

AN  
**ALARM**  
TO  
**UNCONVERTED SINNERS,**  
IN A  
**SERIOUS TREATISE;**  
SHOWING,

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| I. What Conversion is not, and<br>correcting some mistakes about it | IV. The marks of the unconverted.   |
| II. What Conversion is, and what it<br>consists of.                 | V. The miseries of the unconverted. |
| III. The necessity of Conversion.                                   | VI. Directions for conversion.      |
|   | VII. Motives for conversion.        |

By that faithful servant of Jesus Christ,

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*First published 1671*

*Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. JOHN 3.3.*

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## Editor's Preface

Few books, whether in print or out of print, have had as profound an effect on me as this one. It doesn't matter if you are a non-believer, a nominal believer, or a sound believer, this book will rattle your cage. It will force you to confront who you truly are in your own mind, in the sight of men, and in the presence of God. It is not for the faint of heart. Be prepared to be challenged by this holy sentry who stands at the gates of hell, demanding to know who goes there, and warning you away.

As you read this, please keep in mind the audience to whom Mr. Alleine is writing. These are the parishioners of the Church of England. Being English citizens, they were baptized into the church in their infancy. He pleads with them to examine themselves to be sure they understand it is not their baptism that saves them, but their faith in Jesus Christ.

This edition is modernized and reformatted, so that page breaks are more readable. In-line Citations in the original have been superscripted, so they are less obtrusive. Where the original included more than one citation for a statement, and they are not at the end of a paragraph, they have been moved into footnotes. Additional citations are in [blue](#); my footnotes are likewise in [blue](#); this is to distinguish them from the original editor's notes.

*Page number* references in the footnotes refer to the *original* page numbers included intra-text.

I pray Alleine's work proves useful to examine your own walk with Christ, either affirming and strengthening your faith in Christ, or provoking you to flee to Him for salvation; this was Alleine's purpose in writing it.

[2Cor 13:5](#) Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.  
Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? — unless indeed you are disqualified.

William H. Gross

May 4, 2010

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## TO THE READER

### THAT WOULD BE SAFE AND HAPPY,

IF it is possible that you will live hereafter, and are called to account in another world for what you do in this, then it would be wise to take the safest course, and not run the constant hazard of being dragged by death to judgment before you are prepared to meet your Judge. But *another life*, and a *judgment to come*, are more than possible: there is a high probability. Indeed, there is as great a certainty as can reasonably be expected that death will not put an end to your being; that you will live after the return of your body to the earth; and that you will then be tried, and sentenced to such a happiness or misery incomparably greater than anything — no, than *all* you ever felt or saw, heard of or imagined. These weighty truths are taught and established in some measure by the light of nature; but they are much more clearly and firmly taught and established by the oracles of God in the Holy Scriptures. Besides what they say of the different states of separated souls, they plainly teach, and strongly assert, *that God has appointed a time in which he will judge the whole world, by the Mediator Jesus Christ; that this great Mediator, who is God as well as man, will descend from heaven, attended by its glorious inhabitants, with triumphant acclamations to his royal throne; that a mighty voice will call all who*

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*ever dwelt on earth to make their personal appearance; that this awakening and commanding summons will be immediately heard and obeyed by the dead, and they, along with those then remaining alive, will all stand before the judgment seat; that after a thoroughly searching and impartial trial which will discover men's several talents, trusts, and opportunities to get and do good, and their most secret actions, words and thoughts, every one of them will receive an unalterable sentence of absolution or condemnation. And then, those who are approved and absolved, will inherit a heavenly kingdom, prepared for them from the foundation of the world; they will be like the angels, their delightful companions; they will converse with their most amiable and loving Saviour, beholding and partaking of his glory. Indeed, they will resemble, see, and enjoy God himself in completed holiness and everlasting bliss. Those, on the other hand, who are reprobate and damned, will never be admitted to the regions of light, nor be favoured with a glimpse of it. Instead, along with devils, in the blackness of eternal darkness, they will suffer the perpetual gnawings of the worm that does not die, and the extreme torments of unquenchable fire.*

These things cannot be denied. Therefore, if you don't earnestly desire to be one of those to whom the Lord says, *Come you blessed*,<sup>Mat 25.34</sup> rather than, *Depart you cursed*;<sup>Mat 7.23</sup> and if you don't readily welcome, and diligently use, any proper helps to avoid for yourself the most heavy and endless misery, and to attain for yourself the most pure, vast, and everlasting happiness; then you must be guilty of such woeful abuses of reason as to far exceed all the excesses of those who lack it; you must be grossly foolish and unnaturally cruel to your own soul, to your entire being!

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And such helps are now offered to you in this little book, which has a tincture of the excellent author's flaming love toward God, and useful charity toward the souls of men. And now that it is in your hand, let me tell you that you cannot refuse to read it, or read it without doing what it so plainly teaches and affectionately urges, except at your greatest peril. If you will not, at a small expense of time and pains, read it over, and if this too is rejected after neglecting so many means of instruction, then how justly may you be *destroyed for lack of knowledge*?<sup>Hos 4.6</sup> How soon may the *things which belong to your peace be hidden from your eyes*?<sup>Luk 19.42</sup> A continued wilful lack of understanding is large ground for fearing that *he that made you will not have mercy on you, and he that formed you will show you no favour*.<sup>Isa 27.11</sup> If you read, but don't practise what

scripture and reason so compassionately plead for, then the *increase of your knowledge will increase your sorrow*, <sup>Ecc 1.18</sup> because it will aggravate your sin; for if someone *knows his Lord's will*, how and why to *do good, and he does not do it*, <sup>Jas 4.17</sup> but instead he does the forbidden evil, then to him it is heinous, inexcusable sin for which he is liable to be *beaten with many stripes*; <sup>Luk 12.47</sup> he is in constant dreadful danger of severer punishment.

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I hope therefore you will peruse so short a discourse, and are not unwilling to do it in such a manner as to grow acquainted with and be persuaded to do your great duty, which is also to your greatest advantage. The design of the following directions is so that you may not fail in it.

1. Pray in the name of Christ, as you are and will be enabled, for the more effectual assistances of the Holy Spirit. Such is the corruption of our nature that it utterly disables us from making a saving use of outward means without inward aids. Unless the Spirit, by his powerful operations, works you into a serious and teachable temper, unless he drives home the attempts of God's messengers, and gives them an efficacy far beyond their own, then the most concerning truths and weightiest arguments can never be presented and enforced so as to overcome your sensual, worldly inclinations; nor will these rescue you from the dominion of sin and Satan and bring you back to God. You must therefore *pray*, and do that with appropriate apprehensions of the great God, with due regard for the gracious Mediator, with deep shame and sorrow for the sins you confess, with ardent desires for all the grace you beg for, and with faithful improvements of those measures you have already received. If you thus ask with fervent importunity, and persevering constancy, then you will undoubtedly find that *God did not bid you to seek his face in vain*. As our Lord warrants us to argue (Luke 11), if a man will not deny a friend what he is

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pleading for, and if a father will grant his son what he asks for and wants, then much more will your heavenly Father give you the Holy Spirit for all necessary purposes, to produce in you all those effects that are truly necessary for your eternal salvation.

2. Consider seriously what you read, and work it upon your soul to the extent that a given section concerns you. Medicines for the body will operate even if they are not thought about; but spiritual remedies for the mind require its co-operation with them: the clearest explications, fullest proofs, and strongest motives about matters of nearest and greatest concern, will not do the soul any good, unless by thinking it applies them, and extracts their virtue; nor will the Spirit heal its lamentable diseases if his influences are not answered with suitable endeavours. Work then as the Spirit works in and with you; take into most serious consideration whatever is apt to promote your recovery; lay those things closest to heart which are likeliest to cure its hardness; inculcate and urge them, and along with that, cry mightily to the one *who is able and no less willing to help you*, until you feel his gentle force, and come to a conquering resolve that you must and will do as you are advised; until you not only assent to the course proposed as fit to be taken, but are steadily determined that it is best for you; that it is absolutely necessary, and it must effectually be prosecuted; that by the grace of God you will thoroughly change your heart and life; and so escape from the greatest evil, and ensure the highest good.

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3. Once you have seriously considered and resolved what to do, proceed to practice it with all your might, and without the least delay. It is commonly a work of some time to alter the temper of the soul, and to change the course of the life; and according to God's usual methods, the longer you have been accustomed to do evil, the more time and pains will be required to break the force of stubborn lusts, to weaken and subdue vicious habits, and to gain habits of grace and goodness: to travel back the way you have gone wrong, and to get out of it, into the path of life. It is well then if there are enough days remaining for you to do the *one thing needed*. <sup>Luk 10.42</sup> To be

sure, you are not certain of an hour to spare; the loss of so small a part may prove the loss of all. Besides, if you put off your reformation, even if only for a little while, it is a sign you don't really intend to be reformed at all. For against your own conviction, you intend to add sin to sin at present; and how can that be consistent with a hearty plan of growing good afterward? Don't delude yourself, therefore, with such a desperate fraud, but imitate the royal Psalmist: when you have *thought on your ways, turn your feet to God's testimonies: make haste, and don't delay to keep his commandments.* [Psa 119.60](#)

4. Remember that conversion to God is just the beginning of your duty; you must afterwards obey him all the days of your life. There is no other way to preserve an

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interest in his favour, and a right to its great expressions. The largest and last discoveries of divine grace *teach you to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world;* [Tit 2.12](#) and by so doing, to *look for the blessed object of your hope:* they warn you plainly enough against *drawing back to perdition;* [Heb 10.39](#) they threaten a *final rejection if you deny your Saviour in words or works;* and they often direct and command you to *seek glory, and honour, and immortality, by patient continuance in well-doing;* [Rom 2.7](#) to be *faithful to death,* [Rev 2.10](#) whatever it costs you, so that your Lord may *give you a crown of life.* These may seem hard sayings, but they contain nothing like a reasonable discouragement. There is more than enough misery in hell to necessitate its prevention by any temporary labour, lack, and suffering; and there is an abundantly sufficient happiness in heaven to encourage a steadfast perseverance in the work of the Lord, even though it is more harsh and grievous than sinners imagine. Even at present, religion is not without a reward; indeed, if you try as you should, you will find it a reward in itself. When the main difficulties at first are over, your duty will grow easier daily. It will have many pleasures mixed with it; and at length it will itself become the greatest of them. It will not abridge your appetites for any desirable gratifications, but it will give them a new delicious relish of the fountain from which they flow: instead of the bindings and twinges of a bad conscience, and the dread of an after-reckoning, peace will settle

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within you, and fill you with comfortable reflections and joyful hopes. And by degrees, a loving, thankful, praising obedience will become your sweetest employment. In that, you may *draw still nearer to God, delight yourself in him, and receive from him the desires of your heart;* [Psa 37.4](#) you may always walk in the *light of his countenance,* [Psa 89.15](#) and feed on *his loving kindness, which is better than life.* [Psa 63.3](#) In short, before you ascend to heaven, you may be in a heaven on earth. And you may find, by happy experience, that the way to have all you can wish hereafter, is to be and to do what is best for you here.

## AN EARNEST INVITATION TO SINNERS

TO TURN TO GOD, IN ORDER TO THEIR ETERNAL SALVATION.

DEARLY beloved and longed for, I gladly acknowledge I am a debtor to you all; and I am concerned, because I would like to be found a good steward to the household of God, giving to every one his portion. But the physician is most solicitous for those patients whose case is most doubtful and hazardous; and the father's tender mercies are especially turned towards his dying child. The numbers of unconverted souls among you call for my most earnest compassions and hasty diligence to pluck them out of the burning. <sup>Jude 23</sup> And therefore, I will first apply myself along these lines to these.

But where will I fetch my arguments from, or how will I choose my words? Lord, with what will I woo them? With what will I win them? Oh, if I could only tell! I would write to them in tears. I would weep out every argument. I would empty my veins for ink. I would petition them on my knees — truly (were I able), I would. Oh, how thankful I would be if they would be prevailed upon to repent and turn!

How long have I travailed in birth with you? <sup>Gal. 4.19</sup> How frequently have I courted you? How often would I have gathered you? <sup>Mat 23.37</sup> How instant have I been with you? This is what

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I have prayed for and studied for, for many years: that I might bring you to God. Oh, that I might do it! Will you still be entreated? Oh, what a happy man you might make me if you would only listen to me, and allow me to carry you over to Jesus Christ!

“But, Lord, how insufficient I am for this work! I have been many a year wooing for you, but the damsel would not go with me. Lord, what kind of task have you set me to do? Alas! With what will I pierce the scales of Leviathan, or make the heart that is hard as stone to feel; hard as a piece of millstone? Should I go and press my mouth to the grave, and expect the dead to obey me and come forth? Will I make an oration to the rocks, or declaim to the mountains, and think I will move them by arguments? Will I make the blind see? From the beginning of the world, it was not heard of that a man had opened the eyes of the blind. But you, O Lord, can pierce the scales, and prick the heart of the sinner. I can only shoot at rovers,<sup>1</sup> and draw the bow at a risk; you direct the arrow between the joints of the harness, and kill the sin, and save the soul of a sinner who looks upon these labours.”

But I must apply to you, the one to whom I am sent: yet I am at a loss. I wish to God I knew how to work with you! Should I hesitate at the difficulty of it? God knows, you yourselves are my witnesses, how I have followed you in private, as well as in public,

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and have brought the gospel to your doors, testifying to you the necessity of the new birth, and persuading you to look for a sound and thorough change over time. Beloved, I have not acted out a part among you in order to serve my own advantage: our gospel is not yes and no. Haven't you heard the same truths from the pulpit, by public labours, by private letters, and by personal instruction? Brothers, I am of the same mind as ever: that holiness is the best choice, that there is no entering into heaven except by the straight passages of the second birth, that without holiness you will never see God. <sup>Heb 12.14</sup> Ah, my beloved! Refresh my tender mercies in the Lord. *If there is any consolation in Christ, any comfort of love, any fellowship of the Spirit, any tenderness and mercies, fulfil my joy. Now give yourselves to the Lord.* <sup>2Cor 8.5</sup> *Now set yourselves to seek him. Now set up the Lord Jesus in your hearts, and set him up in your houses. Now*

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<sup>1</sup> A mark selected at random, as in a competition between two archers who are wandering over a specified area.



come in and kiss the son, <sup>Psa 2.12</sup> and embrace the offers of mercy; touch his sceptre and live; why will you die? I don't beg for myself, but I would willingly have you happy: this is the prize I run for and the mark I aim at. My soul's desire and prayer for you is that you may be saved. <sup>Rom 10.1</sup>

The famous Lycurgus,<sup>1</sup> having instituted the strictest and most wholesome laws for his people, told them he was compelled to go on a journey away from them. He got them to bind themselves in an oath that his laws would be observed until his return. This being done, he went

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into voluntary banishment and never returned. Why? So that, by virtue of their oath, they might be engaged to perpetually observe his laws. I think I would be glad to endure the hard conditions which he endured (though I love you tenderly) so that I might engage you thoroughly to obey the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dearly beloved, would you gladden the heart of your minister? Why then, embrace the counsels of the Lord by me: forego your sins; set to prayer; increase the worship of God in your families; keep your distance from the corruptions of the times. What greater joy for a minister than to hear of souls that are born to Christ by him, and that his children walk in the truth! <sup>2Joh 4</sup>

Brothers, I beseech you, allow me friendly openness, and freedom with regard to your deepest concerns. I am not playing the orator to make a learned speech to you, nor am I dressing my dish with eloquence by which to please you. These lines are embarked on a weighty errand indeed, namely, to convince, convert, and save you. I am not baiting my hook with rhetoric, nor am I fishing for your applause, but for your souls. My work is not to *please* you, but to *save* you; nor is my business with your fancies, but with your hearts. If I don't have your hearts, I have nothing. If I were to please your ears, I would sing another song. If I were to preach myself, I would steer another course: I could then tell you a smoother tale: I would make you pillows, and speak peace to you: for how can Ahab love his Micaiah

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who always prophesies evil concerning him?<sup>1Kng 22.8</sup> But how much better are the wounds of a friend, than the fair speeches of the harlot who flatters with her lips until the arrow strikes through the liver and hunts for the precious life? <sup>Pro 7.21-23; 6.26</sup> If I were to quiet a crying infant, I might sing him into a pleasant mood, and rock him asleep: but when the child has fallen into the fire, the parent takes another course: he will not go to still him with a song or a trifle. I know if we don't make haste with you, you are lost: if we cannot get your consent to arise and come away, you will perish forever: if there is no conversion, there is no salvation. I must get your goodwill, or else I will leave you miserable.

But here the difficulty of my work again recurs to me. "Lord, choose my stones out of the rock." <sup>1Sam. 17.40, 45</sup> I come in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel. I come out like the stripling David — not to wrestle with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world. <sup>Eph. 6.12</sup> This day, let the Lord strike the Philistine, and strip the strong man of his armour, and allow me to fetch the captives out of his hand. Lord, choose my words, choose my weapons for me; and when I put my hand into the bag and take a stone from it, and sling it, carry it to the mark and make it sink, not into the forehead, <sup>1Sam. 17.49</sup> but into the heart of the unconverted sinner, and knock him to the ground. As with Saul,

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<sup>1</sup> Lycurgus was the "Father of Sparta." He established harmony, simplicity, and strength as Spartan culture. This warrior society tamed its youth through systematic education aimed at developing leadership, courage, public spirit, and wisdom.



in his so happy fall, <sup>Act 9.4</sup> you have sent me as Abraham sent his servant, to obtain a wife for my master, your Son. <sup>Gen 24.4</sup> But my discouraged soul is ready to fear that the woman will not be willing to follow me. Lord God of my master, I pray you send me good speed this day, and show kindness to my master, and send your angel before me, and prosper my way, that I may obtain a wife for your Son, <sup>Gen 24.12</sup> that just as your servant did not rest until he had brought Isaac and Rebekah together, so I may be successful in bringing Christ and the souls of my people together before we part.”

But I turn to you. Some of you don't know what I mean by conversion, and so it would be in vain to persuade you of something you don't understand; therefore, for your sakes, I will show you *what this conversion is*. Others cherish secret hopes of mercy, even though they continue as they are in sin; and for them I must show the *necessity of conversion*. Others are likely to harden themselves with an empty conceit that they are converted already; to them I must show the *marks of the unconverted*. Others, because they *feel* no harm, *fear* none — and so they sleep on top of the mast; to them I will show the *misery of the unconverted*. Others sit still, because they don't see their way out; to them I will show the *means of conversion*. And finally, for the enlivening of all, I will close with the *motives for conversion*.

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## CHAP. I — SHOWING THE NEGATIVE, WHAT CONVERSION IS NOT, AND CORRECTING SOME MISTAKES ABOUT IT.

LET the blind Samaritans worship what they don't know; <sup>Joh 4.22</sup> let the heathen Athenians superscribe their altar to the unknown God; <sup>Act 17.23</sup> let the guileful Papists commend the mother of destruction <sup>Hos. 4.6</sup> as the mother of devotion. Those who know man's constitution, and the nature of the reasonable soul's operation, must know that understanding has dominion in the soul; thus one who works rationally at conversion must labour to let the light in here. *Ignorantis non est consensus.*<sup>1</sup> And therefore, so you may not mistake me, I will show you what I mean by the conversion which I persuade you to endeavour after.

It is said that when Jupiter<sup>2</sup> let down the golden chaplets<sup>3</sup> from heaven, all but one were stolen; upon which (to avoid losing a relic of such great esteem) they made five others so like it, that if any were wickedly minded enough to steal that one too, they would not be able to discern which it was. And truly, my beloved, the devil has made many counterfeits of this conversion, and cheats one with this, and another with that: and he has such a craft and artifice in this mystery of deceits, that (if it were possible) he would deceive the very elect. Now, so that I may cure

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the damnable mistakes of some who think they *are* converted when they are *not*, as well as remove the troubles and fears of others who think they are *not* converted when they *are*, I will show you the nature of conversion, both negatively (what it is not), and positively (what it is).

### ***We will begin with the negative.***

**1. It is not taking on the profession of Christianity.** Doubtless Christianity is more than a name. If we hear Paul, it does not lie in words but in power. <sup>1Cor 4.20</sup> If ceasing to be Jews and Pagans, and verbally professing to be Christians, had been true conversion (this is all that some understood it to be), then who would make better Christians than those of Sardis and Laodicea? These were all Christians by verbal profession, and so they had a name to identify them; but because they *only* had a name, they are condemned by Christ who threatened to spit them out. <sup>Rev 3.16</sup> Aren't there many who name the name of the Lord Jesus, and yet don't depart from iniquity? <sup>2Tim 2.19</sup> who profess they know God, but by their works they deny him? <sup>Tit. 1.16</sup> And will God receive these as true converts merely because they turned to the Christian religion? What! Converts from sin who still live in sin? *It is a visible contradiction.* Surely if the lamp of their profession had served the turn, the foolish virgins would never have been shut out. <sup>Mat 25.3, 12</sup> We find that not only those who profess Christ, but also *preachers* of Christ, and *wonder-workers*, are turned away because they are evil-workers. <sup>Mat 7.22-23</sup>

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**2. It is not being washed in the laver of regeneration,** or putting on the badge of Christ in baptism. Many take the press-money,<sup>4</sup> and wear the uniform of Christ, yet they never stand to their colours, or follow their leader. Ananias, Saphira, and Magus were each baptized, as well as the rest. It is absurd that so many confuse deceiving with being deceived! They dream that effectual grace is necessarily tied to the external administration of baptism (which revives the

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<sup>1</sup> Ignorance is not consent.

<sup>2</sup> Roman mythology — supreme god of the Romans — god of the skies; he is the counterpart of the Greek Zeus.

<sup>3</sup> Flower arrangement consisting of a circular band of foliage or flowers for ornamental purposes. The kings of Alba and Rome imitated Jupiter as god of the oak by wearing a crown of oak leaves.

<sup>4</sup> Money paid to a man enlisted into public service.

Popish tenet of the sacraments working grace in us *ex opere operato*<sup>1</sup>); and so every infant would be regenerated not only *sacramento tenus*,<sup>2</sup> sacramentally, but really and properly. From this, men fancy they were regenerated when they were baptized; thus they need no further work.

But if this were so, then all who were baptized in their infancy must necessarily be saved, because the promise of pardon and salvation is made to all those who are converted and regenerated.<sup>3</sup> Our calling, and our sanctification (as to its beginnings) or our conversion (which are the same things, differently conceived and expressed) are just the middle link in the golden chain. They are fastened to election at the one end, and glorification at the other.<sup>4</sup> The silver cord may not be broken, nor may the connection between salvation and sanctification, between grace and glory, be impiously violated.<sup>Mat 5.8</sup> If we were indeed born again, it is to an

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incorruptible inheritance, reserved in heaven for us; and the divine power is engaged to keep us for it.<sup>1Pet 1.5</sup> If the regenerate may perish in their sins in the end, then we will no longer say His seed remains in someone who is born of God, and that he cannot sin <sup>1Joh 3.9</sup> (i.e. sin unto death), nor that it is impossible to deceive the very elect.<sup>Mat 24.24</sup>

And indeed, if this were true, then to see our names written in heaven, all we need to do is search the church register to see if we were baptized. I would keep my certificate of baptism as my best evidence for heaven, and a wet finger would assure my gracious state. Men would do well to carry a certificate of their baptism with the register's signature on it (just as the philosopher would be buried with the bishop's bond in his hand, which he had given him in order to receive his alms in another world); when they died, upon seeing this certificate, there would be no doubt they would be admitted into heaven.

In short, if there is nothing more necessary to conversion or regeneration than to be turned to the Christian religion, or to be baptized in infancy, this will fly directly in the face of Mat 7.14, as well as multitudes of others. We will no longer say, *Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way*; <sup>Mat 7.14</sup> for if all who were baptized and of the true religion are saved, then the door has become heavenly wide; and we will then say, "Wide is the gate and broad is the way that

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leads to life." If this is true, then whole parishes, indeed, whole countries and whole kingdoms may go in side by side; and we will no longer teach that the righteous are scarcely saved, or that there is need of such a stir in taking the kingdom of heaven by violence, and striving to enter in. Surely if the way is as easy as many make it, there is little more necessary than to be regenerated in our baptism and cry God mercy, and be absolved by the minister at our end; it is more hassle than we need to put ourselves to in such running, seeking, knocking, fighting, and wrestling, as the word requires as necessary to salvation. *Secondly*, If this is true, we will no longer say, *Few find it*; indeed, we will rather say, *Few miss it*: we will no longer say of the many that are called, that *few are chosen*,<sup>Mat 22.14</sup> and that even of professing Israel, only a *remnant* will be saved.<sup>Rom 11.5</sup> If this doctrine is true, we will not say any longer with the disciples, *Who then will be saved?*

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<sup>1</sup> *Ex opere operato* is a Latin phrase meaning "from the work done," It refers to the Catholic belief that the act of taking the Sacraments actually conveys grace if nothing else bars it (like a sinful act or disposition). The Reformers rejected this view.

<sup>2</sup> Baptism of infants is a *sacramento tenus*, a dependent and tentative identification of those belonging to the Church. There is a supposition that the person is one of the elect and will finally persevere. Calvin, for example, *calls* all the baptized regenerate, but he did so with the understanding that if they don't persevere, then they are not and were never regenerate. That is, the sacrament is not efficacious in itself: it does not *cause* salvation, and it does not *evidence* salvation.

<sup>3</sup> Act 3.19; 1Pet 3.4; Mat 19.28

<sup>4</sup> Rom 8.30; 2Thes 2.13; 1Pet 1.2

Rather, who then will *not* be saved? If a man is called a brother (that is, a Christian) and he is baptized, even though he is a fornicator, or a railer, or covetous, or a drunkard, he will still inherit the kingdom of God.<sup>1Cor 5:11; 6:9-10</sup>

But the Arminian will reply, *Such as these, though they received regenerating grace in baptism, have since fallen away and must be renewed again, or else they cannot be saved.*

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I answer,

1. That there is an infallible connection between regeneration and salvation, as we have already shown; I itch to further evidence it, but that it goes against my intended brevity.

2. Then men must be born again, which carries a great deal of absurdity in its very face. And why may not men be twice born in nature as well as in grace? Why not as great an absurdity to be twice *re-generated* as to be twice generated? But

3. and above all, this allows the thing I contend for: that whatever men receive or pretend to receive in baptism, if they are afterwards found to be grossly ignorant, profane, nominal, or without the power of godliness, *they must be born again*, or else be shut out of the kingdom of God. So then, they must have more to plead for themselves than their *baptismal regeneration*.

Well, in this you see all are agreed that more or less is received in baptism if (when men come of age) they are evidently un sanctified; they must be renewed again by a thorough and powerful change, or else they cannot escape the damnation of hell. Friends and brothers, *don't be deceived; God is not mocked.*<sup>Gal. 6:7</sup> Whether it is your baptism, or whatever else you pretend, I tell you from the living God, that if any of you are prayerless persons,<sup>Joh 15:14</sup> or unclean, or malicious, or covetous, or riotous, or a scoffer, or a lover of evil company,<sup>Pro 13:20</sup> in a word, if you are not holy, strict, and self-denying Christians;<sup>1</sup> you cannot be saved unless you are transformed by a further work upon you, and renewed again by repentance.

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Thus I have shown that it is not enough to evidence that a man is regenerate merely because he has been baptized; effectual grace does not necessarily accompany baptism, as some have vainly asserted. But I must answer one objection before I pass.

Obj. *The sacraments certainly attain their ends when men do not ponere obicem<sup>2</sup> or lay some obstructions, which infants do not.*<sup>3</sup>

Ans. I answer that it is not the purpose of baptism to regenerate.

1. Because then there would be no reason why it should be confined only to the seed of believers; for both the law of God, and the nature of charity, requires us to use the means of conversion for all, as far as we have opportunity. Were this true, there is no better charity than to catch the children of Turks and Heathens and baptize them, and dispatch them to heaven out of hand; like the bloody wretches that made the poor Protestants (to save their lives) swear they would come to mass, and that they would never depart from it; and then they put them to death immediately, saying they would hang them while in a good mind.

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<sup>1</sup> Heb 12:14; Mat 16:24

<sup>2</sup> Latin: 'lay a bar in the way.'

<sup>3</sup> This alludes to the Roman Catholic view of baptism as cited by Richard Baxter in, *An Account of all the Proceedings Of the Commissioners of both Persuasions, Appointed by his Sacred Majesty, According To Letters Patent, for the Review of The Book of Common Prayer, etc.,* (London: 1661), 21.

2. Because it *presupposes* regeneration, and therefore it cannot be intended to *confer* it. In all the express instances in scripture, we find that baptism assumes their repentance, belief, and receipt the Holy Ghost.<sup>1</sup> It would be no little absurdity to imagine that baptism was instituted for an end of which not one of the first subjects was capable;

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(for they were all adult persons, and supposed to have faith and repentance, just as they professed; and their children were not baptized until after them, in their own right). Were this doctrine true, baptism would *make* disciples; but we find that scripture declares them such beforehand.<sup>Mat 28.19</sup>

3. Because baptism is only a seal of the covenant, it cannot convey the benefits except according to the tenor of the covenant to which the seal is set. Now the covenant is conditional; therefore the seal conveys conditionally. The covenant requires faith and repentance as the conditions of the grand benefits: pardon and life.<sup>Act 16.31; 3.19</sup> And what the covenant does not convey except upon these conditions, the seal cannot. So baptism presupposes faith and repentance in the subject, without which it neither does nor can convey the saving benefits; otherwise the seal would convey contrary to the tenor of the covenant to which it is affixed.

**3. It does not lie in *moral righteousness*.** — This does not exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and therefore it cannot bring us to the kingdom of God.<sup>Mat 5.20</sup> Paul, while unconverted, was blameless as to the righteousness which is in the law.<sup>Phi 3.6</sup> None could say, your eye is black. The self-judge could say, *I am no extortioner, adulterer, unjust, etc.*<sup>Luk 18.11</sup> You must have something more than all this to show, or else (however you may justify *yourself*) God will condemn you. I don't condemn morality,

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but I warn you not to rest here. Piety includes morality, just as Christianity includes humanity, and grace includes reason; but we must not divide the tables.

**4. It does not consist in *external conformity to the rules of piety*.** It is too obvious that men may have a form of godliness without the power of it.<sup>2Tim 3.5</sup> Men may pray long,<sup>Mat 23.14</sup> and fast often,<sup>Luk 18.12</sup> and hear gladly,<sup>Mar 6.20</sup> and be very ambitious in the service of God, even though it is costly and expensive,<sup>Isa 1.11</sup> and yet be strangers to conversion. They must plead more than that they keep their church, give alms, and pray, if they are to prove themselves sound converts. There is no outward service that a hypocrite cannot do; even to the point of giving all his goods to the poor, and his members to the fire.<sup>1Cor 13.3</sup>

**5. It does not lie in *chaining up corruption by education, human laws, or the force of obligatory affliction*.** It is too common and easy to mistake education for grace; but if this were enough, who was a better man than Joash? While Jehoiada his uncle lived, he was ambitious in God's service, and he calls upon him to repair the house of the Lord.<sup>2Kng 12.2, 7</sup> But all this while it was nothing more than good education; for when his good tutor was taken out of the way, he appears to have been a wolf chained up, for he falls into idolatry.<sup>2</sup>

**6. In short, it does not consist in *illumination. or conviction: in a superficial change, or partial reformation*:** An apostate may be a man enlightened,<sup>Heb 6.4</sup> a Felix who trembles under convictions,<sup>Act 24.25</sup> and a Herod who amends many things.<sup>Mar 6.20</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Act 8.37; 2.38; 10.47; Mar 16.16

<sup>2</sup> 2Chr 24:17-18

But it is one thing to have sin *alarmed only by convictions*, and another to have it *captivated and crucified by converting grace*. Many, because their consciences have been troubled for their sins, think their case is well; they miserably mistake *conviction* for *conversion*. Cain might have passed for a convert among these, because he ran up and down the world like a man distracted under the rage of a guilty conscience till, with building and business, he had worn it away.<sup>Gen 4.13-14</sup> Others think that, because they have given up their riotous ways, and have broken away from evil company, or from some particular lust, and they are reduced to sobriety and civility, that they are now real converts. They forget that there is a vast difference between being *sanctified* and *civilized*; many seek to enter into the kingdom of heaven,<sup>Luk 13.24</sup> and are not far from it,<sup>Mar 12.34</sup> and almost arrive at Christianity;<sup>Act 26.28</sup> yet they fall short in the end. While conscience holds the whip over them, many will pray, hear, read, and forbear their delightful sins; but no sooner is this lion asleep, than they are at their vomit again. Who was more religious than the Jews when God's hand was upon them?<sup>Psa 78.34-35</sup> But as soon as the affliction ended, they forgot God, and showed their religion was a fit,<sup>1 Psa 78.36-37</sup> You may have disorged a troublesome sin that will not sit well in your stomach,

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or escaped many of the grosser pollutions of the world; yet all the while, you have not changed your swinish nature.<sup>2Pet 2.20, 22</sup>

You may cast the lead out of its rude mass into the more attractive proportions of a plant, and then into the shape of a beast, and from that into the form and features of a man; but all the while it is still only lead. In the same way, a man may pass through various transformations, from ignorance to knowledge, from profaneness to civility, and from there to a form of religion; and all this while he is still carnal and unregenerate, as long as his *nature* remains unchanged.

*Application.* Hear then, O sinners! *Hear* as you would *live*: so come and hear.<sup>Isa 55.3</sup> Why would you so wilfully deceive yourselves, or build your hopes upon the sand? I know whoever goes to pluck away your hopes will find it hard work. It must seem ungrateful to you, and truly it is not pleasing to me. I set about it as a surgeon when he must cut off a putrified member from his well-beloved friend; he must do it by force, but with an aching heart, a pitying eye, a trembling hand. Yet understand me, brothers: I am only taking down the delapidated house, (which will otherwise speedily fall by itself, and bury you in the rubbish) that I may build good, and strong, and firm forever. The hope of the wicked will perish if God is true to his word.<sup>Pro 11.7</sup> Would you not be better off, O sinner, to let the word convince you now, in time, and to let go of your self-deluding hopes, than to have death open your eyes too late, and find yourself in hell before you are aware?

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I would be a false and a faithless shepherd if I did not tell you that, if you have built your hopes on no better grounds than these forementioned, you are still in your sins. Let your consciences speak: what is it that you will plead for yourselves? *Is it that you wear Christ's uniform? That you bear his name? That you belong to the visible church? That you know the points of religion? That you are civilized; that you perform religious duties, are just in your dealings, and your conscience has been troubled for your sins?* I tell you from the Lord, these pleas will never be accepted at God's bar. All this, though good in themselves, will not prove you are converted, and so it will not suffice for your salvation. Oh, look around you, and think of turning speedily and soundly. Set to praying, and reading, and studying your own hearts; don't rest until God has made thorough work with you; for you must be *other* men, or else you are *lost* men.

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<sup>1</sup> That is, an accommodation — it satisfied a condition or restriction without becoming a wholesale change of heart.

But if these types fall short of conversion, what will I say about the profane sinner? It may be that he will scarcely turn his eyes or lend his ears to this discourse. But if any such sinner is reading this, or within hearing of it, he must know from the Lord that made him, that he is far from the kingdom of God. May a man be civilized and *not converted*? What then of the drunkard and glutton? May a man keep company with the wise virgins, and yet be shut out? Is it not much more likely that a companion of fools will be destroyed? <sup>Pro 13.20</sup> May a man be true and just in his dealings with others,

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and yet not be *justified* by God? What then will become of *you*, O wretched man, whose conscience tells you that you are false in your trade, and false to your word, and take advantage by a lying tongue? If men who are enlightened, and perform holy duties, and yet go down to perdition for resting in them, and stay on this side of conversion, then what will become of *you*, O miserable families that live without God in the world? And what of you, O wretched sinners with whom God is scarcely in your thoughts, you who are so ignorant that you *cannot* pray, or so careless that you *will not*? Oh, repent, and be converted! Break off your sins with righteousness; flee to Christ for pardoning and renewing grace; surrender yourselves to him, to walk with him in holiness, or else you will never see God. Oh, that you would take the warnings of God! In his name I once more admonish you, **Turn at my reproof**,<sup>Pro 1.23</sup> **forsake the foolish and live**.<sup>Pro 9.6</sup> **Be sober, righteous, and godly**.<sup>Tit. 2.12</sup> **Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, you double-minded**.<sup>Jas. 4.8</sup> **Cease to do evil; learn to do well**.<sup>Isa 1.16-17</sup> But if you continue as you are, you must die.<sup>Eze 33.11</sup>



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**CHAP. II — SHOWING POSITIVELY WHAT CONVERSION IS.**

I am not permitted to leave you with your eyes half open, like the one who saw men like trees walking.<sup>Mar 8.24</sup> The word is profitable for *doctrine* as well as *reproof*,<sup>2Tim 3.16</sup> And therefore, having conducted you this far past the shelves and rocks of so many dangerous mistakes, I would guide you at length into the harbour of truth.

Conversion then (in short) lies in the thorough change both of the heart and life. I will briefly describe it in its nature and causes.

**1. The author is the Spirit of God.**

And therefore it is called the sanctification of the Spirit,<sup>2Thes 2.13</sup> and the renewing of the Holy Ghost,<sup>Tit. 3.5</sup> yet not excluding the other Persons in the Trinity: for the apostle teaches us to bless the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for he has caused us to be born again;<sup>1Pet 1.3</sup> and Christ is said to give repentance to Israel,<sup>Act 5.31</sup> and he is called the everlasting Father; <sup>Isa 9.6</sup> and we are his seed, and the children which God has given him.<sup>1</sup> Oh, blessed birth! Seven cities contended for the birth of Homer, but the whole Trinity fathers the new creature. Yet this work is principally ascribed to the Holy Ghost, and so we are said to be born of the Spirit.<sup>Joh 3.8</sup>

So then, it is a work above man's power.

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We are born, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.<sup>Joh 1.13</sup> Never think you can convert yourself: if you would ever be savingly converted, you must despair of doing it in your own strength.<sup>Jer 13.9-3</sup> It is a resurrection from the dead,<sup>2</sup> a new creation,<sup>3</sup> a work of absolute omnipotence.<sup>Eph 1.19</sup> Are these not beyond the reach of human power? If you have no more than you had by your first birth (a good nature, a meek and chaste temper, etc.), then you are a stranger to true conversion. This is a *supernatural* work.

**2. The moving cause is either internal, or external.**

***The internal mover is free grace alone:*** *Not by works of righteousness which we have done; but of his own mercy he saved us by the renewing of the Holy Ghost.*<sup>Tit. 3.5</sup> *Of his own will he bore us.*<sup>Jas. 1.18</sup> We are chosen and called to sanctification, not because of it.<sup>Eph 1.4</sup>

God finds nothing in a man to turn his heart, but to turn his stomach; there is enough to provoke his loathing, but nothing to provoke his love. Look back at yourself, O Christian. Take your verminous rags; look at yourself in your blood.<sup>Eze 16.6</sup> Oh, reflect upon your swinish nature, your filthy swill, your once-beloved mire!<sup>2Pet 2.22</sup> Can you think of your trough and draught without loathing? Open your tomb.<sup>Mat 23.27</sup> Aren't you struck almost dead with the hellish damp? Behold your putrid soul, your loathsome members.

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Oh, insufferable stench, if you would only smell your own putrefaction! <sup>Psa 14.3</sup> Behold your ghastly visage, your crawling lusts, your slime and corruption. Don't your own clothes abhor you? <sup>Job 9.31</sup> How then could holiness and purity love you? Be astonished at this, O heavens; be moved, O earth! <sup>Jer 2.12</sup> Who is it that must cry, Grace! grace! <sup>Zech. 4.7</sup> Hear and blush, you children of the Most High; O you unthankful generation! Blush that free grace is no longer in your mouths, or in your thoughts: it is no longer adored, admired, and commended by such as you.

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<sup>1</sup> Heb 3.13; Isa 53.10

<sup>2</sup> Rev 20.5; Eph 2.1

<sup>3</sup> Gal. 6.15; Eph 2.10

One would think you would do nothing but praise and admire God, whatever you are. How can you rationalize so as to forget such grace, or pass it over with a slight and rare mention? What besides free grace would move God to love you, unless hostility could do it, or deformity could do it, unless vomit or rottenness could do it? How affectionately does Peter lift up his hands? *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of his abundant mercy has caused us to be born again.*<sup>1Pet 1.3</sup> How emotionally does Paul magnify the free mercy of God? *God, who is rich in mercy, has made us alive together with Christ because of his great love with which he loved us: by grace you are saved.*<sup>Eph 2.4-5</sup>

***The external mover is the merit and intercession of the blessed Jesus.*** He has obtained gifts for the rebellious;<sup>Psa 68.18</sup> and it is through him that God works in us what is well-pleasing in his sight.<sup>Heb 13.21</sup>

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Through him, all spiritual blessings are bestowed upon us in heavenly things,<sup>Eph 1.3</sup> He interceded for the elect that don't believe,<sup>Joh 12.20</sup> Every convert is the fruit of Christ's suffering,<sup>Isa 53.11</sup> Oh, never was infant born into the world with the difficulty that Christ endured for us! How emphatically he groans in his suffering! All the pains that he suffered on his cross were our birth-pains,<sup>Act 2.24</sup> the pulls and throws that Christ endured for us. He became sanctification for us,<sup>1Cor 1.30</sup> He sanctified himself (that is, he set himself apart as a sacrifice) so that we may be sanctified,<sup>Joh 17.19</sup> We are sanctified through the offering of his body, once for all.<sup>Heb 10.10</sup>

Except for his own pity, then, and the merit and intercession of Christ, nothing prevails upon God to bestow converting grace on us. If you are a new creature, you know to whom you owe it: to Christ's pangs and prayers. From this comes the natural affection of a believer for Christ. The foal does not run after the dam more naturally, nor the suckling for the teats, than a believer runs to Jesus Christ. And where else should you go? If anyone in the world can show more for your heart than Christ can, let them carry it. Does Satan? Does the world court you? Does sin sue for your heart? Were these crucified for you? <sup>1Cor 1.13</sup> O Christian, love and serve the Lord while you have a being. Don't even the Publicans love those who love them, and show kindness to those who are kind to them? <sup>Mat 5.46-47</sup>

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### **3. The instrument is either personal or real.**

***The personal is the ministry:*** *In Christ, I became your father through the gospel.*<sup>1Cor 4.15</sup> Christ's ministers are those sent to open men's eyes, and turn them to God.<sup>Act 26.18</sup>

O unthankful world, little do you know what you are doing while you are persecuting the messengers of the Lord: it is their business (under Christ) to save you. Whom have you reproached and blasphemed? Against whom have you exalted your voice, and lifted your eyes on high? <sup>Isa 37.23</sup> Those who show you the way of salvation are the servants of the most high God. <sup>Act 16.17</sup> And is this how you repay them, O foolish and unwise? <sup>Deu 32.6</sup> O sons of ingratitude, against whom do you sport yourselves? Against whom do you make faces, and stick out your tongue? <sup>Isa 57.4</sup> These are the instruments that God uses to convert and save you; and yet you spit in the face of your physicians, and throw your pilots over-board? *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

***The real instrument is the word:*** *We were born by the word of truth:* This is what enlightens the eyes, converts the soul, <sup>Psa 19.7-8</sup> makes us wise unto salvation.<sup>2Tim 3.15</sup> This is the incorruptible seed by which we are born again.<sup>1Pet 1.23</sup> If we are washed, it is by the word;<sup>Eph 5.26</sup> if we are sanctified, it is through the truth.<sup>Joh 17.17</sup>

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This is what generates faith, and regenerates us.<sup>Rom 10.17; Jas. 1.18</sup>

O you saints, how you should *love* the word! For you have been converted by this: O you sinners, how you should *ply* the word! For you must be converted by this: no other ordinary means *but* this. You that have felt its renewing power, make much of it while you live; be forever thankful for it: tie it around your necks; write it on your hands; store it in your hearts.<sup>Pro 6.21-22</sup> When you go, let it lead you; when you sleep, let it keep you; when you wake, let it talk with you. Say with holy David, *I will never forget your precepts, for you have made me alive by them.*<sup>Psa 119.93</sup> You that are unconverted, read the word with diligence; flock to it where it is powerfully preached; fill the porches like the multitude of impotent, blind, lame, and withered who were waiting for the moving of the water.<sup>Joh 5.3</sup> Pray for the coming of the Spirit in the word. Come off your knees to the sermon; and come to your knees from the sermon. The seed does not prosper, because it is not watered by prayers and tears, nor is it covered by meditation.

#### 4. The final cause is man's salvation and God's glory.

We are chosen through sanctification to salvation,<sup>2Thes 2.13</sup> called that we might be glorified,<sup>Rom 8.30</sup> but especially, that God might be glorified,<sup>Isa 60.21</sup> that we would display his praises,<sup>1Pet 2.9</sup> and be fruitful in good works.<sup>Col. 1.10</sup> O Christian, don't forget the end of your calling:

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let your light shine,<sup>Mat 5.16</sup> let your lamp burn; let your fruits be good, and many, and in season;<sup>Psa 1.3</sup> let all your plans align with God's, that he may be magnified in you,<sup>Phi 1.20</sup> Why should God regret that he has made you a Christian, as in the time of the old world when he regretted that he made men? <sup>Gen 6.6</sup> Why should you be an eye-sore in his orchard by your unfruitfulness? <sup>Luk 13</sup> or a son that causes shame: a grief to your father, and a bitterness to the woman who bore you? <sup>Pro 17.25; 10.5</sup> Let the womb bless her that bore you.<sup>Pro 17.21</sup> *One who fathers a fool does it to his sorrow; and the father of a fool has no joy.*

#### 5. The subject is the elect sinner in all his parts and powers, members and mind.

God calls only those he predestines.<sup>Rom 8.30</sup> None are drawn to Christ by their calling, nor do they come to him by believing, except his sheep — those whom the Father has given him.<sup>Joh 6.37; 44</sup> Effectual calling runs parallel with eternal election.<sup>2Pet 1.10</sup>

You begin at the wrong end if you dispute first about your election. Prove your *conversion*, and then never doubt of your *election*; or can you not yet prove it? Focus on a present and complete turning. **Whatever God's purposes are, though secret, I am sure his promises are plain.** How desperately rebels argue! If I am elected, I will be saved, no matter what I will; and if I am not, I will be damned, no matter what I can. Perverse sinner, will you begin where you should end?

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Is the word not before you? What does it say? *Repent and be converted, so that your sins may be blotted out.*<sup>Act 3.19</sup> *If you mortify the deeds of the body, you will live.*<sup>Rom 8.13</sup> *Believe and be saved.*<sup>Act 16.31</sup> What can be plainer? Don't stand still, disputing about your election, but set to repenting and believing. Cry to God for converting grace. *Revealed* things belong to you; busy yourself in these. It is just (as one well said) that those who will not feed on the plain food of the word, will be choked with the bones. **Whatever God's purposes are, I am sure his promises are true.** Whatever the decrees of heaven may be, I am sure that if I repent and believe, I will be saved; and I am sure that if I don't repent, I will be damned. Is this not plain ground here for you, and would you still run upon the rocks?

More particularly, this change of conversion passes throughout the whole subject. A carnal person may have some shreds of good morality, a little close to the list; but he is never good

throughout the whole cloth, throughout the whole body of holiness and Christianity. Feel him a little further near the ridge, and you will see he is only a deceitful piece. Conversion is not repairing the old building; instead, it takes everything down and erects a new structure: it is not putting in a patch, or sewing on a list of holiness; instead, with the true convert, holiness is woven into all his powers, principles, and practice. The sincere Christian is quite a new fabric from the foundation to the top-stone, all fire-new.<sup>1</sup> He is a new man, <sup>Eph 4.24</sup> a new creature.

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All things have become new.<sup>2Cor 5.17</sup> Conversion is a deep work, a heart work;<sup>2</sup> it turns everything upside down, and places a man in a new world. It goes throughout men, throughout the *mind*, throughout the *members*, throughout the *activities* of the whole life.

1. Throughout the *mind*. It makes a universal change within. *First*, It turns the *balance of the judgment*, so that God and his glory outweigh all carnal and worldly interest.<sup>3</sup> It opens the eye of the mind, and makes the scales of its native ignorance fall off; it turns men from darkness to light.<sup>4</sup> The man that saw no danger in his condition before, now concludes he is lost and forever undone <sup>Act 2.37</sup> unless he is renewed by the power of grace. One who formerly thought there was little harm in sin, now comes to see it as the chief of evils; he sees the unreasonableness, the unrighteousness, the deformity and filthiness that is in sin, so that he is frightened by it, loathes it, dreads it, flees it, and even abhors himself for it.<sup>5</sup> For one who could see little sin in himself before, and could find nothing to confess except for a few gross and glaring evils,<sup>6</sup>

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sin now revives his conscience.<sup>Rom 7.9</sup> He sees the rottenness of his heart, and the desperate and deep pollution of his whole nature: he cries, *Unclean, unclean.*<sup>Lev. 13-45</sup> *Lord, purge me with hyssop, wash me thoroughly, create in me a new heart.*<sup>Psa 51.2, 7, 10</sup> He sees himself altogether filthy,<sup>Psa 14.3</sup> corrupt, both root and tree.<sup>Mat 7.17-18</sup> He writes “unclean” on all his parts, and powers, and performances.<sup>7</sup> He discovers the nasty corners he was never aware of, and sees the blasphemy and theft, murder and adultery that is in his heart, and of which he was ignorant before. Up to this point, he saw no form or attractiveness in Christ, no beauty that he should desire him; but now he finds the hidden treasure, and he will sell everything to buy this field.<sup>8</sup> Christ is the pearl he seeks, sin the puddle he loathes. Now, according to this new light, this man is of another mind than he was before, another judgment. Now God is everything to him; he has none like him in heaven or earth.<sup>Psa 73.25</sup> He prefers him truly before all the world: God’s favour is his life; the light of his countenance is more than corn, or wine and oil (the good that he formerly enquired after and set his heart upon).<sup>Psa 4.6-7</sup> Now, let all the world be set on one side, and God alone on the other; let the harlot put on her paint and gallantry, and present herself to

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<sup>1</sup> This means brand-new, like “newly forged iron, fresh from the furnace.” *Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase & Fable*.

