hell by the slender Thread of thy Life, yea thou fearlessly walkest upon the narrow Line of Life, just by the brink of the eternal Furnace: The terrible Sword of God's Justice hangs over thy Head, as it were by a Hair, ready to pierce thy Bowels, and bathe it self in thy Gore. Is this a case to Sleep in? to Laugh in? and to take thy Ease? *Amos 6. 1. Wo to those that are at ease in Zion.* Come Friend, in the Name of the Great God my Lord and Master, let me tell thee a little more of thy danger and misery. The Holy God hates thee, as thou dost a Toad. *Psal. 7. 11. Jer. 12. 8.* The whole Trinity is against thee, while thou continuest in this State: God the Father, for thy slighting the marvellous Projects of his Grace and Love in the Lord Jesus. *Heb. 10. 26, --- 32.* God the Son, for your making light of the Blessings he bought with his Blood. *Mat. 22. 3, 7.* And God the Holy Ghost, for your resisting and quenching his good motions. *Act. 7. 51.* All God's Attributes are engag'd to Damn you, so continuing. If there is Power, or Truth, or Justice in God, ye shall perish except ye repent. *Luk. 13. 3. Mat. 22. 13.* *Then said the King to the Servants, bind him hand & foot, and cast him into utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* *Matth. 13. 30.* Gather together the Tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them. All the Hosts of God, whether in Heaven or on Earth are against thee: The very Stars in their Courses fought against Sifera, *Judg. 5. 20.* The holy Angels must needs relent the dishonours offered to their offended Master, and therefore they are sometimes the Executioners of his righteous Judgments against the Wicked. *2 King. 19. 35. 1 Chron. 21. 30. Psal. 57. 5.* The Earth groans under thee, while thou art a stranger to God. *Rom. 8. 22.* The very bruit Creatures revolt from their subjection to sinning Man, and thereby avenge the quarrel of their injur'd Lord. Poor presumptuous Sinner! thou hast no Friend in Heaven or Earth

that is able to stand by thee and succour thee in thy distress? You can look no where, but where there is occasion of fear and sorrow: If ye look *backwards*, there is a doleful Landskip opens to your view, of a Life spent in vain, a Life spent in offending the Author of it, and thereby procuring an endless Death: If ye look *forward*, what can be more terrible than to behold your gradual advances to a Place of inexpressible Misery: If you look *upward*, Heaven is shut and seal'd against you; behold a flaming Cherub (*viz.* the Justice of an incensed God) guards that Celestial Eden from such Intruders: If ye look *downward*, *Hell from beneath is mov'd to meet you at your coming*, *Isai. 14. 9.* If you look *inward*, what can you see but Sin and Security? The dreadful Prefages of your endless Misery! Whatever conceit you have of your Wit, or Wealth, you are nevertheless *wretched, poor, blind, miserable and naked*, *Rev. 3. 17.* Brethren, if ye had all the Mines of *Peru* and *Mexico*, and yet wanted the Graces of the Spirit, that try'd Gold, you are wretchedly *Poor*. Mayn't a Man be justly called *Poor* that has no Bread to eat, or House to cover him, no Shelder to shroud from the Rain? This is thy Case; thou hast no Interest in the Bread of Life, the Heavenly Manna, *Prov. 14. 10. Rev. 17. 17.* no Interest in the House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens, whose builder and maker is God, *Heb. 11. 10.* *Blind* without any saving knowledge of God or your Selves, or the Truth as it is in Jesus, *Eph. 4. 18. 2 Cor. 11. 10. 1 Cor. 2. 14.* and sentenc'd to all Evil, as our Text asserts: *Naked*, without any right to the precious Robe of the Redeemer's Righteousness, *Isai. 61. 10.* without any Shelter to protect you from the storms of God's Indignation, *Psal. 69. 24. Heb. 10. 27.* *Without God and without Christ, without Hope, without the Covenants of Promise*, *Eph. 2. 12.* Every Leaf in the Bible spits Fire and Venom in thy Face, for there's not a Promise in all the Book of God for you, so continuing, *2 Cor. 1. 20.*

Object I hope I shall be sav'd for all your threats, tho' I ben't Converted, and so precise as you talk of.

Ans. My threats; they are not mine, but the threatenings of the God that made you. If you are sav'd without Conversion, then the Truth of God must fail, *Joh. 3. 3. Gal. 6. 15.* But if in the face of Light you will obstinately hold your false Confidence, then remember, *Rebels, that all the Curses that are in this Book, shall lie upon you; as our Text affirms, God's Anger and Jealousy shall smite*

against

against you, and your Names shall be blotted out from under Heaven!

Object. 2. I can't believe these hard things.

Why then you are an *Infidel*, you will give your Maker the Lye, when you won't believe his Word: But your unbelief won't render the Faith of God without effect, Rom.

3. 3. If you won't believe, you must be put to the expence of having your wilful Mistakes corrected by sad and hopeless Experience, by feeling what you would not credit, accomplish'd in your Destruction. But I don't wonder you won't believe that which tends to disturb the false Ease you so inordinately affect, and as greedily, as foolishly labour to retain to your cost.

Again, the Devil your Father is as unwilling you should believe these threats, as you are your selves; for he knows that if you were sensible of your danger, you would labour more to escape it than you do at present, and so be in a more likely way to get out of his Clutches.

THE IMPROVEMENT.

U S E. I. Of Consolation to the People of God, who have good scriptural Evidences of their Hope, who have been brought to Christ by a sound Conviction, and Conversion of the whole Soul, and whose course of Life is Holy and Heavenly; blessed are ye of the Lord, rejoyce and be exceeding glad, for ye are delivered from those Curses I mentioned, and invested with the contrary Blessings and Benefits, by Christ's being made a Curse for you; and thus has deliver'd you from the Curse of the Law, Gal. 3. 13. Sing O Heavens! and be joyful O Earth! and break forth into singing, O Mountains! for the Lord hath comforted his People, and will have Mercy upon his afflicted, Isai. 49. 13. There is no Condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, Rom. 8. 1. Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the Law, but under Grace, Rom. 6. 14. Ye are brought from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that ye might receive forgiveness of Sins, and an Inheritance among them that are sanctified, Act. 26. 18. For God who commanded the Light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in your Hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 4. 6. As a thick Cloud God has blotted out your transgressions for his own Names sake, Isai. 44. 22. To them that fear God's Name has the Sun of Righteousness arisen with

with healing under his Wings. Mal. 4. 2. O how should ye love and serve that Holy Jesus, that hath purchased so great things for you at so dear a rate. Remember precious Souls to your eternal Comfort,

1. That you are under a universal Benediction: *Blessed* are you in *Body* and in *Soul*, and in all their *Parts* and *Powers*; blessed are your *Eyes*, for they see, and your *Ears* for they hear, and your *Hearts*, for it understands, and loves the things that belong to your *Peace*: *Blessed* are your *Bowels* that are fill'd with compassionate relentings towards the poor and needy; your *Hands* which are open to supply the Indigent, and your *Feet* that freely and frequently carry you to the beds of Spices (the Assemblies of the faithful) where you may meet and serve your Jesus. *Blessed* are your *Minds* with beams of Divine Light, in that you see the Holiness, and other Perfections of God, the amiableness of Religion, the beauty of Jesus, the horrors of Sin and Hell, the necessity and excellency of Holiness and eternal Happiness, affectionately & effectually. *Blessed* are you who know the Truth as it is in Jesus, who know these things and do them. *Job. 13. 17.* *Blessed* are your *Wills* that have heartily, unreservedly, deliberately, and resolvedly clos'd with Christ. *Job. 1. 12. Luk. 9. 23, 24.* *Blessed* are your *tender Consciences* that so readily smite you for the least Offences. *Blessed* are your *Affections* that flow with an easy and eager proneness towards Christ and Holiness. *Blessed* is your *Love*, in that you can say with *Peter, Lord Jesus thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee, Joh. 21. 17.* Your *Desires*; that you can say with *Asaph, Whom have I in Heaven but thee, or on Earth that I desire besides thee, Psal. 73. 25.* Your *Delights*; that you can say with *David, One Day in thy Courts is worth a thousand elsewhere, Psal. 84. 10.* *Blessed* is your *Hatred*, which is fix'd upon it's right Object, *Sin*; and your *Dislike*, that it's plac'd on wicked People, tho' never so great and prosperous. *Psal. 15. 4. Do not I hate them that hate thee.* *Blessed* are you in your *Enjoyments*, for they come through the Gracious Covenant, swimming in the Ocean of Christ's Blood, and are sanctified to you by the Holy Spirit. *Heb. 12. 18.* Your God spreads a Table for you in the Wilderness before the face of your Enemies: *Let your Conversation be without Covetousness, and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, he will never leave thee nor forsake thee, Heb. 13. 5.* Your God will supply all your need, *Phil. 4. 19.* All God's Providences are blessed to you,

Rom.

Rom. 8. 28. Are you *Afflicted*? It's a fatherly Chastisement; *Heb. 12. 6, 7.* Are you *Prosperous*? It's a presage of your endless Happiness: *All things are yours, whether Prosperity, Poverty, Life, Death, things present or things to come; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's, 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.* Every thing shall work together to advance your Happiness; *Paul and Apolos is your's*: The Word is a favour of Life unto you, and the Sacraments Seals of Salvation, *Rom. 8. 28.* Thus all your *Enjoyments* and Privileges are blest'd; *and if God is for you, who shall be against you, Rom. 8. 31.* Your *Performances* also meet with a gracious acceptance; for tho' they are in themselves but Pillars of Smoke, they are nevertheless perfum'd with Myrrh and Frankincense, and all the Powders of the Merchant, *Cant. 3. 6.* Do you *mourn*, poor Souls? blessed of Christ are you, *for you shall by G by rejoyce world without end, Mar. 5. 4.* Light is sown for the Righteous, and joy for the upright in Heart, *Psal. 97. 11.* As your *Blessings* are universal, so,

2. They shall be final and perpetual. Tho' your Husband may hide his Face from you for a moment, because of your miscarriages, yet he will return with everlasting loving kindness, *Isai. 54. 7, 8. Psal. 89. 32, 33.*

3. Your Blessings shall be as publick and solemn as they are *lasting* and *durable*. Ye shall be honoured with that glorious Benediction mentioned by the Evangelist, *Math. 23. Come ye blessed of my Father &c.* before the face of God and Angels; and Men and Devils, reprobate and damned Angels, will be fill'd with Indignation at your joyful and solemn reception, but shan't be able by all the efforts of their malice, to make your Crown twinkle, for your state of Happiness shall be Eternal, it shall last as long as God endures. *Mar. 25. 46.* And,

4. Exquisitely *sweet* and *ravishing*; being receiv'd by your dearest *Jesus* with the tenderest Congratulations, the sweetest Smiles, and most joyful Triumphs, you shall ascend into the Seat of the blessed, the Imperial City of the most high God, after the general Judgment, when you have seen with pleasure (because God's Justice is thereby honoured) all the damned Hosts of Angels and Men justly sentenc'd to their cursed Tophet, then shall you ascend the high and holy Hills of the Heavenly Paradise, with God the Father, Son and Spirit, and his holy Myriads of triumphing Angels, with Hearts brim full of joy and gladness, and your Lips breathing forth sweet and continual Hosannah's; the loud and harmonious Accents of which shall strike the

Concave

Concave of the Heavens, when your joyous Squadrons, having the mighty God for their Guide and General, shall with august Port and regular Array advance to, and arrive at the Regions of the blessed; the golden pearly Gates of that celestial City of the *great King* will open of their own accord to give easy access to that blessed throng of Angels and Elect Persons, when the redeemed of God shall come with Crowns on their Heads to Zion, that Paradise of Pleasure, where sorrow and sighing shall fly away: Their pace thither will doubtless be very speedy, having such an eager Wing as Love & Joy will form. It's highly probable that the very sight of the New Jerusalem at a distance will fill their Hearts with the most pleasing Sensations; as when the *Italians* came within sight of their native Shoar, they made the Heavens ring with Shouts and joyful Acclamations, crying out aloud, *Italia, Italia, Italianam, Italianam Læto clamore Salutant.* But when you are come to your happy Mansions, what Seraph's Tongue can describe the Pleasures that shall then possess your Souls, when you shall have a safe and secure *retreat* from all the boisterous Winds and Waves of Sin & Sorrow which beat upon you, and rowl'd over you in this tempestuous and troubled *Ocean*: and shall on the contrary be unspeakably ravish'd with the uninterrupted views and enjoyments of the blessed God, and the dear and transcendently lovely Lord Jesus; when your Love and Joy shall be perfected, and your Souls eternally satisfyed with the continual Emanations of the Divine Affection, the Conversation & Social Worship of holy Angels and blessed Saints throughout Eternity.

