

DIRECTION SIXTH.

THE SEVERAL PIECES OF THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD.

Second Piece—The Christian's Breastplate.

'And having on the breastplate of righteousness' (Eph. 6:14).

These words present us with a SECOND PIECE OF ARMOUR, commended to, and charged upon, all Christ's soldiers—a breastplate, and the metal it is to be made of, righteousness—'and having on the breastplate of righteousness.' Concerning this, there requires that a double inquiry would be made. FIRST. What is the righteousness here meant? SECOND. Why is it compared to this piece of the soldier's armour, the breastplate.

THE EXPLANATION OF THE WORDS.

FIRST INQUIRY.

[The righteousness meant.]

What is the righteousness here meant? The Scripture speaks of a twofold righteousness; the one legal, the other evangelical.

FIRST. A legal righteousness—that which God required of man in the covenant of works: 'Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them,' Rom. 10:5. Three things concur to make up this law righteousness.

First. An obedience absolutely perfect to the law of God, that is, perfect extensively, in regard of the object; intensively, in regard of the subject. The whole law, in short, must be kept with the whole heart; the least defect either of part or degree in the obedience spoils all.

Second. This perfect obedience to the law of God must be personally performed by him that is thus righteous. 'The man that doeth these things shall live.' In that covenant, God had but man's single bond for performance—no surety engaged with him—so that God having none else to come upon for the default, it was necessary, except God will lose his debt, to exact it personally on every man.

Third. This perfect personal obedience must be

perpetual. This law allows no after-gain. If the law be once broken, though but in one very thought, there is no place for repentance in that covenant, though it were attended with a life afterward never so exact and spotless. After-obedience being but due, cannot make amends for former disobedience. He doth not satisfy the law for killing a man once, that doeth so no more. How desperate were our condition, if we could not be listed in Christ's muster-roll, till we were provided with such a breastplate as this is? Adam indeed had such a righteousness made to his hand. His heart and the law were in unison; it answered it, as face answers face in a glass. It was as natural to him to be righteous, as now it is to his posterity to be unrighteous. God was the engraver of his own image upon man, which consisted in righteousness and holiness. And he who made all so perfect, that upon a review of the whole creation, he neither added nor altered anything, but saw 'all very good,' was not less curious in the master-piece of all his work, he 'made man perfect.' But Adam sinned, and defiled our nature, and now our nature defiles us; so that, never since could Adam's plate—righteousness, I mean—fit the breast of any mere man. If God would save all the world for one such righteous man—as once he offered to do Sodom for ten—that one could not be found. The apostle divides all the world into 'Jew and Gentile,' Rom. 3:9. He is not afraid to lay them all in the dirt;

—we have before proved that they are ‘all under sin. As it is written, There is none, no, not one.’ Not the most boastful philosopher among the Gentiles, nor the precisest Pharisee among the Jews—we may go yet further—not the holiest saint that ever lived, can stand righteous before that bar. ‘Enter not into judgment with thy servant,’ saith David, ‘for in thy sight shall no man living be justified,’ Ps. 143:2. God hath nailed that door up, that none can for ever enter by a law-righteousness into life and happiness. This way to heaven is like the northern passage to the Indies—whoever attempts it, is sure to be frozen up before he gets halfway thither.

SECOND. The second righteousness, which the Scripture speaks of, is an evangelical righteousness. Now this also is twofold—a righteousness imputed or imparted. The imputed righteousness, is that which is wrought by Christ for the believer; the imparted, that which is wrought by Christ in the believer. The first of these, the imputed righteousness, is the righteousness of our justification, that by which the believer stands just and righteous before God, and is called, by way of distinction from the latter, ‘the righteousness of God,’ Rom. 3:21; 10:3. Not, as if the other righteousness were not of God also, but,

First. Because this is not only wrought by Christ, but also performed in Christ—who is God—and is not inherent in us, so that the benefit of it redounds by faith to us, as if we had wrought it. Hence Christ is called ‘the Lord our righteousness.’

Second. Because this is the righteousness, and not the other, which God hath ordained to be the meritorious cause of the justification of our persons, and also of the acceptance of our inherent righteousness imparted by him to us. Now, this righteousness belongs to ‘the fourth piece of armour’—the ‘shield of faith’—indeed we find it bearing its name from that grace, Rom. 4:11, where it is called ‘the righteousness of faith,’ because apprehended and applied by faith unto the soul. The ‘righteousness’ therefore which is here compared to ‘the breastplate,’ is the latter of the two, and that is, the righteousness of our sanctification, which I called a righteousness imparted, or a righteousness wrought by Christ in the believer. Now, this take, thus described. It is a supernatural principle of a new life planted in the heart of every child of God by the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit, whereby they endeavour to approve themselves to

God and man, in performing what the word of God requires to be performed to both. Briefly let us unfold what is rolled up in this description.

1. Here is the efficient, or workman—the Holy Spirit. Hence it is that the several parts of holiness are called ‘fruits of the Spirit,’ Gal. 5:22. If the Spirit be not at the root, no such fruit can be seen on the branches as holiness. ‘Sensual,’ and ‘having not the Spirit,’ are inseparably coupled, Jude 19. Man, by his fall, hath a double loss; God’s love to him and his likeness to God. Christ restores both to his children—the first, by his righteousness imputed to them; the second, by his Spirit re-imparting the lost image of God to them, which consists ‘in righteousness and true holiness.’ Who, but a man, can impart his own nature, and beget a child like himself? and who, but the Spirit of God, can make a creature like God, by making him partaker of the divine nature?

2. Here is the work produced—a supernatural principle of a new life. (1.) By a principle of life, I mean, an inward disposition and quality, sweetly, powerfully, and constantly inclining it to that which is holy; so that the Christian, though passive in the production, is afterward active, and co-working with the Spirit in all actions of holiness; not as a lifeless instrument is in the hand of a musician, but as a living child in the hand of a father. Therefore they are said to be ‘led by the Holy Spirit,’ Rom. 8:14. (2.) It is a principle of new life; the Spirit’s work was not chafe and recover what was swooning, but to work a life *de novo*—anew, in a soul quite dead: ‘You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses,’ Eph. 2:1. The devil comes as orator, to persuade by argument, when he tempts; the Spirit as a creator, when he converts. The devil draws forth and enkindles what he finds raked up in the heart before; but the Holy Spirit puts into the soul what he finds not there—called in Scripture the ‘seed’ of God, I John 3:9. ‘Christ formed in you,’ Gal. 4:19, the ‘new creature,’ Gal. 6:15, the ‘law’ put by God into the inner man, Jer. 31:33, which Paul calls ‘the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,’ Rom. 8:2. (3.) It is a supernatural principle. By this we distinguish it from Adam’s righteousness and holiness, which was co-natural to him, as now sin is to us; and, had he stood, would have been propagated to us as naturally as now his sin is. Holiness was as natural to Adam’s soul as health was to his body, they both resulting *ex principiis recte constitutis*—from principles

pure and rightly disposed.

3. Here is the soil or subject in which the Spirit plants this principle of holiness—the child of God. ‘Because ye are sons, he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts,’ Gal. 4:6. Not a child in all his family that is unlike his Father—‘as is the heavenly, so are they that are heavenly’—and none but children have this stamp of true holiness on them. As the apostle, Rom. 8:9, concludes, we ‘have not his Spirit’ if we be ‘in the flesh’—that is in an unholy sinful state—so he concludes, we are ‘not his’ children if we ‘have not his Spirit,’ thus transforming and sanctifying us. There is indeed a holiness and sanctification, taken in a large sense, which may be found in such as are not children. So all the children of believers are ‘holy,’ I Cor. 7; who are not all children of God. Yea false professors also gain the name of being sanctified, Heb. 10:29, because they pretend to be so. But that which the Scripture calls righteousness and true holiness, is a sculpture the Spirit engraves on none but the children of God. The Spirit sanctifies none but whom Christ prays his Father to ‘sanctify,’ and they are his peculiar number given to God of him, John 17:17.

4. Here is the efficacy of this principle, planted by the Spirit in the heart of a child of God, whereby he endeavours. As the heart—which is the principle of the natural life in the body—from the infusion of natural life, is ever beating and working, so the principle of new life in the soul is ever endeavouring. The ‘new creature’ is not still-born; true holiness is not a dull habit, that sleeps away the time with doing nothing. The woman cured by Christ ‘arose’ up presently ‘and ministered unto them,’ Matt. 8:15. No sooner is this principle planted in the heart, but the man riseth up to wait on God, and act for God with all his might and main. The seed which the sanctifying Spirit cast into the soul, is not lost in the soil, but quickly shows it is alive by the fruit it bears.

5. Here is the imperfect nature of this principle—as it shows its reality by endeavouring, so its imperfection, that it enables but to an endeavour, not to a full performance. Evangelical holiness makes the creature rather willing than able to give full obedience. The saint’s heart leaps when his legs do but creep in the way of God’s commandments. Mary asked ‘where they had laid Christ?’ meaning, it seems, to carry him away on her shoulders; which she

was not able for to do. Her affections were stronger than her back. That principle of holiness which is in the saint, makes him lift at that duty which he can little more than stir. Paul, a saint of the first magnitude, he gives us his own character, with other eminent servants of Christ, rather from the sincerity of their will and endeavour, than perfection of their work. ‘Pray for us; for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly,’ Heb. 13:18. He doth not say ‘In all things we do live honestly,’ as if no step were taken awry by them; no, he durst not say so for a world. But thus much he dares assert for himself and brethren, ‘that they are willing in all things to do what was holy and righteous.’ Where ‘willing’ is not a weak listless velleity,¹ but a will exerted in a vigorous endeavour, it weighs as much in an impartial ear, as that of the same Paul, Acts 24:16, ‘herein do I exercise myself.’ He was so willing, as to use his best care and labour in the ways of holiness, and having this testimony in his own breast, he is not afraid to lay claim to ‘a good conscience,’ though he doth not fully attain to that he desires: ‘We trust we have a good conscience, willing,’ &c.—he means in the favourable interpretation of the gospel, for the law allows no such good conscience.

6. Here is the uniformity of this principle in its actings—‘to God and man.’ True holiness doth not divide what God joins together: ‘God spake all these words,’ Ex. 20:1, first table and second also. Now a truly sanctified heart does not skip or blot one word God hath written, but desires to be a faithful executor to perform the whole will of God.

7. Here is the order of its actings—as ‘to God and man;’ so, first to God, and then to man; yea, to God, in his righteousness and charity to man. Paul saith of the Macedonians that they first gave ‘their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God,’ II Cor. 8:5. God is first served, and man, in obedience to the will of God.

8. Here is the rule it goes by—‘what the word of God requires.’ Apocryphal holiness is no true holiness. We cannot write in religion a right line without a rule, or by a false one. And all are false rules besides the word—‘to the law, and to the testimony; if

1. Velleity—volition in its weakest form; a mere wish. From The Random House Dictionary. — SDB

they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,' Isa. 8:20.

SECOND INQUIRY.

[Why righteousness is compared to a breastplate.]

The second thing to be inquired, is, why righteousness and holiness are compared to the breastplate? And that is because of a twofold use that the soldier makes of this piece of armour, and of a twofold benefit he receives from it.

FIRST. The breastplate preserves the principal part of the body, and that is the breast, where the very vitals of man are closely couched together, and where a shot or stab is more deadly than in other parts that are remote from the fountain of life. A man may outlive many wounds received in the arms or legs, but a stab in the heart or other vital parts is the certain messenger of death approaching. Thus righteousness and holiness preserve the principal part of a Christian—his soul and conscience. We live or die spiritually, yea eternally, as we look to our souls and consciences. It is not a wound in estate, credit, or any other worldly enjoyment, that kills us in this sense. These touch not, hazard not, the Christian's life, any more than the shaving of the beard, or the paring of the nails, do the man's. Spiritual vitals are seated in the soul and conscience. It must be a spiritual dagger that stabs these, and that only is sin which is said to 'hunt for

the precious life,' Prov. 6:26. This is the 'dart' that strikes the youngman 'through the liver,' who hasteth to his lust, 'as the bird to the snare, and knoweth not that it is for his life,' Prov. 7:23. Now righteousness and holiness defend the conscience from all wounds and harms from sin, which is the weapon Satan useth to give the conscience its deadly stab with.

SECOND. The breastplate, by defending this principal part, emboldens the soldier, and makes him fearless of danger; and that is as necessary in fight as the other. It is almost all one for an army to be killed or cowed. A dead soldier slain upon the place, will do, in a manner, as much good, as a dead-hearted soldier that is dismayed with fear—his heart is killed while he is alive—and a naked breast exposeth the unarmed soldier to a trembling heart; whereas one otherwise cowardly, having his breast well defended with a plate of proof, will the more boldly venture upon the pikes. Thus, righteousness, by defending the conscience, fills the creature with courage in the face of death and danger; whereas guilt—which is the nakedness of the soul—puts the stoutest sinner into a shaking fit of fear. 'The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion,' Prov. 28:1. They say sheep are scared by the clatter of their own feet as they run. So is the sinner with the din of his guilt. No sooner did Adam see his plate off, and himself to be naked, but he is afraid at God's voice, as if he had never been acquainted with him. Never can we truly recover our courage, till we recover our holiness—'If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God,' 1 John 3:21.

CONNECTION OF THE BREASTPLATE AND GIRDLE.

The words being thus opened, the observations are easily drawn from them. But the copulative 'and,' with which this piece of armour is so closely buckled to the former, bids us make a little stand, to take notice how lovingly truth and holiness are here conjoined, like the sister-curtains of the tabernacle, Ex. 26:13, so called in the Hebrew; and it is a pity any should unclasp them which God hath so fitted to each other. Let this then be the note from hence: NOTE. That truth and holiness must go together.

First. Take truth, for truth of doctrine. An orthodox judgment, with an unholy heart and an ungodly life, is as uncomely as a man's head would be on a beast's shoulders. That man hath little cause to brag that what he holds is truth, if he doth be wicked. Poor wretch, if thou beest a slave to the devil, it matters not to what part thy chain be fastened, whether to the head or foot. He holds thee as sure to him by thy foot in thy practice as he would by thy head, if heretical and blasphemous; yea, thou art worse on it in some respects than they who are like themselves all over. Thy wickedness is greater, because committed in the face of truth. Many—the mistakes of their erroneous judgments, betray them unto the unholiness of their practice. Their

wicked lives are the conclusion which follows necessarily upon the premises of their errors. But thy judgment lights thee another way, except thou meanest further to accumulate thy sin by fathering thy unholiness on truth itself. They only miss their way to heaven in the dark, or are misled by a false light of erroneous judgment, which possibly, rectified, would bring them back into the path of holiness; but thou sinnest by the broad light of truth, and goest on boldly to hell at noon-day; like the devil himself, who knows truth from error well enough but hates to be ruled by it. Should a minstrel sing to a sweet tune with her voice and play to another with her hand that is harsh and displeasing, such music would more grate the judicious ear than if she had sung to what she had played. Thus, to sing to truth with our judgment, and play wickedness with our heart and hand in our life, is more abhorring to God and all good men, than where the judgment is erroneous as well as the life ungodly. Nahash had not enraged David so much, if he had come with an army of twenty thousand men into the field against him, as he did by abusing his ambassadors so basely. The open hostility which many express by their ungodly lives, does not so much provoke God as the base usage they give to his truth, which he sends to treat with them, yea, in them. This kindles the fire of his wrath into a flame of purpose, when he sees men put scorn upon his truth, by walking contrary to the light of it, and imprisoning it from having any command over them in their lives, and yet own it to be the truth of God.

Second. Take it for truth of heart; and so truth and holiness must go together. In vain do men pretend to sincerity, if they be unholy in their lives. God owns no unholy sincerity. The terms do clash one with another. Sincerity teacheth the soul to point at the right end of all its actions—the glory of God. Now it is not enough to set the right end before us, but to walk in the right way to it. We shall never come at God's glory out of God's way. Holiness and righteousness is the sincere man's path, set by God as a causeway on which he is to walk, both to the glorifying of God and to being glorified by God. Now he that thinks to find a shorter cut and a nearer way than this, to obtain this end, he takes but pains to undo himself. As he finds a new way of glorifying God, which God hath not chalked, so he must find a new heaven which God hath not prepared, or else he must go without one to reward him for his pains. O friends! look to find this stamp of righteousness and holiness on your sincerity. The proverb saith, 'Hell is full of good wishes,'—of such, who now, when it is too late, wish they had acted their part otherwise when on earth than they did. And do you not think there are there more than a good store of good meanings also? such who pretended, when on earth, they meant well, and their hearts were honest; however, it happened that their lives were otherwise. What a strange delusion is this? If one should say, 'Though all the water the bucket brings up be naught and stinking, yet that which is in the well is all sweet,' who would believe him? Thy heart upright, and thy meanings good, when all that proceeds from thy heart in thy life is wicked! How can it be? Who will believe thee? surely thou dost not thyself.

THE CHRISTIAN'S ESPECIAL CARE—TO KEEP ON HIS BREASTPLATE.

It is now time, having measured the ground, to lay the bottom stone on which the structure from these words is to be reared. I thought to have drawn out several points as distinct foundations, to build our discourse upon, but shall now choose to unite all in a single point—as one main building—though I make a few more rooms therein to entertain what else should have been handled severally. The point is this—

DOCTRINE. That he who means to be a Christian indeed, must endeavour to maintain the power of holiness and righteousness in his life and conversation. This is to have 'the breastplate of righteousness' and to have it on also. He is a holy righteous man that hath a work of grace and holiness in his heart, as he is a living man that hath a principle of life in him. But he maintains the power of holiness that exerts this vigorously in his daily walking; as he the power of natural life, in whom the principle of life seated in the heart empowers every member to do its particular office in the body strenuously. Thus walked the primitive Christians, 'in whose veins,' saith Jerome, 'the blood of Christ was yet warm.' Their great care was to keep on this breast-

plate of righteousness close and entire, that it neither might loosen by negligence nor be broken by presumptuous sinning. The character then that a saint was known by from other men, was his holy walking, Luke 1:6. There it is said of Zacharias and Elizabeth, 'They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.' This was also holy Paul's everyday exercise, 'to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men,' Acts 24:16. Never did any more curiously watch the health of their body, than he attended to the health of his soul, that no unholiness or unrighteousness—which is the only bane of it—might distemper and defile it. And truly we, who come after such holy ones in the same profession, do bind ourselves to our good behaviour, that we will walk holily and righteously as they did. The point carries its evidence on its forehead, and needs rather pressing than proving; and therefore I may be pardoned if the demonstrations of the point be handled as well in the character of motives to, as of reasons for, the duty. This will spare work in the application. **FIRST.** Then I shall adduce some **REASONS** why the Christian should have especial care to keep on the breastplate of righteousness; that is, to exhibit the power of a holy and righteous life. **SECOND.** I shall mention several **INSTANCES** wherein specially every Christian is to express the power of a holy and righteous life. **THIRD.** I shall lay down some **DIRECTIONS**, by way of counsel and help, to all those who desire to maintain the power of holiness and righteousness in their daily walking. These several branches we now proceed to take up in their order, applying them at the close.

BRANCH FIRST.

[REASONS WHY the Christian should have care to keep on his breastplate.]

I shall adduce some reasons why the Christian should have especial care to keep on the breastplate of righteousness;—that is, exhibit the power of a holy and righteous life.

FIRST. In regard of God, whose great design is, to have his people 'a holy people.' **SECOND.** In regard of Satan, whose design is as much against the saints' holiness as God is for it. **THIRD.** In regard of holiness itself, the incomparable excellency of which commands us to pursue it.

[God's great design—his people's holiness.]

REASON FIRST. In regard of God, whose great design is, to have his people 'a holy people.' This is enough to oblige, yea to provoke, every Christian to promote what God hath so strongly set upon his heart to effect. He deserves to be cashiered that endeavours not to pursue what his general declares to be his design; and he to have his name blotted out of Christ's muster-roll whose heart stands not on tiptoes ready to march, yea to run, on his design. It is an honourable epitaph which Paul sets on the memory of David, long before deceased, that he, 'in his own gen-

eration served the will of God,' Acts 13:36. He made it the business of his life to carry on God's designs: and all gracious hearts touched with the same loadstone of God's love stand to the same point. All the private ends of a sincere soul are swallowed up in this, that he may 'do the will of God in his generation.' This he heartily prays for, 'Thy will be done.' This is his study—to find what is the 'good and acceptable will of God,' which is the very cause why he loves the Bible above all the books of the world beside, because in none but that can he find what is the mind and will of God concerning him. Now I shall endeavour to show that this is the great design of God to have his people holy. It runs like a silver thread through all God's other designs.

First. It appears in his very decrees, which—so far as they are printed and exposed to our view in the Scripture—we may safely look into. What was God driving at in his electing some out of the lump of mankind? was it only their impunity he desired, that while others were left to swim in torment and misery, they should only be exempted from that infelicity? No, sure. The apostle will tell us more. 'He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy,' Eph. 1:4. Mark, not because he foresaw that they would be of themselves 'holy,' but 'that they should be holy;' this was what God resolved he would make them to be. It was as if some curious workman, seeing a forest of trees growing up-

on his own ground—all alike, not one better than another—should mark some above all the rest, and set them apart in his thoughts, as resolving to make some rare pieces of workmanship out of them. Thus God chose some out of the lump of mankind, whom he set apart for this purpose—to carve his own image upon them, which consists in ‘righteousness and true holiness’—a piece of such rare workmanship, that when God hath finished it, and shall show it to men and angels, it will appear to exceed the fabric of heaven and earth itself.

Second. It was his design in sending his Son into the world. It could be no small occasion that brought him hither. God wants not servants to go on his ordinary errands. The glorious angels, who behold his face continually, are ready to fly wherever he sends them. But here God had a work to do of such importance, that he would put trust, not in his servants, but [in] his Son alone to accomplish. Now, what God’s design was in this great work will appear by knowing what Christ’s was, for they—both Father and Son—were agreed what should be done before he came upon the stage of action. See therefore the very bottom of Christ’s heart in this his great undertaking opened. He ‘gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,’ Titus 2:14. Had man kept his primitive righteousness, Christ’s pain and pains had been spared. It was man’s lost holiness he came to recover. It had not been an enterprise becoming the greatness and holiness of such a one as the Son of God to engage for less than this. Both God and man, between whom Christ comes to negotiate, call for holiness—God’s glory and man’s happiness; neither of which can be attained except holiness be restored to man. Not God’s glory, who, as he is glorious in the holiness of his own nature and works, so is he glorified by the holiness of his people’s hearts and lives. Were it possible—which is the height of all blasphemy to think—that the holiness of God could be separated from any of his attributes or works, God himself would cease to be glorious; his sovereignty would degenerate into tyranny, his wisdom into craft, his justice into cruelty, &c. Now the glory of all God’s attributes and works resulting from his holiness in them all; it follows, that then we glorify God, when we give him the glory of his holiness, and who but a holy creature will or can do that?

While man stands under the power of sin, how can he give God the glory of that which his own sinful nature makes him defy and hate God for? Had Christ’s therefore been to procure man a pardon, and not to restore his lost holiness, he had been but a minister of sin’s, and instead of bringing glory to God, had set sin in the throne, and only obtained a liberty for the creature to dishonour God without control. Again, man’s happiness could not have been obtained without a recovery of his lost holiness. Man’s happiness stands in his likeness to God, and his fruition of God. He must have the first before he can enjoy the latter; he must be like God before God can take any liking in him. And God must take full content in man, before he admits him to the enjoyment of himself, which that he may do, Christ undertakes to make his people ‘holy as God is holy.’ You see now what was the great design that the heart of Christ was so full with, to ‘make us a holy people.’ Well therefore may the apostle bring in that heavy charge against all unholy professors, which he doth with tears, ‘that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,’ Php. 3:18. Christ came to destroy the works of the devil. The loose unholy walker—he goes about to destroy the work of Christ. The Lord Jesus lays down his heart’s blood to redeem souls out of the hand of sin and Satan, that they may be free to serve God, without fear, in holiness; and the loose Christian, if I may call him so, ‘denies the Lord that bought him,’ and delivers up himself basely unto his old bondage, from which Christ had ransomed him with so great a sum. Whose heart doth not tremble at such horrid ingratitude?