<sup>2</sup> Act 2.37; 6.14

<sup>3</sup> Act 20.24; Phi 1.20; Psa 73.25

<sup>4</sup> Act 26.18; Eph 5.8; 1Pet 2.9

<sup>5</sup> Rom 7.15; Job 42.6; Eze 36.31

<sup>6</sup> “This was said of that learned ignoramus, Bellarmine — it seems, while he knew so much about others, he was a miserable stranger to himself; when he was to be confessed by the priest, he could not remember any matter to confess, but was prepared to go back to the sins of his youth.” — Alleine.

*Roberto Francesco Romolo Bellarmino (1542- 1621) was a Jesuit Cardinal of the Catholic Church. He summoned Galileo to inform him that the Copernican idea of a mobile earth was heresy. He was also a chief opponent of the Protestant Reformation.- WHG*

<sup>7</sup> Isa 64.6; Rom 7.18

<sup>8</sup> Mat 13.46

the soul in all the glory of her kingdoms (as when Satan would have tempted our Saviour with her).

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Yet the soul will not fall down and worship her, but will prefer a naked, yes, a crucified and persecuted Christ, before her.<sup>1</sup> Even a hypocrite might come to yield a general assent to this, that it is the chief good; yes, the wiser heathens (some of them) have at last stumbled upon this: but there is a difference between the *absolute* and the *comparative* judgment of the understanding. No hypocrite comes so far as to look upon God as the most desirable and suitable good to him, and at that point, acquiesces in him. This was the convert's voice: *The Lord is my portion, says my soul: Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides you. God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.*<sup>Psa 73.26; Lam. 3.24</sup>

*Secondly*, It turns the *bias of the will*, both as to *means* and *ends*.

(1.) The intention of the will is altered.<sup>2</sup> Now the man has new ends and plans: now he intends to have God above all; and he desires and designs nothing in all the world so much as that Christ may be magnified in him.<sup>Phi 1.20</sup> He considers himself more happy in this than in all that the earth could yield: that he may be serviceable to Christ, and bring him glory in his generation. This is the mark he aims at, so that the name of Jesus may be great in the world, and that all the sheaves of his brothers may bow to this sheaf.

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Reader, do you read this, and never ask yourself whether it is that way with you? Pause awhile, and breathe on this great concern.

(2.) The *election* also is changed, so that he chooses another way.<sup>Psa 119.13</sup> He rests upon God as his blessedness; and upon Christ as the principal; and upon holiness as the subordinate means to bring him to God.<sup>3</sup> He chooses Jesus for his Lord.<sup>Col. 2.6</sup> He is not merely forced into Christ by the storm; nor does he take Christ for a bare necessity, as the man who begged from the gallows that he would rather take a wife than the noose; but it is a free choice. This match is not made out of fright, as with the terrified conscience, or a dying sinner who will seemingly do anything for Christ (he only takes Christ rather than hell); rather, he deliberately resolves that Christ is his best choice,<sup>Phi 1.23</sup> and he would rather choose him than all the good of this world, even if he might enjoy it while he could. Again, he takes holiness for his path; he does not submit to it out of mere necessity, but he likes and loves it. *I have chosen the way of your precepts.*<sup>Psa 119.173</sup> He takes God's testimonies, not as his bondage, but as his heritage, indeed, his heritage forever,<sup>Psa 119.111</sup> He does not consider them his burden, but his bliss; not his cords, but his cordials.<sup>4</sup> He not only hears, but he takes up Christ's yoke: he does not take holiness like the stomach takes the loathed medicine,

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(which it swallows rather than die); instead, he takes it like the hungry man takes his beloved food: no time passes so sweetly with him as the time he spends in the exercise of holiness; these are both his aliment and his element, the desire of his eyes and the joy of his heart.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Phi 3.8, Cor 2.2

<sup>2</sup> Eze 36.26; Jer 31.33; Isa 26.8-9

<sup>3</sup> Joh 14.6; Rom 2.7

<sup>4</sup> 1Joh 5.3; Psa 119.14, 16-17

<sup>5</sup> Job 23.12; Psa 119.82, 131, 162, 174; 63.5

Put it to your conscience as you go along, whether *you* are that man? O happy man, if this is your case! But see you are thorough and impartial in the search.

*Thirdly*, It turns the *bent of the affections*, <sup>2Cor 7.11</sup>. These all run in a new channel: the Jordan is now driven back, and the water runs upwards against its natural course.

Christ is his *hope*, <sup>1Tim 1.1</sup>, this is his prize; <sup>Phi 3.8</sup> here is his eye; here is his heart. He is content to throw everything overboard (as the merchant does in the storm when he is about to perish), so he may but keep this jewel.

The *first* of his *desires* is not after gold, but grace; <sup>Phi 3.13</sup> he hungers after it, he seeks it as he would seek silver, he digs for it as he would for hidden treasure: he would rather be gracious than be great: he would rather be the holiest man on earth than the most learned, most famous, or most prosperous. While carnal, he said, "Oh, if I were only in great esteem, and rolled in wealth, and swam in pleasure; if my debts were paid, and I and mine were provided for, *then* I would be a happy man." But now the tune has changed: Oh, says the convert, if only I had my corruptions subdued; if I had such measures of grace, such fellowship with God,

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then even if I were poor and despised, I would not care; I would consider myself a blessed man. Reader, is this the language of your soul?

His *joys* are changed. He rejoices in the ways of God's testimonies as much as he would in all riches. <sup>Psa 119.14</sup> He delights in the law of the Lord, which he once little savoured. He has no such joy as he does in thoughts of Christ, the fruition of his company, and the prosperity of his people.

His *cares* are quite altered. He was once set on the world, and any scraps of spare time (nothing too often) was enough for his soul. Now he gives up caring for the donkeys, and sets his heart on the kingdom. Now his cry is, What shall I do to be saved? <sup>Act 16.30</sup> His great concern is how to secure his soul. Oh, how he would bless you if you could only put away his doubts of this!

His *fears* are not so much of suffering, but of sinning. <sup>Heb 11.25-26</sup> Once he was afraid of nothing so much as the loss of his estate, or esteem, the pleasure of friends, the frowns of the great: nothing sounded so terrible to him as pain, or poverty, or disgrace. Now these are little to him in comparison to God's dishonour or displeasure. How warily he walks, lest he tread on a snare! He always fears: he looks before and behind; he has his eye upon his heart and he often looks over his shoulder lest he be overtaken with sin.<sup>1</sup> It kills his heart to think of losing God's favour; this he dreads as his only undoing; <sup>Psa 51.11-12; Psa 119.7</sup>

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No thought in the world pinches him and pains him so much as to think of parting with Christ.

His *love* runs a new course. My love was crucified (said holy Ignatius), that is, my Christ. *This is my beloved*, says the spouse, <sup>Song 5.16</sup> How often Augustine pours his love upon Christ! *O eternal blessedness*, etc.

He can find no words sweet enough. *Let me see you, O light of my eyes. Come, O you joy of my spirit. Let me behold you, Oh, the gladness of my heart. Let me love you, O the life of my soul. Appear to me, O my great delight, my sweet comfort, my God, my life, and the whole glory of my soul. Let me find you, O desire of my heart! Let me hold you, love of my soul! Let me embrace you, O heavenly bridegroom! Let me possess you.*

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<sup>1</sup> Psa 39.1; Pro 28.14; Ecc 2.14



His *sorrows* now have a new vent.<sup>2Cor 7.9-10</sup> The view of his sins and the sight of a Christ crucified that scarcely stirred him before, now deeply affect his heart!

His hatred boils, his anger burns against sin.<sup>Psa 119.104</sup> He has no patience with himself; he calls himself a fool, and a beast, and he thinks any name is too good for him when his indignation is stirred up against sin.<sup>1</sup> He could once swill in it with exceeding pleasure; now he loathes the thought of returning to it as much as he loathes licking the filthiest vomit.

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Commune, then, with your own heart; pay attention to the common and general current of your affections, whether they are towards God in Christ above all other concerns. Indeed, sudden and strong commotions of the affections and sensitivities, are often found in hypocrites, especially where the natural constitution leads to that. By contrast, the sanctified are often without tangible stirrings of the affections where their temper is more relaxed, unemotional, and detached. The question is whether the judgment and will are firmly determined for God above all other good — whether real or apparent; if the affections sincerely follow their choice and conduct, even though not as strongly and sensibly as desired, there is no doubt that the change is a saving change.

2. Throughout the *members*. Those who were the instruments of sin before, have now become the holy utensils of Christ's living temple.<sup>2</sup> Someone who before made a vulgarity or a cask of his body, now possesses his vessel in sanctification and honour, in temperance, chastity and sobriety, and has dedicated it to the Lord.<sup>3</sup>

The *eye* that once was a wandering, wanton, haughty, and covetous eye, is now employed as if by Mary, weeping over her sins,<sup>Luk 7.38</sup> beholding God in his works,<sup>Psa 8.3</sup> reading his word,<sup>Act 8.30</sup> searching for objects of mercy, and opportunities to serve.

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The *ear* that was once open to Satan's call, and (like a vitiated palate) relished nothing more than filthy or scintillating talk and the fool's laughter, is now drilled to the door of Christ's house, and open to his discipline: it says, *Speak, Lord, for your servant hears*: it cries with him, *Veniat verbum domini*;<sup>4</sup> it waits for his word as for rain, and relishes them more than the appointed food,<sup>Job 23.12</sup> and more than honey and the honey-comb.<sup>Psa 19.10</sup>

The *head* that was the shop of worldly designs, is now filled with other matters, and set upon the study of God's will;<sup>5</sup> the man beats his head, not so much about his gain but about his duty. The thoughts and cares that now fill his head are principally how he may please God and flee sin.

His *heart* that was a pig-sty of filthy lusts, has become an altar of incense where the fire of divine love is ever kept, and from which the daily sacrifice of prayer and praises, and the sweet incense of holy desires, exclamations, and pantings, are continually ascending.<sup>6</sup>

The *mouth* has become a well of life,<sup>Pro 18.21</sup> his tongue like choice silver, and his lips feed many.<sup>Pro 10.20-21</sup> Now the salt of grace has seasoned his speech and eaten out the corruption,<sup>Col. 4.6</sup> and cleansed the mouth from his filthy communication, flattery, boasting, criticizing, lying, swearing, and backbiting that once came like flashes out of the hell that was in the heart.<sup>Jas. 3.6-7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Psa 73.22; Pro 30.2

<sup>2</sup> Rom 6.16; 1Cor 3.16

<sup>3</sup> 1Thes 4.4; Gal. 5.22-23; 1Cor 6.19-20

<sup>4</sup> "Where is the word of the Lord?" Jer 17.15 Vulgate

<sup>5</sup> Psa 1.2; 119.97

<sup>6</sup> Psa 108.1; 119.20; 139.17-18



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The *throat*, that was once an open tomb,<sup>Rom 3.13</sup> now sends forth the sweet breath of prayer and holy discourse; and the man speaks another tongue than the language of Canaan; he never does so well as when talking of God and Christ, and the matters of another world. His *mouth* brings forth wisdom; his *tongue* has become the silver trumpet of his Maker's praise, his glory, and the best member that he has.

Now, here the hypocrite will hesitate. He may speak like an angel, but he has a covetous eye, or he has the gain of unrighteousness in his hand; or else his hand is clean, but his heart is full of rottenness,<sup>Mat 23.27</sup> and immoderate cares; it is a veritable oven of lust, a shop of pride, and the seat of malice. It may be, as with Nebuchadnezzar's Image, that he has a golden head — a great deal of knowledge — but his feet are clay: his affections are worldly; he regards earthly things, and his way and his walk are sensual and carnal. If you follow him to his secret haunts, his footsteps will be found in some by-paths of sin. The work of conversion in him is not pervasive.

3. Throughout the *activities*, or the *life* and *practice*. The new man takes a new course; <sup>Eph 2.2-3</sup> His citizenship is in heaven,<sup>Phi 3.20</sup> No sooner does Christ call him by effectual grace, than he becomes a follower of Christ.<sup>Mat 4.20</sup> When God has given him a new heart, and written his law in his mind, he immediately walks in God's statutes and keeps his judgments,<sup>Eze 36.26-27</sup>

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Though sin may dwell in him (God knows it is a wearisome and unwelcome guest), it no longer has dominion over him.<sup>Rom 6.7, 14</sup> He has his fruit leading to holiness;<sup>Rom 6.22</sup> and though he makes many a blot, yet the law and life of Jesus is what he eyes as his copy;<sup>1</sup> he has an unfeigned respect for all God's commandments.<sup>Psa 119.6</sup> His conscience is pricked even by little sins and little duties.<sup>Psa 119.113</sup> His infirmities which he cannot help, although he would, are his soul's burden; they are like the dust in a man's eye which, though tiny, is more than a little troublesome. O man! Can you read this, and not inwardly examine your own soul? The sincere convert is not one man at church, and another man at home; he is not a saint on his knees, and a cheat in his shop; he will not tithe mint and cummin, and neglect mercy, and judgment, and the weighty matters of the law; he does not pretend piety, and neglect morality.<sup>Mat 23.14</sup> Instead, he turns from all his sins, and he keeps all God's statutes,<sup>Eze 18.21</sup> even though not perfectly (except in his desire and endeavour). Yet he is sincere in not giving himself permission to breach any.<sup>Rom 7.15</sup> *Now* he delights in the word, and he sets himself to prayer, and he opens his hand (if he is able), and gives to the hungry.<sup>2</sup> He ends his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor;<sup>Dan. 4.27</sup> he has a good conscience, and he is willing to live honestly in all things,<sup>Heb 13.18</sup> and to keep himself without offence towards God and men.<sup>Act 24.16</sup>

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Here again you find the deficiency of many who profess Christ, who consider themselves good Christians. They are selective in the law,<sup>Mal 2.9</sup> beginning with the cheap and easy duties of religion; but they don't finish the work. They are like a cake that isn't turned: it is half-toasted and half-raw. You may find them strict in their words, and punctual in their dealings; but they don't exercise themselves toward godliness; they are strangers to self-examination, and governing their hearts. You may find them duly at the church; but if you follow them to their families, you will see little besides the world being minded; or if they have a course of family-duties, follow them to their private room, and you will find their souls are little looked after. It may be they seem otherwise religious, but they don't bridle their tongues, and so their religion is in vain.<sup>Jas. 1.26</sup> It may be they align private and family prayer; but follow them to their shops, and

<sup>1</sup> Psa 119.30; Heb. 12.2

<sup>2</sup> Rom, 7.22; Psa 109.4; Isa 58.10

you will find them in the trade of lying, or in some covert and habitual way of deceit. Thus the hypocrite is not comprehensive in the course of his obedience.

So much for the subject of conversion.

## 6. There are things from which or to which we turn.

1. The things from which we turn in this motion of conversion are *sin*, *Satan*, the *world*, and our own *righteousness*.

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*First, Sin.* When a man is converted, he is done forever with sin, yes, with *all sin*,<sup>Psa 119.128</sup> but most of all he is done with his own sins, and especially with his secret sin.<sup>Psa 18.23</sup> Sin is now the butt of his indignation.<sup>2Cor 7.11</sup> He thirsts to bathe his hands in the blood of his sins. His sins set abroad<sup>1</sup> his sorrows: it is sin that pierces him and wounds him; he feels it like a thorn in his side, like a thorn in his eyes; he groans and struggles under it; not just nominally, but emotionally he cries out, *O wretched man!* He is not impatient about any burden so much as his sin,<sup>Psa 40.12</sup> If God were to give him his choice, he would choose any affliction so that he might be rid of sin; he feels it like cutting gravel in his shoes, stabbing and paining him as he goes.

Before conversion, he thought lightly of sin: he cherished it in his heart as Uriah cherished his lamb: he nourished it, and it grew up with him; it ate, as it were, of his own meat, and drank from his own cup, and it lay on his chest, and was like a daughter to him<sup>2</sup>: but when God opens his eyes by conversion, he throws it away with abhorrence,<sup>Isa 30.22</sup> just as a man would do with a loathsome toad which he hugged close to his chest in the dark, thinking it was some pretty and harmless bird. When a man is savingly changed, he is not only deeply convinced of the danger, but of the defilement of sin. And oh, how earnest he is to be purified by God! He loathes himself for his sins.<sup>Eze 36.31</sup> He runs to Christ and throws himself into

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the fountain because of his sin and uncleanness.<sup>Zech. 13.1</sup> If he falls, what a frenzy there is to get clean again! He flies to the word, and washes, and rubs, and rinses, labouring to cleanse himself from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit: he abhors his once-beloved sin,<sup>Psa 18.23</sup> just as a cleanly nature abhors the trough and mire in which pigs are seen delighting.

The sound convert is heartily engaged against sin; he wrestles with it, he wars against it. He is too often foiled, but he never yields the cause, nor lays down the weapons. Instead, he gets up and gets to it again while he has breath in his body. He never allows quiet possession: he makes no peace; he gives no quarter. He falls upon it, fires upon it, and is disturbed by it with continual alarm. He can forgive his other enemies; he can pity them and pray for them;<sup>Act 7.60</sup> But here he is implacable; here he is set upon revenge. He hunts for the precious life. His eye will not pity, his hand will not spare, even though it is a right hand or a right eye. Whether it is a lucrative sin that delights his nature, or makes him esteemed with carnal friends, he would rather throw his gain down the sewer, see his popularity fall, or have the flower of pleasure wither in his hand, than let himself continue in any known way of sin.<sup>Luk 19.8</sup> He grants no indulgence; he gives no toleration. Instead, he confronts sin wherever he meets it, and frowns upon it with this unwelcoming salute, *Have I found you, O my enemy?*

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<sup>1</sup> To open like a cask so that it spills its contents.

<sup>2</sup> 2Sam 12.3

Reader, has conscience been at work while you have been looking over these lines? Have you pondered these things in your heart? Have you searched the book within, to see if these things are so? If not, read it again, and make your conscience say whether it is this way with you.

Have you crucified your flesh with its affections and lusts? Have you not only confessed, but forsaken all sin in your fervent desires, and the regular practice of every deliberate and wilful sin in your life? If not, you are still unconverted. Doesn't conscience fly in your face as you read this? Doesn't it tell you that you are living a lie for your own advantage, that you use deceit in your calling, that there is some way of secret wantonness in which you live? Well then, don't deceive yourself: you are poisoned by bitterness, and bound in iniquity.<sup>Act 8.23</sup>

Doesn't your unbridled tongue, your brutish intemperance, your wicked company, your neglect of prayer and of hearing and reading the word, now testify against you, and say, *We are your works, and we will follow you?* Or, if I have not hit you right, doesn't the bird within tell them there is such and such a way that you know is evil, yet to gain some carnal consideration, you tolerate it, and you are willing to spare it? If this is your case, then you are unregenerate to this day, and you must be changed, or else condemned.

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*Secondly, Satan.* Conversion binds the strong man;<sup>Mat 12.29</sup> it spoils his armour, throws out his goods, and turns men from the power of Satan to God.<sup>Act 26.18</sup> Before, the devil would no sooner hold up his finger to the sinner to call him to his wicked company, to sinful games and filthy delights, than he quickly followed like an ox to the slaughter, like a fool to the correction of the stocks, like the bird that hastens to the prey, not knowing that his life is at stake. Before, no sooner would Satan bid him lie than he quickly had a lie on the tip of his tongue.<sup>Act 5.3</sup> No sooner would Satan offer a wanton object, than he would be stung with lust. The devil could do more with him than God could! If the devil said, "Away with these family duties," you could be sure they would be rarely performed in his house. If the devil said, "Away with this strictness, this preciseness," he would keep far from it. If he told him, "There's no need for these private duties," he would rarely perform them day to day. *But now that he is converted,* he serves another master, and takes quite another course.<sup>1Pet 4.4</sup> He goes and comes at Christ's beckon.<sup>Col. 3.24</sup> Satan may sometimes catch his foot in a trap, but he will no longer be a willing captive. He watches for the snares and baits of Satan, and he studies to become acquainted with his tricks. He is very suspicious of his plots, and watches what crosses his path, in case Satan has some plot against him: he wrestles against principalities and powers.<sup>Eph 6.12</sup>

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He considers the messenger of Satan as men consider the messenger of death: he keeps his eye on his enemy,<sup>1Pet 5.8</sup> and takes care in his duties, to prevent Satan from gaining a foothold.

*Thirdly, The World.* Before having a sound faith, a man is overcome by the world. He bows down to mammon; or he idolizes his own reputation; or else he loves pleasure more than God.<sup>2Tim 3.4</sup> Here is the root of man's misery caused by the fall: he is attracted to the creature instead of to God, and he gives the creature that esteem, confidence and affection that he owes to God alone.<sup>1</sup>

O miserable man! What a deformed monster sin has made you! God made you little lower than the angels, and he made sin little better than the devils.<sup>Joh 6.70; 8.44</sup> But the monster has his head and heart where his feet should be, and his feet kick against heaven. Everything is out of place. The world that was formed to serve you, has come to rule you; and the deceitful harlot has bewitched you with her enchantments, and made you bow down and serve her.

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<sup>1</sup> Rom 1.25; Mat 10.37; Pro 18.11; Jer 17.5

But converting grace sets everything in order again. It puts God in the throne and makes the world his footstool.<sup>Psa 73.25</sup> It puts Christ in the heart and the world under his feet.<sup>1</sup> So Paul says, *I have been crucified to the world, and the world to me.*<sup>Gal. 6.14</sup> Before this change, his cry was, *Who will show us any (worldly) good?* But now he sings another tune: *Lord, lift up the light of your countenance upon me,* and whoever wants to, take the corn and wine.<sup>Psa 4.6-7</sup>

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Before, his heart's delight and contentment were in the world. Then, his song was, *Soul, take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry; you have many good things laid up for many years:* but now all this is withered, and there is no attraction that he desires. He is attuned with the sweet Psalmist of Israel, *The Lord is the portion of my inheritance; the lines have fallen to me in a fair place; I have a good inheritance.*<sup>Psa 16.5-6</sup> He blesses himself, and boasts in God;<sup>2</sup> nothing else gives him contentment. He has written "vanity" and "vexation" on all his worldly enjoyments;<sup>Ecc 1, 2</sup> he considers all human excellencies but loss and dung.<sup>Phi 3.7-8</sup> He now chases life and immortality.<sup>Rom 2.7</sup> He trades it all for grace and glory, and he pursues an incorruptible crown.<sup>1Cor 9.25</sup> His heart is set to seek the Lord.<sup>3</sup> He seeks first the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness. Religion is no longer an incidental matter with him, but is his main concern.<sup>4</sup> The gaudy idol has now become like Nehushtan;<sup>2Kng 18.4</sup> he gets up and treads on it, like Diogenes trampled on Plato's hangings saying, *Calco Platonis fastum.*<sup>5</sup> Before, the world ruled him; he would do more for gain than godliness,<sup>1Tim 6.6</sup> and more to please his friend or his flesh than to please the God that made him. God had to stand by until the world was served first. But now all else must stand by: he hates his father, his mother, life and *all* in comparison to Christ.<sup>Luk 1.26</sup>

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Well then, pause a little, and look within yourself: doesn't this intimately concern you? You pretend you are for Christ, but doesn't the world rule you? Don't you take more real delight and contentment in the world than in him? Don't you find yourself more at ease when the world is on your mind, and you are surrounded by carnal delights, than when you are retired in private to prayer and meditation, or when you are attending to God's word and worship? There is no surer evidence of an unconverted state than to have the things of the world uppermost in our aims, love, and estimation.<sup>Joh 2.15; Jas. 4.4</sup>

With the sound convert, Christ is supreme. How dear is this name to him? How precious is his savour? <sup>6</sup> The name of Jesus is engraved on his heart;<sup>Gal. 4.19</sup> it lies like a sachet of myrrh on his breast.<sup>Song 1.13-14</sup> Once Christ is savingly revealed to him, honour is but air, and laughter is but madness, and mammon falls over like Dagon fell before the ark, with its hands and head broken off on the threshold.<sup>1Sam 5.4</sup> *Here* is the pearl of great price to the true convert; *here* is his treasure; *here* is his hope;<sup>Mat 13.44-45</sup> *this* is his glory: *My beloved is mine, and I am his.*<sup>7</sup> Oh, it is sweeter to him to be able to say, "Christ is mine," than if he could say, "The kingdom is mine," or "the Indies are mine."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eph 3.17; Rev 12.1

<sup>2</sup> Psa 34.2; Lam. 3.24

<sup>3</sup> 1Chr 22.19; 2Chr 15.15

<sup>4</sup> Mat 6.33; Psa 27.4

<sup>5</sup> "So much for Plato's pride!"

<sup>6</sup> Song 1.3; Psa 54.8

<sup>7</sup> Gal. 6.14; Song 2.16

<sup>8</sup> Alleine is referring the kingdom of Britain, and to India, its prize possession at the time.

*Fourthly, Your own Righteousness.* Before conversion, man seeks to cover himself with his own fig leaves,<sup>Phi 3.16</sup> and to make himself whole by his own duties.<sup>Mic. 6.6-7</sup> He is apt to trust in himself,<sup>Luk 16.15; 18.9</sup> and set up his own righteousness, and to reckon his tokens for gold, and not submit to the righteousness of God.<sup>Rom 10.3</sup> But conversion changes his mind. Now he throws away his filthy rags, and he considers his own righteousness as a menstruous cloth; he throws it off as a man would shed the verminous tatters of a nasty beggar.<sup>Isa 64.7</sup> Now he is brought into a poverty of spirit;<sup>Mat 5.3</sup> he complains about and condemns himself,<sup>Rom 7</sup> and his entire inventory is *poor, miserable, wretched, blind, and naked.*<sup>Rev 3.17</sup> He sees a world of iniquity in his holy things, and he calls his once-idolized righteousness merely flesh, and loss, and dogs' meat. He would not be found righteous in himself for a thousand worlds.<sup>Phi 3.4; 7-9</sup> His finger ever touches his sores,<sup>Psa 51.3</sup> his sins, his wants. Now he begins to set a high price on Christ's righteousness; he sees in every duty his need of Christ, to justify both his person and his performances; he cannot live without him; he cannot pray without him; Christ must go with him, or else he cannot come into the presence of God. He leans on the hand of Christ, and so he bows himself in the house of his God. He accounts himself a lost and undone man without him; his life is hidden in Christ, as the life of a man is hidden in the heart. He is fixed upon Christ,

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just as the roots of a tree spread in the earth for stability and nutriment. Before, the news of Christ was a stale and sapless thing; but now how *sweet* Christ is! Augustine could not relish his previously much-admired Cicero, because he could not find the name of Christ. When he speaks of and to his Christ, how pathetically he cries, all in one breath, *Dulcissime, amantis. benignis. caris. etc. quando te videbo? quando satiabo de pulchritudine tua?*<sup>Medit. c. 37</sup> (O most sweet, most loving, most kind, most dear, most precious, most desired, most lovely, most fair, etc.). In a word, the voice of the convert says with the martyr: *None but Christ, none but Christ.*<sup>1</sup>

2. The terms *to which* we are turned, are either *ultimate* or *subordinate*, and also *mediate*.

The *ultimate* is God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, whom the true convert takes as his all-sufficient and eternal blessedness. A man is never truly sanctified until his heart is truly set on God above all things as his portion and chief good. These are the natural breathings of a believer's heart: *you are my portion.*<sup>Psa 119.57</sup> *My soul makes her boast in the Lord.*<sup>Psa 34.2</sup> *My expectation is from him; he alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my defence: In God is my salvation and my glory, the rock of my strength; and my refuge is in God.*<sup>Psa 62.1-2; 5-7; 18.1-2</sup>

Is it an issue for you, as to whether you are converted or not? Then let your soul and all that is within you attend to it *now!*

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Have you taken God for your happiness? Where does the contentment of your heart lie? Where does your choicest comfort come from? Come then! And with Abraham, lift up your eyes eastward, and westward, and northward, and southward, and look around you: what would you have in heaven or earth to make you happy? If God were to give you your choice, as he gave it to Solomon, or if he were to say to you as Ahasuerus said to Esther, *What do you wish, and what is your request? It will be granted to you.*<sup>Est 5.3</sup> What would you ask for? Go into the gardens of pleasure and gather all the fragrant flowers from there; would these content you? Go to the treasures of mammon; suppose you might deluge yourself with these things: go to the towers, to the trophies of honour; what would you think of being a man of renown, and having a name like the name of the great men of the earth? Would *any* of this, *all* of this, suffice to make you consider yourself a happy man? If so, then certainly you are carnal and unconverted. If not, go further; wade into the divine excellencies, the store of God's mercies, his hidden power, the

<sup>1</sup> John Lambert died with these words on his lips. He was a Protestant martyr burnt at the stake in 1538 in London.

unfathomable deeps of his all-sufficiency. Does this suit you best and please you most? Do you say, It is *good to be here*;<sup>Mat 17.4</sup> here I will stay; here I will live and die? Will you let all the world go rather than this? Then it is well between God and you: you are happy, O man! You are happy that you were ever born: if God can make you happy, then you must be happy,

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*for you have affirmed that the Lord is your God.*<sup>Deu 26.17</sup> Do you say to Christ, as he says to us, *your Father will be my Father, and your God my God?*<sup>Joh 20.17</sup> Here is the turning point: a nominal Christian never rests in God. But converting grace does that work, and so it cures the fatal misery of the fall by turning the heart from its idols to the living God.<sup>1Thes 1.9</sup> Now the soul will say, *Lord, where else would I go? You have the words of eternal life.*<sup>Joh 6.68</sup> Here he centers, and here he settles. Oh, it is like the entrance to heaven for him to see his interest in God. When he discovers this, he says, *Return to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.*<sup>Psa 116.7</sup> He is even ready to express Simeon's song, *Lord, now let your servant depart in peace,*<sup>Luk 2.29</sup> and he says with Jacob, when his old heart was revived at the welcome tidings, *It is enough;*<sup>Gen 45.28</sup> when he sees that he has God to go to in covenant, this is *all* his salvation and *all* his desire.<sup>2Sam. 23.5</sup>

Man, is this your case? Have you experienced this? Why then, you are blessed of the Lord! God has been at work with you; he has laid hold of your heart by the power of converting grace, or else you would never have done this.

The *mediate* term of conversion is either *principal*, or *less principal*.

**The *principal* is Christ**, who is the only Mediator between God and man;<sup>1Tim 2.5</sup> his work is to bring us to God.<sup>1Pet 3.18</sup>

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He is the way to the Father.<sup>Joh 14.6</sup> He is the only plank on which we may escape, the only door by which we may enter,<sup>Joh 10.9</sup> Conversion brings the soul to Christ,<sup>Col. 2.6</sup> to accept him as the only means to life, the only way, the only name given under heaven.<sup>Act 4.12</sup> He doesn't look for salvation in any other but him, nor in any other *with* him; he throws himself on Christ alone, like someone would throw himself with spread arms upon the sea.

*Here, (says the convinced sinner) here I will venture, and if I perish, I perish; if I die, I will die here. But, Lord, don't allow me to perish under the pitying eyes of your mercy. Do not entreat me to leave you, or turn from following you.*<sup>Ruth 1.16</sup> *Here I throw myself: if you kick me, if you kill me,*<sup>Joh 13.15</sup> *I will not go from your door.*

Thus the poor soul ventures on Christ, and resolvedly adheres to him. Before conversion, the man made light of Christ; he minded his farm, friends, and merchandise more than Christ.<sup>Mat 22.5</sup> Now Christ is like essential food to him: he is his daily bread, the life of his heart, the staff of his life.<sup>Phi 3.9</sup> His great intent is that Christ might be magnified in him.<sup>Phi 1.20</sup> His heart once said, as they said to the spouse, *What makes your beloved more valuable than another?*<sup>Song 5.9</sup> Before, he found more sweetness in drunken company, wicked games, and earthly delights, than he found in Christ. He took religion for a fancy, and the talk of great enjoyments for an idle dream.

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But now, to live is *Christ* to him. He treats lightly all that he considered precious before, because of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ.<sup>Phi 3.8</sup>

All of Christ is accepted by the sincere convert. He loves not only the *wages*, but the *work* of Christ;<sup>Rom 7.12</sup> he loves not only the *benefits*, but the *burden* of Christ: he is willing not only to tread out the corn, but to pull under the yoke; he takes up the commands of Christ and, yes, the cross of Christ.<sup>Mat 11.28; 16.24</sup>



The unsound convert half-heartedly follows Christ: he is all for the salvation of Christ, but not the sanctification; he is for the privileges, but he doesn't appreciate the person of Christ; he separates the offices of Christ from the benefits of Christ. This is an error at its foundation. Whoever loves life, let him beware here. This is a fatal mistake which you have been warned about often, and yet there is none more common. Jesus is a sweet name, but men don't love the Lord Jesus sincerely.<sup>Eph 6.24</sup> They will not have him as God offers him: *to be their Prince and Saviour*.<sup>Act 5.31</sup> They divide what God has joined, King and Priest. Indeed, they won't accept the salvation of Christ as he intends it; they divide it. Every man votes for salvation from suffering; but they don't desire to be saved from sinning. They want their lives saved, but they want to keep their lusts. Indeed, many again divide their salvation here. They are content to have only *some* of their sins destroyed; but they cannot leave the lap of Delilah, or divorce their beloved Herodias. They cannot be cruel to the right eye, or right hand:

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*the Lord must pardon them in this thing.*<sup>2Kng 5.18</sup> Oh, be infinitely careful here; your souls depend on it. The sound convert takes the whole Christ, and takes him for all intent and purposes — without exceptions, limitations, or reservations. He is willing to have Christ on *his* terms, on *any* terms. He is willing to have the dominion of Christ, as well as deliverance by Christ. He says with Paul, *Lord, what would you have me do?*<sup>Act 9.6</sup> *Anything, Lord.* He sends a blank contract for Christ to set down his own conditions.<sup>1</sup>

**The less principal** is the *laws, ordinances, and ways of Christ*. The heart that was once set against these, and could not endure the strictness of these bonds, the severity of these ways, now falls in love with them, and chooses them as its rule and guide forever.<sup>Psa 119.111-112</sup>

Four things (I observe) God works in every sound convert, with reference to the laws and ways of Christ. If you will be faithful to your own souls, you may come to know your estates by these. Therefore keep your eyes on your hearts as you go along.

(1.) *The judgment is led to approve of them, and subscribe to them as most righteous, and most reasonable.*<sup>2</sup> The mind is brought to love the ways of God; and to consider the corrupt prejudices that were once against them as unreasonable and intolerable; they are now removed.

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The understanding assents to them all as holy, just, and good.<sup>Rom 7.12</sup> David is consumed with these excellencies of God's laws. He expounds on them in praises, both as to their inherent qualities and also as to their admirable effects.<sup>Psa 19.8-10, etc.</sup>

There is a twofold judgment of the understanding: *judicium absolutum, & comparatum*. The absolute judgment is when a man thinks such a course is best in general, but not for him, or not under his present circumstances; *pro hic, et nunc*.<sup>3</sup> Now a godly man's judgment favors the ways of God, not only absolutely, but comparatively as well: he thinks them not only best in general, but best for *him*: he looks upon the rules of religion not only as tolerable, but desirable: indeed, more desirable than gold, fine gold; yes, much fine gold.<sup>Psa 19.10</sup>

His judgment is decidedly determined that it is best to be holy, that it is best to be strict, that in itself this is the most eligible course; and for him it is the wisest, and most rational and desirable choice. Hear the godly man's judgment: *I know, O Lord, that your judgments are right. I love your commandments above gold: yes, above fine gold. I esteem all your precepts concerning all things to be right, and I hate every false way.*<sup>Psa 119.127-128</sup> Note that he approved of all that

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<sup>1</sup> Act 2.37; 16.30

<sup>2</sup> Psa 119.112, 128, 137-138

<sup>3</sup> [For here and now.](#)



God required, and he disallowed all that God forbid: *Your judgments are righteous, O Lord, and upright. Your testimonies that you have commanded are righteous and very faithful. Your word is true from the beginning,*

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*and every one of your righteous judgments endures forever.*<sup>1</sup> See how readily and fully he subscribes to them; he declares his assent and consent to it, and all and everything that it contained.

(2.) *The desire of the heart is to know the whole mind of Christ.*<sup>2</sup> He would not leave one sin undiscovered, or be ignorant of one required duty. It is the natural and earnest breathing of a sanctified heart: *Lord, if there is any way of wickedness in me, disclose it. What I don't know, teach me; and if I have done iniquity, I will do it no more.* The unsound convert is willingly ignorant;<sup>2Pet 3.5</sup> he does *not* love to come to the light.<sup>Joh 3.20</sup> He wants to hold onto a particular sin, and therefore he is loth to know it is a sin, and he will not let the light in at that window. The gracious heart is willing to know the whole latitude and compass of his Maker's law.<sup>3</sup> He fully accepts the word that convinces him of any duty that he did not know or mind before, or that discloses any sin that lay hidden before.<sup>Psa 119.11</sup>

(3.) *The free and resolved choice of the will is determined for the ways of Christ above all the pleasures of sin and prosperities of the world.*<sup>Psa 119.103, 127, 162</sup> His consent is not extorted by some extreme anguish, nor is it only a sudden and hasty resolve; instead, he is deliberately purposed, and he freely chooses.<sup>4</sup> True, the flesh will rebel,

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yet the prevailing part of his will is for Christ's laws and government; so that he takes them up, not as his toil or burden, but as his bliss.<sup>5</sup> While the unsanctified convert walks in Christ's ways as if he is in chains and fetters, the true convert does them naturally;<sup>6</sup> he considers Christ's laws to be his liberty.<sup>7</sup> He is willing to wear the beauties of holiness,<sup>Psa 110.3</sup> and he has this inseparable mark: that if he had his choice, he would rather live a strict and holy life, than the most prosperous and flourishing life in the world. <sup>1Sam. 10.26</sup> A band of men went with Saul, whose hearts God had touched.<sup>8</sup> When God touches the hearts of his chosen, they quickly follow Christ,<sup>Mat 4.22</sup> and (though drawn) they freely run after him,<sup>Song 1.4</sup> and willingly offer themselves to the Lord's service;<sup>2Chr 7.16</sup> they seek him with their whole heart. <sup>2Chr 15.15</sup> Fear has its use, but this is not the main motivation of a sanctified heart. Christ does not keep his subjects by force, but is king of a willing people. They are (through his grace) freely resolved to serve him; they do it by choice, not as slaves. They are like the son or spouse who is motivated by love and a loyal mind.

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<sup>1</sup> Psa 119.86, 160, 162-163

<sup>2</sup> Psa 119.124-125, 169; 25.4-5

<sup>3</sup> Psa 119.18-19, 27, 33, 64, 66, 68, 78, 108, 124

<sup>4</sup> Psa 17.3; 119.50

<sup>5</sup> 1Joh 5.3; Psa 119.60, 72

<sup>6</sup> Psa 40.8; Jer 31.33

<sup>7</sup> Psa 119.32, 45; Jas 1.25

<sup>8</sup> 1Sam 10.26.

In a word, the laws of Christ are the convert's love,<sup>1</sup> his desire,<sup>2</sup> his delight,<sup>3</sup> and his continual study.<sup>4</sup>

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(4.) *The bent of his course is directed to keep God's statutes.*<sup>Psa 119.4, 8, 167-168</sup>

It is the daily care of his life to walk with God. He seeks great things; he has noble intents even though he falls short: he aims at nothing less than perfection: he desires it, he reaches after it, he would not rest in any tent of grace until he was quite rid of sin, and had perfect holiness.<sup>Phi 3.11-14</sup>

Here the hypocrite's rottenness may be discovered. He desires holiness (as one said well) only as a bridge to heaven; he earnestly enquires what the least is that will serve his aims; if he can get just enough to obtain heaven, this is all he cares for. But the sound convert desires holiness for holiness' sake,<sup>5</sup> and not only for heaven's sake. He is not satisfied only with what might save him from hell, but he desires the highest ground: yet desires are not enough. What is your way and your course? Is the drift and scope of your life altered? Is holiness your trade, and is religion your business?<sup>6</sup> If not, you are short of sound conversion.

*Application.* And is the conversion we have described absolutely necessary for salvation? If so, then be informed: 1.) That straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life. 2.) That there are few that find it. 3.) That there is need of a divine power to savingly convert a sinner to Jesus Christ.

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Again then, be exhorted to look within yourself. What does your conscience say? Does it begin to bite? Does it *twitch* as you go? Is this *your* judgment, and this *your* choice, and this *your* way that we have described? If so, then it is well. But does your heart condemn you, and tell you there is such a sin you live in against your conscience? Does it tell you there is a secret way of wickedness which you make no bones about? Or a duty that your conscience ignores?

Does your conscience carry you to your private room, and tell you how seldom you pray and read there? Does it carry you to your family and show you the charge of God, and the souls of your children and servants that you neglect there? Does your conscience lead you to your shop, or your trade, and tell you of some hidden iniquity there? Does it carry you into the liquor store, or the tavern, and go around in your ear because of the loose company you keep there, and the precious time you misspend there; for the talents of God which you throw down this sinkhole; for your gambling and drunkenness, etc.? Does it carry you into your secret chamber and read you a curtain lecture?<sup>7</sup>

O conscience! Do your duty. In the name of the living God, I command you to discharge your office: lay hold of this sinner, fall upon him, arrest him, apprehend him, undeceive him. What! Will you flatter and soothe him while he still lives in his sins? Awake, O conscience! What do you mean, O sleeper? What! Do you never have a reproof in your mouth?

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<sup>1</sup> Psa 119.159, 163, 167

<sup>2</sup> Psa 119.5, 20, 40

<sup>3</sup> Psa 119.77, 92, 103, 111, 143

<sup>4</sup> Psa 119.99, 79; Psa 1.2

<sup>5</sup> Psa 119.97; Mat 5.6

<sup>6</sup> Rom 8.1, Mat 25.16, Phi 1.21

<sup>7</sup> [A private reprimand given by a wife to her husband in a curtained bed.](#)

What! Will this soul die in his careless neglect of God and eternity, and you stay completely silent? What! Will he still go on in his trespasses and yet have peace? Oh, rouse yourself and *do your work!* Let the preacher in your chest speak out! Cry aloud and don't hold back: lift up your voice like a trumpet; don't let the blood of this soul be on your hands!

### CHAP. III – THE NECESSITY OF CONVERSION.

It may be that you are ready to say, *What does this stir mean?* And you are apt to wonder why I follow you with such earnestness, continually ringing one lesson in your ears, *That you should repent and be converted.*<sup>Act 3.19</sup> But I must say to you, as Ruth said to Naomi, *Don't entreat me to leave you, nor to turn aside from following you.*<sup>Ruth 1.16</sup> Were it a matter of indifference, I would never make so much of it: if you might be saved as you are, I would gladly leave you alone. But wouldn't you have me anxious for you when I see you ready to perish? As the Lord lives, before whom I stand, I don't have the least hopes to see one of your faces in heaven unless you are converted: I utterly despair of your salvation, unless you are persuaded to thoroughly turn,

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and surrender to God in holiness and newness of life. Hasn't God said, *Unless you are born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God?*<sup>Joh 3.3</sup> And yet you wonder why your ministers so openly labor in childbirth with you? <sup>Gal 4.19</sup> Don't think it strange that I am so sincere with you to pursue holiness, and that I long to see the image of God on you: no one has ever or will ever enter heaven by any way other than this. The conversion described is not a high shelf that only taller Christians can reach; rather, every soul that is saved passes through this universal change.

In a passage of the noble Roman<sup>1</sup>, when he was hastening with corn to the city in the famine, and the mariners were loth to set sail in foul weather, he says to them, *Necessarium est navigare, non est necessarium vivere*; "our voyage is more necessary than our lives." What do you consider necessary? Is your bread necessary? Is your breath necessary? Then your conversion is much more necessary. Indeed this is the *unum necessarium*, "the one thing necessary." Your estate is not necessary; you may sell it all for the pearl of great price, and yet gain by the purchase.<sup>Mat 13.46</sup> Your life is not necessary; you may part with it for Christ, to your infinite advantage. Your esteem is not necessary: you may be reproached for the name of Christ and yet be happy; indeed, happier in reproach than in repute.<sup>2</sup> But your conversion is necessary; your damnation is conditioned on it. In that case, don't you need to look about you? Your making or your marring for all eternity depends on this one point!

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But I will more particularly show the necessity of it in five things; for without conversion,

**I. Your being is in vain.** Isn't it a pity that you are good for nothing, an unprofitable burden on the earth, a wart or a cyst in the body of the universe? This is what you are while you remain unconverted; for you cannot fulfil the purpose of your being. Is it not for the divine pleasure that you exist and were created? <sup>Rev 4.11</sup> Didn't he make you for himself? <sup>Pro 16.4</sup> Are you a man, and do you have reason? Well then, *think* to yourself why your being exists, and where it came from. Behold God's workmanship in your body and ask yourself, "To what end did God rear this fabric?" Consider the noble faculties of your heaven-born soul: to what end did God bestow these excellencies? To no other end than you should please yourself and gratify your senses? Did God send men into the world, like a swallow, only to gather a few sticks and dirt, and build their nests, and breed their young, and then fly away? The heathens could see further than this! Are you so fearfully and wonderfully made,<sup>Psa 139.14</sup> and yet you don't think to yourself, "Surely it was for some noble and exalted end"?

O man! Set your reason in the chair a little while. Isn't it a pity that such a fine fabric should be raised in vain? Truly, you are in vain, unless you are made for God: better you had no existence, than not to exist for him.

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<sup>1</sup> That is, Cato.

<sup>2</sup> 1Pet 4.4; Mat 5.10-11

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Do you want to serve your end? Then you must repent and be converted. Without this, you are to *no purpose*; indeed, you are to *bad purpose*.

*First, To no purpose.* An unconverted man is like a fine musical instrument that has every string broken, or is out of tune; the Spirit of the living God must repair and turn it by the grace of regeneration, and sweetly move it by the power of actuating grace; otherwise your prayers will only be howlings, and all your services will make no music in the ears of the most Holy.<sup>1</sup> All of your powers and faculties are so corrupt in your natural state, that unless you are purged from dead works, you cannot serve the living God.<sup>Heb 9.14; Tit. 1.15</sup>

An unsanctified man cannot work the work of God.

(1.) He has no *skill* in it. He is as completely unskilled in the work as he is in the word of righteousness.<sup>Heb 5.13</sup> There are great mysteries in the *practices* as well as the *principles* of godliness; now, the unregenerate man doesn't know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,<sup>2</sup> You may as well expect someone who never learned the alphabet to read, or expect good lute music from someone who never set his hand to the instrument, as to expect a natural man to do any pleasing service to the Lord. He must first be taught by God<sup>Joh 6.45</sup> to pray,<sup>Luk 11.1</sup> to profit,<sup>Isa 48.17</sup>, and to go,<sup>Hos. 11.3</sup> or else he will be at a complete loss.

(2.) He has no *strength* for it. How weak is his heart? <sup>Eze 16.30</sup> He tires quickly. The Sabbath, is such a weariness to him! <sup>Mal 1.13</sup> He has no strength;<sup>Rom 5.6</sup> indeed, he is stark dead in sin. <sup>Eph 2.5</sup>

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(3.) He has no *mind* for it. He doesn't desire knowledge of God's ways.<sup>Job 21.14</sup> He doesn't know them, and he doesn't *care* to know them,<sup>Psa 82.5</sup> he does not know, nor will he understand.

(4.) He has neither *suitable instruments* nor *materials* for it. A man may as well hew marble without tools, or paint a portrait without colours or brush, or build without materials, as to perform any acceptable service without the graces of the Spirit — which are both the materials and the instruments in the work. Giving alms is not a service of God but of conceit, unless it is given out by the hand of divine love. What is the prayer of our lips without grace in the heart, except a lifeless carcass? What are all our confessions, unless they are exercises of godly sorrow and unfeigned repentance? What are our petitions, unless they are motivated all along by holy desires and faith in divine attributes and promises? What are our praises and thanksgivings, unless they are from the love of God and a holy gratitude, and a heartfelt sense of God's mercies? So that a man may as well expect the trees to speak, or look for logic from the brutes, or motion from the dead, as to expect any service from the unconverted that is holy and acceptable to God. When the tree is evil, how can the fruit be good? <sup>Mat 7.18</sup>

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*Secondly, To bad purpose.* The unconverted soul is a veritable cage of unclean birds,<sup>Rev 18.2</sup> a sepulchre full of corruption and rotteness,<sup>3</sup> a loathsome carcass full of crawling worms that emits a hellish and most malodorous stench in the nostrils of God. Oh, dreadful case! Don't you yet see a change that is needed? Wouldn't it have grieved someone to see the golden consecrated vessels of God's temple turned into quaffing bowls of drunkenness, and polluted with the service of idols? <sup>Dan. 5.2-3</sup> Was it that kind of an abomination to the Jews when Antiochus set up the image

<sup>1</sup> Eph 2.10; Phi 2.13; Hos 7.14; Isa 1.15

<sup>2</sup> Mat 13.11; 1Tim 3.16

<sup>3</sup> Mat 23.27; Psa 14.3

of a pig at the entrance of the temple? <sup>1</sup> How much more abominable then would it have been for the temple itself to be turned into a stable or a sty, and to have the Holy of Holies served like the house of Baal, to have the image of God taken down, and be turned into a draught-house? <sup>2</sup> <sup>2Kng 10.27</sup> This is the condition of the unregenerate; all of your members are turned into instruments of unrighteousness, <sup>Rom 6.19</sup> and servants of Satan; and your inmost powers are turned into receptacles of uncleanness. <sup>2</sup> You may see whether good guests are within by what comes out: *For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies*, etc. This blackguard discovers what a hell there is within.