U S E II. Of Exhortation. But I turn me to offer a Word more to those Presumptuous Souls that have no Interest in this Happiness. Friends, I hope I may say with *Moses*, that I have this Day (according to my capacity) set Death & Life before you, the Blessing & the Curse: What do you think, will you or will you not, pluck out your right Eye, and cut off your right Arm? If you will still delay, or deceive your selves, then Hear O Heavens! and give Ear, O Earth! let all the Creation blush and be ashamed at your obstinacy! He that hath an Ear to hear, let him hear! O Earth! Earth! Earth! Hear the Word of the Lord, Jer. 22. 29. I call God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost to witness against you: I call the Sun in the Firmament to witness your bold and vile affront offered to God and his Christ; would not even that obedient and glorious

glorious Creature shrow'd his brighter beauty with a blushing Vail at the sight of your perverseness and obstinacy, if he could be made sensible of it: I call the *Elect Angels* that are in this Meeting House, to appear before Christ in the Day of his coming to Judgment, and witness your Murderous neglect of Christ and your Souls: I charge your *Consciences* to bear witness of this against your selves, and against one another. I need not call the *Devils*, for they will readily enough accuse you before Christ, when he shall be seated on his starry Throne, and you arraign'd at his dread Tribunal. Hear me, O Presumptuous Sinners! I adjure you by the most high God! that ye persist no longer in these Paths of Death: Hate me, and abuse me as much as you please, I don't mind your Reproaches, they are a Pleasure to me in this Life, and they will add to my Crown in the next: Only pity your own Souls. O ye Sons and Daughters of Shame and Death, bear with my Importunity a little longer, for by and by the Sun of Mercy will set upon you, and you will hear nothing but the loud roarings of the Devils, and the hideous Shrieks & Groans of the Damned, instead of Ministers: You Worldly minded Fleshly People; you Prophane Rebels; you Heathen Moralists, and Pharisaical lifeless Formalists; consider I beseech you, that it's dreadful to fall under the Curses of the Law, but more terrible to be expos'd to the Curses of the Gospel: It's awful to be Cursed by your *Creator*, but it's more so to be Cursed by your *Redeemer*. O Sinners! will you Sleep quietly on the *Battlements of Hell*? on the *brim of the Eternal Furnace*? Prithy lay your Ear to that Pit of Dragons, and hear how heavily the Damned groan, how piteously do they lament and moan over their former Presumption, which is now turn'd into endless Despair: Hear how loudly they roar, how frightfully they screech and yell; see how they rage and foam, and gnash their teeth with desperate madness; and look how the malicious Devils torment and rack those forlorn damned Castiffs; many of which had the same Priviledges which thou now enjoyest, and doubtless had as strong hopes of escaping this misery as thou hast at present; how soon! how soon! may'st thou be amongst them?

Consider, O Sinner! what a variety of *Methods* the gracious God has us'd with you to reduce you to your Duty and Allegiance; to reclaim you from your Sin and Ruin; and how ineffectual they have been through your *obstinacy* and *presumption*: How many Mercies has the good God heap'd

heap'd upon you? which instead of drawing you to Repentance (as according to the Laws of Reason and Grace, *Jude they should, Rom. 2. 4.*) have been abus'd by you to the encrease of your former Wickedness; thereby treasuring up to your selves Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God, *Rom. 2. 5.* How often has the Word of the living God been spoken to you, but in vain, *Isai. 53. Isai. 65. 2.* Think on these following Scriptures, and tremble under the just and sad apprehensions of thy Sin and Danger. *Prov. 1. 22. 24, 25, 26. 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.* *But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the God of this World hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God should shine upon them. Isai. 6. 2, 10.* Go and tell this People, hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not; make the Heart of this People fat, and make their Ears heavy, and shut their Eyes, lest they see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Hearts, and convert and be healed.

The Intreaties of a God and Saviour have had little or no Power upon you; what wretched *Shifts* did ye use to keep those Soul alluring and Heart melting Addresses of the condescending God, and wooing Redeemer from piercing your very Souls, and captivating your hard Hearts to the Obedience of Christ? Must you not have iron Bowels, and Hearts of Steel and Adamant, that can withstand such passionate Intreaties as these following? *Ezek. 33. 11.* Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his Way and live: Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil Ways; for why will ye die, O House of Israel? *Deut. 32. 29.* O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end. *Deut. 5. 29.* O that there were such an Heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my Commandments always, that it might be well with them and their Children for ever. *Ezek. 18. 30.* Repent and turn your selves from your Transgressions, so Iniquity shall not be your Ruin. *Micah 6. 3.* O my People, What have I done unto thee, and wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against me. What Reluctance does the gracious God express in giving up with a sinful People, *Hos. 11. 7, 8.* My People are bent to backsliding from me, though they called them to the most high, none at all would exalt him. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall

I deliver thee, Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? Mine Heart is turned within me, my Repentings are kindled together. How affectionately also are the Intreaties and Complaints of the Lord Jesus, *Matth. 11. 28. John 7. 37. If any Man thirst let him come unto me and drink. Matth. 23. 37. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee: How often would I have gathered thy Children together, as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings and ye would not. John 5. 40. Ye will not come unto me that ye might have Life, Luke 19. 41, 42. And when he was come near it, he beheld the City and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known in this thy Day, the Things which belong unto thy Peace, but now they are hid from thine Eyes.* How long have you kept the Lord Jesus pleading for Admission, *Rev. 3. 20. without the Doors of your worthless sinful Hearts, even till his blessed Head was wet with the Dew, and his Locks with the Drops of the Night, Cant. 5. 2.* While in the mean time, you readily embrac'd his and your own Enemies; his Tears, his Groans, his Wounds, his Blood, (which are great Arguments to love with an ingenuous Spirit, *Quot Vulnera tot Ora*) has not effectually softened your Itony Hearts; may not he say in Justice concerning you, *But those mine Enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me, Luke 19. 27.* How often have the Ministers of Christ intreated you with Tears in their Eyes, and Sorrow in their Hearts: Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God, *2 Cor. 5. 20. I beseech you therefore, Brethren, by the Mercies of God, that ye present your Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable Service, Rom. 12. 1. If there be therefore any Consolation in Christ, if any Comfort of Love, if any Fellowship of the Spirit, if any Bowels and Mercies, fulfil ye my Joy, Phil. 2. 1, 2. We then as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the Grace of God (the Gospel of Grace) in vain. For behold, now is the accepted Time, behold now is the Day of Salvation, 2 Cor. 6. 1, 2. But has not these Intreaties been in vain to you? Have you not almost broke their Hearts with your presumptuous Obstinacy on this Account? They are obliged to complain with *Isaiab*, that they labour in vain, and spend their Strength for nought, *Isai. 49. 4. And with Micah, Wo is me,**

for

for I am as when they have gathered the Summer Fruits, as the Grape gleanings of the Vintage, there is no Cluster to eat; my Soul desired the first ripe Fruit. The good Man is perished out of the Earth, and there is none upright among Men, Micah 7. 1, 2. All the Afflictions of the World are not so heavy on the Hearts of faithful Ministers, as this, that they travail and are in Pain, and yet bring forth nothing but Wind, *Isai* 26. 18. And has not the Denunciation of God's Threatnings had as little Effect upon your Fear, Security and false Confidence, as the other upon your Love. When you have heard the Words of the Curse, have you not said in your Hearts, if not with your Lips, that you shall have Peace notwithstanding? For God's sake apply to your Consciences the latter part of our Text: But has the Rod of God reformed you? No, the Lord has stricken them, but they have not grieved, thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive Correction, they have made their Faces harder than a Rock, they have refused to return, *Isai* 3. I charge and beseech you before God, and his elect Angels! by all the Curses of the broken Law, and despised Gospel! by all the Threats of an angry God! by all the Agonies of a crucified Christ! by all the Blessings purchased by his dying Passion; that you quit your presumptuous Confidence, which will fail you in your Extremity, *Job* 11. 20. But the Eyes of the Wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their Hope shall be as the giving up of the Ghost. And that you labour to take to Heart the Concerns of your poor Souls before it be too late, too late; and fly to Christ for Refuge.

If any ask for Directions to know how they may comply with the foresaid Entreaty? I would offer these following

1. Examine and search into your present State, and see what is the Course of your Life, and the Grounds of your Hope. To perswade you to the performance of this Duty, consider

1. It is the positive Command of God, *2 Cor* 13 5. *Zeph* 1. 1, 2.

2. It is the first Step towards Conversion and Salvation, *Jer.* 3. 13. *Luke* 15. 17.

3. Without it we shall be mistaken about our State, & the Consequences of such a Mistake are very dangerous and damning, as I have before express'd in the doctrinal Part of this Discourse. Is not this sufficient to excite any considerate Person to make a solemn and impartial Inquiry

into

into his State and Actions? While a Person is unacquainted with himself, he is fixed in a State of Death, and there remains no Probability of his Conversion and Salvation. It is easier to bring the openly prophane to Repentance than such Pharisaical and deceived Sinners, *Matth. 21. 32. Rev. 3. 15.* O let not the blessed God have cause to complain of us, as of the obstinate Jews, *Why then is this People of Jerusalem sliden back, by a perpetual Backsliding? They hold fast Deceit, they refuse to return. I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no Man repented him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done? Every one turned to his Course, as the Horse russeth into the Battle,* *Jer. 8. 5, 6.*

Having found upon Inquiry that your present State is bad, the Grounds of your Hope to be one or other of these sandy Foundations I mentioned before. Then

2. Judge your selves, that ye not judged, *1 Cor. 11. 31.* Condemn your present State, as Graceless, Christless, and Damnable, *Luke 15. 17.* See thy Way in the Valley, Know what thou hast done, *Jer. 2. 23.* Then

3. Endeavour to obtain a deep Sense of your present Misery; This is frequently recommended in the holy Scriptures, *Jer. 4. 3, 4. Joel 2. 12, 13. Jam. 4. 8, 9. Psalms 34. 19. & 51. 17. & 38. 4, 5, 6.* All that are savingly changed do once at least feel the Spirit of Bondage to fear, *Rom. 8. 15. & 7. 9, 10. Acts 9. 6. & 16. 29. & 2. 37.* And indeed this is many Ways necessary

1. To make us willing to forsake Sin (which separates between Christ and us) by discovering it's Danger and causing us to taste of it's Bitterness.

2. To embrace Christ. Until a Man has this Sight and Sense of the vile Nature and horrible Consequences of Sin, he will never deny himself, nor heartily forsake his Darling Lusts, and hasten to Christ, as the only Door of Hope, and Rock of Refuge, with vehement desire and labour; and so esteem every thing as dross and dung in comparison of him; all which is absolutely necessary to Salvation, *Luk. 3. 23. Gal. 5. 24. Isai. 32. 2. Isai. 26. 4. Isai. 55. 1, 2. Rev. 22. 17. Matth. 11. 28. Act. 14. 27.* This sense of your Sin and Misery which I would urge you to labour for, contains these things in it,

1. An affecting apprehension of Sin, actual and original; as also of the Misery of your present State in four Particulars, *viz.* the Certainty, Severity, Eternity, and Equity of it. 2. Fear of Punishment. 3. Sorrow for Sin. 4. Despair of

pair of Help in your Selves, or any other besides Christ,
 5. Shame because of your Impieties. 6. Hatred against
 Sin.

These I design to treat of, in the order now proposed,
 and I intreat you for Christ's sake to Examine your selves
 by them, conscienciously, and impartially, as in the Pre-
 sence of the Great GOD.

But I return to consider the first Particular proposed,
 Every Person that is savingly convinced, has an affecting
 Apprehension,

1. Of the Sins of his Life, both as to the Malignity of
 their Nature, and their damning Effects. An enlighten-
 ed Soul sees more Deformity in Sin, than in any Punish-
 ment due for it. O how odious and loathsome does it
 appear in their View, that they think no Words sufficient
 to express the Baseness of it's Nature? Sin becomes by
 the Commandment exceeding sinful, *Rom* 7. 13. i. e. the
 Law being applied to the Conscience, by the Holy Spi-
 rit, feelingly, discovers the odious Nature of Sin, *1 Tim*
 1. 13. *Gen* 34. 30.