Third. It is God’s great design, in the regenerating work of the Spirit on the hearts of his people, to make them righteous, and to fit them to walk holily before him, Eze. 36:26, 27, where God promiseth ‘a new heart,’ and to ‘put his Spirit into them.’ And why will he do this? that he may cause them to ‘walk in his statutes, keep his judgments, and do them.’ An old heart would have served well enough to have done the devil’s drudgery withal. But God intending them for more high and noble employment, to lift up their head out of sin’s prison, and prefer them to his own service, therefore he throws away their jail-clothes, and beautifies them with the graces of his Spirit, that their hearts suit their work. When God ordered the temple to be built with such curious care and costly

materials, he declared that he intended it for holy use. That however was not so glorious as the spiritual temple of a regenerate heart is, which is the ‘workmanship’ of God himself, Eph. 2:10. And for what intent reared by him? If we read on we may see, ‘created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.’ This accents the unrighteousness and unholiness of a saint with a circumflex; it lays a deeper aggravation I mean upon his sin, than others’, because committed against such a work of the Spirit as none have in the world besides. A sin acted in the temple was greater than if the same had been committed by a Jew in his private dwelling, because the temple was a consecrated place. The saint is a consecrated person, and, by acts of unrighteousness, he profanes God’s temple. The sin of another is theft, because he robs God of the glory due to him; but the sin of a saint is sacrilege, because he robs God of that which is devoted to him in an especial manner. Better not to repent at all than to repent of our repentance. ‘Better not to vow’ and dedicate ourselves to him, and after this to inquire how we may evade and repeal this act. Such a one tells the world he finds some ‘iniquity in God,’ that alters the opinion and practice formerly taken up by him. In a word, the saint is not only by the Spirit consecrated to God, but is by him indued with a new life from God: ‘you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins,’ Eph. 2:1. A noble principle of high extraction hath been given you on a high design, that you should live up to that principle in righteousness and holiness. When God breathed a rational soul into man, he intended not that he should live with the beasts, and as the beasts; nor that thou shouldst have thy conversation as a mere carnal man doth; but that ‘as thou hast received Christ, so thou shouldst walk in him,’ Col. 2:6.

The apostle blames the Corinthians for living below themselves, and like the poor-spirited men of the world, in their corrupt passions. ‘Are ye not carnal, ... and walk as men?’ 1 Cor. 3:3. When thou, Christian, actest unholily, thou sinnest at a high rate indeed. Others sin against the light of God in their consciences. That is the furthest they can go. But thou sinnest against the life of God in thy very heart. The more unnatural any act is, the more horrid. It is unnatural for a man to be cruel to his own flesh; for a woman to go about to kill the child in her womb. O

how your ears tingle at such a flagitious² act! What then art thou going to do, when, by thy unholy walking, thou art killing the babe of grace in thy soul? Is Herod marked for a bloody man that would have butchered Christ newly born in the world, and canst thou, without horror, attempt the murdering of Christ newly formed in thy heart?

Fourth. It is the great design God drives at in his word and ordinances, to make his people holy and righteous. The word of God—it is both seed to beget, and food to nourish, holiness begotten in the heart. Every part of it contributes to this design abundantly. The preceptive part affords a perfect rule of holiness for the saint to walk by, not accommodated to the humours of any, as man’s laws are. These make their laws to fit the crooked minds of men, as tailors their garments to fit the crooked bodies they are [designed] for. The commands of God gratify the lusts of none. They are suited to the holy nature of God, not the unholy hearts of men. The promises present us with admirable encouragements to toll³ and allure us on in the way of holiness. All of them [are] so warily laid, that an unholy heart cannot, without violence to his conscience, lay claim to any of them—God having set that flaming sword, conscience, in the sinner’s bosom, to keep him off from touching or tasting the fruit of this tree of life—and if any profane heart be so bold, while he is walking in the ways of unrighteousness, as to finger any of the treasure that is locked up in the promises, it doth not long stay in their hands, but God, sooner or later, makes them throw it away as Judas his ‘thirty pieces’—their consciences telling them they are not the right owners. False comforts from the promises, like riches, which Solomon speaks of, ‘make themselves wings and fly away’ from the unholy wretch, when he thinks he is most sure of them. Again the threatenings—the minatory⁴ part of the word—this runs like a devouring gulf on either side of the narrow path of holiness and righteousness, ready to swallow up every soul that walks not therein. ‘For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all

2. Flagitious, marked by outrageous or scandalous crime or vice. — SDB

3. Toll, usually spelled tole—to draw on, allure. — ED.

4. Minatory, threatening, menacing. — SDB

ungodliness and unrighteousness of men,' Rom. 1:18. To the promissory and minatory is annexed the exemplary part of the word, as Bible instances to confirm our faith concerning truth and certainty of both. The promises—they are backed with the example of holy men and women, who have beaten the path of holiness for us, and 'through faith and patience' in their holy course, have at last 'obtained' the comfort of 'the promises' in heaven's bliss, to the unspeakable encouragement of all that are ascending the hill after them. To the threatenings are annexed many sad examples of unholy souls who have undone themselves, and damned their own souls in unholy ways—whose carcasses are, as it were, thrown upon the shore of the word, and exposed to our view in reading and hearing of it, that we may be kept from being engulfed in those sins that were their perdition. 'These things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted,' 1 Cor. 10:6.

Thus we see how the whole composition of the Scripture befriends holiness, and speaks what the design of God therein is, to carry on which the more strongly, God hath appointed many holy ordinances to quicken the word upon our hearts. Indeed all of them are but the word in several forms; hearing, prayer, sacraments, meditation, and holy conference. The word is the subject-matter of them all; only, as a wise physician, doth prepare the same drug several ways—sometimes to be taken one way, sometimes another—to make it more effectual, and [to] refresh his patient with variety; so the Lord, consulting our weakness, doth by his word, administering it to us now in this, and anon in that ordinance, for our greater delight and profit, aiming still at the same end in all, even the promoting of holiness in the hearts and lives of his people. And what are they all, but as veins and arteries by which Christ conveys the life-blood and spirits of holiness into every member of his mystical body? The church is the garden, Christ is the fountain, [and] every ordinance, as a pipe from him, to water all the beds in his garden. And why? but to make them more abundant in the fruits of righteousness.

Fifth. It is his design in all his providences. 'All things'—that is all providences especially—'work together for good to them that love God,' Rom. 8:28. And how do they work for their good, but by making them more good and more holy? Providences are

good and evil to us, as they find, or make us, better or worse. Nothing is good to him that is evil. As makes use of all the seasons of the year for the harvest—the frost and cold of the winter, as well as the heat of the summer—so doth he, of fair and foul, pleasing and displeasing providences, for promoting holiness. winter providences kill the weeds of lust, and summer providences ripen and mellow the fruits of righteousness. When he afflicts it is for our profit, to make us partakers of his holiness, Heb. 12:10. Afflictions Bernard compares to the teasel⁵, which, though it be sharp and scratching, is to make the cloth more pure and fine. God would not rub so hard if it were not to fetch out the dirt that is ingrained in our natures. God loves purity so well that he had rather see a hole than a spot in his child's garments. When he deals more gently in his providences, and lets his people under the sunny bank of comforts and enjoyments, fencing them from the cold blasts of affliction, it is to draw forth the sap of grace, and hasten their growth in holiness. Paul understood this, when he besought the saints at Rome, 'by the mercies of God, to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God,' Rom. 12:1, implying that mercies came from God to us on this very errand, and that God might reasonably expect a such a return. The husbandman, when he lays his compost on the ground, looks to receive it at harvest again in a fuller crop; and so doth God, by his mercies. Therefore doth he so vehemently complain of Israel's ingratitude, 'She did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal,' Hosea 2:8. God took it ill, and well might he, that they should entertain Baal at his cost. If God sends in any cheer to us, he would have us know that it is for his own entertainment, he means to come and sup upon his own charge. And what dish is it that pleaseth God's palate? Surely he would not have his people eat of any unclean thing, will not himself. They are the pleasant fruits of holiness and righteousness which Christ comes into his garden to feed on: 'I am

5. Teasel, any of a genus of Old World prickly herbs; with flower heads covered with stiff hooked bracts—called also fuller's teasel. OR: a flower head of a fuller's teasel used when dried to raise a nap on woolen cloth. OR: a wire substitute for a fuller's teasel. From Webster's. — SDB

come into my garden, my sister, [my] spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk,' Song 5:1.

[The power of holiness to be maintained because of SATAN'S DESIGN AGAINST IT.]

SECOND REASON. There is a reason in regard of Satan, whose design is as much against the saints' holiness, as God is for it. He hath ever a way to God's yea. If God be for holiness, he must needs be against it. And what should be our chief care to defend, but that which Satan's thoughts and plots are most laid to assault and storm? There is no creature the devil delights to lodge and dwell in as man. When he enters into other creatures it is but on a design against man. When he entered the 'serpent,' it was to deceive Eve. The 'swine,' Matt. 8:32, he possessed on a design to dispossess the Gergesenes of the gospel. But, might he choose his own lodging, none pleaseth him but man. And why? Because man only is capable, by his rational soul, of sin and unrighteousness. And as he prefers man to quarter in above all inferior creatures, so he had rather possess the souls of men than their bodies. None but the best room in the house will serve this unclean spirit in which to vomit his blasphemies, and spit out his malice against God—and why? but because the soul is the proper seat of holiness and sin. This, one gives as the reason why, amongst all the ways that Satan plagued Job, he did not choose to make a forcible entry into his body, and possess him corporally; for certainly he might—that being short of taking away his life—the only thing reserved by God out of his commission, and being in his power, sure it was not to spare Job that trouble. No pity dwells in a devil's heart. But the very reason seems to be what an ancient hath noted. The devil waited for a higher preferment; he hoped for to possess his soul, which he longed for a thousand times more. He had rather hear Job himself blaspheme God, while he was compos mentis—his own man, than himself in Job to belch out blasphemies against God, which would have been the devil's own sin, and not Job's.

Thus, you see, it is holiness and righteousness his spite is at. No gain comes to the devil's purse, no victory he counts got, except he can make the Chris-

tian lose his holiness. He can allow a man to have anything, or be anything, rather than be truly, powerfully, holy. It is not your riches and worldly enjoyments he grudges, so much as your holiness. Job, for aught we know, might have enjoyed his flocks and herds, his children, and servants, without any disturbance from hell, if the devil had not seen him to be a godly man—'one fearing God and eschewing evil.' This angered the wicked spirit. Now he tries a fall with Job, that, if possible, he may unsaint him, and despoil him of his breastplate of righteousness. His plundering of his estate, butchering his children, carbonading⁶, as I may say, his body with sores and boils—which were as so many deep slashes in his flesh—was but like some thieves' cruel usage of men whom they would rob, on a design to make them confess and deliver up their treasure. Would but Job have thrown the devil his purse—his integrity, I mean—and let Satan carry away his good conscience, Satan would have soon unbound him, and not have cared if he had his estate and children again. The wolf tears the fleece, that he may come to raven on the flesh, and suck the blood of the sheep. The life-blood of holiness is that which this hellish murderer longs to suck out of the Christian's heart. It is not a form of godliness, or goodly shows of righteousness, the devil maligns, but the power. Not the name, but the new nature itself, brings this lion fell out of his den. Satan can live very peaceably as a quiet neighbour by the door of such as will content themselves with an empty name of profession, this alters not his property, nor toucheth his copy-hold⁷. The profession made by Judas, Satan knew, did not put him a step out of his way to hell. The devil can show a man a way to damnation, through duties and ordinances of God's worship. That covetous traitorous heart which Judas carried with him to hear Christ's sermon, and [to] preach his own, held him fast enough to the devil, and therefore he gives him line enough, liberty enough, to keep his credit awhile with his fellow-apostles. He cares not though others think him a

6. Carbonading, i.e. cutting up or across, in order to broiling.

7. Copy-hold, A former tenure of land in England and Ireland by right of being recorded in the court of the manor. From Webster's.—SDB

disciple of Christ, so he knows him to be his own slave.

In a word, it is not a superstitious holiness which offends him. How can it, when he is the instituter of it himself, and that on a subtle design to undermine the true genuine holiness in the hearts of men? And by this time the church of Christ hath found how deep a contrivance it is. This in all ages hath been to the power of holiness what the ivy is to the oak. The wanton embraces of this mock holiness round about religion, hath killed the heart of scriptural holiness wherever it hath prevailed. It is to the true holiness as the concubine is to the true wife, who is sure to draw the husband's love from her. This brat the devil hath long put out to nurse to the Romish church, which hath taken a great deal of pains to bring it up for him, and no wonder, when she is so well paid for its maintenance—it having brought her in so much worldly treasure and riches. No, it is holiness in its naked simplicity, as it is founded on scripture-bottom, and guided by scripture-rule, that he is a sworn enemy against. Indeed, this is the flag which the soul hangs out, and by which it gives defiance to the devil; no wonder if he strives to shoot it down. Now, and not till now, the creature really declares himself a friend to God, and an enemy to the kingdom of darkness; and here is the ground of that quarrel, which will never cease so long as he continues an unclean spirit, and they to be the holy ones of God. 'All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution,' II Tim. 3:12.

Mark, what it is that makes the devil and his instruments take arms and breathe slaughter against Christians—it is their godliness. Many specious pretenses persecutors have to disguise their malice; but the Spirit of God, that looks through all their hypocritical mufflers, is privy to the cabinet-counsels of their hearts, and those instructions they have from the devil, which worketh so mightily in them. He tells us, he that will live godly shall be persecuted. Downright godliness is the butt they level their arrows at.

Again, observe the kind of godliness at which their blood rises, 'all that will live godly in Christ Jesus.' There are more sorts of holiness and godliness than one. But all may have fair quarter at the devil's hands, except this godliness in Christ Jesus. The devil hath an implacable malice against Christ.

He hates, as I may so say, every letter of his name. That godliness which is learned of him, and derived from him, he opposeth unto death. Christian blood is sweeter to his tooth, but the blood of the Christian's godliness is far sweeter. He had rather, if he could, kill that, than them—rather draw the Christian from his godliness, than butcher him for it; yet, that he may not stand out, he will play at small game, and express his cruelty upon their bodies, but it is only when he cannot come at their souls. 'They were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain,' Heb. 11:37. That which these bloody men principally desired, was to draw them into sin, and make apostates of them; and therefore they tempted them before they slew them. The devil accounts that the complete victory—when he can despoil them of their armour, and bribe them from their steadfastness in their holy profession. 'Let her be defiled, and let her eye look upon Zion,' Micah 4:11. He had rather see saints defiled with unrighteousness and sin than defiled with their blood and gore. Persecution, he hath learned, doth but mow the church, which afterward comes up thicker for it; it is unholiness that ruins it. Persecutors do but plough God's field for him, while he is sowing it with the blood that they let out; but profaneness—that roots it up, and lays it all waste, consciences and churches also.

[The power of holiness to be maintained because of ITS OWN EXCELLENCY.]

THIRD REASON. There is a reason in regard of holiness itself—the incomparable excellency whereof commands us to pursue it, and endeavour after it, with our utmost care and strength.

First. It is an excellency peculiar to the rational creature. Inferior creatures have a goodness proper to them; but intellectual beings only are capable of an inward holiness. God saw every creature he made to be 'good;' only angels and man to be 'holy.' And if we part with holiness that is our crown, we become worse than the beasts themselves; yea, it is holiness and righteousness that makes one man differ from another in God's account. We go by a false rate, when we value men by their external advantages. All stand on a level as to God, till holiness be super-added. Princes, in whom is seated the sovereign power, claim as their prerogative to set the just value

on all coin—what every piece shall go for; this a penny, and that a pound. Much more surely then doth it belong to God to rate his creatures. And he tells us, ‘The righteous is more excellent than his neighbour,’ *Prov. 12:26* ‘The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth,’ *Prov. 10:20*. The Spirit of God compares the righteous to silver and gold, the most precious of metals, which above all other metals are of such account, that only money made of silver and gold is current in all countries; holiness will go in both worlds; but external excellencies, such as worldly riches, honours, &c., like leather and brass money, are of no esteem, save in this beggarly lower world.

Second. It is holiness that is, though not our plea, yet our evidence for heaven. ‘Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.’ Heaven is a city where righteousness dwells. Though God suffer the earth to bear for a while unholy men—which it doth not without sweating under their weight, and groaning to be rid of the load—yet sure he will never pester heaven with such a crew. Before Enoch was translated to heaven, he walked holily with God on earth; which made God desire his company so soon. O friends! do we like an empty profession? such a religion as will leave us short of heaven? or can we reasonably expect a dispensation above others, that we should commence glorified creatures in heaven, without keeping our acts, and performing the exercises of godliness which God hath laid upon those that will stand candidates for that place? Certainly, what God hath written in his word, as to this, shall stand. He will not make a blot in his decrees for any; which he should, did he alter the method of salvation in the least. Either, therefore, we must renounce our hopes of going thither, or resolve to walk in the path of holiness, that will lead us thither. That is vain breath which sets not the sails of our affections a-going, and our feet a-travelling thither, where we would be at last.

Third. It is holiness, and that maintained in its power, that capacitates us for communion with God in this life. Communion with God is so desirable, that many pretend to it, who know not what it means; like some that brag of their acquaintance with such a great man, who, may be, never saw his face, nor have been admitted into his company. The Spirit of God gives the lie to that man who saith he hath any ac-

quaintance with God, while he keeps his acquaintance with any unrighteousness: ‘If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie,’ *1 John 1:6*. The apostle is willing to pass for a loud liar himself, if he walks in darkness, and pretends to have fellowship with God. How can they ‘walk together’ that are not ‘agreed?’ Communion is founded on union, and union upon likeness. And how like are God and the devil, holiness and unrighteousness, one to the other? There is a vast difference between conversing with ordinances, and having communion with God. A man may have great acquaintance with ordinances, and be a great stranger to God at the same time. Every one that goes to court, and hangs about the palace, doth not speak with the prince. And what sorry things are ordinances without this communion with God? Ordinances are as it were the exchange, where holy souls trade with God by his Spirit for heavenly treasures, from which they come filled and enriched with grace and comfort. Now, what does the unholy wretch? truly like some idle persons that come and walk among merchants on the exchange, but have no business there, or commerce whereby they get any advantage. An unholy heart hath no dealings with God; he takes no notice of God. May be, to be sure, God takes no such notice of him, as to communicate himself graciously to him. Nay, suppose a person habitually holy, but under the power of some temptation for the present, whereby he defiles himself; he is in this case unfit to have any friendly communion with God. ‘A righteous man falling down before the wicked is,’ saith Solomon, ‘as a troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring,’ *Prov. 25:26*; much more is he so when he falls down before the wicked one, and yields to his temptation—now his spirit is roil [i.e. turbid] and muddied. And if we will not use the water of a spring, though in itself pure and wholesome, when it is troubled, or drink of that vessel that runs thick, but stay while [i.e. until] it be settled and comes clear; can we wonder if God refuseth to taste of those duties which a godly person performs, before the stream be cleared by the renewing of his repentance for his sin?

Fourth. Holiness in the power of it is necessary to the true peace and repose of the soul. I do not say that our peace is bottomed on the righteousness of our nature or holiness of our lives, yet it is ever attended with these. ‘There is no peace, saith my God,

to the wicked.' We may as soon make the sea always still, as an unholy heart truly quiet. From whence come the intestine wars in men's bosoms, that set them at variance with themselves, but from their own lusts? these break the peace, and keep the man in a continual tempest. As the spirit of holiness comes into his heart, and the sceptre of Christ—which is 'a sceptre of righteousness'—bears sway in the life; so the storm abates more and more, till it be quite down, which will not be while we are short of heaven. There only is perfect rest, because perfect holiness. Whence those frights and fears, which make them a magor missabib—a terror round about?—they wake and sleep with the scent of hell-fire about them continually. O, it is their unholy course and unrighteous ways that walk in their thoughts, as John's ghost in Herod's. This makes men discontented in every condition. They neither can relish the sweetness of their enjoyments, nor bear the bitter taste of their afflictions. I know there are ways to stupefy the conscience, and bind up for a time the senses of an unholy heart, that it shall not feel its own misery; but the virtue of this opium is soon spent, and then the wretch is upon the rack again, and his horror returns upon him with a greater paroxysm. An example whereof I have heard. A notorious drunkard, who used, when told of his ungodly life, to shake off, as easily as Paul did the viper from his hand, all the threatenings of the word that his friends would have fastened on his conscience—bearing himself upon a presumptuous hope of the mercy of God in Christ: it pleased God to lay him, some while after, on his back by sickness; which, for a time, scared his old companions—brethren with him in iniquity—from visiting him; but hearing he was cheery and pleasant in his sickness, they ventured again to see him; doing so, they found him very confident of the mercy of God (whereby their hands were much strengthened in their old ways); but before he died, this tune was changed to purpose; his vain hopes vanished, his guilty conscience awakened, and the poor wretch, roasted in the scorching flames of his former ungodly practices, and now ready to die, cries out despairingly, 'O sirs! I had prepared a plaster, and thought all was well, but now it will stick no longer.' His guilty conscience rubbed it off as fast as he clapped it on. And truly, friends, you will find that the blood of Christ himself will not cleave to a soul that is in league with any way

of sin and unrighteousness. God will pluck such from the horns of his altar, that flee to it, but not from their unrighteousness, and will slay them in the sight of the sanctuary they so boldly trust to. You know the message Solomon sent to Adonijah, 'If thou showest thyself a worthy man, not a hair of thy head shall fall; but if wickedness shall be found in thee, thou shalt surely die.' In vain do men think to shroud themselves under Christ's wing from the hue and cry of their accusing conscience, while wickedness finds a sanctuary in them. Christ never was intended by God to secure men in their unrighteousness, but to save them from it.

Fifth. Holiness has a mighty influence upon others. When this appears with power in the lives of Christians, it works mightily upon the spirits of men; it stops the mouths of the ungodly, who are ready to reproach religion, and to throw the dirt of professors' sins on the face of profession itself. They say that frogs will cease croaking when a light is brought near unto them. The light of a holy conversation hangs as it were a padlock on profane lips; yea, it forceth them to acknowledge God in them. 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven,' Matt. 5:16. Yea more, this would not only stop their mouths, but be a means to open their very hearts to the embracing of Christ and his grace.

One reason why such shoals of souls came into the net of the gospel in primitive times was, because then the divinity of the gospel doctrine appeared in the divinity and holiness of Christians' lives. Justin Martyr, when converted, professed, 'That the holiness that shined in Christians' lives and patience, that triumphed over their enemies' cruelty at their deaths, made him conclude the doctrine of the gospel was truth.' Yea, Julian himself, vile wretch as he was, could say, that the Christian religion came to be propagated so much, 'propter Christianorum erga omnes beneficia—because Christians were a people that did good to all, and hurt to none.' I am sure we find, by woeful experience, that in these debauched times, wherein religion is so bespattered with frequent scandals, yea, a common looseness of professors, it is hard to get any that are out to come under the net of the gospel. Some beasts there are, that if they have once blown upon a pasture, others will hardly eat of the grass for some while after. Truly I have had some

such sad thoughts as these concerning our unhappy times; that, till the ill favour, which the pride, contentions, errors, and looseness of professors now-a-days, have left upon the truths and ordinances of Christ be worn off, there is little hope of any great comings in of new converts. The minister cannot be always preaching. Two or three hours, may be, in a week, he spends among his people in the pulpit, holding the glass of the gospel before their faces; but the lives of professors, these preach all week long. If they were but holy and exemplary, they would be as a repetition of the preacher's sermon to the families and neighbours among whom they converse, and would keep the sound of his doctrine continually ringing in their ears. This would give Christians an admirable advantage in doing good to their carnal neighbours, by counsel and reproof, which is now seldom done, and when done, it proves to little purpose, because not backed with their own exemplary walking. 'It behoves him,' saith Tertullian, 'that would counsel or reprove another, to guard his speech—*autoritate propriae conversationis, ne dicta factis deficientibus erubescant*—with the authority of his own conversation, lest, wanting that, what he says may put himself to the blush.' We do not love that one that hath the stinking breath should come very near us; and truly we count one comes very near us that reproves us. Such therefore had need have a sweet-scented life. Reproofs are good physic, but they have an displeasing farewell. It is hard for men not to vomit them up on the face of him that gives them. Now nothing is more powerful to keep a reproof from thus coming up, than the holiness of the person that reproves. 'Let the righteous smite me,' saith David, 'it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head,' Ps. 141:5. See how well it is taken from such a hand, because of the authority that holiness carries with it. None but a vile wretch will smite a righteous man with reproach, for smiting him with a reproof, especially if it be softly laid on, and like oil fomented, and wrought into him, as it should, with compassion and love to his soul. Thus we see how influential the power of holiness would be unto the wicked. Neither would it be less upon our brethren and fellow-Christians.