Oh, insufferable abuse! To see a heaven-born soul abased to the filthiest drudgery; to see the glory of God's creation, the chief of the ways of God, the lord of the universe, lapping with the prodigal at the trough, or licking up with greediness the most loathsome vomit!

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Was it that kind of lamentation to see those who fed delicately, sitting desolate in the streets; and to see the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, treated as earthen pitchers; and those that were clothed in scarlet, embracing dunghills? <sup>Lam. 4.2, 5</sup> Isn't it much more fearful to see the only thing that has immortality in this lower world, and that carries the stamp of God, to become like a vessel in which there is no pleasure? <sup>Jer 22.28</sup> (which is just a modest expression of the vessel men put to the most sordid use.) Oh, intolerable indignity! It would be better if you were dashed into a thousand pieces, than to continue to be abused in so filthy a service.

**II. Not only man, but the *whole visible creation is in vain without conversion.***

Beloved, God has made all the visible creatures in heaven and earth for the service of man; and man alone is the spokesman for all the rest. Man is in the universe like the tongue is in the body: it speaks for all the members. The other creatures cannot praise their Maker, except by dumb signs and hints to man that he should speak for them. Man is (as it were) the high priest of God's creation, to offer the sacrifice of praise for all his fellow-creatures. <sup>Psa 147-148, 150</sup> The Lord God expects a tribute of praise from all his works. <sup>Psa 103.22</sup> Now all the rest bring their tribute to man, and pay it by his hand. So then, if man is false, faithless, and selfish, God is wronged by all, and he will have no active glory from his works.

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Oh, what a dreadful thought to think! That God should build such a world as this, and lay out such infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness upon it, and all in vain: and man should be guilty, in the end, of robbing and depriving him of the glory of all. Oh, think of this! While you are unconverted, all the offices of the creatures are in vain with regard to you: your meat nourishes you in vain, the sun shines his light on you in vain, the stars that serve you in their courses by their most powerful though hidden influence, <sup>3</sup> do it in vain; your clothes warm you in vain; your beast carries you in vain: in a word, the unwearied labour, and continual activity of the whole creation is in vain (with regard to you). The service of all the creatures that drudge for you and yield their strength to you (so that you would serve their Maker with them) is all but lost labour. Hence the whole creation groans under the abuse of this unsanctified world <sup>Rom 8.22</sup> that perverts them to serve their own lusts, quite contrary to the very purpose of their being.

**III. Without this, your *religion is in vain.*** <sup>Jas. 1.26</sup> All your religious performances are but lost; for they can neither please God, <sup>Rom 8.8</sup> nor save your soul, <sup>1Cor 13.2-3</sup> which are the very ends of religion. No matter how gilded your services may be, God takes no pleasure in them. <sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 1Macc 1.10; 6.7

<sup>2</sup> Eph 2.2; Tit 1.15

<sup>3</sup> Jdg 5.20; Hos. 2.21, 22

<sup>4</sup> Isa 1.14; Mal 1.10



Isn't it dreadful when a man's sacrifices are like murder and his prayers are like a whiff of abomination? <sup>1</sup> Many who are convicted of this think they will do a little mending,

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that a few prayers and alms will save everything again. But alas, sirs! While your hearts remain unsanctified, your duties will not pass muster. Jehu was punctual, and yet all he did was rejected because his heart was not upright.<sup>2</sup> Paul was blameless, and yet while he was unconverted, everything he did was loss.<sup>Phi 3:6-7</sup> Men think that their service to God is worth much; and so they hold it up to him,<sup>3</sup> as if to make him indebted to them for it; when in fact (being unsanctified), their duties cannot be accepted.

O soul! Don't think when your sins pursue you, that a little praying and adjusting of your course will pacify God: you must begin with your *heart*; if that is not renewed, you can no more please God than someone who, having unspeakably offended you, brought you his vomit in a dish to pacify you; or having fallen into the mire, thought to reconcile you with his loathsome embraces.

It is a great misery to labour in the fire. The poets could not invent a worse hell for Sisyphus than to continually roll the barrel up the hill, and quickly have it roll down again, and thus renew his labour. God threatens it as the greatest of temporal judgments, that sinners should build and not inhabit, plant and not gather, and have their labours eaten by strangers.<sup>Deu 28:30, 38-40</sup> Isn't it a great a misery to lose the fruit of our common labours, to sow in vain, and to build in vain? How much more misery is it to lose all our efforts in religion:

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to pray, and bear, and fast *in vain*? This is an undoing, and an eternal loss. Don't be deceived: if you continue in your sinful state, though you spread out your hands to him, God will hide his eye; though you offer many prayers, he will not hear.<sup>Isa 1:15</sup> If a man without skill sets about doing our work, and he mars it, even though he took great pains with it, we will give him little thanks. God will be worshipped in the prescribed manner.<sup>1Chr 15:13</sup> If a servant does our work, but contrary to our orders, then he will receive lashes rather than praise. God's work must be done according to God's mind, or he will not be pleased; and this cannot be done unless it is done with a holy heart.<sup>2Chr 25:2</sup>

**IV. Without this, your hopes are in vain.**<sup>4</sup> *The Lord has rejected your confidences.* <sup>Jer 2:37</sup>

*First, your hopes of comfort here are in vain.* It is not only necessary to the safety, but to the comfort of your condition, that you be converted. Without this, you will not know peace.<sup>Isa 59:8</sup> Without the fear of God, you cannot have the comforts of the Holy Ghost.<sup>Act 9:31</sup> God speaks peace only to his people and to his saints.<sup>Psa 85:8</sup> If you have a false peace while continuing in your sins, it is not of God's speaking, and thus you may guess the author. Sin is a real sickness,<sup>Isa 1:5</sup> indeed, it is the worst of sickness; it is a leprosy in the head,<sup>Lev. 13:44</sup> a plague in the heart.<sup>1Kng 8:31</sup> It is brokenness in the bones.<sup>Psa 51:8</sup> It pierces, it wounds, it racks, it torments.<sup>1Tim 1:10</sup>

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A man might as well expect ease while his diseases are most severe, or when his bones are out of joint, as to expect true comfort while he is still in his sins.

O wretched man! You can have no ease in this case except what comes from the deadliness of the disease! You will have the poor sick man saying in his lightheadedness that he is well, when you

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<sup>1</sup> Isa 66.3; Pro 28.9

<sup>2</sup> 2Kng 10 *with* Hos. 1.4

<sup>3</sup> Isa 58.3; Mat 7.22

<sup>4</sup> Job 8.12-13



see death in his face: he will say he needs to be up and about his business, when the very next step is likely to be into the grave. The unsanctified often see nothing amiss. They think they are whole and they don't call for the physician; but this shows the danger of their case.

Sin naturally breeds distempers and disturbances in the soul. What kind of continual tempest and commotion is there in a discontented mind? What kind of consuming evil is inordinate desire? What is passion but a high fever in the mind? What is lust but a fire in the bones? What is pride, but a deadly conceit? Or covetousness, but an insatiable and insufferable thirst? Or malice and envy, but venom in the very heart? Spiritual sloth is but a scurvy in the mind, and carnal security is a mortal lethargy. And how can a soul that is under so many diseases have true comfort? But converting grace cures — and so it eases the mind and prepares the soul for a settled standing and immortal peace: *Great peace have those who love your commandments, and nothing will offend them.*<sup>Psa 119.165</sup> These are the ways of wisdom that afford pleasure and peace.<sup>Pro 3.17</sup> David had infinitely more pleasure in the word than in all the delight of his court.<sup>1</sup>

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The conscience cannot be truly pacified until it is soundly purified.<sup>Heb 10.22</sup> Cursed is that peace that is maintained in a path of sin.<sup>Deu 29.19-20</sup> Two sorts of peace are more to be dreaded than all the troubles in the world: peace *with* sin, and peace *in* sin.

*Secondly, your hopes of salvation hereafter are in vain; indeed, they are worse than in vain. They are most injurious to God, and most pernicious to yourself. There is death, desperation, and blasphemy in the center of this hope.*

(1.) There is *death* in it. Your *confidence will be rooted out of your tabernacles*; (God will tear it up, root and branch) *it will bring you to the king of terrors.*<sup>Job 18.14</sup> Though you may lean upon this house, it will not stand,<sup>Job 8.15</sup> but will prove to be like a ruinous building which, when a man trusts it, will fall down around his ears.

(2.) There is *desperation* in it. *Where is the hope of the hypocrite when God takes away his soul?*<sup>Job 27.8</sup> At that point, his hope comes to an end forever. Indeed, the hope of the righteous has an end too, but it is not a destructive end — it is a perfective end; his hope ends in fruition, while others end in frustration.<sup>Pro 10.28</sup> The godly says at death, *It is finished*; but the wicked says, *It is perished* — and in sad earnest, he grieves for himself, (as Job mistakenly did) *Where now is my hope? He has destroyed me; I am gone, and my hope is uprooted like a tree.*<sup>Job 19.10</sup> *But the righteous has hope in his death.*<sup>Pro 14.32</sup> When nature is dying, his hopes are living; when his body is languishing; his hopes are flourishing;

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his hope is a *living hope*;<sup>1Pet 1.3</sup> to him it is a lively hope, but to others it is a dying, indeed, a damning and soul-undoing hope. *When a wicked man dies, his expectation will perish, and the hope of unjust men perishes.*<sup>Pro 40.7</sup> *It will be cut off, and prove to be like a spider's web*<sup>Job 8.14</sup> which he spins out of his own innards; but then comes death with the broom and it takes it all down; and so there is an eternal end to his confidence in which he trusted. *For the eyes of the wicked will fail, and their hope will be like giving up the ghost.*<sup>Job 11.20</sup> Wicked men are settled in their carnal hope, and will not be beaten out of it: they hold it tight and will not let it go. But death will indeed knock it from their fingers. Even though *we* cannot undecieve them, death and judgment *will*. When death shoots his arrow through your liver, it will let out your soul and your hopes together. The unsanctified have hope only in this life;<sup>1Cor 15.19</sup> and therefore, of all men, they are most miserable: When death comes, it lets them out into the amazing gulf of endless desperation.

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<sup>1</sup> Psa 119.103, 127

(3.) There is *blasphemy* in it. To hope we will be saved even though we continue unconverted, is to hope that we will prove God a liar. He told you that despite being as merciful and pitying as he is, he will never save you if you go on in ignorance, or in a course of unrighteousness.<sup>1</sup> In a word, he told you that whatever you may be or do, nothing will save you unless you are new creatures.<sup>Gal. 6.15</sup> Now, to say God is merciful,

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and that we hope he will nevertheless save us, is to say in effect that we hope God will *not* do what he says. However, we may not set God's attributes at variance with each other: God is resolved to glorify mercy, but not at the expense of truth — as the presumptuous sinner will find to his everlasting sorrow.

*Obj.* But we hope in Jesus Christ; we put our whole hope in God; and therefore we don't doubt that we will be saved.

*Ans. 1.* This is not to hope *in* Christ, but *against* Christ. To hope to see the kingdom of God without being born again, to hope to find eternal life in the broad way, is to hope that Christ will prove to be a false prophet. It is David's plea, *I hope in your word*;<sup>Psa 119.81</sup> but this other hope is *against* the word. Show me a word of Christ that affirms your hope that he will save you in your ignorance, or in your profane neglect of his service, and I won't try to shake your confidence.

*Ans. 2.* God *rejects* this hope with abhorrence. Those condemned by the prophet continued in their sins; *yet* (the text says) *they will lean upon the Lord*.<sup>Mic 3.11</sup> God will not bear to be made a prop to men in their sins: the Lord rejected those presumptuous sinners who still went on in their trespasses; and yet they wanted to fasten themselves on the God of Israel.<sup>Isa 48.1-2</sup> Just as a man would do, God will shake off the briars that cling to his garment (as one man well said).

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*Ans. 3.* If your hope is anything of worth, it will purify you from your sins;<sup>1Joh 3.3</sup> but cursed is that hope that cherishes men in their sins.

*Obj.* Would you have us despair?

*Ans.* You must despair of ever coming to heaven as you are,<sup>Act 2.37</sup> that is, while you remain unconverted. You must despair ever to see the face of God without holiness; but you must by no means despair of finding mercy upon your thorough repentance and conversion; neither must you despair of attaining to repentance and conversion by the use of God's means.

**V. Without this, all that Christ has done and suffered will be in vain for you.**<sup>2</sup> That is, in no way will it lead to your salvation. Many urge this as a sufficient ground for their hopes: that Christ died for sinners. But I must tell you that Christ never died to save impenitent and unconverted sinners (those who continue in sin).<sup>2Tim 2.19</sup> A great divine in his private dealings with others tended to ask two questions: 1. *What has Christ done for you?* 2. *What has Christ worked in you?* Without the application of the Spirit in regeneration, we can have no saving interest in the benefits of redemption. I tell you from the Lord, that Christ himself cannot save you if you continue in this condition.

**First, It would be against his trust.** The Mediator is the Servant of the Father.<sup>Isa 42.1</sup> He shows his commission from him, acts in his name, and pleads his command for his justification.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Isa 27.11; 1Cor 6.9

<sup>2</sup> Joh 13.8; Tit 2.14

<sup>3</sup> Joh 10.18, 36; 6.38, 40

God has committed all things to him, entrusted his own glory and the salvation of the elect to him.<sup>1</sup>

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Accordingly, Christ gave his Father an account of both parts of his trust before he left the world. <sup>Joh 17.4, 6, 12</sup> Now Christ would quite betray his Father's glory, his greatest trust, if he were to save men in their sins; for this would *first*, overturn all his Father's directions, and *second*, this would violate all his attributes.

*1st, Overturn all his directions.*

This is their order: that men should be brought through sanctification unto salvation.<sup>2</sup> He has chosen them to be holy.<sup>Eph 1.4</sup> They are elected to pardon and life through sanctification.<sup>1Pet 1.2</sup> If you can repeal the law of God's immutable counsel, or destroy the one whom the Father has sealed, going directly against his commission, then and not otherwise may you get to heaven in this condition. To hope that Christ will save you while you remain unconverted is to hope that Christ will falsify his trust. He never did nor will he ever save one soul except those whom the Father has given him in election, and has drawn to him by effectual calling.<sup>Joh 6.34, 37</sup> Be assured, Christ will save none in a way that is contrary to his Father's will.<sup>Joh 6.38</sup>

*2dly, Violate all his attributes.*

(1.) It violates His *justice*: the righteousness of God's judgment lies in rendering to all according to their works.<sup>Rom 2.5-6</sup>. Now, if men were to sow to the flesh, and yet reap everlasting life from the Spirit,<sup>Gal. 6.7-8</sup> where would the glory of divine justice be found, since it would be given to the wicked according to their works of unrighteousness? <sup>3</sup>

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(2.) It violates His *holiness*. If God were not only to save sinners, but save them in their sins,<sup>4</sup> his most pure and strict holiness would be badly defaced. The unsanctified person is, in the eyes of God's holiness, worse than a pig or a viper.<sup>5</sup> Now, what cleanly nature could endure having filthy pigs bed and board with him in his parlour or bed chamber? It would violate the infinite purity of the divine nature to have such unsanctified persons dwell with him. They cannot stand in his judgment; they cannot abide in his presence.<sup>Psa 1.5; 5.4-5</sup> If holy David would not endure them in his house, or even in his sight,<sup>Psa 101.3, 7</sup> why would we think God will? If he were to take men as they are from the trough to the table, from the harlot's lips, from the sty and draff <sup>6</sup>, to the glory of heaven, the world would think that God is not as separated from sin, nor dislikes it so much, as we are told. They would conclude God is just like them (which they wickedly did), mistaking the *forbearance* of God as *license*.<sup>Psa 50.21</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mat 11.27; Joh 17.2

<sup>2</sup> "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth." (2Th 2:13 <sup>NAU</sup>), This verse makes it clear that we are not sanctified apart from faith in the truth. The order is faith, sanctification, then glorification. Salvation thus has two pillars: justification by faith, and sanctification by the Spirit. One leads to the other.

<sup>3</sup> The original wording is: "...given to the wicked according to the work of the righteous." Paul writes, "while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Therefore, the elect, while yet wicked, are indeed saved by the work of the righteous (Christ). The original wording creates a *non sequitur*; hence it has been reworded. Alleine's point is that faith imputes Christ's righteousness to us, thus objectively sanctifying us. But such faith must lead to our own inherent sanctification. Where subjective sanctification is absent, faith must be absent as well (*we are saved by faith alone, but not by a faith which is alone*). — WHG

<sup>4</sup> "save them in their sins," that is, unrepentant, unconverted, unsanctified, and unregenerate. See (3) below. — WHG

<sup>5</sup> Mat 23.33; 2Pet 2.22

<sup>6</sup> Draff: the residue of husks after fermentation of the grain used in brewing; it is used as food for cattle.

(3.) It violates His *veracity*: God has declared from heaven that, *if anyone says he has peace, though he goes on in the imagination of his heart, God's wrath will smoke against that man.* <sup>Deu 29.19-20</sup> [Only] those who confess and forsake their sins will find mercy. <sup>Pro 28.13</sup> Those who ascend his hill must have clean hands and a pure heart. <sup>Psa 24.3-4</sup> Where would God's truth be if, despite all this,

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he were to bring men to salvation without conversion? O desperate sinner, who dares to hope that Christ will make his Father a liar, and nullify his word to save you!

(4.) It violates His *wisdom*: this would be to throw away the choicest mercies on those who would not value them, nor were in any way suited to them.

*First*, They would not value them. The unsanctified sinner puts little price upon God's great salvation. <sup>Mat 22.5</sup> He sets no more by Christ, than the healthy set by the physician. <sup>Mat 9.12</sup> He does not prize his balm nor value his cure; he tramples on his blood. <sup>Heb 10.29</sup> Now, would it be wise to force pardon and life on those who would give God no thanks for these things? When he has forbidden us to do it, would the all-wise God throw his holy things to dogs, or throw his pearls to swine, who would only turn and rend him if they could? <sup>Mat 7.6</sup> This would make mercy despised indeed! Wisdom requires that life be given in a way that is suited to God's honour, and that God provides to secure his own glory as well as man's felicity. It would dishonor God to set his jewels on the snouts of swine (*continuing on*), and to bestow his choicest riches on those who have more pleasure in their swill than in the heavenly delights he offers. God would lose the praise and glory of his grace if he threw it away on those who were not only unworthy of it, but unwilling to receive it.

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*Secondly*, They are in no way suited to them. The divine wisdom is seen in suiting things to each other: the means to the end, the object to the faculty, the quality of the gift to the capacity of the receiver. Now, if Christ were to bring the unregenerate sinner to heaven, that sinner could receive no more felicity there than a beast could receive if you were to bring it into a beautiful room, to the society of learned men, and to a well-furnished table; the poor thing would much rather be grazing in the field with his fellow brutes. Alas! What would an unsanctified creature do in heaven? He could not be content there, because nothing suits him. **The place does not suit him:** he would be but *piscis in arido*, i.e. quite out of his element, like a pig in the parlour, or a fish out of water. **The company does not suit him:** what communion does darkness have with light, corruption with perfection, or filth and rottenness with glory and immortality? **The employment does not suit him:** the anthems of heaven don't fit his mouth; they don't suit his ear. Can you charm your beast with music, or would you bring him to your organ, and expect him to make a melody, or keep tune with the skilful choir? Or even if he has the skill, he would not have the will; and so he could find no pleasure in it, no more than a nauseous stomach finds in the meat on which it has just been stuffed. Spread your table with delicacies before a languishing patient, and it will only be an offence to him. Alas! If a man thinks a sermon is long, and he says of the Sabbath, *How tiresome this is!* <sup>Mal 1.13</sup> then how miserable would he be if he was held to that for eternity?

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(5.) It violates His *immutability*, or his *omniscience*, or his *omnipotence*.

It is enacted in the conclave of heaven, and registered in the decrees of the court above, that none but *the pure in heart will ever see God.* <sup>Mat 5.8</sup> This is stored away, and it is sealed among his treasures. Now, if Christ brings anyone to heaven who is still unconverted, either he must

get them in without his Father's knowledge (and then where is his Father's omniscience?), or against his will (and then where is his omnipotence?), or else he must change his will (and then where is his immutability?).

Sinner, will you not yet give up your vain hope of being saved in this condition? Says Bildad, *Will the earth be forsaken for you, or the rocks moved out of their place?* <sup>Job 18.4</sup> May I reason with you in this way much more? Will the laws of heaven be reversed for you? Will the everlasting foundations be overturned for you? Will Christ put out the eye of his Father's omniscience, or shorten the arm of his eternal power for you? Will divine justice be violated for you? Or the brightness of the glory of his holiness be blemished for you? Oh, the impossibility, the absurdity and blasphemy that exists in such confidence! To think Christ would ever save you in this condition, is to turn your Saviour into a sinner, and to do more wrong to the infinite Majesty than all the wicked on earth or devils in hell ever did or could do; and would you still not give up such a blasphemous hope?

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**Secondly, It would be against his word.** We need not say, *Who will ascend into heaven, to bring down Christ from above?* or, who will descend into the deep, to bring up Christ from beneath? the word is near us. <sup>Rom 10.6-8</sup> Are you agreed that Christ will end the controversy? Hear then his own words: *Unless you are converted, you will by no means enter into the kingdom of heaven.* <sup>Mat 18.3</sup> *You must be born again.* <sup>Joh 3.7</sup> *If I don't wash yourself, you have no part in me.* <sup>Joh 13.8</sup> *Repent, or perish.* <sup>Luk 13.3</sup> One would think that one word from Christ is enough; but how often and earnestly he reiterates it! *Truly, truly, Unless a man is born again, he will not see the kingdom of God.* <sup>Joh 3.3, 5</sup> Yes, he not only asserts it, but he proves the necessity of the new birth. Because of the fleshliness and filthiness of man's first birth, <sup>Joh 3.6</sup> man is no more fit for heaven than the beast is fit for the chamber of the king's presence. And will you still believe your own presumptuous confidence, directly against Christ's words? He would have to go against the law of his kingdom, and the rule of his judgment, to save you in such a condition.

**Thirdly, It would be against his oath.** He has lifted his hand to heaven. He has sworn that those who remain in unbelief, and don't know his ways, (that is, those who are ignorant of them, or disobedient to them) will not enter into his rest.<sup>1</sup> And will you not yet believe, O sinner, that he is in earnest? Can you hope he will recant for you? The covenant of grace is confirmed by an oath, and sealed by blood;<sup>2</sup>

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but all of this must be made void, and another way to heaven must be found, if you are to be saved, living and dying while yet un sanctified. God has come to his lowest and last terms with man; he has condescended as far as he could with honour; he has set up his pillars with a *Ne plus ultra*.<sup>3</sup> Men cannot be saved while unconverted, unless they can get another covenant made, and have the whole frame of the gospel altered (which was established forever with such dreadful solemnities). And wouldn't this be a misplaced hope?

**Fourthly, This would be against his honour.** God shows his love to the sinner so as to show his hatred toward sin also. Therefore, whoever names the name of Jesus must depart from iniquity <sup>2Tim 2.19</sup> and deny all ungodliness. Whoever hopes for life by Christ, must purify himself just as Christ is pure,<sup>4</sup> otherwise Christ will be thought to favour sin. The Lord Jesus would have

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<sup>1</sup> Psa 95.11; Heb 3.18

<sup>2</sup> Heb 6.17; 9.16, 18-19; Mat 26.28

<sup>3</sup> A standard of having no flaw or defect; with the highest perfection.

<sup>4</sup> 1Joh 3.3; Tit. 2.12

all the world know, though he pardons sin, he will not protect it. If holy David says, *Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity*,<sup>Psa 6.8</sup> and shuts the doors against them,<sup>Psa 101.7</sup> then should we not much more expect it because of Christ's holiness? Would it honour him to have dogs sit at the table, or to lodge pigs with his children, or to have Abraham's bosom become a nest of vipers?

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**Fifthly, This would be against his offices.** God has exalted Christ to be a Prince and a Saviour.<sup>Act 5.31</sup> He would act against both offices if he were to save men in their sins. It is the office of a king, *Parcere subjectis & debellare superbos*: To be a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to those who do well,<sup>Rom 13.3-4</sup>. *He is a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath on the one who does evil*. Now, would Christ favour the ungodly (continuing the metaphor), by taking those to reign with him who would not have Christ to reign over *them*?<sup>Luk 19.27</sup> This would be quite against his office: he therefore reigns so as to put his enemies under his feet.<sup>1Cor 15.24</sup> Now, if he were to place them in his bosom, he would betray the purposes of his regal power. It belongs to Christ, as a king, to subdue the hearts and slay the lusts of his chosen.<sup>Psa 45.5; 110.3</sup> What king would take rebels into his court, who are in open hostility toward him? What would this be but to betray life, kingdom, government, and all together? If Christ is a king, then he must have homage, honour, subjection, etc.<sup>Mal 1.6</sup> Now, to save men while they remain in their natural hostility toward him, would be to obscure his dignity, lose his authority, bring contempt on his government, and sell his dearly-bought rights for nothing.

Again, just as Christ would not be a Prince if he were to do this, neither would he be a Saviour; for his salvation is *spiritual*: he is called "Jesus" because he saves his people *from* their sins.<sup>Mat 1.21</sup> So, if he were to save them *in* their sins, he would be neither Lord nor Jesus. To save men from the *punishment* and not from the *power* of sin, would be to do half his work, and he would be an imperfect Saviour.

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His office as the *deliverer*, is to turn away ungodliness from Jacob.<sup>Rom 11.26</sup> *He is sent to bless men in turning them from their iniquities*,<sup>Act 3.26</sup> to make an end of sin.<sup>Dan. 9.24</sup> So he would destroy his own plans, and nullify his offices, if he saved men who remain in their unconverted state.

*Application.* Arise, then! What do you mean, O sleeper? Awake, O secure sinner, lest you be consumed in your iniquities! Say as the lepers do, *If we sit here we will die*.<sup>2Kng 7.3-4</sup> Truly, it is no more certain that you are now out of hell, than you will speedily be in it, unless you repent and are converted. There is just this one door for you to escape by. *Arise*, then, O sluggard, and shake off your excuses. How long will you slumber, and fold your hands to sleep?<sup>Pro 6.10-11</sup> Will you lie down in the midst of the sea, or sleep on top of the mast?<sup>Pro 23.34</sup> There is no other remedy; you either turn or burn. There is an unchangeable need to change your condition unless you are resolved to endure the worst of it, and contest it with the Almighty. If you love your life, O man, arise and come away! I think I see the Lord Jesus laying his merciful hands on you in holy fierceness; I think he does it as the angels did to Lot.<sup>Gen 19.15-17</sup> *Then the angels hurried Lot, saying, Arise, lest you be consumed. And while he lingered, the men grabbed his hand, the Lord being merciful to him, and they brought him outside the city, and said, Escape for your life! Don't stay in any of the plain — escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed!*

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Oh, how wilful your destruction will be, if you still harden yourself in your sinful state! But none of you can say you have not had fair warning. Yet I think I cannot tell how to leave you this way. It is not enough for me to have delivered my *own* soul. What! Will I go away without finishing my errand? Will none of you arise and follow me? Have I been speaking all this while to the wind? Have I been charming the deaf adder, or allaying the tumbling ocean with arguments? Do



I speak to trees and rocks, or to *men*? To the tombs and monuments of the dead, or to a living audience? If you are men, and not senseless stocks, then *stand still*, and consider where you are going. If you have the reason and understanding of men, then don't dare to run into the flames, and fall into hell with your eyes open. Instead, just think to yourselves, and set to the work of repentance. What! You are men, and yet you run into the pit when even the beasts will not be forced into it? What! You are endued with reason, and yet you dally with death and hell, and the vengeance of the Almighty?! Are men not distinguished from the brutes in this: that they have the foresight and care to provide for things to come? And will you not hasten your escape from eternal torment? Oh, show yourselves to be *men*, and let reason prevail with you! Is it reasonable for you to contend against the Lord your Maker? <sup>Isa 45:9</sup> Or to harden yourselves against his word<sup>Job 9:4</sup> as though the Strength of Israel would lie to you? <sup>1Sam. 15:29</sup>

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Is it reasonable that an understanding creature would lose, indeed, live quite against the very purpose of his being, and be like a broken pitcher that is fit only for the dunghill? Is it tolerable that the only thing in this world that God has made capable of knowing his will, and of bringing him glory, should still live in ignorance of his Maker, and be unserviceable to his use; indeed, that he should be engaged *against* him, and spit venom in the face of his Creator? Hear heavens, and give ear, O earth, and let the senseless creatures judge whether this is reason: that man, when God has nourished and brought him up, should rebel against him? <sup>Isa 1:2</sup> Judge yourselves: is it a reasonable undertaking for briars and thorns to set themselves in battle against the devouring fire? <sup>Isa 27:4</sup> Or for the potsherd of the earth to strive against his Maker?<sup>1</sup> If you say this *is* reason, surely the eye of reason has been put out. But if this is *not* reason, then there is no reason for you to continue as you are; rather it is entirely reasonable for you to immediately repent and turn.

What will I say? I could exhaust myself in this argument. Oh, if only you would listen to me so that you would quickly set a new course! Will you not be made clean? When will that be? What! Will nobody be persuaded? Reader, will I at least prevail with *you*? Will you sit down and consider the forementioned arguments, and debate whether it is best to turn? Come, let us reason together:

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Is it *good* for you to be in this condition? Will you sit still while the tide rolls in on you? Is it good for you to test whether God is as good as his word, and harden yourself in the conceit that all is well with you while you remain unsanctified?

But I know you will not be persuaded; most will stay as they are, and do as they have done. I know the drunkard will return to his vomit, and the deceiver will return to his deceit, and the lustful wanton will return to his dalliance. Alas! I must leave you where you were — in your ignorance or looseness, or in your lifeless formality and your customary devotions! However, I will sit down and bemoan my fruitless labours, and sigh over my perishing hearers.

Oh, distracted sinners! What will their end be? *What will they do in the day of his visitation? Where will they flee for help? Where will they leave their glory?* <sup>Isa 10:3</sup> How powerfully sin has bewitched them! How effectually the god of this world has blinded them! How strong their delusion is! How uncircumcised their ears are! How obdurate<sup>2</sup> their hearts are! Satan has them at his beck and call: but how long may I call and get no answer? I may dispute with them year after year, and all they give me is the hearing. They must and will have their sins, say what I will. Though I tell them there is death in the cup, they still lift it to their lips: though I tell them it is

<sup>1</sup> Isa 45:9

<sup>2</sup> Stubborn and persistent in wrongdoing.

the broad way, and that it ends in destruction, they still travel on it: I *warn* them, yet I cannot *win* them. Sometimes I think the mercies of God will melt them,

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and his winning invitations will overcome them; but I find them just as they were. Sometimes I think that the terror of the Lord will persuade them; yet this won't do it either. They approve the word, enjoy the sermon, and commend the preacher; but they still live as they did. They will not *deny* me, but they will not *obey* me either. They flock to the word of God, and they sit before me as his people, and they hear my words, but they will not *do* them. They value and plead for ministers. To them I am like someone who has a pleasant voice and sings a lovely song; yet I cannot get them to come under Christ's yoke. They love me, and say they will do anything for me; but for my life, I cannot persuade them to leave their sins, to forego their evil company, their intemperance, their unjust gain, etc. I cannot prevail with them to establish prayer in their families and in their studies, yet they promise me, like the disobedient son that said, *I go, sir; but did not.*<sup>Mat 21.30</sup> I cannot persuade them to learn the principles of religion, though *they will die without knowledge.*<sup>Job 36.12</sup> I tell them of their misery, but they believe it is well enough: if I tell them that, for particular reasons, I fear that their state is bad, they think I am critical. Or if they are awakened for the moment, they are quickly lulled asleep again by Satan, and they lose the sense of it all.

Alas for my poor hearers! Must they perish by the hundreds in the end, when ministers would so willingly save them? What course will I use with them that I have not tried?

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[What will I do for the daughter of my people? <sup>Jer 9.7</sup> O Lord God, *help!* Alas! Would I leave them this way? If *they* will not hear me, at least *you* hear me: Oh, that they might still live in your sight! *Lord, save them, or else they perish!* My heart would melt to see their houses on fire around them while they were fast asleep in their beds; and shouldn't my soul be moved within me to see them falling into endless perdition? Lord, have compassion, and save them from the burning: put forth your divine power and the work will be done: *but as for me, I cannot prevail.*]

**CHAP. IV — SHOWING THE MARKS OF THE UNCONVERTED.**

As long as we keep aloof in general statements, little fruit can be expected: the execution is done in the hand-fight. David is not awakened by the prophet as he hovers at a distance in insinuating parables: the prophet is forced to close with him, and tell him directly, *you* are the man. Few will deny the necessity of the new birth in words; but they have self-deluding confidence that the work is not to be done now. And because they know they are free from that gross hypocrisy that

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takes up religion merely for appearance in order to deceive others, and to veil their wicked plans, they are confident of their sincerity. They don't suspect they have that closer hypocrisy (where the greatest danger lies) by which a man deceives his own soul.<sup>Jas. 1.26</sup> But man's deceitful heart is such a matchless cheat, and self-delusion is so reigning and so fatal a disease, that I don't know which is greater: the difficulty, the dislike, or the necessity of undeceiving them, which is my present task. Alas for my unconverted hearers: they must either be undeceived, or undone. But how will this be effected? *Hic labor, hoc opus est.*<sup>1</sup>

[Help, O all-searching light, and let your discerning eye discover the rotten foundation of the self-deceiver; and lead me, Lord God, as you did the prophet, into the chambers of imagery, and dig through the wall of sinners' hearts, and discover the hidden abominations that are lurking out of sight in the dark. Oh, send your angel before me to open the assorted wards of their hearts, as you sent him before Peter; and make even the iron gates fly open of their own accord. And as Jonathan no sooner tasted the honey than his eyes were enlightened, so grant, O Lord, that when the poor deceived souls with whom I must deal, look upon these lines, their minds may be illuminated, and their consciences convicted and awakened, so that they may see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and be converted; and you may heal them.]

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This must be premised before we proceed to the discovery: it is most certain that men may have a confident persuasion that their hearts and states are good, and yet they are unsound. Hear the Truth Himself, who shows in Laodicea's case that men may be wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and yet they do not know it; indeed, they may be confident they are rich and increased in grace.<sup>Rev 3.17</sup> *There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet they are not washed from their filthiness.*<sup>Pro 30.12</sup> Who was better persuaded of his case than Paul while he still remained unconverted? <sup>Rom 7.9</sup> Those who mistake a strong confidence for sufficient evidence are miserably deceived. Those who have no better proof that they are converted than a strong persuasion are certainly still strangers to conversion.

But to get closer to the issue, as it was said of the adherents of antichrist, so it is said here: some unconverted carry their marks more openly in their foreheads; and some carry them more covertly in their hands. The apostle considers some on whom he writes the sentence of death to be in the following dreadful categories, which I beg you to pay attention to with all diligence.<sup>Eph 5.5-6</sup> *For you know this: that no whoremonger, or unclean person, or covetous man (who is an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience.*<sup>Rev 21.8</sup>

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*But the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, will have their place in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*<sup>1Cor 6.9-10</sup> *Don't you know that the unrighteous will not*

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<sup>1</sup> this is the hard work; this is the toil.

*inherit the kingdom of God? Don't be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers nor the effeminate,<sup>1</sup> nor those who abuse themselves with men,<sup>2</sup> nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, will inherit the kingdom of God.* See Gal. 5:19-21 Woe to those who have their names written in these red scrolls;<sup>3</sup> such may know as certainly as if God had told them from heaven, that they are unsanctified and they cannot be saved in this condition.

There are then the following sorts that are unconverted beyond dispute: they carry their marks openly in their foreheads.

1. The *unclean*. These are always counted among the goats, and have their names (whoever he left out) in all the forementioned lists. Eph 5:5; Rev 21:8; 1Cor 5:9, 19

2. The *covetous*. These are always branded as idolaters, and the doors of the kingdom are shut against them by name. Eph 5:5; Col. 3:5; 1Cor 6:9-10

3. *Drunkards*. Not only those who drink away their reason, but along with this, indeed, above all this, those who are *addicted* to strong drink. The Lord fills his mouth with woes against these, and he declares that they have no inheritance in the kingdom of God. Isa 5:11-12, 22; Gal. 5:31

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4. *Liars*. The God that cannot lie has told them that there is no place for them in his kingdom, no entrance into his hill; instead, their portion is with the father of lies (whose children they are) in the lake of burnings. Psa 15:1-2; Rev 21:8, 27; Joh 8:44; Pro 6:17

5. *Swearers*. The end of these, without deep and speedy repentance, is swift destruction and most certain and unavoidable condemnation. Jas. 5:12; Zech. 5:1-3

6. *Railers* and *backbiters*, those who love to criticize their neighbours, and fling all the dirt they can in his face, or else wound him secretly behind his back. Psa 15:1, 3; 1Cor 6:10; 5:11

7. *Thieves*, extortioners, oppressors, who grind the poor and over-stretch their brothers when they have them at an advantage: these must know that *God is the avenger of all these*.<sup>1</sup>Thes 4:6 Hear, O you false, and purloining, and wasteful servants! Hear, O you deceitful tradesmen! Hear your sentence: God will certainly hold shut his door against you, and turn your treasures of unrighteousness into the treasures of wrath, and make your ill-gotten silver and gold torment you like burning metal in your innards.<sup>1</sup>Cor 6:9-10, Jas. 5:2-3

8. All that typically live in the *profane neglect of God's worship*, those who don't hear his word, who don't call on his name, who withhold prayer before God, who don't mind their own soul, nor their family's souls, but live without God in the world. Joh 8:47; 15:4; Psa 14:4; 79:6; Eph 2:12; 4:18

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9. Those who are *frequenters* and *lovers of evil company*; God has declared he will destroy all such people, and that they will never enter into the hill of his rest. Pro 13:20; Psa 15:4; Pro 9:6

10. *Scoffers at religion*, those who scorn strict living, and laugh at the messengers and diligent servants of the Lord and their holy profession, and amuse themselves with the weakness and failings of those who profess Christ: hear, you despisers; hear your dreadful doom. Pro 19:29; 2Chr 36:16; Pro 3:24

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<sup>1</sup> This refers to the passive male partner in a homosexual relationship.

<sup>2</sup> This refers to a practicing homosexual.

<sup>3</sup> Heb 9:19; Rev 5:9

Sinner, consider diligently whether you are included among these ranks — for if this is your case, you are poisoned by bitterness, and bound by iniquity<sup>1</sup>; for all these persons carry their marks openly in their foreheads, and they are undoubtedly the sons of death.

And if so, may the Lord pity our poor congregations. Oh, how few would be left when these ten sorts are excluded? Alas, on how many doors, and on how many faces must we write, Lord, have mercy upon us! Sirs, what rationalization can you make to maintain your confidence in your good estate when God from heaven decides against you, and pronounces that you are in a state of damnation? I would reason with you, as God reasons with them; *How can you say, “I am not polluted?”* <sup>Jer 2.3</sup> *See your way in the valley, know what you have done.* Isn't your conscience aware of your deceitful tricks, of your chamber-pranks, of your way of lying?

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Indeed, aren't your friends, family, neighbours, witnesses to your profane neglect of God's worship, to your covetous practices, to your envious and malicious carriage? Might they not point at you saying, “There goes a gaming prodigal; there goes a drunken Nabal, a companion of evil-doers; there goes a railer, or a scoffer, a loose-liver?” Beloved, God has written it as if with a sun-beam, in the book from which you must be judged, that *these* are not the blemishes of his children, and that none such as these (unless they are renewed by converting grace) will ever escape the damnation of hell.

Oh, that anyone like this among you would now be persuaded to repent and turn from all your transgressions, or else iniquity will be your ruin! <sup>Eze 18.30</sup> Alas for poor hardened sinners! Must I leave you in the end where you were before? Must I leave the tippler<sup>2</sup> still at the ale-bench? Must I leave the wanton still at his dalliance? Must I leave the malicious still in his venom, and the drunkard still at his vomit? You must know that you have been warned, and that I am clear of your blood. And whether men will hear, or whether they will resist, I will leave these scriptures with them, either as thunder-bolts to awaken them, or as searing irons to harden them as reprobates: <sup>Psa 68.21</sup> *God will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of anyone who continues in his trespasses.* <sup>Pro 29.1</sup> *Being often reprov'd, one who stiffens his neck will suddenly*

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*be destroyed, and without remedy.* <sup>Pro 1.24, etc.</sup> *Because I have called and you refused, because I have stretched out my hand and no one heeded, etc. I will laugh at your calamity when your destruction comes like a whirlwind.*

And now I imagine, many will begin to bless themselves, and think all is well, because they cannot be spotted with the grosser evils mentioned above. But I must further tell you, that there is another sort of unsanctified person, those who don't carry their marks openly on their foreheads, but carry them more secretly and covertly in their hands. These frequently deceive themselves and others, and pass for good Christians when they are all the while unsound at their core. Many pass undiscovered until death and judgment bring everything to light. Those self-deceivers seem to come even to heaven's gate, confident of their admission, and yet they are turned away in the end. <sup>Mat 7.22</sup> Brothers, *beloved*, I beg you deeply to lay to heart and to firmly retain this awakening consideration: that multitudes go wrong by the hand of some secret sin that is not only hidden from others, but (for lack of watching their own hearts) even from themselves. A man may be free from open pollutions, and yet die at last by the fatal hand of some unobserved iniquity. And there are these twelve hidden sins by which numbers of souls go down into the chambers of death. You must search carefully for these, and take them as black marks wherever they are found; they reveal a graceless and unconverted estate.

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<sup>1</sup> Act 8.23

<sup>2</sup> Tippler — someone who drinks liquor repeatedly in small quantities.

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Just as you love your lives, read carefully, and with a holy jealousy for yourselves, lest you be one of the persons described here:

1. *Gross ignorance.* Ah, how many poor souls this sin kills in the dark <sup>Hos. 4.6</sup> while they sincerely think they have good hearts, and are on their way to heaven! This is the murderer who dispatches thousands silently when (poor hearts!) they suspect nothing, and don't see the hand that harms them. You will find, whatever excuses you have for ignorance, that it is a soul-undoing evil.<sup>1</sup> Ah! Would it not have saddened a man's heart to see that woeful spectacle, when the poor Protestants were shut up as a group in a barn, and a butcher comes with his inhuman hands, warm in human blood, and leads them one by one, blindfolded, to a block where he slew them (poor innocents!) one after another by the scores in cold blood?<sup>2</sup> But how much more should our hearts bleed to think of the hundreds who attend great congregations, and whom *Ignorance* butchers in secret, leading them blindfolded to the block? Beware to ensure this is not *your* case; do not plead ignorance! If you spare that sin, know that it will not spare you. Will a man keep a murderer in his heart?

2. *Secret reservations in following Christ.* To forsake all for Christ, to hate father and mother for him — yes, even a man's own life — this is a hard saying.<sup>Luk 14.6</sup> Some will do much, but they will not be of the sort of religion that deprives them of anything;

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they will never be entirely devoted to Christ, nor fully resigned to him; they must have their sweet sins. They will do themselves no harm, and so they have secret exceptions for life, liberty, or estate. Many take Christ by merely raising their hand, and never consider his self-denying terms, nor do they count the cost. This error in the foundation mars everything, and secretly ruins them forever.<sup>Luk 14.28; Mat 13.21</sup>

3. *Formality in religion.* Many stop at the bark of the tree, and rest on the outside of religion, in the external performances of their holy duties.<sup>Mat 23.25</sup> This most effectively deceives men; it more certainly undoes them than open looseness, as it did in the Pharisees' case.<sup>Mat 23.31</sup> They hear, they fast, they pray, they give charity; and so they believe their situation must be good.<sup>Luk 18.11</sup> Thus resting in the outward work, but falling short of the heart-work — the inward power and vitality of religion — in the end, they fall from the flattering hopes and confident persuasions that they are on their way to heaven, and into the flames.<sup>Mat 7.22-23</sup> Oh, it is a dreadful case when a man's religion serves only to harden him, and effectively deludes and deceives his own soul!

4. *The prevalence of false ends in holy duties.*<sup>Mat 23.25</sup> This was the bane of the Pharisees. Oh, how many a poor soul is undone by this, and drops into hell before he discerns his mistake! He performs good duties, and so he thinks all is well.

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He doesn't perceive that he is motivated by carnal ends all the while. It is too true, that even with the truly sanctified, many carnal ends will often creep in. But they are matters he hates and that humiliate him; they never become habitually prevalent with him, nor do they bear the greatest influence.<sup>3</sup> But when the main thing that ordinarily drives a man to religious duties is

<sup>1</sup> Isa 27.21; 2Thes 1.8; 2Cor 4.3

<sup>2</sup> Alleine may be referring to the massacre of a number of Huguenots in France, March 1, 1562. The duke of Guise and his men slew several dozen Protestant worshippers in a barn in the Champagne town of Vassy, near the Guise family seat of Joinville. The Protestants mobilized for self-defense, leading to the *First Civil War* (1562-1563) of the *French Wars of Religion*. — WHG

<sup>3</sup> The original text cites Rom 14.7 in obvious error. More likely it is Rom 7.15: For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I *would* like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate. (NAU)



some carnal end — to satisfy his conscience, to get the reputation of being religious, to be seen by men, to show off his own gifts and roles, to avoid the criticism of a profane and irreligious person, etc. — this discloses an unsound heart.<sup>1</sup> O Christians, if you want to avoid self-deceit, then see that you mind not only your *acts*, but along with them, indeed, above all, your *ends*.

5. *Trusting in their own righteousness.*<sup>Luk 18.9</sup> This is a soul-undoing mischief.<sup>Rom 10.3</sup> When men trust in their own righteousness, they do indeed reject Christ's. Beloved, you need to watch on every hand — for not only may your *sins* undo you, but your *duties*. It may be you never thought of this, but a man may just as certainly fail by his seeming righteousness, and supposed graces, as he does by gross sins. He does this when he trusts in these things as his righteousness before God, to satisfy God's justice, appease his wrath, procure his favour, and obtain his own pardon. This puts Christ out of office; it makes a saviour of his own duties and graces. Beware of this,

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O professors of Christ! Though you are much involved in duties, this one fly will spoil all the ointment. When you have done your most and your best, be sure to remove yourselves to Christ; consider your own righteousness as rags.<sup>Psa 143.3; Phi 3.8; Isa 64.6; Neh. 13.22</sup>

6. *A secret hostility against the strictness of religion.* Many moral persons, punctual in their formal devotions, still have a bitter hostility against strictness; they hate the life and power of religion.<sup>2</sup> They don't like this aggressiveness, that men are so stirred up by religion. They condemn the strictness of religion as an aberration, indiscretion, and intemperate zeal. With them, a lively preacher or a lively Christian is over-enthusiastic. These men don't love holiness *as* holiness (if they did, they would love the extremes of holiness). Therefore, they are undoubtedly rotten at heart, whatever good opinion they may have of themselves.

7. *Resting at a certain level of religion.* When they have enough to save them (as they suppose they have) they look no further; and so they show themselves short of the true grace that always makes men aspire to further perfection.<sup>Phi 3.13; Pro 4.18</sup>

8. *The predominant love of the world.* This is the sure evidence of an unsanctified heart.<sup>3</sup> But how close this sin lurks, often under a pleasing cover of open profession! <sup>Luk 8.14</sup> Indeed, such a power of deceit exists in this sin, that many times,

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when everybody else can see the man's worldliness and covetousness, he cannot see it himself. He has so many masks, and excuses, and pretences for his love of the world, that he blinds his own eyes, and he perishes in his self-deceit. How many professors of Christ are found here, with whom the world has more of their hearts and affections than Christ? How many long for earthly things, and are thereby evidently after the flesh, and likely to end in destruction? <sup>4</sup> Yet ask these men, and they will tell you confidently that they prize Christ above all, God forbid otherwise! They don't see their own earthly-mindedness for lack of a close observation of the working of their own hearts. If they only searched carefully, they would quickly find that their greatest contentment is in the world,<sup>Luk 12.19</sup> and their greatest care and main endeavour is to get and secure the world. This is the certain disclosure of an unconverted sinner. May those who profess Christ take earnest heed, so they will not perish by the hand of this unobserved sin. Men may be, and often are, kept from Christ as effectually by the inordinate love of lawful comforts, as they are by the most unlawful course of behavior.<sup>Mat 22.5; Luk 14.18-20, 24</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hos. 10.1; Zech. 7.5-6

<sup>2</sup> Phi 3.6 compared with Act 9.1

<sup>3</sup> Mar 10.37; 1Joh 2.15

<sup>4</sup> Rom 8.5; Phi 3.19

9. *Reigning malice and envy against those who disrespect or injure them.*<sup>1</sup>Joh 2.9, 11 Oh, how many who seem to be religious remember injuries, and carry grudges, and return to men as good as they get: rendering evil for evil, loving to take revenge,

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wishing evil to those who wrong them. All of this is directly against the rule of the gospel, the pattern of Christ, and the nature of God.<sup>1</sup> Doubtless, when this evil is kept boiling in the heart, and is not hated, resisted, and mortified, but instead habitually prevails, then that person is in the very poison of bitterness, and in a state of death.<sup>Mat 18.34-35; 1Joh 3.14-15</sup>

Reader, does nothing of this apply to you? Are you in none of the mentioned ranks? Oh, search and search again; take your heart solemnly to task. Woe to you if after your profession of faith, you are found under the power of ignorance, lost in formality, drowned in earthly-mindedness, envenomed with malice, exalted in the worth of your own righteousness, leavened with hypocrisy and with carnal ends in God's service, or embittered against strictness. This would be a sad discovery, that all your religion is in vain. But I must proceed.