2. The Pollutions of his Nature; that corrupt and un-
 clean Original, from which all actual Evils proceed, *Psalms*
 51. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Unconvinced and presumptuous Sinners
 take little Notice of their Heart Corruptions, they are
 apt to think that their Hearts are indifferent good, their
 principal Concern is to get and keep the outside clean,
 if they could but get that managed, they are apt to
 think they would be pretty well off, *Psalms* 36. 2. O but
 when God enlightens the Mind, their Sentiments are
 quickly altered, they are made to behold with Surprise
 and Confusion, innumerable Iniquities in their Hearts,
 which lay before hid and concealed from their Observance:
 Not only their actual Sins appear in their Scarlet Dress,
 and hideous Aggravations; as ranged in *Batallia* against
 them to condemn and confound them, *Psalms* 50. 21. But
 their original Corruption stands ready like a Lyon rampant,
 with open Mouth to devour them, *Eph* 2. 2, 3. It aston-
 ishes them to see so many Evils in their Hearts, which
 they as little dreamed were there before God enlighten-
 ed them, as *Hazael*, that he should commit those Barbari-
 ties the Prophet *Elisha* foretold, *2 Kings* 8. 13. And *Ha-
 zael* said, *But what is thy Servant a Dog that he should do
 this great Thing?* And as it astonishes them, so it afflicts
 them exceedingly, and makes them cry out, O! what a
 Wretch, a Monster in Sin am I! Never was there such a
 Creature

Creature on God's Earth before, 1 Tim 1. 15. *This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners, of whom I am chief. Observe, not was but am chief. At present I see I am one of the greatest of Sinners. How will such convinced Souls complain of their Hearts, which before they used to applaud; O my Heart! my Heart! never Man or Woman had such a Heart as mine, they would be willing to change Hearts with any Body, were it possible to be done, for they are apt to think that there is some peculiar Wickedness, and mystery of Iniquity in their Hearts, which is not in any others; this makes them complain to God in the Language of the inspired Apostle, in his Epistle to the Romans, Chap. 7. 23, 24. O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death.* You know one may see many Motes, or Atoms by a Sun Beam shining through a Crevise into a House, which they can't perceive by the light of a Candle, now the Light of a natural Conscience which is all the inward Illumination, that many unconverted People have abiding in them, is no more in comparison of the special enlightening Influences of the Holy Ghost, than the Light of a Candle to the Sun.

3. Of his lost, undone, and miserable State at present. *Luke 15. 17.* It is not enough to say, we are all in a lost State by Nature, alas! no it will not do, it will not do! You must see that you are this Moment in an undone Condition. *Luke 15. 24. This my Son was dead and is alive again, was lost, and is found.* He was not only lost really, but he saw that he was lost, and was much affected with his doleful Condition, before he was found by his Father; and it is such only that Christ came to seek and save, *Matth. 15. 24. Luke 15. 4, 6. Matth. 18. 11. comp. Luke 18. 10, 15.* It is such only whom Jesus carries on his Shoulder to the Sheepfold, and lays in his Arms, *Luke 15. 4, 5. Isa. 40. 11. He shall feed his Flock like a Shepherd: He shall gather the Lambs with his Arm, and carry them in his Bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. Matth. 11. 28. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* It is not said, Come unto me you vain, airy, high minded, hard hearted People, and I will give you rest; no, they must be in another Condition, before they be prepared for it; have their Wills bowed, their Hearts broken and distress'd for Sin. Particularly,

O

1, They

1. They must have a *Sight* of the *Certainty* of their *Misery*, if they die in the State they are in at present. A convinced Sinner sees and knows that if he is removed by Death, in his present Condition, he shall as surely die as God lives, as surely die eternally, as he at present lives naturally, as certainly be separated from God's gracious Presence in Eternity, by the judicial Curse of Christ, as his Soul shall be separated from his Body in Time, by the stroke of Death. While People are in a State of Blindness and Security, they are apt to flatter themselves with the Hopes of Mercy, though they keep the *old Heart*, and go on in the *old Course*, as that bold prophane Rebel in our Text, *I shall have Peace* though --- But true Peace and Safety was not a whit the nearer him, because he dreamed of it, and groundlessly expected it; nor Destruction the further from him, because he as foolishly as impiously disdain'd it. Too many, I fear follow this Man's Practice, and think, if they don't say, though I be not so precise in my Life, and have not got such a Change of Heart as some Saints pretend to, yet I hope to be saved as well as any of them; this is natural to unconvinced Sinners, and those unhappy Creatures will labour to prop up their false Hope, by all means possible. As particularly,

1. By a false Application of the Promises; like *Wasps* they draw Poison out of the sweetest *Flowers*. And

2. They encourage themselves by the Falls of pious People, and by many other Methods before mention'd. If one convinces some People by the dint of Scripture and Reason, that the most of Mankind are in a bad State at present, and does but say, that if they die in that State they shall be damned, they are presently surpriz'd, and imagine you to be a strange sort of a rash unmerciful Creature, and quickly reply with much compassionate Zeal for the good of Mankind! You must not judge, God is merciful; you can't tell what he will do with such People. Ans. Poor silly Souls, you are rather Objects of Pity than Anger! you seem to have Zeal, but alas, it is without Knowledge! *Rom. 10. 2.* Instead of it's being for God, it is against him; this general groundless Charity, has a direct Tendency to strengthen your own and others false Hopes, and keep the World in a dangerous Security; and this is privately the Reason, at least as to your selves, why it is so wide. In short, your Speech is either the Speech of an Ignoramus, a Fool, or an Infidel, either of

One that does not know the plain Current and drift of the Scriptures, or of one that cannot know through the Defect of a natural Understanding, or of one that will not believe through Prejudice. You must not judge. Ans. But may not we mention God's own Judgment as it is plainly reveal'd to us in his Word, if we may not, then we may shut up our Bibles. God is merciful. Ans. He is so, but will he shew mercy contrary to his Word? If so, then what will become of his Truth? O the Blindness of the ungodly World! But it is again objected, You don't know what God will do. Ans. Yes in this Particular we do, for he has told us, in as plain a Manner as can be express'd in his Word, what he will do; that without we believe, and are born again, and live a holy Life, we shall be damned, *Mark 16 16. John 3, 3, 5. Heb. 12, 14.* And must we not believe God's Word? I assure you it is the Devil's Cause you are defending, by your painted Antiscriptural *Charity*. The Truth is, by your Way of arguing, you prove your selves to be in a State of Blindness and Death, *Rev. 3. 17.* But on the contrary, such as are truly convinced, are obliged to cast away all the Rubbish upon which they built their Hopes before; their Mouths are shut, and all their old carnal Pleas are silenc'd by which they were wont to extenuate their Sins, or justify their State, *Rom 7 8, 9, 11, 13. & 3. 19.*

2. Of the Severity of it: That it is Misery unallayed with the least mixture of Ease, or Intermiſſion. The Severity of the Damned's Misery is set forth to us by several very dreadful Similitudes in the Scriptures. Such as

1. That of a *Worm* gnawing upon a Body, *Isai. 66. 24. Mark 9. 44 comp* which signifies the biting Reproaches of the Sinner's guilty Conscience, which will cleave to and prey upon the damned Soul, as Worms upon a dead Body: This Worm never dies, the Soul that is it's Food is immortal, and the Worm is bred in it, and one with it: Damned Sinners will be for ever accusing, condemning and upbraiding themselves with their own Folly, in rejecting the Happiness offered them to Eternity.

2. By that of a *Furnace*, *Matth. 13. 42. And shall cast them into a Furnace of Fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of Teeth.* Let us consider a little the Analogy, and Disagreement, between a Furnace and Hell.

1. A Furnace is a Place prepared for Torment, *Dan 3 6. So Tophet is ordained of old, yea for the King it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large, and the Pile thereof is Fire*

and much Wood, the Breath of the Lord like a Stream of Brimstone doth kindle it, *Isai. 30. 33. Rev. 21. 8.*

2. A Furnace heated very hot, as *Nebuchadnezzar's* was, is very terrible to such as are to be cast into it, for their Wickedness: But alas! *Nebuchadnezzar's* Furnace heated seven Times, nay seventy times seven were it possible, is but an obscure Figure of the Damned's Torments, in that Lake which burns with Fire and Brimstone, which is the second Death! *Rev. 21. 8.* For an earthly Furnace, though terrible, soon puts a Period to the Lives of the Patients, and consequently to their Sufferings, which must needs expire with their Life; but the Damned's Torments shall never terminate, though they are always dying, yet they shall never die. Miserable Souls they are, unconceivably tormented with a dying Life, and a living Death. Again, an earthly Furnace does but affect the Body, and is subject to Decays, it may be either quenched, or will abate through want of Fuel; but Hell's Furnace affects both Soul and Body in all it's Parts and Powers, and that without Intermision or End, *Rev. 14. 11.* And how can there be want of Fuel seeing the Breath of a God kindles the Flames, *Isai. 30. 33.* Nay, God himself is the Fuel that shall torment the Damned most. Hence it is said to be a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living God, *Heb. 10. 31.*

3. By *Darkness*, utter *Darkness*, Blackness of *Darkness* for ever, *Matth. 8. 12. Jude 5, 15.* Natural *Darkness* is uncomfortable, but it hath an End, and is succeeded with *Light*; so it was in *Egypt*; and also they may enjoy some Comforts in the Time of it; but this is without *Comfort*, and without *End*; they shall never see *Light* more, neither natural, spiritual, nor artificial.

2. Men may be in spiritual *Darkness* and saved for all, *Isai. 50. 10.* But the Gulph of Hell excludes all *Light* and *Hope*. Now convinced Sinners have an awful Apprehension of this, their Rest is broken by it, Sleep departs from their Eyes, and Slumber from their Eye-lids, in a great Measure; and even that little they have is very much disturb'd, with frightful Visions of a dreadful God, and an eternal Hell. *Job* complains of this in the seventh Chapter of his Book, Verse 14. *Thou scarest me with Dreams, and terrifiest me through Visions.* Even in the Day time their waking Thoughts present horrible Images of the burning fiery Furnace, and of those damned Creatures, that are rolling there on flaming Beds, and roaring hideously

ously through the Acuteness of painful Anguish! Sometimes bewailing their own *Madness*, and sometimes disgorge their impotent *Rage* against God!

3. The convinced Sinner has an affecting Apprehension of the *Eternity* of his Misery, that it will never, never End! O this heightens the Severity of it, and makes it intolerable, terrible, incomparable, unconceivable, inexpressible, and miserable Misery! How can a Person that has a Sight of this keep from crying out with the most doleful Accent, Great and good God! what shall I do to be saved? Men and Brethren, What shall I do to be saved? *Acts 2. 37.* Most holy Lord God! My Heart and *Flesh trembles because of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments,* Psalm 119. 120. Whither, blessed God, shall I hasten for Relief and Succour?