When one Christian sees holiness sparkle in the life of another he converses with, he shall find his own grace spring within him, as the babe in Elizabeth

at the salutation of Mary. Truly one eminently holy is enough to put life into a whole society; on the contrary, the error or looseness of one professor, endangers the whole company that are acquainted with him. Therefore we have so strict a charge—'Follow peace with all men, and holiness;...looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you and thereby many be defiled,' Heb. 12:14. It is spoken to professors. The heathen's drunkenness, uncleanness, unrighteous walking did not so much endanger them. But, when 'a root of bitterness springs up' among professors themselves, this hazards the defiling of many. A scab on the wolf's back is not so dangerous to the sheep—because they will not be easily drawn among such company; but, when it gets into the flock, among professors that feed together, pray, hear, and walk in fellowship together, then is there fear it will spread. A loose erroneous professor doth the devil more service in his kind, than a whole troop of such as pretend to no religion. The devil gets no credit by them. There are many errors and sinful practices which have long lain upon his hands, and he could not put them off, till he found his way—viz. to employ some professors as his brokers to commend them to others, and to disperse them for him. And if such do not ensnare and defile others by their unholy walking, to be sure they grieve their hearts, and put them to shame in the world. O how Christians hang down their heads upon the scandal of any of their company!—as all the patriarchs were troubled, when the cup was found in one of their sacks. And it is no small matter to make sad the hearts of God's people. In a word, he that keeps not up, in some measure, the power of a holy life, renders himself useless and unprofitable. Wouldst thou pray for others? A heathen could bid a wicked man hold his peace, and not let the gods know he was in a ship when a storm was on them. Wouldst thou speak a word of comfort to any mournful soul? O how unsavoury are comforts dropping from such a mouth! Wouldst thou counsel another? Thy friend will think thou dost but jest. Whatever thou sayest in commendation of holiness, he will not believe that thou thyself dost think it good; for then thou wouldst take that thyself, which thou commendest to another.

Sixth. Holiness and righteousness—they are the pillars of kingdoms and nations. Who are they that

keep the house from falling on a people's head, but the righteous in a nation? 'Ten righteous men,' could they have been found in Sodom, had blown over the storm of fire and brimstone that, in a few hours, entombed them in their own ashes; yea, the destroying angel's hands were tied up, as it were, while but one righteous Lot was among them. 'Haste thee, escape hither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come hither,' Gen. 19:22. Rehoboam and his kingdom were strengthened for three years, and might have been for three and twenty, if he had not, by his unrighteousness, pulled it down upon himself and people; for his unhappiness is dated from the very time of his departure from God, II Chr. 11:16-12:2. Josiah, when he came to the crown, found the kingdom of Judah tumbling apace to ruin; yet, because his heart was set for God, and prepared to walk before him, God took his bail (as I may so say) for that wretched people, even when they were under arrest from him, and almost at the prison door, so that their safety was, in a manner, bound up in his life; for soon after his decease all went to wreck among them. It was a heroic speech of Luther, who foresaw a black cloud of God's judgments coming over the head of Germany, but told some of his friends, 'That he would do his best to keep it from falling in his days'—yea, he believed it should not come—and, said he, 'when I am gone, let them that come after me look to it.'

This poor nation of England hath, for many generations in a succession, had a number of precious, righteous ones, who have, through God's grace, walked close with God, and been kept in a great degree unspotted from the defilements of the ungodly times they lived in. These were the Atlases of their several ages; these have oft found favour of God, to beg the life of this nation, when its neck hath been on the very block. But they are gone, or wearing away apace, and a new generation coming in their room; unhappy would the day be called when you were born, if you should be the men and women that, by degenerating from the power of holiness, should cut the banks which was their chief care to keep up, and so let in a desolating judgment to overflow the land. That heir we count unworthy of his birth and patrimony, who, by his debauched courses, prodigally makes away that estate, which, by the care and providence of his ancestors, was through many descents at last transmitted to him; but which now, together with

the honour of the family, unhappily ends in him. If ever any age was like to do thus by the place of their nativity, this present is it, wherein our sad lot to live is cast. How low is the power of holiness sunk among us, to what it was but in the last generation! Religion, alas! runs low and dreggy⁸ among professors. God, we know, will not long suffer it. If Egypt knows a dearth is coming by the low ebbing of Nilus, surely we may see a judgment to be coming by the low fall of the power of godliness.

There are great complaints of what men have lost in these hurling times. Some bemoan their lost places and estates, others the lost lives of their friends in the wars; but professors may claim justly the first place of all the mourners of the times, to lament their lost loves to the truths of Christ, worship of Christ, servants of Christ—yea, that universal decay which appears in their holy walking before God and man. This is sad indeed, but that which adds a fearful aggravation to it is, that we degenerate and grow loose at a time when we are under the highest engagements for holiness that ever any people were. We are a people redeemed from many deaths and dangers. And when better might God expect us to be a righteous nation? It is an ill time for a person to fall a stealing and pilfering again as soon as the rope is off his neck, and he let safely come down that ladder from which he was even now like to be tumbled off. Surely it added to righteous Noah's sin, to be drunk as soon almost as he was set on shore, when a little before he had seen a whole world sinking before his eyes, and he, privileged person, left by God to plant the world again with a godly seed. O sirs, the earth hath hardly yet drunk in the rivers of blood that have been shed in our land. The cities and towns have hardly got out of their ruins, which the miseries of war laid them in. The moans of the fatherless and husbandless, whom the sword bereaved of their dearest relations, are not yet silenced by their own death. Yea, can our own frights and scares, which we were amazed with, when we saw the nation—like a candle lighted at both ends—on flame, and every day the fire coming nearer and nearer to ourselves—can these be so soon forgotten? Now, that at such a time as this, a nation, and that the professing part of it, should

8. Dreggy, full of dregs, muddy. — Ed.

grow looser, more proud, covetous, contentious, wanton in their principles, and careless in their lives; this must be for a lamentation. We have little cause to boast of our peace and plenty, when the result of our deliverance is to deliver us up to commit such abominations. This is as if one whose quartan⁹ ague is gone, but leaving him in a deep dropsy, should brag his ague hath left him, little thinking that when it went, it left him a worse guest in its place. An unhappy change, God knows it is; to have war, pestilence, and famine removed, and to be left swollen up with pride, error, and libertinism.

Again, we are a people who have made more pretensions to righteousness and holiness than our forefathers ever did. What else meant the many prayers to God, and petitions to man, for reformation? What interpretations could a charitable heart make, of our putting ourselves under the bond of a covenant, to endeavour for personal reformation, and then national, but that we meant in earnest to be a more righteous nation than ever before? This made such a loud report in foreign parts, that our neighbour-churches were set a wondering to think what these glorious beginnings might ripen to; so that now—having put forth these leaves, and told both God and man, by them, what fruit was to be looked for from us—our present state must needs be nigh unto cursing, for disappointing the just expectations of both. Nothing can save the life of this our nation, or lengthen out its tranquility in mercy to it, but the recovery of the much decayed power of holiness. This, as a spring of new blood to a weak body, would, though almost a dying, revive it, and procure more happy days—yea, more happy days to come over its head, than it hath yet seen; but alas! as we are degenerating from bad to worse, we do but die lingeringly—every day we fetch our breath shorter and shorter; if the sword should but be drawn again among us, we have hardly strength to hold out another fit.

SECOND BRANCH.

[INSTANCES WHEREIN the Christian is to express the power of holiness.]

The second particular, into which the point was branched, comes now to be taken into hand; and that was to mention several instances wherein especially every Christian is to express the power of a holy and righteous life. Now this I shall do under several heads.

FIRST. The Christian must maintain the power of holiness in his contest with sin. SECOND. The Christian must express the power of holiness in the duties of God's worship. THIRD. The Christian must express the power of holiness in his particular calling and worldly employments.

[The power of holiness is expressed in the saint's BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS SIN.]

FIRST INSTANCE. The Christian must maintain the power of holiness in his contest with sin; and that in the particulars following.

Thou must not only refuse to commit broad sins, but shun the appearance of sin also; this is to walk in the power of holiness. The dove doth not only fly from the hawk, but will not so much as smell a single feather that falls from it. It should be enough to scare the holy soul from any enterprise, if it be but male coloratum—badly coloured. We are commanded to 'hate even the garment spotted by the flesh,' Jude 23. A cleanly person will not only refuse to swallow the dung-hill (he [who would] is a beast indeed), but he is careful also that he doth not get so much as a spot on his clothes as he is eating his meat. The Christian's care should be to keep, as his conscience is pure, so his name pure; which is done by avoiding all appearance of evil. Bernard's three questions are worth the asking ourselves in any enterprise. An liceat? an deceat? an expediat?—Is it lawful? may I do it and not sin? Is it becoming me a Christian? may I do it, and not wrong my profession? That work which would suit a mean man, would it become a prince? 'Should such a man as I flee?' Neh. 6:11, said Nehemiah nobly. Lastly, Is it expedient? may I do it, and not offend my weak brother? There are some things we must deny ourselves of for the sake of

9. Quartan, occurring every fourth day. — Ed..

others. Though a man could sit his horse, and run him full speed without danger to himself; yet he should do very ill to come scouring through a town where children are in the way, that may be, before he is aware, rid over by him, and spoiled. Thus some things thou mayest do, and without sin to thee, if there were no weak Christians in thy way to ride over, and so bruise their tender consciences and grieve their spirits. But alas! this is too narrow a path for many shaleing¹⁰ professors to walk in now-a-days; they must have more room and scope for their loose hearts, or else they and their profession must part. Liberty is the Diana of our times. O what apologies are made for some suspicious practices!—long hair, gaudy garish apparel, spotted faces, naked breasts. These have been called to the bar in former times, and censured by sober and solid Christians, as things at least suspicious, and of no ‘good report;’ but now they have hit upon a more favourable jury, that find them ‘not guilty.’ Yea, many are so fond of them, that they think Christian liberty is wronged in their censure. Professors are so far from a holy jealousy, that should make them watch their hearts, lest they go too far, that they stretch their consciences to come up to the full length of their tedder; as if he were the brave Christian that could come nearest the pit of sin, and not fall in; as in the Olympian games, he wore the garland away, that could drive his chariot nearest the mark, and not knock on it. If this were so, Paul mistook when he bade Christians ‘abstain from all appearance of evil,’ 1 Thes. 5:22. He should rather, by these men’s divinity, have said ‘abstain’ not from ‘the appearance,’ only take heed of what is in itself grossly ‘evil.’ But he that can venture on ‘the appearance of evil,’ under the pretence of liberty, may, for aught I know, commit that which is more grossly evil, under some appearance of good. It is not hard, if a man will be at the cost, to put a good colour on a rotten stuff, and practice also.

Second Particular. Thou must not only endeavour against all sin, but that, on noble principles. Here lies the power of holiness. Many forbear to sin upon such an unworthy account, that God will not thank them for it another day. As it is in actions of

piety and charity, God makes no account of them, except he be interested in them. When we fast or pray, God asks, ‘Do you fast and pray to me, even to me?’ Zech. 7:5. When we give alms, ‘a cup of cold water’ for his sake, given ‘in the name of a disciple,’ is more valued by him, Matt. 10:42, than a cup of gold, for private and low ends. As in these, so it is in sin, God looks that his authority should conclude, and his love constrain us to renounce it; before the commandments—as princes, before their proclamations, prefix their arms and royal names—God sets his glorious name. ‘God spake all these words,’ saying, &c., Ex. 20:1. And why this, but that we should sanctify his name in all that we do? A master may well think himself despised by that servant that still goes on, when he bids him leave off such a work, but has done presently at the entreaty of another. O how many are there that go on to sin, for all that God says to the contrary! But when their credit bids, for shame of the world, to give over such a practice, they can knock off presently. When their profit speaks, it is heard and obeyed. O sirs! take heed of this; God expects his servants should not only do what he commands, but this, at his command, and his only. And as in abstaining from evil, so in mourning for sins committed by us, if we will be Christians indeed, we must take in, yea prefer, God’s concernments before our own. Indeed, it were to be wished that some were kind to their own souls, as to mourn for themselves when they have sinned—that they would cry out with Lamech, ‘I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt.’ Gen. 4:23. Many have such brawny consciences, that they do not so much as complain they have hurt themselves by their sins. But, little of the power of holiness appears in all this. There may be a great cry in the conscience, ‘I am damned! I have undone myself!’ and the dishonour that is cast upon God by him, not laid to heart. You remember what Joab said to David, taking on heavily for Absalom’s death, ‘I perceive,’ said he, ‘if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well,’ 11 Sam. 19:6. Thus we might say to such selfish mourners, ‘We perceive that if thou couldst but save the life of thy soul from eternal death and damnation, though the glory of God miscarried, thou couldst be pleased well enough.’ But know, that a gracious soul’s mourning runs in another channel. ‘Against thee, thee only have I sinned,’ is holy

10. Shaleing, taken, probably, from shale, meaning a husk or shell; hence, outside, specious. — ED.

David's moan. There is a great difference between a servant that works for another, and one that is his own man. As we say, the latter puts all his losses upon his own head: 'So much,' saith he, 'I have lost by such a ship—so much by such a bargain.' But the servant that trades with his master's stock—he, when any loss comes, he puts it on his master's account: 'So much have I lost of my master's goods.' O Christian! think of this. Thou art but a servant. All the stock thou tradest with is not thine, but thy God's; and therefore, when thou fallest into any sin, bewail it as a wrong to him. 'So much, alas! I have dishonoured my God; his talents I have wasted; his name I have wounded; his Spirit I have grieved.'

Third Particular. He must not only abstain from acting a sin, but also labour to mortify it. A wound may be hid when it is not healed—covered, and yet not cured. Some men, they are like unskilful physicians, who rather drive in the disease, than drive out the cause of the disease. Corruption thus left in the bosom, like lime unslaked, or a humour unpurged, is sure at one time or other to take fire and break out, though now it lies peaceably, as powder in the barrel, and makes no noise. I have read that the opening of a chest where some cloths were laid up—not very well aired and cleared from the infection that had been in the house—was the cause of a great plague in Venice, after they had lain many years there, without doing any hurt. I am sure we see, for want of true mortification, many who, after they have walked so long unblameably as to gain the reputation of being saints in the opinion of others, upon some occasion, like the opening of the chest, have fallen sadly into abominable practices; and therefore it behoves us not to satisfy ourselves with anything less than a work of mortification, and that followed on from day to day. 'I protest,' saith Paul, 'by my rejoicing in Christ, I die daily.' Here was a man who walked in the power of holiness. Sin is like the beast, *Rev. 13:3*, which seemed at one time as if it would presently die of its wounds, but by and by it was strangely healed so as to recover again. Many a saint, for want of keeping a tight rein, and that constantly, over some corruption which they have thought they had got the mastery of, have been thrown out the saddle, and by it dragged dangerously into temptation, unable to resist the fury of lust, when it has got head, till they have broken their bones with some sad fall into sin. If thou wouldst, Chris-

tian, show the power of holiness, never give over mortifying-work, no, not when thy corruptions play least in thy sight. He that is inclined to a disease—gout, stone, or the like—must not only take physic when he hath a fit actually upon him, but ever and anon should be taking something good against it. So should the Christian, not only when he finds his corruption stirring, but every day keep his soul in a course of spiritual physic, against the growing of it. This is holiness in its power. Many professors do with their souls in this respect, as deceitful chirurgeons with their patients—lay on a healing plaster one day, and a contrary the next day, that sets the cure more back than the other set it forward. Take heed of this, except thou meanest not only to bring the power of holiness into danger, but the very life and truth of it into question in thy soul.

Fourth Particular. He must, as endeavour to mortify corruption, so to grow and advance in the contrary grace. Every sin hath its opposite grace, as every poison hath its antidote. He that will walk in the power of holiness, must not only labour to make avoidance of sin, but to get possession of the contrary grace. We read of a house that stood 'empty,' *Matt. 12:44*. 'The unclean spirit went out,' but the Holy Spirit came not in—that is, when a man is a mere negative Christian, he ceaseth to do evil in some ways he hath formerly walked in, but he learns not to do good. This is to lose heaven with short-shooting. God will not ask us what we were not, but what we were. Not to swear and curse will not serve our turn; but thou wilt be asked, 'Didst thou bless and sanctify God's name?' It will not suffice that thou didst not persecute Christ, but 'Didst thou receive him?' Thou didst not hate his saints, but didst thou love them? Thou didst not drink and swill, but wert thou filled with the Spirit? He is the skilful physician who, at the same time he evacuates the disease, doth also comfort and strengthen nature; and he the true Christian, that doth not content himself with a bare laying aside of evil customs and practices, but labours to walk in that exercise of the corresponding graces. Art thou discomposed with impatience?—haunted with a discontented spirit, under any affliction? Think it not enough to silence thy heart from quarreling with God; but leave not till thou canst bring it sweetly to rely on God. Holy David drove it thus far—he did not only chide his soul for being disquieted, but he

charges it to trust in God, Ps. 43:5. Hast thou any grudgings in thy heart against thy brother? Think it not enough to quench these sparks of hell-fire; but labour to kindle a heavenly fire of love to him, so as to set thee a praying heartily for him. I have known one who, when he had some envious, unkind thoughts stirring in him, against any one—as who so holy may not find such vermin sometimes creeping about him?—would not stay long from the throne of grace; but going there, that he might enter the stronger protest against them, would most earnestly pray for the increase of those good things in them, which he before had seemed to grudge, [i.e. desiderate], and so revenged himself of those envious lustings which at any time rose in his heart against others.

Fifth Particular. He must have a public spirit against the sins of others. A good subject doth not only labour to live quietly under his prince's government himself, but is ready to serve his prince against those that will not. True holiness, as true charity, begins at home, but it doth not confine itself within its own doors. It hath a zeal against sin abroad. He that is of a neutral spirit, and, Gallio-like, cares not what dishonour God hath from others, calls in question the zeal he expresseth against sin in his own bosom. When David would know the temper of his own heart, the furthest discovery by all search that he could make of the sincerity of it, is his zeal against the sins of others. 'Do I not hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred; I count them mine enemies,' Ps. 139:21, 22. Having done this, he entreats God himself to ransack his heart; 'Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me,' &c., ver. 23, 24; as if he had said, Lord, my line will not reach to fathom my heart any further, and therefore if it be possible that yet any evil may shroud itself under this, tell me, and 'lead me in the way everlasting.'

Sixth Particular. The Christian, when he shows most zeal against sin, and hath greatest victory over it, even then must he renounce all fiduciary¹¹ glorying in this. The excellency of gospel holiness consists in self-denial. 'Though I wee perfect,' saith Job, 'yet

would I not know my soul,' Job 9:21; that is, I would not be conceited and proud of my innocence. When a man is lift up with any excellency he hath, we say, 'He knows it;' 'He hath excellent parts, but he knows it;' that is, he reflects too much on himself, and sees his own face too oft in the glass of his own perfections. They who climb lofty mountains find it safest, the higher they ascend, the more to bow and stoop with their bodies; and so does the Spirit of Christ teach the saints, as they get higher in their victories over corruption, to bow lowest in self-denial. The saints are bid to, 'keep themselves in the love of God,' and then to wait, 'looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life,' Jude 21. And, 'Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy,' Hosea 10:12. We sow on earth, we reap in heaven. The seed we are to sow is righteousness and holiness, which when we have done, with greatest care and cost, we must not expect our reward from the hand of our righteousness, but from God's mercy.

[The power of holiness is expressed
in the DUTIES OF GOD'S WORSHIP.]

SECOND INSTANCE. The Christian must exert the power of holiness in the duties of God's worship. The same light that shows us a God, convinceth us he is to be worshipped, and not only so, but that he will be worshipped in a holy manner also. God was very choice in all that belonged to his worship under the law. If he hath a tabernacle—the place of worship—it must be made of the choicest materials; the workmen employed to make it must be rarely gifted for the purpose; the sacrifices to be offered up, the best in every kind, the males of the flock, the best of the beasts, the fat of the inwards, not the offals. The persons that attend upon the Lord, and minister unto him, they must be peculiarly holy. What is the gospel of all this? but that God is very wonderful in his worship. If in any action of our lives we be more holy than in others, sure it is to be, when we have to do with God immediately. Now this holiness in duties of worship should appear in these particulars.

First. In making conscience of one duty as well as another. The Christian must encompass all within his religious walk. It is dangerous to perform one duty, that we may dispense with ourselves in the neglect of another. Partiality is hateful to God, especially

11. Fiduciary, i.e. confident.

in the duties of religion—which have all a divine stamp upon them. There is no ordinance of God’s appointment which he doth not bless to his people; and we must not reject what God owns. Yea, God communicates himself with great variety to his saints, now in this, anon in that, on purpose to keep up the esteem of all in our hearts. The spouse seeks her Beloved in secret duty at home, and finds him not; then she goes to the public, and meets ‘him whom her soul loveth,’ Song 3:4. Daniel, no doubt, had often visited the throne of grace, and been a long trader in that duty; but God reserved the fuller manifestation of his love, and the opening of some secrets to him, till he did, to ordinary prayer, join extraordinary fasting and prayer. Then the commandment came forth, and a messenger from heaven was despatched to acquaint him with God’s mind and heart, Dan. 9:3 compared with ver. 23. There is no duty, but the saints, at one time or another, find the Spirit of God breathing sweetly in, and filling their souls from it, with more than ordinary refreshing. Sometimes the child sucks its milk from this breast, sometimes from that. David, in meditation, while he was ‘musing,’ Ps. 39:3, finds a heavenly heat kindling in his bosom, till at last the fire breaks out. To the eunuch in ‘reading’ of the word, Acts 8:27, 28, is sent Philip to join his chariot; to the apostles, Christ ‘makes known himself in breaking of bread,’ Luke 24:35; the disciples walking to Emmaus, and conferring together, presently have Christ fall in with them, Luke 24:15, who helps them to untie those knots which they were posed with; Cornelius, at duty in his house, has ‘a vision,’ Acts 10:3 from heaven, to direct him in the way he should walk. Take heed, Christian, therefore that thou neglectest not any one duty. How knowest thou, but that is the door at which Christ stands waiting to enter at into thy soul? The Spirit is free. Do not bind him to this or that duty, but wait on him in all. It is not wisdom to let any water run past thy mill, which may be useful to set thy soul a-going heavenward. May be, Christian, thou findest little in those duties thou performest; they are empty breasts to thy soul. It is worth thy inquiry, whether there be not some other thou neglectest? Thou hearest the word with little profit, may be? I pray, tell me, dost thou not neglect sacraments? I am sure too many do, and that upon weak grounds, God knows. And wilt thou have God meet thee in one ordinance, who dost not meet him in another?

Or, if thou frequentest all public ordinances, is not God a great stranger to thee at home, in thy house and closet? What communion dost thou hold with him in private duties? Here is a hole wide enough to lose all thou gettest in public, if not timely mended. Samuel would not sit down to the feast with Jesse and his sons, till David, though the youngest son, was fetched, who was also the only son what was wanting, 1 Sam. 16:11. If thou wouldst have God’s company in any ordinance, thou must wait on him in all; he will not have any willingly neglected. Oh fetch back that duty which thou hast sent away; though least in thy eye, yet, it may be, it is that which God means to crown with his choicest blessing to thy soul.

Second. In a close and vigorous pursuance of those ends for which God hath appointed them. Now there is a double end which God chiefly aims at in duties of his worship. 1. God intends that by them we should do our homage to him as our sovereign Lord. 2. He intends them to be as means through which he may let out himself into the bosoms of his children, and communicate the choicest of his blessings to them. Now here the power of holiness puts forth itself, when the Christian attends narrowly to reach these ends in every duty he performs.