10. *Unmortified pride.* When men love the praise of men more than the praise of God, and they set their hearts on men's esteem, applause, and approbation, it is most certain that they are still in their sins, and strangers to true conversion.<sup>2</sup> When men don't see, or complain, or groan under the pride of their own hearts, it is a sign they are stark-dead in sin. Oh, how secretly this sin lives and reigns in many hearts and they don't know it; they are complete strangers to themselves!<sup>Joh 9.40</sup>

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11. *The prevailing love of pleasure.*<sup>2</sup>Tim 3.4 This is a black mark. When men give the flesh the liberty that it craves, and they pamper and please it, and don't deny and restrain it; when their great delight is in gratifying their bellies and pleasing their senses: whatever appearance they may have of true religion, all of it is unsound.<sup>3</sup> A flesh-pleasing life cannot be pleasing to God; *Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh.* They are careful to oppose it and keep it under control as their enemy.<sup>Gal. 5.24; 1Cor 9.25-27</sup>

12. *Carnal security, or a presumptuous and ungrounded confidence that their condition is already good.*<sup>Rev 3.17</sup> Many cry peace and safety, when sudden destruction is coming upon them.<sup>1</sup>Thes 5.3 This is what kept the foolish virgins sleeping when they should have been working; it kept them on their beds when they should have been at the markets.<sup>4</sup> They didn't notice their lack of oil until the bridegroom had come; while they went to buy it, the door was shut. And oh, that these foolish virgins had no successors! Where is the place, indeed, where is the house where these sorts don't dwell? Men cherish in themselves a hope that their condition is good, basing it on ever so slight grounds; and so they don't seek to change. By this failure, they perish in their sins. Are you at peace? Show me the grounds on which your peace is based? Is it a scriptural peace? Can you show the distinguishing marks of a sound believer?

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Can you evidence that you have something more than any hypocrite in the world would have? If not, then fear this peace more than any other trouble. Know that a carnal peace commonly

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<sup>1</sup> Rom 12.14, 17; 1Pet 2.21, 23; Neh. 9.17

<sup>2</sup> Joh 12.43; Gal. 1.10

<sup>3</sup> Rom 16.18; Tit. 3.3

<sup>4</sup> Mat 25.5, 10; Pro 10.5

proves the greatest mortal enemy of the soul. While it smiles and kisses, and speaks nicely to you, it fatally strikes you under the fifth rib.<sup>1</sup>

By this time, I think I hear my reader crying out with the disciples, *Who then will be saved?* Remove from our congregations the ten sorts of openly profane, and then remove the twelve sorts of covert self-deceivers, and tell me whether a remnant is left to be saved? How few sheep will be left when all these are separated out and placed among the goats? For my part, of all my numerous hearers, I have no hope to see *any* of them in heaven who are found among these twenty-two sorts mentioned here — unless they are brought into *another condition* by sound *conversion*.

*Application.* And now, Conscience, perform your office: speak out, and drive it home to the one who hears or reads these lines. If you find any of these marks on him, you must pronounce him utterly unclean.<sup>Lev. 13.44</sup> Don't lie: don't speak peace to anyone to whom God speaks no peace. Don't let lust bribe you, or self-love; don't let carnal prejudice blind you. I *subpoena* you from the court of heaven, to come and give evidence: I require you, in the name of God,

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to go with me to search the suspected house. Because you will answer at your peril, give a true report of the state and condition of the one who reads this book. Conscience, will you utterly hold your peace at such a time as this? I adjure you by the living God, tell us the *truth*.<sup>Mat 26.63</sup> Is the man converted, or is he not? Does he allow himself to continue in any way of sin, or does he not? Does he truly love, please, prize, and delight in God above all other things, or not? Come, put it to the test.

How long will this soul live in uncertainty? O conscience, bring in your verdict. Is this man a new man, or is he not? How do you find it? Has a thorough and mighty change transpired in him, or not? When was the time? Where was the place? Or by what means was this thorough change of the new birth worked in his soul? *Speak*, conscience! Or if you cannot tell the time and place, can you show scripture evidence that the work is done? Has the man ever been removed from his false foundation, from the false hopes and false peace in which once he trusted? Has he been deeply convicted of sin, of his lost and undone condition, and has he been brought out of himself, and away from his sins, to surrender himself entirely to Jesus Christ? Or do you find him to this day under the power of ignorance, or in the mire of profaneness? Have you found on him the gains of unrighteousness? Do you find him a stranger to prayer;

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does he neglect the word; is he a lover of this present world? Do you often catch him in a lie? Do you find his heart fermented with malice, or burning with lust, or pursuing his covetousness? Speak plainly to all the mentioned particulars: can you acquit this man, this woman, from being any of the twenty-two sorts described here? If he is found in any of them, then set him aside; his portion is not with the saints. He must be converted and made a new creature, or else he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Beloved, don't betray yourselves; don't deceive your own hearts, or set your hands to your own ruin by wilfully blinding yourselves. Set up a tribunal in your own breasts. Bring the word and conscience together. *To the law, and to the testimony!* Isa 8.20. Hear what the word concludes about your condition. Oh, follow the search until you have discovered how your case stands. Make a mistake here, and you will perish: such is the treachery of the heart, the subtlety of the tempter, and the deceitfulness of sin.<sup>2</sup> All conspire to flatter and deceive the soul. Besides that, it

<sup>1</sup> 2Sam 3.27 — Joab fatally stabbed Abner under the 5<sup>th</sup> rib.

<sup>2</sup> Jer 17.9; 2Cor 11.3; Heb 3.13

is so common and easy to be mistaken; it is a thousand to one that you will be deceived unless you are very careful, and thorough, and impartial in the enquiry into your spiritual condition. Oh, therefore apply yourself to your work; get to the bottom of it; search for it with candles; weigh yourselves in the balance; come to the standard of the sanctuary;<sup>Lev 27.3</sup> bring your coin to the touchstone.<sup>1</sup>

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You have the worst cheats in the world to deal with: a world of counterfeit coin is going around; happy is the one who does not take tokens for gold.<sup>2</sup> Satan is the master of deceits; he can draw life-like; he is perfect in the trade. There is nothing he cannot imitate: you cannot wish for any grace that he cannot fit you to a tee with a counterfeit. Trade warily then: look at every piece you take. Be suspicious; don't trust so much as your own hearts. Run to God to search you and try you, to examine you and prove your heart.<sup>3</sup> If other helps don't suffice to resolve it, and you are still at a loss, open your case faithfully to some godly and faithful minister.<sup>Mal 2.7</sup> Don't rest until you have put the business of your eternal welfare out of question.<sup>2Pet 1.10</sup> *O searcher of hearts, put this soul upon the quest, and help him in the search.*

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<sup>1</sup> In other words, base your assessment on God's standards, and not on some counterfeit measure of warrantability.

<sup>2</sup> That is, taking a marker or promissory note in substitution for the gold itself.

<sup>3</sup> Psa 26.2; 139.23-24

**CHAP. V — SHOWING THE MISERIES OF THE UNCONVERTED.**

So unspeakably dreadful is the case of every unconverted soul, that I have sometimes thought, if we could only convince men they are still unregenerate, the work on this matter would be done. But sadly, I experience that such a spirit of sloth and slumber<sup>1</sup> possesses the unsanctified,

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that though they are convinced they are still unconverted, yet they often carelessly sit still. Through the pursuit of sensual pleasures, or the hurry of worldly business, or the noise and clamour of earthly cares, lusts, and affections,<sup>Luk 8.14</sup> the voice of conscience is drowned out. Men go no further than some cold wishes, and a general intent to repent and amend.<sup>Act 24.25</sup>

It is therefore highly necessary that I not only convince men they are unconverted, but also try to bring them to a sense of the fearful misery of this estate.

But here I find myself aground at the start. What tongue can sufficiently tell the heirs of hell about their misery if it were not Dives in that flame?<sup>Luk 16.24</sup> Where is the ready writer whose pen can decypher the misery of those who are without God in the world?<sup>Eph 2.12</sup> This cannot be fully done unless we knew the infinite ocean of bliss and perfection that is in God, which a state of sin excludes men from knowing. *Who knows (says Moses) the power of your anger?*<sup>Psa 90.11</sup> How will I tell men what I don't know? Yet the little we know, one would think, would shake the heart of a man who had the least degree of spiritual life and sense. But this is the more imposing difficulty: I am to speak to those who are *without* sense. Alas, this is not the least of man's misery: he is dead, *stark* dead in trespasses and sins.<sup>Eph 2.1</sup>

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If I could bring paradise into view, or present the kingdom of heaven as well as the tempter presented the kingdoms of the world and all their glory to our Saviour; or if I could disclose the face of the deep and devouring gulph of *Tophet*<sup>2</sup> in all its terrors, and open the gates of the infernal furnace, alas, he has no eyes to see it!<sup>Matt 13.14-15</sup> If I could vividly paint the beauties of holiness, or the glory of the gospel; or if I could bring into view the more than diabolical deformity and ugliness of sin, he could no more judge the loveliness and beauty of the one, nor the filthiness and hatefulness of the other, than a blind man could judge colours. He is alienated from the life of God through the ignorance brought on him by the blindness of his heart.<sup>Eph 4.18</sup> He neither does, nor *can* he know the things of God, because they are spiritually discerned.<sup>1Cor 2.14</sup> His eyes cannot be savingly opened except by converting grace.<sup>Act 26.18</sup> He is a child of darkness, and he walks in darkness;<sup>1Joh 1.6</sup> indeed, the light in him is darkness.<sup>Mat 6.2-3</sup>

Will I ring his death-knell, or read his sentence, or sound in his ear the terrible trumpet of God's judgments that (one would think) should make both his ears tingle, and throw him into a fit like Belshazzar's<sup>3</sup> — even appall his face, and loosen his joints, and make his knees knock together? Yet, alas! he does not perceive me; he has no ears to hear.

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Or will I call all the daughters of music to sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb? Still he would not be stirred. Will I allure him with the joyful sound, and lovely song, and glad tidings of the gospel? Or with the sweetest and most inviting calls, comforts, and cordials of the divine

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<sup>1</sup> Rom 11.8; Matt 13.15

<sup>2</sup> **KJV Isa 30:33** For Tophet [*a burning place*] is ordained of old; yes, for the king it is prepared; he has made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the LORD, like a stream of brimstone, does kindle it. See also Jeremiah 7:31-32; 19:6,11-14.

<sup>3</sup> Dan 5:6

promises that are so exceedingly great and precious? It will not savingly affect him unless I can find him ears,<sup>Mat 13.15</sup> and not just tell him the news.

Will I set before him the feast of fat things, the wine of wisdom, the bread of God, the tree of life, or the hidden manna? He has no appetite for them, and no mind for them.<sup>1</sup> If I were to press the choicest grapes, the heavenly clusters of gospel privileges, and afford him the richest wine of God's own cellar, indeed, of Christ's own side;<sup>Joh 19.34</sup> or if I were to set before him the delicious honeycomb of God's testimonies,<sup>Psa 19.10</sup> alas! he has no taste to discern them. Will I invite the dead to rise and eat the banquet of their own funerals? Well, the dead in sin are no better able to savour the holy food with which the Lord of life has spread his table.

What then will I do? Will I burn the brimstone of hell at his nostrils? Or will I open the box of very precious nard that fills the whole house of this universe with its perfume,<sup>2</sup> and hope that the savour of Christ's ointment and the smell of his garments will attract him? <sup>Psa 45.8</sup> Alas! Dead sinners are like dumb idols: they have mouths, but they don't speak; they have eyes, but they don't see; they have ears, but they don't hear;

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they have noses, but they don't smell; they have hands, but they don't touch; they have feet, but they don't walk, nor can they speak through their throat.<sup>Psa 115.5-7</sup> They are destitute of all spiritual sense and motion.

But let me try the sense that leaves us last, and draw the sword of the Word. Yet lay into him as I will, even if I were to choose my arrows from God's quiver, and direct them at his heart, nevertheless he does not feel it. How could he? He is past feeling! <sup>Eph 4.19</sup> Even though the wrath of God abides on him, and he has the mountainous weight of thousands of sins upon him, still he goes up and down as light as if nothing ailed him.<sup>Rom 7.9</sup> In a word, he carries a dead soul in a living body; his flesh is but the walking coffin of a corrupted mind that is twice dead,<sup>Jude 12</sup> rotting in the slime and putrefaction of his nauseating lusts.<sup>Mat 23.27-28</sup>

Which way then will I come at the miserable objects with whom I have to deal? Who will make the heart of stone relent,<sup>Zec 11.12</sup> or the lifeless carcass feel and move? It is *God* that is able to raise up children for Abraham out of stones,<sup>Mat 3.9</sup> who raises the dead,<sup>2Cor 1.9</sup> and melts the mountains,<sup>Nah. 1.5</sup> and brings water out of flintrock.<sup>Deu 8.15</sup> He loves to work beyond the hopes and belief of man; he peoples his church with dry bones, and plants his orchard with dry sticks. *He* is able to do this. Therefore I bow my knee to the most high God.<sup>Eph 3.14</sup>

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As our Saviour prayed at the sepulchre of Lazarus,<sup>Joh 11.38, 41</sup> and as the Shunammite ran to the man of God for her dead child,<sup>2Kng 4.25</sup> so your mourning minister kneels around your graves, and carries you in the arms of prayer to that God in whom your help is found.

[O you all-powerful Jehovah, who works and none can stop you; who has the keys of hell and death;<sup>Rev 1.18</sup> pity the dead souls who lie here entombed, and roll away the grave-stone, and say, as you said to Lazarus when he was already stinking, *Come forth!* Lighten this darkness O inaccessible light, and let the day-spring from on high visit the dark region of the dead to whom I speak: for you can open the eyes that death itself has closed: you who formed the ear, can restore the hearing: say to these ears, *Ephphatha*, and they will be opened. Give eyes to see your excellencies, a taste that may relish your sweetness, a scent that may savour your ointments, a feeling that may sense the privilege of your favour, the burden of your wrath, the intolerable weight of unpardoned sin; and command your servants to prophesy to the dry

<sup>1</sup> 1Cor 2.14; Mat 22.5

<sup>2</sup> Mar 14.3; Joh 12.8



bones. And let the effects of this prophecy be as when your prophet prophesied the valley of dry bones into a living army, exceedingly great:

*The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones. He said to me,*

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*Prophesy upon these bones, and say to them, O you dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, **and you will live**. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you; **and you will live**, and you will know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, Prophesy to the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, 'Thus says the Lord God, Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, **and they lived** and stood up upon their feet, an exceedingly great army. [Eze 37.1, etc.]*

But, as I am able, I must proceed now to unfold that misery which I confess, no tongue can unfold, no heart can sufficiently comprehend. Know, therefore, that while you are unconverted,

**I. The infinite God is engaged against you.**

It is no small part of your misery that you are without God.<sup>Eph 2.12</sup> Micah ran crying after the Danites, *You have taken away my gods, and what have I left?*<sup>Jdg 18.23-24</sup>

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Oh, what a mourning you must then lift up, you who are without God, who can lay no claim to him without daring to usurp! You may say of God as Sheba said of David, *We have no part in David, nor have we an inheritance in the son of Jesse.*<sup>2Sam. 20.1</sup> What a pitiful and piercing moan is Saul's extremity! *The Philistines are upon me, and God has departed from me.*<sup>1Sam 28.15</sup> Sinners, *what will you do in the day of his visitation? Where will you flee for help? Where will you leave your riches?*<sup>Isa 10.3</sup> What will you do when the Philistines are upon you; when the world takes its eternal leave of you; when you must bid your friends, houses, and lands farewell forevermore? What will you do then, I ask, you who don't have God to go to? Will you call on him *then*? Will you cry to him for help? Alas! He will not own you.<sup>Pro 1.28-29</sup> He will not admit any knowledge of you, but will send you packing with, *I never knew you.*<sup>Mat 7.23</sup> Those who know what it is to have God to go to, to live upon, they know a little what a fearful misery it is to be without God. This is what made that holy man cry out, *Let me have a God or nothing. Let me know him, and his will, and what will please him, and how I may come to enjoy him; or I would rather I never had an understanding to know anything,* etc.<sup>1</sup> But you are not only without God, but God is *against you.*<sup>2</sup> Oh, if God would only be neutral, as though he did not own or help the poor sinner, his case would not be so deeply miserable. Even if

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God were to surrender the poor creature to the will of all his enemies, to do the worst with him; even if he were to deliver him over to the torments<sup>Mat 18.34</sup> so that devils would tear and torture him to their utmost power and skill, yet this would not be half so fearful. But God will set *himself* against the sinner, and believe it, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living*

<sup>1</sup> Unknown reference; but see Rom 3.4 — WHG

<sup>2</sup> Eze 5.8-9; Nah. 2.13

God.<sup>Heb 10.31</sup> There is no friend like him, and no enemy like him. As much as heaven is above the earth, and omnipotence above impotency, and infinity above nullity — so much more horrible is it to fall into the hands of the living God than into the paws of bears or lions, indeed, furies or devils. God himself will be your tormentor. Your destruction will come from the presence of the Lord.<sup>2Thes 1.9</sup>

[*Tophet is deep and large, and the breath of the Lord kindles it like a stream of brimstone.*<sup>Isa 30.33</sup> *If God is against you, who will be for you? If one man sins against another, the judge will judge him: but if a man sins against the Lord, who will entreat for him?*<sup>1Sam. 2.25</sup> *You, even you, are to be feared; and who will stand in your sight once you are angry?*<sup>Psa 76.7</sup> *Who is that god who will deliver you out of his hands?*<sup>Dan. 3.15</sup> *Can Mammon? Riches will not profit in the day of wrath.*<sup>Pro 11.4</sup> *Can kings or warriors? No, they will cry to the mountains and to the rocks to fall on us, and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath has come, and who will be able to stand?*<sup>Rev 6.15-17</sup>]

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Sinner, I think this should pierce your heart like a dagger: to know that God is your enemy. Oh, where will you go? Where will you find shelter? There is no hope for you unless you lay down your weapon, plead out your pardon, and get Christ to stand as your friend and make your peace. If it were not for this, you might go into some howling wilderness and pine there in sorrow, with anguished heart and horrible despair. But in Christ there is a possibility of mercy for you, yes, a proffer of mercy to you; that you may have God be more for you than he is now against you. But if you will not forsake your sins, nor turn thoroughly and purposely to God by a sound conversion, the wrath of God abides on you; and he proclaims that he is against you, as in the prophet: *Therefore, thus says the Lord God, Behold I, even I, am against you.*<sup>Eze 5.8</sup>

1. His face is against you. *The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them.*<sup>Psa 34.16</sup> Woe to those whom God sets his face against. When he but looked upon the host of the Egyptians, how terrible was the consequence! *I will set my face against that man, and I will make him a sign, and a proverb, and will cut him off from the midst of my people, and you will know that I am the Lord.*<sup>Eze 14.8</sup>

2. His heart is against you: *He hates all the workers of iniquity.*

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Man, does your heart not tremble to think of being an object of God's hatred? *Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be inclined towards this people: throw them out of my sight.*<sup>Jer 15.1</sup> *My soul loathed them, and their souls also abhorred me.*<sup>Zech. 11.8</sup>

3. His hand is against you.<sup>1Sam. 12.14-15</sup> All his attributes are against you:

First, His **justice** is like a flaming sword, unsheathed against you. *If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to my adversaries, and will reward those who hate me. I will make my arrows drunk with blood, etc.*<sup>Deu 32.41-42</sup> So strict is justice, that it will by no means clear the guilty.<sup>Exo 34.7</sup> God will not discharge you; he will not hold you guiltless.<sup>Exo 20.7</sup> Rather, he will require the whole debt from you personally, unless you can make a scripture-claim to Christ, and to his satisfaction. When the enlightened sinner looks on justice and sees the balance in which he must be weighed, and the sword by which he must be executed, he feels an earthquake in his breast. But Satan keeps this out of sight, and he persuades the soul while he can, that the Lord is made up entirely of mercy, and so he lulls the soul to sleep in sin. Divine justice is very strict; it must have satisfaction to the last penny; it pronounces indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul that does evil.<sup>Rom 2.8-9</sup> It curses every one who does not continue to do everything that is written in the law.<sup>Gal. 3.10</sup>

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The justice of God, to the unpardoned sinner who has any sense of his misery, is more terrible than the sight of the bailiff or creditor is to the bankrupt debtor; than judge and bench are to the robber; or irons and gallows are to the guilty murderer. “When justice sits upon life and death, oh, what dreadful work it makes with the wretched sinner! *Bind him hand and foot; throw him into utter darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*<sup>Mat 22.13</sup> *Depart from me you cursed, into everlasting fire.*<sup>Mat 25.41</sup> This is the terrible sentence that justice pronounces. Sinner, why must you be tried by this severe justice? As God lives, you *will* hear this death sentence unless you repent and are converted.

*Secondly, The holiness of God is full of antipathy against you.*<sup>Psa 5.4-5</sup> He is not only angry with you (as he may be with his own children), but he has a fixed, rooted, habitual displeasure against you; he *loathes* you,<sup>Zech. 11.8</sup> and he loathes what you do, even though he may have commanded the substance of it.<sup>1</sup> It is as if a man gave his servant very good meat to prepare; yet if the servant mingled filth or poison with it, the man would not touch it. God’s nature is infinitely contrary to sin, and so he can but hate a sinner who is out of Christ.

Oh, what a misery this is, to be out of the favour, indeed, under the *hatred* of God! <sup>2</sup> God might as easily lay aside his nature, and cease to be God,

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as not to oppose you, and detest you, unless you are changed and renewed by grace. O sinner, how dare you think of the bright and radiant sun of purity, or think upon the beauties, the glory of holiness that is in God! *Even the stars are not pure in his sight.*<sup>Job 25.5</sup> *He humbles himself to behold things in the heavens.*<sup>Psa 113.6</sup> Oh, those light and sparkling eyes of his! What they spy in you! Nor do you have any part in Christ for which he would plead for you. I think you would cry out, astonished like the Bethshemites, *Who can stand before this holy Lord God?*<sup>1Sam. 6.20</sup>

*Thirdly, The power of God is mounted like a mighty cannon against you.* The glory of God’s power is displayed in the horrific confusion and destruction of those who don’t obey the gospel.<sup>2Thes 1.8-9</sup> He will make his power known in them.<sup>Rom 9.22</sup> How mightily he can torment them! For this end he raises them up: *that he might make his power known.*<sup>Rom 9.17</sup> O man, are you able to make a good contest with your Maker? It is no more than a silly reed against the cedars of God, or a little rowboat against the tumbling ocean, or children’s bubbles against the blustering winds.

Sinner, the power of God’s anger is against you! <sup>Psa 90.11</sup> Power and anger together make fearful work. It would be better if you had all the world in arms against you, than to have the power of God against you. There is no escaping his hands, no escaping his prison.

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“*Who can understand the thunder of his power?*”<sup>Job 26.14</sup> Unhappy is the man who would understand it by experiencing it! “*If he would contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand times. He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength. Who has hardened himself against him and prospered? He removes the mountains, and they don’t know it. He overturns them in his anger. He shakes the earth out of her place and its pillars tremble. He commands the sun and it does not rise; and he seals up the stars. Behold, he takes away and who can stop him? Who will say to him, What are you doing? If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers bend under him.*”<sup>Job 9.3-7, 12-13</sup> And are you a fit match for such an antagonist? *Oh, consider this — you who forget God — lest he tear you in pieces and there is none to deliver*

<sup>1</sup> Isa 1.14; Mal 1.10

<sup>2</sup> Ecc 5.4; Hos. 9.15

*you.*<sup>Psa 50.22</sup> Submit to mercy. Don't let dust and stubble stand against the Almighty. Don't set briars and thorns against him in battle, lest he go through them and consume them together; *but lay hold of his strength, that you may make peace with him.*<sup>Isa 27.4-5</sup> *Woe to him that strives with his Maker,*<sup>Isa 45.9</sup>

*Fourthly, The **wisdom** of God is set to ruin you.* He has fixed his arrows, and prepared the instruments of death, and made everything ready.<sup>Psa 7.12-13</sup> His plans are against you to devise your destruction.<sup>Jer 18.11</sup> He laughs to himself to see how you will be taken and ensnared in the evil day.<sup>Psa 37.13</sup>

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*The Lord will laugh at him, for he sees that his day is coming.* He sees how you will come down mightily in a moment; how you will wring your hands, and tear your hair, and eat your flesh, and gnash your teeth out of anguish and an astonished heart, when you see you have fallen without remedy into the pit of destruction.

*Fifthly, The **truth** of God is sworn against you.*<sup>Psa 95.11</sup> If he is true and faithful, you must perish if you go on this way.<sup>Luk 13.3</sup> Unless he is false to his word, you must die unless you repent.<sup>Eze 33.11</sup> *If we don't believe, he still abides faithful; he cannot deny himself;*<sup>2Tim 2.13</sup> that is, he is faithful to his threats as well as to his promises. And if we don't believe, he will show his faithfulness in our confusion. God has told you as plain as it can be spoken, that if he does not wash you, you have no part in him;<sup>Joh 13.8</sup> that if you live after the flesh, you will die;<sup>Rom 8.13</sup> that unless you are converted, you will in no way enter into the kingdom of heaven.<sup>Mat 18.3</sup> And he remains faithful: he cannot deny himself. Beloved, just as the immutable faithfulness of God in his promise and oath affords believers strong consolation,<sup>Heb 6.18</sup> it also affords *un*-believers strong consternation and confusion. O sinner, tell me: what rationalizations do you make when you think of all the threats of God's word that stand on record against you? Do you believe their truth, or not? If not, then you are a wretched infidel, and *not* a Christian; therefore give up the name and the hopes of a Christian.

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But if you *do* believe them, then you must have a heart of steel that you can calmly walk up and down when the truth and faithfulness of God is engaged to destroy you! If God Almighty can do it, then you will surely perish and be damned. Why man, the whole book of God testifies against you while you remain unsanctified: it condemns you on every page. It is like Ezekiel's scroll to you: written inside and out with lamentation, and mourning, and woe.<sup>Eze 2.9-10</sup> And all this will surely come upon you, and overtake you,<sup>Deu 28.15</sup> unless you repent. *Heaven and earth will pass away, but not one jot or tittle of this word will ever pass away.*<sup>1</sup>

Now put all this together, and tell me if the case of the unconverted is not deplorably miserable? Just as we read of those who bound themselves by an oath and a curse to kill Paul,<sup>Act 23.12</sup> so you must know, O sinner, to your terror, that all the attributes of the infinite God are bound in an oath to destroy *you.*<sup>Heb 3.28</sup> O man! What will you do? Where will you flee? If God's omniscience can find you, you will not escape. If the true and faithful God will keep his oath, then you must perish unless you believe and repent. If the Almighty has the power to torment you, you will be perfectly miserable in soul and body for all eternity, unless it is prevented by your speedy conversion.

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**II. The whole creation of God is against you.** The whole creation (says Paul) groans and travails in pain.<sup>Rom 8.22</sup> But what is it that the creation groans under? Why, the tearful abuse that it is

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<sup>1</sup> Mat 5.18

subject to in serving the lusts of unsanctified men. And what is it that the creation groans for? Why, for freedom and liberty from this abuse: for the creature is unwillingly subject to this bondage.<sup>Rom 8.19-21</sup> If the unreasonable and inanimate creatures had speech and reason, they would cry out under it as insufferable bondage to be abused by the ungodly, contrary to their natures and contrary to the ends that the great Creator made them for. A passage from an eminent divine<sup>1</sup> says, “The liquor that the drunkard drinks, if it had a man’s reason to know how shamefully it is being abused and spoiled, it would groan in the barrels against the drunkard; it would groan in the cup against him; groan in his throat and in his belly against him; it would fly in his face, if it could speak. And if God were to open the mouths of the creatures, as he opened the mouth of Balaam’s ass, the proud man’s garments on his back would groan against him. There is no such creature that, if it had reason to know how it is abused, would not groan against the man until he converted. The land would groan to bear him; the air would groan to give him breath; their houses would groan to lodge them; their beds would groan to ease them; their food would groan to nourish them; their clothes would groan to cover them; and the creature would groan to give them any help and comfort, as long as they live in sin against God.” I think this should be a terror to an unconverted soul: to think that he is a burden to the creation.<sup>Luk 13.7</sup>

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*Cut it down, why should it encumber the ground?* If the poor inanimate creatures could only speak, they would say to the ungodly, as Moses said to Israel, *Must we fetch you water out of the rock, you rebels?*<sup>Num. 20.10</sup> Your food would say, “Lord, must I nourish such a wretch as this, and yield my strength for him to dishonour you with it? No, I would rather choke him, if you will give me permission.” The very air would say, “Lord, must I give this man breath to set his tongue against heaven, and scorn your people, and vent his pride, and wrath, and filthy communication, and belch out oaths and blasphemy against you? No, if you just say the word, he will be breathless for me.” His poor beast would say, “Lord, must I carry him for his wicked plans? No, I will break his bones; I would rather end his days, if I may only have your permission.” The earth groans under a wicked man, and hell groans *for* him, until death satisfies both and unburdens the earth, and shuts the mouth of hell with him. While the Lord of hosts is against you, be sure the hosts of the Lord are against you, and all the creatures (as it were) are up in arms against you until, upon your conversion, the controversy between God and you ends, and a covenant of peace with the creatures is made for you.<sup>2</sup>

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**III.** *The roaring lion has his full power upon you.*<sup>1Pet 5.8</sup> You are held fast in the paw of that lion which is greedy to devour you. You are *in the snare of the devil, led captive by him at his will.*<sup>2Tim 2.26</sup> This is *the spirit that works in the children of disobedience.*<sup>Eph 2.2</sup> They are his drudges,<sup>3</sup> and they do his lusts. He is the ruler of darkness of this world,<sup>Eph 6.12</sup> that is, the ruler of ignorant sinners who live in darkness. You pity the poor *Indians* that worship the devil as their God, but seldom think this is your own case. Why, it is the common misery of all the unsanctified, that the devil is their God. <sup>2Cor 4.4</sup> They don’t *intend* to pay him homage and worship him; they would defy him and anyone who said this about them; yet all the while they serve him; they come and go at his beck, and they live under his government. *You are servants of the one to whom you yield yourselves as obedient servants.*<sup>Rom 6.16</sup> Oh, how many then will be found real servants of the devil, who consider themselves the children of God! The devil no sooner offers a sinful delight, or an opportunity for your unlawful advantage, than you embrace it. If he suggests a lie or he prompts you to revenge, you readily obey. If he forbids you to read or to pray, you

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<sup>1</sup> Unknown reference – WHG

<sup>2</sup> Job 5.22-24; Hos. 2.18-20

<sup>3</sup> A laborer who is obliged to do menial work.



listen to him. Therefore you are his servants. Indeed, he lies behind the curtain; he acts in the dark, and sinners don't see who sets them to work. But all the while he leads them on a string. Doubtless the liar does not intend it to be a service to Satan, but to his own advantage; yet it is Satan that stands in the corner unobserved, and puts the thing into his heart.<sup>1</sup> Unquestionably, when *Judas* sold his Master for money, and when the *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans*

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plundered Job, they did not intend to do the devil a favor; they intended only to satisfy their own covetous thirst; yet it was the devil that actuated them in their wickedness.<sup>2</sup> Men may indeed be slaves and common drudges for the devil, and never know it. In fact, they may think they enjoy a happy liberty.<sup>2Pet 2.19</sup>

Are you still in ignorance, and not yet turned from darkness to light? Why, you are under the power of Satan! <sup>Act 26.18</sup> Do you live in the ordinary and wilful practice of any known sin? Then know that you are of the devil.<sup>1Joh 3.8</sup> Do you live in strife, or envy, or malice? Truly he is your father.<sup>Joh 8.40-41</sup> Oh, dreadful case! However Satan may provide his slaves with various pleasures,<sup>Tit. 3.3</sup> it is merely to roll them into endless perdition. The serpent comes with the apple in his mouth, Oh, but (as with *Eve*) you don't see the deadly sting in his tail. The one who is now the tempter, will be one day your tormenter. Oh, that I could let you see how black a master you serve, how filthy a drudgery you do, how merciless a tyrant you gratify! His whole pleasure is to put you to work to make your perdition and damnation sure, and to heat the furnace hotter and hotter in which you must burn for millions and millions of ages.

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**IV.** *The guilt of your sins lies like a mountain upon you.* Poor soul! You don't feel it, but this is what seals your misery. While unconverted, none of your sins are blotted out,<sup>Act 3.19</sup> they are all on the score against you: regeneration and remission are never separated; the unsanctified are unquestionably unjustified and unpardoned.<sup>3</sup> Beloved, it is a fearful thing to be in debt, but above all to be in God's debt; for there is no arrest so formidable as his, no prison so horrible as his. Look upon an enlightened sinner, who feels the weight of his own guilt: Oh, how frightful are his looks, how fearful are his complaints! His comforts are turned into wormwood,<sup>4</sup> his moisture into drought,<sup>Psa 32.4</sup> and sleep has departed from his eyes.<sup>Gen 31.40</sup> He is a terror to himself and to all that are around him. He is ready to envy the very stones that lie in the street because they are senseless, and don't feel his misery. He wishes he had been a dog, or a toad, or a serpent, rather than a man, because then death would have put an end to his misery; whereas now it will be just the beginning of what will know no end.

However light you may make of it now, you will one day find the guilt of unpardoned sin to be a heavy burden. This is a millstone that breaks whoever falls on it; and on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.<sup>Mat 21.44</sup> What work it made for our Saviour! It pressed the very blood out of his veins, and broke all his bones. If it did this in the green tree, what will it do in the dry?

Oh, think of your ease *later*. Can you think of this threat without trembling:

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*You will die in your sins?* <sup>Joh 8.24</sup> Oh, it would be better for you to die in a prison, or to die in a ditch or a dungeon, than die in your sins. If death would take away your sins too, just as it will

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<sup>1</sup> Act 5.2; Joh 8.44

<sup>2</sup> Joh 13.27. Job 1.12, 15, 17

<sup>3</sup> 1Cor 6.11; 1Pet 1.2; Heb 9.14

<sup>4</sup> Wormwood is a bitter and poisonous root. The reference is Amos 6.12.



take away all your other comforts, it would be some mitigation. But your sins will follow you when your friends leave you, and all your worldly enjoyments say good-bye to you. Your sins will not die with you <sup>1</sup> as a prisoner's other debts will. Instead, they will go to judgment with you, to be your accusers there: and they will go to hell with you, to be your tormentors there. Better to have many fiends and furies around you, than to have your sins fall upon you, and fasten to you. Oh, the work that these will make for you! Look over your debts in time! How much are you in the ledgers of every one of God's laws? Every one of God's commandments is ready to arrest you, and take you by the throat for the innumerable bonds it has on you. What will you do then, when they accumulate against you? Hold open the eyes of your conscience to consider this, so that you may despair of yourself and be driven to Christ, and flee for refuge to lay hold of the hope that is set before you. <sup>Heb 6.18</sup>

**V. *Your raging lusts miserably enslave you.*** While unconverted, you are a servant to sin. It reigns over you and holds you under its dominion, until you are brought within the bonds of God's covenant.<sup>2</sup> Now there's no other tyrant like sin.

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Oh, the filthy and fearful work that it engages its servants in! Would it not pierce a man's heart to see a company of poor creatures drudging and toiling, to carry both kindling and fuel for their own burning? Why, this is the employment of sin's drudges: even while they bless themselves in their unrighteous gains, even while they swing and swill in pleasures, they are but treasuring up wrath and vengeance for their eternal burnings; they are but storing up powder and bullets, and adding to the pile of *Tophet*, pouring oil on the fire to make the flame rage all the fiercer. Who would serve a master whose work is drudgery, and whose wages is death? <sup>Rom 6.23</sup>

What a woeful spectacle was that poor wretch who was possessed with the legion! Wouldn't it have grieved your heart to see him among the tombs, cutting and wounding himself? <sup>Mar 5.5</sup> This is *your* case; such is *your* work; every stroke is a thrust at *your* heart. <sup>1Tim 6.10</sup> Conscience is now asleep, but when death and judgment bring you to your senses, then you will feel the raging pain and anguish of every wound. The convicted sinner is a tangible instance of the miserable bondage of sin: conscience flies upon him, and tells him what the end of these things will be: and yet he is such a slave to his lust, that he must continue, even though he sees it will be his endless perdition. And when temptation comes, lust gets the bit in his mouth, breaks all the cords of his vows and promises, and carries him headlong to his own destruction.

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**VI. *The furnace of eternal vengeance is heated — ready for you.*** <sup>Isa 30.33</sup> Hell and destruction open their mouths for you, they gape for you, they groan for you, <sup>Isa 5.14</sup> waiting with a greedy eye as you stand on the brink, and when you drop in. If the wrath of man is like *the roaring of a lion*, <sup>Pro 20.2</sup> and *heavier than sand*, <sup>Pro 27.3</sup> then what is the wrath of the infinite God? Nebuchadnezzar in his fiery rage commanded the burning furnace to be heated seven times hotter. If that furnace was fierce enough to burn even those who drew near to throw the three children in, <sup>Dan. 3.19, 22</sup> then how hot is the burning oven of the Almighty's fury? <sup>Mal 4.1</sup> Surely this is seventy times seven more fierce. What do you think, O man, of becoming a bundle of sticks in hell for all eternity? *Can your heart endure, or can your hand be strong in the day when I will deal with you? says the Lord of hosts.* <sup>Eze 22.14</sup> Can you dwell with everlasting burnings? Can you abide the consuming fire, when you are like a glowing iron in hell, and your whole body and soul are as perfectly possessed by God's burning vengeance, as the fiery sparkling iron is when heated in the fiercest forge? <sup>Ezek 22.20</sup> If you cannot bear God's whip, how then will you endure his

<sup>1</sup> 2Cor 5.10; Rev 20.12

<sup>2</sup> Joh 8.34, 36; Tit. 3.3; Rom 6.12, 14; 6.16-17

scorpion? If you are crushed, and ready to wish yourself dead under the weight of his finger, how then will you bear the weight of his thighs?

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The most patient man who ever was, cursed the day he was born,<sup>Job. 3.1</sup> and even wished death to come and end his misery when God let out just one little drop of his wrath. <sup>Job. 7.15-16</sup> How then will you endure when God pours out all of his vials, and sets himself against you to torment you? When he makes your conscience the tunnel by which he pours his burning wrath into your soul forever? And when he fills all your powers as full of torment as they are now filled with sin? When immortality will be your misery; and to die the death of a brute, and be swallowed into the gulph of annihilation, will be such a felicity that an eternity of wishes and an ocean of tears will never purchase it? *Now* you can put off the evil day, and you can laugh and be merry, and forget the terror of the Lord.<sup>2Cor 5.11</sup> But *then* how will you hold out, or hold up, when God throws you into a bed of torments,<sup>Rev 2.21</sup> and makes you lie down in sorrows?<sup>Isa 1.11</sup> How will you hold out when screams and blasphemy are your only music and the wine of God's wrath, which is poured without mixture into the cup of his indignation, is your only drink? <sup>Rev 14.10</sup> How will you hold out when you draw your breath in the flames, and the horrid stench of sulphur is your only perfume? In a word, when the smoke of your torment ascends forever and ever, and you have no rest night nor day — no rest in your conscience, no ease in your bones; instead, you will be an execration, an astonishment, a curse and a reproach forevermore! <sup>Jer 42.18</sup>

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O sinner! Stop here, and consider! If you *are* a man, and not a senseless block, consider! Think to yourself where you stand. Why, you're on the very brink of this furnace! As the Lord lives, and your soul lives, there is just a step between you and this.<sup>1Sam. 20.3</sup> You don't know when you lie down, whether you may be in that furnace before the morning. You don't know when you rise, whether you may drop into it before the night. Do you dare make light of this? Will you go on in such a dreadful condition as if nothing ailed you? If you put it off and say it doesn't affect you, look over the foregoing chapter again, and tell me the truth: are none of these black marks found on you? Don't blind your eyes; don't deceive yourself; see your misery while you may still prevent it. Think what it is to be a vile outcast, a damned reprobate, a vessel of wrath into which the Lord will pour his tormenting fury as long as the man has a being.<sup>Rom 9.22</sup>

Divine wrath is a fierce,<sup>Deu 32.22</sup> devouring, <sup>Isa 33.14</sup> everlasting,<sup>Mat 25.41</sup> unquenchable fire,<sup>Mat 3.12</sup> and your soul and body must be the fuel on which it will feed forever — unless you consider your ways, and speedily turn to the Lord by sound conversion. Those who have only been singed by this fire, and had no more than the smell of it on them, oh, what amazing spectacles they have been!

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Whose heart would not have melted to hear *Spira's*<sup>1</sup> outcries? Or to have seen *Chaloner*,<sup>2</sup> that monument of justice, worn to skin and bones, blaspheming the God of heaven, cursing himself, and continually crying out, Oh, torture, torture, torture! Oh, torture, torture! It was as if the flames of wrath had already taken hold on him. To have heard *Rogers*<sup>3</sup> crying out, *I have had a little pleasure, but now I must go to hell forevermore*; wishing only for this mitigation: that God

<sup>1</sup> Francis Spira (d. 1548) was an Italian lawyer who became a Protestant but apostatized. He died in despair thinking himself to be a reprobate. See *Surgeon's Sermon No. 547*.

<sup>2</sup> Which "Chaloner" this refers to is unknown. It is not Thomas Chaloner, who authored *Moses his Tombe* (1656). Thomas Chaloner opposed Oliver Cromwell, Presbyterian rule, and religion in general. However, Thomas Chaloner was *not* burned at the stake. He was excluded from Parliament, then left England, and died in Holland in 1661.

<sup>3</sup> It is unknown which Rodgers this refers to.

would just let him lie burning forever behind the back of that fire (on the earth) — still bringing this sad conclusion, after whatever else was said to afford him some hope, “I must go to hell, I must go to the furnace of hell for millions of millions of ages!” Oh, if the *fears* and *forethought* of the wrath to come is so terrible, so intolerable, what is the *feel* of it?

Sinner, it is in vain to flatter you; this would only summon you into the unquenchable fire. Know from the living God that here you must lie; you must dwell with these burnings until immortality dies and immutability changes; until eternity runs out and omnipotence is no longer able to torment — unless in good earnest you are renewed throughout by sanctifying grace.

**VII.** *The law discharges all its threats and curses at you.*<sup>1</sup> Oh, how dreadfully it thunders! It spits fire and brimstone in your face: its words are like drawn swords and the sharp arrows of the mighty: it demands satisfaction to the utmost, and it cries, “Justice, justice!”

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It speaks blood and war against you, wounds and death. The execration, plagues, and deaths that this murdering piece is loaded with! (*Deu 28.15-16, etc.*) You are the target at which this shot is leveled, O man! Run away to the stronghold! <sup>Zech. 9.12</sup> Run away from your sins and hasten to the sanctuary, to the city of refuge, <sup>Heb 13.13</sup> even the Lord Jesus Christ. Hide yourself in him, or else you are lost and without any hope of recovery.

**VIII.** *The gospel itself binds on you the sentence of eternal damnation.*<sup>Mar 16.16</sup> If you continue in your impenitent and unconverted state, know that the gospel announces a much worse condemnation than would ever have been levied for the transgression only of the first covenant. Isn't it dreadful to have the gospel fill its mouth with threats, thunder, and damnation, and to have the Lord roar from mount Sion against you? <sup>Joel 3.16</sup> Hear the terror of the Lord: *He that does not believe will be damned. Unless you repent, you will all perish.*<sup>Luk 13.3</sup> Isn't this the condemnation: that light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light? <sup>Joh 3.19</sup> *The wrath of God abides on the one who does not believe, Joh 3.36. If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received its just reward, then how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?*<sup>Heb 2.2-3</sup>

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*Anyone that despised Moses' law died without mercy: how much worse punishment will someone be thought worthy of, who has trampled underfoot the Son of God?*<sup>Heb 10.28-29</sup>

**Application.** Is this *true* indeed? Is this *your* misery? Yes, it is as true as God is true. Better open your eyes and see it now while you may remedy it, than blind and harden yourself till, to your eternal sorrow, you *feel* what you would not *believe*. And if it is true, then what do you mean by loitering and lingering in such a state?

Alas for you, poor man! Sin has effectually undone you. It has deprived and despoiled you even of your reason to look after your own everlasting good. O miserable caitiff!<sup>2</sup> What stupidity and senselessness has surprised you! Oh let me kick and awake this sleeper who dwells within the walls of this flesh. Is there a soul here, a rational understanding soul? Or are you only a walking ghost, a senseless lump? Are you a reasonable soul and yet so brutish that you forget your immortal soul, and think you are like the beasts who perish? Are you turned into flesh so that you savour nothing but gratifying your senses, and making provision for your flesh? Or else, having enough reason to understand the eternity of your future estate, do you still make light of being everlastingly miserable? This is so far below a brute, and so much worse! It's acting

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<sup>1</sup> Gal. 3.10; Rom 7

<sup>2</sup> A cowardly and despicable person

*against* reason rather than acting *without* it. O unhappy soul! You were the glory of man, the friend of angels, and the image of God! You were

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God's representative in the world, and had supremacy among the creatures, and dominion over your Maker's works! Have you now become a slave to your appetites, a slave to so base an idol as your belly? And you do it for no higher felicity than to fill yourself with the vapor of man's applause, or heaping together a little refined earth which is no more suitable to your spiritual and immortal nature than dirt and sticks? Oh, why don't you think where you will be forever? *Death* is at hand; the *Judge* is at the door! <sup>Jas. 5-9</sup> Just a little while, and *time will be no more.* <sup>Rev 10.5-6</sup> And you would run the risk of continuing in such a state which, if you are overtaken, you are irrecoverably miserable?

Come then! Arise and attend to your immediate concerns. Tell me, where are you going? What! Will you live in such a course of life, in which every act is a step toward perdition, and you don't know whether you may make your bed in hell the next night? Oh, if you have a spark of reason, then consider and turn! Listen to your true friend, who wants to show you your present misery so that you might make your escape in time, and be eternally happy.

Hear what the Lord says, *Do you not fear me? says the Lord: will you not tremble at my presence?* <sup>Jer 5.22</sup> O sinners, do you make light of *the wrath to come?* <sup>Mat 3-7</sup> I am sure there is a time coming when you will *not* make light of it. Why, the devils themselves believe and tremble, <sup>Jas. 2.19</sup> What! Are you more hardened than they?

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Will you run along the cliff's edge? Will you play at the asp's hole? Will you put your hand on the *cokatrice's*<sup>1</sup> den? Will you dance around the fire until you are burnt? Or dally with devouring wrath as if you were indifferent whether you escape it or endure it? O madness of folly! You are *Solomon's* madman, who throws fire-brands, and arrows, and death, and says, *I was only joking!* <sup>Pro 26.18-19</sup> There is nothing so oblivious as the wilful sinner, <sup>Luk 15.17</sup> who goes on in his unconverted estate, without sense, as if nothing ailed him. The man who runs into the cannon's mouth, who gambles with his blood, or spends his life in frolic, is sensible, sober, and serious, compared to the one who continues in his trespasses. <sup>Psa 68.21</sup> *For he stretches out his hand against God, and stiffens himself against the Almighty. He runs at him, stubbornly, on the thick embossments of his shield.* <sup>Job. 15.25-26</sup> Is it wisdom to dally with the second death, or to venture into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone <sup>Rev 21.8</sup> as if you were only going to wash yourself, or swim for your recreation? Will you, as it were, fetch your cloak, and jump into the eternal flames, like children jump through the bonfire? What will I say? I can find no expression, no comparison, by which to present the dreadful indifference of that soul who goes on in sin.

Awake, awake! <sup>Eph 5.14</sup> O sinner! Arise and take your flight! There is only one door that you may flee by, and that is the narrow door of conversion and the new birth.

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Unless you turn sincerely from all your sins, and come into Jesus Christ, and take him for the Lord your righteousness, and walk in him in holiness and newness of life, then as the Lord lives, it is no more certain that you are now out of hell, than you will without fail be in it just a few days and nights from now. Oh, set your heart to think of your case. Is it not your everlasting misery or else your welfare that deserves a little consideration? Look again over the miseries of the unconverted. If the Lord has not spoken by me, then disregard me; but if it is the very word of God that all this misery lies upon you, then what a state you are in! Does it make sense for

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<sup>1</sup> Mythical monster hatched by a reptile from a cock's egg; able to kill with a glance.

someone to live in such a condition, and not make all possible haste to prevent his utter ruin? O man! Who has bewitched you, <sup>Gal. 3.1</sup> that in the matters of this present life you are wise enough to forecast your business, foresee your danger, and prevent your mischief; but in matters of everlasting consequence you are deficient and careless, as if they little concerned you? Why is it nothing to you to have all the attributes of God engaged against you? Can you do well without his favour? Can you escape his hands, or endure his vengeance? Do you hear the creation groaning under you, and hell groaning for you, and yet think your case is good enough? Are you in the paw of the lion, under the power of corruption, in the dark and smelly prison, fettered with your lusts, working out your own damnation,

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and this isn't worth considering? Will you make light of all the terrors of the law, of all its curses and thunderbolts, as if they were just the sound of children's pop-guns, or as if you were going to wage war with their paper pellets? Do you laugh at hell and destruction? Or can you drink the envenomed cup of the Almighty's fury, as if it were just a common potion?