4. They have a Sight of the *Equity* of their Misery; that it takes it's Rise from their Sins, and is but the just Wages and Reward of their Iniquities; that they have brought it upon themselves, by their wilful Obstinacy against Light; they know in their own Consciences, that they were not forced to sin as they have done, that they have neglected those Duties of Religion, they might have performed, that God may justly take up the ancient Complaint against them, *O Israel thou hast destroyed thy self,* Hof. 13. 9. *What could I have done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done?* respecting outward Means: *And yet when I looked for Grapes, behold wild Grapes!* Isai. 5. In short, every thing seems to condemn such a Soul; when they look to the *Trees* or *Flowers*, or *brutal Herds*, these Creatures they see, though void of the Conduct of Reason, yet by a natural Instinct, answer the Designs of their *Being*; but they themselves, though endowed with rational Powers, have lived in Opposition to theirs. In short, there is nothing within the whole *Verge* of Nature, the Heavens, Earth and Sea, but what when considered, serves to increase their Pains! The Sun runs his appointed *Circle* without the least Variation; the proud angry Ocean keeps within his stated *Bounds*, and observes his stated Ebbs and Flows; the blustering Winds and pregnant Clouds follow divine Direction, Psalm 135. 7. *He causeth the Vapours to ascend to the Ends of the Earth, he maketh Lightnings for the Rain, he bringeth the Wind out of his Treasuries.* Psalm 148. There is an agreeable Harmony and ready Submission to the divine Pleasure, in all the Works of God; Men and Devils only excepted! from

whom only the most could be reasonably expected : but if they turn their Eye from the Book of *Nature*, the Works of God, to the Book of *Scripture*, the Word of God, they can find no Comfort there for them, but almost every Page wounds them deeper, pricks them like a *Nail*, *Ecc. 12. 11.* stabs them like a two-edged *Sword*, *Heb. 4. 12.* *Rev. 1. 16.* bruises them like a *Hammer*, *Jer. 23. 29.* scorches them like *Fire*, *Jer. 20. 9.* and frights them as *Claps of Thunder* and sudden *Flashes of Lightning* does the timorous, *Luke 10. 18.* But I proceed to consider a

2. Particular included in that Concern I would urge you to attain, which is *Fear*; a necessary Consequent of the former : A convinced Sinner is exceedingly afraid lest the fierce Anger of God overtake and consume him, because of his many and multiplied Transgressions ! *Isai. 6. 5.* *Then said I, wo is me, because I am a Man of unclean Lips, for mine Eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.* *Psalms 119. 120.* *My Flesh trembleth for Fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments.* *Rom. 7. 24.* *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death !* O Sinner ! if such holy Men of God, as I have now mentioned, were seized with such Fear and Anguish upon the Account of their Sins of Infirmity, what Reason hast thou to cry out, because of all thy base Abominations, thy presumptuous and crimson Iniquities. Suppose one that had slain a Man at a Venture, under the legal *O Economy*, saw the Avenger of Blood close at his Heels, ready to slay him, would he not flee with Fear and great Hast to the City of *Refuge* in order to save his Life ? Is it not much more so think ye with a convinced Sinner, for the Life of his Soul, his poor precious Soul lyes at Stake ; when he is made to see that he is guilty of Soul Murder, and beholds the destroying Angel of God's Vengeance, ready to give him the fatal *Blow*, when he beholds the *Bow of Justice bent*, arm'd with the pointed *Arrows of Death* ready to pierce his unarmed, shelterless Soul, and make it bleed to eternal Death ? Won't he labour with more Fear and Hast, to obtain an *Escape* ?

3. *Sorrow for Sin*, and it's threatened Punishment, *2 Sam. 24. 10.* This Sorrow must be

1. A *great Sorrow*, such as breaks the Heart for, and from Sin, *Zech. 12. 10.* *Joel 2. 12, 13.* *Isai. 66. 2.*

2. A *Gospel Sorrow* for Sin, as it is contrary to God, *Psalms 51. 4.* *Against thee, thee only have I sinned. He had sinned against Uriah and Bathsheba, against his own*

Soul.

Soul, his Body, his Family, his Kingdom, and against the Church of God; every of these Considerations, no doubt, swell'd the Tide of his Grief; but the principal Accent of his Sorrow, was that he had offended a gracious God. A true penitent mourns over Sin, more because of it's vile Nature, and the Wrong thereby offer'd against a great and good God; then the Punishment which follow it, either in this or the next Life. Cain and Judas were grieved for the penal Fruits of Sin. In the mean time, I freely confess, that a legal Sorrow, or a Sorrow principally flowing from slavish Fear, is much better than none at all, because as I shew'd before, it is a necessary Preparative for Conversion to God. Before the Fire begins to burn brightly, there is much Smoke, but where there is much Smoke, there is some Sign of Fire.

3. A sorrowing Sorrow. The true Penitent mourns that he can mourn no more; when he considers the Number and heinousness of his Sins, he is afflicted that his Grief is so small, his Tears so few, he wishes with the mourning Prophet *Jeremiah*, that his Head were Waters, and his Eyes a Fountain of Tears.

4. An effectual Sorrow. Such as

1. Imbitters Sin, makes those Lusts which were once sweet to the Taste, as Gall and Wormwood, *Jer. 2. 19.*

2. Such as restrains from Sin. *I kept my self from mine Iniquity*, Psalm 18. 23. It is not like that of *Pharaoh* and *Saul*, who were somewhat grieved for Sin, for a little time; but their Sorrow was as the morning Cloud, soon pass'd over, wore away speedily, and they returned again to Folly, *Exod 9. 27, 28. compared with 34, 35. 1 Sam. 26. 21.*

3. Such as is frequently renewed, for Sins of Infirmity; when the Penitent contrary to the general Byass of his Heart, by the Force of Temptation, or surprize, falls into Sin, his Sorrow is renewed for it; he hastens with an aching Heart, and weeping Eyes, to the Blood of Sprinkling for Relief, and is not satisfied until he get a Sense of God's pardoning Mercy. Psalm 58. 17, 18. *My Sorrow is continually before me. I will declare mine Iniquity, I will be sorry for my Sin.* That the Penitent's Sorrow is daily renewed for Sin, the Pattern of Prayer our Lord has left to guide us in that Duty, fully confirms: there we are directed to make daily Confessions of Sin. This necessarily supposes

1. That there will be daily Sins to confess.

It inforces the Necessity of confessing them. If we must confess them, why not mourn over them? But I hasten to the

4. Particular which is, *Despair of Help* in our selves, or any other besides Christ. *Luke 15, Acts 2. 37. Men and Brethren What shall we do?* These are the Words of Men under the greatest Anxiety, and reduced to a great Loss and Strait!

1. They saw something must be done, *What shall we do?*

2. They were willing to do any thing to obtain Peace and Pardon, and that immediately; they were not for adjourning their Convictions, to a more convenient Season, with *Felix*, no, they saw their Compliance must be now or never. Unconvinced Sinners will stand halting and halving between two Opinions; they are apt to think the Terms of the Gospel are hard forsooth! they are not willing to pluck out their right Eye, or cut off their right Arm: Aye, but when God opens a Sinner's Eyes, and lays as it were his Neck on the Block, then he will buckle to any Terms; much more to these easy and rational ones, proposed to us in the Gospel. *Psalms 110. 3. Acts 9. 6. And he trembling and astonished, said, Lord, What wilt thou have me to do?*

3. They were at a Loss what to do! They were even at their Wits end; in the greatest *Plunge* and *Maze*! like Persons lost in a pathless howling Wilderness, among the most savage Beasts of Prey, Lyons, Bears, Tygers, Vultures, and that knew not which way to travel to obtain an escape? and therefore they ask'd direction with the most anxious Importunity, *Men and Brethren, What shall we do?* Their Query is much like that of a Mariner, or Passenger, in the time of a violent Storm, in the dead of the Night, when the Sea being vex'd with tempestuous Winds, rolls Mountains high, so that he can hear nothing but the noise of the boisterous *Winds*, and angry *Waves*; in the mean time the *Heavens* are *black* with *Clouds*, and no Star appears; and the labouring Vessel springs a Leak, present Death presents it self, in all it's hideous Shapes; the disturb'd Deep opens it's murmuring Mouth, to swallow him up quick, and bury him alive in a watery Grave; and he can see at present no way of escape: With what agony of the most sensible Passion, would such a Man implore relief? O! what shall I do? Or it's like that of a Man, that is mortally stab'd; or one that has drunk deadly Poi-

son, and feels it working in his bowels, how would such Persons cry out with the utmost vehemence to a Physician, what shall I do? But perhaps some may object, that was in old times, when People were very ignorant, but now Men of Sense and good Education, know their Duty, that there is no need now of applying to others for direction, in such matters, and making a great phus and ado about Conversion; that it looks silly, and hypocritical to do so; indeed some weak ignorant People, may apply themselves to Ministers, if they will; but as for my self, I know my Duty, no Priest can pardon my Sins. Take an answer to thy Objection in the following Queries.

Quer. 1. Are we not now in these Gospel times born in a state of spiritual Blindness and Death, as well as those that liv'd in the days of *Methuselah*, or in the times of the Apostles?

Quer. 2. Will a good Education enlighten any Person in the saving knowledge of divine Truths, without the special concurrence of the Holy Spirit? I think not. How did *Moses* complain over *Israel*, that notwithstanding their peculiar Privileges, they were void of saving knowledge? *Deut. 29. 4. For the Lord hath not given you a Heart to perceive, and Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, unto this day.* And is not that as awful a Speech of the Lord *Jesus*, *Matth. 13. 14. 15. And in them is fulfilled the prophesy of Isaias, which saith, by hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand: and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive. For this people's Heart is waxed gross, and their Ears are dull of hearing, and their Eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them.* O it's to be fear'd! many of this Generation are under that dreadful Judgment of a penal obduracy, and judicial blindness! and it's well if the present Objector be not in the same woful Condition. *2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the god of this World hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

Well, but we are instructed by the Means of Grace we enjoy, that we should believe and repent; this some that heard the Apostles did not know, before they heard their advice.

Ans. w. It's true, I confess, that good Education, and Gospel Privileges, deserves our esteem, and demands improvement,

ness, upon the greatest *peril* for neglect; they are servicable in their Place, but not saving, without the special blessing of Christ. *Gal. 6. 15. 1 Cor. 3. 6, 8.*

Quer. 3. Tho' natural People have the advantage of hearing of Faith & Repentance, can they Believe or Repent now savingly because of that, by their own power, more than in the Apostles times? the Scriptures declare the contrary, *1 Cor. 5. 5. Phil. 2. 13. Job. 1. 13. Act. 5. 31. Ezek. 36. 26. Job. 15. 5.*

Quer. 4. Is not Conviction and Conversion the same in substance now, that it was of old? if they be not, you must prove how, and where, the terms of Salvation were altered, which I don't see how you can do, without producing a new Bible.

Quer. 5. What use would you make of that memorable instance of Peter's Hearers, who were so deeply concerned about their Souls, and made such earnest application for direction? Was not what was written aforetime written for our learning, *Rom. 15. 4.*

But you'll say, there's no need of such a stir and *phus* about Conversion, that it looks silly and hypocritical.

Answer Miserable Souls! it's true, you don't see the need of it. *Cant. 5. 9.* otherwise you would not live so unconcern'd as you do. But blessed be God there are some who see it. If there be not a necessity of earnest labour, then,

Quer. 6. Why are we commanded to *Strive to enter in at the strait Gate*? *Luk. 13. 24. To give all diligence to make our Calling and Election sure to us, and inform'd, that the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and that the violent take it by force?* *2 Pet. 1. 5. Matth. 11. 12.*

As to what you object against making a *phus*, or stir, I Answer, That such who are truly convinc'd will, and do endeavour as much as they can, to conceal their concern from such scornful, graceless Creatures as you are, for they know you are unacquainted with such things, and therefore disgust the very appearance of them; but is it not natural for a sick Man to complain of his Maladies, and seek direction and relief of such from whom he can with reason expect it? Truly, convinc'd Sinners make no more stir than needs must: Pray consider, they are upon a Rack of most exquisite pain. Whosoever thou art that complains of them, thou would make as great, if not greater moan, thy self, if thy Soul were in their Soul's stead; for all thy pride and stoutness, and thy present unjust reflections against God's People, wou'd be an addition to thy pain.

But

But you object, that it looks silly and hypocritical; this leads me to the next Query,

Quer. 7. Whether this bold Censure does not flow from ignorance of a special Work of God's Spirit in thy self, and enmity against God and his People? But you'll allow that weak, ignorant People, may make application to others for direction, then

Quer. 8. Whither by your own rule, you should not come among the first? seeing that great Pride is a sign of great Ignorance, both of God, and a Man's self. Does not *Solomon* that mirror of Wisdom, inform us, that a Fool is wiser in his own conceit, than seven Men that can render a reason.

Quer. 9. Whether Self denial be not a term of Christianity? and whether the denial of our own Wisdom (in point of dependance) be not a necessary part of it? The Scripture vouches both. *Mar. 8. 34. 1 Cor. 3. 18.*

But you'll object, that a Priest can't pardon Sin.

I answer, Truths may be spoken with a disdainful Air, and a bad design. It's true, neither a Priest nor a Fryar can pardon Sin, but in the mean time, its as true that they may counsel Sinners for their good, tho' they can't convert them; and it's equally certain,

1. That they are commanded to inquire into the state of their Flocks; as I've prov'd before.

2. That the People are commanded to make application to them, *Matth. 8. 4. Mal. 2. 7.* And

3. That this is confirm'd by the ever memorable and harmonious example of three Thousand at once, who did not talk after your saucy petulant manner; and what was the principal reason of this? why they were prick'd at the Heart, that was the reason; and thy whole heartedness, Sinner, is the cause of thy impudence!