1. God appoints them for this end, that we may do our homage to him as our sovereign Lord. Were there not a worship paid to God, how should we declare and make it appear that we hold our life and being on him? One of the first things that God taught Adam, and Adam his children, was in divine worship. Now if we will do this holily, we must make it our chief care so to perform every duty, that by it we may sanctify his name in it, and give him the glory due unto him. A subject may offer a present after such a ridiculous fashion to his prince, that he may count himself rather scomed than honoured by him. The soldiers bowed the knee to Christ, but they ‘mocked him,’ Matt. 27:29, and so does God reckon that many do by him, even while they worship him. By the carriage and behaviour of ourselves in religious duties, we speak what our thoughts are of God himself. He that performs them with a holy awe upon his spirit, and comes to them filled with faith and fear, with joy and trembling—he declares plainly that he believes God to be a great God and a good God—a glorious majesty and a gracious. But he that is careless and slovenly in them, tells God himself to his

face that he hath mean and low thoughts of him. The misbehaviour of a person in religious duties, ariseth from his misapprehensions of God whom he worships. What is engraven on the seal, you shall surely see printed on the wax. And what thoughts the heart hath of God, are stamped on the duties the man performs. Abel showed himself to be a holy man, and Cain appeared a wicked wretch, in their sacrifice. And how? but in this—that Abel aimed at that end which God intends in his worship—the sanctifying {of} his name—but which, Cain minded not at all. This may appear by comparing Abel’s sacrifice with his, in two particulars.

(1.) Abel is very choice in the matter of his sacrifice—not any of the flock that comes first to hand, but ‘the firstlings;’ nor does he offer the lean of them to God, and save the fat for himself, but gives God the best of the best. But of Cain’s offering no such care is recorded to be taken by him. It is only said, that he, ‘brought of the fruit of the ground, an offering unto the Lord,’ but not a word that it was the first fruit or the best fruit, Gen. 4:3, 4. Again,

(2.) Abel did not put God off with a beast or two for a sacrifice; but with them give his heart also. ‘By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain,’ Heb. 11:4. He gave God the inward worship of his soul; and this was it that God took so kindly at his hands, for which he obtained a testimony from God himself that he was ‘righteous.’ Whereas Cain thought it enough—if not too much—to give him a little of the fruit of the ground. Had the wretch but considered who God was, and what was his end in requiring an offering at his hands, he could not have thought rationally that a handful or two of corn was that which he prized or looked at, any further than to be a sign of that inward and spiritual worship which he expected to come along with the outward ceremony. But he showed what base and unworthy thoughts he had of God, and accordingly he dealt with him. O Christians! remember when you engage in any duty of religion, that you go to do your homage to God, who will be worshipped like himself. ‘Cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen,’ Mal. 1:14. This made David so curious about the temple which he had in his heart to build, ‘because

this palace is not for man, but for the Lord God,’ 1 Chr. 29:1; therefore he saith, he ‘prepared with all my might for the house of his God,’ ver. 2. Thus should the gracious soul say, when going to any duty of religion, ‘It is not man, but the Lord God, I am going to minister unto, and therefore I must be serious and solemn, holy and humble,’ &c.

2. The second end God hath appointed divine ordinances and religious duties for, is to be a means whereby he may let out himself to his people, and communicate the choicest of his blessings into their bosoms. ‘There,’ saith the psalmist, speaking of the mountain of Zion, where the temple stood, the place of God’s worship, ‘the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore,’ Ps. 133:3; that is, he hath appointed the blessing of life spiritual, grace, and comfort, which at last shall swell into life eternal, to issue and stream thence. The saints ever drew their water out of these wells. ‘Your heart shall live that seek God,’ Ps. 69:32. And their souls must needs die that seek not God here. The husbandman may as well expect a crop where he never plowed and sowed; and the tradesman to grow rich, who never opens his shop-doors to let customers in; as he to thrive in grace, or comfort, that converseth not with the duties of religion. The great things God doth for his people are got in communion with him. Now here appears the power of holiness—when a soul makes this his business, which he follows close, and attends to, in duties of religion, viz. to receive some spiritual advantage from God by them. As a scholar knowing he is sent to the university to get learning himself, gives up to pursue this, and neglects other things (it is not riches, or pleasures he looks after, but learning); thus, too, the gracious soul bestirs him, and flees from one duty to another, as the bee from flower to flower, to store itself with more and more grace. It is not credit and reputation to be thought a great saint, but to be indeed such, that he takes all this pains for. The Christian is compared to a merchantman that trades for rich pearls; he is to go to ordinances, as the merchant that sails from port to port, not to see places, but to take in his lading, some here, some there. A Christian should be as much ashamed to return empty from his traffic with ordinances, as the merchant to come home without his lading. But, alas! how little is this looked after by many that pass for great professors, who are like some idle persons that

come to the market, not to buy provision, and carry home what they want, but to gaze and look upon what is there to be sold, to no purpose. O my brethren, take heed of this! Idleness is bad anywhere, but worst in the market-place, where so many are at work before thy eyes, whose care for their souls both adds to thy sin, and will, another day, to thy shame. Dost thou not see others grow rich in grace and comfort, by their trading with those ordinances, from which thou comest away poor and beggarly? and canst thou see it without blushing? If thou hadst but a heart to propound the same end to thy soul, when thou comest, thou mightest speed as well as they. God allows a free trade to all that value Christ and his grace, according to their preciousness. 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price,' Isa. 55:1. The Spirit of God seems, in the judgment of some, to allude to a certain custom in maritime towns. When a ship comes with commodities to be sold, they use to cry them about the town. 'Oh, all that would have such and such commodities, let them come to the waterside, where they are to be had at such a price.' Thus Christ calls every one that sees his need of him; and of his graces, to the ordinances, where these are to be freely had of all that come to them, for this very end.

[The power of holiness is to be shown in the Christian's **WORLDLY EMPLOYMENTS.**]

THIRD INSTANCE. The Christian must express the power of holiness in his particular calling and worldly employments—that wherein he is conversant. Holiness must be written upon those, as well as on his religious duties. He that observes the law of building, is as exact in making a kitchen, as in making a parlour; so, by the law of Christianity, we must be as exact in our worldly business, as in duties of worship—'Be ye holy in all manner of conversation,' I Peter 1:15. We must not leave our religion, as some do their Bibles, at church. As in man, the highest faculty—which is reason—guides his lowest actions, even those which are common to beasts, such as eating, drinking, and sleeping (man doth, that is, should, if he will deserve his own name, exercise these acts as reason directs—should show himself in them a ra-

tional creature); so in a Christian, grace, that is the highest principle, is to steer and guide him in those actions that are common to man as man. The Christian is not to buy and sell, as a mere man, but as a Christian man. Religion is not like that statesman's gown, which, when he went to recreate himself, he would throw off, and say, 'There lie, lord treasurer, a while.' No, wherever the Christian is, whatever he is adorning, he must keep his religion on—I mean, do it holily. He must not do that in which he cannot show himself a Christian. Now the power of holiness puts itself forth in our particular callings these ways. But take them conjunctively, and 'the beauty of holiness' will appear in the symmetry of all the parts together.

First. When the Christian is diligent in his particular calling. When God calls us to be Christians, he calls us indeed out of the world as to our affections, but not out of the world as to employment. It is true, when Elisha was called, he left his plough, and the apostles their nets, but not as they were called to be saints, but because they were called to office in the church. Some, however, in our days, could find in their hearts to send the officers of the church to the plough again; but upon how little reason let themselves judge, who find one trade, if it be well followed, and managed with a full stock, enough to find them work all the week. Surely then the minister that has to do with, yea, provide for, more souls than they bodies, may find his head and heart as full of work in his calling, from one end of the year, as any of them all. But I am speaking to the private Christian. Thou canst not be holy, if thou beest not diligent in a particular calling. The law of man counts him a vagrant that hath not a particular abiding place; and the word of God counts him a disorderly person that hath not a particular calling, wherein to move and act for God's glory and the good of others. 'We hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all,' II Thes. 3:11. God would have his people profitable, like the sheep which doth the very ground good it feeds on. Every one should be better for a Christian. When Onesimus was converted, he became 'profitable' to Paul and Philemon also; to Paul as a Christian, to Philemon as a servant, Phil 11. Grace made him of a runaway, a diligent servant. An idle professor is a scandalous professor. An idle man does none good, and himself most hurt.

Second. When he is not only diligent, but for conscience's sake. There are many who are free enough of their pains, in their particular callings; they need no spur. But what sets them on work? It is conscience, because God commands it? Oh no! then they would be diligent in their general calling also. They would pray as hard as they work. They then would knock off, as well as fall on, at God's command. If conscience were the key that opened their shop on the week-day, it would shut it on the Lord's day. When we see a man, like the hawk, fly after the world's prey, and will not come to God's lure¹², but—though conscience in God's name bids 'Come off, and wait on thy God in this duty in thy family, that in thy closet'—still goes on his worldly chase: he shows plain enough whose errand he goes on—not that of conscience, but that of his own lusts. But if thou wilt walk in the power of holiness, thou must be diligent in thy calling on a religious account. That which makes thee 'fervent in prayer,' must make thee 'not slothful in business.' Thou must say, 'This is the place God hath set me in. I am but his servant in my own shop, and here I must serve him as I would have my prentice or child serve me; yea, much more, for they are not mine so much as I am his.'

Third. When he expects the success of his labour from God, and accordingly, if he speeds, gives his humble thanks to God. Indeed, they go together; he that doeth not the one, will not the other. The worldling that goes not through his closet by prayer into his shop in the morning when he enters upon his business, no wonder if he returns not at night by his closet, in thankfulness to God. He began without God; it were strange if he should end in him. The spider that spins her web out of her own bowels, dwells in it when she hath done, Job 8:14; and men that carry on their enterprises by their own wit and care, entitle themselves to what they think they have done. They will sooner sacrifice—as they to their 'net' and 'drag,' Hab. 1:15—to their own wisdom and industry than to God. Such a wretch I have lately heard of in our days, who, being by a neighbour ex-

cited to thank God for a rich crop of corn he had standing on his ground, atheistically replied, 'Thank God! nay, rather thank my dung-cart'—the speech of a dung-hill spirit, more filthy than the muck in his cart. But if thou wilt be a Christian, thou must acknowledge God 'in all thy ways,' not 'leaning to thy own understanding;' and this will direct thee to him, when success crowns thy labours, to crown God with the praise. Jacob laboured as diligently, and took as much pains for the estate he had at last, as another, yet laying the foundation of all in prayer, and expecting the blessing from heaven, Gen. 28:20; he ascribes all that fair estate he at last was possessed of, to the mercy and truth of God, whom he had, in his poor state—when with his pilgrim staff he was travelling to Padan-aram—engaged by a solemn vow to provide for him, Gen 32:10.

Fourth. When the Christian is content with the portion, little or much, that God upon his endeavours allots to him; not content because he cannot have it otherwise. Necessity was the heathen's schoolmaster to teach contentment; but faith must be the Christian's, whereby he acquiesces in the dispositions of God's providence with a sweet complacency as the will of God concerning him. Here is godliness in triumph—when the Christian can carve contentment out of God's providence, whatever the dish is that is set before him. If he 'gathers little,' he lacks not, but is satisfied with his short meal. If he 'gathers much,' he hath 'nothing over'—I mean not more than his grace can well digest and turn to good nourishment; 'nothing over' that turns to bad humours of pride and wantonness. This was the pitch Paul attained unto, Php. 4:12. He knew how 'to abound and to suffer need.' Take contentment from godliness, and you take one of the best jewels away she wears in her bosom. 'Godliness with contentment is great gain;' not godliness with an estate, but 'godliness with contentment,' I Tim. 6:6.

Fifth. When the Christian's particular calling doth not encroach upon his general. Truly this requires a strong guard. The world is of an encroaching nature, hard it is to converse with it, and not come into bondage to it. As Hagar, when Abraham showed her some respect more than ordinary, began to contest with, yea, crow over, her mistress, so will our worldly employments jostle with our heavenly, if we keep not a strict hand over them. Now the power of

12. Lure is explained by Latham to be—'that whereto falconers call their young hawks by casting it up in the air;'—generally something which invites by the prospect of advantage. — ED.

holiness appears here in two things.

1. When the Christian suffers not his worldly business to eat upon his time for communion with God, but keeps it inviolable from the sacrilegious hands of the world. The Christian may observe, that, if he will listen to it, he shall never think of setting about any religious duty, but some excuse or other, to put off, will present itself to his thoughts. 'This thing must be just now done; that friend spoken with, or that customer waited for;' so that, as the wise man saith, 'He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap,' Ecc. 11:4. In the same way he that will regard what his own sloth, worldly interest, and fleshly part suggest, shall never pray, meditate, or hold communion with God in any other religious duty. O it is sad! when the master must ask the man leave when to eat, and when not—when the Christian must take his orders from the world, when to wait on God and when not, whereas religion should give law to that. Then holiness is in its power—as Samson in his strength—when it can snap asunder these excuses, that would keep him from his God, as easily as he did his cords of flax—when the Christian can make his way into the presence of God, through the throng of worldly encumbrances. 'Behold,' saith David, 'I have prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver,' &c, 1 Chr. 22:14. He had ways enough to have disposed of his treasures, if he would have been discouraged from the work; he might have had a fair apology from the wars he was all his reign involved in—which were continually draining his exchequer—to have spared this cost. But as Rome showed her puissance in sending succours to Spain when Hannibal was at her gates; so David would show his zeal for God and his house, by laying aside such vast sums for the building of a temple in the midst of the troubles and expenses of his kingdom. He is the Christian, indeed, that lays aside a good portion of time daily, in the midst of all his worldly occasions, for communion with God. Whoever he compounds with and pays short, he dares not make bold with God, to serve him by halves. He shall have his time devoted to him, though others are put off with the less; like the devout man, who, when the time for his devotions came, what company soever he was with, would take his leave of them with this fair excuse, that he had a friend that stayed to speak

with him (he meant his God).

2. When his worldly employments do not turn the edge of his affections, and leave a bluntness upon his spirit as to holding communion with God. Here is holiness in the power. As the husband, when he hath been abroad all day in this company and that, yet none of these makes him love his wife and children the less. When he comes home at night, he brings his affections to them as entire as when he went out, yea, he is glad he got from all others to them again. This is a sweet frame of spirit indeed. But alas! how hard to keep it. Canst thou say, O Christian! after thou hast passed a day amidst thy worldly profits, and been entertained with the delight and pleasures which thy full estate affords thee, that thou bringest thy whole heart to thy God with thee, when at night thou returnest into his presence to wait on him? Thou canst say more than many can that have some good in them. Oh it is hard to converse with the world all day, and shake it off at night, so as to be free to enjoy privacy with God. The world does by the Christian as the little child by the mother; if it cannot keep the mother from going out, then it will cry after her to go with her. If the world cannot keep us from going to religious duties, then it will cry to be taken along with us, and much ado to part it and the affections.

[The power of holiness to be shown in the Christian's BEHAVIOUR TO OTHERS.]

FOURTH INSTANCE. The Christian must express the power of holiness in his carriage and behaviour to others, and they are either within doors, or without.

[TO THOSE WITHIN DOORS—family relations.]

First. The Christian must express the power of holiness in his carriage to those within doors—his family relations. Much, though not all, of the power of godliness lies within doors, to those that God hath there related us unto. It is in vain to talk of holiness, if we can bring no letters testimonial from our holy walking with our relations. O it is sad, when they that have reason to know us best, by their daily converse with us, do speak least for our godliness. Few so impudent as to come naked into the streets. If men have anything to cover their naughtiness, they will put it on when they come abroad. But what art thou

within doors? what care and conscience to discharge thy duty to thy near relations? He is a bad husband that hath money to spend among company abroad, but none to lay in provisions to keep his family at home. And can he be a good Christian that spends all his religion abroad, and leaves none for his nearest relations at home, that is a great zealot among strangers, and yet hath little or nothing of God coming from him in his family? Yea, it were well, if some that gain the reputation for Christians abroad, did not fall short of others that pretend not to profession in those moral duties which they should perform to their relations. There are some who are great strangers to profession, who yet are loving and kind in their way to their wives. What kind of professors then are they, who are doggish and currish to the wife of their bosoms? who by their tyrannical lording it over them, embitter their spirits, and make them 'cover the Lord's altar with tears and weeping?' There are wives to be found that are not clamorous, peevish, and forward to their husbands, who yet are far from a true work of grace in their hearts. Do they then walk as becomes holiness, who trouble the whole house with their violent passions? There are servants who, from the authority of a natural conscience, are kept from railing and reviling language, when reproved by their masters; and shall not grace keep pace with nature? Holy David knew very well how near this part of the saints' duty lies to the very heart of godliness; and therefore, when he makes his solemn vow to walk holily before God, he instanceth in this, as one stage whereon he might eminently discover the graciousness of his spirit. 'I will walk within my house with a perfect heart,' Ps. 101:2. But, to instance in a few particulars wherein the power of holiness is to appear as to family relations.

1. The power of holiness is to appear in the choice of our relations, such, I mean, as are eligible. Some are not in our choice. The child cannot choose what father he will have, nor the father what child; but where God allows a liberty, he expects a care.

(1.) Art thou godly and wantest a service? O take heed thou showest thy holiness in the family thou chooseth, and towards the governors thou puttest thyself under. Inquire more whether it be a healthful air for thy soul within doors, than for thy body without. The very senseless creatures groan to serve the ungodly world, and is capable of choosing,

would count it their 'liberty' to serve the 'children of God,' Rom. 8:21. And wilt thou voluntarily, when thou mayest prevent it, run thyself under the government of such as are ungodly, who art thyself a child of God? It is hard to serve two masters, though much alike in disposition; but impossible to serve those two—a holy God, and a wicked ungodly man or woman—so as long to please them both. But, if thou beest under the roof of such a one, forget not thy duty to them, though they forget their duty to God; possibly thy faithfulness to them may bring them to inquire after thy God, for thy sake, as Nebuchadnezzar did for Daniel's. No doubt wicked men would take up religion and the ways of God more seriously into their consideration, if there were a more heavenly luster and beauty upon Christians' lives in their several relations to invite them thereunto. Sometimes a book is read the sooner for the fairness of the characters, which would have been not much looked in if the print had been naught. O how oft do we hear that the thoughts of religion are thrown away with scorn, by wicked masters, when their professing servants are taken false, appear proud and undutiful, slothful or negligent! What then follows, but 'is this your religion? God keep me from such a religion as this.' O commend the ways of God to thy carnal and ungodly master or mistress by a clear unblotted conversation in thy place! But withal let me tell thee, if—doing thy utmost in thy place to promote religion in the family—thou seest that the soil is so cold that there is no visible hope of planting for God, it is time, high time, to think of transplanting thyself; for it is to be feared, the place which is so bad to plant in, will not, cannot, be very good for thee to grow and thrive in.

(2.) Art thou a godly master? When thou takest a servant into thy house, choose for God as well as thyself. Remember there is a work for God to be done by thy servant, as well as thyself; and shall he be fit for thy turn, that is not for his? Thou desirest that the work should prosper thy servant takes in hand. Dost thou not? and what ground hath thou from the promise to hope, that the work should prosper in his hand that sins all the while he is doing of it? 'The plowing of the wicked, is sin,' Prov. 21:4. A godly servant is a greater blessing than we think on. He can work and set God on work also for his master's good; 'O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and shew kindness unto

my master Abraham,' Gen. 24:12. And sure Abraham's servant did his master as much service by his prayer, as by his prudence in that journey. If you were but to plant an orchard, you would get the best fruit trees, and not cumber your ground with crabs. There is more loss in a graceless servant in the house, than a fruitless tree in the orchard. Holy David observed, while he was at Saul's court, the mischief of having wicked and ungodly servants; for with such was that unhappy king so compassed, that David compares his court to the profane and barbarous heathens, among whom there was scarce more wickedness to be found. 'Woe is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the tents of Kedar!' Ps. 120:5, that is, among those who were as prodigiously wicked as any there. And, no doubt, but that fact made this gracious man, in his banishment before he came to the crown—having seen the evil of a disordered house—to resolve what he will do, when God should make him the head of such a royal family. 'He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight,' Ps. 101:7. He instanceth those sins not as if he would spend all his zeal against them, but because he had observed them principally to abound in Saul's court, by which he had suffered so much; as you may perceive by Ps. 120:2, 3.

(3.) Art thou godly? show thyself so in the choice of husband or wife. I am sure, if some, and those godly also, could bring no other testimonial for their godliness, than the care they have taken in this particular, it might justly be called into question both by themselves and others. There is no one thing that gracious persons, even those recorded in Scripture as well as others, have shown their weakness, yea, given offence and scandal, more in, than in this particular. 'The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair,' Gen. 6:2. One would have thought the sons of God should have looked for grace in the heart rather than for beauty in the face; but we see that even they sometimes turn in at the fairest sign, without much inquiring what grace is to be found dwelling within. But, Christian, let not the miscarriage of any in this particular—how holy soever otherwise—make thee less careful in thy choice. God did not leave their practice on record for thee to follow, but to shun. He is but a slovenly Christian that will swallow all the saints do without paring their actions. Is it not enough that the wicked break their necks over the

sins of the saints; but wilt thou run upon them also to break thy shins? Point not at this godly man, and that godly woman, saying, they can marry into such a profane family, and lie by the side of a drunkard, swearer, &c.; but look to the rule, O Christian! if thou wilt keep the power of holiness. That is clear as a sunbeam written in the Scripture, 'Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?' II Cor. 6:14. And where he give the widow leave to marry again, he still remembers to bound this liberty—'to whom she will, only, in the Lord,' I Cor. 7:39. Mark that, 'in the Lord,' that is, in the church. All without the faith are 'without God in the world.' The Lord's kindred and family is in the church. You marry out of the Lord, when you marry out of the Lord's kindred. Or again, 'in the Lord' may be taken as in the fear of the Lord, with his leave and liking. That the parents' consent is fit to be had, we all yield; and is not thy heavenly Father's? And will he ever give his consent that thou shouldst bestow thyself on a beast, a sot, an earthworm? Holy men have paid dear for such matches. What a woful plague was Delilah to Samson? and Michal was none of the greatest comforts to David. Had he not better have married the poorest damsel in Israel, if godly—though no more with her than the clothes on her back—than such a fleering¹³ companion, that mocked him for his zeal to God?

2. The power of holiness is to appear in labouring to interest God in our relations. The Christian cannot indeed propagate grace to his child, nor jointure¹⁴ his wife in his holiness, as he may in his lands, yet he must do his utmost to entitle God to them. Why did God command Abraham that all his house should be circumcised? surely he would have him go as far as he could, to draw them into affinity with and relation to God. Near relations call for dear affections. Grace doth not teach us to love them less than we did, but to love them better. It turns our love into a spiritual channel, and makes chiefly desire their eternal good. What singular thing else is in the

13. Fleering, i.e. mocking, deriding. — ED.

14. Jointure — an estate settled on a wife to be taken by her in lieu of a dower; a settlement on the wife of a freehold estate for her lifetime. From Webster's. — SDB

Christian's love above others? Do not the heathens lay up estates for their children here? are not they careful for their servants' backs and bellies as well as others? Yes, sure, but your care must exceed theirs. I remember Augustine, speaking how highly some commended his father's cost and care to educate him, even above his estate, makes this sad complaint:¹⁵ 'whereas,' saith he, 'my father's drift in all was not to train me up for thee. His project was that I might be eloquent, an orator, not a Christian.' O my brethren! if God be worth your acquaintance, is he not worth theirs also that are so near and dear to you? One house now holds you; would you not have one heaven receive you? Can you think, without trembling that those who live together in one family, should, when the house is broken up by death, go, one to hell, another to heaven? Surely you are like to have little joy from them on earth, who you fear shall not meet you in heaven. By the law of Lycurgus, the father that gave no learning to his child when young, was to lose that succour that was due from his child to him in his old age. The righteousness of that law though I dare not assert, yet this I may say—what he unjustly commanded, God doth most righteously suffer—that those who do not teach their children their duty to God, lose the honour and reverence which should be paid them by their children; and so of other relations also.