Gird your loins now like a man, for I will demand of you, and you answer me: <sup>Job 40.7</sup> are you such a Leviathan that the scales of your pride will keep your Maker from coming after you? Will you consider his arrows as straw, and the instruments of death as rotten wood? Are you chief of all the children of pride, that you should consider his arrows stubble, and laugh at the shaking of his spear? Are you made without fear, and do you disdain his barbed irons? <sup>Job 41</sup> Are you like the horse that paws in the valley, and rejoices in his strength — who goes out to meet the armed men? Do you mock fear, and are not frightened? Don't you turn from God's sword when his quiver rattles against you, or from his glittering spear and shield? <sup>Job 39.21-23</sup> Well, if the threats and calls of the Word will neither frighten nor awaken you, then I am sure death and judgment will. Oh, what will you do when the Lord comes out against you, and in his fury he falls upon you, and you feel what you read here? When *Daniel's* enemies were cast into the den of lions — they and their wives and their children —

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the lions had mastery over them, and broke all their bones into pieces before they ever got to the bottom of the den. <sup>Dan. 6.24</sup> What then will be done to you when you fall into the hands of the living God? When he grips you in his iron arms, and grinds and crushes you to a thousand pieces in his wrath? Don't contend with God *then*. Repent and be converted *now*, so none of this will come upon you. <sup>Isa 55.6-7</sup> *Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.*

**CHAP. VI — DIRECTIONS FOR CONVERSION.**

Mark 10.17. *And one came, and kneeled to him, and asked him,  
Good master, what must I do that I may inherit eternal life?*

BEFORE you read these directions, I advise you — indeed, I charge you before God and his holy angels — to resolve to follow them (as far as your conscience is convinced they are agreeable to God's word and to your estate); call in his assistance and blessing

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so that they may succeed. And because I have sought the Lord, and consulted his precepts as to what advice to give you, you must entertain it with that awe, reverence, and purpose of obedience that the word of the living God requires.

Now then, attend to my words; *set your heart to all that I will testify to you this day, for it is not an empty thing; it is your life.*<sup>Deu 32.46-47</sup> This is the end of all that has been spoken up to now: to get you to begin turning and making use of God's means for your conversion. I would not trouble you or torment you before the time<sup>1</sup> with forethoughts of your eternal misery, except to have you make your escape from it. If you were imprisoned in your present misery without remedy, it would only be mercy to leave you alone, so that you might enjoy that small and poor comfort you are capable of here in this world. But you may yet be *happy*, if you don't wilfully refuse the means of your recovery. Behold, I hold open that door to you. Arise! Take your flight! I place the way of life before you: walk in it and you will live and not die.<sup>2</sup> It sorrows me to think you would be your own murderers, and throw yourselves headlong into the pit, when God and men cry out to you, as *Peter* cried out to his master, *spare yourself*.<sup>3</sup>

A noble virgin<sup>4</sup> that attended the court of *Spain* was wickedly ravished by the king; and upon hearing of it, the duke, her father, was roused to revenge. He called the *Moors* to his aid. When they had executed his plan,

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they miserably wasted and stripped the country. The virgin, taking this disaster to heart badly, shut herself up in a tower belonging to her father's house, and desired that her father and mother might be called to her. Crying out to them of her own wretchedness, that she should have been the cause of so much misery and the desolation to her country to satisfy the revenge of her injury, she told them she was resolved to be avenged upon herself. Her father and mother begged her to pity herself and them, but nothing would prevail; she took her leave of them, and threw herself off the battlements, and so perished before their faces.

The wilful self-destruction of ungodly men is just this way. The God that made them pleads with them, and cries out to them, as Paul cried out to the distraught jailor when he was about to murder himself, *Do yourself no harm!* The ministers of Christ forewarn them, and chase them, and would willingly have them back. But alas! No expostulations or protests will prevail; men will hurl themselves into perdition while pity itself looks on.

What will I say? Would it not grieve a person with any humanity, if in the time of a virulent plague, he had a medicine that would infallibly cure the entire country, and recover the most

<sup>1</sup> Mat 8.29

<sup>2</sup> Deut. 30.19; Jer 9.16

<sup>3</sup> Mat 16.23

<sup>4</sup> Julian, Count of Ceuta, c. 709, sent one of his daughters (Cava) to Roderic's court at Toledo for an education. Roderic subsequently made her pregnant. In Spanish she came to be known as *la Cava Rumía*. When Julian learned of the affair he removed his daughter from Roderic's court and, out of vengeance, sold out Hispania to the Muslim invaders, thus making possible the Umayyad conquest of Hispania. *But this is only a legend.*



hopeless patients — and yet his friends and neighbours were dying by the hundreds around him because they would not use it? Men and brothers, though you carry the certain symptoms in your faces, yet I have a remedy

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that will cure you all, that will cure without fail. Just follow just these few directions, and if you don't then win heaven, I will be content to lose it.

Hear then, sinner! If you would ever be converted and saved, embrace the following counsel.

**Direct. I.** *Settle it for yourself, as an undoubted truth, that it is impossible for you to ever get to heaven in your unconverted state.* Can any other but Christ save you? And *he* tells you that he will never do it unless you are regenerated and converted.<sup>1</sup> Does he not keep the keys of heaven, and can you get in without his permission? It must be without his permission if you are ever to get there in your natural condition, without a sound and thorough renovation.

**Direct. II.** *Labour to get a thorough sight, and a lively sense, and feeling of your sins.* Until men are weary and heavy-laden, and pricked at the heart, and stark sick of sin, they will not come to Christ in his way for ease and cure; nor will they ask, What will we do? <sup>2</sup> They must admit to *themselves* that they are dead men, before they will come to Christ that they may have life.<sup>Joh 5.40</sup> Labour, therefore, to set all your sins in order before you; never be afraid to look at them, but let your spirit make a diligent search.<sup>Psa 77.6</sup> Enquire into your heart and into your life; thoroughly examine yourself and all your ways <sup>Psa 119.59</sup> so that you may make a full discovery of them.

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Call in the help of God's Spirit, sensing your own inability to do it, for it is his proper work to convict us of sin.<sup>Joh 16.8</sup> Spread everything before the face of your conscience, until your heart and eyes are set abroad.<sup>3</sup> Don't stop striving with God and your own soul, until it cries out under the sense of your sins, as the enlightened jailor did: *What must I do to be saved?* <sup>Act 16.30</sup> Do it to this purpose.

*Meditate on the numerousness of your sins.* David's heart failed when he thought of this, and considered that he had more sins than hairs.<sup>Psa 40.12</sup> This made him cry out at the multitude of God's tender mercies.<sup>Psa 51.1</sup> The loathsome carcass doesn't swarm with crawling worms more hatefully than an unsanctified soul swarms with filthy lusts. They fill his head, his heart, his eyes and his mouth. Look backward: where was ever the place, and when was ever the time, in which you did not sin? Look inward: what part or power can you find in your soul or body, that is not poisoned with sin? What duty do you ever perform in which that poison is not spilled? Oh, how great is the sum of your debts, you who all your life have been running up the books,<sup>4</sup> and never did or can pay off one penny of your debt! Look over the sin of your nature and all its cursed brood, the sins of your life: call to mind your omissions, commissions, the sins of your thoughts, of your words, of your actions, the sins of your youth, the sins of your years, etc. Don't be like a desperate bankrupt, who is afraid to look over his books. Read the records of your conscience carefully. These books must be opened sooner or later. <sup>Rev 20.12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Mat 18.3; Joh 3.3

<sup>2</sup> Mat 11.28; Acts. 2.37; Mat 9.12

<sup>3</sup> To open a cask or barrel so that its contents spill out.

<sup>4</sup> That is, running a tab, an ever-increasing debt on the account books.

*Meditate on the **aggravations** of your sins,*<sup>1</sup> as grand enemies against the God of your life, and against the life of your soul. In a word, they are the public enemies of all mankind. David, Ezra, Daniel, and the good Levites, pondered the aggravations of their sins by considering their injuriousness to God, their opposition to his good and righteous laws, and the mercies and warnings that they were committed against! <sup>2</sup> Oh, the work that sin has made in the world. This is the enemy that has brought in death, that has robbed and enslaved man, that undid the devil, and that dug the pit of hell.<sup>3</sup> This is the enemy that has turned the creation upside down, and sown dissention between man and the creatures, between man and man; indeed, between man and himself, setting the sensual part against the rational, the will against the judgment, lust against conscience; indeed, worst of all, between God and man, making the lapsed sinner both hateful to God, and the one who hates him.<sup>Zech. 11.8</sup> O man! How can you make so light of sin? This is the traitor that sucked the blood of the Son of God, that sold him, that mocked him, that scourged him, that spit in his face, that dug into his hands, that pierced his side, that pressed his soul, that mangled his body, that never left until he had bound him, condemned him, nailed him, crucified

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him, and put him to open shame.<sup>Isa 53.4-6</sup> This is that deadly poison, so powerful in its operation, that one drop of it shed on the root of mankind has corrupted, spoiled, poisoned, and undone his whole race at once.<sup>Rom 5.18-19</sup> This is the common butcher, the bloody executioner, that has killed the prophets, burnt the martyrs, murdered all the apostles, all the patriarchs, all the kings and potentates, that has destroyed cities, swallowed empires, butchered and devoured whole nations. Whichever weapon it was done by, sin did the execution.<sup>Rom 6.23</sup> Do you still think it is just a small thing? If *Adam* and all his children could be dug out of their graves, and their bodies piled up to heaven, and an inquest were held, what matchless murderer would be guilty of all this blood? It would be all found in the skirts of sin. Study the nature of sin until your heart is brought to fear and loathe it. And meditate on the aggravations of your particular sin, how you have sinned against all God's warnings, against your own prayers, against mercies, against corrections, against clearest light, against freest love, against your own resolutions, against promises, vows, and covenants of better obedience, etc. Charge your heart with these things, drive it home until it blushes for shame and is brought out of all good opinion of itself. <sup>Ezra 9.6</sup>

*Meditate upon the **desert** of sin.*<sup>4</sup> It cries up to heaven, it calls for vengeance;<sup>Gen 18.21</sup> its due wages is death and damnation:

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it pulls the curse of God upon the soul and body.<sup>5</sup> The least sinful word or thought puts you under the infinite wrath of God Almighty.<sup>6</sup> Oh, what a load of wrath, what a weight of curses, what treasure of vengeance have all the millions of your sins then deserved? <sup>7</sup> Oh, judge yourself, that the Lord may not judge you.<sup>1Cor 11.31</sup>

*Meditate on the **deformity** and **defilement** of sin;* It is as black as hell, the very image and likeness of the devil that is drawn upon the soul.<sup>1Joh 3.8, 10</sup> It would more frighten you to see

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<sup>1</sup> The aggravations of our sins are those effects that make them even more reprehensible to us and to God, that exacerbate them.

<sup>2</sup> Neh. 9; Dan. 9; Ezra 9

<sup>3</sup> Rom 5.12; 2Pet 2.4; Joh 8.34

<sup>4</sup> "Desert of sin" — what sin deserves or merits; its due and just punishment.

<sup>5</sup> Gal. 3.10; Deut. 28

<sup>6</sup> Rom 2.8-9; Mat 12.36

<sup>7</sup> Rom 2.5; Joh 3.36

yourself in the hateful deformity of your nature, than to see the devil. There is no mire so unclean, no vomit so loathsome, no carcass or carrion so offensive, no plague or leprosy so nauseating as sin. That is what you are all rolling in. You are covered with its odious filth, a filth by which you are rendered more displeasing to the pure and holy nature of the glorious God, than the most filthy object composed of whatever would be most hateful to all your senses.<sup>Job 15.15-16</sup> Could you clasp a toad to your chest? Could you cherish it, and take delight in it? You are just as opposed to the pure and perfect holiness of the divine nature, just as loathsome to it, as that toad is to you,<sup>Mat 3:33</sup> until you are purified by the blood of Jesus and the power of renewing grace.

Set aside all other sins; fix your eye on these two:

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(1.) **The sin of your nature.** It serves little purpose to lop off the branches, while the root of original corruption remains untouched. In vain, men empty the stream while the fountain is still running that fills it up again. Let the ax of your repentance (along with David's) go to the root of sin.<sup>Psa 51.5</sup> Study how deep, how close, how permanent your natural pollution is, how universal it is, until you cry out with Paul's passion at your body of death.<sup>Rom 7.24</sup> Look into your parts and powers, and see what unclean vessels, what styes, what dunghills, what sinks they have become. *Heu miser, quid sum? Vas sterquilini, concha putredinis: plenus foetore & horror.*<sup>August. Solil. c. 8.</sup> The heart is never soundly broken until it is convinced through and through of the heinousness of original sin. Fix your thoughts here. This is what makes you opposed to all good, and prone to all evil.<sup>Rom 7.15</sup> It spills blindness, pride, prejudice, and unbelief into your mind; hostility, inconstancy, and obstinacy into your will; inordinate heats and colds into your affections; insensibility, numbness, and unfaithfulness into your conscience; slipperiness into your memory. In a word, it has disordered every wheel of your soul; it has made what should be a habitation of holiness into a hell of iniquity.<sup>Jas. 3.6</sup> This is what has defiled, corrupted, and perverted all your members, and turned them into weapons of unrighteousness, and servants of sin.<sup>Rom 6.19</sup> This is what has filled the head with carnal and corrupt plans,<sup>Mic. 2.1</sup> the hand with sinful practices,<sup>Isa 1.15</sup> the eyes with wandering and wantonness,<sup>2Pet 2.14</sup>

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and the tongue with deadly poison.<sup>Jas. 3.8</sup> It has opened the ears to tales, flattery, and filthy communication, and shut them against the instruction of life.<sup>Zech. 7.11-12</sup> It has turned your heart into a mint and a forge for sin, and a cursed womb for every deadly conception,<sup>Mat 15.19</sup> It pours out its wickedness without ceasing,<sup>2Pet 2.14</sup> as naturally, freely, and unweariedly as a fountain pours out its waters,<sup>Jer 6.7</sup> or the raging sea tosses out mire and dirt.<sup>Isa 57.20</sup> And will you still be in love with yourself, and tell us any longer of your good heart? Oh, never stop meditating on this desperate contagion of original corruption until, along with *Ephraim*, you grieve for yourself;<sup>Jer 31.18</sup> and with deepest shame and sorrow, you strike your breast as the *Publican* did;<sup>Luk 18.13</sup> and with *Job*, you abhor yourself and repent in dust and ashes.<sup>Job 42.6, 22</sup>

(2.) **The particular evil that you are most addicted to.** Discover all its aggravations;<sup>1</sup> drive home to your heart all of God's threats against it. Repentance drives the whole herd before it, but it especially sticks the arrow in the beloved sin, and singles this out above the rest in order to run it down,<sup>Psa 18.23</sup> Oh, labour to make this sin odious to your soul, and double your guards and your resolutions against it, because this sin most dishonours God, and endangers you.

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**Direct. III.** *Strive to affect your heart with a deep sense of your present misery,*

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<sup>1</sup> See the note on "aggravations" on page 76.

Read over the foregoing chapter again and again; get it out of the book and into your heart. Remember when you lie down, that for all you know you may awake in flames; and when you rise up, that by the next night you may be making your bed in hell. Is it acceptable to live in such a fearful state, to stand tottering upon the brink of the bottomless pit, and to live at the mercy of every disease that, if you succumbed, it would send you immediately into the flames? Suppose you saw a condemned wretch hanging over Nebuchadnezzar's burning fiery furnace by nothing but a twine-thread which was ready to break any moment. Wouldn't your heart tremble for such a person? Why, if you are still unconverted, then *you* are that man, and *this is your case*. O man or woman who reads this, what if the thread of your life were to break? You don't know whether it will be the next night, or indeed, the next moment. Where would you be then? Where would you drop? Truly, upon the snap of just this thread, if you die in your present state, you would fall into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone where you must lie scalding and sweltering in a fiery ocean as long as God exists. Doesn't your soul tremble as you read this? Don't your tears wet the paper, and your heart throb in your chest? Don't you yet begin to strike your breast, and think to yourself what need you have of a change? Oh, what is your heart made of?

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Have you not only lost all regard for God, but are without any love and pity for yourself?

Oh, study your misery until your heart cries out for Christ as earnestly as a drowning man cries for a boat, or the wounded cries for a surgeon. Men must come to see the danger, and feel the sting of their deadly sores and sickness, or else Christ will be a physician of no value to them. <sup>Mat 9.12</sup> The man-slayer hastens to the city of refuge when he is pursued by the avenger of blood. So too, men must be hounded out of themselves, or they will not come to Christ. It was distress and extremity that made the prodigal think of returning home. <sup>Luk 15.16-17</sup> While *Laodicea* thinks she is rich, increased in goods and in need of nothing, there is little hope. She must be deeply convinced of her wretchedness, blindness, poverty, and nakedness before she will come to Christ for gold, raiment, and eye-salve. <sup>Rev 3.17-18</sup> Therefore hold the eyes of your conscience open; amplify your misery as much as possible; don't flee the sight of it just because you fear it will fill you with terror. The sense of your misery is just the festering of the wound which is needed for its cure. Better to *fear* the torments that abide with you now, than *feel* them hereafter.

**Direct. IV.** *Settle it in your heart that you are forever unable to recover yourself.* Never think that your praying, reading, hearing, confessing, or amending will cure you. These must be attended to, but you are undone if you rest in them for salvation. <sup>Rom 10.3</sup> You are a lost man if you hope to escape drowning on any other plank than Jesus Christ. <sup>Act 4.12</sup>

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You must unlearn yourself, and renounce your own wisdom, your own righteousness, your own strength, and throw yourself wholly upon Christ, just as a swimmer must throw himself upon the water, or else you cannot escape. While men trust in themselves, and establish their own righteousness, and have confidence in the flesh, they will not come savingly to Christ.<sup>1</sup> You must know that your gain is but loss and dung, your strength is but weakness, your righteousness is but rags and rotteness, before there will be an effectual closure between Christ and you.<sup>2</sup> Can the lifeless carcass shake off its grave-clothes and loose the bonds of death? Only then might you recover yourself, for you are dead in trespasses and sins, and under an impossible burden of acceptably serving your Maker in this condition.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, when you go to pray or meditate, or

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<sup>1</sup> Luke 18.9; Phi. 3.3

<sup>2</sup> Phi. 3.7-9; 2Cor 3.5; Isa 54.6

<sup>3</sup> Rom 8.8; Heb. 11.6

do any of the duties to which you are directed here, leave yourself; call in the help of the Spirit; despair of doing anything that would be pleasing to God if done in your own strength.

*Yet don't neglect your duty:* lie at the pool and wait in the path of the Spirit.<sup>Joh 5.1-8</sup> While the Eunuch was reading, *then* the Holy Ghost sent Philip to him;<sup>Act 8.28-29</sup> when the disciples were praying,<sup>Act 4.31</sup> and when Cornelius and his friends were hearing,<sup>Act 10.44</sup> *then* the Holy Ghost fell upon them and filled them all. Strive to give yourself up to Christ;

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strive to pray, strive to meditate, strive a thousand times over. Try to do it as well as you can, and while you are endeavouring to do your duty, the Spirit of the Lord will come upon you, and help you do what you are utterly unable to do by yourself.<sup>Pro 1.24</sup>

**Direct. V.** *Renounce all your sins without delay.* If you yield yourself to the practice of any sin, you are undone.<sup>Rom 6.17</sup> You hope in vain for life by Christ unless you depart from your iniquity.<sup>2Tim 2.19</sup> Forsake your sins, or else you cannot find mercy.<sup>Pro 28.13</sup> You cannot be married to Christ unless you are divorced from sin. Turn over the traitor or you can have no peace with heaven. Throw the head of Sheba over the wall; don't keep Delilah in your lap. You must part with your sins, or else with your soul. Spare but one sin, and God will not spare you. Never make excuses: either your sins must die, or you must die for them.<sup>Psa 68.21</sup> If you allow one sin, though just a little one, a secret one, even though you plead necessity, and have a hundred justifications and excuses for it, the life of your soul must be exchanged for the life of that sin.<sup>Eze 18.21</sup> And won't *that* be dearly bought?<sup>1</sup>

O sinner! Hear and consider: if you will part with your sins, God will give you his Christ. Isn't this a fair exchange? I testify to you this day that if you perish, it is not because there was never a Saviour provided, nor a life tendered, but because you preferred (as the Jews did) the murderer

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before your Saviour, sin before Christ, and you loved darkness rather than light.<sup>Joh 3.10</sup> Search your heart therefore with candles, as the Jews searched their houses for leaven before the Passover. Labour to discover your sins. Enter into your closet and consider, "What evil have I lived in? What duty have I neglected towards God? What sin have I lived in against my brother?" And now strike the dagger through the heart of your sins, as Joab did through Absalom's.<sup>2Sam 18.14</sup> Never stand contemplating your sin, or hiding the morsel under your tongue.<sup>Job 20.12</sup> Spit it out as poison, with fear and detestation. Alas! What do you think your sins will do for you, that you would hesitate at parting with them? They will flatter you, but they will also undo you and cut your throat while they smile at you, and poison you; while they please you and arm the justice and wrath of the infinite God against you. They will open hell for you, and pile up fuel to burn you. Behold the gallows they have prepared for you. Oh, serve them like Haman, and give them the execution they would otherwise have given you. Away with them, crucify them, and let only Christ be Lord over you.

**Direct. VI.** *Solemnly choose God for your portion and blessedness.*<sup>Deu 26</sup> With all possible devotion and veneration, avouch that the Lord is your God. Put the world with all its glory, paint, and gallantry, with all its pleasures and promotions on the one hand; and put God with all

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his infinite excellencies and perfections on the other; and see that you deliberately make your choice.<sup>Josh. 24.15</sup> Take your rest in God.<sup>Joh 6.68</sup> Sit down under his shadow.<sup>Song 2.3</sup> Let his promises

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<sup>1</sup> Alleine is not speaking of sinless perfection here, but of our intent and resolve to put sin away. He writes on page 48 (page 26 intra), "Instead, he turns from all his sins, and he keeps all God's statutes, even though not perfectly (except in his desire and endeavour). Yet he is sincere in not giving himself permission to breach any."



and perfections turn the scale against all the world. Settle it in your heart that the Lord is an all-sufficient portion, and that you cannot be miserable while you have God to live upon: take him for your shield and your exceeding great reward. God alone is more than all the world. Content yourself with him. Let others carry the preferments and glory of the world. *You* place your happiness in finding his favour and the light of his countenance.<sup>Psa 4.6-7</sup>

Poor sinner! You have fallen away from God, and you have engaged his power and wrath against you. Still, know that out of his abundant grace, he offers to be your God again in Christ.<sup>2Cor 6.17-18</sup> What do you say, man? Will you have the Lord for your God? Take this counsel and you will *have* him: come to him by his Christ.<sup>Joh 14.6</sup> Renounce the idols of your own pleasures, gain, and reputation.<sup>1Thes 1.9</sup> Let these be pulled off the throne, and set God's interest uppermost in your heart. Take him, as God, to be highest in your affections, estimations, and intentions, for he will not tolerate having any other set above him.<sup>1</sup> In a word, you must take him in all his *personal relations*, and in all his *essential perfections*.

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**First, in all his personal relations.** God the Father must be taken for *your* Father.<sup>Jer 3.4, 19, 22</sup> Oh, come to him with the prodigal's plea, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight. I am not worthy to be called your Son. But since by your wonderful mercy you are pleased to take me as your child, even though I am a dog, a pig, a devil, I solemnly take you for my Father. I commend myself to your care. I trust to your providence, and toss my burden on your shoulders. I depend on your provision, and I submit to your corrections. I trust under the shadow of your wings. I hide in your chambers, and I fly to your name. I renounce all confidence in myself. I repose my confidence in you. I depose my concerns with you. I will be for *you*, and for no other."

Again, God the Son must be taken as your Saviour, as your Redeemer and righteousness.<sup>Joh 1.12</sup> He must be accepted as the only way to the Father, and the only means of life.<sup>Heb 7.25</sup> Oh then, put off the raiment of your captivity — put on the wedding garment, and go and marry yourself to Jesus Christ. "Lord I am yours, and all that I have: my body, my soul, my name, my estate. I send a bill of divorce to my other lovers. I give my heart to you. I will be yours undividedly, yours everlastingly. I will put your name on all I have, and use it only as *your* goods, as *your* loan, during *your* leave, resigning all to you. I will have no king but you. Reign over me: other Lords have had dominion over me, but now I will make mention only of your name.

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I hereby take an oath of fealty to you, promising and vowing to serve, love, and fear you above all other competitors. I disavow my own righteousness, and I despair of ever being pardoned and saved for my own duties or graces. I lean only on your all-sufficient sacrifice and intercession for pardon, life, and acceptance before God. I take you for my only guide and instructor, resolving to be led and directed by you, and to wait for your counsel. Yours will be my driving voice."

Lastly, God the Spirit must be taken for your Sanctifier,<sup>2</sup> for your advocate, your counsellor, your comforter, the teacher in your ignorance, and the pledge and earnest of your inheritance.<sup>3</sup> *Awake, north wind, and come forth; blow upon my garden.*<sup>Song 4.16</sup> "Come, Spirit of the Most High; here is a house for you; here is a temple for you: rest here forever; dwell here, and rest here. Look, I release possession to you, *full* possession. I send you the keys of my heart, that everything may be for your use, that you may put your goods and your grace into your every

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<sup>1</sup> Exo 20.3; Rom 1.24; Psa 83.25

<sup>2</sup> Rom 8.9, 14; Gal. 5.16, 18

<sup>3</sup> Rom 8.26; Psa 73.24; Joh 14.6; Eph 4.30



room. I release the use of it all to you, so that every faculty, and every member may be your instrument to work righteousness, and to do the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

**Secondly. In all his essential perfections.** Consider how the Lord has revealed himself to you in his word. Will you take him as such a God?

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O sinner! Here is the most blessed news that ever came to the sons of men: *the Lord will be your God* if you will only close with him in his excellencies.<sup>1</sup> Will you have the merciful, gracious, sin-pardoning God to be your God? Oh, *yes*, (says the sinner) I am undone otherwise. But God further tells you, I am the holy and sin-hating God. If you would be owned as one of my people, then you must be holy:<sup>1Pet 1.16</sup> holy in heart, holy in life. You must put away all your iniquities, no matter how dear, how natural, how necessary to maintain your fleshly interest. Unless you distance your sin, I cannot be your God. Throw out the leaven; put away the evil of your doings; cease to do evil; learn to do well; or else I can have nothing to do with you.<sup>Isa 1.16-18</sup> Bring out my enemies, or else there is no peace to be had with me. What does your heart answer? “Lord, I desire to have you as such a God. I desire to be holy as you are holy, to be made a partaker of your holiness. I love you, not only for your goodness and mercy, but for your holiness and purity. I take your holiness for my happiness. Oh, be a fountain of holiness to me; set the stamp and impress of your holiness on me. I will thankfully part with all my sins at your command. I forsake my wilful sins at once; and for my infirmities that I cannot get rid of, even though I desire to, I will strive against them by every means. I detest them, and pray and war against them, and I will never let them have quiet rest in my soul.” Beloved, whoever thus accepts the Lord for his God, will *have* him.

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Again, he tells you, I am the all-sufficient God.<sup>Gen 17.1</sup> Will you lay everything at my feet, and give it up to my disposition, and take me for your only portion? Will you own and honour my all-sufficiency? Will you take me as your happiness and treasure, your hope and bliss? I am a sun and a shield, all in one. Will you have me for your all?<sup>2</sup> Now, what do you say to this? Does your mouth water for the onions and flesh-pots of Egypt? Are you loth to exchange the earthly happiness for a part in God? And though you would be glad to have God and the world too, is it possible for you to think of having him and *nothing but him*? Or would you rather consort with the earth below, if God would only let you keep it as long as you wanted? *This is a fearful sign.* But now, if you are willing, sell everything for the pearl of great price.<sup>Mat 13.46</sup>

Does your heart answer, “Lord, I desire no other portion but you. Take the corn, and the wine, and the oil, whoever wants them, that I may have the light of your countenance.”<sup>Psa 4.6-7</sup> I fix on you for my happiness; I gladly venture myself on you, and trust myself with you. I set my hopes in you. I take up my rest with you. Let me hear you say, ‘I am your God, your salvation,’ and I have enough — all I wish for. I will make no terms with you except for yourself. Let me but have you for sure. Let me be able to make my claim, and see my title to you.

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As for other things, I leave them to you. Give me more or less, anything or nothing, and I will be satisfied in my God.” If this is your heart’s answer, then take him thus, and he is your own.

Again, he tells you, I am the sovereign Lord. If you will have me for your God, you must give me the supremacy.<sup>Mat 6.24</sup> I will not be an underling; you must not make me a second to sin, or to any worldly interest. If you will be my people, I must have the rule over you. You must not live at

<sup>1</sup> Gen 17.7; Rev 21.3

<sup>2</sup> Gen 15.1; Psa 84.11

your own whims. Will you come under my yoke? Will you bow to my government? Will you submit to my discipline, to my word, to my rod? Sinner, what do you say to this? “Lord, I would rather be at your command, than live by my own whims. I would rather have your will be done than mine. I approve of and consent to your laws, and I consider it my privilege to lie under them. And even though the flesh rebels and often breaks its boundaries, I am resolved to take no other Lord but you. I willingly take the oath of your supremacy, and I acknowledge you for my Liege Sovereign. I resolve all my days to pay to you the tributes of worship, obedience, love and service, and to live to you as the end of my life.” This is a right acceptance of God.

To be short, he tells you, I am the true and faithful God. If you would have me for your God, then you must be content to trust me.<sup>1</sup> Will you risk yourselves upon my word, and depend on my faithfulness, and take my bond for your security?

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Will you be content to follow me, in poverty, reproach, and affliction here, to see much going out and little coming in, and to wait until the next world for your preferment? <sup>Mat 9.21</sup> I deal upon trust. Will you be content to labour, and to suffer, and to wait for your returns until the resurrection of the just? <sup>Luk 14.14</sup> The womb of the promise will not quickly yield: will you have the patience to wait? <sup>Heb 10.36</sup> Now, beloved, what do you say to this? Will you have this God for your God? Will you be content to live by faith, and trust him for an unseen happiness, an unseen heaven, and an unseen glory? Do your hearts answer, “Lord, we will venture ourselves upon you; we commit ourselves to you; we rest on you; we know whom we have trusted; we are willing to take your word; we will prefer your promises before our own possessions, and the hopes of heaven before all the enjoyments of the earth; we will await your leisure. Do what you will here, so that we may have but your faithful promise for heaven hereafter.” If you can in truth, and upon deliberation, accept God in this way, then he will be yours. Thus, in a right conversion to God, you must close with him in a way suitable to his excellencies. But when men embrace his mercy, yet still love sin and hate holiness and purity; or when they take him for their benefactor, but not for their sovereign; or for their patron, but not for their portion — this is not a thorough or a sound conversion.

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**Direct. VII.** *Accept the Lord Jesus in all his offices, with all his inconveniences, as yours.* Christ may be had on these terms. Sinner, you have undone yourself, and you are plunged into the ditch of most deplorable misery which you will never be able to climb out of. But Jesus Christ is able and ready to help you, and he freely tenders himself to you.<sup>2</sup> No matter how many, or however great or long-continuing your sins may be, yet you will most certainly be pardoned and saved if you don't wretchedly neglect the offer that is hereby made to you in the name of God. The Lord Jesus calls to you to look to him and be saved.<sup>Isa 45.22</sup> Come to him and he will in no way throw you out.<sup>Joh 6.37</sup> Yes, he is your suiter, and he beseeches you to be reconciled.<sup>2Cor 5.20</sup> He cries in the streets; he knocks at your door; he woos you to accept him and live with him.<sup>3</sup> If you die, it is because you would not come to him for life.<sup>Joh 5.40</sup> Now accept an offered Christ, and you are forever made.<sup>4</sup> Give your consent to him now, and the match is made; all the world cannot hinder it. Don't stay back because of your unworthiness. Man, I tell you that nothing in all the world can undo you but your own unwillingness. Speak, man! Do you want the match? Will you have Christ in all his relations to be yours: your king, your priest, your prophet? Will

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<sup>1</sup> 2Tim 1.12; Pro 3.5

<sup>2</sup> Heb 7.25; Joh 3.36

<sup>3</sup> Pro 1.20; Rev 2.30

<sup>4</sup> That is, assured of success — this is an image of betrothal, a secured promise of eternal union with Christ.

you have him with all his inconveniences? Don't take Christ by raising your hand, but sit down first and count the cost.

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Will you lay everything at his feet? Will you be content to take every risk with him? Will you take your lot with him, fall where it may? Will you deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow him? Are you deliberately, understandingly, freely, fixedly determined to cling to him in all times and conditions? If so, my soul for yours. You will never perish,<sup>Joh 3.16</sup> but you have passed from death to life.<sup>Joh 5.24</sup> Here lies the main point of your salvation: that you are found in your covenant-closure with Jesus Christ: and therefore, if you love yourself, see that you are faithful to God and to your soul here.

**Direct. VIII.** *Resign all your powers and faculties, your whole interest, to be his. They gave themselves to the Lord.*<sup>2Cor 8.5</sup> *Present your bodies as a living sacrifice.*<sup>Rom 12.1</sup> The Lord does not seek what is *yours*, but *you*. Therefore, resign your *body* with all its members to him, and your *soul* with all its powers, so that he may be glorified in your body and in your spirit which are his.<sup>2Cor 6.20</sup> In a right closure with Christ, all the faculties surrender to him. The *judgment* subscribes, "Lord, you are worthy of all acceptance, chief of ten thousand; happy is the man who finds you. All things that could be desired are not to be compared with you,"<sup>Pro 3.13-15</sup> The *understanding* lays aside its corrupt reasonings and cavils,<sup>1</sup> and its prejudices against Christ and his ways. It is now past questioning and disputing. It throws it away for Christ, against all the world.

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It concludes that it is good to be here. It sees such a treasure in this field, such a value in this pearl, that it is worth it all.<sup>Mat 13.44</sup> "Oh, here is the richest bargain I ever made; here is the richest prize that man was ever offered; here is the most sovereign remedy that mercy ever prepared. He is worthy of my esteem, worthy of my choice, worthy of my love, worthy to be embraced, adored, and admired forevermore."<sup>Rev 5.12</sup> I approve of his articles; his terms are righteous and reasonable, full of equity and mercy." Again, the *will* resigns: it no longer stands wavering, or wishing and woulding, but is peremptorily determined: "Lord, your love has overcome me; you have won me, and you will have me. Come in, Lord; I freely open to you. I consent to be saved in your own way; you will have anything — you will have it all — let me have but you." The *memory* surrenders to Christ: "Lord, here is a store-house for you: out with this trash, lay in the treasure. Let me be a granary, a repository of your truth, your promises, your providences." The *conscience* comes in: "Lord, I will always side with you, I will be your faithful register. I will warn him when the sinner is tempted, and strike him when you are offended. I will witness for you, and judge for you, and guide him into your ways, and will never let sin have quiet in this soul." The *affections* also come in to Christ: "Oh, says love, I am sick for you. Oh, says desire, now I have my longing: here is the satisfaction I searched for;

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here is the desire of nations; here is bread for me, and balm for me — all that I want." *Fear* bows the knee with awe and veneration: "Welcome, Lord. To you will I pay my homage; your word and your rod will command my actions; I will reverence and adore you; I will fall down before you and worship." *Grief* likewise joins in: "Lord, your displeasure and your dishonor, your people's calamities and my own iniquities, will be what bursts me apart. I will mourn when you are offended. I will weep when your cause is wounded." *Anger* likewise comes in for Christ: "Lord, nothing so enrages me as my folly against you — that I should be so duped and bewitched as to listen to the flatteries of sin, and the temptations of Satan against you." *Hatred*, too, will side with Christ: "I protest mortal hostility with your enemies, that I will never be friends with

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<sup>1</sup> An evasion of the point of an argument by raising irrelevant distinctions or objections.

your foes. I vow an immortal quarrel with every sin. I will give no quarter; I will make no peace.” Thus let *all* your powers surrender to Jesus Christ.

Again, you must surrender your whole interest to him. If there is anything you withhold from Christ, it will be your undoing.<sup>Luk 14:33</sup> Unless you forsake all (in preparation and resolution of your heart) you cannot be his disciple. You must hate father and mother, yes, and your own life too, in comparison to him, and as far as it competes with him.<sup>1</sup> In a word, you must give him yourself, and all that you have, without reservation, or else you can have no part in him.

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**Direct. IX,** *Choose the laws of Christ as the rule of your words, thoughts, and actions.*<sup>Psa 119:30</sup> This is the true convert’s *choice*. But here remember these [two] rules,

(1.) *You must choose them all.* There is no coming to heaven by partial obedience: read Psa 119.6, 128, 160; Eze 18.21.<sup>2</sup> None may think it is enough to take the cheap and easy part of religion, and leave behind the duties that are costly and self-denying, those which grate upon the interests of the flesh. You must take all or none. A sincere convert, though his conscience makes most of the greatest sins and the weightiest duties, yet it also makes much of *little* sins and *all* duties.<sup>Psa 119.6, 113; Mat 23.23</sup>

(2.) *For all times:* in prosperity and in adversity, whether it rains or shines. A true convert is resolved in his way. He will stick to his choice and not set his back to the wind or join the religion of the times. *I have stuck to your testimonies. I have inclined my heart to perform your statutes always, even to the end. I have taken your testimonies as a heritage forever.*<sup>Psa 119.31, 111, 117, 44, 93</sup> *I will respect your statutes continually.* This must not be done just by raising the hand, but deliberately and understandingly. The disobedient son said, *I go, sir; but he did not.*<sup>Mat 24.30</sup> How nicely they promised, “*All that the Lord our God will speak to you, we will do it;*” and they spoke as if they meant it: but when it came to trial, it was found that such a heart was not in them to do what they promised.<sup>Deu 5.27, 29</sup> If you would be sincere in closing with the laws and ways of Christ, then

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*First,* study the *meaning, latitude, and compass* of them. Remember that they are spiritual: they reach the very thoughts and inclinations of the heart, so that if you would walk by this rule, then your very thoughts and inward motivations must be under their governance. Again, they are very strict and self-denying, quite against the grain of your natural inclinations.<sup>Mat 16.24</sup> You must take the strait gate, the narrow way, and be content to have the flesh curbed from the liberty it desires.<sup>Mat 7.14</sup> In a word, remember they are comprehensive. *For your commandment is exceedingly broad.*<sup>Psa 119.96</sup>

*Secondly,* don’t rest in *generalities* (there is much deceit in that). Instead, bring your heart down to the *particular commands* of Christ. Those Jews in the prophet seemed as well-resolved as any in the world, and they called God to witness that they meant what they said: but they stuck to generalities. When God’s command crossed their inclinations, they would not obey.<sup>Jer 42.1-6 with Jer 43.2</sup> Take the assembly’s larger catechism;<sup>3</sup> see their excellent and most succinct exposition of the commandments, and take it to heart. Are you resolved in the

<sup>1</sup> Mat 10.37; Luk 14.26-27, etc.

<sup>2</sup> **Psa 119:6** Then I would not be ashamed, When I look into all Your commandments. **Psa 119:128** Therefore all Your precepts concerning all things I consider to be right; I hate every false way. **Psa 119:160** The entirety of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever. **Eze 18:21** "But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die.

<sup>3</sup> That is, the Westminster Assembly’s *Larger Catechism*, c. 1647.

strength of Christ to set upon the conscientious practice of every duty you find required of you there, and to set yourself against every sin that you find forbidden there? This is the way to be found blameless in God's statutes, so that you may never be ashamed.<sup>Psa 119.80</sup>

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*Thirdly*, notice the special duties that your heart is most against, and the special sins that it is most inclined to commit, and see whether your heart is truly resolved to perform the one and forego the other. What do you say to your private sin, your lucrative sin? What do you say to your costly, hazardous, and flesh-displeasing duties? If you hesitate here, and don't resolve by the grace of God to oppose your flesh, and get to it, then you are unsound.<sup>Psa 18.23, and 119.6</sup>

**Direct. X.** *Let all of this be completed in a solemn covenant between God and your soul.*<sup>1</sup>

For your help in this, take these few directions.

**First, Set apart some time**, more than once, to be spent in secret before the Lord:

1. Earnestly seek his special assistance and gracious acceptance of you.
2. Distinctly consider all the terms and conditions of the covenant proposed on the next page.
3. Search your heart to see whether you are sincerely willing to forsake all your sins and resign yourself, body and soul, to God and to his service — to serve him in holiness and righteousness all the days of your life.

**Secondly, Put your spirit in the most serious frame possible**, suitable to a transaction of so high an importance.

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**Thirdly, Lay hold of the covenant of God**; rely on his promise of giving grace and strength by which you may then be enabled to perform your promise. Don't trust your own strength, or the strength of your own resolutions, but take hold of *his* strength.

**Fourthly, Resolve to be faithful**; having engaged your heart, opened your mouth, and subscribed with your hand to the Lord, now resolve in *his* strength to never go back.

**Lastly, Being thus prepared, set upon the work** at some convenient time set apart for the purpose. In the most solemn manner possible, as if the Lord were visibly present before your eyes, fall down on your knees, and stretching your hands toward heaven, open your heart to the Lord in these or similar words:

#### *PROPOSED COVENANT*

O MOST dreadful God! For the passion of your Son, I beg you to accept your poor prodigal who is now prostrating himself at your door. I have fallen from you by my iniquity. I am by nature a son of death, and a thousandfold more the child of hell by my wicked practice.<sup>2</sup> But by your infinite grace, you have promised your grace to me in Christ, if I will only turn to you with all my heart. Therefore, upon the call of your gospel, I have now come in; and throwing down my weapons, I submit myself to your mercy.

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Because you require as the condition of my peace with you, that I put away my idols, and defy all your enemies (which I acknowledge I have wickedly sided with against you), I hereby renounce

<sup>1</sup> Psa 119.106; Neh. 10.9

<sup>2</sup> See page 49, point 6: "The terms of our communion are either *from* which, or *to* which." [we pledge to turn *from* sin, to God] — WHG



them all from the bottom of my heart, firmly covenanting with you not to allow myself to continue in any known sin, but to conscientiously use all the means that I know you have prescribed for the death and utter destruction of all my corruptions.<sup>1</sup> And because I have formerly, inordinately, and idolatrously placed my affections on the world, I hereby resign my heart to you who made it, and humbly vow before your glorious Majesty, that this is the firm resolution of my heart. I do sincerely desire grace from you, so that when you call me to it, I may practise my resolution, through your assistance, to forsake all that is dear to me in this world rather than turn from you to the ways of sin. And I will watch against all its temptations, whether in prosperity or adversity, lest they withdraw my heart from you. I beg you also to help me against the temptations of Satan, to whose wicked suggestions I resolve, by your grace, never to yield myself as a servant. And because my own righteousness is but menstruous rags, I renounce all confidence in it, and acknowledge that, of myself, I am a hopeless, helpless, undone creature, without righteousness or strength.

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Out of your bottomless mercy, you have most graciously offered to me, a wretched sinner, to again be my God through Christ, if I would accept it from you.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, I call heaven and earth to witness this day that I hereby solemnly avouch that you are the Lord *my* God; and with all possible veneration, bowing the neck of my soul under the feet of your most sacred majesty, I hereby take you, Lord Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for my portion and my chief good;<sup>3</sup> and I surrender myself, body and soul, to be your servant, promising and vowing to serve you in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

And since you have appointed the Lord Jesus Christ as the only means of coming to you, I hereby, on the bended knees of my soul, accept him as the only new and living way by which sinners may have access to you; and I hereby solemnly join myself in marriage covenant to him.<sup>4</sup>

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O blessed Jesus, I come to you hungry and hardly of use. I am poor, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked: a most loathsome, polluted wretch, a guilty, condemned malefactor, forever unworthy to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord, much less to be solemnly married to the King of Glory. But because such is your unparalleled love, I hereby accept you with all my power, and take you for my head and husband, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, for all times and conditions, to love, honor, and obey you before all others; and I vow this to the death. I embrace you in all your offices. I renounce my own unworthiness, and I hereby avow that you are the Lord my righteousness. I renounce my own wisdom, and here take you for my only guide: I renounce my own will, and take your will for my law.

And since you have told me that I must suffer if I reign, I hereby covenant with you to take my lot as it falls with you; by your grace assisting me, I will run all risks with you, truly supposing that neither life nor death will part you and me.<sup>Rom 8.35-39</sup>

And because you have been pleased to give me your holy laws as the rule of my life,<sup>5</sup> the way in which I should walk to your kingdom, I hereby willingly put my neck under your yoke, and set my shoulder to your burden. Subscribing to all your laws as holy, just, and good, I solemnly take

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, “The things from which we turn... — *sin, Satan, the world, and our own righteousness*” — must be thus renounced.

<sup>2</sup> See [page 58, point 2](#): “The terms to which we must turn are either ultimate, or mediate.”

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, “The ultimate is God the Father, Son, & Holy Ghost, who must be thus accepted.”

<sup>4</sup> See [page 60](#): “The mediate terms are either principal, or less principal. The principal is Christ the Mediator, who must thus be embraced.”

<sup>5</sup> See [page 63](#): “The less principal are the laws of Christ which must be thus observed.”



them as the rule of my words, thoughts, and actions, promising that though my flesh may contradict and rebel, yet I will endeavor to order and govern my whole life according to your direction, and I will not allow myself to neglect anything that I know is my duty.

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Only because I am subject to many failings through the frailty of my flesh, I am bold to humbly avow that forbidden miscarriages that are contrary to the settled bent and resolution of my heart, will not void this covenant; for so you have said.

Now, Almighty God, searcher of hearts, you know that I make this covenant with you this day without any known guile or reservation; I beg you, that if you spy any flaw or falsehood in it, you would disclose it to me, and help me to do it rightly.

And now, glory be to you, O God the Father, whom I will be bold from this day forward to look upon as my God and Father, that you found such a way to recover undone sinners. Glory be to you, O God the Son, who have loved me and washed me from my sins in your own blood; you have now become my Saviour and Redeemer. Glory be to you, O God the Holy Ghost who, by the finger of your almighty power, have turned around my heart from sin to God.

O dreadful Jehovah, the Lord God Omnipotent, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! You have now become my covenant friend, and through your infinite grace, I have become your covenant servant. *Amen.* So be it. And let the covenant which I have made on earth, be ratified in heaven.

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#### *THE AUTHOR'S ADVICE.*

*I advise you to make this covenant not only in heart, but in word; not only in word, but in writing; and that you would, with all possible reverence, spread the writing before the Lord, as if you were presenting it to him as your act and deed. And when you have done this, set your hand to it; keep it as a memorial of the solemn transactions that have passed between God and you, so that you may return to it upon your doubts and temptations.*

**Direct. XI.** *Beware delaying your conversion: set upon a speedy and present turning. I made haste and did not delay.*<sup>Psa 119.60</sup> Remember and tremble at the sad instance of the foolish virgins who did not come until the door of mercy was shut,<sup>Mat 25</sup> and of a convicted Felix who put off Paul until another season — and we don't find that he had another season.<sup>Act 14.25</sup> Oh, come in while it is called today, lest you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin;<sup>Heb 3.13</sup> lest the day of grace be over, and the things that belong to your peace are hidden from your eyes. *Now* mercy is wooing you: *now* Christ is waiting to be gracious to you and the Spirit of God is striving with you: *now* ministers are calling; *now* your conscience is stirring; *now* the market is open and oil may be had: you have an opportunity to buy; *now* Christ is to be had for the taking. Oh, shake hands on these offers of grace; *now or never!* If you make light of this offer, God may swear in his wrath that you will never taste his supper.<sup>Luk 14.24</sup>

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**Direct. XII.** *Attend conscientiously to the word as the appointed means for your conversion.*<sup>1</sup>

Don't attend to it thoughtlessly, but conscientiously, and with this desire, design, hope and expectation: that you may be converted by it. Come to every sermon you hear with this thought: "Oh, I hope God will now come in: I hope this day may be the time, and that this may be the man by whom God will bring me home." When you come to the ordinances<sup>2</sup>, lift up your heart to God

<sup>1</sup> Jas. 1.18-19; 1Cor 4.15

<sup>2</sup> That is, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Alleine is not indicating that the elements are efficacious in themselves to save us. Yet, if we combine them with faith, they become a real means of grace. When we come with a

in this way: “Lord, let this be the Sabbath, let this be the season in which I receive renewing grace. Oh, let it be said that today such a one was born to you.”

*Obj.* You may say, “I have been a longtime hearer of the word, and yet it has not led to my conversion.”

*Ans.* Yes, but you have not attended to it as a means for your conversion, nor with that intent; nor were you praying for and expecting that this would be the happy *effect* of it.

**Direct. XIII.** *Shake hands with the Spirit when he begins to work upon your heart.* When he convicts, don’t stifle it, but join in with him and beg the Lord to carry on these convictions to conversion. Do not quench the Spirit; don’t reject him, don’t resist him.

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Beware of smothering your convictions with evil company, or worldly business. When you are troubled by sin, and by fears about your eternal state, beg God that these may not leave you until they have thoroughly worked your heart away from sin, and worked it over to Jesus Christ. Say to him, “Strike home, Lord; don’t leave the work half-done. You see that I am not yet wounded enough, that I am not troubled enough — wound me deeper still, Lord. Oh, get to the bottom of my corruption; spill the life-blood of my sin.” Thus yield yourself to the workings of the Spirit, and hoist your sails to his gusts.

**Direct. XIV.** *Set upon the constant and diligent use of serious and fervent prayer.* One who neglects prayer is a profane and unsanctified sinner.<sup>Job 15.4</sup> The one who is not constant in prayer, is just a hypocrite<sup>Job 27.10</sup> (*unless the omission of prayer is contrary to his ordinary habit, and he is under the force of some immediate temptation*). This is one of the first evidences of conversion: it sets men to praying.<sup>Act 9.11</sup> Therefore set to this duty: let never a day pass by in which you have not, morning and evening, set apart some time for solemn prayer in private. Call your family together daily and duly as well, to worship God with you. Woe to you if they are found among the families that don’t call on God’s name.<sup>Jer 10.25</sup> But cold and lifeless devotions will not even reach half-way to heaven. Be fervent and importunate; importunity will carry it; but without force, the kingdom of heaven will not be taken.<sup>Mat 11.12</sup>

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You must *strive* to enter.<sup>Luk 13.24</sup> You must wrestle with tears and with supplications, as Jacob did, if you mean to carry away the blessing.<sup>Gen 32.24 with Hos. 12.4</sup> You are forever undone without grace, and therefore you must get to it, and resolve to take no denial. The man who is likeliest to win grace is fixed in this resolution: “Well, I *must* have grace: and I will never give up until I *have* grace; and I will never stop *seeking*, and *waiting*, and *striving* with God, and with my own heart, until he *renews* me by the power of his grace.”