Quer. 10. Is not your aversion to this duty, owing to one or other, or all of the following Causes? as,

1. Slavish fear, through Guilt: Be not you afraid (speak truly) that a Godly Minister, or private Christian, if you opened your Case to them, would disturb your Peace; your false Peace I mean: I doubt this is the case; if so, you are just like a Person that has got an old Ulcer, he's afraid of the Surgeon's Incision Knife or Lancet. Or,

2. Pride; that you think it below you, to stoop so far, as to open your Soul's case, to a godly Minister, or private Christian, and ask their advice: If this be your case, you are no Disciples of Jesus, otherwise you would have learn-

ed

2d, the lesson of Humility of him. *Matth. 11. 29.* Surely if you had been under the Hammer of Conviction, a sound and special Conviction, your haughty Hearts would have been humbled.

Or, 3. Indifferency and unconcernedness about your Souls. Q. if, you had but a sight of your Soul's danger, and preciousness, you would spare no pains to find relief.

1. You wou'd pray to God, with tears, and groans, that can't be uttered. *Ananias* was commanded by God to go to *Saul* of *Tarsus*, and this reason is given for it, *Behold he prayeth*, *Act. 9. 11.* Mr. *Henry's* Note upon this is very pertinent, "It's not said, he says his Prayers, but he Prays." Aye with many tears, and heavy groans, no doubt. *Psal. 6. 6. 43. 3. Rom. 8. 26.* That order of Men which he was now to be a Member of, are commanded to weep between the Porch and the Altar, *Joel 2. 17.* This direction blessed *Paul* observ'd afterwards, as he himself relates, *Act 20.* and no doubt he begun it now: He did not pray after the cold Pharisical manner he us'd to do, no, there's no notice taken of these dry, dead Prayers; but when he is convinced, then we hear of *Saul*, and that from God himself, *Behold he Prays!*

2. You wou'd confer with pious People about divine things. *Mal. 3. 16, 17.* You would resort to them. *Act. 4. 23.* And perform the Duties of Social Worship with them. *Cant. 6. 1.* Those that are now a terror to you, because of their strictness, whose Conversation you are shy of, wou'd be the desire of your Eyes, and the delight of your Heart; yea you would court their Company, which is now so wearisome to you. *Psal. 16. 3.*

3. Instead of being afraid of too much Trouble, which is your present miserable case, you would be afraid your Trouble was too little; afraid the Wound was not deep enough; and that your Troubles would go over before you got to Christ. — But as to your indifference, pray consider for Christ's sake, that dreadful passage of Scripture, *Rev. 3. 15, 16.* *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would, thou wert cold or hot: So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot; I will spue thee out of my mouth. How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God follow him, but if Baal then follow him.*

And now having remov'd an Objection which lay in the way, I return to consider further of the nature of Despair, that Self despair, I mean, which is necessary to Conversion, and

and Salvation; which contains these two things especially in it,

1. A Heart affecting apprehension of our own *inability* to help our selves out of that complicated Misery, which Sin has brought Mankind into, by any means whatsoever that we can use; whether Prayers, Tears, or any other Performances. *Phil. 3. 9.* A Person that is convinc'd, flies to his Duties directly, hoping for succour; and if he gets rest in them, without Communion with Jesus, he turns Formalist, which it's to be feared too many do, and so perish! These are the fine Christians, the World admires most! But if God has a design of Mercy for the convinced Person, he will shew him the defects of his Duties; and that they can't entitle him to any Promise of God; then he begins to be Sick of them, and loaths both himself and them.

2. They have an affecting view of the *emptiness*, impotency, and *insufficiency* of all other *Creatures*, to help them; whether in *Heaven*, or *Earth*, or in *Hell*. Now when a Sinner is strip'd of all these Dependencies, he is exceedingly bereav'd, and distressed! Affectionate Mr. *Doolittle* expresses the frame of such a disconsolate Soul, (I think inimitably,) in his Body of Practical Divinity, Page 191, 193. in these words, "Wo is me, a sinful Sinner, a miserable Sinner, a lost undone Sinner, a wretched condemn'd Sinner! What shall I do? The holy God condemns me; his righteous Law condemns me; the Angels in Heaven condemn me; the Devil's in Hell condemn me; and wo is me that ever I was born! My own Conscience my bosom Friend condemns me? Whither shall I go? What shall I do, that I may be delivered from my Misery? *Act. 16. 30.* O my Soul, what a Case am I in? In Misery, and can't help my self? In Misery, and cannot all the Creation help me? What shall I do, I am miserable, and must I be miserable? Is there no Hope? is there no Help? for a poor distress'd Sinner! O all ye Angels of God, behold what a miserable Man I am! thou *Sun* and *Moon*, and all ye *Stars* of Heaven, to what a miserable Creature do you communicate your Light and Influence? How is it that the Earth does not cleave asunder and swallow me alive, to let me down to the Damned, as my deserved and proper Place? Let all the Creation look and see, if I ben't a forlorn and a miserable Sinner." I have added what I judg'd further necessary to be mentioned concerning the nature of this Despair

Despair under the fifth direction, to which I refer the Reader.

5. Shame. A convinced Sinner is cover'd with shame as a Garment, because of his spiritual Nakedness: He sees himself void of real good, strip'd of original Righteousness, and poss. s'd of all manner of evil; *Rev. 3. 17. Rom 7. 18.* And therefore he is humbled in the dust, blushes, and mourns with penitent *Ephraim, Jer. 31. 19. Surely after that I was turned, I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, I was asham'd, yea even confounded: because I did bear the reproach of my Touth.* With *Bzra, Chap. 9. 6. O my God, I am asham'd, and blush to lift up my face to thee my God, for our Iniquities have increased over our Heads, and our trespasses grown up unto the Heavens.* With *Daniel, Chap. 9. 7. O Lord, Righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as it is this day.* With the Publican, who stood afar off, and wou'd not so much as lift up his Eyes to Heaven, but smote upon his Breast saying, *God be merciful to me a Sinner, Luk. 18. 13.* With the Prodigal, *Luk 15, 18. Father I have sinned against Heaven, & before thee, & am no more worthy to be call'd thy Son: make me as one of thy hired Servants.* With *Mary*, who in the sense of her Sin, being asham'd to come before Jesus, stood behind him weeping, *Luk 7. 38.* With *Job*, they abhor themselves in dust and ashes. *Job. 42. 6. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the Ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes.* It's observable here, that while *Job* was at a distance from God, under no immediate impressions of his Purity and Majesty, he pleaded hard in his own vindication, but when he came to have a near view of God, in that Glas he saw himself, and that with loathing and abhorrence. So the Prophet, *Isai. 6. 5. Ezek. 6. 9.*

6. Hatred against Sin, and that,

1. Universally. *Psal. 119. 104.* Habitual and prevailing love to any Sin, is inconsistent with the truth of Grace. The Hypocrite speaks of some beloved Sin, as *Naaman the Syrian, 2 King. 5. 18. In this thing the Lord pardon thy Servant:* But the true Penitent in the language of *Joseph the Israelite, Gen. 39. 9. How can I do this great Wickedness, and Sin against God.*

2. Implacably and constantly. Those who hate Sin but by fits, mock God, deceive themselves, and give the Devil the stronger possession of their Souls. *Matth. 12. 43.*

44. 45. If you ask what means you should use to obtain the aforesaid sense of your Misery?

1. Read the Holy Scriptures, which give you a dreadful *Map* of it; and that frequently and considerately, having first implor'd divine direction and assistance.

2. Read pious Writings, and such especially as are most searching and awakening. I would recommend in a special manner to your perusal, Mr. *Shepherd's* Sound Believer, Mr. *Mead's* Almost Christian, Mr. *Dyke* upon the Deceitfulness of the Heart, Mr. *Flavel's* Saint indeed, Mr. *Isaac Ambrose* upon Hell's Horrors, Mr. *Samuel Moody* on the Doleful State of the Damned, and Mr. *Alleine's* Alarm.

3. Hear faithful Ministers; for Daubers and Time-servers are not like to profit you. *Jer.* 23. 9, 21, 22, 32. 'Twas the observation of a worthy writer, "that our first Parents lost Paradise by hearing a Sermon, but it was from the Devil."

Now in order to get your Consciences awakened, and your Hearts chang'd by hearing the preached Word, take these Directions.

1. Be busy with God in the Morning upon your bend'd Knees before you go to hear, cry mightily to Jehovah that he would direct the Speaker to your Case, and that he would seal it by his Power: Beg of God that he would give you a hungry Heart after the Bread of Life offered to Sinners by the preached Word, *Psalms* 42. 1, 2. Spend the Sabbath Morning in Prayer, Reading, Meditation, and keep sending Groans to God all the Way you are going to his House; this would make the Word sweeter to you than Honey from the Comb, and more precious than refined Gold.

2. In the Time of Hearing, hearken to what is spoken with *Attention* and *Reverence*, *Acts* 16. 14. It is hard to hit a Bird on the Wing, so it is difficult to strike a wandering Hearer.

3. Hear with *Faith*, *Heb.* 4. 2. We should receive what is agreeable to the holy Scriptures as a Message from God, *Psalms* 89. 15. *John* 10. 4. *1 Thes.* 2. 13.

4. With *Application*; and take care that ye apply a right Portion; otherwise the Word will hurt you rather than help you; instead of Physick or Food, it will become Poison. You have no Interest in the Promises or Comforts of the Gospel, till you comply with the Terms of it, therefore apply them not, they are Children's Bread, they are Food for Christ's harmless Lambs, and chaste Doves,

Doves, not for unclean Goats, crafty Foxes, or cruel Wolves: Apply the Threatnings to your selves, for they are your Portion while you remain in this State; this is the Way to be awakened out of your deep Sleep.

5. With *Submission & Obedience*, *Jam. 1. 22, 24.* Again, in the Time of Hearing it would be serviceable, I think, to send up to God some sudden ejaculatory Petitions for Light and Help. **But**

3. After Hearing, pray don't talk of this or that Person's Cloaths, or any worldly Matters, but talk of Jesus, as the Disciples did when they were going to Emmaus, and it's probable you will find the Benefit of it as they did. The Sheep chews it's Cud, but the Wolf, the Fox and Swine, do not. Meditate on what you have heard, and confer about it with others, this would be both a profitable and pleasant Way of spending sacred Time; it would bring to your Remembrance Things you had forgot, and fix what you retained the deeper in your Memory, and so prevent the Devil (that grand Bird of Prey) stealing all the Seed of the Word from you; unless we digest the Meat we eat, it is not like to nourish us; and when you get Home to your Houses, go into your Closets, and cry to the Father of Mercies for a Blessing on what you have heard, that the Truths of God may abide in the Imagination of the Thoughts of your Hearts, and appear in the Fruits thereof in your Practice, to the Honour of the most high God, your present Peace and future Happiness.

4. Direct. If you are under any Convictions about the Badness of your State in general, or of any of your Actions in particular, *Hold not the Truth in Unrighteousness*, strangle not your Convictions by Delays, or any other of those Methods before mentioned, lest you feel the Force of divine Vengeance, *Rom. 1. 18.* O consider! that this Practice of quenching the Spirit is,

1. An *ungrateful Practice.* Is this the Way you requite Jehovah for his unmerited and forfeited Goodness, in offering Salvation to you, and inviting you to accept of it? That instead of accepting his Love motions, you labour to strangle and murder them, O monstrous Ingratitude! *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish People and unwise? Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee and established thee?* *Deut. 32. 6.*

2. A *rebellious Practice.* It is a bold breach of God's positive Precept, *1 Thess. 5. 19* and that against the kindest Expressions of Love and Mercy; when the great

King

King of Heaven, whom you have offended by innumerable Transgressions, comes and offers you a free Pardon, and works Inclinations in your Hearts to receive it; you by this Practice do as it were maliciously fly in the Face of God, and insolently kick against his Bowels of Pity; O abhorred Wickedness!