3. The power of holiness is to appear in your taking heed that thy relations be not a snare to thee, or thou to them. There are such sad families to be found, who do nothing else but lead one another into temptation, by drawing forth each other's corruption, from one end of the year to the other. What can we call such families, but so many hells above ground? A man may live with as much safety to his body in a pest-house, as he can there to his soul. And truly the godly are not so far out of danger, but that the devil may make use of their passions to roil and defile one another. I am sure he is very ambitious to do them a mischief this way, and too often prevails. Abraham's fear laid the snare for Sarah his wife, who was easily persuaded to dissemble for him she loved so dearly,

15. Cum interea non satageret pater, qualis crescerem tibi, dummodo essem disertus, velpotius disertus a culturâ tuâ deus.

Gen 12:13. And Rebekah's vehement affection to Jacob, together with the reverence, both her place and grace in Jacob's heart, made him, of a plain man, become the subtle man, to deceive his father and brother; which, though it was too broad a sin for him at first proposal to swallow, as appears, 'I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing,' Gen. 27:12; yet with a little art-using by his mother, we see the passage was widened, and down it went, for all his straining at it; and yet both were godly persons. Look therefore to thyself, that thou dost not bring sin upon thy relations. It would be a heavy affliction to thee to see thy wife, child, or servant sick of the plague, which thou broughtest home to them, or bleeding by a wound which thou unawares gavest them. Alas! better thus than that they should be infected with sin, wounded with guilt, by thy means. And be as careful to antidote thy soul against receiving infection from them, as to take heed of breathing it on them. Thy love is great to thy wife. O let it not make the apple of temptation the more fair or desirable, when offered to thee by her hand! Thou lovest thyself, yea thy God too little, if her so much as to sin for her sake. Thou art a dutiful wife, but obey 'in the Lord;' take heed of turning the tables of the commandments, by setting the seventh before the first. Be sure to save God's stake, before thou payest thy obedience to thy husband. Say to thy soul, 'Can I keep God's command in obeying my husband's?' In paying of debts those should be first discharged which are due by the most, and those the greatest obligations. And to whom thou art deepest bound—God or thy husband—is easy to resolve. Thus too in all other relations. Go as far with thy relations as thou canst travel in God's company, and no farther, as thou wouldst not leave thy holiness and righteousness behind thee; the loss of which is too great, that thou shouldst expect they can recompense unto thee.

4. The power of holiness appears as to our relations, when the Christian is careful to improve the graces of his relations, and get what good from them he can while they are with him. May be thou hast a holy father, a gracious husband or wife—let it be but a servant in a family that is godly—there is good to be got by his gracious conversation, speeches, and holiness, which, like ointment, will betray itself wherever it stays awhile. O Christian! if any such holy person

be with thee in the family, observe what such a one in his speeches, duties of worship, behaviour under affliction, receipt of mercies, returns of Sabbaths, and ordinances, and such like, affords for thy instruction, quickening, and promoting in the ways of holiness. The prophet bade the widow bring all the vessels she had, or could borrow, to catch what should fall from the pot of oil that she had in the house, and therewith pay her debts, II Kings 4:3. Truly, I think it were good counsel to some that complain—or may justly, if they do not—how poor and beggarly they are in grace, to make an improvement of that holy oil of grace which drops from the lips and lives of their godly relations. Set you memories, consciences, hearts, and affections, as vessels to receive all the expressions of holiness that come from them. Thy memory—let that keep and retain the instructions, reproofs, comforts drawn by them out of the word; thy conscience—let that apply these to thy soul, till from thence they distil into thy affections, and thou becomest in love more and more with holiness thy own self, from their recommendation of it to thee. It is a sad thing to consider what a different use a naughty heart makes of the gifts and graces of the godly with whom they live, as they sparkle forth, to what a humble sincere one doth. A naughty heart does but envy and malign such a one the more, and, instead of getting good, is made worse; whereas the sincere soul, he labours to treasure up all for his good.

When Joseph told his prophetic dream to his brethren, their envy, which before lay smoldering in their breasts, took fire presently, and a while after flamed forth into that unnatural cruelty practised upon him by them. There was all the use they made of it. But of good Jacob, it is said, by way of opposition to them, Gen. 37:11, ‘His brethren envied him; but his father observed the saying’—he laid it up for future use, as that which had something of God in it. Thus, Christian, do thou by the holy breathings of the Spirit in those thou livest with. Note the remarkable passages of their gracious conversations, as thou wouldst do the notions of some excellent book, which is not thine own, but lent thee for a time to peruse. Indeed, upon these terms, and no surer, do we enjoy our gracious friends and relations. They are but lent us for a while; and, improve them, or not improve them, they will be called for ere long. And will it be for thy comfort to part with them, before thou hast

had a heart to get good by them? It was a solemn speech of that reverend, holy man of God, Mr. Bolton, to his children, when on his death-bed, ‘I charge you, O my children, not to meet me at the great day before Christ’s tribunal in a Christless graceless condition.’ God keeps an exact account of the means he affords us for our salvation; and the lives of his holy servants are not of the lowest rank. You shall observe that God is very particular in Scripture to record the time, how long his faithful servants lived on earth; and sure, among other reasons, he would have us know that he means to reckon with those that lived with them, for every year, yea, day and hour, they had them among them. They shall know they had a prophet, a father, a husband, that were godly, and that they had them so long, and God will know of them what use they made of them.

[TO THOSE WITHOUT DOORS—our neighbours.]

Second. The power of holiness is to appear to others, must not stay within doors, but walk out into the streets, and visit thy neighbours round. Thy behaviour to and conversation with them, must be holy and righteous. In Scripture, ‘righteousness,’ and ‘living righteously,’ do oft import the whole duty of the Christian to his neighbour; and so, these terms stand distinguished from ‘piety,’ which hath God for its immediate object, and from ‘sobriety’ or ‘temperance,’ which immediately respects ourselves. See them all together, Titus 2:12, where ‘the grace of God that bringeth salvation,’ is said to teach us to ‘live soberly righteously, and godly in this present world.’ He that would be the death of all these three, needs do no more, but stab one of them, no matter which, the life of holiness will run out at any one door, here or there, wherever the wound is given. It is true indeed that there is a moral righteousness, which leaves us short of true holiness; but there is no true holiness that leaves us short of moral righteousness. Though the sensitive soul be found in a beast without the rational, yet the rational soul is not found in man without the sensitive. Grace and evangelical holiness being the higher principle, includes and comprehends the other within itself. This is the dignity and honour due to Christianity, and the principle it lays down in the gospel—its enemies being judges—that though some who profess it, are none of the best, yet they learn not their unrighteousness of it. Most true it is

what one saith, 'No Christian can be bad, except he be a hypocrite.' Either therefore renounce thy baptism, or abominate the thoughts of all unrighteousness. To be sure thou mightest escape better, if thou wouldst let the world know thou didst claim no kindred with Christ, before thou practised such wickedness. Some are unresolved where to find Aristides, Socrates, Cato, and some few other heathens eminent for their moral righteousness—whether in heaven or hell; but, were there ever any that doubted what would become of the unrighteous Christian in the other world? Hell gapes for these above all others. 'Know ye not,' saith the apostle, 'that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?' I Cor. 6:9; as if he had said, 'Sure you have not so far lost the use of your reason as to think that there is any room for such cattle as these in heaven.' And if not the unrighteous, what crevice of hope is left for their salvation, whose unrighteousness hath a thousand time more malignity in it, than any other's in the world is capable of?

The heathen shall, for their unrighteousness, be indicted, and condemned as rebels to the law. So shall the unrighteous Christian also; and that more deeply. But the charge which is incomparably heaviest, and which will lay weight upon him far above the other, is that which the gospel brings in, viz. that, by his unrighteousness, he hath been an 'enemy to the cross of Christ,' Php. 3:18. Indeed, if a man had a mind to show his despite to the height against Christ and his cross, the devil himself could not help him to express it more fully, than to clothe himself with a gaudy profession of the gospel, and with this wrapped about him, to roule¹⁶ himself in the kennel of sordid, base practices of unrighteousness. O how it makes the profane world blaspheme the name of Christ, and abhor the very profession of him, when they see any of this filth upon the face of their conversation, who take to themselves the name of saints more than others do. What! shall that tongue lie to man, that even now prayed so earnestly to God?—those eyes be sent on lust's or envy's errand, that a few moments past thou tookest off the Bible from reading those sacred oracles?—those hands in thy neighbour's pocket to rob him of his estate, which were not long

ago stretched forth so devoutly to heaven?—those legs carry thee to-day into thy shop or market—to cheat and cozen, which yesterday thou wentest with to worship God in public?

In a word, dost thou think to commute with God, so as, by a greater semblance of outward zeal to God in the first table, to obtain a dispensation in point of righteousness to man in the second? Will thy pretended love to God excuse the malice and rancour which thy heart swells with against thy neighbour?—thy devotion to God, disoblige thee from paying thy debts to man? God forbid thou shouldst think so. But if thou dost, Peter's counsel to Simon Magus is mine to thee. 'Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee,' Acts 8:22. In the name of God I charge every one that wears Christ's livery, to make conscience of this piece of righteousness, as you would not bring upon your heads the vengeance of God for all those blasphemies, which the nakedness of some professors in this particular—yea, the base practices of some hypocrites—have given occasion to be belched out by the ungodly world against Christ and the good ways of holiness. Now the power of holiness, as to this particular, will be preserved, when these two things are looked to.

1. When our care is uniform, and equally distributed to endeavour the performing of one duty we owe to our neighbour as well as another. For we must know, there is a righteousness that, as one saith, runs through every precept, as it were the veins of every law in the second table; and calls for obedience due to parents natural, civil, ecclesiastical, in the fifth command; our care to preserve our neighbour's life in the sixth; chastity in the seventh; estate in the eighth; good name in the ninth; and the keeping of our desires in their due bounds, against coveting what is our neighbour's, in the tenth. Now, as health in the body is preserved by keeping the passages of life open, for the spirits freely to move from one part to another—which once obstructed from doing their office in any part, the health of the body is presently in danger—so here the spirit and life of holiness is preserved in the Christian, by a holy care and endeavour to keep the heart free and ready to pass from doing one duty he owes his neighbour to another, according to the several walks that are in every command for him to move in.

16. Roule i.e. roll. — Halliwell.

2. As our care must be uniform, so the motive and spring within that sets us at work, and makes all these wheels move, must be evangelical. The command is a road in which both heathen, Jew, and Christian may be found travelling. How now shall we know the Christian from the other, when heathen and Jew also walk along with him in the same duty—seem as dutiful children, obedient wives, loyal subjects, loving neighbours, as the Christian himself? Truly, if it be not in the motive from which and end to which he acts, nothing else can do it. Look therefore well to this, or else thou art out of thy way while thou seemest to be in thy road. It is very ordinary for men to wrong Christ when they do their neighbour right, and this is done when Christ is not interested in the action, and love to him doth not move us thereunto. Without this thou mayest go for an honest heathen, but canst not be a good Christian. Suppose a servant were intrusted by his master to go and pay such a man a sum of money, which he doth, yet not out of any dutiful respect to the command, or love to the person of his master, but for shame of being taken for a thief; in this case the man should have his due, but the master a great deal of wrong. Such wrong do all mere civil persons do the Lord Jesus. They are very exact and righteous in their dealings with their neighbours, but very injurious at the same time to Christ, because they do not this upon his account. This makes love to our neighbour evangelical, and, as Christ calls it, ‘a new commandment,’ John 13:34, when our love to our brother takes fire from his love to us. We cannot, in a gospel sense, be said to do the duty of any commandment, except we first love Christ, and then for his sake do it. ‘If ye love me, keep my commandments,’ John 14:15. Where, observe, that as God prefixes his name before the decalogue, so Christ for the same reason doth before the Christian’s obedience to any of them, that so they may keep them, both as his commandments, and out of love to him who hath brought us out of a worse house of bondage than Egypt was to Israel.

BRANCH THIRD.

[Ten directions, to guide those who desire to maintain the power of holiness.]

The third thing propounded in handling the point calls now for one despatch; and that is, to lay down some directions by way of counsel and help to all those that desire to maintain the power of holiness and righteousness in their daily walking.

FIRST DIRECTION. Be sure thou gettest a good foundation laid, on which may be reared the beautiful structure of a holy righteous conversation; and that can be no less than the change of thy heart by the powerful work of God’s sanctifying Spirit in thee. Thou must be righteous and holy before thou canst live righteously and holily. If the ship hath not its right make at first, be not equally poised according to the law of that art, it will never sail trim; and if the heart be not moulded anew by the workmanship of the Spirit, and fashioned according to the law of ‘the new creature,’ in which ‘old things pass away, and all things become new,’ the creature will never walk holily, II Cor. 5:17. It is solid grace in the vessel of the heart that feeds profession in the lamp—holiness in the life, Matt. 25:4. Now this thorough change of thy heart is especially to be looked at in these two things.

First. Look that there be a change made in thy judgment of and disposition of heart to sin. Thou hast formerly had such a notion of sin, as hath made it desirable; thou hast looked upon it as Eve did on the forbidden fruit; thou hast thought it ‘pleasant to the eye, good for food,’ and worth thy choice, ‘to be desired of thee;’ and if thou continuest of the same mind, thy teeth will be watering and heart continually hankering after it. Thou mayest possibly be kept from expressing and venting the inward thought of thy heart for a while; but, as two lovers kept asunder by their friends, will one time or another make an escape to each other, so long as their affection is the same it was; so wilt thou to thy lust, and therefore never rest till thou canst say thou dost as heartily loathe and hate sin as ever thou lovedst it before.

Second. Look that there be such a change in thy judgment and heart, as makes thee take an inward complacency and delight in Christ and his holy commands. There is then little fear of thy degenerating,

when thou art tied to him and his service by the heart-strings of love and complacency¹⁷. The devil finds it no hard work to part him and his duty that never joyed nor took true content in doing of it. He whose calling doth not like him, nor 'fit his genius,' as we say, will never excel in it. A scholar learns more in week, when he comes to relish learning, and is pleased with its sweet taste, than he did in a month when he went to school to please his master, whom he feared, not himself. Observe any person in the thing wherein he takes high content, and he is more careful and curious, about that than any other. If his heart be on his garden, oh how neatly it is kept! It shall lie, as we say, in print. All the rare roots and slips that can be got for love and money shall be sought for. Is it beauty that one delights in? How curious and nice is such a one in dressing herself! she hardly knows when she is fine enough. Truly thus it is here; a soul that truly loves Christ delights in holiness, all his strength is laid out upon it. May he but excel in this one thing—be more holy, more heavenly—he will give others leave to run before him in anything else.

SECOND DIRECTION. Be sure to keep thine eye on the right rule thou art to walk by. Every calling hath a rule to go by, peculiar to itself, which requires some study to get an insight into, without which a man will but bungle in his work. No calling hath such a sure rule and perfect law to go by, as the Christian's. Therefore, in earthly professions and worldly callings, men vary in their way and method, though of some trade, because there is no such perfect rule, but another may superadd to it. But the Christian hath one standing rule, the word of God, able to make the man of God perfect. Now, he that would excel in the power of holiness must study this. The physician consults with his Galen, the lawyer with his Littleton, and the philosopher with his Aristotle—the masters of these arts; how much more should the Christian consult with the word, so as to be determined by that, and drawn by that more than by a whole team of argu-

17. Complacency — It would seem that the Rev. Gurnall has in mind here the meaning more associated with the word complaisance i.e., a disposition to please or oblige: affability.

From Webster's. — SDB

ments from men! 'We can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth,' II Cor. 13:8. O Christian! when credit votes this way, friends and relatives that way; when profit bids thee do this, and pleasure that; say, as Jehoshaphat concerning Micaiah, 'Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might enquire of him?' I Kings 22:7. Is there not the word of God, that I may be concluded by it, rather than by any of these lying prophets? Now there are three ways that men go contrary to this direction—all of them destructive to the power of holiness. Some walk by no rule; some by a false rule; and some by the true rule, but partially. The first is the antinomist and libertine, the second is the superstitious zealot, the third is the hypocrite. Beware of all these, except thou meanest to lay the knife to the throat of holiness.

First. Take heed thou dost not take away the rule God sets before thee, with the antinomist and libertine, who say the law is not a rule to the Christian. These must needs make crooked lines in their lives that live by rote and not by rule. I had thought Christ had baptized the law and gospellized it, both by preaching it as a rule of holiness in his sermons, Matt 5:27, and by walking in his life by the rule of it, I Peter 2:21, 22. That principle therefore may be indicted for a murderer of a righteous and holy life, which takes away the rule by which it should be led. This is a subtle way indeed of Satan to surprise the poor creature. If he make the Christian traveller weary of his guide, and once send him away, then it will not be long before he wander out of heaven way and fall into hell roads. The apostle tells us of a generation of men who, 'While they promise themselves liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption,' II Peter 2:19. Truly these, methinks, look like the men who slip off the yoke of the command under a pretence of liberty, that soon have a worse yoke on in its room, even the yoke of sin.

Second. Take heed thou walkest not by a false rule. There is but one true rule—the word of God—and therefore we may know which is false. 'To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,' Isa. 8:20. Pretend not to more strictness than the word will vouch. This is to be 'righteous overmuch' indeed, Ecc. 7:16. Excess makes a monster as well as a defect; not only he that hath but one hand, but he that hath

three, is one. There is a curse scored up for him that 'adds to,' as well as for him that 'takes from the words of this book,' Rev. 22:18. The devil hath had of old a design to undermine scriptural holiness, by crying up an apocryphal holiness. He knows too well that, as the pot by seething over puts out the fire, and so comes in a while not to seethe at all; thus, by making men's zeal to boil over into a false pretended holiness, he is sure to quench all true holiness, and bring them at last to have no zeal, but prove key-cold atheists. The Pharisee must eke out the commands of God with the traditions of men; the Papist, his true son and heir, hath his unwritten verities, holy orders, and rules for a more austere life than ever came into God's heart to require; and of late the Quakers have borrowed many of their shreds from both, with which they are very busy to patch up a ridiculous kind of religion, which a man cannot possibly take up, till he hath first fore-done his own understanding, and renounced all subjection to the word of God. O beware of a will-holiness and a will-worship. It is a heavy charge God puts in against Israel, 'Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples!' Hosea 8:14. This may seem strange—to forget God, and yet be so devout as to build temples! Yes, she built them without warrant from God. God counts himself forgotten when we forget his word, and keep not close to that. It is laid at Jeroboam's door as a great sin, that 'he offered upon the altar which he had made in Bethel...in the month which he had devised of his heart,' I Kings 12:33. He took counsel of his own heart, not of God, when and where to offer. A holiness which is the device of our heart, is not the holiness after God's heart. The curse which falls upon such bold men, is, that while they seek to establish holiness of their own, they submit not to the true holiness which God requires in his word. God justly gives them over to real unholiness, for pretending to a further holiness than they should. Witness those sinks and common-shores of all abominations—religious houses, I mean, as they are called by the Papists—which being the institutions of men, for want of the salt of a divine warrant to keep them sweet, have run into filthiness and corruption. God will not endure that his creature should be a self-mover. It is a greater sin to do what we are not commanded, than not to do what we are commanded by God; as it is in a subject to presume to make laws of his own head, than not to obey the

law his prince enacts. By setting up a holiness of our own, we take God's mint as it were out of his hand, to whom alone it belongs to stamp what is holy and what not.

Third. Use not the true rule partially. To be partial in practicing is as bad as to be partial in handling of the law; this made the priests contemptible, Mal. 2:9, and so will that the professor, to God and man. Square the whole frame of thy life by rule, or all is to no purpose. 'Divers measures, are an abomination to the Lord,' Prov. 20:10. He is the honest man in his dealings with men that hath but one measure, and that according to law, which he useth in his trade. And he is the holy man that useth but one rule for all his actions, and that no other than the word of God. O how fulsome was the Jews' hypocrisy to God that durst not go into the judgment hall, for fear of rendering themselves unclean, John 18, but made no scruple of embruing their hands in Christ's blood! and the Pharisees, who observed the rule of the law strictly in 'tithing anise and cummin,' but dispensed with themselves in 'the weightier matters of the law!' O beware of this, as thou lovest thy soul's life! You would not thank that customer, who comes into your shop, and buys a pennyworth of you, but steals from you what is worth a pound; or him that is very punctual in paying a small debt he owes, only that he may get deeper into your book, and at last cheat you of a greater sum. This is horrid wickedness, to comply with the word in little matters, on a design that you may more covertly wrong God in greater.

THIRD DIRECTION. Be sure to propound a right end to thyself in thy righteous holy walking, and here be sure thou standest clear off a legal end. Do not think, by thy righteousness, to purchase anything at God's hand. Heaven stands not upon sale to any. 'The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord,' Rom. 6:23. What God sold to Christ he gives to us. Christ was the purchaser, believers are but heirs to what he hath bought, and must claim nothing but in his right. By claiming anything of God for our righteousness, we shut ourselves out from having anything of his. We cannot be in two places at the same time. If we be found leaning on our own house, we cannot also be found in Christ. Paul knew this, and therefore renounceth the one, that he may be entitled to the other, Php. 3:8, 9. It is Satan's policy to crack the

breastplate of thy own righteousness, by beating it out further than the metal will bear. Indeed, by trusting in it, thou destroyest the very nature of it—thy righteousness becomes unrighteousness, and thy holiness degenerates into wickedness. What greater impiety than pride?—such a pride as rants it over Christ, and alters the method which God himself hath set for saving souls! O soul! if thou wouldst be holy, learn to be humble. They are clasped together, ‘What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?’ Micah 6:8. And how that he that trusts in his own holiness should be said to walk humbly, it cannot enter into our heart to conceive. God does not set thee to earn heaven by thy holiness; but thereby, to show thy love and thankfulness to Christ that hath earned it for thee. Hence the great argument Christ useth to provoke his disciples to holiness, is love: ‘If ye love me, keep my commandments,’ John 14:15. As if he had said, ‘You know what I came into the world, and am now going out of the world for. I do both upon your service, for whom I lay down my life, and take it up again, that I may live in heaven, to intercede for you. If these, then, and the blessed fruits you reap from these, be valued by you, love me, and if you love me, testify it in keeping my commandments.’ That is gospel holiness which is bred and fed by this love, when all the Christian doth is by him offered up as a thanksgiving sacrifice to Christ, ‘that loved us unto death.’ Thus the spouse to Christ, ‘I will give thee my loves,’ Song 7:12. What she means by her loves she expresseth, ‘All manner of pleasant fruits, new and old, which I have laid up for thee, O my beloved,’ ver. 13. In verse 18 she had professed her faith on Christ, and drunk deep of his love; and now to rebound his love in thankfulness, she bestirs herself to entertain him with the pleasant fruits of his own graces, as gathered from a holy conversation, which she doth not lay up to feed her pride and self-confidence with, but reserves for her Beloved, that he may have the entire praise of them.

FOURTH DIRECTION. Be sure to look often on the perfect pattern, which Christ, in his own example, hath given thee for a holy life. Our hand will be as the copy is we write after. If we set low examples before us, it cannot be expected we should rise high ourselves; and indeed the holiest saint on earth is too low to be our pattern, because perfection in holiness

must be aimed at by the weakest Christian, II Cor. 7:1, and that is not to be found in the best of saints in this lower world. Moses, the meekest man on earth, at a time even his spirit is ruffled; and Peter, the foreman of the apostles, doth not always ὀρθόποδεῖν (foot it right), according to the gospel, Gal. 2:14, and he that would follow him in then, is sure to go out of his way. The good soldier follows his file-leader, not when he runs away, but when he marches after his captain orderly. ‘Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ,’ I Cor. 11:1. The comment must be followed no further than it agrees with the text. The master doth not only rule the scholar's book for him, but writes him a copy with his own hand. Christ's command is our rule, his life our copy. If thou wilt walk holily, thou must not only endeavour to do what Christ commands, but as Christ himself did it; thou must labour to shape every letter in thy copy—action in thy life—in a holy imitation of Christ. By holiness we are the very image of Christ,’ Rom. 8:29. We represent Christ and hold him forth to all that see us.