*Obj.* But God does not hear sinners; their prayer is an abomination.

*Ans.* We must distinguish between sinners. (1) There are *resolved sinners*: God does abhor their prayers. (2) There are *returning sinners*: these God will come out to, and meet them with mercy though still far off.<sup>Luk 15.20</sup> Though the prayers of the unsanctified cannot have full acceptance, God has still done much at the request of such men. Such as he did at Ahab’s humiliation, and Nineveh’s fast.<sup>1</sup> Surely you may go as far as these did, even though you have no grace. How do you know; perhaps you will hurry your suit, as they did theirs. Indeed, is he not far more likely to grant you your desire than theirs, since you ask in the name of Christ? And it is not for

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faithful expectancy that God can and will work in us to transform us because Christ, such trusting reliance in Christ alone is the saving faith we are seeking; and it is the initiatory response of true conversion.

<sup>1</sup> 1Kng 21.26; Jonah 3.8-10

temporal blessings, as they asked for, but for things much more pleasing to him; namely, aren't you asking for *Christ, for grace and pardon, so that you may be justified, sanctified, renewed, and equipped to serve him?* Turn to these soul-encouraging scriptures: Pro 2.1-6; Luke 11.9-13; Pro 8.34-35.<sup>1</sup>

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Isn't it good comfort that he calls you? <sup>Mar 10.49</sup> Does he provide you the means, and yet you think he will mock you? Doubtless, he will not fail you, if you don't want to fail yourself. Oh, pray and don't faint. <sup>Luk 18.1</sup> A person of great quality who offended the Duke of Buckingham, the King's great favorite, was admitted into his presence. After a long wait, he prostrated himself at his feet, saying, *I am resolved never to rise again, until I have obtained your Grace's favor.* By that posture he overcame him. Throw yourself at the feet of God with such resolve. It is for your life; therefore follow after him and don't give up. Resolve that you will not be put off with bones, or with common mercies. What if God doesn't immediately open to you? Isn't grace worth waiting for? Knock and wait, and no doubt mercy will come sooner or later.

And know this, that you have the very same encouragement to seek and to wait that the saints now in glory once had; for they once were in your very situation and they have done so well. Will you not go to the same door, and wait upon your God in the same manner?

**Direct. XV.** *Forsake your evil company,<sup>2</sup> and resist the occasions of sin.<sup>3</sup>* You will never be turned from sin, until you decline and forego the temptations of sin. <sup>1Pet 2.11</sup>

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I don't expect your conversion from sin until you begin some self-denial, such as fleeing the occasions of sin. If you nibble at the bait, and play on the brink, and tamper and meddle with the snare, your soul will surely be taken. Where God in his providence unavoidably exposes men to temptations, and the occasions are such that we cannot remove them, we may expect special assistance in the use of his means. But when we tempt God by *running* into danger, he will not support us when we are tempted. Of all temptations, one of the most fatal and pernicious is evil company. Oh, what hopeful beginnings these have often stifled! Oh, the souls, the estates, the families, the towns that these have ruined! How many a poor sinner has been enlightened and convicted, and has been nearly ready to give the devil the slip, and has even escaped the snare, and yet wicked company has pulled him back into it in the end, and made him seven-fold more the child of hell. In one word, I have no hopes for you unless you shake off your evil company. Christ speaks to you as he does to them in another circumstance, *If you seek me, then let these go their way.* <sup>Joh 18.8</sup> Your life depends on it: forsake these, or else you cannot live. <sup>Pro 9.6</sup> Will you be worse than the beast by continuing on when you see the Lord with a drawn sword in the way? <sup>Num. 22.33</sup> Let this sentence be written in capitals on your conscience,

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<sup>1</sup> **Pro 2:1** My son, if you receive my words, And treasure my commands within you, <sup>2</sup> So that you incline your ear to wisdom, And apply your heart to understanding; <sup>3</sup> Yes, if you cry out for discernment, And lift up your voice for understanding, <sup>4</sup> If you seek her as silver, And search for her as for hidden treasures; <sup>5</sup> Then you will understand the fear of the LORD, And find the knowledge of God. <sup>6</sup> For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth come knowledge and understanding; **Luk 11:9** "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup> "For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. <sup>11</sup> "If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? <sup>12</sup> "Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? <sup>13</sup> "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" **Pro 8:34** Blessed is the man who listens to me, Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the posts of my doors. <sup>35</sup> For whoever finds me finds life, And obtains favor from the LORD;

<sup>2</sup> 1Cor 15:33; Prov. 9.6

<sup>3</sup> Gen. 39.12; Prov. 23.31

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*A COMPANION OF FOOLS WILL BE DESTROYED.*<sup>Pro 13.20</sup> The Lord has spoken it, and who will reverse it? Will you run upon<sup>1</sup> destruction, when God himself forewarns you? If God ever changes your heart, it will be seen in the change of your company. Oh, fear and flee this gulf by which so many thousands of souls have been swallowed into perdition. It will be hard for you, indeed, to make your escape. Your companions will mock you for your religion, and they will consider ways to fill you with prejudices against strictness as being ridiculous and comfortless. They will flatter and allure you. But remember the warnings of the Holy Ghost: *My son, if sinners entice you, don't consent. If they say, 'Come with us — throw your lot in with us,' don't walk in their way; keep your foot from their path; avoid it; don't go near it; turn from it and go away. For the way of the wicked is like darkness; they don't know what they stumble over. They lay in wait for their own blood; they lurk secretly to take their own lives.*<sup>2</sup> My soul is distraught to think how many of my hearers are likely to perish by this wretched mischief, both they and their houses — there are haunting images of such places and company by which they are drawn into sin. Once more I admonish you, as Moses admonished Israel, *And he spoke to the congregation saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men.*<sup>Num. 16.26</sup> Oh, flee from them as you would flee from those who have plague sores running on their foreheads.<sup>3</sup> These are the devil's panders and decoys; if you don't make your escape, they will summon you into perdition, and will prove your eternal ruin.

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**Direct. XVI.** *Lastly, Set apart a day to humble your soul in secret by fasting and prayer, to work the sense of your sins and miseries upon your heart. Read over the Assembly's exposition of the commands.* Write down the duties you have omitted, and the sins you have committed against every commandment. Thus make a catalogue of your sins. With shame and sorrow, spread them before the Lord. If your heart truly agrees to the terms, then join yourself solemnly to the Lord with the covenant provided under the tenth direction above.<sup>4</sup> May the Lord grant you mercy in his sight.

Thus I have told you what you must do to be saved. Will you now obey the voice of the Lord? Will you arise, and set to your work? O man, what answer will you give? What excuses will you make if you were to perish in the end through sheer wilfulness, when you have known the way of life? I don't fear you will fail, unless your own idleness undoes you in the end by neglecting the use of the means that are so plainly prescribed here. Rouse up, O sluggard, and apply yourself to the work! Do it, and the Lord will be with you.

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<sup>1</sup> The image is of someone “running upon” and impaling himself on an outstretched spear.

<sup>2</sup> Pro 1.10-18, and 4.14-20

<sup>3</sup> Consider that the Great Plague of London (bubonic plague) occurred from 1665–1666, just five years before this work was published. A fifth of the population died (100,000 people). This is a startling and too-familiar comparison!

<sup>4</sup> See [page 176](#) above.

*A SHORT SOLILOQUY FOR AN UNREGENERATE SINNER.*

Ah, wretched man that I am! What a condition I have brought myself into by sin!

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Oh, I see my heart has deceived me all this while in flattering me that my condition was good. I see, I see. I am but a lost and undone man, forever undone unless the Lord helps me out of this condition. My sins! my sins! Lord, what an unclean, polluted wretch I am! More loathsome and odious to *you* than the most hateful venom, or malodorous carcass can be to *me*. Oh, what a hell of sin is in this heart of mine, which I have flattered myself to think it is a good heart! Lord, how universally I am corrupted in all my parts, powers, and performances! All the imaginations of the thoughts of my heart are only evil continually. <sup>Gen 6.5</sup> I am unable to do anything that is good. I am averse to it, and hostile against it; and I am prone to all that is evil. My heart is a veritable sink of every kind of sin. And oh, the innumerable hosts and swarms of sinful thoughts, words, and actions that have flown from it! Oh, the load of guilt that is on my soul! My head is full, my heart is full, my mind and my members are all full of sin. Oh, my sins! How they stare at me! How they witness against me! Woe is me: my creditors are upon me; every commandment takes hold of me for more than ten thousand talents, indeed, ten thousand times ten thousand. How endless then is the sum of all my debts! If this whole world were filled from earth to heaven with paper, and all this paper was written on front and back by mathematicians, when it was all added up, it would still come inconceivably short of what I owe for breaking the least of God's commandments.

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Woe to me! For my debts are infinite, and my sins are increased; they are wrongs to an infinite Majesty. If one who commits treason against a silken mortal is worthy to be racked, drawn, and quartered, then what have I deserved, who so often lifted my hands against heaven, and struck at the crown and dignity of the Almighty!

Oh, my sins! My sins! Behold, a troop comes, multitudes upon multitudes! There is no number to their armies. Innumerable evils have encompassed me. My iniquities have taken hold of me; they have set themselves in array against me. Oh, it would be better to have all the regiments of hell come against me than to have my sins fall upon me, despoiling my soul. Lord, I am surrounded by them! How many there are that rise up against me! They have assailed me behind and before. They swarm within me and without me. They have possessed all my powers, and they have fortified my unhappy soul like a garrison, which this brood of hell mans and maintains against the God who made me.

And they are as mighty as they are many. The sands are many, but they are not great; the mountains are great, but they are not many. But woe is me! My sins are as many as the sands, and as mighty as the mountains. Their weight is greater than their number. It would be better that the rocks and the mountains fall upon me, than the crushing and insupportable load of my own sins. Lord, I am heavy-laden; let mercy help, or I am gone.

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Unload me of this heavy guilt, this sinking load, or I am crushed without hope, and must be pressed down to hell. If my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my sins laid in the balances together, they would be heavier than the sands of the sea. Therefore my words are swallowed up; they would weigh down all the rocks and hills, and turn the balance against all the isles of the earth. O Lord, you know my manifold transgressions, and my mighty sins.

Ah my soul! Alas, my glory! From what are you humbled, you who were once the glory of the creation and the image of God? Now you are a lump of filthiness, a coffin of rotteness,



replenished with stench and loathsomeness. Oh, what work sin has made of you! You will be called forsaken, and all the rooms of your faculties will be desolate. The name you will be called by is Ichabod, or *where is the glory?*<sup>1</sup> How mightily you have come down! My beauty is turned into deformity, and my glory into shame. Lord, what a loathsome leper I am! The ulcerous bodies of Job or Lazarus were no more offensive to the eyes and nostrils of men than I must be to the most holy God, whose eyes cannot behold iniquity.

And what misery my sins have brought upon me! Lord, what a case I am in! Sold under sin, cast out of God's favour, accursed from the Lord, cursed in my body, cursed in my soul, cursed in my name, in my estate, my relations, and all that I have.

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My sins are unpardoned, and my soul is within a step of death. Alas! What shall I do? Where will I go? Which way will I look? God is frowning on me from above; hell is gaping for me beneath; conscience is striking me within; temptations and dangers surround me without. Oh, *where* will I flee? What place can hide me from omniscience? What power can secure me from omnipotence?

What do you mean, O my soul, to continue in this way? Are you in league with hell? Have you made a covenant with death? Are you in love with this misery? Is it good for you to be here? Alas! What will I do? Will I go on in my sinful ways? Why, then certain damnation will be my end. Will I be so drunk and insane as to go and sell my soul to the flames for a little ale, and a little ease; for a little pleasure, or gain, or contentment for my flesh? Will I linger any longer in this wretched estate? No! If I tarry here, I will die. What then? Is there no help, no hope? None, unless I turn. Why, is there any remedy for such woeful misery? Is there any mercy after such provocative iniquity? Yes, as sure as God's oath is true, I will have pardon and mercy yet: if I now, sincerely and unreservedly, turn to him by Christ.

Why then, I thank you upon the bended knees of my soul, O most merciful Jehovah, that your patience has waited on me until now. For had you taken me away in this estate, I would have perished forever. And now I adore your grace, and I accept the offer of your mercy: I renounce all my sins, and resolve by your grace to set myself against them, and to follow you in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life.

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Who am I, Lord, that I should make any claim to you, or have any part or portion in you, who is not worthy to lick the dust of your feet? Yet, since you hold out the golden sceptre, I am bold to come and touch it. To despair would be to disparage your mercy; and to stay back when you bid me come, would be to undo myself instantly, and rebel against you under the pretence of humility. Therefore I bow my soul to you, and with all possible thankfulness, I accept you as mine, and surrender myself to you as yours. You will be Sovereign over me, my King, and my God. You will be in the throne, and all my powers will bow to you. They will come and worship before your feet. You will be my portion, O Lord, and I will rest in you.

You call for my heart. Oh, that it was in any way fit for your acceptance! I am unworthy, O Lord, everlastingly unworthy to be yours. But since you will have it so, I freely surrender my heart to you. Take it, it is yours. Oh, that it were better! But, Lord, I put it in your hand, who alone can mend it. Mold it after your own heart. Make it as you would have it: holy, humble, heavenly, soft, tender, and flexible; write your law upon it.

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<sup>1</sup> 1Sam 4.21



Come, Lord Jesus; come quickly; enter in triumphantly. Take me up to you forever. I surrender to you. I come to you as the only way to the Father, as the only Mediator, the means ordained to bring me to God. I have destroyed myself, but my help is in you. Save, Lord, or else I perish. I come to you with the rope around my neck; I am worthy to die, and to be damned. Never was the hire more owed to the servant, never was the penny more owed to the labourer, than death and hell are owed to me as my just wages for my sins. But I fly to your merits. I trust alone to the value and virtue of your sacrifice, and the superiority of your intercession. I submit to your teaching. I choose your government. Stand open, you everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in! <sup>Psa 24.7</sup>

O you Spirit of the most High, the Comforter and Sanctifier of your chosen, come in with all your glorious train, with all your courtly attendants, your fruits and graces. Let me be your habitation. I can give you only what is yours already; but here, with the poor widow, I toss my two mites, my soul and my body, into your treasury, fully resigning them to you, to be sanctified by you, to be servants to you. They will be your patients — cure their malady; they will be your agents — govern their motions. Too long have I served the world; too long have I listened to Satan; but now I renounce them all, and will be ruled by your dictates and directions, and guided by your counsel.

O blessed Trinity! O glorious Unity!

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I deliver myself to you; receive me. Write your name, O Lord, upon me and upon all that I have as your proper goods. Set your mark upon me, upon every member of my body, and every faculty of my whole being. I have chosen your precepts; I will lay your law before me. This will be the copy I keep my eye on, and study to write about. By your grace, I resolve to walk according to this rule; my soul will be governed after this law. And though I cannot perfectly keep even one of your commandments, yet I will not grant myself permission to breach one. I know my flesh will lag behind; but I resolve, in the power of your grace, to cling to you, and to your holy ways, whatever it costs me. I am sure I cannot come off a loser by you; therefore I will be content with reproach, and difficulties, and hardships here; and I will deny myself, and take up my cross, and follow you. Lord Jesus, your yoke is easy, your cross is welcome, because it is the way to you. I lay aside all hopes of worldly happiness. I will be content to tarry until I come to you. Let me be poor and low, little and despised here, only that I may be admitted to live and reign with you hereafter. Lord, you have my heart and hand to this agreement. May it be like the laws of the Medes and Persians, never to be reversed. To this I stand in this resolution: by grace, I will live and die. I have sworn, and I will perform it: that I will keep your righteous judgments; I have given my free consent. I have made my everlasting choice. Lord Jesus, confirm the contract. *Amen.*

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## CHAP. VII — THE MOTIVES FOR CONVERSION.

What has already been said about the necessity of conversion, and the miseries of the unconverted, might be sufficient to induce any considering mind to resolve to quickly turn or be converted to God. Yet, knowing what a piece of desperate obstinacy and intractableness the heart of man naturally is, I think it necessary to add to the means of conversion, and to the directions for a covenant-closure with God in Christ, some motives to persuade you to do it.

“O Lord, don’t fail me now at my last attempts. If anyone has read to this point, and is still untouched, Lord, fasten in him now, and do your work. Now take him by the heart, overcome him; persuade him till he says, ‘You have prevailed, for You were stronger than I.’ Lord, did you not make me a fisher of men? And have I toiled all this while and caught nothing? Alas, that I have spent my strength for nothing! And now I am casting my last time: Lord Jesus, stand upon the shore, and direct how and where I will spread my net; and let me so enclose with arguments the souls I seek, that they may not be able to get out. Now, Lord, for a multitude of souls! Now for a full draught! O Lord God, remember me, I pray you, and strengthen me this once, O God.”

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*But now I turn to you.*

Men and brothers, heaven and earth call upon you. Indeed, hell itself preaches the doctrine of repentance to you. The angels of the churches travail with you;<sup>Gal. 4.19</sup> the angels of heaven wait for you, for your repenting and turning to God. O sinner! Why should the devils make merry with you? Why should you be a morsel for that devouring Leviathan? Why should harpies<sup>1</sup> and hell-hounds<sup>2</sup> tear you apart, and make a feast of you. And when they have gotten you into the snare, and fastened their talons in you, why should they laugh at your destruction, and deride your misery, and amuse themselves with your damnable folly? This *must* be your case, unless you turn. And would it not be better for you to be a joy to angels, than to be a laughing-stock and an amusement for devils? Truly, if you would only come in, the heavenly host would take up their anthems and sing, *Glory be to God in the highest*. The morning stars would sing together, and all the sons of God would shout for joy and celebrate *this* new creation as they did the first. Your repentance would, as it were, make a holyday in heaven, and the glorious spirits would rejoice that there is a new brother added to their society;<sup>Rev 22.9</sup> there is another heir born to their Lord, and the lost son is received safe and sound. The true penitent’s tears are indeed the wine that cheers both God and man.

If it is a little thing, that men and angels would rejoice at your conversion, then know that God himself would rejoice over you, even with singing,

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and you would rest in his love.<sup>3</sup> Jacob never wept over the neck of his Joseph with such joy as your heavenly Father would rejoice over you upon coming in to him. Look over the story of the prodigal. I think I see how the aged father sets aside his condition, and forgets his years! Behold how he runs! <sup>Luk 15.20</sup> Oh, the haste that mercy makes! The sinner doesn’t make half that speed. I think I see how his stomach churns, how his compassions yearn. How quick-sighted love is! Mercy spies him a great way off, forgets his riotous lifestyle, his unnatural rebellion, his horrid ingratitude, his debauched practices (not a word of these), and the father receives him with open

<sup>1</sup> A fabulous winged monster, ravenous and filthy, having the face of a woman and the body of a vulture.

<sup>2</sup> A hellhound is a supernatural dog assigned to guard the entrance to the world of the dead, such as graveyards and burial grounds, or undertake other duties related to the afterlife, such as hunting down lost souls.

<sup>3</sup> Luk 15.9; Isa 62.5

arms, clasps him around his neck, forgets the nastiness of his rags, kisses the lips that deserved to be loathed, the lips that had been joined to harlots and that had eaten with pigs. He calls for the fatted calf, the best robe, the ring, the shoe, the best cheer in heaven's store, the best attire in heaven's wardrobe.<sup>Luk 15.6, 9, 23</sup> Indeed, the joy cannot be held in one breast, etc. Others must be called to participate; the friends must meet and make merry. Angels must wait, but the prodigal must be set at the table under his Father's wing: he is the joy of the feast. He is the sweet subject of the Father's delight. The friends sympathize, but none knows the felicity the Father takes in his newborn son whom he has received from the dead. I think I hear the music and the dancing at a distance. Oh, the melody of the heavenly choristers!

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I cannot learn the song,<sup>Rev 14.3</sup> but I think I overhear the burden at which all the harmonious choir sings sweetly with one voice; for thus goes the round at heaven's table, "For this my son was dead, and is alive again, was lost, and now is found."<sup>Luk 15.22, 24, 32</sup> I don't need to further explain the parable: God is the Father, Christ is the cheer, his righteousness the robe, his graces the ornaments, ministers, saints, angels, the friends and servants; and you who are reading this (if you will only sincerely repent and turn) are the welcome prodigal, the happy instance of this grace, and the blessed subject of this joy and love.

O rock! O adamant!<sup>1</sup> What! Not moved yet? Not yet resolved to turn without delay and close with mercy? I will try you yet once again: if one were sent to you from the dead, would you be persuaded? Well, hear the voice from the dead, from the damned, crying to you that you should repent. *I pray you, that you would send him to my father's house; for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come into this place of torment. If one went to them from the dead, they will repent.*<sup>Luk 16.27-28, etc.</sup> Hear, O man! Your impenitent predecessors preach to you from the infernal gallows, from the flames and the rack, that you should repent. Oh, look down into the bottomless pit: see how the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever?<sup>Rev 14.11</sup> How black are the fiends! How furious are their tormentors!

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It is their only music to hear how their miserable patients roar, to hear their bones crack. It is their meat and drink to see how their flesh fries, and how their fat drops; to drench them with burning metal, to rip open their bodies and pour the fierce burning brass into their stomachs, and into the recesses and ventricles of their hearts. What do you think of those chains of darkness, of those instruments of cruelty? Can you be content to burn? Do you see how the worm gnaws, how the oven glows, how the fire rages? What do you say to that river of brimstone, that dark and horrible vault, that gulf of perdition? Will you take up your residence here? Oh, put your ear to the door of hell and hear the curses and blasphemies, the weepings and wailings. Do you hear how they lament their folly, and curse their day?<sup>2</sup> How they roar and yell, and gnash their teeth? How deep their groans are? How impassioned their moans? How inconceivable their miseries? The shrieks of Korah, Dathan and Abiram were so terrible when the earth split asunder, and opened her mouth, swallowing them up and all that belonged to them, that all Israel fled at their cry.<sup>Num. 19.33-34</sup> Then, oh how fearful would the cry be if God were to take the cover off the mouth of hell, and let the cry of the damned ascend in all its terror among the children of men! And of all their moans and miseries, this is the piercing, killing emphasis and burden: *Forever and ever...*

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<sup>1</sup> A rock as hard as diamond; it describes someone who is impervious to pleas, persuasion, requests, and reason.

<sup>2</sup> Mat 22.13; Rev 16.9

Why, as God lives, who made your soul, you are but a few hours distant from all this, unless you repent and are converted.

Oh, I am lost and swallowed up in the abundance of arguments that I might suggest. If there is any point to wisdom in this world, it is to repent and come in; if there is anything righteous, anything reasonable, then *this* is it. But if there is anything that may be called madness and folly in this world, anything that may be considered drunken, absurd, brutish, or unreasonable, then it is *this*: to continue in your unconverted estate! Let me beg of you, because you would not wilfully destroy yourself, sit down and weigh the following motives, besides what has been said. Let your conscience say whether it is against reason that you repent and turn.

1. *The God that made you most graciously invites you.*

*First, His most sweet and merciful nature invites you.* Oh, the kindness of God, his working pity, his tender mercies! They are infinitely above our thoughts: they are *higher than heaven; what can we do? Deeper than hell; what can we know?* <sup>Job 11.7-9</sup> He is *full of compassion, and gracious; long-suffering, and plentiful in mercy.* <sup>Psa 86.15</sup> *Turn to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, of great kindness, and willing to turn from bringing disaster upon us.*<sup>1</sup> If God would not turn from bringing disaster, then it would discourage us from repenting.

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If there were no hope of mercy, then it would be no wonder that rebels held out. But no subjects never had such a gracious prince as you have to deal with: such piety, patience, clemency, and pity. *Who is a God like you, that pardons iniquity?* etc. <sup>Mic 7.18</sup> O sinners, see what a God you have to deal with! If you will but turn, *he will turn again, and have compassion on you: he will subdue your iniquities, and throw all your sins into the depths of the sea.* <sup>Mic 7.19</sup> *Return to me, says the Lord of hosts, and I will return to you.*<sup>2</sup> Sinners don't fail because their thoughts of God's mercies are too high, but because, (1.) They overlook his justice. (2.) They convince themselves there is mercy apart from God's way. His mercy is beyond all imagination. <sup>Isa 55.9</sup> They are great mercies, <sup>1Chr 21.13</sup> manifold mercies, <sup>Neh. 9.19</sup> tender mercies, <sup>Psa 25.6</sup> sure mercies, <sup>Isa 55.3</sup> everlasting mercies,<sup>3</sup> and all are yours if you will only turn. Are you willing to come in? Why, the Lord has laid aside his terror, erected a throne of grace, and he holds out the golden scepter to you: touch it and live. Would a merciful man slay his enemy when he is prostrate at his feet, acknowledging his wrong, begging for pardon, and offering to enter into a covenant of peace with him? Much less will the merciful God do so. Study his name, Exo 34.7. Read their experience, Neh. 9.17.

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*Secondly, His soul-encouraging calls and promises invite you.* Ah, what an earnest suiter mercy is to you! How loving, how quickly it calls after you! How passionately it woos you! *Return, you backsliding Israel, says the Lord, and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, says the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever. Only acknowledge your iniquity. Turn, Oh, backsliding children, says the Lord, for I am married to you. Return, and I will heal your backslidings. You have played the harlot with many lovers, yet return to me, says the Lord.* <sup>Jer 3.11-14, 22</sup> *As I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that he turns from his way, and lives: turn, turn from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?* <sup>Eze 33.11</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Exo 32.14; Jer 18.8; Jon. 3:10

<sup>2</sup> Mal 3.17; Zech. 1.3

<sup>3</sup> Psa 103.17; Isa 54.8

“If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he has committed, and keep all my statutes, and do what is lawful and right, he will surely live; he will not die. All his transgressions that he has committed will not be mentioned to him: for the righteousness he has done, he will live. Repent and turn from all your transgressions so iniquity will not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, and make yourselves a clean heart, and a new spirit;<sup>1</sup> for why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dies, says the Lord God; therefore turn, and live.” Eze 18.21-22, 30-32

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Oh, melting, gracious words! The voice of God and not of a man! This is not the manner of men for the offended sovereign to court the offending traitorous scoundrel. Oh, how mercy chases you, and pleads with you! Is your heart not yet broken? Oh, that today you would hear his voice!

2. *The doors of heaven are thrown open to you, the everlasting gates are set wide for you, and an abundant entrance into the kingdom of heaven is provided to you. Christ now speaks to you, (as the woman spoke to her husband) Arise and take possession.*<sup>1Kng 21.15</sup> View the glory of the other world as presented in the map of the gospel. Go to the top of Pisgah (mountain of the promises), and look with your eyes westward, northward, southward and eastward, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, and that goodly mountain.<sup>Deu 3.27, 25</sup> Behold the paradise of God, watered with the streams of glory. Arise, and walk through the land, the length of it, and the breadth of it: for the land which you see, the Lord will give to you forever, if you will only return,<sup>Gen 13.14-15, 17</sup> Let me say to you, as Paul said to Agrippa, do you *believe* the prophets? If you believe indeed, then view what glorious things are spoken of the city of God,<sup>Psa 87.3</sup> and know that all this is hereby tendered to you in the name of God. As truly as God is true, it will be yours forever, if you will but thoroughly turn.

Behold the city of pure transparent gold, whose foundations are garnished with all kinds of precious stones, whose gates are pearls, whose light is glory, whose temple is God.<sup>Rev 21</sup>

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Do you *believe* this? If they are, then aren't you worse than oblivious if you will not take possession when the gates are flung open to you, and you are bid to enter? O you sons of folly, will you embrace the dunghills, and refuse the kingdom? Behold the Lord God takes you up into the mountain; he shows you the kingdom of heaven, and all its glory; and he tells you, *I will give you all this, if you will fall down and worship me*; if you will submit to mercy, accept my Son, and serve me in righteousness and holiness. *O fools, and slow of heart to believe!* Will you court the harlot? Will you seek and serve the world, and neglect the eternal glory? What! Not enter into paradise, when the flaming sword that was once set to keep you out is now used to drive you in? But you say that I am uncharitable to think you are infidels and unbelievers. Why, what else should I think of you? Either you are desperate unbelievers who don't acknowledge it, or else you are so completely distracted that you can know and believe the excellency and eternity of his glory, and yet so fearfully neglect it! Surely you either have no faith, or else no reason; and I would say that your conscience should tell you so before I leave you.

Just pay attention to what is offered to you: O blessed kingdom! A kingdom of glory,<sup>1Thes 2.1</sup> a kingdom of righteousness,<sup>2Pet 3.13</sup> a kingdom of peace,<sup>Rom 14.17</sup> an everlasting kingdom.<sup>2Pet 1.11</sup> Here you will dwell; here you will reign forever; and the Lord will set you on a throne of glory;<sup>Mat 19.28</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is an obvious impossibility; however, by repenting from sin and turning to God, God promises to provide them with these: “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.” (Eze 36:26 NKJ)



and with his own hand he will set the royal diadem on your head, and give you a crown, not of thorns (for there will be no sinning or suffering there),<sup>Rev 21.3-5, 23, 27</sup> not of gold (for this will be more common than dirt in that day), but a crown of life,<sup>Jas. 1.12</sup> a crown of righteousness,<sup>2Tim 4.8</sup> a crown of glory.<sup>1Pet 5.4</sup> Yes, you will put on glory like a robe, <sup>1Cor 15.53</sup> and shine like the sun in the firmament, in the glory of your Father.<sup>Mat 13.43</sup> Look at your dirty flesh, your clay, your worm's meat: this present flesh, this lump, this carcass will be brighter than the stars.<sup>Dan. 12.3</sup> In short, you will be made like the angels of God, <sup>Luk 20.36</sup> and behold his face in righteousness. <sup>Psa 17.15</sup> Look inward now, and tell me, do you *believe* yet? If not, then your conscience must pronounce that you are an infidel; for it is the very word of God that I speak.

But if you say you do believe, then let me next know your resolutions. Will you embrace this for your happiness? Will you forego your sinful gains, your forbidden pleasures? Will you trample on the world's esteem, and spit in the harlot's face, and shut your ears at her flatteries, and wrestle your way out of her embraces? Will you be content to embrace present reproach and poverty if it lies in your way to heaven, and follow the Lord with humble self-denial in a mortified and flesh-displeasing life? If so, then all is yours, *forever*. And are you not fairly compensated? Is it not a pity that someone should be damned,

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who must go on and perish, when all this may be had for the taking? In a word, will you now accept these offers? Will you take God at his word? Will you stop holding fast to the world, and rid your hands of your sins, and lay hold of eternal life? If not, then let your conscience tell you whether you are distracted or bewitched that you can ignore so happy a choice by which you might be reconciled forever.

3. *God will place unspeakable privileges on you right now.*<sup>1</sup> Though the fullness of your blessings will be deferred until hereafter, God will give you no little things in-hand.<sup>2</sup>

He will redeem you from your bondage.<sup>Joh 8.36</sup> He will pluck you from the lion's paw.<sup>Col. 1.13</sup> The serpent will bruise your heel, but you will bruise his head.<sup>3Gen 3.15</sup> He will deliver you from this present evil world.<sup>Gal. 1.4</sup> Prosperity will not destroy you, and adversity will not come between him and you.<sup>Rom 8.35, 37-38</sup> He will redeem you from the power of the grave,<sup>Psa 49.15</sup> and make the king of terrors a messenger of peace to you. He will remove the curse from the cross,<sup>Psa 119.71</sup> and make affliction the refining pot<sup>4</sup>, the fan, the cathartic, to blow off the chaff, purify the metal, and purge the mind.<sup>5</sup> He will save you from the arrest of the law, and turn the curse into a blessing to you.<sup>6</sup> He has the keys of hell and death, and shuts what no man can open.<sup>Rev 3.7; 1.18</sup>

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He will shut its mouth, as he once shut the lions' mouths,<sup>Dan. 6.22</sup> so that you will not be hurt by the second death.<sup>Rev 2.11</sup>

He will not only save you from misery, but he will bestow on you unspeakable prerogatives: he will bestow himself on you. He will be a friend to you, and a father to you.<sup>2Cor 6.18</sup> He will be a sun and a shield to you.<sup>Psa 84.11</sup> In a word, he will be God to you.<sup>Gen 17.7</sup> And what more can be said? Whatever you may expect that God would do for you, and be to you, he will be that, and he will

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<sup>1</sup> 1Cor 3.22. Heb 12.22-24

<sup>2</sup> The promises are securely in our hand, and the Holy Spirit is the pledge of their fulfillment. Yet, our final receipt of some may be deferred. That's because some blessings are temporal while others are eternal. *Alleine* lists both below.

<sup>3</sup> Though spoken of Christ, we are eternally united to Christ. His suffering is our suffering; his victory is our victory.

<sup>4</sup> Pro 17.23; 27.21 — silver is tested and purified (refined) in the “fining-pot.” KJV

<sup>5</sup> Dan. 12.10; Isa 27.9

<sup>6</sup> Rom 6.14; Gal. 2.24



do that. The woman who marries a prince expects he will do for her as a prince would do: that she may live in a suitable estate, and have a corresponding dowry. The man who has a king for his father or as a friend, expects he will do for him like a king. Alas! The kings and monarchs of the earth, who are so far above you, are like painted butterflies among the rest of their kind, or like the pretty coloured caterpillar among the rest of the worms, if they are compared with God. Because he infinitely exceeds the glory and power of his glittering dust, so God will exceed in doing for his favorites whatever princes can do for theirs, beyond all proportion. He will give you grace and glory and withhold no good thing from you.<sup>Psa 84.11</sup> He will take you for his sons and daughters, and make you heirs of his promises;<sup>Heb 6.17</sup> and establish his everlasting covenant with you.<sup>Jer 32.40</sup>

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He will justify you from all that law, conscience, and Satan can charge you with.<sup>Rom 8.33-34</sup> He give you free access into his presence, and he accepts you and receives your prayers.<sup>1</sup> He will abide in you, and make you his confidants; he will hold a constant and friendly communion with you.<sup>2</sup> His ear will be opened, his door opened, and his store will be open to you at all times. His blessing will rest on you. He will make your enemies serve you, and work all things for your good.<sup>Psa 115.13; Rom 8.28</sup>

4. *The terms of mercy are brought as low as possible to you.* God has stooped as low to sinners as he can do with honour. He will not be thought to favour sin; nor will he stain the glory of his holiness. How could he come lower than he has, unless he would do those things? He has abated the impossibility of the first covenant.<sup>3</sup> He doesn't impose anything unreasonable or impossible on you as a condition of life. Two things were necessary for you to do according to the tenor of the first covenant: (1.) *That you should fully satisfy the demands of justice for past offences.* (2.) *That you should personally, perfectly, and perpetually perform the whole law for the time to come.* Both of these are impossible for us to do.<sup>Rom 8.3</sup> But behold God's gracious abatement in both! He doesn't require personal satisfaction; he is content to take from the surety (which he provided as well) what he might have exacted from you.<sup>2Cor 5.19</sup>

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He declares that he has received a ransom,<sup>4</sup> and that he expects nothing but that you accept his Son, and that he will be righteousness and redemption to you.<sup>5</sup> As for future obedience, here he is content to yield to your weakness and omit the rigour of it. He does not demand perfection as a condition of life, though he still insists it is due; but he is content to accept your sincerity of effort.<sup>6</sup> Though you cannot pay the full debt, he will accept you according to what you have, and take your willingness in place of doing, and your intentions in place of the performance.<sup>7</sup> And if you come in his Christ, and you set your hearts to please him, and make it your primary concern, he will approve and reward you, even though the vessel is marred in your hands.

Oh, consider your Maker's condescension. Let me say to you, as Naaman's servant said to him, *My father, if the prophet had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather when he says to you, Wash and be clean?*<sup>2Kng 5.13</sup> If God had demanded some

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<sup>1</sup> Eph 2.12; 1.6; 1Joh 5.14

<sup>2</sup> Joh 14.23; 15.15; 1Joh 1.3

<sup>3</sup> Jer 3.13; Mar 5.26; Acts. 16.31; 3.19; Pro 38.13

<sup>4</sup> Job 33.24; 1Tim 2.6

<sup>5</sup> Joh 1.12; 1Cor 1.30

<sup>6</sup> Gen, 16.1; Pro 11.20

<sup>7</sup> 2Cor 8.12; 2Chr 6.17

terrible, some severe and rigorous thing of you in order to escape eternal damnation, would you not have done it? Suppose it had been to spend all your days in sorrow in some howling wilderness, or to languish in famine, or offer the fruit of your bodies for the sin of your souls, wouldn't you have thankfully accepted eternal redemption if these had been the conditions?

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Furthermore, if God had told you that you would have fried in the fire for millions of ages, or you would have been tormented in hell for that long, wouldn't you have gladly accepted it? Alas! All these are not so much as one grain of sand in the glass of eternity. If your offended Creator would have held you but one year on the rack, and then asked you to come and forsake your sins, accept Christ, and serve him a few years in self-denial, or else lie in this condition forever and ever, do you think you would have hesitated at the offer, or disputed the terms, or been unresolved whether to accept the proposal? Sinner, return and live! Why would you die when life is to be had for the taking, and mercy is beholden to you to be saved? Could you say indeed, "Lord, I knew you were a hard man," <sup>Mat 25.24</sup> you would have had some excuse. But when the God of heaven has stooped so low, and abated so far, then if you now refused, who will plead for you?

*Obj.* Notwithstanding all these abatements, I am no more able to perform those conditions of faith, repentance, and sincere obedience (in themselves so easy), than to satisfy and fulfil the law.

*Ans.* You may perform these by God's enabling grace, while the others are naturally impossible in this state, even to believers themselves. But let the next consideration serve as a fuller answer.

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5. *In what you are impotent, God offers grace to enable you. I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded.* <sup>Pro 1.24</sup> Though you are plunged into the ditch of that misery from which you can never get out, Christ offers to *help* you out; he stretches out his hand to you: if you perish, it is for refusing his help. *Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man opens to me, I will come in.* <sup>Rev 3.20</sup> Though you are poor, wretched, blind, and naked, Christ offers a cure for your blindness, a cover for your nakedness, and a remedy for your poverty; he offers you his righteousness, his graces: *I counsel you to buy gold from me, that you may be rich, and white raiment, that you may be clothed; and anoint your eyes with eye-salve, that you may see.* <sup>Rev 3.17-18</sup> Do you say the condition is impossible because you have nothing with which to buy? You must know that *this* buying is without money and without price. <sup>Isa 55.1</sup> *This* buying is by begging, and seeking with diligence and constancy the use of God's means. <sup>Pro 2.3-4</sup> God commands you to know him, and to fear him. Do you say, "Yes, but my mind is blinded, and my heart is hardened from this fear"? I answer, God offers to enlighten your mind, and teach you *his* fear; these are presented to you for your choosing. *For they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.* <sup>Pro 1.29</sup> So if men live in ignorance and estrangement from the Lord, it is because *they will not understand, and don't desire the knowledge of his ways.* <sup>Job 21.14</sup>

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*If you cry after knowledge, if you seek her like silver, etc. then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.* <sup>Pro 2.3-5</sup>. Is this not a fair offer? *Turn at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit upon you.* <sup>Pro 1.23</sup>. Though you can do nothing of yourselves, yet you may do all things through his spirit enabling you; he offers you assistance. God bids you *wash, and make yourself clean.* <sup>Isa 1.16</sup> You say you are unable, much as the leopard is unable to wash out his spots. <sup>Jer 13.23</sup> Yes, but the Lord offers to purge you; so if you are still filthy, it is through your own willfulness. *I have purged you, and you were not purged.* <sup>Eze 24.13</sup> *O Jerusalem, will you not be made clean? When will it be?* <sup>Jer 13.27</sup> God waits for when you will be made clean, when you will yield to his actions, and accept his offers, and let him do *for* you and

*in* you what you cannot do for yourselves. You don't know how much God will do upon importuning him, if you will only be eager and insistent with him. <sup>Luk 11.8; 18.5</sup>

Even if God has not bound himself by express promise to give wicked men grace in the diligent use of the means he afforded them, he has still given them abundant encouragement to expect it from him if they earnestly seek it his way. His most gracious nature is abundant encouragement. If a rich and most bountiful man were to see you in misery, and bid you come to his door, would you not confidently expect at your coming, to find some relief?

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You are not able to believe or repent. God appointed you to use such means in order obtain faith and repentance. Doesn't this argue that God will bestow these things on you if you ply him diligently in prayer, meditation, reading, hearing, self-examination, and the rest of his means? Otherwise God would only be mocking his poor creatures by having them perform these self-denying endeavors, and then deny them in the end, after they have worked hard at it and continued waiting upon him for grace. Surely, if a sweet-natured man would not treat them this way, much less will the most merciful and gracious God.

I intended to add many other arguments, but these have swollen under my hand. I hope the judicious reader will look upon the weight of them rather than the number.

## THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE

AND now, my brothers, let me know your minds: what do you intend to do? Will you go on and die? Or will you set upon a thorough and speedy conversion, and lay hold of eternal life? How long will you linger in Sodom? How long will you halt between two opinions? <sup>1Kng 18.21</sup> Are you not yet resolved whether it is better to choose Christ or Barabbas, bliss or torment, the land of Cabul <sup>1Kng 9.13</sup> or the paradise of God?

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Is it debatable whether the Abana and Pharpar of Damascus<sup>1</sup> are better than all the streams of Eden? Or whether the vile puddle of sin is preferred over the water of life which is clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb? Can the world, in good earnest, do for you what Christ can? Will it stand by you to eternity? Will pleasures, titles, lands, and treasures descend with you? <sup>2</sup> If not, should you not look for something that will? What do you mean by standing there wavering, by being off again, on again? Foolish children! How long will you hesitate between the womb and the world? In the end, will I leave you no further than Agrippa who was *almost* persuaded? Why, if I left you here, then you are forever lost: as good as *not at all* Christians, as *not altogether* Christians. You have half a mind to surrender your former negligent life, and to set a strict and holy course. You wish you could be as some others are, and could do as they can do. How long will you rest in idle wishes and fruitless purposes? When will you come to a fixed, full, and firm resolve? Do you not see how Satan dupes you by tempting you to delays? How long has he tolled<sup>3</sup> you onward in the way to perdition? How many years have you been purposing to amend your ways? What if God had taken you in the meantime?

Well, don't put me off with a dilatory answer. Don't talk to me about "later." I must have your immediate consent. If you are not resolved now, while the Lord is dealing with you and wooing you, then you are much less likely to be resolved later when these impressions have worn off, and you are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

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Will you give me your hands? Will you open the doors and give the Lord Jesus full and present possession? Will you put your names on his covenant? Will you subscribe? What do you resolve? If you are still set upon your delays, my labour is lost, and all is likely to come to nothing. I want you to make your venture now. Come cast your lot, make your choice: *Now is the accepted time, now is the day of your salvation,* <sup>2Cor 6.2</sup> *today if you will hear his voice.* <sup>Heb 3.7</sup> Why should this not be the day on which you are able to date your happiness? Why should you venture a day longer in this dangerous and dreadful condition? What if God should require your soul this night? <sup>Luk 12.20</sup> *Oh, that you might know in this your day, the things that belong to your peace, before they are hidden from your eyes.* <sup>Luk 19.42</sup> This is your day, and it is but a day. <sup>Joh 9.4</sup> Others have had their day, and have received their doom. Now you are brought onto the stage of this world, here to act your part for all eternity. Remember you are now upon your good behavior, forever-lasting. If you don't make a wise choice now, you are undone forever. Look what your present choice is; such must be your eternal condition.<sup>4</sup>

And is this true indeed? Is life and death at your choice? Yes, it is as true as truth is, <sup>Deu 30.19</sup> Why then, what is it that hinders your happiness?

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<sup>1</sup> [2Kings 5.12](#) — the two rivers of Damascus.

<sup>2</sup> [Psa 49.17](#); [1Tim 6.7](#)

<sup>3</sup> Toll: to ring bells, as in announcing a death ("Ask not for whom the bell tolls...").

<sup>4</sup> [Luke 10.24](#); [16.25](#); [Prov. 1.27-29](#)

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Nothing does or can hinder it except your own wilful neglect or refusal. This was the passage of the Eunuch speaking to Philip, *See, here is water; what hinders me from being baptized?* I may say the same to you, “See, here is Christ; here is mercy, pardon, life: what hinders you from being pardoned and saved?” One of the martyrs as he was praying at the stake, had his pardon sitting nearby in a box, (which he rightly refused because its terms were unworthy);<sup>1</sup> but here the terms are most honorable and easy. O sinner! Will you burn with your pardon nearby? Just release your consent to Christ right now, renounce your sins, deny yourself, take up the yoke and the cross, and you earn the day. Christ is yours; pardon, peace, life, blessedness, are all yours; and is this not an offer worth embracing? Why would you hesitate or dispute the case by doubting? Isn’t it beyond question whether God is better than sin, and glory better than vanity? Why would you forsake your own mercy and sin against your own life? When will you shake off your sloth, and lay aside your excuses? *Don’t boast about tomorrow*, you don’t know where this night may lodge you.<sup>Pro 27.1</sup>

Beloved, now the holy Spirit is striving with you: he will not always strive. Haven’t you felt your heart warmed by the word, and been almost persuaded to lay off your sins and come to God? Haven’t you felt some good motions in your mind, which warned you of your danger,

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and told you what your careless course will end in? It may be that you are like young Samuel who, when the Lord called once and then again, did not know the voice of the Lord.<sup>1Sam. 3.6-7</sup> But these motions and items are the offers and attempts, the calls and strivings of the Spirit. Oh, take the advantage of the tide, and know the day of your visitation.

Now, the Lord Jesus stretches wide his arms to receive you: he beseeches you by us. How movingly, how meltingly, how pitifully, how passionately he calls! The church is put into a sudden ecstasy upon the sound of his voice, *the voice of my beloved*.<sup>Song 2.8</sup> Will you turn a deaf ear to his voice? It is not the voice that breaks the cedars, and makes the mountains skip like a calf; that shakes the wilderness, and divides the flames of fire. It is not Sinai’s thunder, but the soft and still voice. It is not the voice of mount Ebal, a voice of cursing and terror, but the voice of mount Gerizim, the voice of blessing and of glad tidings, of good things. It is not the voice of the trumpet or the noise of war, but a message of peace from the King of peace.<sup>2</sup> I think it should be with you as it was with the spouse, *My soul failed when he spoke*.<sup>Song 5.6</sup> I may say to you, O sinner, as Martha said to her sister, *The Master has come, and he calls for you*.<sup>Joh 11.28</sup> Oh now, arise quickly and come to him, as Mary did. How sweet are his invitations! He cries out in the open concourse, *If any man thirsts, let him come to me and drink*.<sup>Joh 7.37; Pro 1.21</sup>

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He pierces his own body for you: Oh, come and lay your mouth to his side. How free he is! He excludes no one: *Whoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely*.<sup>Rev 22.17</sup> *Whoever is simple, let him turn in here. Come, eat of my bread, drink of the wine which I have mixed. Forsake the foolish and live*.<sup>Pro 9.4-6</sup> *Come to me, etc. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, and you will find rest for your souls*.<sup>Mat 11.28-29</sup> *The one who comes to me, I will in no way cast out*.<sup>Joh 6.37</sup> How he grieves the obstinate refuser! *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered your children, as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and you would*

<sup>1</sup> In *Foxes Book of Martyrs*, we discover this is the Rev. Geo. Marsh, martyred April 4, 1555. The chancellor told him the queen’s pardon was in the box if he would recant. He said he would gladly accept it, for he loved the queen; but it would tend to pluck him from God who was King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and he could not receive it on such terms. (Detroit, 1853 ed.) p. 409.

<sup>2</sup> Eph 6.15; 2Cor 5.18, 20

*not!* <sup>Mat 23.37</sup> *Behold me, behold me: I have stretched out my hands all the day to a rebellious people.* <sup>Isa 65.1-2</sup> Oh, be persuaded now at last, to throw yourselves into the arms of love.

Behold, O you sons of men, the Lord Jesus has thrown open the prisons. And now he comes to you (as the magistrates once came to them <sup>Act 16.39</sup>), and he beseeches you to come out. If Christ called you to come out of a palace or a paradise, it would be no wonder if you were unwilling (and yet, how easily Adam was tolled from there!). But it is from your *prison*, sirs, from your *chains*, from the *dungeon*, from the *darkness* that he calls you, <sup>Isa 42.6-7</sup> and yet you will not come? He calls you to liberty, <sup>Gal. 5.13</sup> and yet you will not listen? His yoke is easy, his laws are liberty,

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his service is freedom,<sup>1</sup> and whatever prejudices you have against his ways, if God may be believed, you will find them all pleasure and peace, and you will taste indescribable sweetness and joy, and take infinite delight and felicity in them.<sup>2</sup>

Beloved, I am loth to leave you; I cannot give up. I am now ready to close, but I would drive this bargain between Christ and you before I end. What! Will I leave you at the end as I found you? Have you read up to this point, and have not yet resolved to abandon all your sins right now, and close with Jesus Christ? Alas! What will I say? What will I do? Will you turn off all my importuning? Have I run in vain? Have I used so many arguments, and spent so much time persuading you, and yet in the end must I sit down in disappointment? But is it a small matter that you turn me off? You slight the God who made you; you reject the tender mercies and the beseeching of a Saviour? And if you will not be prevailed upon to repent now and be converted, then you will be resisting the Holy Ghost. <sup>Act 7.51</sup>

Well, though I have called you at length, and you have refused, yet I will once more lift up my voice like a trumpet, and cry from the highest places of the city before I conclude with a miserable *conclamatum est*.<sup>3</sup> Once more I will call after heedless sinners so that, if possible, I may awaken them. *O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.* <sup>Jer 22.29</sup>

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Unless you are resolved to die, lend your ears to these last calls of mercy. Behold, in the name of God I openly proclaim to you; *Listen to me, O you children: hear instruction, and be wise, and don't refuse it.* <sup>Pro 8.32-33</sup>

*Listen, every one that thirsts, come to the waters; and he that has no money, come, buy, and eat: Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Why do you spend your money for what is not bread, and your labor for what does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come to me; hear, and your soul will live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.* <sup>Isa 55.1-3</sup>

Listen, every one that is sick of any kind of disease, or torment, <sup>Mat 4.23-24</sup> or is possessed with an evil spirit, whether of pride, fury, lust, or covetousness, come to the physician; bring your sick. Look, here is the one that *heals all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases among the people.*

Listen, every one that is in debt, and every one that is in distress, and every one that is discontented. Gather yourselves to Christ, and he will become a captain over you; he will be your protection from the arrests by the law; he will save you from the hand of justice. Behold he is an

<sup>1</sup> Mat 11.30; Jas. 1.25; 1Cor 7.22

<sup>2</sup> Pro 3.17; Psa 119.165; 1Pet 1.8; Psa 119.103, 111

<sup>3</sup> He is dead past all hope.



open sanctuary for you, he is a known refuge.<sup>1</sup> Away with your sins; and come in to him, lest the avenger of blood seizes you, lest devouring wrath overtakes you.