3. *A mad Practice.* For by this you enter the Lists with the almighty *Jehovah*; you fight with the sovereign Majesty of Heaven and Earth! And what think you is like to be the Fruit of this unequal Contest? *Isai. 27. 4. Who would set the Briars and Thorns against me in Battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.* Is it not the Perfection of Madness to contend with one that is infinitely stronger than your selves? *Isai. 45. 9. Wo unto him that strive with his Maker: let the Potter strive with the Potsherd of the Earth.*

4. *A murderous Practice.* It is Murder, Soul-Murder, wilful Soul-Murder; when you stifle and quench these Convictions about the Danger of your State, or Wickedness of your Actions, which the good God with much Labour and Love has kindled in your Consciences, *Ezek. 34. 8, 9. & 33. 11.* One may be guilty of Murder by preventing Life, as well as by destroying it when formed. Thus those Women who expell their Conceptions by unjust Methods, lest their Wickedness should be brought to light, are undoubtedly guilty of Murder in the Sight of God; and much more those who suppress the beginning Convictions of Sin. O! will ye be guilty of this inhumane and unparell'd Barbarity against the blessed God, against your selves, against your poor Souls? Will you imbrue your Hands in your own Blood? Won't this cry from the Earth to God against you? *Gen. 4. 10.*

5. *A Practice grieving to God.* *Eph. 4. 30.* O do not cause him to withdraw his gracious Presence, by your unkind Neglect of, or Opposition to his Love-motions, or by refusing to hearken to his Counsels, and rebelling against his Government!

6. *Destructive to your selves.* *Prov. 1. 21. & 33. & 29. 1.* It destroys your Peace both in Health and Sicknes, in Life, at Death, and in Eternity. *Isai. 57. 20, 21. But the Wicked are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest; whose Waters cast up Mire and Dirt. There is no Peace saith my God unto the Wicked.* Your oppressed Consciences will trouble you in Health, according to the Scripture now mentioned, but at Death probably much more, then will they

they give you (in all likelihood) ghastly Griets for your bloody barbarous Wickedness, in strangling their repeated Cries, and thereby murdering your own Souls, but if not on Earth, they will in Hell repay you the Wages of your Blood guiltiness. *Isai 5. 11. Wo unto the Wicked, it shall be ill with him: for the Reward of his Hands shall be given him.* *Matth. 8. 12. & 13. 42. 50.* By opposing the Convictions of the Spirit, you will cause him to withdraw, and that for ever, *Gen. 6. 3.* Now without his Help you can neither perform the Duties of Religion to Acceptance, or conquer the Corruptions of your Nature, and resist the Temptations of Satan to purpose; all which is necessary to Salvation, *Rom. 8. 13.*

7. *Pleasing to your mortal Adversaries.* Nay, it is no less than a cruel Conspiracy with Satan the grand Enemy of your Souls, for thereby you consent to and conceal his Intreagues, and so shew that you love Death, *Prov. 8. 36.*

8. But if on the contrary you cherished the Motions of the Holy Spirit, the Issue would probably be your Conversion and Salvation. *Isai. 55. 7.* But notwithstanding these Arguments, some are so cruel as to labour to extinguish Soul-troubles, by indirect and unlawful Methods. What may be the Causes of this abhorred God provoking, Soul damning Wickedness?

1. One Reason is this, the Fire is too hot for some; it scorches and pains them, and therefore they endeavour to get rid of it as soon as they can; like Felix who when he was brought into a Fit of Trembling by Paul's preaching, he wanted to hear no more of it at present, but said he, when I have a more convenient Time, I will call for thee, *Acts 24. 25.*

2. Some through fear of *Discredit*, or *loss of worldly Goods*, *2 Tim. 4. 10.*

3. Some out of Love to present Ease, or other Lusts.

As Men put out the Fire when they have a Mind to go to Bed, as Mr. Keach observes. Do not Men (says the same Author) quench the Fire when the Pot boils over; even so when the Fire of the Spirit is so hot and strong, that it is like to boil out a beloved Lust, which they prized for it's profitableness, like a right Hand, or for Pleasures, like a right Eye, then they hasten to lessen the Fire, and like Judas think there need not be so much waste. Now what a vile thing (says Mr. Polewhale) is this, to quench the Fire of the Spirit, rather than the Scum and Filthiness of Sin should be work'd and

and boiled out thereby. See how God threatens such, Ezek. 24. 6, 11, 13. But on the contrary,

5. Labour to increase them by considering in the most solemn Manner, the following Particulars.

1. The Curse, the Indignation of God which you are exposed to, Gal. 3. 10. *John 3.* And all your other Miseries which I before described. Consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in Pieces, and there be none to deliver you, Psalm 50.

2. Think upon the Offers you have of Redemption from them in the Gospel of Christ.

3. O think upon their short Duration and uncertain Continuance; our Time and golden Opportunities are soon elapsed, and impossible to be recalled, *Fronte capellata post est Occasio calva.* What is our Life, but as a Vapour which appeareth but for a little time, & then vanisheth away? James 4. 14. Therefore be intreated poor unconverted Sinners to call upon God while he is near, and seek him while he may be found, *Isai. 55. 6.* For behold, now is the accepted Time, behold, now is the Day of Salvation, 2 Cor.

6. 2. O think, and think again, upon the Vastness of that Eternity of Pain and inexpressible Misery, which infallibly ensues your vile Abuse of Time! O Eternity! Eternity! thou infinite Abyss of unconceivable and endless Time, what humane Understanding can grasp thee! Our very Thoughts in their most aspiring Flights are mazed and lost in conceiving of thee!

3. Dwell upon the Thoughts of the unsatisfactory and fading Nature of all temporal Things. The Fashion of this World passeth away, saith the Apostle, *James 1. 11.* They can't help thee in thy greatest Extremity. As

1. Under deep Convictions of Conscience offer a Man Money to be easy, and it would increase his Pain. O! it's just like offering a hungry Man Stones instead of Bread.

2. At Death. How little Comfort can a Man take of his Possessions, which he is going to bid an eternal Farewell to, and which cannot any whit mitigate or allay his Pain; will it be a Comfort then for a Man to think that he has been such a trusty Drudge to Mammon, or other Lusts? I believe not. And

3. What Comfort will such Things yield at the general Judgment? At these three Periods all the Sinner's Floods of earthly Waters fail, and cannot yield one drop of Comfort to the thirsty Soul. O but the Springs of Grace yield

eternal Sweets, their crystal Streams not only follow and refresh us here, in all the Difficulties we are exposed to in this parched Desert, but do accompany us to the eternal World, and there yield a more full and lasting Delight, *Rev. 22. 1. And he shewed me a pure River of Water of Life, clear as Crystal, proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb.*

6. Consider seriously the dreadful Danger of Apostacy from any good Beginnings you have; as it is expressed in those awful Places of Scripture, *Matth. 12. 43, 44, 45. Heb. 10. 26, 38, 39. 2 Pet. 2. 18, 19. Jude 12. Luke 9. 62. Remember Lot's Wife.*

Direct. 6. You must despair wholly; not of God, as if he either could not, or would not help you, for he is great in Power, and rich in Mercy, *Jer. 32. 17, 18. Psalm 43. 5. Exod. 34. 6, 7.* nor of the Mediator, as if he were not sufficient to relieve and save you; for he is the Wisdom and Power of God, *1 Cor. 1. 24.* In him are Treasures of Wisdom, and a Fulness of Power, even the Fulness of the Godhead bodily, *Col. 1. 19. Eph. 1. 7. Col. 2. 9.* But of your selves. And particularly,

1. Of your own Wisdom. Hence it is said, that we must become Fools, that we may be wise, *1 Cor. 3. 18.* i. e. we must be sensible of our Inability to direct or guide our Steps in the Way to Life, and therefore feel the Want of Christ as a Prophet, to instruct and teach us those Things that belong to our Peace and Salvation, *Lord, What wilt thou have me to do?* said convinced Paul, *Acts 9. 6.* Who-soever hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto Jesus, and those only, *John 6. 45.*

2. Of your own Power. Because without Christ ye can do nothing, *John 15. 4, 5.* While you are in your unrenewed State, ye are dead in Sin, *Eph. 2. 1, 5, 5.* unable so much as to think a good Thought, *2 Cor. 3. 5.* It is God that works both to will and to do in any, and that of his own good Pleasure, *Phil. 2. 13.*

3. Of your own Righteousness; whether natural, civil, moral, religious, privative or positive; as utterly insufficient to purchase and procure your Redemption; you are more than ten thousand Talents indebted to divine Justice, and you have not one single Mite to pay it with, *Matth. 18. 24, 25.* Your own Privileges and Performances which you formerly counted Gain, you must now count no better than Loss and Dung, *Phil. 3. 1, 9.*

And

4. And of all Things else, besides God and the only Médiator, 1 *Tim.* 2. 5. without whom there is no Salvation, *Acts* 4. 12. *John* 14. 6.

5. You should so despair of all those Things mentioned, as to condemn your selves, 1 *Cor.* 11. 31. I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son, *Luke* 15. 17, 18, 19.

6. And rest satisfied with any, even the most abject Condition in which it shall please God to place you. Ver. 19. *Make me as one of thy hired Servants.* This Despair which I have mentioned, is many Ways necessary, in as much as on the one hand, God will not grant us Pardon without it, *Gal.* 5. 4. *Rom.* 10. 3. And on the other hand, without it we are not willing to seek Salvation only with God and the Mediator; for it is natural to us to seek it rather any way else than in Christ where it is only to be found, until we be storm'd out of all our false Refuges, *Hos.* 5. 13. *Luke* 15. 14, --- 17. But more particularly,

1. It is honourable to God and the Mediator, when we seek all from God, and ascribe all the Glory to him, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. *Psalms* 115. 1. and nothing to our selves, 2 *Cor.* 3. 5. It is reasonable that the blessed Jesus should consult his own Honour, as well as his People's Happiness in his Dealings with them: Now this is the most effectual Method to secure it, which at once removes all Cause of Boasting from the Creature, and puts the Crown of our Happiness upon the Head of free Grace.

2. Profitable to us. As it is highly conducive to illustrate the divine Honours, so to subserve our great Interests, it checks aspiring Arrogance, excites us to almost an invincible Patience, and inspires us with the most ingenuous Gratitude, 2 *Cor.* 5. 7. *Luke* 15. 19. *Psalms* 116. 34. *Rom.* 7. 24. Now that you may obtain this salutary Despair, which is so contrary to your former Presumption, and so necessary to your eternal Salvation; think with your selves that you are universally corrupted and depraved; He that is born of the Flesh is Flesh, *John* 3. 6. That in you, that is in your Flesh, there dwells no good, *Rom.* 7. 18. That you are dead in Sin, possess'd with, and govern'd by the Devil, under God's Curse and Wrath, *Ezek.* 37. 23. *Eph.* 1. 1, 2. *Acts* 26. 18. *John* 6. 70. & 3. 3. That you can do nothing that is spiritual, good and acceptable to God, nothing by which ye can lay claim to Happiness, either by a Merit of Congruity or Condignity, i. e. either by the intrinsic Worth of your Work, or by Virtue of

any Promise of God, *Rom. 5. 6* *Eph. 2. 12.* As more particularly, you can no more believe savingly, than you can toss the Earth off from it's Axis, or raise the Dead; for saving Faith is the Gift of God, *Eph. 2. 8.* the Fruit of the Spirit, *Gal. 5. 22.* only given to the Elect, and wrought in them by the Power that raised the Dead, *Tit. 1. 1.* *2 Theff. 3. 2.* *Eph. 1. 19, 20.*

2. You cannot repent savingly; You have a Heart which you can no more break than you can draw Waters out of a Flint: Repentance is Christ's Gift, *Acts 5. 31.* It is God's Prerogative, and his only to give an Heart of Flesh, *Ezek. 36. 26.* You will say, then why does God require these Things of us? I answer, that though you have lost your Power of obeying through your own Default, and voluntary Apostacy; yet God has not lost his Power of commanding the Creatures; Sin cannot invalidate the Creator's Claim of Right: But what if you could do much more than indeed you can, what could this do towards your Salvation, seeing all your Performances are imperfect? *Isai. 64. 7.* *James 3. 2.* *Matth. 25. 5.* And that the Law requires an absolute and perfect Obedience, both extensive and intensive, in Thought, Word and Action, and curses for the least Failure, *Gal. 3. 10.* *Matth. 22. 37.*

Obj. But such as enjoy the Gospel are not under the Law, but under Grace. *Ans.* The Assertion, if taken universally, is false: It is not the enjoying Gospel-Privileges, but a Compliance with Gospel Terms that frees any from the Curse of the Law, *Rom. 8. 1* & *6. 14, 17.*

Again consider, that if you could perform commanded Duties perfectly, which in this Life is unattainable, is not this a Debt you owe to God as your Creator, Preserver and Benefactor? Now how can the Payment of one Debt discharge another? How can this remove the Guilt of your original Trespas? *Gen. 2. 17.* *Rom. 5. 12.*

Direct 7. Be not *hasty* and impatient in labouring to get rid of your Troubles; any how, right or wrong. If a Woman should endeavour to provoke her Travail-Pains before the proper Season, she would be in great Danget of destroying both the Child and her self: Wait God's appointed Time, in his appointed Way. Consider, God has waited long upon you, for that which was nothing but your *Duty*: And is it not reasonable that you should wait upon him without Grudging for that which is pure *Mercy*, for that which you can no Ways merit? If ever you obtain an Interest in God's pardoning Love, you won't think

think much of your Labour in seeking it: The Harvest will sufficiently recompence all the Pains you have been at, if they had been ten thousands times more.