Now two things go to make a thing the image of another. First, likeness; secondly, derivation. It must not only be like it, but this likeness must be deduced and derived from it. Snow and milk are both alike white; yet we cannot say that they are the image one of another, because that likeness they have is not derived either from the other. But the picture which is drawn every line by the face of a man, this may be called the image of that man after whose likeness it is made. Thus true holiness is that which is derived from Christ, when the soul sets Christ in his word and Christ in his example before him—as one would the person whose picture he intends to draw—and labours to draw every line in his life by these. O this is a sweet way indeed to maintain the power of holiness. When thou art tempted to any vanity, set Christ before thy eye in his holy walking; ask thy soul, ‘Am I in this speech, action, company I consort with, like Christ? Did he, or would he, if again to live on earth, do as I do? would not he be more choice of his words than I am? did ever such a vain speech drop from his lips? would he delight in such company as I do? spend his time upon such trifles and impertinences as I do? would he bestow so much cost in pampering of his body, and swallow down his throat at one meal what would feed many poor creatures ready to starve for want? would he be in every fashion that

comes up, though never so ridiculous and offensive? should cards and dice ever have been found in his hands to drive time away? And shall I indulge myself in anything that would make me unlike Christ? God forbid! We think it enough if we can quote such a good man, or great professor, to countenance our practice, and so are led into temptation. But Christian, if thy conscience tells thee Christ likes not such doings, away with them, though thou couldst produce the example of the most eminent saint in the country to favour them. Thou knowest some, possibly, of great name for profession, that have cast off duties in their families. But did not Christ show an especial care of the apostles, which lived under him, and were of his family?—often praying with them, repeating to them, and further opening to them what he preached in public; keeping also the passover with them as his household, according to the law of that ordinance, Ex. 12. Thou seest some turn their back on the public assemblies, under a pretence of sinful mixtures there that would defile them. Did our Lord Jesus do thus? was not he in the temple and in the synagogues holding communion with them in the service of God, which was for the substance there preserved, though not without some corruptions crept in among them? O Christian, study Christ's life more, and thou wilt soon learn to mend thy own! *Summa religionis est imitari, quem colis*—it is the very sum and top of religion, to be as, like the God we worship as may be.

FIFTH DIRECTION. Be sure to walk dependently on God. The vine is fruitful so long as it hath a pole or wall to run upon, but without such a help it would soon be trodden under foot, and come to nothing. 'It is not in man to direct his own way.' 'There are many good things that God doth in man, which man has no hand in; but there is no good and holy action that man does but God enables him to do it.'¹⁸ As was said of that Grecian captain, 'Parmenio did many exploits without Alexander, but Alexander nothing without Parmenio.' If thou wilt therefore maintain holiness in its power 'acknowledge God in all thy ways,' and 'lean not unto thine own understanding,' *Prov. 3:5, 6*. He is ready to help them that engage him, but

counts himself charged with the care of none but such as depend on him. The Christian's way to heaven is something like that in our nation called 'the washes,' where the sands, by reason of the sea's daily overflowing, do so alter, that the traveller who passed them safely a month ago, cannot without great danger venture again, except he hath his guide with him. Where then he found firm land, possibly a little after, coming, he may meet with a devouring quicksand. Truly thus, the Christian who gets over a duty at one time with some facility, his way smooth and plain before him, at another time may find a temptation in the same duty enough to set him, if he had not help from heaven to carry him safe out of the danger. O Christian, it is not safe for thee to venture one step without thy stay, thy hand of faith leaning on thy Beloved's arm. Trust to thy own legs, and thou fallest; use thy legs, but trust to his arm, and thou art safe.

SIXTH DIRECTION. Be sure to look to thy company—who they are thou consortest with. Flee unholy company, as baneful to the power of godliness. Be but as careful for thy soul as thou wouldst for thy body. Durst thou drink in the same cup, or sit in the same chair, with one that hath an infectious disease? And is not sin as catching a disease as the plague itself? Darest thou come where such ill scents are to be taken as may soon infect thy soul? Of all trades it would not do well to have the collier and fuller live together. What one cleanseth the other will crock and smutch.¹⁹ Thou canst not be long among unholy ones, but thou wilt hazard the defiling of thy soul, which the Holy Spirit hath made pure. He did not wash thee clean to run where thou shouldest be made foul; and certainly thou shalt have no help from them to advance thy holiness. Truly we should not choose that society where we may not hope to make them, or be made ourselves, better by them. It is observable what the Spirit of God notes concerning Abraham, 'he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise,' *Heb. 11:9*. He is not said to dwell with the natives of that land, but 'with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise.' Abraham did not seek acquaintance with

18. *Multa bona facit Deus in homine, quæ non facit homo, nulla vero facit homo, quæ non facit Deus ut faciat.*
— Augustine

19. Crock and smutch, i.e. blacken with smoke, soot, or coal. — Ed.

the heathen; no, he was willing to continue a stranger to them; but he lived with those that were of his own family, and God's family also. Christians are a company of themselves, 'being let go, they went to their own company,' Acts 4:23. Who should believers join themselves to but believers? As Paul said, 'Have you not a wise man among you, but you must go to law before unbelievers?' so may I say to thee, Christian—Is there never a saint in all the town that thou canst be acquainted with, sit and discourse with, but you must join with the profane and ungodly amongst whom you live? No wonder thy holiness thrives no better, when thou breathest in wicked company; it is like the east wind, under which nothing grows and prospers.

SEVENTH DIRECTION. Be sure to get some Christian friend whom thou mayest trust above others to be thy faithful monitor. O that man hath a great help for the maintaining the power of godliness, that hath an open-hearted friend that dare speak his heart to him! A stander-by sees more sometimes, by a man, than the actor can do by himself, and is more fit to judge of his actions than he is of his own. Sometimes self-love blinds us in our own cause, that we see not ourselves so bad as we are; and sometimes we are over-suspicious of the worst by ourselves, which makes us appear to ourselves worse than we are. Now that thou mayest not deprive thyself of so great help from thy friend, be sure to keep thy heart ready with meekness to receive, yea, with thankfulness to embrace, a reproof from his mouth. Those that cannot bear plain dealing hurt themselves most; for by this they seldom hear the truth. He that hath not love enough to give a reproof seasonably to his brother, nor humility enough to bear a reproof from him, is not worthy to be called a Christian. By the first he shows himself a 'hater of his brother,' Lev. 19:17; by the second he proves himself 'a scorner,' Prov. 9:8. Holy David professed he would take it as 'a kindness' for the 'righteous to smite him,' yea, as kindly as he broke a box of precious oil upon his head, which was amongst the Jews a high expression of love, Ps. 141:5. And he made his word good. He did not, as the Papists do by their holy water, commend it highly, but turn away his face, when it comes to sprinkled on him. No, Abigail and Nathan who reprov'd him—one for his bloody intentions against Nabal and his family—the other for his bloody fact upon Uriah;

—they both sped well in their errand. The first prevented the fact intended by her reasonable reproof; the second recovered him out of that dismal sin of murder, wherein he had lain some months without coming so far to himself as to repent of it, for aught that we read. And it is observable that they did not only prevail in the business, but endeared themselves so unto him, by their faithfulness to his soul, that he takes Abigail to be his wife, and Nathan to be his most privy counsellor to his dying day, I Kings 1:27, 32. Truly it is one great reason why the falls of professors are so frequent in our days, and their recoveries so rare of late, because few in these unloving times are to be found so faithful as to do this Christian office of reproof to their brethren. They will sooner go and tattle of it to others to their disgrace, than speak of it to themselves for their recovery. Indeed, by telling others, we obstruct our way from telling the person himself with any hope of doing him good. It will be hard to make him believe thou comest to heal his soul when thou hast already wounded his name.

EIGHTH DIRECTION. Be often seriously thinking how holily and righteously you will, in a dying hour, wish you had lived. They who now think it matters not much what language drivels from them, what company they walk in, what they busy their time about, how they comport with God in his worship, and with man in their dealings, but live at large, and care not much which end goes foremost, yea wonder at the niceness and zeal of others, as if there were no pace would carry them to heaven but the gallop; when once death comes so near as to be known by its own grim face, and not to report of others, when these poor creatures see they must in earnest into another world, without any delay, and their naked souls must return to 'God who gave them,' to hear what interpretation he will put upon the course and tenor of their walking, and accordingly to pass an irrevocable sentence of life or death upon them, now their thoughts will begin to change, and take up other notions of a righteous and holy life than ever they had before. It is observed among the Papists that many cardinals, and other great ones, who would think that their cowl and religious habit ill become them in their health,, yet are very ambitious to die and to be buried in them, as commonly they are. Though this be a foppery in itself, yet it helps us to a notion considerable. They who live wickedly and loosely, yet like a reli-

gious habit very well when to go into another world. As that young gallant said to his swaggering companion—after they had visited Ambrose lying on his dying bed, and saw how comfortably he lay, triumphing over death now approaching—‘O that I might live with thee, and die with Ambrose.’ Vain wish! wouldst thou, O man, not reap what thou sowest, and find what thou layest up with thy own hands? Dost thou sow cockle and wouldst reap wheat? Dost thou fill thy chest with dirt, and expect to find gold when thou openest it? Cheat and gull thyself thou mayest, but thou canst not mock God, who will pay thee in the same coin at thy death which thou treasurest up in thy life. There are few so horribly wicked, but the thoughts of death awes them. They dare not fall upon their wicked practices till they have got some distance from the thoughts of this. Christian, walk in the company of it every day by serious meditation, and tell me at the week’s end whether it doth not keep worse company from thee.

NINTH DIRECTION. Be sure to improve the covenant of grace for thy assistance in thy holy course. Moses himself had his holiness not from the law, but gospel. Those heroic acts, for which he is recorded as one so eminently holy, they all are attributed to his faith, Heb. 11:24, 25. ‘By faith’ Moses did this, and ‘by faith’ that, to show from whence he had his strength. Now the better to improve the covenant of grace, for this purpose, consider these three particulars.

First. That God in the covenant of grace hath promised to furnish and enable his children for a holy life, ‘I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes,’ Eze. 36:27. This is the way God hath by himself. The mother can take her child by the hand to lead it, but cannot put strength into its feeble joints to make him go. The prince can give his captains a commission to fight, but not courage to fight. There is a power goes with the promises; hence it is they are called ‘exceeding great and precious promises,’ because given for this very end—that by them we ‘might partake of the divine nature,’ II Peter 1:4; and therefore we are not only pressed to holiness from the command, but especially from the promise, ‘Having therefore these promises,’ (he means to help and encourage us), ‘let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,’ II Cor. 7:1. O it is good travelling in his company that promiseth to pay our charges all the

way—it is good working for him that promiseth to work all our work for us, Php. 2:12, 13.

Second. That God hath laid up in Christ a rich and full treasure of grace to supply thy wants continually, ‘It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell,’ Col. 1:19. Fulness! all fulness! all fulness dwelling! not the fulness of a land-flood, up and down; not the fulness of a vessel, to serve his own turn only; but of a fountain that lends its streams to others without straitening or lessening its own store. Indeed, it is a fulness purposely ministerial, as the sun hath not its light for itself, but for the lower world, called therefore שמש (shemesh), because it is the great minister and servant to hold forth light to the world. Thus Christ is the Sun of righteousness, diffusing his grace into the bosoms of his people. ‘Grace’ is said to be ‘poured into his lips,’ to let us know he hath it, not to keep to himself, but to impart, ‘that of his fulness we may receive, and grace for grace.’ And,

Third. That every child of God hath not only a right to this fulness in Christ, but an inward principle—which is faith—whereby he is, by the instinct of the new creature, taught to suck and draw grace from Christ, as the child doth nourishment in the womb by the navel-string from the mother. Therefore, poor soul, if thou wouldst be more holy, believe more, suck more from Christ. Holy David, affected with the thoughts of God’s gracious providence in delivering him out of his deeper distress, takes up, as the best messenger he could send his thanks to heaven by, a strong resolution for a holy life, ‘I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living,’ Ps. 116:9, he would spend his days now in God’s service; but lest we should think he was rash and self-confident, he adds, ‘I believed, therefore have I spoken,’ ver. 10. First, he acted his faith on God for strength, and then he promiseth what he will do. Indeed, the Christian is a very beggarly creature considered in himself. He is not ashamed to confess it. What he promiseth to expend in any holy duty, is upon the credit of his Saviour’s purse, who, he humbly believes, will bear him out in it with assisting grace.

TENTH DIRECTION. Be sure to fortify thyself against those discouragements, by which Satan, if possible, will divert thee from thy purpose, and make thee lay aside this breastplate of righteousness and holiness, as cumbersome, yea prejudicial, to thy car-

nal interests. Now the better to arm thee against his assaults of this kind, I shall instance two or three great objections, whereby he scares many from this holy walking, and also lend a little help to wrest these weapons out of thine enemy's hand, by preparing an answer to them.

[Satan's stratagems to disarm the Christian of his breastplate defeated.]

First. Satan attempts to make the Christian throw away his breastplate of righteousness, by presenting it as that which hinders the pleasure of his life.

Second. He endeavours to make the Christian throw away his breastplate, as being prejudicial to his worldly profits.

Third. He endeavours to make the Christian throw away his breastplate, by scaring him with the contradiction, opposition, and feud which it brings from the world.

[Satan's first stratagem defeated; that, viz. in which he represents the Christian's breastplate as HINDERING THE PLEASURE OF LIFE.]

First Stratagem. Satan attempts to make the Christian throw away his breastplate, by presenting it as that which hinders the pleasure of his life.

He labours to picture a holy righteous life with such an austere sour face, that the creature may be out of love with it. 'O,' saith he, 'if you mean to be thus precise and holy, then bid adieu to all joy. You at once deprive yourselves of all those pleasures which others pass their days so merrily in the embraces of, that are not so strait-laced in their consciences.' How true a charge this is, that Satan lays upon the ways of holiness we shall now see. And truly he that desires to see the true face of holiness in its native hue and colour, should do well not to trust Satan, or his own carnal heart, to draw its picture. I shall deal with this objection first, by way of concession, then by way of negation, and lastly by way of affirmation.

Answer First. I answer by way of concession, viz. that there are some pleasures which, if they may be so called, are inconsistent with the power of holiness. Whoever will take up a purpose to 'live righteously'

must shake hands with them. They are of two sorts.

1. Sort. All such pleasures as are in themselves sinful. Godliness will allow no such in thy embraces. And art thou not shrewdly hurt, dost thou think, to be denied that which would be thy bane to drink? Would any think the father cruel that should charge his child not to dare so much as taste of any rat's-bane? Truly, I hope, you that have passed under the new work of the Spirit, can call sin by another name than pleasure. I am sure saints in former times have not counted themselves tied up, but saved, from such pleasures. The bondage lies in serving them, and the liberty in being saved from them. The apostle bemoans the time when himself, and other saints, were 'foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures,' Titus 3:3; and he reckons it among the prime benefits they received by the grace of the gospel, to be delivered from that vassalage, 'but according to his mercy he saved us'—how?—not by pardoning only, but—'by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost,' ver. 5. However the devil makes poor creatures expect pleasure in sin, and promiseth them great matters of this kind; yet he goes against his conscience, and his own present sense also. He doth not find sin so pleasant a morsel to his own taste that he should need to commend it upon this account to others. Sin's pleasure is like the pleasure which a place in the West Indies affords those that dwell in it. There grows in it most rare luscious fruit, but these dainties are so sauced by with the intolerably scorching heat of the sun by day, and the multitude of a sort of creatures stinging them by night, that they can neither well eat by day nor sleep by night to digest their sweet-meats. This made the Spaniards call the place 'comfits in hell;' and truly what are the pleasures of sin but such comfits in hell? There is some carnal pleasure they have which delights a rank sensual palate, but they are served in with the fiery wrath of God, and the stinging of a guilty, restless conscience; and the fears of the one, and the anguish of the other, are able sure to melt and waste away that little joy and pleasure they bring to the sense.

2. Sort. There are pleasures which are not in their own nature sinful. Such are creature comforts and delights. The sin lies, as to these, not in the using, but in the abusing of them. This is done in two ways.

(1.) When a due measure is not kept in the use of them. He cannot live holily and righteously in this present world that lives not soberly also. Godliness will allow thee to taste of these pleasures as sauce, but not to feed on them as meat. The rich men's charge runs thus, 'ye have lived in pleasure on the earth,' James 5:5. They lived in pleasures as if they had lived for them, and could not live without them. When once this wine of creature contents fumes up to the brain, intoxicates the man's judgment, that he begins to dote of them, and cannot think of parting with them to enjoy better, but cries, loath to depart—as those Jews in Babylon, who, beginning to thrive in that soil, were very willing to stay and lay their bones here for all Jerusalem, which they were called to return unto—then truly they are pernicious to the power of holiness. Though a master doth not grudge his servant his meat and drink, yet he will not like it if, when he is to go abroad, his servant be laid up drunk and disabled from waiting on him by his intemperance. And a drunken man is as fit to attend on his master, and do his business for him, as a Christian, overcharged with the pleasures of the creature, is to serve his God in any duty of godliness.

(2.) They are sinful when not rightly timed. Fruit ate out of its season is nought. We read of 'a time to embrace and a time to refrain,' Ecc. 3:5. There are some seasons that the power of holiness calls off, and will not allow what is lawful at another time. As, (a) On the Lord's-day. Then all carnal, creature-pleasures are out of season. God calls us them to higher delights, and he expects we should lay the other aside, and not put our palates out of taste with those lower pleasures, that we may the better relish his heavenly dainties. 'If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord,' Isa. 58:13, 14. Mark! we can neither taste the sweetness of communion with God, nor pay the honour due to God in sanctifying his day, except we deny ourselves in our carnal delights. If a king should at some certain times of the year invite some of his poor subjects to sit and feast with him at his own royal table, they should exceedingly dishonour their prince, and wrong themselves, to bring

their ordinary mean fare with them to court. Do glorified saints in heaven call for any of their carnal delights, or miss them, while they are taken up in heaven praising God, and feeding on the joys that flow from the full-eyed vision of God? And doth not God make account he gives you to enjoy heaven in a figure, when he admits you the service of his holy day? (b) In days of solemn fasting and prayer. We are on such occasions to afflict our souls, and creature-pleasures will fit that work no better than a silver lace would do a mourning suit. (c) In times of public calamity in the church abroad, especially at home. And this a gracious heart cannot but count reasonable, that he should deny himself, or at least tie up himself to a very short allowance in his creature-delights, when Christ in his church lies a-bleeding. Sympathy is a debt we owe to our fellow-saints—Christ mystical. And truly the cords of others' afflictions will be little felt through our soft downy beds, if we indulge ourselves, I mean, to a full enjoyment of our ease and carnal delights. What child that is merry and pleasant in his own house, and hath a father or mother lying at the same time in great misery at the point of death, but unknown to him, will not, when the doleful news at last comes to him, change his note, yea, mourn that he did not know it sooner, and had not rather have been weeping for and with his dear relations in the house of mourning, than passing away his time pleasantly at home? Hitherto I have answered by concession, confessing what pleasures a holy and righteous life denies and forbids, and I hope they appear to be no other than such as may, without any loss to the believer's joy, be fairly dismissed.

Answer Second. Now, in the second place, I come to answer by way of negation; viz. that though a holy righteous life denies the Christian the pleasures forementioned, yet it doth not deprive him of any true pleasure the creature affords; yea, so far from this, that none doth or can enjoy the sweetness of the creature, like the gracious soul that walks in the power of holiness, as will appear in these two particulars.

1. The gracious person hath a more curious palate, that fits him to taste a further sweetness in, and so draw more pleasure from, any creature-enjoyment, than an unholy person can do. The fly finds no honey in the same flower from whence the bee goes laden away. Nor can an unholy heart taste the sweet-

ness which the saint doth in a creature. He hath indeed a natural fleshly palate, whereby he relisheth the gross carnal pleasure the flesh affords, and that he makes his whole meal on; but a gracious heart tastes something more. 'All' Israel drank of the rock, 'and that rock was Christ,' 1 Cor. 10:4. But did all that tasted the water's natural sweetness, taste Christ in it? No, alas! they were but a few holy souls that had a spiritual palate to do this. Samson's father and mother ate of the honey out of the lion's carcass, as well as Samson, and may be liked the taste of it for honey as well as Samson; yet he took more pleasure sure than they. He tasted the sweetness of God's providence in it, that had delivered him from that very lion that now affords him this honey, Judges 14.

2. The Christian has more true pleasure from the creature than the wicked, as it comes more refined to him than to the other. The unholy wretch sucks dregs and all—dregs of sin and dregs of wrath—whereas the Christian's cup is not thus spiced. (1.) He sucks dregs of sin. The more he hath of the creature's delights given him, the more he sins with them. Oh, it is sad to think what work they make in his naughty heart! They are but fuel for his lusts to kindle upon. Away they run with their enjoyments, as the prodigal with his bags, or like hogs in shaking time; no sight is to be had of them, or thought of their return, as long as they can get anything abroad, among the delights of the world. None so prodigiously wicked as those that are fed high with carnal pleasures. They are to the ungodly as the dung and ordure is to the swine, which grows fat by lying in it. Their hearts grow gross and fat, their consciences more stupid and senseless in sin by them; whereas the comforts and delights that God gives in to a holy soul by the creature, turn to the spiritual nourishment of his graces, and draw these forth into exercise, as they do the others' lust. (2.) The unholy man sucks dregs of wrath. The Israelites had little pleasure from their dainties when the wrath of God fell upon them before they could get them down their throats, Ps. 78:30. The sinner's feast is no sooner served in, but divine justice is preparing to send up a reckoning after it; and the fearful expectation of this cannot but spoil the taste of the other. But the gracious soul is entertained upon free-cost. No amazing thoughts need discompose his spirit, so as to break his draught, or make him spill any of the comfort of his present

enjoyment from the fear of an approaching danger. All is well. The coast is clear. He may say with David, 'I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety,' Ps. 4:8. God will not—all beside cannot—break his rest. As the unicorn heals the waters by dipping his horn in them, that all the beasts may drink without danger, so Christ hath healed creature-enjoyments, that there is no death now in the saints' cup.

Answer Third. I answer by way of affirmation. The power of holiness is so far from depriving a man of the joy and pleasure of his life, that there are incomparable delights and pleasures peculiar to the holy life, which the gracious soul finds in the ways of righteousness, enjoys by itself, and no stranger intermeddles with. They lie inward indeed, and therefore the world speaks so wildly and ignorantly concerning them. They will not believe they have such pleasures till they see them, and they shall never see them till they believe them. The Roman soldiers, when they entered the temple, and went into the holy of holies, seeing there no image, as they used to have in their own idolatrous temples, gave out in a jeer that the Jews worshipped the clouds. Truly thus, because the pleasures of righteousness and holiness are not so gross as to come under the cognizance of the world's carnal senses, as their brutish ones do, therefore they laugh at the saints, as if their joys were but the child of fancy, and that they do but embrace a cloud, instead of Juno herself—a fantastic pleasure for the true. But let such know that they carry in their own bosom what will help them to think the pleasures of a holy life more real than thus. The horror, I mean, which the guilt of their unholy and unrighteous lives does sometimes fill their amazed consciences with, though there be no whip on their back, and pain in their flesh, tells them, the peace which results from a good conscience, may as well fill the soul with sweet joy, when no carnal delights contribute to the same, as at any other time. There are three things considered in the nature of a holy righteous life, that are enough to demonstrate it to be the only pleasant life. It is a life from God; it is a life with God; it is the very life of God.

1. It is a life from God, and therefore must needs be pleasant and joyous. Whatever God makes is good and pleasant in its kind. Now life is one of the choicest of God's works, insomuch that the poor-

est, silliest gnat, or fly, in this respect, exceeds the sun in its meridian glory. To every life God hath appointed a pleasure suitable to its kind. The beasts have a pleasure suitable to the life of beasts, and man much more to his. Now, every creature we know, enjoys the pleasure of its life best when it is in its right temper. If a beast be sick, it droops and groans; and so does man also. No dainties, sports, or music please a man that is ill in his health. Now holiness is the due temper of the soul, as health is of the body, and therefore a holy life must needs be a pleasant life. Adam, I hope, in paradise, before sin spoiled his temper, lived a pleasant life. When the creature is made holy, then he begins to return to his primitive temper, and with it to his primitive joy and pleasure. O sirs! men fall out with their outward conditions, and are discontented with their rank and place in the world, but the fault lies more inward—the shoe is straight and good enough, but the foot is crooked that wears it. All would do well if thou wert well, and thou wilt never be well till thou art righteous and holy.