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Listen, every ignorant sinner, come and buy eye-salve, that you may see.<sup>Rev 3.18</sup> Away with your excuses: you are forever lost if you continue in this estate.<sup>2Cor 4.3</sup> But accept Christ for your prophet, and he will be a light to you.<sup>Isa 42.6; Eph 5.14</sup> Cry to him for knowledge, study his word, take pains about the principles of religion, humble yourself before him, and he will teach you his way, and make you wise unto salvation.<sup>Mat 13.36; Luk 8.9; Joh 5.39; Psa 25.9</sup> But if you will not follow him in the uncomfortable use of his means, and you sit down because you have only one talent, he will condemn you as a wicked and slothful servant.<sup>Mat 25.24, 30</sup>

Listen, every profane sinner, come in and live: return to the Lord and he will have mercy on you. Be *entreated*. Oh, return! Come, you that have filled your mouth with curses and execrations, all kinds of sins and blasphemies will be forgiven you if you will just thoroughly turn to Christ and come in.<sup>Mat 3.28</sup> Though you were as unclean as *Magdalene*, *if you put away your whoredoms out of your sight, and your adulteries from between your breasts*, and surrender yourself to Christ as a vessel of holiness for his use alone, then, *though your sins be as scarlet, they will be as wool; and though they be as crimson, they will be white as snow*.<sup>Luk 7.37; Hos 2.2; 1Thes 4.4; Isa 1.18</sup>

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Hear, O you drunkards! *How long will you be drunken? Put away your wine*,<sup>1Sam. 1.14</sup> though you have rolled in the vomit of your sin, take the vomit of repentance, and heartily disgorge your beloved lusts, and the Lord will receive you.<sup>2Cor 6.17</sup> Surrender yourselves to Christ to live soberly, righteously, and godly. Embrace his righteousness, accept his government, and though you have been swine, he will wash you.<sup>Rev 3.6</sup>

Hear, O you loose companions! whose delight is in vain and wicked society, gambling away your time in carnal mirth and jollity with them; come in at wisdom's call: choose her and her ways, and you will live.<sup>Pro 9.5-6</sup>

Hear, O you scorners! Hear the word of the Lord: though you have made sport of godliness and its professors; though you have scorned Christ and his ways, yet he calls even you to gather you under the wings of his mercy.<sup>Pro 1.22-23</sup> In a word, even though you were found among the worst of that black roll,<sup>1Cor 6.9-10</sup> yet upon your thorough conversion you will be washed, justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.<sup>1Cor 6.11</sup>

Listen, every nominal professor who is only a lukewarm and dough-baked Christian, who rests in a form of godliness: give up your half-heartedness and your hesitation; be a Christian throughout; be zealous and repent; and then, even though you have been an offence to Christ's stomach, you will be the joy of his heart.<sup>Rev 3.16, 19-20</sup>

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And now bear witness that mercy has been offered you: *I call heaven and earth to record against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses; therefore choose life, that you may live*.<sup>Deu 30.19</sup> I can only woo you and warn you; I cannot compel you to be happy; if I could, I would. What answer will you send me with to my Master? Let me speak to you as Abraham's servant spoke to them; *And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my Master, tell me...*<sup>Gen 24.49</sup> Oh, for such a happy answer as Rebekah gave to them, *And they said, we will call the girl, and ask her. And they called Rebekah, and said to her, will you go with this man? And she said, I will go*.<sup>Gen 24.57-58</sup> Oh, if I only had this reply from you! Why should I be

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<sup>1</sup> Heb 6.18; Psa 48.3

your accuser, <sup>Mat 10.14-15</sup> when I thirst for your salvation? Why should the passionate pleadings and wooing of mercy be turned into the horrid aggravation of your obstinacy, and add to your misery? Judge yourselves! Don't you think the condemnation is doubly dreadful for those who continue in their sins after all endeavours have been made to recall them? Doubtless, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, yes, for Sodom and Gomorrah in the Day of Judgment, than for you. <sup>Mat 11.22, 24</sup>

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Beloved, if you have any pity for your perishing souls, close with the present offers of mercy. If you would not continue and increase the pains of your travailing ministers, then don't hesitate in the birth. If the God that made you has any authority with you, then obey his command and come in. If you don't despise grace, and you would not close the doors of mercy against yourselves, then repent and be converted. Don't let heaven stand open for you in vain. Don't let the Lord Jesus open his wares in vain, and invite you to buy without money and without price. Don't let his ministers and his Spirit strive with you in vain, and leave you now at last unpersuaded, lest this sentence be pronounced against you: *The bellows are burnt, the lead is consumed by the fire, the founder melts in vain. Men will call them reprobate silver, because the Lord has rejected them.* <sup>Jer 6.29-30</sup>

“Father of Spirits, take the heart in hand that is too hard for my weakness: Don't end here, even though I have finished. Half a word from your effectual power will do the work. O you who has the key of David, that opens what no man shuts; open this heart as you did Lydia's, and let the King of glory enter in, and make this soul your captive. Don't let the tempter harden him with delays. Don't let him stir from this place, nor take his eyes from these lines, until he is resolved to forego his sins, and to accept life upon your self-denying terms. In your name, O Lord God, I entered into these labours. In your name I close them. Don't let all the time they have cost be lost hours. Don't let all the heartfelt thoughts,

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and all the pains surrounding them, be lost labour. Lord, put your hand into the heart of this reader, and send your Spirit, as you once sent Philip to join the chariot of the Eunuch while he was reading the word. And even if I may never know it while I live, yet I beseech you, Lord God, let it be found at that day, that some souls are converted by these labours: and let some be able to stand up and say that by these persuasions they were won to you. *Amen, Amen.* Let him that reads this say, *Amen.*”

**MR. ALLEINE'S COUNSEL FOR PERSONAL AND FAMILY GODLINESS.**

BELOVED, I despair of ever bringing you to salvation without sanctification, or to have you possess happiness without persuading you to holiness. God knows, I haven't the least hope to ever see one of your faces in heaven unless you are converted, and sanctified, and exercise yourselves to godliness: I beseech you, study *personal* godliness and *family* godliness.

1. *Personal godliness.* Let it be your first care to set up Christ in your hearts: see that you make all your worldly interest stoop to him, that you are entirely and unreservedly devoted to him. If you wilfully, and deliberately, and ordinarily harbour any sin, you are undone.<sup>1</sup> See that you sincerely take the law of Christ as the rule of your words, thoughts, and actions; and subject your whole man, members and mind, faithfully to him.<sup>2</sup> If you don't have a true respect for all God's commandments, you are unsound at heart.<sup>Psa 119.6</sup>

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Oh, study to get the image and impress of Christ upon you within. Begin with your hearts, or else you will build without any foundation. Labour to get a saving change within, or else all your external performances will be to no purpose. And then study to demonstrate the power of godliness in your life. Let piety be your first and great business; it is the highest point of justice to give God his due. Beware that none of you are prayerless; for that is a most certain indication of a Christless and a graceless person, of someone who is a stranger to the fear of God.<sup>3</sup> Don't allow your bibles to gather dust: see that you converse daily with the word.<sup>Joh 5.39</sup> A man can never lay claim to blessedness, if his delight is not in the law of the Lord.<sup>Psa 1.1-2</sup> Let meditation and self-examination be your daily exercise.

But piety without charity is only the half of Christianity; or rather it is impious hypocrisy. We may not divide the tables. Therefore, see that you are just. Love mercy, and let equity and charity run like an even thread throughout all your dealings. Be temperate in all things and let chastity and sobriety be your undivided companions. Let truth and purity, seriousness and modesty, heaviness and gravity, be the constant ornament of your speech. Let patience and humility, simplicity and sincerity shine out in all the parts of your conversations. See that you forget and forgive wrongs; requite them with kindness if you would be found the children of the most high.

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Be merciful in your censures, and put the most favourable constructions upon your brothers' carriage that their actions will reasonably bear. Be slow in promising, and punctual in fulfilling. Let meekness and innocence, affableness, submissiveness, and simplicity commend your conversations to all men. Let none of your relations lack that love and royalty, that reverence and duty, that tenderness, care, and vigilance which their various places and capacities call for. *This* is thorough godliness. I charge you before the most high God, that none of you be found a swearer, a liar, a lover of evil company, or a scoffer; malicious, covetous, a drunkard, a glutton, unrighteous in his dealings, or unclean in his living; a quarreler, thief, backbiter, or railer; for I pronounce to you from the living God that destruction and damnation is the end of all such people.<sup>4</sup>

2. *Family godliness.* The one who has set up Christ in his heart will be sure to study to set him up in his house. Let every family be a Christian church,<sup>1Cor 19.19</sup> every house a house of prayer; let

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<sup>1</sup> Psa 68.21; Eze 18.20

<sup>2</sup> Psa 119.34; Rom 6.13

<sup>3</sup> Psa 14.4; Joh 15.4

<sup>4</sup> Pro 13.20; Jas. 5.12; Rev 21.8; 1Cor 6.9-10; Gal. 5.19-21

every householder say with Joshua, *I and my house will serve the Lord*;<sup>Josh. 24.15</sup> and resolve with David, *I will walk in my house with a perfect heart*.<sup>Psa 101.2</sup> Let me press upon you a few duties in general,

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*First*, Let religion be in your families, not as a passing matter (to be minded at your leisure, when the world permits you), but let it be the standing business of the house. Let them have your prayers as duly as their meals. Are there any of your families that don't have time for taking food? Wretched man! Can you not find time to pray?

*Secondly*, Settle it in your hearts that your souls are bound up in the souls of your family. They are committed to you, and if they are lost through your neglect, they will be required at your hands. Sirs, if you do not, you will know that the charge of souls is a heavy charge, and that the blood of souls is a heavy guilt. O man, do you have a charge of souls to answer for, and yet you don't rouse yourself for them, so that their blood is not found on your clothes? <sup>Jer 2.34</sup> Will you do no more for immortal souls than you do for the beasts which perish? What do you do for your children and servants? You provide meat and drink for them that is agreeable to their nature; and don't you do the same for your beasts? You give them medicines, and comfort them when they are sick; and don't you do the same for your pigs? More particularly,

1. Let the solemn reading of the word, and singing of psalms, be your family exercises.<sup>1</sup> See Christ singing with his family, namely his disciples.<sup>Mat 27.30; Luk 9.18</sup>

2. Let every person in your families be duly called to account as to how they are profiting by the word heard or read as they are going about your business: this is a sacred duty of consequence;

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and it would be a means to bring those under your charge to remember and profit by what they receive. See Christ's example in calling his Family to account: Mat 16.11, 13, 15.<sup>2</sup>

3. Often take an account of the souls under your care concerning their spiritual states.<sup>3</sup> Enquire into their condition; emphasize the sinfulness and misery of their natural state, and the necessity of regeneration and conversion in order to be saved. Admonish them gravely for their sins; encourage their initial turning; follow them earnestly; and let them have no rest from you until you see in them a saving change. This is a duty of very great consequence, but (I am afraid) most fearfully neglected. Doesn't your conscience say, *you are the man*?<sup>2Sam.1 12.7</sup>

4. See to the strict sanctity of the Sabbath by all your household.<sup>4</sup> Many poor families have little other time. Oh, if you would as diligently improve your Sabbath days in labouring for knowledge and doing your Maker's work, as you do the other days in doing your own work, then I have no doubt you may come to some proficiency in these things.

5. Let the morning and evening sacrifice of solemn prayer be offered up daily in all your families.<sup>5</sup> Beware they are not found among the families that don't call on God's name; for, why should there be wrath from the Lord upon your families? <sup>Jer 10.25</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Isa 34.36; Joh 5.39; Psa 118.15

<sup>2</sup> <sup>11</sup> "How is it that you don't understand that I did not speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." ... <sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ... <sup>15</sup> He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

<sup>3</sup> *For this, you must be followers of Christ*, Mat 13.10, 36, 51; Mar 4.10-11.

<sup>4</sup> Exo 20.19; Lev. 23.3

<sup>5</sup> Psa 92.1-2; Exo 30.7-8; Luk 1.9-10

Families without family prayer are miserable families, without GOD in the world! What! You have so many family sins, family needs, family mercies, and yet no family prayers? How do you pray with all prayer and supplication if you don't do it with family prayer? <sup>Eph 6.18</sup> **Don't say, I have no time.** What! Isn't all your time for the purpose of serving God and saving your soul? And yet this is what you can find no time for?? Find but a *heart*, and you will find *time*.<sup>1</sup> Pinch time out of your meals and your sleep rather than lack in prayer. **Don't say, My business will not allow it.** This is the greatest business: to save yourself and the souls committed to you. Business! A business cost will be no excuse.<sup>2</sup> In a word, the blessing of all is gotten by prayer,<sup>3</sup> and what is your business without God's blessing? **Don't say, I am not able.** Use the one talent, and God will increase it.<sup>Mat 25.24, etc.</sup> Helps are available till you are better able. But if there is no other remedy, you must join with your abler neighbor: God has special regard for joint prayer,<sup>4</sup> and therefore you must improve family opportunities to perform it.

6. Have everyone in your families engage in private prayer. Observe whether they perform it. Get them the help of a form if they need it, until they are able to do without it. Direct them how to pray by reminding them of their sins, wants, and mercies, which are the materials of prayer. This was the practice of John and of Jesus.<sup>Luk 11.1-2, etc.</sup>

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7. Set up catechising in your families at the least once every week. Have you no fear of the Almighty's charge that you should *teach these things diligently to your children, and talk of them as you sit in your houses?* <sup>5</sup> And *train them up in the way in which they should go?* <sup>Pro 22.6</sup> God commanded Abraham to *teach his children and household,* <sup>Gen 18.19</sup> and he had many *instructed servants.* <sup>Gen 14.14.</sup> God gave such a promise to him upon doing that, and yet you won't take a share either in the praise or the promises? If Christ honored catechising with his *presence,* <sup>Luk 2.46</sup> then won't you own it with your *practice?* **Don't say, They don't care and won't learn.** What do you have your authority for, if not to use it for God and the good of their souls? You call them up and force them to do *your work*; shouldn't you be at least as zealous in having them do *God's work?* **Don't say, They are dull and incapable.** If they are dull, God requires more pains and patience of you; but as dull as they are, you still make them learn how to *work*; and can't they learn just as well how to *live*? Are they capable of the mysteries of your trade, and incapable of the plain principles of religion? Well, if you would ever see the growth of religion, the cure of ignorance, the remedy of profaneness, and the downfall of error, then fulfil my joy in going through with this duty.

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Will you answer the calls of divine providence? Would you rather remove the obligation, or prevent the impending calamities? Would you plant nurseries for the church of God? Do you want God to build your houses and bless your substance? Do you want your children to bless you? Oh, then set up piety in your families if you would ever be blessed or ever be a blessing. Let your hearts and your houses be the temples of the living God in which his worship (according to all the directions mentioned) may be reverently performed with constancy. *One who is often reprov'd, and hardens his neck, will suddenly be destroyed without remedy.* <sup>Pro 29.1</sup> Oh, be wise in time, so that you will not be miserable for eternity.

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<sup>1</sup> Original wording: "Find but a heart and I will find time." — WHG

<sup>2</sup> Original wording: "A whet will be no lett."

<sup>3</sup> Jer 29.11-12; 2Sam. 7.29

<sup>4</sup> Jas. 5.4-19; Act 12.5, 10, 12; 2Cor 1.11

<sup>5</sup> Deu 6.6-9; 4.9-11,18-20

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**USEFUL QUESTIONS,**

BY WHICH A CHRISTIAN MAY EXAMINE HIMSELF EVERY DAY.

*Psa 4.4. Commune with your hearts upon your beds.*

EVERY evening before you sleep (unless you find some other time of the day is more to your advantage in this work) sequester yourself from the world. Put your heart in the presence of the Lord, and then charge it before God to answer these questions.

*For your Duties.*

- Q. 1. Did God find me on my bed when he looked for me on my knees? *Job 1.5; Psa 5.3*
- Q. 2. Have I prayed to no purpose, or allowed wandering thoughts to consume my duties? *Mat 15.8-9; Jer 12.2*
- Q. 3. Have I neglected, or been slovenly in reading God's holy word? *Deu 17.18; Josh. 1.7-8*
- Q. 4. Have I digested the sermon I last heard? Have I repeated it over, and prayed it over? *Luk 2.19; Psa 1.2; 119.5, 11, 97*
- Q. 5. Was there more custom and form in my family duties than conscience? *Psa 101.2; Jer 30.21.*

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- Q. 6. What have I denied myself this day for God? *Luk 9.23*
- Q. 7. Have I redeemed my time from too-long or needless visits, idle imaginations, fruitless discourse, unnecessary sleep, and used it for more than worldly needs? *Eph 5.16; Col. 4.5*
- Q. 8. Have I done anything more than ordinary for the church of God in this extraordinary time? *2Cor 11.28; Isa 6.2, 6*
- Q. 9. Have I taken care of my companions? *Pro 13.20; Pa. 119.63*
- Q. 10. Have I neglected or done something against the duties of my relationship as a master, servant, husband, wife, parent, child, etc.? *Eph 5.22-6:10; Col. 3.18-4:2*

*For your Sins.*

- Q. 1. Does sin sit lightly with me? *Psa 38.4; Rom 7.24*
- Q. 2. Do I mourn for the sins of the land? *Eze 9.4; Jer 9.1-3*
- Q. 3. Do I live in nothing that I know or fear is a sin? *Psa 119.101, 104*

*For your Heart.*

- Q. 1. Have I spent much time in holy exultations? *Neh. 2.4-5*
- Q. 2. Has God been out of my mind, or heaven out of my sight? *Psa 16.8; Jer 2.22; Col. 3.1-2*
- Q. 3. Have I looked often into my own heart, and been scrupulous about vain thoughts? *Pro 3.23; Psa 119.113*

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- Q. 4. Have I given way to the workings of pride or passion? *2Chr 32.26; Jas. 4.5-7*

*For your Tongue.*

- Q. 1. Have I bridled my tongue and reined it in? *Jas. 1.26; 3.2-4; Psa 39.1*
- Q. 2. Have I spoken evil of any man? *Tit. 3.2; Jas. 4.11*



Q. 3. Has the law of the Lord been in my mouth as I sat in my house, as I went by the way, and as I lay down and rose up? Deu 6.6-7

Q. 4. Is there anyone's company I entered that I have not dropped something of God, and left something of good savour behind? Col. 4.6; Eph 4.29

*For your Table.*

Q. 1. Did I sit down with no higher purpose than a beast, merely to please my appetite? Did I eat and drink to the glory of God? 1Cor 10.31

Q. 2. Was my appetite too demanding for me? Jude 12; 2Pet 1.6

Q. 3. Did I rise from the table without dropping anything of God there? Luk 7.36; 14.1, etc.; Joh 6

Q. 4. Did I mock God by only pretending to crave a blessing and to give thanks? Act 27.25, 38; Mat 15.36; Col; 3.17, 23

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*For your Calling.*

Q. 1. Have I been diligent in the duties of my calling? Ecc 9; 1Cor 7.17, 20, 24

Q. 2. Have I defrauded any man? 1Thes 4.6; 1Cor 6.8

Q. 3. Have I ever dropped a lie in my shop or trade? Pro 28.6; Eph 4.25

Q. 4. Did I rashly make or falsely break some promise? Psa 106.33; Josh. 9.14, etc.; Psa 15.4

Diverse Practical

**CASES OF CONSCIENCE**

Satisfactorily Resolved

**CHAP. I — THE SINGULAR DUTIES OF CHRISTIANS.**

**First case of Conscience.**

On Mat 5.47: *What do you do more than others?*

**QUESTION I.**

IN WHAT should Christians be singular in their obedience? Or what *may* they and *must* they do more than others?

*Answer.* Take the answer in these sixteen rules, containing the character and compass of a Christian.

**Rule I.** *Heartily love those who slight you; wish and seek the good of those who hate you and seek to hurt you.* This is the very thing urged in the text: *If you only greet your brothers, and love those who love you, don't even the publicans<sup>1</sup> do the same?* <sup>Mat 5.46-47</sup> Everyone can love those who respect and value us. But to truly love those who think meanly of us, and have prejudices and hard thoughts against us, and to speak well of those who speak evil of us — *this is to do more than others.* As the sweet-spirited Calvin said, “Let Luther call me dog or devil, I will nevertheless say of him that he is a precious servant of Jesus Christ”.

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Thus it was with the martyr Cranmer<sup>2</sup>, of whom it became a proverb, “Do the Bishop of Canterbury a displeasure, and you will ever have him your friend.” Thus that holy man, in his much to be admired parting words said, “I never had any greater pleasure in all my life than to forget and forgive injuries, and to show kindness to those who sought to do evil to me.” Study who has offended you, and disobliged you, and slighted you, and maintain good thoughts of them (if the case will bear it). Speak nothing but good of them, and think what kindness you may show them. Pray for them, wish them well: *so you will be the children of your father which is in heaven.* <sup>Mat 5.44-45</sup>

**Rule II.** *Swim against the stream of the multitude.* Dead fish will swim *with* the stream, but the living swim *against* it. Many will turn Jews when their interest in the world favors it. When religion is in fashion everyone will be in fashion. But to buck the current of the times, and to favor strict godliness in all your ways when the stream runs quite against it; to bear down and resolve as David did, to be even more vile in their sight <sup>2Sam 6.22</sup> — *this is to be, and to do, more than others.* The Samaritans will be Jews when Alexander favors and helps them. But when Antiochus bloodily rages against them, (as in the time of the Maccabees) they will deny their kinship, and pretend to be of another stock (which, by the way, was the reason for the deadly hatred afterwards between the Jews and them).

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But to be singular in your good choice and resolutions, as with Joshua, even though all vote against you with one consent; and as with Noah, to be perfect in our generation when it is so adulterous; and to walk with God and tread a contrary course when the way of all flesh is

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<sup>1</sup> That is, tax-collectors (Gr. *telones*); some mss *ethnikos* (“gentiles” or “pagans”) all of which refer to *outsiders*.

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Cranmer, Bishop of Canterbury 1533-1556, author of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Martyred by Mary Queen of Scots.

corrupted — *this is to do more than others*. Thus the three children, or rather the three *champions*, did not fear the jeers of the mob, or the frowns of the great ones, or the charge of being different. When all the princes, governors, captains, counsellors, sheriffs, and all the people, nations, and languages, fell down and worshipped the idol, *they* stood by themselves, and would not sinfully comply.<sup>Dan. 3:3, 7, 18</sup>

**Rule III.** *Take most care of what is most out of sight.* A Christian's eye is mostly on the things least seen. 1. On his *heart*. In this he exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees whose great care was to keep fair and clean all that could be seen; but they looked no further. If you are conscientious about your carriage in private, and you keep your main guard on your hearts — *this will be more than others aspire to*. This was Paul's care, to keep his conscience, his inside, clean and undefiled.<sup>Act 24:16</sup> Job's care was that, though all the world reproached him, he might not put a reproach in the mouth of his conscience.<sup>Job 27:6</sup> David's care was that his heart might be clean.<sup>Psa 51:10</sup> 2. On his *hope*. Others look at the things that are seen, things in hand;

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but the true believer eyes his hopes. He walks by faith, not by sight. He lives a life quite different from others in the world. That is because living on the hopes of heaven differs from living on the pleasures, profits, and honors of the world.

**Rule IV.** *Be merciful toward other's failings, and very severe toward our own.* The noble Roman, Cato<sup>1</sup> could more easily forgive anyone other than himself. To exaggerate our own evils while having an excuse ready for our brother's evils, to censure ourselves freely while coming with the cloak behind us to cover our brother <sup>Gen 9:23</sup> — *this is to do more than others*. The hypocrite is a censurer at large. He is like the eye that can see anything but itself. He can discern a speck in his brother's eye, but not a log in his own.<sup>Mat 7:14</sup> But the servant of God rebukes others with meekness, while falling out easily and bitterly with himself.

**Rule V.** *Suffer rather than sin.* This was Moses' choice. But the hypocrite is quite contrary: he chooses iniquity rather than affliction. Going with Christ only so far as our ways lie together, is doing no more than any unsound professor of Christ might do. The *test* is when Christ's interest and ours compete, and we must either baulk at our duty, or at our own safety and advantage. The famous martyr under Julian<sup>2</sup> would not give a half-penny toward the building of the idol's temple, even though he was offered his life by the emperor if he would. When the nobles wanted the godly high-priest Eleazar to eat kosher meat and pretend it was pork,

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and would have persuaded king Antiochus that he had the pork, Eleazar said he would rather die than stain his profession with the *appearance* of evil. When a man lies in outward misery, and has a door of deliverance opened if he will only sin, and yet he will not accept it, as with those worthy men listed in Paul's martyrology,<sup>Heb 11:35, etc.</sup> — *this is to do more than others*.

**Rule VI.** *Rejoice for losses in Christ, and glory in the cross.* When *others* are discouraged at the news of hardship (as that ardent and seemingly determined disciple was); or when *they* are offended as soon as the sun of persecution rises; yet *we* take pleasure in such infirmities and tribulations, and *we* rejoice that we are considered worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ — *this is to do more than others*. When the servants of God not only patiently and triumphantly undergo the crosses that crack the minds and break the hearts of others, and shake

<sup>1</sup> *Marcus Porcius Cato Uticensis* (95-46 BC), commonly known as *Cato the Younger* or *Cato the Utican*. He was a politician and statesman in the late Roman Republic, and a follower of the Stoic philosophy. He is remembered for his immunity to bribes, his moral integrity, and his distaste for the widespread corruption of his times.

<sup>2</sup> This is referring to *Martin Arethusa* and emperor *Julian The Apostate* c. 355 — See Spurgeon, sermon 248, "Little Sins."

off the viper without receiving any hurt; when Paul and Silas sing in the stocks, and the resolved martyr embraces the kindling and kisses the stake; when the valiant Philpot<sup>1</sup> says of his prison, “In the judgment of the world, we are in hell; but I find in it the sweet consolation of heaven;” and the holy Bradford says, “My prison is sweeter to me than any parlour, than any pleasure I have had in all my life:”<sup>2</sup> — *this is indeed to exceed others.*

**Rule VII.** *Be good when evil is spoken of our labour.* A Pharisee will do those duties which gain applause from men: but to do despised duties,

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disgraceful duties, and as with David, to be religious when he is called vile for it — *this is to do more than others.* The philosopher might say, “It is noble indeed for a man to do well, when he knows he will bear ill for it.” To take up religion when everyone else knocks it; to stand alone for the truth, as with Luther, when the whole world is chasing after the whore; to be against every man, and to be for Christ against the whole universe, as with Athanasius<sup>3</sup> — *this is indeed to do something singular.*

**Rule VIII.** *Join with God’s interest when it is falling in popularity.* To join ourselves with the Lord’s people when it is the weakest; to take up their cause, as with Moses, when they are in deepest affliction; <sup>Heb 11.25-26</sup> to undauntedly admit we are one of them when this way is spoken against everywhere <sup>Act 28.22</sup> — *this is to walk diametrically opposed to the course of this world.*

**Rule IX.** *Be most cruel to the sin that is naturally most dear.* The hypocrite hides his sweet morsel under his tongue; he spares, as it were, the fattest of the cattle; he says, *The Lord pardon his servant concerning this thing.* <sup>2Kng 5.18</sup> But when a man cuts off his right hand, plucks out his right eye, treats Absalom as Joab did when he took three javelins and thrust them through his heart <sup>2Sam 18.14</sup> — *this is to do more than others.* The sincere Christian is most angry with the sin of his temper; he aims the arrows of all his prayers against this. He keeps himself from his iniquity; he drives the whole herd of swine before him; but he especially shoots at this one; he singles it out to run it down.

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**Rule X.** *Live on the divine promises, when others live on their profession.* Others are all for what is in their hand. For them, words are just wind — they cannot live on them; the promises are *a barren heath, and dry breasts.* <sup>Hos. 9.14</sup> But when we make the promises our heritage, the staff of our life, the life of our hearts, when the promises are the bottle we run to whenever we faint; and while others hope in their wealth, our hope is in the word — *this is to do more than others.*

**Rule XI.** *Love best, and choose soonest, what frustrates the flesh most.* The godly man’s rule is to take self-denial aside, so he is sure it is safe. When focus of others is to *please* themselves, his is to *curb* himself. The life of others is flesh-pleasing, but his is self-denying. The joy of others is when they can *gratify* themselves; his is when he can get *victory* over himself.

**Rule XII.** *Be most passionate about what the self is least concerned with.* Paul is meek as a lamb when personal insulted; <sup>1Cor 4.12</sup> but how his spirit stirred when *God* is dishonored! <sup>Act 13.46</sup> A man of understanding has a cool spirit with his own concerns; but *Moses the Meek* waxes hot

<sup>1</sup> John Philpot — defended the Reformation against its adversaries; he was imprisoned and burned (Fox’s *Book of Martyrs*).

<sup>2</sup> Rev. John Bradford — A Protestant. He was arrested and burned by Mary Queen of Scots, a Catholic. (*Book of Martyrs*)

<sup>3</sup> Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 293-373), He is best remembered for his role in the conflict with Arius at the *First Council of Nicaea* in 325. He argued against the Arian heresy that the Son is substantially distinct from the Father.

with indignation at the sight of the calf! [Exo 32.19](#) To be hot and zealous in those duties where the flesh's interest is not served — *is to do more than Jehu.* [2Kng 10.16, 20](#)

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**Rule XIII.** *Be truly shamed at the least sins, but most shamed at the greatest.*

The hypocrite will be found remiss in one of these. It may be that he flees from open sins, and he startles at gross and glaring sins; but he is little concerned with little sins. These he allows and says nothing about. Or else he will be very sensitive about little things; he hesitates at plucking ears of corn or curing the sick on the Sabbath; he strains at the gnat. Meanwhile in other things he swallows a camel, and devours widows' houses. [Mat 23.14-24](#) The sincere convert will indulge *no* sin; he grieves for, groans under, and frantically cries out against his least infirmity; but he most dreads what God most hates.

**Rule XIV.** *Don't allow yourselves to neglect any duty, but reserve your zeal for the most serious duties.* To tithe mint and cummin, and neglect judgment, mercy and faith; to be zealous for human ceremonies, ordinances, and men's traditions, and omit the weightier matters of the law, is rightly the Pharisee's guise. [Mat 23.23; 15.2](#) But to eye *both* tables: to join sweetly together morality and piety; to be punctual with men but not careless of God; to give to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, but give first to God the things that are God's — *this is to do more than others.* The sincere Christian respects all God's commandments, and walks in all his statutes. He is throughout with God, but he is most zealous about things which go to the heart of religion.

**Rule XV.** *Love your critics.* In this, David does more than Ahab: compare their attitudes in 1Kings 22.8 and Psa 141.5. <sup>1</sup>

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**Rule XVI.** *Subject all your worldly interests to your Maker's glory and perform your holy duties with holy ends; while others do their best actions with carnal aims, you must do your common and civil actions with heavenly aims.*

*Quest.* How may we know whether we are more, and do more, than others who are unsound?

I will answer this question by propounding eight questions to you, beseeching you to retire to the most solemn and strict self-examination, and act according to the dictates of your conscience to give a clear answer to these few interrogatories. That will resolve the issue.

*Quest. I.* *When others pick and choose, do you respect **all** God's commandments?* The hypocrite may have great respect for the comforts, but he has little respect for the commands of religion. He is all for its privileges and promises, and little for its precepts and duties. He is partial in the law: he chooses here and there what he likes — where God's commands serve his own interest, or at least where they don't pinch too hard on the flesh. The sound Christian sets all God's commands before him. He looks at all his material, and he heartily plans and studies his thorough conformity to them. He has no hiding places, or secret haunts; nor does he halt between the Lord and Baal, or serve two masters. He doesn't claim to fear the Lord and serve other gods, nor does he divide his service between God and mammon. Rather, he is uniform, entirely devoted to God's service, and he fears Him alone. He has a good conscience and is willing to live honestly in all things. He truly, though not perfectly, forsakes all his sins and keeps all God's statutes that are known to him. Let me therefore ask you two questions:

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<sup>1</sup> The king of Israel [Ahab] answered Jehoshaphat, "There is still one man through whom we can inquire of the LORD, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad. He is Micaiah son of Imlah." (1Ki 22:8 <sup>NIV</sup>); but David writes: "Let a righteous man strike me — it is a kindness; let him rebuke me — it is oil on my head: my head will not refuse it. Yet my prayer is ever against the deeds of evildoers; (Psa 141:5 <sup>NIV</sup>)

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(1.) *When others divide the tables,<sup>1</sup> do you sweetly join them in your practice?* The hypocrite may be just and square towards other men; but if you follow him into his family or into private, you will find little of God there. His family is neglected and his soul is neglected. Or it may be that he is an ardent first table man; but you will find him remiss in the second. He makes many prayers, and long prayers, yet he has no qualms about devouring widows' houses. He is a great pretender to piety, but meanwhile he neglects judgment and mercy. The sincere convert joins these together: he is careful to be just with man, but he will not meanwhile neglect the first and greater part of justice, namely, to give God his due. He does justly, he loves mercy, but he also walks humbly with God. He walks soberly with respect to himself, righteously towards his neighbor, and godly towards his Maker. He is not one of those that is good only on his knees, but you will find he is conscientious everywhere. You will find temperance at his table, chastity and modesty in his behaviour, grace and truth in his works, charity in his deeds, faithfulness in his trust, and justice in his dealings. He not only seems religious, but he bridles his tongue. He is not only a good Christian, but a good neighbor. He is not only a good man, but a good husband, a good master, a dutiful child, a diligent and faithful servant, and a good citizen.

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In a word, he is careful to discharge the duties of his relations among men.

(2.) *When others stop at the externals, do you look to the spiritual part of every command, and principally mind the inward and essential parts of religion?* Do you not only conscientiously perform your duties, but also carefully look at your manner of performing them, and the ends for which you perform them? Do you submit to your conscience not only the open, but also the secret sins? Do you abound, above all, in private duties? Do you keep a watch on your heart, and submit to your conscience not only the gross acts of sin, but even sinful thoughts, inclinations, and desires? And are you grieved even with your least infirmities, and the corrupt dispositions of your nature which you cannot help, even though you would?

*Quest. II. When others have reservations in closing with Christ, do you surrender all to him?* Have you taken Christ not by raising your hand, but by deliberately and understandingly sitting down first and counting the cost? Do you have any secret reservations for your own ease, safety, and estate? Do you savor some beloved sins? Have you, upon solemn consideration, accepted Christ as the Lord your righteousness for better or worse, for all changes of times and conditions, to run all risks with him, and to share your lot with him, fall as it may?

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*Quest. III. When others want little of religion, and make a hobby of it, do you make religion your business?* Or do you give God the world's left-overs, and serve him only when you have leisure? Must God stand by while the world is served first? Is your soul your least concern, put off with scraps and remnants of your time? Or is religion your trade, and is your lifestyle in heaven? Do you walk with God, or do you only now and then give him a turn? When you end your prayers, do you also end your religion until you pray again? Or do you carry on a design of religion throughout the whole course of your life? Do you only have a covering of religion on the outside of the piece? Or is the woof <sup>2</sup> of religion woven into the whole cloth: into your heart and life, into your discourse, trades, and table? Do you seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness? <sup>Mat 6.33</sup> Is it the chief care of your life that God be served, and that your soul be saved? And is this the *one thing needed* with you, <sup>Luk 10.42</sup> the thing you chiefly mind and are most

<sup>1</sup> Referring to the two tables of the Ten Commandments; the first governs our relationship with God, the second with men.

<sup>2</sup> The yarn woven across the warp yarn in weaving.



anxious about? Does your heart say with *David*, *One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell... etc.* [Psa 27.4](#)

*Quest. IV. When others are after the wages of religion, are you after the work?* Can you say with *David*, *I have chosen your precepts?* [Psa 119.173](#) Does your heart freely make this choice? Would you rather be holy than otherwise if you had your choice? Would you rather be God's servant and live by his command than at the call of your own lusts? Do you consider the laws of Christ your heritage, or rather your bondage? Do you choose not only the *wages* of righteousness, but also the *ways* of righteousness? Are God's commandments your judiciously resolved delight?

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And are the sweetest hours of your life the hours you spend with him? Do you enjoy yourself most when you most enjoy God? Is his service the greatest comfort, and is it meat and drink to you to do his will (unless you are not yourself, as in times of temptation and desertion)? Do you use holy duties only as men use medicine: to calm the frightful furies<sup>1</sup> when they are disturbed, or when your conscience lashes out, or the affliction stings, or to pacify God so that he won't hurt you? Or instead do you use them as your daily bread, the very staff of your life, and the means of your comfort?

*Quest V. When others are for cheap and easy religion, are you for self-denial?* When others are for the religion that serves them best, are you for what serves God best? When others serve sparingly, and study how to save costs in going to heaven, are you more princely, resolving not to serve the Lord with what costs you nothing? [2Sam 24.24](#) Is your course of religion such that it contradicts your flesh, opposing and curbing its desires? Or do you love to give the flesh what it craves, and to let it have its own way? Is there no enemy you dread so much as self, or do you pamper and please your self, and make provisions for it? Do you pray and watch against the desires of the self, and grieve its unhappy infirmities in your actions? Would you prefer this enemy were under your feet than to have all the world?

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*Quest. VI. When others are for no more of religion than necessary, are you for the height of religion?* The hypocrite (as someone said) is very inquisitive about the least a man may have and still go to heaven; and if he could find just this, he would look no further. But the sincere Christian, though satisfied that his state is good, will not rest in any attainments of grace, but reaches forward, and presses on. If it were possible, he would attain to the resurrection of the dead. [Phil 3.11-12](#) The one who hasn't desired, and designed, and endeavored toward perfection, has never come to a sincere faith. A true believer desires holiness for holiness' sake; and therefore he is set upon perfecting holiness. Others desire it only for heaven's sake, and are therefore only for as much as will pay their fare there. Others make use of holiness only as a bridge to heaven, and therefore they want no more than will barely serve their purposes.<sup>2</sup> The true believer has a holy nature, and therefore holiness is his element, and his natural employment. He must desire holiness in all its height, because every nature reaches after perfection in its kind. The godly man doesn't desire holiness because it is the way to heaven. Rather, he loves heaven all the better for the holy way that leads to it, and for the perfect holiness which is found there.

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<sup>1</sup> Greek mythology” The three goddesses of vengeance: *Tisiphone* (of murder), *Megaera* (of jealousy) and *Alecto* (of anger). Without mercy, the Furies punished all crime by relentless pursuit, striking the offenders with madness.

<sup>2</sup> And they have a false notion of heaven itself; otherwise they might justly desire it as the end of their present holiness, because it is the fruition of God in perfect holiness. — *Alleine*

*Quest. VII. When others are all for the **salvation** of Christ, are you as truly for **sanctification** by Christ? Do you take Christ as God offers him, with all his offices and benefits, to be both a Prince and a Saviour, to give you *repentance* as well as *remission* of sins? Are you willing to have the *dominion* of Christ as well as the *deliverance* of Christ? Do you embrace his *burden* as well as his *benefits*? Do you consider his laws your liberty, his service your freedom, his government your privilege, and not your bondage? Do you go in Christ's ways as if in prison and fetters; or do you run with bursting heart, delight, and real willingness?*

*Quest. VIII. When others make **self** their end, do you set **God** above all, as your highest end? The hypocrite does the same duties that the godly do, but with different ends: he eats for himself, and fasts for himself, and prays with no better than selfish ends; and therefore he is rejected, Now, is it your great design, in your whole course, to glorify God and to enjoy God? Do you count this your whole business and blessedness? Do you make other business stoop to this, and other interests yield to this? Does your soul breathe after this above all worldly good so that Christ may be magnified in you? Do you consider your name and estate as loss, and the delights of your senses but puddle-water compared to Christ? If conscience gives a comfortable and clear answer to these questions, go in peace: blessed are you of the Lord; God is your friend; heaven is your heritage; and the promises are your portion, Christ is yours, *all* is yours; *for he that does these things will never be moved.*<sup>Psa 15.5</sup>*

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#### **A Necessary Case on 1Thess. 4.1.**

*Quest. WHAT may and must a Christian be, and do, so that he may please God?*

*Ans.* To please God, something is necessary as to you or your estates, and something as to your performances and acts.

*First,* As to *you* or your *estates*, it is necessary in general that you be reconciled to God. If you intend to walk worthy of the Lord so as to please him, you must first be friends with him, for *how can two walk together unless they are agreed?*<sup>Amos 3.3</sup> Get the controversy resolved between God and you, and then you *will walk with God in peace*, as Levi did. Labour to get the breach sealed, to have the hostility slain, and to have divine displeasure removed — because until your pardon is obtained, and your peace is made, nothing you can do will please God. He will be angry with you, and angry with your prayers. What a tart message that is to impenitent sinners! God cannot take pleasure in them. *I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts; nor in any of their performances: neither will I accept an offering from your hand.*<sup>Mal 1.10</sup> He professes that his soul takes no delight in them, and he tells them that, to him, they are like a vessel in which there is no pleasure.<sup>Jer 22.28</sup>

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It is the modest expression of that vessel into which nature empties itself. Come in, then, and touch the golden scepter. Yield to mercy, kiss the Son, and resign to Christ. Accept the peace tendered to you in the word of reconciliation, and then God will be your friend. More particularly, so that you may be in a state of reconciliation and thus in a capacity to please God, you must follow these directions.

#### **1. Put off every sin.**

It is your iniquity that separates you and your God; this is the point of contention. If you want God pleased, then turn every sin out of doors, pluck it out, cast it from you; *if you esteem iniquity in your heart, God will not hear you or regard you.*<sup>Psa 66.18</sup> If you are one of those who takes pleasure in unrighteousness, the Lord takes no pleasure in you. He is not a God that has pleasure in wickedness; evil will not dwell with him; the foolish will not stand in his sight; he hates all the workers of iniquity. See that you abandon every sin you know; don't spare one

Agag, <sup>1Sam. 15.9</sup> not a right-eye, <sup>Mat 5.29</sup> not a Herodias; <sup>Mar 6.22</sup> for then God will not spare you. Give the darling of your bosom a bill of divorce; say to all your idols, "Get out!" God will not look at the man who looks pleasantly at any sin. The jealous God will not endure you hankering for the harlot's lips, or embracing any sin with delight. He will not bear to see you smile at any sin. He considers you a traitor to his crown if you willingly harbour his enemy. Even if you are very diligent in God's service, and present him with multitudes of sacrifices and

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prayers, he will be pleased with nothing, and he will hide his face and stop his ears, while you keep your iniquities in your hands. <sup>Isa 1.11, 15</sup> God will not deal amicably with those who will not put away their evil ways. Oh, look at your hands, look into your heart, look into your house, into your shop, your trade, your calling! See if you don't have some way of wickedness. You cannot have peace with God, nor can he have pleasure in you, until this wickedness is removed; *put off, therefore, the old man with his deeds.* <sup>Col. 3.9</sup>

## **2. Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.** <sup>Rom 13.14</sup>

(1.) *Put on the red robe of his righteousness for justification.* The Lord will never give you a good look or a good word except in Christ. He is a revenging, consuming fire to those out of Christ; but put on Christ's robes and he will be well-pleased. Enoch had this testimony: that he pleased God. But Christ had much more: that God was well-pleased with sinners, in him and for his sake. Away with these rags and fig-leaves. How can the righteous soul of God do anything but abhor you while you are in the menstruous clothes of your own righteousness? Don't dare come to God unless it is with Christ in your arms. Approach God only in the garments of your elder brother, lest you carry away the curse. Joshua's filthy garments must be put off, and Christ's raiment put on, or else there is no standing before the bright and burning eyes of infinite holiness. Put on the Lord Jesus in believing; that is, accept him in all his offices, with

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all his inconveniences, and surrender yourself to him. This will entitle you to his merits and his righteousness. Without this, nothing will avail. If your head were waters, and your eyes a fountain of tears; if you were to wear out your tongue to the roots with praying; if you were to weep an ocean and wash yourself in your own brine; all of that could not get out one spot. Nothing can be accepted while you are out of Christ; and therefore, in the first place, apply yourself to him. God will accept no gift but off his altar.

(2.) *Put on the white robe of his grace for sanctification.* <sup>Rev 6.11</sup> If you are in the flesh, that is, unrenewed and unsanctified, then you cannot please God. <sup>Rom 8.8</sup> Never think you can correct the matter with a little mending and reforming of particular acts. Your *heart* must be renewed, your *state* must be completely altered, or else God cannot be pleased. <sup>Mat 7.17-18</sup> The tree must be made good and the fountain must be healed, or else the fruit will be sour and the stream will be salty. Likeness is the basis of love; similarity and suitability of nature is the loadstone of affection. Thus, once Christ is formed in you, that is, his image in his grace, God cannot but love his own likeness. Would you have his favour? Would you be his delight? Then conform to what pleases him; study to be like him; purify yourself as he is pure. The righteous Lord loves righteousness; he desires truth in the inward parts, and he takes infinite satisfaction in the graces of his people. These are the spikenard and saffron, the spices, the beds of lilies;

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the sweet ointment that Christ is so taken with. These are the cinnamon and the trees of frankincense; the calamus<sup>1</sup> and camphire<sup>2</sup>; the myrrh and aloes; the necklaces and precious

<sup>1</sup> The aromatic root of the sweet flag; used medicinally

pearls that he is so enamored with, and that he so superlatively commends.<sup>Song 4.4</sup> This is the raiment of needle-work and gold of Ophir in which the queen is presented to her royal husband.<sup>Psa 45.9, 14</sup> Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved,<sup>Col. 3.12-13</sup> put on compelling depths of mercy and kindness; put off all anger, wrath, malice, and filthy communication; and put on the new man.<sup>Col. 3.9-10</sup> Particularly, let me commend to you some special graces which God reveals he is wonderfully pleased with; if you would ever please God, then put these on.

**I. Be clothed with humility.**<sup>1Pet 5.5</sup> This is a garment which must be put on, or else you cannot be accepted or saved.<sup>Mat 18.3</sup> Here is the dress that you must come to God in. He must be served in humility of mind.<sup>Act 20.19</sup> You must humble yourselves to walk with him.<sup>Mic 6.8</sup> Humility is a plain and yet attractive garment. This grace eminently honors God; therefore God puts a peculiar honor on it, and he reveals a most special delight in it. Of all the men in the world, this is the sort of man that God regards: the one who is pure and has a contrite spirit, who trembles at his word,<sup>Isa 66.2</sup> though God is *the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy.*<sup>Isa 57.15</sup> From this, the trembling soul

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is ready to conclude that surely such a fearful Majesty can only despise him; such a sin-hating purity can only abhor him. Yet God lays aside his Majesty and bears with man's weakness, and condescends to have a most familiar and constant communion and cohabitation with his poor dust, when such a man lies contrite at God's feet, prostrated in humility. If you would be accepted by God, then come as Benhadad's servants came to the king of Israel: with a rope around your neck and ashes on your head.<sup>1Kng 20.22</sup> Think lowly of yourself, and God will honor you.<sup>1Sam. 2.30</sup> Set yourself in the lowest place, and God will set you higher. Be little in your own eyes, and you will be high in his. With God, a proud heart and a proud look is the first-born of abominations. If you would ever have God well-pleased with you, be thoroughly displeased with yourself. If you thoroughly loathe yourself, God loves you. If you abhor yourself, God delights in you. Be angry with yourself, and the Almighty will turn his anger away from you. Condemn yourself, and God will acquit you. Do not in any way extenuate your sins or justify yourself. Think worse of yourself, be willing for others to think little of you, and heartily love those who slight you. *This is the frame in which God is well-pleased.* Pass sentence on yourself, and God will absolve you. Make yourself his foot-stool, and he will lift you onto the throne.<sup>Rev 2</sup>

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**II. Labour for sincerity.** This is not a distinct grace from the rest; yet, for doctrine sake I will speak of it distinctly. Uprightness is the main thing God looks for and covenants for.<sup>Gen 17.1</sup> It is what renders us and our performances acceptable to God.<sup>Pro 15.8</sup> Those who are upright in the Way, are God's delight.<sup>Pro 11.20</sup> To these go all the promises of peace, salvation, pardon, preservation, and blessedness.<sup>Psa 97.10</sup> In a word, there is no good thing God that withholds from those who walk uprightly.<sup>Pro 28.10</sup> This was Noah's praise: that he was upright in his generation. This is what placed such a value on Job that God extols him for it and boasts of him, as it were: the singular sincerity and integrity of his heart. Study to be upright, so that the main bent of your heart is to please God and honor him; so that God's interest is uppermost with you; so that he has the greatest share of you; and so that the eyes of the soul are principally toward him — for sincerity consists in this, as to your state. Let your greatest care be your heart; *here* is a Christian's great work. The Lord does not see as man sees — for man looks at the outward appearance, but the *Lord* looks at the heart.<sup>1Sam 16.7</sup> Therefore see that *you* look at it. Let your eye be mainly where God's eye is. He doesn't look so much at what you do, as with what kind of heart you do it. Go then and do likewise. Yet don't be satisfied with being upright as to your

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<sup>1</sup> Camphor — henna blossoms (Song of Solomon 1.14)

*state*; but labour to prove yourselves upright to God in your *spiritual actions*. Do ordinary, as well as spiritual actions, with holy ends.