Direct 8. Try carefully the *Comforts* you get by the Word; if they don't excite you to Humility, Thankfulness, Holiness in Heart, and Heavenliness in Conversation and Practice; trust them not; and particularly, beware ye mistake not, in taking a natural Ease for a spiritual: Some People when they are in Troubles, will weep much, which gives Vent to their Grief; and this alas! the poor Souls foolishly imagine to be spiritual Consolations!

Direct 9. Don't be satisfied with the bare Performance of Duties, unless ye find Christ in them, for these are the Way to Rest, and not the resting Place it self. Beware of being satisfied with your own Resolves, to be, and do better; rest not upon them, which it is to be feared, many do, and so perish, *Acts 24. 25.*

Direct 10. *Shun* the Company of ungodly People; I mean unnecessary Conversation with them: Forsake the foolish and live, and walk in the way of understanding. *Prov 9. 6.* Remember and imitate the memorable *Pattern* of the Psalmist's practice, *Depart from me ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God,* *Psal 119. 115.* Bad Company has been the ruin of Thousands, of whom once better things were expected. *Prov. 13. 20.*

Direct 11. Associate your selves with pious Persons: For as Solomon observes, *Prov. 13. 20. He that walks with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroy'd.* And if you are under Troubles, open your Case to them, or to some godly Minister. *Act. 2. 37.* Be not ashamed to do this: It's your Duty, and your Honour; and as it will be pleasing to them, so it's likely it will be very profitable to you. Alas! many poor Souls thro' bashfulness, and the Temptations of the Devil together, do themselves great injury, deprive themselves of much comfort, and necessary direction, by concealing the distress'd Circumstances of their present Condition from the Friends of God; a little Spark is like to be blown up to a Flame if it had vent; whereas on the contrary, if it be confin'd entirely to their own bosoms, it's in danger of being smother'd; but in the mean time, least you be misguided, see that these Persons you open your Hearts to, have the evident signs of powerful and experimental Christianity; and pray examine the Directions they give you by the written Word.

Direct. 11. Open your Case to God by fervent and importunate Supplication: Cry to him Day and Night for pity and pardon: *Change me, O God, and I shall be changed, Draw me, and I will run after thee,* Cant. 1. 4. Confess your Sins, with shame and sorrow, in the Prodigal's and Publican's Language, and the demerit of them: 'I confess most high God! thou mightest have honour'd thy Justice in my Destruction, long ago, and have sent me quick to Hell: How strange and astonishing is thy Patience! O that it might lead me to Repentance!' Confess your impotency to help your selves, and bewail over the multiply'd defects of all your sacred Services, and plead with God for Mercy to this effect: 'Gracious Jehovah, thou hast been found of those that sought thee not; O! wilt thou not be found of those that endeavour to seek thee? I confess, most Holy God! that I deserve to be forever separated from thy gracious Presence, and that I can do nothing to merit thy Favour; but I beg for Mercy through the Redeemer's Blood: Lord if thou wilt thou canst make me clean: O make me an Instance of thy free Grace, a Monument of thy Mercy to all Eternity'. Plead the Encouragements that Christ has given to the weary and heavy laden Soul, and to such as see themselves in a lost state, if thou art in such a condition.

To conclude; I shall only add two Motives to excite your Compliance with the Exhortation and Directions, viz. The Necessity of it, and the Advantages you are like to get by it.

1. The Necessity; which is absolute.
2. The Advantages; which are great.

1. The Necessity is absolute both in respect of the command and mean. Jer. 8. 7. for without it you shall perish in your delusions. *Isai. 44. 20. Feb. 11. 20.* Without it God will tear you in Pieces. *Hos. 15. 7. I will be unto them as a Lion, as a Leopard by the way will I observe them: I will meet them as a Bear bereaved of her Whelps, and I will rent the Caut of their Heart.* A Lion is a terrible, majestic, strong, just, and generous Creature: When the Lion roars the Beasts of the Forest tremble. Amos 3. 8. He triumphs over his Prey, as if he challeng'd any to attempt it's rescue; and none indeed dare pretend to it, he being the King of Beasts; so with God is terrible Majesty, Job 37. 22. and everlasting Strength, *Psal. 96. 6. Honour and Majesty are before him: Strength and Beauty are in his Sanctuary,* Job 9. 19. and Job 12. 13, 14. 16. *Psal. 29. 4. The Voice of the Lord is powerful, the Voice of the Lord is full of majesty,* Joel 3. 16.

The Lord also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his Voice from Jerusalem, and the Heavens and Earth shall shake. When Jehovah speaks the Earth trembles, and it's deep Foundations move; when he is wroth all Nature is in the utmost disorder, *Psal. 18. 7, 15.* He bows the Heavens and comes down, makes Darkness, Clouds and Cherubs, his Pavilion; rides swiftly upon the wings of the Wind, and easily dissipates his Enemies; by shooting barbed Arrows, burning Thunderbolts, and blazing Lightnings at them. *Psal. 18. 13, 14.* The Hills melt like Wax at the presence of the Lord, of the Lord of the whole Earth, *Plal. 97. 5.* When God but touches the Mountains they smoke, *Psal. 144. 5.* The everlasting Mountains are scattered, and the perpetual Hills do bow, *Hab. 3. 6.* Yea he weighs the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Balance! Grasps the great Ocean in the hollow of his Hand! and meets out the Heavens with a Span, *Isai. 40. 12.* The Pillars of Heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof, *Job 26. 11.* Who then can stand before this great and dreadful God? *Dan. 9. 5.* Who shall take the Prey from him? whose Strength is infinite and everlasting! *Hof. 5. 14.* For I will be unto Ephraim as a Lyon: and as a young Lyon to the House of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away, I will take away and none shall rescue him.

It's observ'd of the Lyon that he will not fall upon any Creature unless he be much provok'd, and that he will not destroy those that submit to his mercy. So indeed God's Patience is great, otherwise the World wou'd soon become a terrible Theatre, an Academa, a Field of Blood, a Scene of Desolation and Horror; but being abus'd, it will have a dreadful Period, abus'd Mercy will turn into inflam'd Severity; Wrath will break forth upon you suddenly, unless you in time submit to mercy, *Luk. 12. 39, 40. 2 Per. 3. 10.* And as a Leopard by the way will I observe them. A Leopard is a very quick sighted (*Lynx Visu*) swift, and subtle Creature, *Hab. 1. 8.* He waits by the Road, and as some say hides his Head that he may the more securely and suddenly seize his Prey: Thus if you persist in a sinful Security, you may expect that God will employ his Wisdom as well as his Power against you to hasten & heighten your deserved ruin; he will watch over you for evil, and not for good, *Jer. 44. 27.* Catch you, and seize you by the way, with the gripe of his Justice, when you are going fearlessly and securely on, little dreaming of such a blow; so he did Pharaoh that haughty Monarch, in all his martial Pomp.

Pomp and bravery, and suddenly entomb'd all his Honours in the deep. *I will meet them as a Bear bereav'd of her Whelps.* A Bear is naturally a fierce Creature, 2 *King.* 2. 24. But being bereav'd of her Young whom she greatly affects, 2 *Sam.* 17. 8. she is exceedingly enrag'd, *Prov.* 17. 12. which shews with what inflam'd severity God will meet the impenitent and presumptuous Sinner, as a roaring Lyon, and as a bereaved Bear, and he will make you feel (so continuing) with a witness the fruits of his Wrath, for he will *rent* the Caul of your Heart. To awake you & excite you, if possible, to comply with the Exhortation and Directions, I shall attempt to open and explain what is contained in this terrible Phrase of *rending* the Caul from the Heart, and what is imported by it. The expression is most awful and solemn! It informs us,

1. That God will slay his Enemies, *Luk.* 19. 27. *Isa.* 1. 24. The Heart being a vital and one of the most noble Parts, a violent Death must needs ensue its Separation; for it is in the Body of Man, like the main Spring in a Watch, when that's remov'd all it's motion ceases.

2. Tear them in Pieces. *Hos.* 5. 14. *For I will be to Ephraim as a Lion; and as a young Lion to the house of Judah: I even I will tear and go away; I will take away and none shall rescue him.* *Psal.* 50. 22. *Now consider this ye that forget God (which all presumptuous Sinners do) least I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.*

3. That God will pluck out their Hearts: This is necessary in order to separate the Caul from them.

4. By this expression of rending the Heart, some understand the spiritual Plagues and Judgments God inflicts upon his Enemies. So Mr. Henry, "He will send such Judgments upon them as shall prey upon their Spirits, and consume their Vitals, such as will fill the Soul with confusion and tear it in pieces." And to this purpose speaks Arius, Montanus, and Mr. Barroughs. Luther thus glosseth upon the words, "The Lord will do as a Lion doth; He more immediately will strike out their Hearts with spiritual Plagues; and as for their Estates, and Bodies, he will leave them to other Beasts: Their Hearts were grown fat, they had a film about their Hearts; and Instruction could not get to their Hearts; but God will tear that Caul, that Film from off their Hearts." So that the expression seems to import,

1. The removal of their presumptuous Stupidity; that hardness and insensibility which Presumers have contracted by

a long course of sinning, shall then be speedily, totally, and eternally removed: the *Caul* shall be rent from the Heart; those who are now past feeling, *Eph.* 4. 19. whom all the threats of a God will not pierce, or alarm, but still they sit like stupid Blocks, and unconcerned Stones, in hearing the most dreadful menaces, shall be fill'd with the most exquisite Pain! when those Threatnings they now despise shall be put in execution! for then Sinners! presuming Sinners! the *Caul* shall be rent from your *Hearts*, & all your painful Passions which are now frozen and congeal'd, shall then be set in a perpetual commotion. *Mat.* 8. 12. *Chap.* 22. 13. 24. 51. *Chap.* 25. 30. *Luk.* 13. 28.

2. The suddenness of those Judgments God inflicts upon presuming, ungrateful, impenitent Sinners; as a Garment is suddenly rent in the Hands of a strong Man: How secure soever you are in your own imagination, yet surely you are set in slippery Places from which except ye turn speedily, you shall have a certain, sudden, and eternal downfall, among Devils and Damned Spirits! *Psal.* 73. 18, 19, 20. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou calledst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment; they are utterly consumed with terror; as a dream when one awaketh; so O Lord, when thou awakest thou shalt despise their image. Upon this last verse learned *Musculus* thus glosseth, page 535.