2. It is a life with God. A gracious soul, he walks in God's presence, and keeps communion with him. If you would meet a saint, you know his haunt, what company he keeps. 'That ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ,' 1 John 1:3. See the ingenuity of a holy soul, 'truly our fellowship' is with God, we tell you no lie. An unholy heart dares not be thus free, I warrant you, and tell what company his soul walks with from day to day. We see there is no danger of going among holy men; they will bring you acquainted with no ill company; they will carry you to God where their greatest resource lies. And tell me now, must not that man live a pleasant life that walks with God? Let it be but a man you ride with in a journey, one that loves you well, and is able to entertain you with good and cheerful discourse; doth not the delight you take in his company, strangely, yet sweetly, beguile you of the tediousness of the way? O what joy must God bring with him then to that soul he walks with! 'Blessed is the people,' saith the psalmist, 'that know that joyful sound, they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance; in thy name shall they rejoice all day.' The sound of the trumpet, which called them to their religious assemblies, is called there 'the joyful sound,' because in his worship God is especially manifest himself to his

people. The heaven of heavens is to be where the Lord is; surely then, that which the saint hath of God's presence here is enough to make the Christian's life joyous. O Christians, is it not sweet to walk with God, to God!—to walk with God here below, by his assisting, comforting presence, to God manifesting himself in all his glory above in heaven! O all you that are for pleasant prospects in your walks, and out of your windows, see here one that the world cannot match—the prospect that a gracious soul hath, walking in the paths of righteousness. He may see God walking with him, as a friend with his friend, and manifesting himself to him; yea, he hath not only the sweetness of God's present company with him, but he hath the goodly prospect of heaven before him, where God is leading him, and in this way of holiness will certainly bring him at last. Whereas the unholy wretch, walking in the company of his lusts, though they sweeten his mouth with a little frothy pleasure at present, that soon is melted off his tongue, and the taste forgotten, yet they show him the region of darkness before him, whither they will bring him, and where they will leave him, to repent of his dear-bought pleasures in torments easeless and endless.

3. It is the life of God himself. Read the expression, 'being alienated from the life of God,' Eph. 4:18. That is the life of godliness. A holy life is the life of God. But how? Not only as God is the author of it; so he is of the beast's life. Thus the wicked are not alienated from the life of God, for they have a natural life which God gave them. But the expression carries more in it, and that is this. The life of God is as much as a life which God himself lives. He is a living God, and his life is a holy life. Holiness is the life of his life. Now, I pray, friends, do you not think God himself lives a life of pleasure? And what is the pleasure of his life but holiness? He takes pleasure in the graces of his saints, Ps. 149:4; how much more in his own essential holiness, from whence those beams which shine so beautifully to his eye in his children were first shot! Thou, whoever thou beest, hast an art above God himself, if thou canst fetch any true pleasure out of unholiness and unrighteousness. And let me tell thee also, it is not the lowest of blasphemies for thee to charge the way of righteousness and holiness, to be an enemy to true pleasure, for in that thou chargest God himself to want true joy and pleasure: who has no pleasure if holiness will not yield it. But

away with such putrid stuff as this is. The devils and damned souls themselves, that hate God with the most perfect hatred of any other, yet dare not say, they cannot say so. They know God to be glorious and happy, yea, 'glorious in holiness,' and the creature's bliss and glory to consist in a participation of that holiness which makes God himself so blessed and glorious. This, Christian, is the utmost that can be said of thy happiness, either here or in heaven hereafter. That makes thee glorious which makes God glorious. Thy joy and pleasure is of the same kind with the pleasure God delights himself in. 'Thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures,' Ps. 36:8. Mark that phrase, 'the river of thy pleasures.' God hath his pleasures, and God gives his saints to drink of his pleasures. This is the sweet accent of his saints' pleasures. When a prince bids his servants carry such a man down into the cellar, and let him drink of their beer or wine, this is a kindness from so great a personage to be valued highly. But for the prince to set him at his own table, and let him drink of his own wine, this I hope is far more. When God gives a man estate, corn, and wine, and oil—the comforts of the creature—he entertains the man but in the common cellar. Such as have none but carnal enjoyments, they do but sit with the servants, and in some sensual pleasures they are but fellow-commoners with the beasts. But when he bestows his grace, beautifies a soul with holiness, then he prefers the creature the highest it is capable of. He never sends this rich clothing to any, but he means to set such by them, at his own table with him, in heaven's glory.

[Satan's second stratagem defeated; that, viz. in which he represents the Christian's breastplate as PREJUDICIAL TO HIS WORLDLY PROFITS.]

Second Stratagem. Satan endeavours to make the Christian throw away his breastplate, by presenting it as prejudicial to his worldly profits. If thou didst not stumble at the former stone, the devil hath another at hand to throw in thy way. He is not so unskilful a fowler as to go with one single shot into the field; and therefore expect him, as soon as he hath discharged one and missed thee, to let fly at thee with a second, and tell thee, 'This holy life and righteous walking thou hadst best never meddle with, except

thou meanest to undo thyself, and all that depend on thee. Look upon the rich and great men in the world, how dost thou think these heap together such vast estates, and raised their families to such dignity and grandeur in their places? was it by their righteousness and holiness? Alas! if they had been so strait-laced in their consciences as thou must be, if thou tiest thyself up to the rules of a holy life, they had never come to so good a market for this world as they have done; and if thou wilt thrive with them thou must do as they have done—throw off this breastplate of righteousness quite, or unbuckle it, that it may hang loose enough, to turn aside when an advantage is offered, or else you may shut up your shop-windows, and give over your trade, for all you are like to get at year's end.' To defend thee, Christian, against this assault, take these few considerations, from which it will not be hard to draw an answer that will stop the mouth of this objection.

Answer First. Consider, it is not necessary that thou shouldst be rich, but it is necessary that thou shouldst be holy, if thou meanest to be happy. You may travel to heaven with never a penny in your purse, but not without holiness in your heart and life also. And wisdom bids thee first attend to that which is of greatest necessity.

Answer Second. Heaven is worth the having, though thou goest poor and ragged, yea, naked thither. There are some in the world that will accept God's offer thankfully, may they be admitted into that glorious city, though God doth not bribe them, and toll them along thither with great estates here. And therefore, for shame, resolve to be holy at all peradventures. Do not stand indenting with God for that, which if you were actually possessed of, and loved him, you would leave, and throw at your heels with scorn, rather than part with him.

Answer Third. A little of the world will give thee content, if holiness be kept in its power, as few clothes will serve a hale strong man. And better is the warmth that comes from blood and spirits within, than that from a load of clothes without. Better, I trow, the content which godliness gives the Christian in his poverty, than the content—if there be such a thing in the world—which the rich man hath from his wealth. 'Godliness with contentment is great gain.' The holy person is the only contented man in the world. Paul tells us he had 'learned in whatsoever

state he was therewith to be content,' Php. 4:11. But if you ask him who was his master that taught him this hard lesson, he will tell you, he had it not by sitting at Gamaliel's feet, but Christ's. 'I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me,' ver. 13. What the philosopher said is a brag, that the holy soul, in truth and soberness, can say through Christ, when he is lowest and poorest, that his heart and condition are matches. We would count him a happy man—*stilo mundi*, after the fashion of the world—that can live of himself without trading or borrowing; or that, when he would buy or purchase, hath ready cash for the purpose in his coffers; when he would indulge his fanciful appetite with varieties, hath all the rarities the several elements can afford within his own pale, and needs not to send abroad to this market and that for provision. Godliness is so rich a continent, that it is able to maintain the Christian of its own growth, as I may say, and out of its own store, with all that his gracious heart can desire, without begging at the creature's door, and hazarding unworthily his holiness to attain.

Answer Fourth. Consider what a dear bargain they have who part with or pawn their breastplate of righteousness for the world's riches. This will appear, 1. In the sin. 2. In the heavy curse that treads upon the heels of that sin.

1. It is a great sin. The devil sure would tempt Christ to no small sin. We find him, laying this golden bait before him, when he 'showed him all the kingdoms of the world,' and promised them all unto him, if he would 'fall down and worship him,' Luke 4:5-7. What was the foul spirit's design in this demand, but to draw Christ to acknowledge him the lord of the world, and by worshipping him, to declare that he expected the good things of the world, not from God, but him? Now truly, every one that by unrighteousness seeks the world's pelf, he goes to the devil for it, and doth in effect worship him. He had as good speak out, and say he acknowledges not God, but the devil, to be lord of the world, and to have the disposing of it; for he doth what God interprets so. Now, how much better is it to have poverty from God, than riches from the devil? Here is a daring sin with a witness, at one clasp to take away God's sovereignty, and to bestow it upon the devil, to do what he pleases with the world!

2. It is a foolish sin. 'They that will be rich'

—that is, by right or wrong—'fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish...lusts,' 1 Tim. 6:9. What greater folly than to play the thief to acquire that which is man's already? If thou beest a saint, all is thine the world hath. 'Godliness' hath the 'promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,' 1 Tim. 4:8. If riches be good for thee, thou shalt have them, for that is the tenure of temporal promises; and if it be not thought good by God—who is best able to judge—to pay thee the promise in specie—in kind, then another promise comes in for thy relief, which assures thee thou shalt have money-worth. 'Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,' Heb. 13:5. If God hath given thee riches, but calls thee to part with it for his name's sake, then he gives thee his bond upon which thou mayest recover thy loss, with 'a hundred-fold' advantage 'in this life,' besides 'eternal life in the world to come,' Matt. 19:29. And he is a fool, with witness, that parts with God's promises, for any security the devil can give him.

3. Unrighteous gain will appear to be a dear bargain, from the heavy curse that cleaves unto it. 'The curse of God is in the house of the wicked,' Prov. 3:33; but 'in the house of the righteous is much treasure,' Prov. 15:6. You may come to the righteous man, and find, possibly, no money in his house, but you are sure to find 'a treasure;' whereas there is no treasure in the wicked man's house when much gold and silver is to be found, because the curse of God eats up all his gains. God's fork follows the wicked's rake. It is most righteous for him to scatter what such gather by unrighteousness. They are said therefore, to 'consult shame to their house,...for the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it,' Hab. 2:10, 11. O who that prizeth the comfort of his life would, though for tons of gold, live in a house thus haunted!—where the cry of his unrighteousness follows him into every room he goes, and he doth, as it were, hear the stones and beams of his house groaning under the weight of his sin that laid them there! Yea, so hateful is this sin to the righteous Lord, that not only they who purse up the gain thus got are cursed by him, but also the instruments such use to advance their unrighteous projects. The poor servant, that to curry favour with his master, advanceth his estate by fraud and unrighteousness, God threatens to

pay him his wages. 'I punish all those that leap on the threshold, which fill their masters' houses with violence and deceit,' Zeph. 1:9. This is spoken of either servants standing at the door to hook in customers they may cheat; or else of great men's officers that came with absolute power into men's houses to take by violence from them what they pleased; these, though their masters pocketed the gain, shall be punished—their masters as the great devourers, and they as their sharks to seek and provide prey for them.

[Satan's third stratagem defeated; viz. that in which he represents the Christian's breastplate as BRINGING IN THE OPPOSITION OF THE WORLD.]

Third Stratagem. Satan endeavours to make the Christian throw away his breastplate, by scaring him with the contradictive opposition and feud which it brings from the world. This is yet a third stumbling-block which Satan useth to lay in the way of a soul setting forth in this path of righteousness. 'O,' saith Satan, 'this is the ready way to bring thee under the lash of every tongue, to lose the love of thy neighbours, and contract the scorn, yea hatred, of all thou livest among. And dost thou not desire to live friendly and peaceably with thy neighbours? canst thou bear to be hooted at, as Lot was among the Sodomites, and Noah amidst the old world, that were all of another way? This holiness breeds ill blood wherever it comes. Own that, and you bring the world's fists about thy ears presently.'

Truly, though this be a sorry weak objection in itself, yet, where it meets with a soft temper, and a disposition tendered with a facility of nature, one in whom love and peaceful inclinations are predominant, it carries weight enough to amount to a dangerous temptation. No doubt Aaron stumbled at this stone in the business of the golden calf. He did not please himself, surely, in the thing; but it was an act merely complacental to the people, as appears by his apology to Moses, 'Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief,' Ex. 32:22. As if he has said, 'I did not know what they would have done to me upon my denial. What I did was to pacify them, and prevent more trouble from them.' There is need we see to be armed against this temptation, which that thou may-

est be, seriously weigh these two particulars.

Answer First. Thy God, Christian, whom thou servest, commands the tongues, hands, yea hearts, of all men. He can, when he pleaseth—without the least abating in thy holy course—give thee to find favour in the eyes of those thou most fearest. 'When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him,' Prov. 16:7. Laban, in a fury, pursues Jacob, but God meets him in the way, and gives him his lesson how he should carry himself to the good man, Gen. 31:24; and, ver. 29, he doth ingenuously confess to Jacob what turned the wind into a warmer comer, and made him so calm with him, that set out so full of rage, 'It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt: but the God of your father spake unto me yester-night,' &c. Thank him for nothing. He had power to hurt Jacob, but God would not let him. Mordecai, one would have thought, took the readiest way to incur the king's wrath, by denying Haman that reverence which all were, by royal command, to pay him. But the holy man's conscience would not suffer his knee to bow. And yet we see, when that proud favourite had done his worst to be revenged on him, he was forced himself to inherit the gallows intended for Mordecai, and leave Mordecai to succeed him in his prince's favour. Thus God, who hath a key to king's breasts, on a sudden locked Ahasuerus's heart against that cursed Amalekite, and opened it to let this holy man into his room. O who would be afraid to be conscientious when God can, and doth so admirably provide for his people's safety, while they keep close to him!

Answer Second. Suppose thy holy walking stirs up the wrath of ungodly ones against thee, know that there may be more mercy in their hatred than in their love. Commonly the saints get good by the wrath of the wicked against them, not so oft by their favour and friendship. Their displeasure wakens their care, and makes them more accurate (thus David prayed God to 'make his way plain for him,' because of his observing enemies), whereas their friendship too oft lays it asleep, and proves a snare to draw them into some sinful compliance with them. Jehoshaphat was wound in too far by his correspondence with Ahab, so hard is it to keep in with God and wicked men also. Luther professed he 'would not have Erasmus's honour for a world;' indeed the friendship he had with, and respect he had from, the great ones of the world

made him mealy-mouthed in the cause of God. The Moabites could not give Israel the fall at arm's length, but when they closed in alliances with the children of Israel, then they were too hard for them. Not their curses, but their embraces did them hurt. Again, we can never lose the love, or incur the wrath of men, upon better or more advantageous terms than for keeping our 'breastplate of righteousness' close to us.

1. When we lose for this any love from men, we gain God's blessing instead of it. 'Blessed are ye, when all men speak evil of you falsely, for my name's sake,' Matt. 5:11. God's blessing is a good roof over our head to defend us from the storm of man's wrath. O it is sad, when a Christian opens the mouths of the wicked, by some unholy action, to speak evil of him! No promise will open then its door to hide thee from the storm of their railing tongues. Man reviles and God frowns. Little welcome such a one has, when he returns home to look into his own conscience, or converse with his God; but when it is for thy holiness they hate thee, God is bound by promise to pay thee love for their hatred, blessing for their cursing. And truly that courtier has little cause to complain, that for a little disrespect from others, that cannot hurt him, is advanced higher in his prince's favour.

2. While thy holy walking loseth thee some love from the world, it gains thee the more reverence and honour. They that will not love thee because thou art holy, cannot choose but fear and reverence thee, at the same time, for what they hate thee. Let a saint comply with the wicked, and remit a little of his holiness to correspond with them, and he loses by the hand—as to his interest, I mean, in them—for by gaining a false love he loses that true honour which inwardly their consciences paid to his holiness. A Christian walking in the power of holiness is like Samson in his strength, the wicked fear him; but when he shows an impotent spirit, by any indecency in his course to his holy profession, then presently he is taken prisoner by them, and falls under both the lash of their tongue and the scorn of their hearts. They can now dance about such a one, and make him their May-game, whose holiness even now kept them in awe. It is not poverty, or the baseness of thy outward state in the world, that will render the contemptible, so long as thou keepest thy breastplate of righteousness on. There sits majesty in the brow of holiness though clad in rags. Righteous David commands

reverence from wicked Saul. The king himself does this homage to his poor exiled subject, 'He wept, and said to David, Thou art more righteous than I,' 1 Sam. 24:17. Ay, this is as it should be, when carnal men are forced to acknowledge that they are outshot by the holy lives of Christians. O Christians, do some singular thing—what the best of your merely civil neighbours cannot do—and you sit sure in the throne of their consciences, even when they throw you out of their hearts and affections! So long as the magicians did something like the miracles Moses wrought, they thought themselves as good men as he; but when they were nonplussed in the plague of lice, and could not, with all their art, produce the like, they acknowledged 'the finger of God' to be in it, Ex. 8:16. Do not more than carnal men do, and you stand but level with themselves in their opinions of you, yea, they think themselves better than you, who pretend to holiness more than they. It is expected that every one in the calling he professeth should more than a little exceed another that is not of that calling, which if he do not, he becomes contemptible. We come to the application, in which we shall be the shorter, having sprinkled something of this nature all along as we handled the doctrinal part.

APPLICATION.

[Use for information on two points
as to holiness.]

Use First. The information afforded in the preceding, bearing on those two particulars, viz. as to maintaining the power of holiness, and as to the possibility of doing so.

1. If we are thus to endeavour the maintaining of the power of holiness, then sure there is such a thing as righteousness and unrighteousness—holiness, and sin that opposeth it. Yet there is a generation of men that make these things to be mere fancies, as if all the existence they had were in the melancholy imaginations of some poor-spirited timorous men, who dream of these things, and then are scared with the bugbears that their own foolish thoughts represent to them. Hence, some among us have dared to make it their boast and glorying that they have at last got from under the bondage of that tyrant conscience; they can

now do that which we call swearing, lying, yea, what not, without being bearded and checked by an imperious conscience; yea, they assert that there is no sin to any but him that thinks so. These are worse fools than he the psalmist speaks of, Ps. 14:1. He doth but 'say in his heart there is no God;' but these tell the world what fools they are, and cannot hide their shame. I do not mention these so much to confute them—that were to as little purpose, as to go prove there is a sun shining in a clear day because a mad frantic man denies it—as rather to affect your hearts with the abominations of the times, ye holy ones of God. O how deep asleep were men, that the enemy could come and sow such tares as these amongst us! Perhaps they thought such poisonous seed would not grow in our soil, that had so much labour and cost bestowed on it by Christ's husbandmen; that such strong delusions would never go down with any that had been used to so pure a gospel diet! But alas! we see by woeful experience that, as a plague when it hits into a city that stands in the purest air, oft rageth more than in another place, so when a spirit of delusion falls upon a people that have enjoyed most of the gospel, it grows most prodigious. It makes me even tremble to think what a place of nettles England, that hath so long continued—without wrong to any other church Christ hath in the world—one of his fairest, fruitfulest garden-plots, may at last become, when I see what weeds have sprung up in our days. I have heard that reverend and holy Master Greenham say, he feared rather atheism than Popery would be England's ruin. Had he lived in our dismal days, he would have had his fears much increased. Were there ever more atheists made and making in England since it was acquainted with the gospel, than in the compass of a dozen years last past? I have reason to think there are not. When men shall fall so far from profession of the gospel, and be so blinded that they cannot know light from darkness, righteousness from unrighteousness, are they not far gone in atheism? This is not natural blindness, for the heathen could tell when they did good and evil, and see holiness from sin without scripture light to show them, Rom. 2:14, 15. No, this blindness is a plague of God fallen on them for rebelling against the light when they could see it. And if this plague should grow more common, which God forbid! woe then to England!

2. If we be to maintain the power of holiness,

then surely it is possible. God would not command what he doth not enable his own peculiar people to do; only here, you must remember carefully the distinction premised in the opening of the text, between a legal righteousness and an evangelical righteousness. The latter of these is so far from being unattainable, that there is not a sincere Christian in the world but is truly holy in this sense, that is, he doth truly desire, and conscionably endeavour—with some success of his endeavour through divine grace assisting—to walk according to the rule of God's word. I confess all Christ's scholars are not of the same form. All his children are not of the same stature and strength. Some foot it more nimbly in the ways of holiness than others, yet not a saint but is endued with a principle of life that sets him at work for God, and to desire to do more than he is able. As the seed, though little in itself, yet hath in it virtually the bigness and height of a grown tree, towards which it is putting forth with more and more strength of nature as it grows, so in the very first principle of grace planted at conversion, there is perfection of grace contained in a sense;—that is, a disposition putting the creature forth in desires and endeavours after that perfection to which God hath appointed him in Christ Jesus. And therefore, Christian, whenever such thoughts of the impossibility of obtaining this holiness here on earth are suggested to thee, reject them as sent in from Satan, and that on a design to feed thy own distrustful humour—which he knows they will suit too well, as the news of giants and high walls, that the spies brought to the unbelieving Israelites, did them—and all to weaken thy endeavours after holiness, which he knows will surely prove him a liar. Do but strongly resolve to be conscientious in thy endeavours, with an eye upon the promise of help, and the work will go on. Thou needest not fear it, 'for the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly,' Ps. 84:11. Mark that 'grace and glory,' that is, 'grace unto glory.' He will still be adding 'more grace' to that thou hast, till thy grace on earth commenceth glory in heaven.

[Use for reproof of several sorts of persons.]

Use Second. The improvement of the preceding doctrine for reproof of several sorts of persons.

1. All those who content themselves with their unholy state wherein they are. Such is the state of every one by nature. These, alas! are so far from maintaining the power of holiness, that they are under the power of their lusts. These give law to them, and cut out all their work for them, which they bestow all their time to make up. And is not that a sad life, sirs, which is spent about such filthy, beastly work as sin and unrighteousness is? Well may the 'bond of iniquity' and 'the gall of bitterness' be joined together, Acts 8:23. The apostle is thought to allude to Deut. 29:18, where all sin and unrighteousness is called 'a root that beareth gall and wormwood.' He that plants sin and unholiness, and then thinks to gather any other than bitter fruit for all his labour, pretends to a knowledge beyond God himself, who tells the natural fruit which grows from this root is 'gall and wormwood.' Who would look for musk in a dog's kennel? That thou mayest sooner find there than any true sweetness and comfort in unholiness. The devil may possibly for a time sophisticate, with his cookery and art, this bitter morsel, so that thou shalt not have the natural taste of it upon thy palate; but, as Abner said to Joab, 'knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?' II Sam. 2:26. In hell all the sugar will be melted wherein this bitter pill was wrapped. Then, if not before, thou wilt have the true relish of that which goes down now so sweetly. O how many are they now in hell cursing their feast and feast-maker too! Do you think it gives any ease to the damned to think what they had for their money? I mean what pleasures, profits, and carnal enjoyments they once had on earth, for which they now pay those unspeakable torments that are upon them, and shall continue for ever without any hope or help? No, it increaseth their pain beyond all our conceit, that they should sell their precious souls so cheap, in a manner for a song, and lose heaven and blessedness, because they would not be holy, which now they learn too late, was itself—however once they thought otherwise—a great part of that blessedness, and now torments them to consider they put it from them under the notion of a burden and a bondage. But alas! alas! how few thoughts do unholy wretches spend with themselves,

in considering what is doing in another world! They see sinners die daily in the prosecution of their lusts, but do not more think what is become of them—that they are in hell burning and roaring for their sin—than the fish in the river do think what is become of their fellows that were twitched up by their gills from them even now with the angler's hook, and cast into the seething-pot or frying-pan alive. No, as those silly creatures are ready still to nibble and bite at the same hook that struck their fellows, even so are men and women forward to catch at those baits still of sinful pleasures, and wages of unrighteousness, by which so many millions of souls before them have been hooked into hell and damnation.

2. Those who are as unholy as others, naked to God's eye and Satan's malice, but to save their credit in the world, wear something like a breastplate—a counterfeit holiness, which does them this service for the present, that they are thought to be what they are not. 'Verily they have their reward,' and a poor one it is. For the Lord's sake consider what you do, and tremble at it. You do the devil, God's great enemy, double service, and God double disservice, just as he comes into the field and brings deceitful arms with him, he draws his prince's expectation towards him as one that would do some exploit for him, but means nothing so, yea, he hinders some other that would be faithful to his prince in that place where he, a traitor, now stands. Such a one may do his prince more mischief than many who cowardly stay at home, or rebelliously run over to the enemy's side, and tell him plainly what they mean to do.