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Much of your life is lost for lack of this. To the extent we do things for God by his grace, he credits our account. But what we do for no higher end than ourselves, is lost from our account.

**III. Put on a spirit of zeal and activity.** How wonderfully God was pleased with Phinehas' zeal. <sup>Num. 25.11-13</sup> What great approbation he shows him! What a testimony he gives him! He is so greatly pleased with Phinehas' zealous appearance for him, that he turns away his displeasure from the whole congregation of Israel, and overlooks their crimson provocations against him. By contrast, there is nothing that God is more displeased with than being remiss, lifeless, and indifferent in religion. Lukewarm water is no more displeasing to the stomach, than a lukewarm professor is to God; and therefore he will spew such a person out of his mouth. <sup>Rev 3.16</sup> Christians, where is your *zeal* for the Lord of hosts? Christ's redeemed must be zealous of good works. <sup>Tit. 2.14</sup> *Not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, instantly night and day for the hope of the promise.*<sup>1</sup> Don't just do what is right in the sight of the Lord, but do it with all your heart: the Lord loves a willing servant. Stir yourselves up for the Lord! Be followers of *Christ* who went up and down doing good. Every Christian should be a common blessing, a public good. This is being the children of your heavenly Father who is good to all,

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and whose tender mercies are over all his works. Be confident that the father best loves the child that is most like him. A private narrow spirit is a low and base spirit, unworthy of a Christian. A catholic and infectious spirit is full of great desires and great plans. A man with a large heart is set upon doing good; his fire, though always hottest within, will burst from his breast and provoke others; his love will not lie confined to a sect, but gladly and thankfully owns Christ wherever he sees him. This catholic spirit, I say, is the glory of religion, the church's blessing, and God's delight.

**IV. Live by faith.** <sup>Heb 10.38</sup> This is a precious grace in God's account.<sup>2</sup> It gives glory to God, and therefore God takes no small pleasure in it. By faith, Enoch obtained the testimonial that he pleased God.<sup>3</sup> If you want to walk so as to please God, you must walk by faith. Christians must look to things unseen; they must not live by the common measure. Christ must be their life and breath, their prayers and their promises, their daily bread. By faith the elders obtained that good report;<sup>4</sup> faith is what Christ was so greatly taken with in the Centurion, and what made the Centurion commendable for it. This is what won such a singular praise and approbation from our Saviour for the woman of Canaan: her victorious faith. <sup>Matt 15.28</sup>

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You have *taken away my heart, my sister, my spouse; you have taken away my heart with one of your eyes;* <sup>Song 4.9</sup> that is, with your faith. Live in the power of faith and you will please God to the heart. Give glory to him by believing. Let the life you now live in the flesh, be by faith in the Son of God. <sup>Gal. 2.20</sup> Faith, as one well says, is the navel of morality.

*Live by faith in prosperity.* Though you have the world around you, don't let it be above you; keep it at your feet; use it as your servant. Dwell on the views of glory and contemplation of

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<sup>1</sup> Act 18.25; Rom 12.11; Act 26.6-7

<sup>2</sup> 2Pet 1.1; 1Pet 1.7

<sup>3</sup> Rom 4.20; Heb. 11.5; 1Cor 4.18; Heb. 11.39; Mat 8.10-11

<sup>4</sup> Eph 1.15; Col. 1.4



eternity. Buy as though you don't possess; rejoice as though you were not rejoicing; love as though you did not love; and use this world so as not to abuse it. It is only form, not substance; it passes away.<sup>1Cor 7:30-31</sup> Use it, therefore, with crucified affections. Prove the sincerity of your faith by gaining victory over your excessive contentment with, delight in, desires after, and cares for the things of this world.<sup>1Joh 5:4; 2:15</sup>

*Live by faith in adversity.* Weep as though you don't weep,<sup>1Cor 7:30</sup> enduring the cross and despising the shame as looking to Jesus.<sup>Heb 12:2</sup> Consider Christ's disgrace your riches,<sup>Heb 11:26</sup> and his shame your glory.<sup>Act 5:41</sup> Compare these light afflictions with the weight of glory.<sup>1</sup> Ply your hearts with the promises: consider whether you can get the riches that are stored in them. Rest yourselves in the Lord,<sup>Psa 37:7</sup> and know that your heavenly Father has no greater delight than to see his children trust him with confidence, when all visible helps are out of sight, and he seems to be their enemy.<sup>Job 13:15</sup>

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**V. Put on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.** This has great value in God's sight.<sup>1Pet 3:4</sup> Study to be like your Father: slow to anger, ready to forgive, forgetting injuries, loving enemies, requiting ill-will with kindness, ill-words with courtesy, and neglects with benefits. If anyone wrongs you, do him kindness all the sooner. Thus you bear God's likeness, and you will be his delight. If you have unrestrained passions, and an unbridled tongue, know that God especially hates and is displeased with a contrary heart, and a perverse tongue.<sup>2</sup> Oh, seek meekness! How can the holy dove rest in a wrathful heart? Christ is a Lamb of meekness; how can he take pleasure in an unquiet and contentious spirit? Truly, *with the perverse, he will be perverse.*<sup>Psa 18:26</sup> If you will not forgive others, he will not forgive you.<sup>Mat 6:15</sup> Are you hard to please? Are you an obstinate wife, a contradictory master, a cross and wilful servant? Then surely God will not be pleased with you; he will measure to you as you measure to others.<sup>Matt 7:2</sup>

**VI. Get a spirit of self-denial.** God is pleased best, when self is displeased most. God is well-pleased when we are content to be empty and abased, so that God may be honored. And as with the holy Baptist, he is pleased when we are willing to be eclipsed by Christ, willing to decrease; not considering ourselves the loser as long as his interest is the gainer;<sup>Joh 3:29-30</sup> rejoicing that

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we are made low for Christ's advancement. How greatly was he pleased with Solomon's self-denying choice? He gave him what he asked for, and he threw riches and honor into the bargain.<sup>1Kng 3:10-12</sup> Abraham's self-denial was extraordinary. What! To sacrifice with his own hand the whole hope of his family, the heir of promise, the child of his years, a son, and an *only* son, when his life was bound up in the lad's life! Was there ever a mortal ill-used in this way? But Abraham would not be a loser. God gives him a testimony from heaven. He blesses him, blesses his seed, and blesses all the nations in him.<sup>Gen 22:15-18</sup> Moses was wonderful in his self-denial, but more wonderful was his acceptance and reward;<sup>Heb 11:24</sup> There was none like Moses.<sup>Deu 34:10</sup> God prefers him in a way that Pharaoh could not. He spoke with him face to face, as a man would speak with his friend. His word would be, as it were, a law with God. Whomever Moses spoke for, they were spared, even though they seemed devoted to destruction. But whoever dared to speak against Moses was sure to bear his iniquity.<sup>Num. 12:8</sup> *Forget self!* Renounce your own wisdom, your own worthiness, your own will. Rein in your passions; curb your appetite; bridle your tongue. Do this, and you will be gently accepted. You will find that God's favor will infinitely reward you, despite all the murmuring opposition and discontent of your flesh, which will resent having the reins held so hard.

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<sup>1</sup> 2Cor 4:17; Rom 8:18

<sup>2</sup> Pro 3:32; 1:19; 2:12; 8:13



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**VII. Maintain a spirit of resolution and constancy in God's way.**<sup>Heb 10.38</sup> This was the renown of the three worthies.<sup>Dan. 3</sup> They<sup>1</sup> did not fear the fierceness of Nebuchadnezzar's rage, nor the fire of the furnace. All the world could not make them bow. And how gloriously God owned them, and miraculously evidenced his pleasure in them. *Stand your ground!* Resolve to live and die by substantial godliness. Cling to the Lord with full purpose of heart. Let no difficulties make you change your position. Then will you be an honor and a pleasure to the God that made you.

Well then, do you want to know what frame of heart is well pleasing to God? Why, it is this humble, sincere, zealous, active frame, this believing, meek, self-denying, and resolved frame — *this is the frame that is well-pleasing in the sight of God.*

*Secondly, As to your performances.* Briefly, if they are to please God, then you must heedfully look at these five things:

1. That they are done by the **right rule**, which is God's word. You must not follow the imaginations of your own hearts.<sup>Num. 15.39</sup> You must not do what is right in your own eyes. In all sacred actions, you must have God's command to warrant you. You may not offer to God anything of which you cannot say, "You require these things at our hands."<sup>Isa 1.12</sup> In all civil actions, you must have God's permission. You can be sure he will never accept what his word condemns. Under pain of God's displeasure, don't dare set your hands to what the word forbids.

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2. That they are done for the **right ends**, which is God's glory. How damnably did the Pharisees err?<sup>2</sup> How miserably did Jehu fail?<sup>2Kng 10.29-31</sup> And both failed in what was commanded, because they failed to aim at this end: God's glory.

3. That they proceed from **right principles**: (1.) *Faith*, without which it is impossible to please God; prayer will not avail you, unless it is the prayer of faith.<sup>Heb 11.6</sup> *We believe, and therefore we speak.* (2.) *Love*. If we were to give our goods to the poor, and our bodies to the fire, and don't do it from love, it would profit us nothing.<sup>1Cor 1.13</sup> Where men are driven to their duties only by the slavish fear of hell, or the lashes of conscience, or the love of man's praise — or where any other carnal principle governs the act — it cannot please God. (3.) *Fear*. We cannot serve God acceptably without reverence and godly fear (not *slavish* fear). The Lord takes pleasure in those who *fear* him, in those who *hope* in his mercy. Observe the happy mixture where these two are joined together: it is true filial<sup>3</sup> fear. David says, *I will come to your house in the abundance of your mercy, (behold his faith:) and in your fear I will worship toward your holy temple*<sup>Psa 5.7</sup> (there is his fear mixed with faith). Faith without fear would be bold presumption; fear without faith is sinful despair: join them together and God is well-pleased.

4. That they may be done in a **right manner**: (1) *preparedly*, not impulsively or inconsiderately in the presence of so dreadful a Majesty; (2) *prudently*, for lawful acts may be spoiled and may even be done unlawfully if they are done without considering

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that an offence might in some cases accompany them. Indeed, holy duties as well as ordinary actions may be turned into sins by being ill-timed, or by not appropriately considering the present circumstances: (3) *reverently*, not rashly; utter everything with our mouths as we would

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<sup>1</sup> Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

<sup>2</sup> John 8.44; Luke 11.43

<sup>3</sup> Filial: befitting a son or daughter.

before God, behaving ourselves as in his sight: (4) *heartily*; not insincerely as when our lips are going while our minds are wandering aimlessly.

5. That they be directed through the *right means*, that is, through Jesus Christ as the only way to the Father. Bring all your sacrifices to the High Priest; offer them all upon this altar; otherwise all is lost. It is not enough to say, “through our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen,” at the end. Rather, in every duty you must come with a lively dependence on him for righteousness and strength, for assistance and acceptance. Remember to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, leaning on his hand. Without this, all your services will be rejected in the end.

**CHAP. II — THIRD CASE OF CONSCIENCE, GROUNDED UPON THE WORDS OF OUR SAVIOUR:**

Joh 8.29. *For I always do those things that please him.*

*Quest. I. Is any man able in this life to attain the example of Christ in this: to always do those things that please God?*

*Ans.* Consider that there is none that does good and does not sin; [Rom 3.10-18, 23](#) and God is not, nor can he be pleased with sin,

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not only in his own people, but most of all he hates it in others. Then it cannot be that any man in this life would fully attain Christ’s example in this. Yet we may come so far towards it, not only in our immediate addresses to God, but in the general course of our lives, that we may come to please God. Thus Enoch and Noah walked with God, *i.e.* in their general course of life they walked so as to please God, and to be approved in his sight. Thus the lowliest of our actions, if we do them to the Lord as the servants of Christ, have a promise of acceptance and reward. [Col. 3.22-24](#)

*Quest. II. How may we, in our own measure, come to be followers of Christ in this: to always do those things that please God?*

*Ans.* In order to do this, something is necessary with reference to, *1st*, our persons; *2dly*, our principles; and *3dly*, our practices.

*1st*, With reference to our *persons*. Here it is necessary,

1. That there our natures be altered by renewing grace, for those who are in the flesh cannot please God. [Rom 8.8](#)

Wild vines must bring forth sour grapes. [Isa 5.4](#) The fruit they bear (however deceptively pleasing and fair to the eye) is evil fruit. [Mat 7.16](#) Where a good treasure of grace is not in the heart, a man cannot bring forth good things by his actions. [Mat 12.33](#)

Many “enlightened” sinners think they may pacify God and set everything right by reading and praying, and by forsaking some gross and foul sins.

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They are mistaken souls, let me undeceive you. You begin at the wrong end; your first and greatest care must be to get your hearts and natures changed, and renewed by the power of converting grace. You labour in vain at the streams, if the fountain of corruption in your heart remains strong. You mustn’t think of it as dealing with a dilapidated house, where a little mending here and there will restore it again. With you, the old building must be torn down, and the foundation-stone relaid in sound repentance from dead works. There must be a thorough conversion to God. Until this is done, you must know that God takes no pleasure in you, nor will he accept an offering from your hand as he would from his friends. [Mal 2.10](#)

2. That you are accepted through faith in Jesus Christ. For God is well-pleased in him alone. <sup>Mat 3.17</sup> So without faith gaining us an interest in Christ, it is impossible to please God. <sup>Heb 11.6</sup>

To better understand both these particulars, know that there are two attributes of God to which you must be conformed, or else you cannot please him.

(1.) The *holiness* of God: For he is not a God who takes pleasure in iniquity; he hears no sinner: the foolish will not stand in his sight: he hates all workers of iniquity.<sup>1</sup> God can no more take pleasure in the unsanctified, than we can take pleasure in swine or serpents.

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(2.) The *justice* of God: For *he will by no means clear the guilty.* <sup>Exo 34.7</sup> Even if we could have inherent holiness in us, in our unpardoned state, yet justice would only be infinitely offended while our guilt lies unresolved. You may see this in Christ. For though he was perfectly holy, yet being under the guilt of our sins imputed to him, the severity of God's justice broke out against him.

Now man is naturally an offence both to the holiness and the justice of God. Thus, in order to please God, by necessity there must occur a two-fold change in him.

(1.) The *real change* of sanctification. I call this a real change, because by this there is a real change ensuing of new qualifications and dispositions: from proud to humble; from carnal to spiritual and heavenly; etc.

(2.) The *relative change* of justification. I call this a relative change, because there is no real change in a man's nature, but in his condition. This enables him to stand in a new relation to the law under which he was guilty and condemned before; but now the law pronounces the same man clear and acquitted. And this is not for any righteousness *infused* in him, but for the satisfaction and payment of another that was laid down for him. Satisfaction must be made, and righteousness must be tendered, or else God cannot be at peace with him. We have nothing to pay. <sup>Luk 7.42</sup> O sinner! Fly away to Christ for it; hide yourself in the clefts of that rock;

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run to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. Don't appear before God except in the robe of Christ's righteousness. God sends you to Jesus, as he sent them to Job. *Go to my servant Job; he will pray for you, for I will accept him.* <sup>Job. 42.8</sup> Get out of yourselves: flee to Christ; labour to be found in him. Otherwise, all your endeavours in rinsing and washing yourselves will have no effect.

*2dly*, With reference to our *principles*. Here some *corrupt principles* must be *unlearned*, and some *holy principles* must be *received* and *retained*.

1st. Some *corrupt principles* must be *unlearned*. Such as,

1. *It is enough if we serve God on the Lord's day, and we may serve ourselves the rest of the week.* Though God has reserved one day in seven to be wholly for his immediate service, which is why it is specifically called the *Lord's day*, we still must know that every day is his. He has not allowed us one hour or minute of time that is not for his service. Indeed, he has service of more than one sort. But we must know that the business of our ordinary affairs, if rightly done, is serving the Lord Christ. <sup>Col. 3.24</sup> God is as truly served by you in the working day's labor, as he is on the Sabbath-day's rest, if you do it in a right manner, and for holy ends.

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<sup>1</sup> Psa 5.4-5; Joh 9.31

There is a generation whose religion is just a Sunday religion, which they put on and off with their Sunday's clothes, thinking God is fairly served for the week. But God knows that the little they do then is poorly done.

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Never think that God accepts offerings from your hands, when you live six days for the world and yourself, and you spend one day for him. This shows you are under the unmodified power of self-love, and you are not the Lord's. For none of us lives for himself, <sup>Rom 14:7</sup> You must remember that the Sabbath is for you to learn how to serve God all week; don't think that when the Lord's day is ended, his work is done.

2. *If God is served morning and evening, it is enough, even though we serve ourselves the rest of the day.* God must be served every day, and all day. <sup>Pro 23:17</sup> You must serve him not only in your fasts, but at your meals; not only on your knees, but in your callings.

Some think that if they keep up religious duties, they may do whatever they prefer at other times; they think that if they are intemperate, lascivious, and unrighteous, it is enough to make up with God at night, and all will be well. This is like the whore in Proverbs that having made her offering, was ready for new wickedness, <sup>Pro 7:14</sup> as if she paid off the old tab and may now boldly run up a new one.

Others think that if they give God his dues morning and evening, then as long as they don't serve the devil with the rest of their time, they may serve themselves with it. But those who live more to themselves than they do to God, lay claim to God in vain. This is a horrible sacrilege: to put off God with just the tenth.

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God is to be considered and served in *all* that you do. And this is what I'm driving at: we may not divide ourselves between God and the world, between his service and our own ends, and thus put him off with partial service. Instead, we must do *everything* in obedience to him, and we must be *entirely* the Lord's, so that in *all* things he may be glorified by us, <sup>1Pet 4:11</sup> and so that we may not lose our reward. <sup>2Joh 1:8</sup>

2dly, Some *holy principles* must be *received* and *retained*: such as,

**Principle I.** Pleasing God is our *only business*, and our *highest blessedness*.

**First**, Our *only business*. What is it that we call or consider our business?

1. *A man's business is what his livelihood and subsistence depend on.* The lawyer considers the law his business, and the tradesman considers his trade his business, because their livelihood and subsistence depends on them. Brothers, our whole being depends on pleasing God. Do this, and you do all; miss this, and you mar all. Please him, and you are reconciled forever; if he is not pleased, you are undone forever. How careful is the selfish courtier to please his prince? How does he crouch and flatter? If he can only determine what will gratify and please his prince, he considers himself happy. And why? Because he is entirely dependent on his prince's favor. We depend on the favor of God much more. Blessed is the man whom he chooses. <sup>Psa 65:4</sup> In his favor is found life. <sup>Psa 30:5</sup> But woe to those who have God against them;

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they are perfectly miserable; *men will call them reprobate silver, because the Lord has rejected them.* <sup>Jer 6:30</sup> If the Lord says to a man, as he said to Moses, you have *found grace in my sight, and I know you by name,* <sup>Exo 33:12</sup> then that man is happy. But if he says, *I take no*

*pleasure in you*, then you may cover the face of that man, as they covered Haman's face and carried him away.<sup>Est. 7.8</sup> His end must be miserable if he continues.

2. *A man's business is what he has his stock and talents for.* If a man is entrusted as a steward or a factor, then his business is to buy commodities that are useful. Beloved, all of our time, parts, interest, food, and clothing, and whatever mercies, spiritual or temporal, these are the stock which God has entrusted us. It is all for his own use and service. Isn't it sad and fearful that God placed so great a stock in the hands of the sons of *men*, and yet he has (if I may say) received so little profit from it, by which I mean, so little glory from it? He sowed so much, and reaped so little; he strew so much, and gathered so little. Isn't it sad that men should have so much in vain? Do you have health and wealth, and yet not use it for God? Then it is all in vain. Do you have understanding, and yet you only improve it in order to contrive your own affairs and worldly plans? If so, then your reason and your understanding have become vain. Oh, how will you answer the charge that you have had so great a stock in your hands, and yet made so little profit from it?

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It would have been better for some men if they'd never had a foot of land, or an hour's ease, or if they never had the understanding of men, because they haven't used their talents for God, and for the ends for which these things were put into their hands.

3. *A man's business is what his capacities call for.* It is a man's business, if he has the capacity of a judge, to do justice; or the capacity of a servant, to do his masters will. Brothers, all your capacities evidence that it is your business to please God. You are his friends; you are his servants. Therefore you must please him in all things.<sup>Tit. 2.9</sup> You are his children, and therefore you must honor him.<sup>Mal 1.6</sup> You are his spouse, and therefore it is your business to please your husband.<sup>1Cor 7.34</sup>

4. *A man's business is what he is employed for.* If a man is employed as a schoolmaster, it is his business to teach; if he is employed as a soldier, it is his business to fight. Beloved, don't you know who feeds you? Do you think God keeps so many servants to have them idle, or to mind only their own plans and pleasures? God has distributed to every one his work; every man has his hands full. There is so much work to be done indoors, and so much outdoors; there is so much towards God, towards your neighbour, and towards yourselves, that you have no time in which to be idle. You will dearly pay for it if you eat his bread, and you don't do his work.

And because pleasing God is our highest business,

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**Secondly**, So it is also our *highest blessedness*: for man's happiness lies in God's favor.<sup>Psa 4.6</sup> Our happiness is in attaining the end of our being, and therefore the great query among the philosophers was this: "What was the end or happiness of man?" Now the true end of our being is that we may please God; *we are and were created for his pleasure*.<sup>Rev 4.11</sup> And for this end we are also *newly* created so that we would yield ourselves to God;<sup>Rom 6.14</sup> and we are being built into a spiritual house so that we would offer up spiritual sacrifice to him, acceptable through Christ.<sup>1Pet 3.5</sup> This is the end of our redemption: that we should not serve ourselves, but him — in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives;<sup>Luk 1.75</sup> and that we would no longer live to ourselves, but to him that died for us.<sup>Rom 5.15</sup> Likewise, this is the end of our justification: that our consciences being purged, we would acceptably serve the living God. It is the end of our glorification that, being translated into heaven, we would perfectly please God, and serve him night and day in his temple.<sup>Rev 7.15; 22.3</sup> Thus, pleasing God is the whole end, or whole happiness of man.<sup>Ecc 12.13</sup> And this is clear, because

we then help ourselves most when we please God best. You have a two-fold advantage by this:

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(1.) You will be the *favourites of God*. Oh, glorious promotion! Haman thought that he was no little man when he was on Ahasueras' right hand; and yet in the end, he was promoted to the gallows.<sup>Est. 5:11; 7:10</sup> But what will be done to the man whom God delights to *honor*? Oh, blessed is that man! Woe to the one who touches him; it would have been better for him to have a millstone hung around his neck, and be drowned in the sea, than he should offend him.<sup>Luk 17:2</sup> God is infinitely careful of his favorites. When they are injured, the apple of his eye is touched.<sup>Zech. 2:8</sup> Whoever touches them will not be innocent.<sup>Psa 105:15</sup> But God blesses those who show them kindness.<sup>Gen 12:3</sup> And he renders vengeance on the ungodly for every hard word they utter against them.<sup>Jude 15</sup>

O man, doesn't your soul say, "Happy is the one in such a case"? Won't your condition be most blessed when God is infinitely tender toward you in this way: taking all the kindnesses done to you, as though done to himself,<sup>Mat 25:40</sup> and all the injuries done to you, as affronts to himself?<sup>Act 9:4</sup> This is the happy situation of his favorites.

(2.) Everything you do will be *found on your account with God*. Brothers, are you believers or are you not? Do you believe in the immortality of the soul and the life to come, or do you not? The ways of most declare them to be real infidels, even though they are professed Christians. If you think there is an eternal state to come, then wouldn't it be wise to provide for it, and lay up what you possibly can, so you may inherit it in the other world?<sup>Mat 6:20</sup>

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Shouldn't every wise man, who knows he will soon move to another country, be careful to quickly transport all he can so he may enjoy it at his arrival? Beloved, if you indeed believe that you will live forever in another world, wouldn't it be your best course of action to do those things, the fruit of which you will enjoy forever? Having only a short time to live here, only a madman would build and plant here, when he has a land of inheritance to build on elsewhere. The mischief that comes from self-seeking and self-pleasing is infinite; you are eternal losers by it. God will say, *You have your reward*.<sup>Mat 6:5</sup> You may have something in hand, but the eternal reward is lost.

Brothers, I am ambitious for you that what you do here lasts forever, so that it all meets you in the other world; so that there you reap the everlasting fruit of what you are doing now. A wise builder will build to last forever, and not just for a day or a year. Oh, that you would be wise builders! Do all for God, and you will have an eternal advantage. Learn just this lesson: set your mind to please God in all things, and then you will be promoting and advancing yourselves in whatever you do. Always lay up a treasure in heaven, continually adding to the heap. Oh, what riches you will realize when you gain by every day, every hour, and every action! For God will not let the least thing that is done for him, not a cup of cold water, go without an everlasting reward;<sup>Mat 10:42</sup> nor will your labor be in vain.<sup>1Cor 15:58</sup>

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**Principle II.** *When you have done all, if God is not pleased, you have done nothing.* Settle it in your hearts that whatever is not done for God is done in vain. When you don't please God, you don't profit yourselves. When men offer something, however richly and freely, if it is not done in a manner pleasing to God, then it is a vain offering.<sup>Isa 1:13</sup> If men were to do more than God ever required, and were zealous in things God never commanded, they worship him in vain.<sup>Mat 15:9</sup> Beloved, whatever time you lived for yourselves, you lived in vain,



because it was not with your end in mind. Oh, it is a heart-cutting consideration for a tender Christian to think of this: that when his life is so short, and time is so little, he must be willing to cut off so much! Yet you must only cut off as many hours from your days, and as many years from your life, as you lived for yourself and not for God; these are all lost as to their ends. If you are forgiven upon your repentance, you won't be rewarded for these anyway.

Beloved, you must consider that you have lived no longer than you have lived for God. *To me, to live is Christ.* <sup>Phi 1.21</sup> I consider it such that, if I did not live for him, then I did not live. The only employment of my life is to serve him; and so I could not tell what to do with my life if it were not to spend it for him.

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Christian, you must reckon it this way in your mind: as much time as I have lived for Christ, I have lived only that much. And as much time as I have lived for myself, I have lost that much. While we live below our reason, it is not the man that lives, but the beast. That is what distinguishes the human life from that of brutes. Now, while we don't live for God, we live utterly below our reason. This is sufficiently evident in the fact that God is the author and the end of man. Doesn't reason dictate that God should have the glory of his own work, and that the vessel should be for the potter's use? Does anyone plant a vineyard, or keep a herd, and not expect the fruit or milk of it? <sup>1Cor 9.7</sup> God has made you for himself, O man. <sup>Pro 16.4</sup> Do you have the face of a man, and yet you don't blush to think that God made and employed you in vain? If you have one grain of ingenuity, you will abhor the thought of this: that you were made in vain. Why, as much as you do for yourself, you do for nothing. It may be that you have a very busy life; but if you don't act for God, then all this while you are busy doing nothing. You can sit down in the evening and say, I have done nothing all day. You will find a blank in God's book for that day; there is nothing on your account. On this sad record, such a day was spent, and nothing was done. God has his day-book, and he takes notice of all your activities. He notes how you rise, and how you go to your labours. He notes how you speak, and how you eat. He notes whether you have an eye toward him and his glory in all you do, or whether you look no higher than yourselves. *We have been toiling all night,*

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*and caught nothing.* <sup>Luk 5.5</sup> Couldn't this be the sad complaint of many a man? I have been toiling all my life, and yet I have done nothing, because what I did was not done for the Lord. How would you take it of your servants, if coming home in the evening, you were to find that every one of them had minded their own business and pleasure, and left your work undone? Is it not sad, sirs, that so many hours and days pass by, and we are no nearer our end than we ever were before? Your little children are busy from morning to night, and yet all the while they have been doing nothing. So are you when you only seek to please your fleshly self, and you are not serving and pleasing God in what you undertake.

**Principle III.** *The favor of all the world can benefit you nothing, if God is not pleased with you and by you.* If anyone could save you from God's wrath, you needn't be so eager to please him; but there isn't. And so, if God is not pleased, we are all undone. *You, even you are to be feared; and who may stand in your sight once you are angry?* <sup>1</sup> When men ignore God's anger, and the fear and dread of God isn't on their hearts, it's no wonder they aren't careful to please him. You must be convinced that the displeasure of God is the most formidable thing in the world, or else you will never learn this great lesson. Beloved, if you

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<sup>1</sup> Psa 76.7; Isa 43.13

were to please men, and all the world were on your side, what would this avail you while God is your enemy? If all men were to bless you, and speak well of you,

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what would this profit you when God rises up in judgment against you, and condemns you? It is not at man's bar, but at God's that you must stand.<sup>1</sup> It is not by men's votes that you must be condemned or acquitted. It will not be decided by a majority, *but God himself is the judge.*<sup>Psa 75</sup> It is in his breast whether you will live or die. If a man were on trial for his life, what would it avail him that all his fellow prisoners, and the whole crowd around him were for him, when the whole bench and jury were against him? If your lives and estates were in question, to whom would you go to make your friend? The judge or the people? Sirs, be convinced that if God is against you, it is as bad as if God and all the world were against you; for it all means nothing without *him*. Oh, whatever you do, study to get in with him, and keep in with him. I tell you, the time is coming when the breath of man will mean nothing, when their commendation will do you no good. O man, even if all the world were to give you their hands, and sign your certificate, it would mean nothing in God's account or in his court. Many build their hopes for heaven on the good opinion that others have of them. But I tell you, man, though you were to carry letters of commendation with you when you die, and all the ministers of the gospel were to give you their *bene decessit*,<sup>2</sup> it would all be no more than a blank paper. God would not save you one jot sooner if he were to find that all the while you were a secret hypocrite and a rotten-hearted professor of Christ.

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**Principle IV.** *God will not be pleased with you in anything, unless you make it your concern to please him well in everything.* You will one day be ashamed unless you respect all God's commandments.<sup>Psa 119.6</sup> You don't have a good conscience unless it is your concern to live honestly in all things.<sup>Heb 13.18</sup> If Naaman must be excused in one thing, to bow in the house of Rimmon so that he might not displease his master, this is enough to spoil everything.<sup>2Kng 5.18</sup> Some need to keep God's good-will and the world's too. And so they give each their turn; they serve God at home, and conform to the world abroad. It is a great thing indeed that they refuse to swallow, rather than lose the good-will of men, especially great men. These men have two faces and two tongues: the one is for the good company they keep, and the other is for the bad company they keep. Some hold onto two first principles: the one is the common fountain of all good (which is God); the other is the cause of all evil; and they worship both. They hold onto the good principle for its *love*, and they hold onto the evil out of *fear*. Many among us now have just such a religion. But let them know, whoever they are, that while they grip all, they lose all. For God will not have time-servers, or men-pleasers, as the servants of Christ.<sup>Eph 6.6; Gal. 1.10</sup>

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*3dly.* With reference to your *practices*. Here, if you ever want to attain this blessed life of always doing those things that please God, you must carefully follow these six rules.

**Rule I.** *Look around you at the whole scope and compass of your duty.* Great is the scope of Christianity. The commandment is exceedingly broad.<sup>Psa 119.96</sup> And many professors of Christ scarcely look more than one way. While they intensely mind one thing, they neglect another. It may be that while they are occupied with the care of religious duties, they forget relative duties; or they are careful about personal duties, but remiss in the duties they owe to the souls of their families; or they complain and mourn over their own sins, but they don't take to heart

<sup>1</sup> That is, standing at the bar of justice to receive the verdict.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, to die well (a natural death); here it means to die with a good name and commendations.

others' sins. It may be they are more punctual in their more immediate duties towards God, but they are negligent in their duties towards men; or they spend much time on their own souls, but they care little for the church and the misery of perishing souls around them. Possibly they strictly keep the Sabbath, and pray, and hear, and fear an oath; but in the meantime, they have few qualms about breaking their promises, passing hasty and uncharitable criticisms, spending time vainly, being unprofitable in their speech, or stingy toward godly uses. They allow sin to go unreproved; they unleash their anger at every petty frustration. Many mind their duty to those who are within, and in the meantime, they are very stingy in their duties to those who are without. This is too common a case.

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Where is the Christian who seriously thinks to himself, "What might I do to win souls?" It may be that you stay in the company of the godly where you may be edified. But when do you go to your poor neighbor, whom you see living in a sinful state, and tell him of his danger, and labor to gain him to Christ? Indeed, this great duty is so much neglected, and so out of fashion, that I am afraid many question whether it is a duty or not — as if you might let sin lie upon the soul of your brother and yet be innocent.<sup>Lev. 19:17</sup> If it were his ox or ass that lay ready to perish, you would not question whether it was your duty to help him out of the ditch. Do you earnestly think you owe more to these beasts than you owe to his soul? Does scripture belong only to ministers, or to *all* believers? *The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that wins souls is wise.*<sup>Pro 11:30</sup> Surely the lives of too many Christians speak the same language that Cain spoke with his mouth, *Am I my brother's keeper?*<sup>Gen 4:9</sup> It is true, God would have you keep everyone within the bounds of your proper stations; but take opportunities, indeed, seek opportunities as you are able, to do good to others. Don't you know how to approach your poor neighbors? Carry alms with you; do him a kindness; oblige him by your courteous and winning carriage. Then I expect to see the kingdom of Christ flourish gloriously, when everyone who professes godliness arises and takes hold of his neighbor's sleeve.

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Oh, see your neglect in this! Don't think it is enough to keep your own vineyard. Let your friend and neighbors have no quiet from you until you see them in good earnest seeking after heaven. Oh, if every one might bring just one to Christ, what a blessed thing this would be! I lose myself in this argument, but I am content to do so, this duty being so miserably neglected.

Too many live as though religion lay all in praying, and hearing holy discussions and the like, forgetting that *pure and undefiled religion is this: to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction.*<sup>Jas. 1:27</sup> The other should be done in such a way that this would not be left undone. You are conscientious to be just, true, and faithful; but do you forget to win others by your kindness and affableness? Isn't it written in your bibles, *be pitiful, be courteous, having compassion one for another.*<sup>1Pet 3:8</sup> Don't say, it is not my nature: what does grace serve for, if not to correct the evils of your temper? Isn't ours a religion of self-denial? Don't the rules of our religion enjoin us to be followers of whatever is lovely, and of good report, and may render religion amiable to the world?<sup>Phi 4:8</sup>

**Rule II.** Use forethought, so that every duty may fall in its time and order, and every work may have its place. It is not enough to do God's work; it must be done in his order. What in itself is good and necessary, may be so ill-timed as to become a sin. It is a duty to tell your brother of his sin;

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but it is also your sin to rip him up in your anger, or argue back when he is admonishing you in a Christian way. Your worldly business must not shut out religion, nor may religious duties so

consume you as to neglect your callings. Rather, every duty must have its place. But for doing everything in God's order, take these five directions.

**Direct. 1.**

1. *Begin at home in provoking good.* Why should God plead with you, you *that teach another, do you not teach yourself?* <sup>Rom 2.21</sup> Be an example of your own rule, or else the hypocrite's charge will come against you: *They bind heavy burdens, but will not touch them with one of their fingers.* <sup>Mat 23.4</sup> Observe God's order. *These words which I command you will be in your heart;* that must be our first care. And having gotten our lesson well ourselves, we must then teach it to others. *And you will teach them diligently to your children, and tell of them when you,* etc. <sup>Deu 6.6-7</sup> At least, if you haven't already attained it, be sure to learn it first; and when you press a duty, intend yourself first, and speak most to your own heart.

2. *First get the beam out of your own eye* in reproving evil; <sup>Mat 7.5</sup> otherwise you will be branded a hypocrite. We may not think as many mistakenly do, that we must not reprove another when we are guilty of the same sin. Rather, we must, in such a case, be sure to cast the first stone at ourselves. Be angry soonest with yourself, and be more severe toward your own sins than any others.

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It is strange to see how professors can be so critical of others, and yet so sensitive of their own corruptions, and so impatient with reproof. Reader, fear and avoid this sin.

**Direct. 2.** *Let God be served first.* Let God have your first thoughts, the first of the day, the first of your strength. How heavily God is displeased with profane priests because they serve themselves with sacrifices before serving him! <sup>1Sam. 2.15-16</sup> Here is holy counsel that one gives us, "Hold fast the door of your heart against the world in the morning, until your heart has first been in heaven, and has been seasoned and mortified from there against the temptations you are likely to meet with as soon as you come down below." Indeed, all must be done as God's service, but his immediate service must be done first. It is the counsel of several heathens that all undertakings should begin with prayer. Says Aratus,<sup>1</sup> *Let us begin with God.* And the Muslims always began their books as men once began wills, *In the name of God.*<sup>2</sup>

**Direct. 3.** *First cleanse the inside.* <sup>Mat 23.26</sup> Cleanse first what is inside the cup. Though many live outwardly, as if all their work inwardly were done, remember that it lies mainly here. It is preposterous in religion to begin first with the outside. <sup>Jer 4.14</sup> *O Jerusalem, wash your heart!* Once this is done, reformation will soon follow in the life, but not otherwise.

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Many are careful to see that what appears to men is beautiful; but their hearts are neglected. They carry the marks of the hypocrite on them. <sup>Mat 23.27-28</sup> What does it profit you, O vain man, to keep it all secret from men, since God knows and rejects you? He has appointed a day in which he will rip open your pack, and dissect your heart before the world. <sup>1Cor 4.5; Ecc 12.14; Rom 2.16</sup>

**Direct. 4.** Eye those duties most, that are most important. <sup>Mat 23.23</sup> The hypocrite is very punctual in lesser matters, but he neglects the weightiest things of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith. He favors a religion that costs him little. Therefore, words being cheap, he's as unrestrained in his speech as any zealot when it comes to the circumstantial of religion; and he is marvellously critical of others who, to his mind, don't seem to be men of wide

<sup>1</sup> In Act 17.28, Paul quotes the *Phaenomena of Aratus* to show the Athenians that their religion is idolatrous. Line 1 reads, "Let us begin with Zeus, whom we mortals never leave unspoken."

<sup>2</sup> Actually, "In the name of Allah."

principles and large consciences. But in the mean time he is negligent in his private duties; he is a stranger to self-denial and to walking humbly with God. He strains wonderfully at the pretense; but it may be that he swallows the gains of unrighteousness or the baits of intemperance fast enough. It may be that he decries superstition, and wants a stone to fling at a profane churchman; but in the meantime, he walks loosely in his own family, has few scruples about his business dealings, or he will lift his cup as freely as another, so long as he doesn't get drunk. Or, if he will not take a penny of his neighbor's estate, he is most unmerciful to his neighbor's good name;

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he will repeat any report going around. Brothers, you must submit the least sin and the least duty to your conscience. But it is a fearful sign when men are zealous against lesser sins, and yet connive at greater ones, as these are.<sup>Mat 23.24</sup>

**Direct. 5.** *Take the first opportunity when God gives a fit season for any duty.* Don't let Satan beguile you by telling you there is another or a better time. It may be that you intend to reprove your brother for his sin, but how long will you wait? If God now gives you an opportunity, your backward heart may say, "Not now, but another time;" and so it is put off until he or you are removed, or he is hardened; or at the very least you are guilty of the sin that he commits in the meanwhile, because you have not done your duty to prevent it. It may be in your heart to deal with your unconverted friend or neighbor about his spiritual estate; but perhaps while you are delaying, death comes and snatches him away in his sins, or takes you away, and so farewell forever to any opportunity for doing the soul of your brother any good. How often are our private duties hindered or miserably disturbed for lack of care to lay hold of the first opportunity? We think another hour in the day may do as well; but then one thing or another unexpectedly comes up and nothing is done, or nothing purposeful. Therefore beware of this cheat. A man scarcely peeps into the world, until one briar or thorn, or another will catch him. Therefore; take opportunity by the mane. Our Saviour would take his season for prayer before dawn, after which his other work would be pressing.<sup>Mar 1.35</sup>

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**Rule III.** *Do nothing sacred without God's command; do nothing civil without God's permission.* Don't offer strange fire.<sup>Lev 10.1</sup> In God's worship you must well be able to answer the question, "Who has required these things at your hands?" Here the command must be observed without adding or diminishing.<sup>Deu 12.32</sup> Yet understand this with two cautions.

(1.) Men may not stamp their invented ceremonies with a moral significance, nor impose or use them, even if they do it with good intentions to edify the people by devised means.<sup>Mat 15.9</sup> Christ sufficiently provided for edifying his people without such devices. Nothing may be used as a part of worship that God has not commanded.<sup>Col. 2.23</sup> If he has said, I did not command it, or speak it, nor did it come into my mind,<sup>1</sup> then that is enough to make it rejected by the Lord of divine worship. Nevertheless, those things that are merely circumstantial, and are generally necessary, and are not intended to be any part or means of worship, may be determined by human prudence, according to the general rules of the word which must always be observed.<sup>1Cor 14.26</sup> For lack of understanding, many have ignorantly condemned preaching by an hour-glass<sup>2</sup>, in a high place,<sup>1</sup> in churches,<sup>2</sup> by way of doctrine and use, etc. running from one extreme to another.

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<sup>1</sup> Jer 7.31; 19.5

<sup>2</sup> Hour-glasses were introduced into churches in the early sixteenth century when preachers were famous for their wearisome sermons. Other preachers, more merciful, used a half-hour glass and kept within its limits. Many churches were furnished with ornamental stands to hold the glass. These were not generally used after 1650. <http://www.love-watches.com/Hourglass.htm>



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(2.) We are not to think that the substance of God's ordinance may be forsaken because of some faults in the administrators, or in the way they are administered. The administering of God's ordinances does not belong to the people, but to the minister. And if he fails in his duty by administering them in a way that is improper and less edifying, it is *my* grief, but *his* sin. Hophni and Phinehas were corrupt in their lives, and they brought much corruption and rudeness into the service of God. Yet Elkanah and Hannah, along with other godly persons, nevertheless attended God's worship and sanctuary.<sup>1</sup>Sam. 1.3 Much corruption had crept into the doctrine, worship, and lives of the administrators of the church of the Jews. Yet our Saviour (though he still decried the corruptions and would not join in them) never prohibited communion with them in God's worship. Rather, he enjoins it,<sup>3</sup> and practices it, both he and his parents, and also his apostles.<sup>4</sup>

But now in civil things, it is sufficient that you have the permission of God's word, if not its commands, provided the general rules are observed to do all to the glory of God,<sup>1</sup>Cor 10.31 and provided we don't abuse our lawful liberty by offending others.<sup>Rom 14.20</sup> Now your actions being thus justifiable as to their matter (without which it is impossible to justify them,

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whatever your good intentions may be to please God), the influence and virtue of their holy ends will effectually turn all of it into religious duties, just as the touch of the philosopher's stone turns the baser metal into gold.

**Rule IV.** *In every action, let God be uppermost; but in religious actions, let God be all.* Let none of your actions terminate with yourselves, but labour to be able to give this sincere account of anything you set about doing: that you do it because it is pleasing to God, and because this is his will concerning you. Set a mark on this caution. Beware in those actions in which *self* may bear a part, lest it knock out the stakes, and carry it all away. You may, in your common actions, have an eye toward your outward convenience and being comfortable in the world: but this must not be the chief thing, much less all that you intend from it. For by looking no higher than *self*, you incur this double mischief: (1.) You lose that much from your own account; (2.) You usurp the great prerogatives of God. I fear we are not aware of the fearful evil that exists in self-seeking. It is no less than pushing God off the throne, and setting ourselves in his place. It is God's great prerogative, and the proper worship that is due to him as God, that he should be the last end of all our operations as his creatures, and that all our actions should terminate in him. Now when we eye our own convenience, and not God, and we look to this more than we look to God, then we claim the divine prerogative for ourselves, and we set ourselves above him; this is no less than heinous idolatry.

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And if it is such a heinous sin to bow down to an image, which is just giving God's outward worship to the creature, then how much more heinous is it to seek and honor ourselves before

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<sup>1</sup> Over time, pulpits had become more and more ornate in their construction. Many had carved stairways, intricate ornamentation, and grand canopies. These made the pulpit a piece of art in pre-reformation European cathedrals, often set to the side. One such pulpit at the Trinity Church in Stratford-on-Avon was nearly twelve feet up a long flight of circular steps. During the reformation, the pulpit was moved to the center of the sanctuary to better symbolize the centrality of God's Word.

<sup>2</sup> The Presbyterian Church was founded in Scotland by John Knox (1513-1572), who started out as a bodyguard for a street preacher named George Wishart. After Wishart was martyred in 1546, Knox took over as leader of the reformation. Wishart was not allowed to preach in the churches and so he preached in the marketplaces and fields.

<sup>3</sup> Mat 5.24; Mar 4; Luk 5.14

<sup>4</sup> Luk 2.21-22, 24, 39, 41, 46; Act 21.23-24, 26



God? This converts our inward worship of God, which is the primary thing, to worship of the creature. Oh, how many who pass for good Christians, will be found heinous idolaters because they have sought their own carnal ends more than God and his glory. And many real Christians, though they mainly do all for God and his glory, yet in many particular actions they contract great guilt by looking no higher than themselves in what they do. I know you cannot always be thinking of God, yet I would have you never forget what you have been taught: to remember God upon entering every solemn action, and make him your end. Lie down in the name of God every evening; go out in his name every morning; resolve to undertake all for him. When you perform your calling, when you sit down at your meals, or when you make any journey or visit, do it as to the Lord with the intent to please him in it. You may attain this with care and watchfulness.

Again, in religious actions let God be all. Here *self* (by which I mean the *carnal self*) must be shut out; otherwise this dead fly will spoil the box of most precious ointment. It is true that *self* will crowd in, but you must knock it down carefully. Otherwise, if this is the predominant ingredient, then all your duties will be but lost labour. What is more pleasing to God than prayer? This is incense before him.<sup>Psa 141.2</sup>

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What is more delightful than alms? This is a sacrifice acceptable and well-pleasing to him.<sup>Phi 4.18</sup> How happy a testimony did Cornelius have? *Your prayers and alms have come up as a memorial before God.*<sup>Act 10.4</sup> Yet when *self* is predominant in those duties, prayers, alms, etc., all are lost.<sup>Mat 6.7, and 23.5</sup>

**Rule V.** *When you have done all, be careful to deny all.*<sup>Luk 7.7</sup> Or don't deny God's mercy in enabling and assisting you. This must be done with all thankfulness observed. But attribute nothing to yourselves, and give God all the glory. Take the pattern of holy David: *But who am I, and what is my people, that we should offer so willingly? We have given you what is your own.*<sup>1Chr 29.14</sup> And of blessed Paul: *Not I, but the grace of God which was with me.*<sup>1Cor 15.10</sup> And of good Nehemiah, who when he had done most eminent service for God, flies to God in the end for pardoning mercy. *Remember me, O God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of your mercy.*<sup>Neh. 13.22</sup>

**Rule VI.** *Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.*<sup>Col. 3.17</sup> Having carefully set out to do all for God in the morning, and having directed your ordinary actions toward him as your end throughout the day, doing all in his sight, and with a desire to please him in it, then bring it all to Christ in the evening, and present it all to God by him. Confidently expect God's acceptance and reward for all that you have done. For he has promised this,

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no matter how mean your actions may be, because they were done as his service.<sup>1</sup> If you neglect this, you will lose it all in the end; for God will accept no sacrifice except from the hand of the priest. And therefore you must not look for acceptance from God, nor for any reward from him, except through Christ alone.<sup>2</sup> You must be sure, therefore, not only to make a formal mention of Christ's name, but to build all your hopes and success upon him alone, and to come to God with all actual and lively dependence on him.

Thus I have resolved the case propounded. I will just answer an objection, and so conclude.

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<sup>1</sup> Col. 3.22-24; Eph 6.6-8

<sup>2</sup> 1Pet 2.1, 5; Joh 14.6

*Obj.* You bind heavy burdens. What! Must we always be in the traces?<sup>1</sup> Surely this severity of religion is more than necessary.

*Ans.* 1. Burden, man?! Why, it is your happiness! If holiness and pleasing God are burdens, then health is a burden; heaven and happiness are burdens!

*Ans.* 2. This is no other burden than what God himself has bound upon your consciences. *Who are you, O man, that replies against God?* <sup>Rom 9.20</sup> Have I put a contrived and unnecessary strictness on you? Or have I bound a burden on you that I would not touch with one of my fingers? <sup>1Cor 9.8</sup> *Do I say this as a man? Or doesn't the law also say the same thing?* I ask you: whose word is this? *Be in the fear of the Lord all day long.* <sup>Pro 23.17</sup> Do all to the glory of God. <sup>1Cor 10.31</sup> Exercise yourself to godliness. <sup>1Tim 4.7</sup>

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What have I pressed for, except what the saints have practised? *One thing I do: I press toward the mark.* <sup>Phi 3.13-14</sup> *One thing have I desired of the Lord: that is what I will seek.* <sup>Psa 27.4</sup> *And, Your servant who is devoted to your fear.* <sup>Psa 119.38</sup> *Enoch walked with God three hundred years.* <sup>Gen 5.22</sup> What is this except what the scripture has foretold will be? *They will walk up and down in the name of the Lord.* <sup>Zech. 10.12</sup> *Then it will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and on every pot in Jerusalem, HOLINESS TO THE LORD.* <sup>Zech. 14.20-21</sup> Don't dispute against God, but get up and be doing. It is an ill sign when the heart rises against the strictness of the duty: You are utterly mistaken if you think this life of strictness is bondage. Who has joy unspeakable and full of glory, and who knows the peace that passes all understanding, if not those who walk thus with God?

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<sup>1</sup> The two lines that connect a horse's harness to a wagon or other vehicle for pulling it.