" *Uitur similitudine omnium*
 " *apertissima, somni, viz. Dor-*
 " *mientis; Et imaginis: ita*
 " *ut similitudine somni depingat,*
 " *quam sit inanis impiorum feli-*
 " *citas, quibus in hac Vita instar*
 " *dormientium tantisper bene est,*
 " *dum veluti in vanitate sua, et*
 " *felicitaris opinione dormiunt, et*
 " *inter somniendum imaginem*
 " *quandam felicitatis imperitis*
 " *ac carnalibus hominibus, non*
 " *ipsam felicitatem obijciunt,*
 " *quam illi pro tempore quidem*
 " *suspiciunt. Et admirantur:*
 " *verum mox soluto vane felicitatis*
 " *somnio, solvi quoq; reperit*
 " *inane illius spectrum, non pos-*
 " *sunt aliud, quam ut quos antea*
 " *suscipiebant tum incipiant in*
 " *corde contemnere.*

The Psalmist useth the most apt similitude of sleep, and an image: in order to represent the vanity of the ungodly's happiness, with whom it is only well for a little time, in this Life, like People asleep, while they slumber in their vanity and conceit of happiness; and in their sleep carry before them but a certain image, or shadow of happiness, to amuse the ignorant and ungodly; which they for a time behold, and admire, but the dream of happiness being broke and it's image vanish'd, they can't but contemn those whom they before admir'd,

The Presumer Detected,

Hear you Presumers what God says to you, Deut. 32. 35. *To me belongeth Vengeance, and Recompense; their Foot shall slide in due Time, for the Day of their Calamity is at Hand, and the Things that shall come upon them make haste.* Jer. 23. 12. *Wherefore their Way shall be unto them as slippery Ways in Darkness, they shall be driven on and fall therein, for I will bring Evil upon them.* Consider O Presumer, that provoked Justice lies in Ambush to give thee a sudden and therefore a terrible Surprize! Jer. 44. 27. Dan. 9. 24.

3. The Irresistibility of them, or their uncontroll'd Force and Violence. O Sinner! thou canst no more withstand the Execution of God's Justice, "than a Lamb can make it's Part good against a Lyon, no more than a feeble Rag is able to prevent its being torn, when in the Hands of an enraged Giant.

4. The Acuteness of the Pain occasioned by them. Would it not cause intolerable Pain to have one of your Arms broke and crushed to pieces, and while the Bones jarred and rised against each other, to have it pulled off by the Shoulder Blade, to have not only the Bones disjoyned and broken, the fleshy Parts torn in pieces, but the sinewy, those most sensible Parts rent asunder; but yet it is more terrible to be wounded at the Heart, for a Stab there is mortal! But is it not still more dreadful to have the Breast dug and opened, and the Heart that Seat of Life, and Spring of Motion, violently tore out of it, having first broke all these vital, bleeding Chords, by which it was united to the Body, and then to have the Pericordium (or Skin that covers it) fled off and the Caul rent from it? But be assured Brethren, that this though a bold and very terrible Image, is but an obscure Resemblance of the Almighty's Jealousy, and the Pains produced by it, in the miserable Subjects of his Indignation; for it infinitely surpasses any finite Mind, in it's utmost Stretch of Thought to frame adequate or equal Ideas of it. Psalm 90. 11. *Who knows the Power of thine Anger? according to thy Fear, so is thy Wrath.* The Damned must be always scorched with Flames that shall never expire! The Damned must be always griped with a Worm that shall never die. "The Damned must ever ever drink "the rankest Venom that can be squeezed out of all the "Curles ever God denounced; as I proved before. But I proceed to consider the second Motive.

2. Motive,

2. Motive, Which should excite your Compliance with the former Exhortation and Directions, viz. The Advantages you are like to obtain thereby, And

1. By it you may obtain Pardon, Jer. 31. 18, 19, 20. Luke 15. 17, -- 27. *Isai.* 61. 1, 2, 3. & 44. 3. & 55. 1. John 6. 37. And is not this a great Privilege? How just is the Psalmist's Observation concerning it, Psalm 32. 1. *Blessed is he whose Transgression is forgiven, whose Sin is covered.* Is he not blessed in Body and Soul, in Time and for ever after it.

2. By this you may obtain Peace, which is the natural Consequent of the former, a valuable and precious Benefit, upon which the Comforts of humane Life very much depend, Rom. 2. 10. & 8. 6. Prov. 3. 17. And

3. The divine Benediction upon all your Enjoyments here; which maketh rich, and adds no Sorrow with it, Prov. 10. 22. And finally, a Crown in the next Life, which fadeth not away: Which may God grant us the Privilege of enjoying for Christ's sake. Amen.

F I N I S.





An INDEX,

Or an Account of the Order of the Principal Heads contain'd in the preceeding Discourse.

T HE Introduction,	Page 1
Division,	pa. 2
Explication,	pa. 2 to 8
Doctrine,	pa. 8
Method,	pa. 8
F irst General Head, wherein is shewed both Negatively and Positively, what it is to go on in a Course of Sin, in 7 Particulars.	pa. 8 to 10
S econd General Head, which proves that some who go on a course of Sin do notwithstanding expect Peace.	pa. 10
T hird General Head, which enquires into the Grounds of their Expectation of Peace and Impunity, and 1. Ignorance is one Ground, which is fourfold, 1. Of God. 2. Of themselves. 3. Of the Law in it's spiritual Extent. 4. Of the Evil of Sin, which is open'd in Three Particulars,	pa. 12 to 14
2. Negligence 3. Self Love 4. Inconsideration.	pa. 15, 16
U nder which Head is shewn the Nature of it's opposite, viz. Inconsideration in Three Particulars, with some of it's advantageous Consequences.	pa. 16, 17
5. Pride. 6. Prosperity. Three Signs of Wealth given in Wrath.	
7. False and erroneous Conceits of these Four Particulars, viz. The Christian's Graces, Affections, Priviledges, Performances; and First, of the Christian Graces in these Nine Instances following	
1. Conviction. 2. Conversion. 3. Of Repentance. 4. Of Faith. 5. Of Sanctification. Under which Head the difference between the Combat with Sin that is in the Regenerate and Unregenerate is open'd in Four Particulars. 6. Of Love. 7. Of Hope. 8. Sincerity. 9. Charity. Four Objections against the Scriptural notion of Charity answer'd.	pa. 17 to 26
2. Of the Affections in Three Particulars, Fear, Desire, Delight. Six Causes among the Affections opened.	p. 26 to 28
3. Of the Priviledges of Christians in four Particulars.	pa. 29
4. Of their Performances or Righteousness, Negative, Positive, Comparative. Eight Signs of dependance upon our own Righteousness propos'd.	pa. 30 to 34
5. Some depend upon false Reasonings or Pretexts. Such as these Fifteen following, 1. There's none of you all perfect. 2. All are Sinners. 3. All have their Failings. 4. I don't justify my self. 5. There's no Body certain of Salvation. Four Considerations propos'd to invalidate this Pretext. 6. If our state be bad we can't change it. 7. We must wait God's time. 8. I design to turn to God afterwards. 9. I have no learning. 10. I have a bad Memory. 11. If I thought much on such melancholy matters I should grow Crazy. Ungodly Sinners prov'd to be Fools	from

AN INDEX

from Three Considerations. 12. If I should pore much on these Things, I should certainly fall into Despair. 13. But I must serve God with a chearful Heart. 14. But I Pray to God often, and God has promised to hear those that ask in his Son's Name. In answer to this the sinfulness of Presumers Prayers is opened in 8 Particulars. Three bad Consequences of that opinion, viz. that the Prayers of ungodly People entitle them to the Promises proposed; and the reasonableness of the contrary Doctrine opened. 15. The Spirit has different ways of working. All these Pretexts are answer'd. pa. 34 to 50

Presumptuous Sinners offer many Excuses and Pretexts to palliate their Sins. And 1. For Drunkenness 5. 2. For Worldly-mindedness 6. 3. For Carnality 4. 4. For Swearing 3. 5. For Sabbath breaking 1. Under which Head the Morality of the Sabbath is prov'd by six Reasons. 6. For the Neglect of Family Worship 5. The necessity of this Practise confirm'd by four Considerations. 7. For neglecting to hear the Word 18. 8. For Passion 2. Under this Head the nature of sinful Anger is explained in three Particulars. 9. For the neglect of Charity 6. Under this Head is shewn the excellency of Charity in six Particulars. pa. 50 to 87

10. Another Cause of the Security and false Hope of wicked People is the Devil. pa. 87

11. The bad Advice of wicked People. Their common Objections answer'd in many Particulars. pa. 87 to 97

12. The daubing of unconverted Ministers; their fraud and fallacy expos'd, in many Particulars. pa. 97 to 102

13. Bad Examples. pa. 102, 103

Fourth General Head, wherein is shew'd the Folly, Misery, and Cursed Estate of Presumptuous Sinners. 1. The Presumer's folly is discover'd in four Particulars. The Resemblance of their Hope to a Rush in three Particulars: To a Spider's Web in four, explain'd. 2. The sinfulness of their Hope expos'd in 9 Particulars. 3. Their Miseries open'd in 9 Particulars, Two Privative, and Seven Positive: The Privative Miseries of Presumptuous Sinners are, 1. Loss of the Image of God; the nature of that Image explain'd in three Particulars. 2. Loss of Communion with God. Three Signs of Communion with God propos'd, and four Particulars of the Misery of those who want it explain'd. Their Positive Miseries, 1. They are under the power of Sin; the spread of Sin over all the Faculties of the Soul explained, and the horrors and dangers of this State describ'd in many Particulars. 2. In the Possession of Satan, the qualities of this Enemy explain'd in four Particulars. 3. Under the Guilt of Sin, the heinous qualities of the Presumer's Sins expos'd, as also the nature of his Condemnation therefor, explain'd in three Particulars. 4. Under the Wrath of God. The qualities of this described in six Particulars, viz. that it is, 1. Incomprehensible. 2. Terrible. 3. Unavoidable, either by flight, force, fraud. 4. Intolerable. 5. Eternal. 6. Continual. The dreadful Nature of God's Wrath further

AN INDEX

further Illustrated by 3 Considerations, 1. By that of his high-
 ness and tremendous Majesty. 2. Of his Holiness, and spotless
 Purity. 3. By the depth of his Wisdom. 4. The Infinity of his
 Power. 5. The weight of Christ's Sufferings. 5. In a state of
 Death. This Truth confirm'd and illustrated, by the description
 of 12 Resemblances between Presumptuous Sinners and Dead Men.
 6. Under the Curse. Four Properties of this described, viz. that
 it is, 1. Universal. 2. Judicial. 3. Extreme and terrible.
 4. Irrevocable and Eternal. The Eternity of the Damned's Tor-
 ments prov'd by five Arguments. 7. In extreme Danger, in
 many respects. pa. 103 to 167

The IMPROVEMENT.

USE. I. Of Consolation; wherein is shewed the happy State of
 gracious Persons. Particularly that their Blessings are and shall
 be, 1. Universal. 2. Perpetual. 3. Exquisitely sweet and ravish-
 ing. pa. 167 to 170

USE. II. Of Exhortation. p. 170 to 174

Twelve Directions propos'd to alarm, and guide Secure Sinners to
 Christ. The first Direction urges the necessity of Self-Examina-
 tion, by three Arguments. The second the necessity of Self-judg-
 ing. The third the necessity of endeavouring after a deep sense
 of their Misery; by two reasons. The qualities of this sense of
 Sin describ'd, or the nature of Conviction open'd, in six Particu-
 lars, viz. That it includes, 1. An affecting apprehension of Sin,
 1. Actual. 2. Original. 3. Of the misery of their present State,
 in four Particulars, viz. 1. The Certainty of it. 2. The Severity of
 it. 3. The Eternity of it. 4. The Equity of it. 2. Fear of
 Punishment. 3. Sorrow for Sin; it's qualities describ'd, in four
 Particulars. 4. Self-Despair; it's nature succinctly opened; and
 an Objection against Application to godly Ministers under Soul
 distress answered by 10 Queries. 5. Shame. 6. Hatred against
 Sin, it's qualities describ'd in two Particulars. The third Di-
 rection also shews how to attain that Sense or Conviction of Sin.
 The right manner of hearing the Word open'd, in 5 Particulars.
 The fourth Direction dissuades from strangling Convictions, by
 8 Arguments, and discovers three of the general Causes of this
 Practice. The fifth Direction excites to labour after the increase
 and augmentation of Convictions by six Considerations. The
 sixth Direction urges the Necessity of Self-Despair by two
 Reasons, and explains it's nature in six Particulars. The seventh
 Direction dissuades from impatient Haste, in labouring to get rid
 of Soul troubles. The eighth Direction excites to a strict Ex-
 amination of the Comforts convinced Persons obtain. The ninth
 Direction dissuades from resting upon the bare performance of
 Duty. The tenth Direction dissuades from unnecessary Con-
 versation with ungodly People. The eleventh Direction advises to
 associate with pious People. The twelfth Direction advises to
 open your Case to God. Two Motives to excite Compliance, viz.
 1. The necessity of it. 2. The Advantages obtained by it.

pa. 174 to the end