O friends! be serious. If you will trade for holiness, let it be for 'true holiness,' as it is phrased, 'Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness,' Eph. 4:24. Two phrases are here observable. Holiness is called the 'new man after God,' that is, according to the likeness of God—such a sculpture on the soul or image as is drawn after God, as the picture after the face of a man. Again, 'true holiness,' or holiness of truth, either respecting the word, which is the rule of holiness, and then it means a Scripture holiness, not pharisaical and traditional; or else it respects the heart, which is the seat of truth or falsehood. True holiness in this sense is holiness and righteousness in the heart. There must be truth of holiness in the inner parts. Many a man's beauty of holiness is but like the

beauty of his body, skin deep, all on the outside. Rip the most beautiful body, and that which was so fair without will be found within, when opened, to have little besides blood, filth, and stench; so this counterfeit holiness, when unbowelled and inside exposed to view, will appear to have hid within it nothing but abundance of spiritual impurities and abominations. ‘God,’ said Paul to the high priest, ‘shall smite thee, thou whited wall,’ Acts 23:3. Thus say I to thee, O hypocrite! God shall also smite thee, thou whited wall, or rather painted sepulchre, that thy paint without in thy profession doth not now more dazzle the eyes of others into admiration of thy sanctity, than thy rottenness within, which then shall appear without, will make thee abhorred and loathed of all that see thee.

3. Those who are so far from being holy themselves, that they mock and jeer others for being so. This breastplate of righteousness is of so base an account with them, that they who wear it in their daily conversation do make themselves no less ridiculous to them than if they came forth in a fool’s coat, or were clad in a dress contrived on purpose to move laughter. When some wretches would set a saint most at naught, and represent him as an object of greatest scorn, what is the language he wraps him up in but ‘there goes a holy brother, one of the pure ones!’ His very holiness is that which he thinks to disgrace him with. This shows a heart extremely wicked. There is a further degree of wickedness appears in mocking holiness in another, than harbouring unholiness in a man’s own bosom. That man hath a great antipathy indeed against a dish of meat who not only himself refuseth to eat of it, but cannot bear the sight of it on another’s trencher without vomiting. O how desperately wicked is that man with whom the very scent and sight of holiness, at such a distance, works so strange an effect as to make him cast up the gall and bitterness of his spirit against it! The Spirit of God bestows the chair upon this sort of sinners, and sets them above all their brethren in iniquity, as most deserving the place. ‘Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful,’ Ps. 1:1. The scorner here is set as chairman at the counsel-table of sinners. Some read the word for scornful, ‘rhetorical mockers.’ There is indeed a devilish wit that some show in their mocks

at holiness; they take a kind of pride in polishing those darts which they shoot against the saints. The Septuagint read it ‘the chair of pestilent ones.’ Indeed, as the plague is the most mortal among diseases, so is the spirit of scorning among sins. As few recover out of this sin as any whatever besides. The Scripture speaks of this sort of sinners as almost free among the dead. [There is] as little hope of doing them good for their souls, as of those for their bodies who cannot keep the physic administered to them, but presently cast it up before it hath any operation on them; and therefore we are even bid to save our physic, and not so much as bestow a reproof on them, lest we have it cast on our faces: ‘Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee,’ Prov. 9:8. All we can do is write ‘Lord, have mercy on them,’ upon their door—I mean, rather pray for them than speak to them.

There hath of old been this sort of mocking sinners mingled amongst the godly. A mocking Ishmael was in Abraham’s family, Gen. 21:9. And observable it is, what interpretation the Spirit of God makes of his scornful carriage towards his brother: ‘As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now,’ Gal. 4:29. Pray, mark,

1. What was the ground of the quarrel. It was this. His brother ‘was born after the Spirit,’ and this, he, being ‘born after the flesh,’ hated.

2. Observe how the Spirit of God phraseth this his scornful carriage to his brother—it is called persecuting him. To aggravate the evil of a scornful spirit, and a mocking tongue, which stands for so little a sin in the world’s account-book—who count none persecutors but those that draw blood for religion—God would have the jeerer and scoffer know among what sort of men he shall be ranked and tried at Christ’s bar—no less sinners than persecutors. But this I conceive is not all. This mocking of holiness is called persecuting, because there is the seed of bloody persecutions in it. They who are so free of their tongue to jeer, and show their teeth in fleering at holiness, would fasten their teeth also on it, if they had power to use their cheek-bone.

3. Observe this was not barely the cross disposition of Ishmael’s personal, peevish, and froward temper, so to abuse his brother, but it is laid as the charge of all wicked men. As he did persecute his brother, because born after the Spirit, ‘even so it is now.’ This

mocking spirit runs in the blood. The whole litter are alike, and if any seem more ingenuous and favourable to the holy ones of God, we must fetch the reason from some other head than their sinful natures. God rides some of them with a curb bit, who, though they open not their hearts to Christ savingly, yet truth is got so far into them by a powerful conviction, that it makes conscience say to them concerning their holy neighbours, what Pilate's wife by message said to her husband of Christ, *Matt. 27:19*, 'Have thou nothing to do with these just men, for I have suffered much concerning them.' But though there were ever mockers of holiness among the saints, because there were ever wicked to be their neighbours, yet the Spirit of God prophesieth of a sort of mockers to come upon the stage in the last days, that should differ from the ordinary scoffers that the people of God have been exercised with. And still the last is the worst. You know those who mock and jeer at holiness used to be men and women that pretended nothing to religion themselves—such as walk in an open defiance to God, and wallow in all manner of wickedness—but the Spirit of God tells us of a new gang that shall mock at holiness under a colour of holiness. They shall be as horribly wicked, some of them, as the worst of the former sort were, but wicked in a mystery. 'But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts,' *Jude 17, 18*. But mark! lest we should expect them at the wrong door, and so mistake, thinking they should arise as formerly from among the common swearers, drunkards, and other notorious sinners among us, he in the next words gives you as clear a character of them as if they carried their name on their forehead, 'these be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit,' *ver. 19*.

Learned Master Perkins reads these words thus, 'These be sect-makers, fleshly,' not having the Spirit. Sect-makers! those that separate themselves! Do not our hearts tremble to see the mockers arrows shot out at this window? These are they who pretend more to purity of worship than others, and profess they separate on account of their conscience, because they cannot suffer themselves so much as touch them that are unclean by joining with them in holy ordinances. And they mockers? they fleshly? Truly, if the Spirit

of God had not told us this, we should have gone last into their tent, as Laban did into Rachel's, as least suspecting that any mocker of holiness could stay there. Yea, God forbid that we should lay it in general as the charge of all who have separated from communion in the public, many of whom, my conscience tells me, are lovers of holiness, and led, though out of their way, by the tenderness of their consciences, which, when God hath better enlightened, will bring them as fast back to their brethren, as now it carrieth them from them. And truly I think it might give a great lift to the making of them think of a return, if they would but, in their sad and serious thoughts, consider how far many of those who went from us with them, are gone—even to mock at the holiness of those from whom once they parted, because they were not holy enough for their company (God the searcher of hearts knows that I speak this with a sad heart), so that were they to come and join with us again in some ordinances, such scandal hath been given by them, that they who durst not join with us, ought not, as they are, to be admitted by us. How many of those have you heard of, that began with a separation from our assemblies, who mock at Sabbaths, cast off family duties, indeed all prayer in secret by themselves, yea, drink in those cursed opinions that make them speak scornfully of Christ the Son of God himself, and the great truths of the gospel, which are the foundation of all true holiness, so that now, none are so great an object of their scorn as those who walk most close to the holy rule of the gospel.

Well, sirs, of what sort soever you are, whether atheistical mockers at holiness, or such as mock at true holiness in the disguise of a false one, take heed what you do; it is as much as your life is worth. 'Be not deceived, God will not be mocked,' nor suffer his grace to be mocked in his saints. You know how dearly that scoff did cost them, though but children, that spake it to the prophet, 'Go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head,' *II Kings 2:23*, where, they did not only revile him with that nickname of bald-head, but made a mock and jeer of Elijah's rapture into heaven. As if they had said, 'You would make us believe your master has gone up to heaven, why do you not go up after him, that we may be rid of both your companies at once?' And we need not wonder that these children should rise to such a height of wicked-

ness so soon, if you observe the place where they lived—at Bethel—which was most infamous for idolatry, and one of the two cities where Jeroboam did set up his calves, 1 Kings 12:28, so that this seems but the natural language which they learned, no doubt, from their idolatrous parents. God met with Michal also, for despising her husband, merely upon a religious account, because he showed a holy zeal for God, which her proud spirit, as many others since have done, thought it too mean and base to do. Well, what is her punishment? ‘Therefore Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child unto the day of her death.’ The service of God was too low for a king in her thoughts, therefore shall none come out of her womb to sit on the throne or wear a crown.

It is great wickedness to mock at the calamity of another. ‘He that mocketh the poor reproacheth his Maker,’ Prov. 17:5. Yea, to laugh at and triumph over a saint’s sin is a heavy sin. So did some sons of Belial, when David fell into that sad temptation of adultery and murder! And they are upon that account indicted for blaspheming God. What then is it to mock one for his holiness? Sin carries some cause of shame, and gives naughty hearts an occasion to reproach him they see besmeared with that, which is so inglorious and unbecoming, especially a saint. But holiness, this is honourable, and stamps dignity on the person that hath it. It is not only the nobility of the creature, but the honour of the most high God himself. So runs his title of honour, ‘Who is like thee, glorious in holiness?’ Ex. 15:11, so that none can mock that, but, upon the same account, he must mock God infinitely more, because there is infinitely more of that holiness which he jeers at in the creature, to be found in God, than all the creatures, men and angels in both worlds, have among them. If you would contrive a way how to cast the greatest dishonour upon God possible, you could not hit upon the like to this. The Romans, when they would put contempt upon any, and degrade them of their nobility, commanded that those, their statues and portraitures, which were set up in the city or temples to their memory, should all be broken down. Every saint is a lively image of God, and the more holy, the more like God; when thou therefore puttest scorn on them, and that for their holiness, now thou touchest God’s honour nearly indeed. Will nothing less content thee but thou must deface that image of his,

which he hath erected, with so much cost, in his saints, on purpose that they might be a praise to him in the earth? Was it such horrible wickedness in those heathens to ‘cast fire into the sanctuary,’ and to ‘break down the carved work thereof,....with axes and hammers,’ Ps. 74:6, 7, of which the church makes her moan, ‘O God, how long shall the adversary reproach? shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?’ ver. 10. What then is thy devilish malice, whose rage is spent, not on wood and stones, but on the carved work of his Spirit—the grace and holiness of his living temples?

[Use for exhortation of the saints.]

Use Third. The preceding doctrine may be for exhortation to the saints in several particulars. I shall only name three, because I have directed myself, in the whole discourse, to them.

1. Bless God that hath furnished thee with this breastplate. Canst thou do less, when thou seest such multitudes on every hand slain before thy face by the destroyer of souls, for want of this piece to defend their naked breasts against his murdering shot? Had God made thee rich and great in the world, but not holy, he had but given thee stock to trade with for hell. These would have made thee a greater booty for Satan, and only procured in the end a deeper damnation. When an enemy comes before a city that hath no walls nor arms to defend it, truly, the richer it is, the worse it fares. When Satan comes to a man that hath much of the world about him, but nothing of God in his soul to defend him, O what miserable work doth he make with such! He takes what he pleaseth, and doth what he will; purse, and all the poor wretch hath, is at his command. Let a lust ask never so unreasonably, he hath not a heart to deny it. Though he knows what the gratifying of it will cost him in another world, yet he will damn his soul rather than displease his lust. Herod throws half his kingdom at the foot of a wanton wench, if she will ask it; and because that was thought too little by her, he will sacrifice his whole kingdom to his lust—for so much the blood of John Baptist may be judged to have cost him in this life, being, so wakeful was divine providence, shortly after turned out of his throne—besides what he pays in the other. But when God made thee a holy man or woman, then he gave thee gates and

bars to thy city. Thou art now able, through his grace, to stand on thy defence, and with the continual succours heaven sends thee to withstand all his power. Thou wert once, indeed, a tame slave to him, but now he is a servant to thee. That day thou becamest holy, God did set thy foot on the serpent's head. Thy lusts were once the strongholds with which he kept thee in awe, and out of which he did come and do thee so much hurt; but now these are out of his hand. O what joy is there in a town when the castle that commanded it is taken from the enemy. Now, poor soul, Satan is dislodged and unkennelled. Never more shall he play rex in thy soul as he hath done. In a word, when thou wert made a holy righteous person, then did God begin heaven in thy soul. That day thou wert born again, an heir to heaven was born. And if such acclamations be at the birth of a young prince, heir to some petty territories, hast not thou more cause, that then hadst heaven's glory settled on thee, in reversion, especially if thou considerest where all thy inheritance lay a little before, that thou couldst lay claim to? Paul joins both together to make his doxology full: 'Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son,' Col. 1:12, 13. O blessed change! to step out of the devil's dark dungeon, where thou wert kept in chains of sin and unrighteousness, prisoner for hell, into the kingdom of Christ's grace, where thou hast the gold chain of holiness, and righteousness put about thy neck as heir-apparent to heaven. Such honour have all his saints.

2. Look thou keepest thy breastplate on, Christian. Need we bid the soldier be careful of his armour? When he goes into the field, can he easily forget to take that with him, or be persuaded to leave it behind him? Yet some have done so, and paid dear for their boldness. Better thou endure the weight of thy plate, though a little cumbersome to the flesh, than receive a wound in thy breast for want of it. Let this piece fall off, and thou canst keep none of the other on. If thou allowest thyself in any unholiness, thy sincerity will presently be called into question in thy conscience. I confess we find that Peter, a little after his sad fall in denying his Master, had the testimony of his uprightness, 'Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee,' John 21:17.

After Christ had thrice put it to the question, he could confidently vouch his sincerity. But we must know, (1.) That sin was not a deliberate sin. The poor man was surprised on a sudden. And, (2.) There had intervened his bitter sorrow between his sin and this his profession; and the renewing of his repentance so speedily, conduced much to the clearing of his sincerity to his conscience. But David found it harder work who sinned more deliberately, and lay longer soaking in his guilt, as you may perceive, Ps. 51:10, where he pleads so earnestly that God would 'renew a right spirit within him.'

Again, the gospel-shoe will not come on thy foot so long as swelled with any sinful humour—I mean any unrighteousness or unholy practice—till assuaged and purged out by repentance. Consider the gospel in its preparation. Art thou in a fit case to suffer cheerfully for God, or patiently for God, as thou art? No more than a soldier in a disease, sick abed, is to make a hard march. Unholiness weakens the soul as much as sickness doth the body, and indisposeth it to endure any hardship. 'O spare me' a little, 'that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more,' Ps. 39:13. David was not yet recovered out of that sin, which had brought him exceeding low, as you may perceive, vv. 10, 11. And the good man cannot think of dying with any willingness till his heart be in a holier frame. And for the peace of the gospel—serenity of conscience and inward joy—alas! all unholiness is to it as poison is to the spirit which drinks them up. Throw a stone into a brook, and though clear before, it presently is royled and muddy. 'He will speak peace unto his people,....but let them not turn again to folly,' Ps. 85:8. Mark, here, what an item he gives, 'But let them not turn,' and as if he had said, 'Upon their peril be it, if they turn from holy walking to folly; I will turn from speaking peace, to speak terror.'

Again by thy negligence in thy holy walking thou endangerest thy faith, which is kept in a good conscience, as the jewel in the cabinet. Faith is an eye. All sin and unholiness casts a mist before this eye. A holy life, to faith, is as a clear air and medium to the eye. We can see farther in a clear day. Thus faith sees farthest into the promise, when it looks through a holy, well-ordered conversation. Faith is a shield; and when does the soldier drop that out of his hand but when dangerously wounded? And if faith fail,

what will become of hope, which hangs upon faith, and draws all her nourishment from her, as the sucking child doth from the nurse? If faith cannot see a pardon in the promise, then hope cannot look for salvation. If faith cannot lay claim to sonship, then hope will not wait for the inheritance. Faith tells the soul it hath 'peace with God,' then the soul 'rejoiceth in the hope of glory,' Rom. 5:1, 2. And now, Christian, what hast thou yet left for thy help? Wilt thou betake thyself to the sword of the Spirit? Alas! how canst thou wield it when, by thy unholy walking, thou hast lamed thy hand of faith that should hold it? This sword hath two edges. With one it heals, with the other it wounds—with one it saves, with the other it damns. O it is a dreadful weapon when it strikes with its wounding, damning side; and for the other side thou hast nothing to do with it while in any way of unholiness. Not a kind word in the whole Bible spoken to one sinning. Now, poor creature, think, and think again; is there any sin worth hazarding all this confusion and mischief, which, if thou beest resolved to have it, will inevitably befall thy soul?

3. Be humble when thou art most holy. Which way soever pride works—as thou shalt find it like the wind—sometimes at one door, sometimes at another—resist it. Nothing more baneful to thy holiness; it turns righteousness into hemlock, holiness into sin. Never art thou less holy than when puffed up with the conceit of it. When we see a man blown up and swelled with the dropsy, we can tell his blood is naught and waterish, without opening a vein for the trial. The more pride puffs thee, the less pure blood of holiness thou hast running in the veins of thy soul. 'Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright,' Hab. 2:4. See an ecce! [behold!] like a sign, is set up at the proud man's door, that all passengers may know a naughty man dwells there. As thou wouldst not, therefore, not only enfeeble the power of holiness, but also call in question the truth of thy holiness, take heed of pride. Sometimes, possibly, thou wilt be ready to despise others, and bid them, in thy thoughts, stand off, as not so holy as thyself; this smells of the Pharisee, beware of it. It is the nature of holiness to depress ourselves, and to give our brethren the advantage in measuring their gifts or graces with our own. 'In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves,' Php. 2:3. At another time, possibly, thou mayest find a spice of the justici-

ary's²⁰ disease hanging about thee—thy heart leaning on thy righteousness, and lifting up thyself into confidence of it, so as to expect thy acceptance with, and salvation from, God for that. O take heed of this, as thou lovest thy life! I may say to thee as Constantine did to Acetius the Novatian, 'Set then up thy ladder, and go to heaven by thyself, for never any went this way thither;' and dost thou think to be the only man that shall appear in heaven purchaser of his own happiness? Go, first, poor creature, and measure the length of thy ladder by the extent of the holy law, and if thou findest it but one round short of that, thou mayest certainly conclude it will leave thee short of heaven. If, therefore, thou hast beheld—to allude to that in Job 31:27—thy righteousness, when it hath shined, and thy holiness walking in its brightness, and thy heart thereby hath been enticed secretly, or thy mouth hath kissed thy hand; know this is a great wickedness, and in this thou hast denied the God above. Thou hast given the highest part of divine worship unto a creature, the created sun of thy inherent holiness, which God hath appointed should be given alone to the uncreated Sun of righteousness, the Lord Jesus, 'the Lord our righteousness.' Renounce thy plea, as now thou hast laid it, for life and salvation, or else give up thy cause as lost. Now the more effectually to keep down any insurrection of pride from the conceit of thy holiness, be pleased to take often these soul-humbling considerations into thy serious thoughts.

(1.) Often meditate on the infinite holiness of God. When men stand high their heads do not grow dizzy till they look down. When men look down upon those that are worse than themselves, or less holy than themselves, then their heads turn round. Looking up would cure this disease. The most holy men, when once they have fixed their eyes a while upon God's holiness, and then looked upon themselves, they have been quite out of love with themselves, and could see nothing but unholiness in themselves. After the vision the prophet had of God sitting on his throne, and his heavenly ministers of state, the seraphim, about him, covering their faces and crying,

20. Justiciary — it would seem that he means to say that one might be feeling self-righteous and not just a little judgmental. — SDB

‘Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts:’ how was this gracious man presently smitten with the sense of his own vileness? They did not more cry up God as holy, than he did cry out upon himself as ‘unclean,’ Isa. 6:3, 5. So Job, ‘Now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself,’ Job 42:5, 6. Never did the good man more loathe himself for the putrid sores of his ulcerous body, when on the dunghill he sat and scraped himself, than now he did for the impurities of his soul. We see ourselves in a dark room, and we think we are fine and clean; but would we compass ourselves with the beams of God’s glorious majesty and holiness, then the sun rays would not discover more atoms in the air, than the holiness of God would convince of sin to be in us. But it is the trick of pride not to come where it may be outshined; it had rather go where it shall be adored, than where it is sure to be put to shame.

(2.) Often meditate on the holiness of man’s innocent state. It is true now, if a believer, thou hast a principle of holiness planted in thee; but, alas! what is that at present to what thy nature once had? They who saw the second temple, and remembered not the first, which Solomon built, thought it, no doubt, a glorious fabric; but others, whose eyes had seen the stately work and goodly buildings of the other, could not but rejoice with tears in their eyes. ‘Many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid,....wept with a loud voice,’ Ezra 3:12. O! it revived the sad thoughts of the sacking of that glorious structure; and so may this little beginning upon a new foundation of the new covenant, remind thee, with sorrow, to think of the ruins that man, in all his glory, fell into by Satan’s policy! It is true, in heaven thou shalt have the odds of Adam in paradise, but thou shalt have many a weary step before thou gettest up that hill. When a man that hath had some thousands a-year hath now but a few pounds per annum allowed him, and the rest sequestered from him for thirty or forty years; it is sad, though comfortable also to think, it shall at last return, and may be, with a great overplus; but at present, he is put to many straits, and fain to make a hard shift to rub through, so as to live anything like his noble descent and family. Thus it is joyous to the saint to think of heaven when all his means shall come into his hands; but truly his imperfect grace,

and the many expenses he is at—from afflictions at God’s hands, temptations at Satan’s, mutinies and intestine broils from remaining lusts within doors—do put him into so many sad straits, that the poor soul is fain oft to snap short in his comfort, yea, much ado he hath to keep shop windows open with the little stock he hath. Hence, the Christian’s getting to heaven is set out as a business of so much difficulty. ‘If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?’ I Peter 4:18. The wise virgins had no oil to spare. The Christian shall hold out, and that is even all. Think of this, and let thy plumes fall.

(3.) Often meditate on thy own personal miscarriages, especially in thy unregenerate state. This kept Paul so humble. How oft does his unregenerate wicked conversation rise, though not in his conscience, to darken his comfort, yet in his mind, to qualify the thoughts of his gifts and grace, I Cor. 15:9, 10, where he speaks how he ‘laboured more than them all.’ O how he waylays his pride that possibly might follow such his glorying too close at his heels! and therefore, before he dare speak a word of his present holiness, he bolts the door upon pride, and first falls upon the story of that black part of his life. O how he batters his pride, and speaks himself all to naught! No enemy could have drawn his picture with a blacker coal, I Cor. 15:7. He calls himself one ‘born out of time,’ ver. 9, ‘for I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.’ And now having sufficiently besmeared and doused himself in the puddle of his former sins, how humbly doth the holy man speak of his transcendent graces! ver. 10. ‘By the grace of God I am what I am,.... and I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God.’ O this is the way of killing this weed of pride, to break up our own hearts, and turn the inside outward—I mean humble and abase ourselves for our former abominations. Pride will not easily thrive in a soul where this plough often walks. Pride is a worm that bites and gnaws out the heart of grace. Now you know they are bitter things that must break the bag of worms that are gathered in the stomach. All sweet things nourish them; they are bitter that scatter and kill them. O Christian, take some quantity of this aloes often, and with God’s blessing thou shalt find ease of that which, if a Christian, thou art troubled

withal. And do not think that this worm breeds only in children—weak Christians, and young novices. I confess that it is the most ordinary disease of that age. But aged and stronger Christians are not out of danger. Old David had this worm of pride crawling out of his mouth when he bade Joab number the people.

And dost not thou too, oft take thyself in numbering the duties and good works thou hast done, and the sufferings thou hast endured for thy God, with some secret self-applauding thoughts that tickle thee for them?

